

A faded, sepia-toned background image of a beach scene. In the foreground, a person stands on the left, and another person is partially visible in the center. In the background, a boat is on the water, and the sky is bright. The overall tone is historical and nostalgic.

Section 3

HOMES RUN BY THE CHRISTIAN BRETHREN/ OPEN BRETHREN ASSEMBLIES OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Umewarra Mission Childrens Home

Records are held privately by the Umewarra Nguraritja – an association of former residents of the Home. Access conditions and contact details appear at the end of the section.

Umeewarra Mission, Children's Home

GENERAL INFORMATION

Years of operation: 1937-1995

Also known as: Davenport Reserve (from 1964)

Run by: Christian Brethren/Open Brethren Assemblies of South Australia

Address: Four kilometres north of Port Augusta, SA

HISTORY

The Open Brethren Assemblies of South Australia established a mission north of Port Augusta in 1937. Named *Umeewarra* it covered an area of some 200 acres (80 hectares). The main focus of the mission was a children's home and school. Children were placed in the home for various reasons, due to separation from family or for medical treatment. Other children attended the mission school while still living with their parents on the reserve.

In 1946 the original site of the home was flooded so buildings were relocated onto higher ground nearby. In the early years girls and boys were accommodated in different sides of one main building. During 1955-56 the main building was extended with the addition of a dining room, kitchen and laundry. Electrical power was also installed for the first time. Later separate buildings were erected for boys, senior girls and infants. During the mid fifties approximately fifty children lived in the home. The number had increased to seventy by the mid 1960s. As well as general and religious education, boys were trained in woodwork and engineering while girls learned needlework, cooking and other home crafts. One of the housemothers/teachers also taught art. Some selected children attended Primary School in Port Augusta. Other senior girls were sent away to train at Singleton Training College in New South Wales.

In 1964 the government took control of the mission and the area was renamed Davenport Reserve. The school was taken over by the Education Department. Four years later a Community Council took over administration of the reserve. The Home continued to accommodate Aboriginal children for a number of years. In the 1970s most children still resident were fostered out. The last few remained in the Home with the former mission superintendent and his wife until they retired in 1995.

Drawn from Christobel Mattingley & Ken Hampton, 'Survival in our own land: 'Aboriginal' experiences in 'South Australia' since 1836' (Wakefield Press, Adelaide 1988) p. 247-249; David Hollinsworth and Janet Craig, 'Aboriginal Missions in South Australia' (Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA, Adelaide 2003), p. 22; Annual reports of the Aborigines Protection Board 1955-1962 and the Aboriginal Affairs Board 1963-1968 and information provided by Mr A and Mrs I McWilliams, former superintendents.

THE RECORDS

- Umeewarra Nguraritja, Port Augusta

No information about the extent or contents of records relating to the Umeewarra Children's Home was available prior to *Finding your own way* going to print. Further information will be provided in an update.

ACCESS TO RECORDS OF THE UMEEWARRA CHILDRENS HOME

Access conditions

Access is restricted to former residents of the home. Proof of identity must be presented.

Contact: Umeewarra Nguraritja
PO Box 2042, Port Augusta SA 5700