
The clash between Aboriginal people and settlers in Van Diemen's Land – the experience of George Meredith of Great Swan Port

MALCOLM WARD

GEORGE Meredith settled in the Great Swan Port area in 1821 and has been cited as one settler who had numerous clashes with Aboriginal people over the following decade.¹ By chiefly calling on his own and other contemporary writings, this paper will examine Meredith's encounters with Aboriginal people and will attempt to determine his opinions towards them as the attacks grew more frequent throughout the decade. The attacks instigated by Meredith's men on Aboriginal people are unfortunately largely undocumented and need to be taken as undoubtedly occurring in the background throughout this time.

In his landmark work of 1992, N.J.B. Plomley coined the expression 'Aboriginal / Settler Clash' in respect of the Indigenous people and European settlers in Van Diemen's Land.² He concluded that from 1803 to 1823, Aboriginal attacks on settlers were mainly retaliation for attacks and wrongdoings by the settlers. After that, attacks were more desperate, being a campaign to drive the settlers out of the land to regain Aborigines' traditional food sources and obtain food and goods from the settlers.³ Plomley and later authors documented individual incidents, sometimes noting that certain settlers suffered 'frequent' attacks, but no detailed study has focused on how an individual Van Diemen's Land settler fared and how, if at all, his attitude to the Indigenous people changed during that time. From the evidence of Meredith's private and public writings (including what was not written), it appears that he was relatively unconcerned about actual or prospective attacks by Aboriginal people on his farm – where his wife and family resided without him for long periods – until quite late in the



George Meredith by Thomas Bock, date unknown
(*East Coast Heritage Museum*)

1820s. This was through the period when violence by the Aboriginal people had escalated and the concerns in Hobart Town approached hysteria, at least in the press. During this time, Meredith was apparently more concerned by violence from bushrangers than by Aboriginal people. There is even some evidence of compassion by Meredith for Aboriginal people, although those particular writings need to be viewed through the lens of Meredith's on-going opposition to government policies. When Meredith's attitude changed in

1829, it did so swiftly to the extreme of canvassing 'annihilation' of the Indigenous people if other policies failed. Then, after the failure of the Black Line and his own Freycinet Line, Meredith suggested to the government, in as many words, that settlers be allowed to go out and kill Aboriginal people.

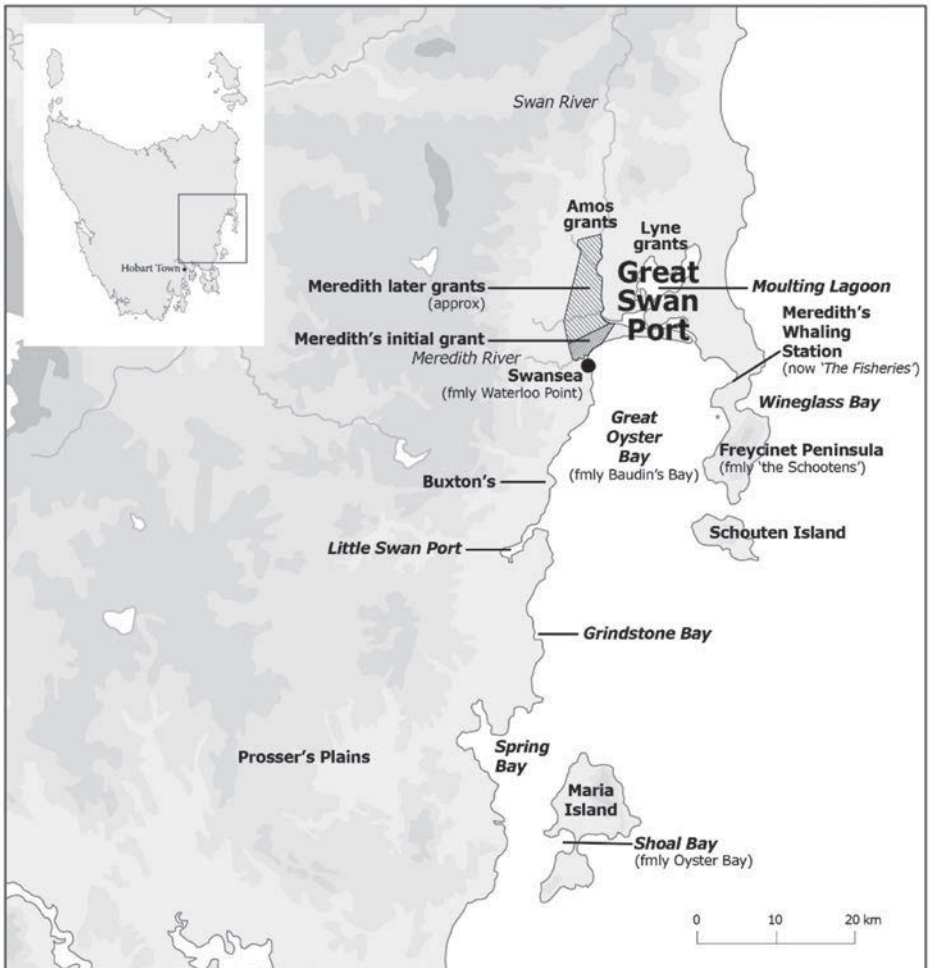
Meredith is better known as a long-term opponent of Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur. His antagonism began soon after Arthur's arrival in 1824, when the governor's tighter administrative practices impinged on Meredith's practices of land acquisition and his general conduct in the colony, which Lieutenant-Governor Sorell had tolerated. From there, Meredith became a vociferous critic of Arthur on issues such as freedom of the press and trial by jury. His early and continued hostility to Arthur lies in contrast with his attitude to Aboriginal people, which appears to have only turned after many years of adverse contact.

