Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE1166

Cochrane Smith, Fanny

(1834 - 1905)

Born	18340101, Wybalenna Settlement, Flinders Island Tasmania Australia
Died	19050224, Port Cygnet Tasmania Australia
Occupation	Community worker, Linguist

Summary

Fanny Cochrane Smith was born in 1834 at Wybalenna settlement on Flinders Island in Bass Strait. From the age of seven she spent her childhood in European homes and institutions, mostly in the household of Robert Clark, catechist at Flinders Island, in conditions of neglect and brutality. When Wybalenna people were moved to Oyster Cove she went into service in Hobart, but returned to Oyster Cove the same year.

On her marriage in 1854 to William Smith, sawyer and ex-convict, she received an annuity of £24. In 1857 they moved to Nicholls Rivulet and took up a land grant, and the first of their 11 children was born the following year. They supported the family by growing produce and splitting shingles. After Truganini died, she claimed herself to be ‘the last Tasmanian’. Her annuity was raised to £50, and she was granted 120 ha of land. She became a Methodist and an active fundraiser, donating land for a church.

Cochrane Smith was proud of her Aboriginal identity, and of her knowledge of food gathering and bush medicine. She became famous for her wax cylinder recordings of Aboriginal songs, now housed in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Published resources

Edited Book
The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia : Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, society and culture, Horton, David, 1994

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988, https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20071105022623/http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/78644/20071105-1315/www.200australianwo

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Resource Section
Smith, Fanny Cochrane (1834-1915), Clark, J., 2006, http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110661b.htm

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