Bonfoey, Clarissa “Clara” (1821–1856)

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Clarissa “Clara” Bonfoey was a close friend of and housekeeper for James and Ellen White for about eight years. After the death of her parents in 1849, she gave to James and Ellen White all of the furniture belonging to her family and moved in with them in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. Clarissa assisted in the housework and often took care of the
children during the Whites’ frequent traveling. The Whites considered her as part of their own family. Although she often experienced health challenges, she was known as “a woman of remarkable faith.” Ministers often prayed for her physical and emotional healing.

In 1855 Clarissa moved with the Whites to Battle Creek. According to James White, Clarissa had suffered greatly from a disease of the lungs. Later a tumor developed, which seems to have caused her premature death on May 30, 1856, at the age of 35. Clarissa’s death was a great loss for the White family. “Poor Clara, yet not poor, sleeps in the cold grave; her loss we deeply feel; it can never be made up; it was so sudden,” Ellen White wrote. Clarissa Bonfoey is buried in the White family plot in Oak Hill Cemetery, in Battle Creek, Michigan.

SOURCES


White, James. “Clarissa M. Bonfoey obituary.” ARH, June 12, 1856.

NOTES