George Meredith's early years and establishment at Great Swan Port

George Meredith was born in Birmingham, England, in 1778, the son of a successful attorney.⁴ He joined the Marines aged eighteen and saw service as a lieutenant during the Napoleonic wars, leaving the service in 1806. Meredith married Sarah Hicks of Berkshire in 1805 and farmed there initially before buying a property, Rhyndaston, Wales, in about 1811. That venture proved unsuccessful and in 1819 Meredith began preparations for his family, then including five children, to emigrate to Van Diemen's Land. His wife died in early 1820 and later that year he married the family nurse, Mary Evans, with whom he had commenced an affair some years before. This had produced a son named Henry.

The Meredith family sailed from London in November 1820 on the *Emerald*, a vessel Meredith chartered with Joseph Archer, later of Panshanger in the central north of the colony.⁵ After arriving in Hobart Town in March 1821, Meredith was encouraged by Lieutenant-Governor Sorell to settle in the Great Swan Port area of eastern Van Diemen's Land, rather than the south-west, which was his original intention.⁶ Meredith immediately took a party via whaleboat to the head of Baudin's Bay (today known as Great Oyster Bay), found where he would make his claim to a land grant and returned to Hobart.⁷ Sorell issued him a location order, but unfortunately chose to give an identical order to another settler, William Talbot, on the same day.⁸ The land became the subject of a long dispute that was not settled until after the arrival of George Arthur as lieutenant-governor in

Locations associated with George Meredith in the 1820s and 1830s (*Di Bricknell*)



1824.⁹ Meredith was able to keep his land and over the following few years he expanded his landholdings to about 10,000 acres (4,000 hectares). He also began a shore-based whale fishery in 1824 at Great Oyster Bay which proved successful.¹⁰

Early European encounters with Aboriginal people in eastern Van Diemen's Land

One of the earliest accounts of Europeans closely encountering Tasmanian Aboriginal people along the east coast of Van Diemen's Land was given by George Mortimer, who was on board the brig *Mercury* when it anchored off Maria Island in July 1789. This contact was described in terms of mutual curiosity.¹¹ In 1802, French explorer François Peron, under the command of Nicolas Baudin, had several encounters with Aboriginal people, beginning with curious engagement and ending in some distrust and threatening behaviour by the Indigenous people, according to the Frenchman's account.¹²

In March 1805 Aboriginal people burned the hut of sealers at Oyster Bay, stole their provisions and destroyed two thousand skins (presumably seal skins) '[obtained] since they were on the island'.¹³ This is likely to have been Oyster Bay, at Maria Island (now known as Shoal Bay).

