

# Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society

1881 – 1895

## Details

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The Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society began its work with Melbourne's 'waifs and strays' on 10 July 1881. In 1895, the Society merged with the Presbyterian Society for Neglected and Destitute Children, to form the Presbyterian and Scot's Church Neglected Children's Aid Society.

The Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society officially began its work with Melbourne's 'waifs and strays' on 10 July 1881. The record of the Society's first intervention reads:

*Annie P ... aged 12.*

*Taken by the Society on 10th July 1881 from a lane known as Bennetts Lane, one of the most disreputable neighbourhoods in Melbourne. Her home was miserable, the father being sick and the mother not able to take care of her.*

In her 1981 history of Kildonan, Robinson points out that children were being unofficially 'rescued' by ladies associated with the Scots' Church for some years before 1881. Many of these children were cared for in the home of Mrs Maria Lord Armour.

Together with Selina Sutherland, Armour was a key figure in the early years of the Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society. The two women lived together for a number of years in a cottage at 167 Collins Street at the rear of the Assembly Hall, known as 'The Villa'. From 1881 to 1890, before Kildonan's first home in North Melbourne opened, the Villa housed 'neglected' children in the care of the Society.

This cottage

The 1894 annual report of the Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society stated that the Receiving Home was at a "temporary location" at 167 Collins Street, Melbourne. This was the cottage where Sutherland lived, at the back of Assembly Hall. (This Assembly Hall building was demolished in 1911 and a new Presbyterian Assembly Hall was built on the opposite side of Collins Street in 1915).

Selina Sutherland went on to become Victoria's first licensed child rescuer, as the child welfare system changed to accommodate the methods of organisations like the Society.

In Robinson's history, the story of 'little Annie's' time in the care of the Society and the Scots' Church is constructed using archival records:

*Annie was washed, fed and clothed, put in a warm clean bed, and comforted during the time which elapsed until a country home was found for her.*

*There Annie went to school, learned to cook and keep house, and probably assisted with milking, harvesting and other tasks around a farm. From time to time Miss Sutherland visited her to ensure that she remained happy, and the minister and members of the local community also took a keen interest in her welfare. She was treated very much as a member of the family, and the last we know of Annie is that she married at the age of 19, having been well trained to be a capable wife and mother.*

On 3 August 1888, the Victorian Government Gazette carried news that Sutherland had been 'specially authorised' under s.21 of the Neglected Children's Act 1887 to apprehend children in brothels, and that the Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society had been approved under ss.62 and 63 as 'an institution to whose care neglected children may be committed'.

In a report from 1891, the Secretary of the Department of Neglected Children, George Guillaume, discussed the Neglected Children's Act 1887 and the new powers it conferred on 'approved private persons'. Guillaume wrote that this power

*should prove of vast service and encouragement to the Scot's Church Neglected Children's Aid Society and other like agencies in their philanthropic endeavours, and these provisions, if taken advantage of, will probably be found to have the effect, by extending private benevolence, of gradually lessening the number of orphans and waifs and strays coming into the care of the Department.*

Selina Sutherland resigned from the Society in 1894, following a period marked by disagreements within the Society and the congregation.

In 1895, the organisation became known as the Presbyterian and Scots' Church Children's Aid Society.

Kildonan UnitingCare is the custodian of records of the Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society.

## Gallery



### **Bible presented to Selina Sutherland**

**Description:** The inscription reads: Presented to Miss Sutherland, by a few of the girls whose lives have been blessed through her loving labours in connection with the Scots' Church Children's Aid Society as a small token of their heartfelt gratitude and esteem. Melbourne, August 23rd 1886. The bible contains some press clippings, presumably kept there by Selina Sutherland.

## More info

### Chronology

- **Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society (1881 – 1895)**
  - The Presbyterian and Scots' Church Children's Aid Society (1895 - 1965?)

## Related Entries

### Ran

- [Kildonan, North Melbourne \(1890 - c. 1937\)](#)  
Date: 1890 - 1895
- [Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society Receiving Home \(c. 1881 - 1908\)](#)

### Related Organisations

- [The Presbyterian Society for Neglected and Destitute Children \(1893 - 1895\)](#)  
The Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society and the Presbyterian Society for Neglected and Destitute Children operated simultaneously within the Scots' Church, due to a breach within the congregation. The situation was resolved in 1895 with the two groups combining to form the Presbyterian and Scot's Church Neglected Children's Aid Society.
- [Presbyterian Church of Victoria \(c. 1838 - current\)](#)  
Date: 1881 - 1895

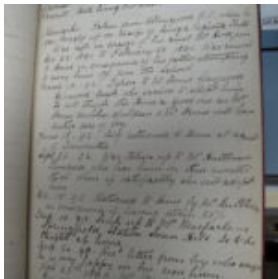
### Related Legislation

- [The Neglected Children's Act 1887, Victoria \(1888 - 1890\)](#)  
Selina Sutherland, of the Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society, was licensed as a 'child rescuer' under the terms of the Neglected Children's Act 1887.

## Resources

- UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania, *Uniting Church in Australia: agencies in Victoria delivering substitute care services*, April 2008

## Other Resources



**Title:** Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society, Extract from Register

**Type:** Image

**Date:** 1884

[Details](#)

## Records

### Records

- [Kildonan UnitingCare Records \(1881 - 2001\)](#)

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