

Place No. 35 Mt Fisher Homestead Group (fmr)



Remains of buildings at Mt Fisher station, 2004

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Mt. Fisher Homestead Group
Other Name (1)	Mt Fisher Station Homestead
Location/Address	
Street Number	
Street Name	
Suburb/Town	George River, Roebourne
Other Locational descriptor (text)	547429 mE, 7587054 mN (MGA94 Zone 50) Lease No 148: 100,000 acres on the George River Now part of Warambie Station Longitude: 117.4561 Latitude: -20.9163

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
Sambell Family (Wade)	PO Box 386 Karratha WA 6714			
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.
In 1879: Pastoral lease 1422 and 1543				

LISTING AND ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	8676
State Register of Heritage Places:(Y/N)	No
Classified by the National Trust (Y/N)	No
Register of the National Estate (Y/N)	No
Local Town Planning Scheme (Y/N)	Yes
Management Category	B

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	1867 (date property was stocked)
Construction Date (2)	
Site Type (Place Type)	Historic Site
Use(s) of Place	
<i>Original</i>	FARMING\PASTORAL: Homestead
<i>Present</i>	VACANTUNUSED : Vacant\Unused - Ruins
<i>Other</i>	CEMETERY/MONUMENT: Graves
Construction Materials:	
<i>Walls</i>	9. STONE 904 Local stone

<i>Roof</i>	
Condition	Poor - Ruin
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	Little
Physical Description	

The Mount Fisher homestead survives as a ruin. The stone walls survive to their full height in several rooms. In much of the homestead they are removed to the footings. According to local accounts, the builders of the highway may have removed stones from some walls.

The station homestead stood adjacent to a low stone outcrop, overlooking the river. It was located on the inland route north from Roebourne, being 24 miles from Roebourne and 5 miles from neighbouring Sherlock Station. The greater lease ran down the George River to the Indian Ocean.

There are several graves at the rear of the homestead site that remind of the hazards of frontier life. These are of James Fisher, founder of Mt Fisher Station, along with his brother George (Fanny Hancock's husband). James died on 7 February 1899, of pneumonia. Buried in the other grave is baby John Edward Hugh Seabrook, one year three months, died 22 June 1883 of whooping cough. John's mother tried to take him from Benmore Station (now part of Pyramid) to Roebourne, but he died at Mt Fisher.¹

History

Brothers George and James Fisher established Mt Fisher station. They arrived to take up their lease on the George River in 1867, having driven 2000 sheep overland the 1000 miles from Boayadine in the Beverley district. Many of the sheep survived.² The long journey saw conflict with Aboriginal people, somewhere near the Ashburton River. The route they followed had been established by E.T.Hooley.³

George's wife Fanny appears to have previously visited the Northwest as early as 1864, then aged 16 years old.⁴ She returned in 1869 to join Goerge at Mt Fisher – her sister was Emma Withnell (nee Hancock) at Mt Welcome Station. George and Fanny's three children died young or at birth. George was presumed deceased while returning to Cossack by sea when the *Rosette* sank. His estate was advertised in *The West Australian* Nov 18, 1879 and indicates the station was largely stocked with sheep (4600 in number).

The station remained in the hands of James Fisher. James married Eliza Strange who would survive her husband and sell off the station, after which it was variously owned by Sherlock and Warambie Stations. Eliza and James's daughter Daisy married Percy William Stove who would reside at Cooya Pooya Station.

It is likely that Aboriginal people were working on this station; the Chief Protector of Aborigines files suggest that this station was being recorded by that office until as late as 1901, indicating that Aboriginal people were present on the station.

The Ngarluma name of the station is recorded as Kurdipingurrana.⁵

Archaeology

There is some archaeological potential to reconstruct the spatial structure of the homestead precinct.

SIGNIFICANCE

Historic theme (s)

1.DEMOGRAPHIC SETTLEMENT & MOBILITY
107 Settlements

Statement of Significance:

The ruins and graves are a reminder of the hardship and harshness faced by the early settlers. The station involved many of the key colonial families in the Roebourne area, and while not as renowned

as the stations that carried on, the Mt Fisher station is a physical reminder of the very earliest phase of colonisation, adaptation, and the arrival of pastoralism before the pastoral domain shifted to larger properties in the 20th century. The establishment of the stock by overlanding heralded the beginnings of overland sheep droving for the Northwest being preferred over risky sea transport.

ASSOCIATIONS	
Architect/Designer (1)	
Architect/Designer (2)	
Other Associated Person(s)	Fisher and Strange family Hancock family William McKenzie Stove family Withnell family Hall family

OTHER	
References	
Karratha Library	

MHI 1996	Assessment undertaken, Place Name Record created
MHI Review 2012	Entry updated

¹ Weller, Helen, ed. *North of the 26th: A Collection of Writings, Paintings, Drawings and Photographs from the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne Regions*. East Perth: The Nine Club, 1979.

² Withnell Taylor, Nancy E. *A Saga of the North-West Yeera-Muk-a-Doo: The First Settlement of North-West Australia Told through the Withnell and Hancock Families 1861 to 1890*. Victoria Park, WA: Hesperian Press, 2002.

³ Sharp, Eloise I. *E. T. Hooley Pioneer Bushman*. Perth, WA: Published privately, 1985. In this account the number of sheep taken north by the Fishers is described as 6000.

⁴ Anna Vitenbergs, 'How NW pioneer women suffered', *Karratha Guardian*, Feb 3, 1993.

⁵ Hall, Harold Aubrey, and C.G. von Brandenstein. *A Partial Vocabulary of the Ngalooma Aboriginal Tribe* Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1971, p. 74.