

# Section 6

## HOMES RUN BY THE METHODIST CHURCH

Kate Cocks Babies Home

Lentara

These Methodist Church homes were run by the Adelaide Central Methodist Mission, now known as UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc.

*Records are held at the UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc and Adoption and Family Information Service of South Australia, Department for Families and Communities. Access conditions and contact details appear at the end of the section.*

## *Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home*

*Of the admissions two were children of single girls, three were those whose mothers were sick, one was an [sic] aboriginal child whose twin had died...and one was a child whose father had deserted the family.*

*Matrons Report, Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home, date withheld, in Minutes of the Board of Management.*



*Kate Cocks Babies Home,  
Courtesy of Adoption and Family  
Information Service*

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Years of operation:** 1937-1976

**Also known as:** Methodist Home for Babies and Unmarried Mothers,  
Methodist Home for Babies and Girls  
Methodist Babies Home at Brighton  
Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home Incorporated  
Kate Cocks Memorial Girls Home Incorporated

**Run by:** Home Missions Department of the Methodist Conference 1937-1950  
Womens Welfare Department of the Methodist Conference 1950-1974  
Adelaide Central Mission 1975-1976

**Address:** Kate Cocks' home, Castle Street, Parkside  
46 Wattle Avenue, Hove

### HISTORY

Kate Cocks, the first female police officer in South Australia, was the force behind the establishment of this home. Shortly after her resignation from the women's police in 1935, a distressed unmarried mother with a newborn baby was sent to her home by another police officer. Miss Cocks, who had also worked as a probation officer for the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department, gave her a place to stay. Over the ensuing weeks more women and babies in the same situation joined her. Concerned about the lack of shelter and support for these women, Miss Cocks approached the Methodist Women's Association and suggested the establishment of a home. In 1936 the Church Women's Welfare Department was formed and Miss Cocks became its first superintendent. The same year the Home Mission department of the church purchased a property at Brighton known as Old Oxford House. From 1910-1934 the building had been a training college for young Methodist men and then briefly, from 1934-1936, a home for the elderly. In 1936 it became a home for babies, a home for girls and the site of a small maternity hospital, all opened officially in July 1937. The first matron to assist Miss Cocks in running the homes was Sister Ruth Barrett. Miss Cocks cared for girls and babies without pay for 15 years. When she died in 1954 the Home was renamed the Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home in her honour.

The home gave shelter to single girls who were pregnant or had recently given birth to their first child. The Babies Home also cared for orphaned and neglected children as well as children whose parents were unable to care for them due to ill health or other reasons. The Kate Cocks home provided both short and long term care and also arranged many adoptions.

Fundraising efforts by church members as well as a number of bequests to the home enabled the buildings to be extended in 1947 and later an enclosed playground was added. When a new Adoption Act came into force in November 1967 the home had to register itself as an adoption agency, The Kate Cocks Memorial Adoption Agency.

By the 1970's more children were being placed in cottage style homes or fostered out rather than adopted. In 1976 the home ceased to operate as an institution for children but continued to offer day care as part of the Central Methodist Mission's child care program.

*Drawn from Arnold D Hunt, 'This side of heaven: A history of Methodism in South Australia' (Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1985); H.A.F Taylor, 'History of Brighton, SA' (Corporation of the City of Brighton, 1958); summary history compiled by Children, Youth and Family Services and various historical summaries contained in PR 9 Records of the Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home, UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc.*

## **THE RECORDS**

- UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc
- Adoption and Family Information Service of SA, Department for Families and Communities

## **ADMISSION RECORDS**

No admission records have survived. According to some sources all the records relating to the Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home were destroyed in a fire. UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc also holds correspondence (dated 1988 and 1999) which relates to the handover of records from the Adelaide Central Mission to the Department of Community Welfare. This correspondence confirms that many personal records were destroyed by the Department when the home closed.

## **OTHER RECORDS - UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc**

### **Minutes of the board of management, Methodist Home for Babies**

- **Archive reference** – PR9 Box 3
- **Title** – *Babies Home Minutes*
- **Date range** – 1940-1948
- **Appearance** – Black notebook containing typed minutes.
- **Contents** – Minutes of monthly meetings including summaries of Matron's monthly reports with numbers of admissions and discharges. Minutes also provide information about day-to-day running of home.

