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## Alma Tighe Obituary

On 15th June in the Wirajarai Hall, Moree, Mrs Alma Tighe, whom some admirers have called "the aristocrat of the Aborigines", died as she had lived—helping others. An accomplished dancer, she had been teaching youngsters ballroom dancing in preparation for the forthcoming Moree National Aborigines' Day Celebrations, just two and a half weeks away. Suffering from a heart condition and knowing that she should take it easy, she nevertheless danced a couple of rounds of a mazurka to encourage the learners. Soon after this, she collapsed.

Alma Tighe's death came as a blow to her Moree people. Charming, cultured and dependable, she had long been an inspiration to the group. Trained in nursing at the Moree District Hospital, she continued to use her skill privately after she had retired from her job.

She solved problems with commonsense, plain talk and practical help. For example, if a family had no clothes for a special occasion and were too poor to buy them, Mrs Tighe would help make the suits and frocks that were needed. Similarly, if sickness came to any family, Mrs Tighe would be there to nurse them better.

Aborigines at Wirajarai told me that the strong class distinctions observed amongst so many Moree Aborigines were **not** recognized by Alma Tighe. She never looked down on anyone, or, as they put it, she "never classed anyone out".

Alma Tighe was proud of her Aboriginality. This was shown by an incident some years ago when the local hospital's wards were decorated, at her suggestion, with Aboriginal designs, gum trees, bark strips and decorated umbrellas designed by Mrs Tighe, who had a flair for decorating things.



*The late Alma Tighe*

Wherever there were things which concerned Aborigines and whenever Aborigines were in trouble, Alma Tighe would be there. It was always understood and accepted, that Alma Tighe would be there. That is why she leaves a memory as an "aristocrat of the Aborigines".