During his voyage around Van Diemen's Land in 1815–16, Captain James Kelly stayed with Aboriginal people in the Furneaux group of islands off the colony's north-east, with friendly encounters and the exchange of seal and kangaroo meat. During their passage down the east coast near Maria Island, however, Kelly and his crew were in fear of being attacked by the Indigenous people, demonstrating perhaps that, even then, some of the Aboriginal people of the east coast were hostile to the Europeans.¹⁴

The first reported fatality in contact between Europeans and Aboriginal people anywhere in Tasmania occurred in 1772, when French explorer Marc-Joseph Marion du Fresne landed at Frederick Henry Bay, in the south-east. After what appears to have been a misunderstanding, the Aboriginal people attacked with spears and stones, and the French fired, killing at least one Aboriginal person.¹⁵ The first fatality of a European on the east coast occurred in 1818 at Grindstone Bay, between present-day Spring Bay and Great Swan Port, where John Kemp was found dead by his fellow sealers on their return after a day trip away.¹⁶ The provocation for this attack is not known, but east coast historian George Musgrave Parker noted that the sealers who worked the coast at this time were 'drawn in most cases from the lowest and most depraved classes'.¹⁷

After a man was speared in the Oyster Bay district in March 1819, the *Hobart Town Gazette* reported:

The tribe which frequents Oyster Bay should be particularly guarded against, as they seem to have such a strong and rooted animosity towards the white people. It is well known that some time before Kemp was killed, a native man was shot in the woods by some of the stockmen to the Eastward, and that the women have been also deprived of their children in that quarter.¹⁸

These early experiences would be reflected in the advice given to Meredith and others when they set out to settle in 1821.

Meredith and the Aboriginal people from 1821 to 1827

Having been steered by Sorell to settle on the east coast of the colony, Meredith wrote to his brother from Hobart Town expressing some apprehension about the local Aboriginal people: 'They are the most wretched of all Aborigines I have ever yet seen or heard of. Cowardly but treacherous I understand and several persons have been recently speared by them for want of due precaution'.¹⁹ Later, writing to Sorell, he re-iterated the initial stories told to him, writing of how settlers built their dwellings close together, 'both for the Sake of Society and mutual protection against the natives, who were represented as numerous and likely to give us Interruption on our first arrival'.²⁰

As it happened, in his diary entries for his first two visits to Great Swan Port in 1821, Meredith recorded only one encounter with Aboriginal people, on 2 November 1821:

took dinner and set off about 3 pm over the hills with my son, Mr. Amos [a fellow voyager and later neighbour] and a man to carry rug and tea kettle, etc – came up the middle of the Marsh at about four miles distance (having fallen in with two separate mobs of natives, who ran from their fires on our approach).²¹

In a letter to his family in England, Thomas Buxton, a settler to the south of Meredith, expressed similar sentiments to Meredith's initial ones. Buxton wrote in September 1821, not long after he arrived in the colony: 'Natives are very treacherous especially this tribe at our settlement'.²² He described how he had shot and wounded one of several Aboriginal people after a chance encounter and could have shot either of them dead but chose to let them run away. He went on to say: 'I am now so accustomed to the Natives

that one man only should never fear travelling from one side of the Island to the other’.

From these statements, it seems that in 1821, the reputation in Hobart Town of Aboriginal people in the central east of the colony was much worse than the initial reality found by the settlers, who experienced no overt threat there.

By early 1823, Meredith and his young family were in rudimentary huts on their land, north of present-day Swansea. Meredith was frequently in Hobart and wrote regularly to his wife. In March 1823, he described an encounter with Aboriginal women during a whaleboat trip south to Hobart, when the crew had to land and take shelter ashore after a storm:

and there we were honour^d by the visit of six Black Ladies to breakfast next morning who caught us craw fish and mutton fish, in abundance, in return for bread we gave them – you would be much amused to see them swim & dive although I do not think you w^d easily reconcile yourself to the open display they make of their charms. Poor things, they are innocent & unconscious of any impropriety or indelicacy. They were chiefly young & two or three well proportion^d & comparatively well-looking. So you see – had I fancied a Black wife I had both opportunity and choice.²³

In an unrelated aside later in the same letter, while directing his wife in respect of the farm management, he commented ‘The Natives I fear must now be dispursed [sic] whenever they make their appearances without stopping to shake the Ladies’. Although ‘dispersal’ later became a euphemism for the killing of Aboriginal people, it is unlikely that Meredith meant it in this way, as at this point he showed no indication of having that extreme position (and had no reason to) and even if he did, he likely would not have expressed such feelings with euphemisms in letters to his wife, who would not have understood them. So, after only a year or so on the land, Meredith had concluded that the Aboriginal people were some threat to his farming interests, but he was not advocating overt violence nor even cautioning his wife against them.

