Fanny Balbuk Yooreel: Realising a Perth Resistance Fighter

Walk the path of Fanny Balbuk Yooreel through the Perth landscape and connect to this untold story 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 to protect it through her lifestyle and activism.

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 this country’s first female activist Fanny Balbuk Yooreel. 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.

She wasn’t frightened to tackle the development of colonisation in this country when it happened especially here in Perth.

Beverley Port-Louis  |  Whadjuk Yued Elder

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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5 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 Yooreel are linked to this site and have great personal impact on the lives of Aboriginal people throughout Western Australia. Members of her family are buried close to prominent Perth landmarks and well but she despairs that ‘All our people are dead.’

6 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’s grandmother, Yabben, 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.

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, Moojumgul, 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.

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.’ Daily News, Friday 14 October 1938.

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There is still the possibility many grave sites exist beneath the buildings and roads of Perth.

Fanny was an angry woman because everything in this life was taken from her family, her country, her lifestyle...especially her lifestyle, the way she wanted to live, was taken from her.

Theresa Wadley | Whadjuk Yued Elder

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

ABOVE: Government House viewed from St Georges Terrace, 1862 (State Library of Western Australia 62038:48)

BELOW: Government House under construction, 1862 (State Library of Western Australia 62038:1-14)

ABOVE: The Terrace Hotel on St George’s Terrace is the former Bishop’s Grove (G Pickering, National Trust of Western Australia)