Fanny Balbuk Yooreel: Realising a Perth Resistance Fighter

Walk the path of Fanny Balbuk Yooreel through the Perth landscape and connect to this unique city in new ways.

A Whadjuk woman who experienced colonisation first-hand in the 19th century, Fanny Balbuk Yooreel was passionate about her country and fought and stroked through her homelands as colonial Perth developed.

Guided by Whadjuk Elders and their extended families, this map provides an experience informed by newly compiled research to mark the 110th anniversary of the death of arguably the most important and uncelebrated Whadjuk woman.

The information in this map was compiled through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions and the National Trust of Western Australia in partnership with the City of Perth.

CULTURAL WARNING

The National Trust of Western Australia would like to advise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers that this brochure contains historical photos, images, references or names of people who have passed away.

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Beverley Port-Louis  |  Whadjuk Yued Elder

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Beverley Port-Louis  |  Whadjuk Yued Elder
57 Murray St

57 Murray Street was built in 1912 for the Public Health and Medical Department as a centre for government bureaucracy, policy and innovation. From this building the Chief Protector of Aborigines controlled the lives of Aboriginal people throughout Western Australia. The death and legacy of Fanny Balbuk’s son, Joe Donnelly, in the western end of Perth’s central business district is linked to the resting place of Fanny Balbuk Yooreel’s grandmother, Yabben. A skull yellowed with age was discovered during building works in the vicinity in 1938. ‘Judging by its age and appearance it is thought probable the skull is that of an Aboriginal who was buried there in the early days of the colony.’

‘It makes me proud because a lot of our women were strong but she didn’t take a step back, she always took a step forward in whatever she said or did.’

May McGuire | Whadjuk Yued Elder

Colonial Hospital, Perth

The Colonial Hospital was established on the corner of Murray St and Victoria Square in 1855. It was here that Fanny Balbuk Yooreel died on 20 March 1907. The cause of her death is recorded as cardiac failure. Her husband Doolby was by her side. She was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery on 21 March 1907. The death and legacy of Fanny Balbuk Yooreel’s son, Joe Donnelly, in the western end of Perth’s central business district is linked to the resting place of Fanny Balbuk Yooreel’s grandmother, Yabben. A skull yellowed with age was discovered during building works in the vicinity in 1938. ‘Judging by its age and appearance it is thought probable the skull is that of an Aboriginal who was buried there in the early days of the colony.’

7 Government House

The devastation and changes to Fanny Balbuk Yooreel’s traditional landscape had great personal impact. Members of her family, are buried close to prominent Perth landmarks along St Georges Terrace. Her great grandmother, Moojumjul, is buried in the grounds of Government House which is also registered as an Aboriginal site. Fanny would protest at the gates of Government House, cursing those within while a substantial fence kept her out.

One of her favourite annoyances was to stand at the gates of Government House, reviling all who dwelt within, because the stone gates guarded by a sentry enclosed her grandmother’s burial ground.

Daisy Bates, 1938

8 Bishop’s Grove

The western end of Perth’s central business district is linked to the resting place of Fanny Balbuk Yooreel’s grandmother, Yabben. A skull yellowed with age was discovered during building works in the vicinity in 1938. ‘Judging by its age and appearance it is thought probable the skull is that of an Aboriginal who was buried there in the early days of the colony.’

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