Adam Amos settled in the district to the north of Meredith. He became a district constable and maintained a diary. The encounters he recorded with Aboriginal people were probably typical of the time:

May 3^d [1823]. I was reddy to go off to meet the prisoners at my Brothers when my House was surrounded by natives. One a woman came to the door I made signes for hir to go away. She did and in a short time about six made their apearence amongst the brush

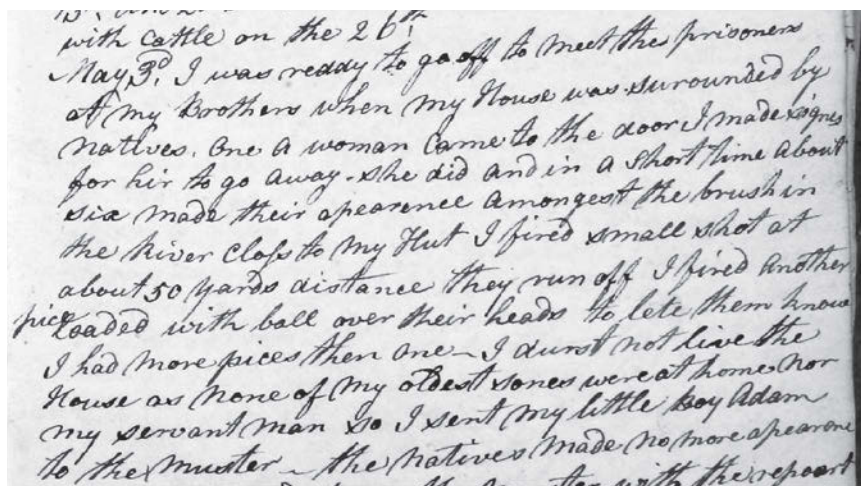
in the river clofs to my Hut I fired small shot at about 50 yards distance they run off I fired another pice loaded with ball over their heads to lete them know that I had more pices than one – I durst not live the House as none of my oldest sones were at home nor my servant man – so I sent my little boy Adam to the Muster – the natives made no more apearence.²⁴

Amos clearly had no wish for Aboriginal people to be around his farm. He seems to have been more concerned with theft than violence, as he sent his son Adam, then aged about sixteen, alone through the bush to the muster.²⁵

The first reliably recorded incident of violence between Aboriginal people and Europeans after Europeans permanently settled in the Great Swan Port district occurred in November 1823. It involved one of George Meredith's men, William Holyoak (sometimes spelled Holyoak) and, like the previous European fatality, occurred at Grindstone Bay. Adam Amos recorded:

20th [November 1823]. I have heard that a large moab of natives has killed one of Mr Gatehouses men at Grindston Bay and allso William Holyoak a man belonging to Mr Meredith, who was on his way here from the Hospitall & wounded another who got from them and fled to Pitwater his master & Some of his men came after them to Mr Talbots where they found them last night & fired on them when they all scattered. A native of Sidney Muskety as he is called was with them & got off too who is a dangerous fellow as he is ackwainted with fire arms and has the natives at his command

Diary of Adam Amos, 3 May 1823, recording an encounter with Aboriginal people (Glamorgan Spring Bay Historical Society)



with cattle on the 26th
May 3rd. I was ready to go off to meet the prisoners
at my Brothers when my House was surrounded by
natives. One a woman came to the door I made signs
for her to go away. she did and in a short time about
six made their apearence amongst the brush in
the river clofs to my Hut I fired small shot at
about 50 yards distance they run off I fired another
pice loaded with ball over their heads to lete them know
I had more pices then one. I durst not live the
House as none of my oldest sones were at home nor
my servant man so I sent my little boy Adam
to the muster. the natives made no more apearence
the with the report

