

Information Sheet No. 14



City of
Greater Geraldton
Regional Library



Heritage Services

Geraldton Regional Library

ALFRED CARSON OBE – Australia's Youngest Headmaster

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| 1859, Nov 7 | - Born in Upper Swan, WA. |
| 1877 | - Appointed assistant headmaster Perth Boys' School. |
| 1878 | - Headmaster Geraldton Boys' School. |
| 1884, Aug 5 | - Married Eva Massingham. |
| 1886, Jul 1 | - Editor of the Victorian Express. |
| 1892, Jul | - Editor of the Geraldton and Murchison Telegraph. |
| Mid 1890s | - Moved to Perth. |
| 1896, Jan | - Joined the West Australian. |
| 1908 | - Appointed special commissioner to investigate liquor-licensing legislation in the Eastern States. |
| 1912 | - Editor of the Western Mail. |
| 1918 | - Represented WA on a press delegation to visit the Western Front and the United Kingdom. |
| 1923-1944 | - Chairman Bush Nursing Society. |
| 1941 | - Awarded the Order of the British Empire. |
| 1944, Aug 24 | - Died in Perth, WA. |

The son of a wheelwright, Alfred Carson was educated at the Guildford Government School. Realising the importance of an education, Carson then undertook four years of training as a pupil teacher at the Perth Boys' School. His diligence was noted and in September 1878 the Geraldton Board of Education appointed him to the position of headmaster of the Government Boys' School. Not quite nineteen, Carson holds the record for being the youngest headmaster of an Australian school.

At that time the school was held in what is now known as the Missions to Seamen building in Marine Terrace. Work commenced on building a new school in Fitzgerald Street. By the end of 1878, Carson and a paid monitor were teaching a class of 62 boys.

Geraldton Regional Library T 08 9956 6659 F 08 9923 9348
A 37 Marine Terrace Geraldton

Mullewa Public Library T 08 9961 1007 F 08 9961 1206
A Thomas Street Mullewa (Council District Office)
E library@cgg.wa.gov.au W library.cgg.wa.gov.au

Carson married Eva Massingham of Dongara on 5 August 1884, in the Wesleyan Chapel at Geraldton. His students had reason to celebrate the occasion as the school was closed for the day.



Alfred Carson. Photo courtesy of Geraldton Historical Society, P 51.

The local newspaper, the *Victorian Express*, was also printed in the school building and in spare moments, Carson sometimes set type and read proofs. It was through assisting with the workings of this paper that Carson realised that here was the opportunity to bring understanding and knowledge to a far greater community than was possible through the classroom. In July 1886 Carson resigned as headmaster to take up the position of editor of the *Victorian Express*.

In appreciation for his past commitment to the school, Mr Gale, Chairman of the District Board of Education, presented Carson with a fish knife and fork and invited him to join the Board.

When the *Geraldton and Murchison Telegraph* commenced in July 1892, Carson was appointed editor. But by now Carson was restless, and seeking a bigger stage from which to work. He moved to Perth in the mid 1890s, to further his editorial career by working for the *West Australian* and *Western Mail*. It was written of Carson, "He was a man who did good as a first instinct and looked for goodness in everyone he met".

References

Text taken from **Geraldton: 150 Years, 150 Lives**, Local Studies Department, Geraldton Regional Library, 2001, p. 33.

Copies are available from the Library, 37 Marine Terrace, Geraldton (PO Box 101, Geraldton, WA, 6531) for \$27.50 (plus \$6.50 postage and handling).

