



**MUSEUM OF
NEW
ZEALAND
TE PAPA
TONGAREWA**

VISIT

Porō mai

**DISCOVER THE
COLLECTIONS**

Wharaitia ngā

kohinga

LEARN

Ako

ABOUT

Mo matou

SHOP

Wharehoko

SUPPORT &

JOIN

Tautokotia,

kuhu mai

Search h



Te Papa Blog

Discover stories from Te Papa's experts, including curators, scientists, historians, collection managers, and educators.

[Blog home](#)

Blog alerts

Stay up to date on our latest blogs.

Email Address*

What topics are you interested in?*

- Mātauranga Māori
- Pacific cultures
- History
- Science Art
- Photography
- Behind the scenes
- For educators

SUBSCRIBE

Search

January 1900 – This month last century

By: [Kirstie Ross](#) | On: 30 Jan 2013

St Joseph's Home for Incurable opens 113 years ago (29 January 1900)

This home for so-called 'incurables', in Buckle Street, Wellington, was an initiative set up by Reverend Mother Mary Joseph Aubert, with the help of Catholic nuns, the Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion. Mother Aubert was the founder of this religious congregation, in 1892.

Prior to her work in Wellington with urban poor, she had gained notice for work in rural areas, especially with Maori in the Whanganui. This French-born nun was also well-versed in the use of Maori medicinal practices and herbs and had manufactured her own medicines, like the one shown below.



Categories




'Paramo'
medicinal
preparation in box,
circa 1895,
Wanganui. Mother
Mary Aubert. Gift of
The Sisters of Our
Lady's Home of
Compassion, Island
Bay, 1990. Te Papa

'Paramo' medicinal
preparation in box, circa
1895, Wanganui. Mother
Mary Aubert. Gift of The
Sisters of Our Lady's
Home of Compassion,
Island Bay, 1990. Te
Papa

Her new venture began with 11 beds for men and women. From 1901, a soup kitchen was being run from the premises. Then, in November 1903 a crèche opened in nearby cottages for the babies of working mothers.

In October 1903, an article in the *Evening Post* called the Home a 'resting place for the decrepit, the unfit, the unfit, the maimed people the outside world has no use for'. Mother Aubert and her Sisters were praised for their dedication 'to lift[ing] fallen humanity from the slough of the world, no matter how they got there'.

 **Old men's home, Ashburton, New Zealand. Muir & Moodie, Te Papa**

Old men's home, Ashburton, New Zealand.
Muir & Moodie, Te Papa

The Home, which depended on public donations, was the first of its kind to open in New Zealand. A reliance on private charity was normal for many other similar institutions, such as the one shown above.

Although the Old Age Pensions Act had been passed in November 1898, it was not until after 1935 that the New Zealand government became the main provider of social welfare.

Find out more about on the [government's changing role in the lives and welfare of New Zealanders on the *Slice of Heaven* exhibition website](#)

View a [television clip to discover more about Mother Aubert](#) and her medicines

By: [Kirstie Ross](#) | On: 30 Jan 2013 | In: [History](#) |
Tagged: [charity](#), [Daughters of Our Lady of Compassion](#),
[Mother Mary Jospeh Aubert](#), [Sisters of Compassion](#), [Slice of Heaven: 20th Century Aotearoa](#), [social welfare](#), [Suzanne Aubert](#) | With: [0 Comments](#)

Previous Post: [Helping to save our rare and endangered orchids](#)

Next Post: [More tangle – a new species of tangle fern](#)

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published.

Required fields are marked *

Comment

*

Name *

Email *

Website

Sign me up for the newsletter!

Notify me of follow-up comments by email.

Notify me of new posts by email.

POST COMMENT

[Contact us](#) | [Media enquiries](#) | [Copyright and terms of use](#) | [Privacy](#)

© Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2024