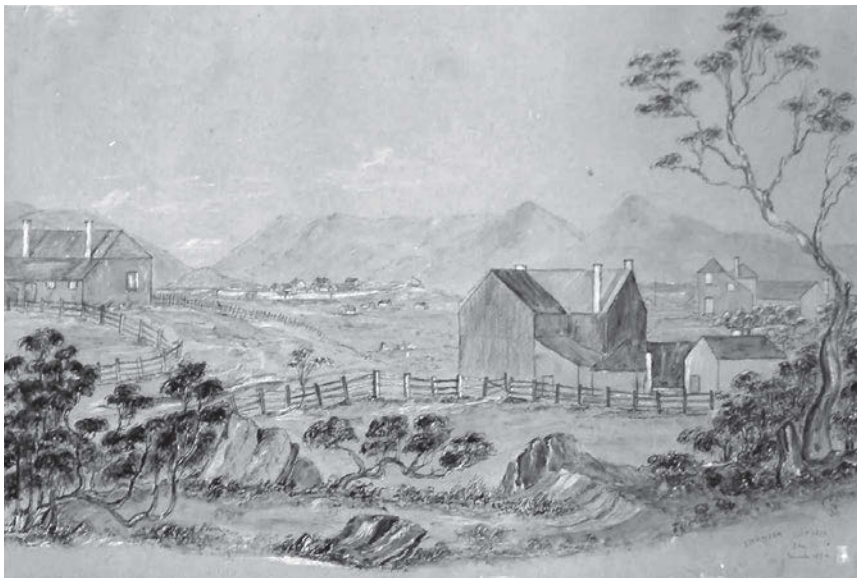
One of his wives stoped and went with Mr Gatehouse home to show where the dead boddys are hid²⁶

The above diary entry is cited by Ryan *et al* as evidence for a massacre of six Aboriginal people at the hands of ‘District Constable Adam Amos and party’.²⁷ Although the site and study are at a ‘preliminary’ stage, this ‘massacre’ data point appears to be erroneous. The person Amos identified as ‘Muskety’ was better known by the settlers as ‘Musquito’, who was indigenous to New South Wales.²⁸

In early July 1824, Robert Gay, a convict servant stockman working for Meredith, was killed by Aboriginal people near Moulting Lagoon.²⁹ Meredith wrote to Arthur immediately following this, but it is instructive that his foremost concern was about bushrangers. The fatality was a second concern:

So long as their [Aborigines’] wanton acts were confined to attacks upon my stock, although any loss both in cattle and sheep was stated to be considerable, I would not allow the offences to be visited personally upon their heads, but when I had one servant most dangerously wounded in the very act of doing them all the kindness in his power, and another barbarously murdered in cold blood, together with an associate ... and further depredations were committed upon the stock ... it seemed indispensable to keep them at a distance, otherwise neither life or property could be considered safe.

Drawing of Swansea 1852 by Fanny Meredith (*East Coast Heritage Museum*)



Our people naturally [look] up to their masters for protection and security against these treacherous attacks and on our part we can only refer our[selves] to the Colonial Government and await measures [as] may be deemed most fitting to meet all the circumstances of the case.³⁰

Clements noted that Adam Amos had recorded in his diary instances from 'as early as' late 1823 to mid-1824 of he or his sons going 'hunting the blacks', having quoted West in relation to settlers as 'game hunters' in the preceding sentence.³¹ This gives a somewhat jaundiced picture of Amos' attitude, as the settler appeared to have used 'hunt' in the sense of pursuit or looking for, rather than blood sport. Amos was a district constable all through the period cited by Clements and was required to pursue and arrest anyone who committed a serious offence. For instance, from Clements' list of incidents, on 12 July 1824 Amos wrote: 'This night my son James returned from hunting the blacks without ever seeing them' (James was an assistant district constable). This was just a few days after the murder of Robert Gay, noted above. Several entries cited by Clements seem to have concerned Amos frightening the Aboriginal people off by firing his gun (as he did in the diary entry cited above) after a threatened fire attack (14 and 15 December 1823), also a 'hunt' to scare off (11 January 1824) and regional reconnaissance without any sightings (25, 28, 29 March 1824).³²

The growing interaction and hostilities between the settlers and the 'Oyster Bay tribe' to 1826 has been traced by Calder in detail.³³ The rise of such incidents occurred just after a significant rise in the number of attacks by escaped convicts, or bushrangers, on the east coast and this might have led to an atmosphere of siege by the Merediths.³⁴ Matthew Brady and James McCabe's gang raided Meredith's house in early October 1825, which apparently prompted Meredith to contemplate moving at least his residence from the area.³⁵

