

Orfelin Ecole (Orphan School), Broome

1895? – 1898?

Details

The Orfelin Ecole, or 'orphan school' in Broome was established some time during or after 1895 by the parish priest, Trappist Father Nicholas Maria Emo, known as 'Father Nicholas'. It ran for three years with a total of thirty seven students who most likely lived at the school.

Father Nicholas gave testimony (in French) to the Roth royal commission in 1905. He was asked about the 'orphan school' which he ran for three years:

Being dependent upon public charity, I was able after a little time to open an orphan school (Orfelin Ecole) in order to gather in the native full-blooded children of both sexes, as well as some half-caste girls, whom, to my sorrow, I found amongst the Asiatics. The Abbot of my congregation at Beagle Bay then commenced to give assistance in the way of provisions; with this help I succeeded in supporting during these three years 37 children and adults, and in paying a small salary for a school mistress...a half-caste woman married to a Manillaman. She had apparently spent some of her earlier years at Broome, and had considerable influence and sympathy with the natives, especial[ly] amongst the children...she was a good, pure, and trustworthy woman...A certain Government official who came to inspect my school gave it an excellent report. He, however, added a postscript implying certain alleged aspersions on the schoolmistress's character, which he certainly admitted in the same postscript he did not personally believe. The very fact, however, of his having made such a slanderous statement did a great deal of harm, with the final result that, disgusted and disheartened, I gave up this particular school and distributed the elder girls into service amongst the European ladies in Broome. Some of the elder boys – six of them – I lately sent to the Beagle Bay Mission. These boys had been with me continually for a long time previously. All the younger children (boys and girls) who at the time of the closing of the school were too young to go into service I have supported until the present time...[The Commissioner asked, 'why did you not send the girls as well to Beagle Bay?' and Nicholas answered:] There were no Sisters there, and I do not believe that any mission for natives can be successful unless there are women to look after the aboriginal girls.

More info

Related Entries

Run by

- [Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance \(Trappists\) \(1895 - current\)](#)

Trappist Father Nicholas established and ran the orphan school in Broome and remained there as parish priest.

Date: 1895? - 1898?

Related Events

- [Royal Commission to Enquire into and Report Upon \[inter alia\] the Administration of the Aborigines Department and the Condition of the Natives, State of Western Australia \(1904? - 1905\)](#)

Father Nicholas Maria Emo ('Father Nicholas'), Parish Priest at Broome, gave evidence to the Roth commission.

Date: February 1905 -

Related Organisations

- [Beagle Bay Mission \(1895 - 1976\)](#)

When it closed down around 1898, some of the children from Orfelin Ecole (Orphan School) in Broome were sent to Beagle Bay Mission.

Date: 1898? -

- [Catholic Diocese of Broome \(1897? - current\)](#)

The Catholic Diocese of Broome history shows that a school was established in 1897.

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