### **Minutes of the board of management, Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home**

- **Archive reference** – PR9 Box 2
- **Title** – *Babies Home Minutes*
- **Date range** – 1948-1957 & 1958-1964
- **Appearance** – Two black foolscap notebooks containing typed minutes.
- **Contents** – Minutes of monthly meetings include attached Matron's monthly reports (from 1951 onwards) which record number of children in the home, give information about admissions and discharges including reasons for admissions, record adoptions, health and other issues. No names are mentioned. Minutes also provide background on the day-to-day running of the home including maintenance, alterations and purchases.

## Minutes of the board of management, Kate Cocks Memorial Girls Home

- **Archive reference** – PR9 Box 3
- **Title** – *Girls Home Minutes*
- **Date range** – 1948-1961
- **Appearance** – Black foolscap notebook containing typed minutes.
- **Contents** – Minutes of monthly meetings include attached Matron's monthly reports with information of admissions, discharges and babies born. Rest of minutes concern general administration of home.
  
- **Archive reference** – PR9 Box 2
- **Title** – *Girls Home, 1961-67*
- **Date range** – 1961-1967
- **Appearance** – Black foolscap notebook containing typed minutes.
- **Contents** – Minutes of monthly meetings include attached Matron's monthly reports with information of admissions, discharges and babies born. Rest of minutes concern general administration of home.

## Minutes of the meeting of the Conference Committee of the Women's Welfare Department

- **Archive reference** – PR9 Box 3
- **Title** – *Conference Committee*
- **Date range** – 1948-1954
- **Appearance** – A4 black notebook containing typed minutes.
- **Contents** – Minutes of meetings include monthly reports from the Superintendent. Reports provide numbers of admissions and discharges and details of individual cases. Christian names (pseudonyms) given from 1956.
  
- **Archive reference** – PR9 Box 2
- **Title** – *Conference Committee 1957-62 & Conference Committee 1962-68*
- **Date range** – 1957-1962 & 1962-1968
- **Appearance** – Two black notebooks containing typed minutes.
- **Contents** – Minutes of meetings include reports from the Superintendent of the Women's Welfare Department. From 1959 these list 'cases' and give details about the situations of particular girls and babies admitted that year. Throughout minutes names are included in different ways. Pseudonyms (Christian name) are used, occasionally with real name of child handwritten next to pseudonym (1957-1959, 1961-1962). In 1960-1961 some full names are given. No names mentioned after 1963.

## Miscellaneous minutes

- **Archive reference** – PR9 Box 5
- **Date range** – 1940s-1970s
- **Appearance** – Minute books.
- **Contents** – Minutes of the Women's Committee, Babies Home Auxiliary, and Babies Home Aid. Each deals with aspects of the running of the homes. Babies Home Auxiliary includes copies of Matron's reports. Names of children not mentioned.

### Matron's reports

- **Archive reference** – PR9 Box 7
- **Date range** – 1944-1956
- **Contents** – Copies of Matron's monthly reports. Numbers and details of admissions and discharges. No names given.

### Miscellaneous records

- **Archive reference** – PR9 Box 3, 6, 7 & 8
- **Date range** – 1940s-1980s
- **Contents** – Boxes contain various documents relating to diet and meals for girls resident in the home, fundraising and promotional material, Annual reports of various committees connected with the homes and papers relating to the redevelopment and sell off of the homes.

### Historical information

- **Archive reference** – PR9 Box 1
- **Date range** – 1930s-1970s
- **Contents** – Historical summaries, booklets, extracts from minutes, correspondence and news clippings related to the life of Kate Cocks and the history of the Babies and Girls Homes.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS – Adoption and Family Information Service of SA, Department for Families and Communities**

- **Date range** – July 1950 (date written in album)
- **Appearance** - One small green soft-cover album of photographs donated by former staff member.
- **Contents** – Many photographs of babies and children, often labelled with Christian names. Photos of staff and home buildings are also included.

### **BOOKS**

Edith S Abbott (1939), *Everybody's friend: The inspiring career of Miss Kate Cocks MBE* (Hassell Press, Adelaide).

Arnold D Hunt (1985), *This side of heaven: A history of Methodism in South Australia* (Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide).

Rev GW Shapley (1964), *Miss Kate Cocks, Her life and work* (South Australian Methodist Historical Society, Adelaide).