Robert McNally was part of the military contingent sent to the Great Swan Port area to pursue the bushrangers, prior to the attack on Meredith. He recorded in a journal the contingent's journey from Little Swan Port in the south, to the Swan River, north of Meredith's property, in late September 1825. The journal was probably compiled later from memory or notes, as the geography is sometimes difficult to recognise, but apparently somewhere in the area he observed: 'through this wild track of Desert the only Guide we had to Direct our steps was the Sculls of the natives nailed on Stumps of trees to Direct the weary [or wary] traveller the way'.³⁶ Use of the word 'desert' is puzzling, as the area, by the coastline, was hilly and would have been well wooded at the time. Given that the journal was

probably compiled later, and coupled with some of the other geographical oddities, it is possible that the grisly markers were not in the Little Swan Port–Swan River area.

There were relatively few reported incidents involving Aboriginal people in the district in 1825, but things escalated during 1826 and 1827, with a number of attacks and deaths of settlers at the hands of the Mairremmener (and doubtless of the latter at the hands of the settlers, but the Aborigines were not in a position to record any such attacks so the number is unknown).³⁷ Late in 1826 William Lyne and his family settled at Apsley, near Moulting Lagoon to the east of the Amos farms (see map).³⁸ His son, John Lyne, wrote in his *Reminiscences* how from the beginning of their settlement, the family, when outside, was always armed against attacks by either bushrangers or Aboriginal people and they mortared the outside of their hut against fire attack. One of Lyne's young sisters was struck unconscious in 1828.³⁹ He thought, as did others, that the attacks were provoked by the settlers:

The Blacks at this time from 1826 to 1831 were never known to give quarter – no doubt they had much reason to be exasperated for it was said that before the arrival of Governor Arthur in 1824 the convicts stock keepers were known to entice the black gins away from tribes and if their husbands went to seek them they the men were often shot [*sic*].⁴⁰

Yet in late 1826, Meredith was still apparently more concerned with bushrangers than Aboriginal people. In a letter to his wife in October that year, Meredith cautioned her against bushrangers, warning her not to go any distance from the house unarmed; he said he was urging the government to offer emancipation to any convict who 'takes a bushranger with arms in his hand'.⁴¹ He did not mention danger from Aboriginal people. This is in contrast with the near hysterical attitude of the Hobart Town press at the time, with the *Colonial Times* editorialising:

We make no pompous display of Philanthropy — we say unequivocally, SELF DEFENCE IS THE FIRST LAW OF NATURE. THE GOVERNMENT MUST REMOVE THE NATIVES — IF NOT, THEY WILL BE HUNTED DOWN LIKE WILD BEASTS, AND DESTROYED!⁴²

Other settlers also saw the relative dangers between bushrangers and Aboriginal people differently from Meredith. William Bryan, a settler in the north, wrote to the local authorities in 1827 about the terror of the

Aboriginal people burning his house: ‘the fury of these Black Monsters exceeded anything I have yet encountered’.⁴³

In the face of rising public concern about the violence between settlers and Aboriginal people, Lieutenant-Governor Arthur wrote a dispatch to Secretary of State Goderich in January 1828 noting the rising violence and advising that, while some steps to halt it had been made, further measures might be necessary. Arthur clearly blamed the settlers for both the origin and the escalation of the attacks by Aboriginal people and added that ‘much ought be endured in return, before the Blacks are treated as an open and accredited enemy by the Government’.⁴⁴

Reported violent conflict in the Great Swan Port district peaked during 1828. Calder named nine locations on the east coast where settlers’ farms were attacked that year.⁴⁵ He also wrote that ‘George Meredith, in particular, was subject to repeated attacks’. Surprisingly, Meredith’s letters to his wife and others during 1827–28 make no mention of Aboriginal people, but attacks on and involving his convict servants and employees certainly did occur.⁴⁶ Perhaps he was trying not to alarm his wife, but she surely would have heard stories about the attacks on settlers in the area.

