Pioneer Woman

The Pioneer Woman wends her way to the port with her basket of produce from the family farm at the new settlement The Vasse. Word has spread that a ship is in port and she takes the opportunity to barter or sell her produce.

Life was difficult for these early settlers and every opportunity was taken to trade with the visiting ships.

Once the land owners began developing their holdings, planting vegetables and milking cows, they had a surplus of produce and bartering with the American Whalers that visited their shores was an outlet for these items.

Early exchanges of items with the American whalers and other ships that visited the port were potatoes, butter, cheese, meat, vegetables and firewood for oil, molasses, clothing, tobacco, spirits, soap, jewellery, saddlery, crockery and tinware.

Early pioneer women suffered many hardships. Georgiana Molloy’s first baby was born in a tent on the beach at Augusta and died nine days later. She suffered further heartache when her son drowned....

‘We have recently been overwhelmed with the most bitter loss of our darling infant and only son of 19 months by the aggravated death of drowning. Painful as it is to record, distance of place compels me.... Charlotte going to the well... pulled out that darling, precious child, lifeless, his flaxen curls all dripping, his little countenance so placid, he looked fast asleep but not dead; and we did not believe he really was so until some minutes after....’

“Busselton Outstation on the Vasse 1830 – 1850” (Rodger Jennings)

The sculpture celebrates these pioneer women who played a critical though perhaps understated role in the settlement. Apart from the traditional roles of Mother, carer and companion, they were business partners and actively involved with community matters.

This work depicts the woman in typical day-wear walking towards the ocean into an on-shore breeze.

Image & Sculpture by Greg James

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