## *Lentara*

*I do not remember being silently taken away, while playing with my brother with our mother inside cleaning somebody's house... I remember crying on the plane to Adelaide with another girl because we realized that we were not going back to Croker Island our home for the first eight years of our lives. That was my first heartbreak.*

*Many sleepless nights were spent at the Children's Home thinking of Croker Island. We arrived at the beginning of winter in 1956. I later learned in 2001 from a newspaper clipping that my friend and I were 'used as an experiment in assimilation' and that 'we would be returned to Croker Island when we reached twenty years of age'. We were never told this. We never went back home...I grew up in Greenslade Home with other girls from baby to 15 years of age. When I reached 16 years of age I was on my own. Greenslade eventually became my second home...My pre-adolescent years had their ups and downs, but I loved being at 'the home'. My favourite hiding place was the Attic, a no-go area... I am sad sometimes, thinking of the heartache my mother would have gone through of not knowing what ever happened to her baby girl and me not knowing her. I hope my mother would be proud that I did not end up with hate in my heart, that I am happy.*

*Anonymous*

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Years of operation:** 1905-1976

**Also known as:** The Adelaide Central Methodist Mission Children's Home  
Methodist Children's Home  
Methodist Children's Homes Incorporated  
Magill Children's Home

**Run by:** The Adelaide Central Mission, (formerly the Central Methodist Mission, now UnitingCare Wesley)

**Address:** Havelock Street, Largs Bay 1905-1912  
6 Penfold Road, Magill 1912-1976

### HISTORY

This home began in a six roomed cottage in Largs Bay. The cottage was donated to the Methodist church by a Mr and Mrs J P Roberts. It initially catered for 10-12 children under the care of a matron, Miss P. Stephenson. The home was officially opened on 4 March 1905. When it became clear that the building was too small, the Church purchased six acres (2.4 hectares) of land on the corner of Penfold Road and Adelaide Street in Magill. There they built a new facility named Greenslade Home. It was officially opened on 7 December 1912 and was run by Adelaide Central Methodist Mission.

In 1921 a separate home for boys, Roberts Home, was opened on an adjacent property. Greenslade Home was then used for girls. A further building to cater for boys was completed in 1924 and named Cann Home. Roberts Home was then used to accommodate toddlers. The complete institution was known as the Methodist Children's Home.



*Lentara Greenslade Home, Cann Home undated,  
Lentara frontage with sign,  
Courtesy of UnitingCare Wesley*

In the 1950s a new committee of management took over and the name changed to the Central Mission Homes for Children. The title *Lentara*, an Aboriginal word meaning 'dawning of the day', was also used for the first time. During 1958 a number of children from Croker Island, Northern Territory were placed in the home.

On 1 March 1954 Roberts Home was destroyed by one of South Australia's worst earthquakes. In 1955 the Mission opened its first cottage home at Magill, Minnie Maughan Cottage, named after the daughter of the founder of Maughan Church who was Treasurer of the Home committee for many years. This signalled a general change from dormitory style living to cottage care during the 1950s and 1960s. Children were eventually housed in six cottages: Greenslade, Roberts (newly built), Cann, l'anson, Maughan and Curtice. Curtice was a family home where siblings were placed together. Cann and l'anson were two independent cottages which were joined together. Twelve children were accommodated in each building.

In 1976 the Magill property was subdivided. The Mission retained two cottages on the site while the rest of the land and buildings were sold. The children were moved to cottage homes in the suburbs. The main building at Lentara, Greenslade Home, still stands today and is a private residence.

*Drawn from Ivor Bailey, 'Mission story: the story of the Adelaide Central Mission,' 1987; 'Transmission newsletter, March 1975'; and Magill Children's Home Timeline (compiled Jan 2004) and 'The Dawning of the Day' typescript (undated), both provided by UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc.*



*Minnie Maughan Cottage, Opening of the Methodist Children's Home Largs Bay 1905, Courtesy UnitingCare Wesley; Lentara 2005 Courtesy Kay Goodman-Dodd*

## THE RECORDS

- UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc.

### ADMISSION RECORDS – UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc.

#### Admission register

- **Title** - *Register of Admissions to the Methodist Home, Largs Bay, 1905-1976*
- **Date range** – 1905-1976
- **Appearance** – A2 size brown ledger divided into columns over two pages with title across the top: *Register of Admissions to the Methodist Home, an institution for Methodist children, Largs Bay*. Year in top left hand corner.
- **Contents** - Left hand page: (1) Number, (2) Name, (3) Age, (4) Date of birth, (5) Last place of residence, (6) What relative in the state, where living, earnings, occupation.  
Right hand page: (7) Court of committal, (8) Reasons for admission, (9) Date of admission, (10) Date of leaving, (11) Where gone to.
- **Notes on contents** - Changes in handwriting indicate different record keepers. Amount of information depends on record keeper. Pages 1-32 cover 1905-1965. At page 33 the title at the top of the page changes to '1921 Boys Home' and numbers start from 1 again. Page 28 includes information about children from Croker Island Mission.  
(5) Last place of residence entries can include the name(s) of other homes from which child has been transferred.

