

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4806

Smith, Mary

(1861 - 1946)

Born	26 May, 1861, Argyle Flats, Heathcote Victoria Australia
Died	31 December, 1946, West Leederville Western Australia Australia
Occupation	Hotel owner

Summary

Mary Smith nee Steedman was the first white woman to live in Bardoc, approximately 30 km from Kalgoorlie. She ran the Bardoc Hotel from 1896 until 1924.

Details

Mary Dudley left Victoria for the goldfields of Western Australia in 1893 with her husband Lionel, her brother Timothy Steedman and her four children Lionel, Fred, Adelaide and Rene. The family travelled by boat, *The Bothwell Castle*, by train to Southern Cross and by wagon to Coolgardie. The journey to Coolgardie took eight days. In 1894 the family moved to Bardoc, where Lionel sold liquor to miners from a wayside shanty, building the more substantial Bardoc Hotel two years later in 1896. Lionel died that same year leaving Mary to run the hotel with the help of her family.

She married miner William Smith in January 1900 and in 1903 a daughter Kathleen Mary was born. She continued to run the Bardoc Hotel cleaning, cooking for boarders and tending the bar. Even a dose of Spanish Influenza in 1919 failed to deter her. Her daughter Kathleen worked as a housemaid and waitress.

Mary's second husband died in 1916, but she remained at Bardoc, leaving only when the mining population dwindled and it became unprofitable to continue.

In 1924, after a lifetime of hard labour, Mary sold the hotel and retired to Perth with Kathleen. She was 64.

Published resources

Site Exhibition

Karlkurla Gold: A History of the Women of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Crienda Fitzgerald and National Foundation for Australian Women, 2012,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/wikb/wikb-home.html>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Author Details

Robyn McLean and Kevin Imms

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