Meredith’s lack of concern in his surviving personal and official writing about Aboriginal people at this time contrasted with what Clements found, which were exasperated settlers writing to government and privately about the depredations of the Aboriginal people in the rural areas.⁴⁷ We cannot know if Meredith was truly unconcerned, or whether he had concerns but was confident that his workers would ‘take care of things’. In the capital, newspapers were still calling for extreme measures, including ‘extermination’ as an option.⁴⁸

It is worth reflecting here on the actual intensity of the reported incidents of attacks by Aboriginal people on Meredith’s interests. Between 1821 and 1830, fourteen incidents involving Meredith’s farms or people were recorded.⁴⁹ The most in any year was four during 1828. Given Meredith’s extensive land-holdings of approximately 10,000 acres by about 1827, his land’s location relative to the annual migration paths of the Indigenous people, the supposed aggressiveness of the Oyster Bay tribe and the increasing arrival of settlers throughout the decade, it might be argued that the number of reported attacks on Meredith’s interests was relatively modest.

Arthur made what became known as his ‘Proclamation of the settled districts’ on 15 April 1828 following recommendations from his Executive Council.⁵⁰ In this, Arthur attempted to order that Aboriginal people would be restricted to outside some undefined ‘settled districts’ but might be

issued a 'passport' to traverse settled districts to the coast. Although it was largely ridiculed at the time, there was some precedent for this type of approach within the British Empire and John West had a favourable view of it.⁵¹

As the conflict continued, on 1 November 1828, soon after the brutal Gough murders near Oatlands, Arthur declared martial law over an area that Calder pointed out was effectively only that of the Mairremmener Oyster Bay and Big River tribes.⁵² Armed civilian 'roving parties', in part manned by convicts, were authorised to go out and take Aboriginal people by force. In late July 1829 Jorgen Jorgenson led a party between Buxton's, at Little Swan Port, and Amos', north of Meredith's property (see map). Although the party heard of some recent attacks on settlers, they encountered no Aboriginal people.⁵³ By September, Arthur reported the situation to London in terms of 'warfare'.⁵⁴ Meredith was in the thick of it.

The Aborigines Committee and the period to October 1831

The next significant measure Arthur implemented was the establishment of a committee in November 1829 to report on the suitability of Bruny Island as a permanent settlement for Aboriginal people.⁵⁵ The committee was later charged with collecting information on the general state of affairs between the settlers and Aboriginal people and, amongst other things, to suggest ways to reconcile the two groups. It was led by Archdeacon William Broughton and became known as the Aborigines Committee.⁵⁶ Evidence was taken from sixteen individuals, mostly settlers on the land, but also Gilbert Robertson, Robert Knopwood and some merchants. The committee's report, with nine recommendations, was dated 19 March 1830.⁵⁷ Plomley referred to the report as a whitewash of the settlers and government and described those that gave evidence as 'extirpationists almost to a man'.⁵⁸ He gave no evidence for this contention and the minutes of evidence given to the committee do not support it.⁵⁹