(6) What relative: Parent's names are given if available. Also records whether parents are living or dead and gives information on their personal and employment situations. In rare cases, the entry identifies parent(s) as 'Aboriginal'.

(7) Court of committal gives Department reference number. Sometimes records duration of admission such as 'until things are settled', 'for 9 months' 'until such time as mother can provide a home' or 'indefinite'.

(8) Reasons for admission: Sometimes gives reasons and sometimes records parents' maintenance payments. Information about adoption sometimes provided. Very occasionally an indication of 'Aboriginality' is given.

(11) Where gone to: sometimes gives names of foster parents or location, or records when a child was returned to parents or to the Welfare Department. Includes information about transfers to other institutions such as Tanderrea.

## **OTHER RECORDS - UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc**

### **Records relating to Indigenous children**

- **Title** - *Indigenous Children, Lentara (Magill Children's Home)*
- **Date range** - 1950s-1970s
- **Contents** - Four packets primarily containing black and white photographs of children at Lentara. Packets include clippings and photocopies of the Mission newsletter, *Transmission* with photos and information about Indigenous children. One packet contains an unidentified news clipping dated 1957/8 relating to children from Croker Island.

### **Records relating to Croker Island children**

- **Title** - *Aboriginal Children sent from Croker Island to Southern institutions*
- **Contents** - Manila folder with plastic sleeves containing loose paper documents and letters relating to transfers of children from the Northern Territory, particularly Croker Island.

### **Financial records**

- **Title** - *Accounts Book - Magill Children's Home/Lentara*
- **Contents** - Hardcover A4 book bound with large screws containing account information for payments made to Lentara for children.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS - UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc**

- **Title** - *Indigenous Children, Lentara (Magill Children's Home)*
- **Date range** - 1950s-1970s
- **Contents** - Four packets primarily containing black and white photographs of children at Lentara. Children are mostly unidentified.
- **Title** - *Magill Children's Home/Lentara*
- **Appearance** - Archive photograph storage folder.
- **Contents** - Range of photographs relating to Lentara including photographs of buildings and of children, mostly unidentified.

## REPORTS - UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc

### Annual reports of the Adelaide Central Methodist Mission

- **Date range** – 1910-1952
- **Contents** – Regularly include a section on the Children's Home, providing an update of developments during the year. Includes information about building, staff, events and outings for children. Photographs of the home and of children are often included.

### BOOKS

Ivor Bailey, *Mission story: the story of the Adelaide Central Mission, 1987.*

### ACCESS TO RECORDS OF HOMES RUN BY THE METHODIST CHURCH

#### UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc

##### **Access conditions**

All personal information held by UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc is accessible upon request and is only limited in special circumstances. Proof of identity is required. Information affecting the privacy of others will be deleted from copies of documents made accessible. Contact UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc for further information.

**Contact:** The General Manager of Services

UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc

GPO Box 2534, Adelaide SA 5001

**Telephone:** (08) 8202 5111 **Fax:** (08) 8211 8041

**Email:** enquiries@ucwadel.org.au

**Location:** 10 Pitt Street, Adelaide SA

**Telephone:** (08) 8202 5104

**Website:** www.ucwadel.org.au

**Fees:** No access charges. Some charges may be made for photocopying etc.

#### Adoption and Family Information Service of SA,

#### Department for Families and Communities

##### **Access conditions**

All applications for access to records held or searched by the Adoption and Family Information Service must be made via a Request for access under the Freedom of Information Act 1991 form available from their office. See Section 11 for further information about accessing records from this department.

**Contact:** Adoption and Family Information Service

PO Box 287, Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000

**Telephone:** (08) 8207 0060

Email: adoptions@dfc.sa.gov.au

**Location:** 1st Floor

45 Wakefield Street, Adelaide SA 5000

**Website:** www.adoptions.sa.gov.au

**Fees:** No access charges. Some charges may be made for photocopying etc.