

Protestant Orphan School

1850 – 1886

Details

The Protestant Orphan School was established in Parramatta in 1850 by the New South Wales Colonial Government. It replaced, and brought together, what had been the Female Orphan School and the Male Orphan School. The Protestant Orphan School housed hundreds of children at a time. It was closed in 1881, after the boarding out system was introduced.

Orphan schools were established in Sydney in the early 1800s, and the Female Orphan School had been moved to Parramatta in 1818. It was run by a committee and funded by the New South Wales Colonial Government.

In 1850, the Male and Female Orphan Schools were amalgamated to form the Protestant Orphan School. This continued in the same buildings in Parramatta that had been used by the Female Orphan School. The Protestant Orphan School, like the Roman Catholic Orphan School and the Randwick Asylum for Destitute Children, massed many hundreds of children into dormitory-style accommodation. In the 1870s this form of caring for dependent children became increasingly unpopular with reformers.

The Protestant Orphan School was closed in 1886, after the State Children's Relief Board introduced boarding out and took children from large institutions and placed them in the boarding out system (foster care).

The Orphan School buildings were converted to the Rydalmere Hospital for the Insane in 1886. In 1995 the hospital closed and the New South Wales Government gave the buildings to the University of Western Sydney.

Gallery



Female Orphan School, Parramatta, 1870-1875, by the American & Australasian Photographic Company [Protestant Orphan School]

Description: This is a digital copy of a carte de visite, or postcard, taken from 1870 to 1875. The Female Orphan School, by that stage, was known as the Protestant Orphan School.



Protestant Orphan School, Parramatta: general view

Description: This is a photograph of the Protestant Orphan School at Parramatta, as seen from across the river. It shows a range of large buildings spread across the site, surrounded by open fields. State Archives NSW have given this photograph a date of 1900, however as the Protestant Orphan School was not in operation by that date it is assumed that this photograph is earlier. The date included here is an estimate.



School House, Protestant Orphanage, Parramatta

Description: This is a photograph of the school house at the Protestant Orphan School. It shows a long brick building with a small bell-tower, and covered walkways approaching it. State Archives NSW have given this photograph a date of 1900, however as the Protestant Orphan School was not in operation by that date it is assumed that this photograph is earlier. The date included here is an estimate.



Protestant Orphan School, Parramatta: children in playground

Description: This is a photograph of children assembled outside of the Protestant Orphan School. It shows three groups of children on the grass in front of the school - a group of boys in the centre, a group of girls in the distance, and a small group of boys standing off to the side. State Archives NSW have given this photograph a date of 1900, however as the Protestant Orphan School was not in operation by that date it is assumed that this photograph is earlier. The date included here is an estimate.



Protestant Orphan School, Parramatta: girls in playground

Description: This is a photograph of children assembled outside of the Protestant Orphan School. Despite the title, there are both girls and boys as well as staff members in this photo. State Archives NSW have given this photograph a date of 1900, however as the Protestant Orphan School was not in operation by that date it is assumed that this photograph is earlier. The date included here is an estimate.

More info

Chronology

- Male Orphan School (1819 - 1850)
 - **Protestant Orphan School (1850 – 1886)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [Colonial Secretary \(1 Jan 1821 - 1 April 1959\)](#)
Date: 1850 - 1886

Related Legislation

- [Apprenticeship Act 1851, New South Wales \(1851 - 1901\)](#)
- [State Children Relief Act 1881, New South Wales \(1881 - 1901\)](#)

The *State Children's Relief Act* gave the State Children's Relief Board the power to take children from the Protestant Orphan School and board them out.

Related Organisations

- [Female Orphan School \(1801 - 1850\)](#)
The Protestant Orphan School was created in 1850 when the Female and Male Orphan Schools were combined.
- [State Children's Relief Board \(1881 - 1923\)](#)
The State Children's Relief Board was given the power to withdraw children from the Protestant Orphan School and place them in the boarding out system.

Resources

- Ramsland, John, *Children of the back lanes: destitute and neglected children in colonial New South Wales*, 1986
- Museums of History NSW, [Child Care and Protection Guide](#), No date
- The Whitlam Institute, [Female Orphan School and Historical Precinct, Parramatta Campus](#), 2013
- Museums of History NSW, [Child Care and Protection Index 1817-1942](#), No date
- Department of Justice, [History](#), Children's Court of New South Wales, 2012
- Bubacz, Beryl M, [The Female and Male Orphan Schools in New South Wales, 1801-1850](#), 2007
- [Female Orphan School](#), University of Western Sydney, 2 September 2014

Records

For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

Records held by other organisations

- [Female Orphan School records, State Archives NSW \(1817 - 1886\)](#)
The records of the Female Orphan School also include some information about children at the Protestant Orphan School
 - [Protestant Orphan School records, State Archives NSW \(1850 - 1870\)](#)
 - [Copies of letters sent concerning the administration of public schools \(1880 - 1896\)](#)
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