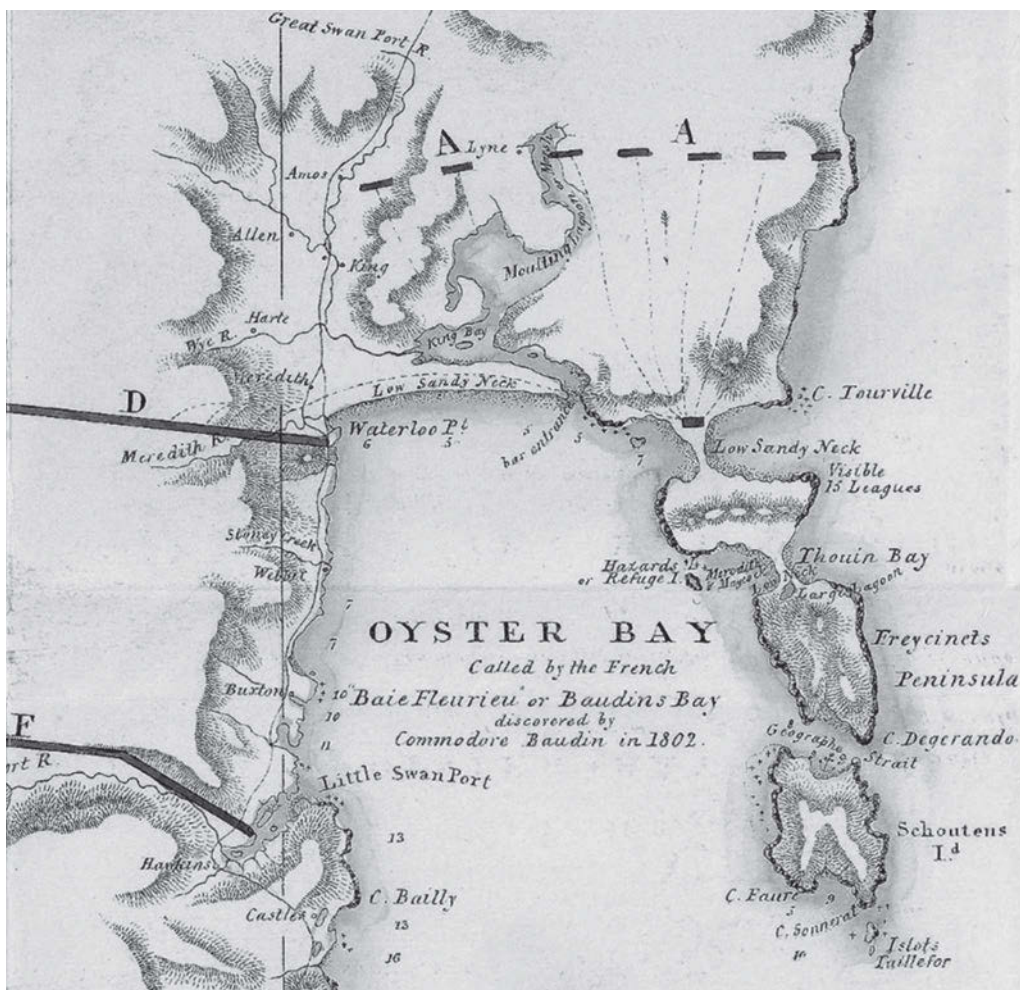
The committee sent out a questionnaire or 'queries' to 'Gentlemen of experience and long standing in the colony'.⁶⁰ George Meredith was one of fourteen respondents and his replies to the questions were dated 24 April 1830.⁶¹ Meredith blamed the local administration for failing to take measures to counter what he saw as the rising threat to his livelihood from the Aboriginal people (this criticism was entirely in character) and largely exonerated the settlers from blame. He saw nothing but hostility and threat from the Aboriginal people. As to what the solution might be, Meredith advocated 'Native Embassy' for the groups of Aboriginal people in the

north-west and on the Bass Strait islands who could understand some English and communicate to others what the government desired. If that failed, Meredith advocated that Aboriginal people should be captured with the assistance of tracking bloodhounds and if that failed, as a last resort, ‘annihilation’.

This type of answer might have been what Plomley had in mind when he said that those who gave evidence to the Aborigines Committee were ‘extirpationists almost to a man’ but, as Windshuttle concluded after his analysis of the answers from each respondent, Meredith’s was the most extreme of a range of views, many of which still urged conciliation.⁶² If nothing else, Meredith’s view can be described as typical Meredith, where any obstruction to his successful enterprise on the land was to be met with full force, be it in the courts, in the press, or, in the end, at the point of a gun.

While the Aborigines Committee was still deliberating, in January 1831 George Augustus Robinson led some Aboriginal people down the east coast of the colony. On 9 and 10 January they passed through Meredith’s land, and heard from William Lyne a story of cruelty inflicted on Aboriginal people by Meredith’s stock-keepers. Meredith’s son George visited Robinson, but Meredith himself did not, although he might have been away in Hobart at the time.⁶³ On a return trip in March, Robinson’s party received sixty and then two hundred pounds of meat from ‘George Meredith’ (assumed to be George senior), who might have appreciated what Robinson had set out to do.⁶⁴ Robinson makes no comment about Meredith in his journals at the time and Meredith does not mention Robinson in the six letters he wrote to his wife in the first half of 1831 (or indeed in any letter to her). Levy grouped Meredith with the ‘opposition’ against the Robinson ‘scheme’, but his evidence for this is weak.⁶⁵

Although the government reaction to the Aborigines Committee report was muted, with continuing attacks on settlers in the middle of the year, the press and settlers began calling for more strenuous action by the government. Calder reported fifty attacks between June and August 1830, including six murders of settlers.⁶⁶ Here, the Legislative Council would become a key driver of policy. Historian Peter Chapman wrote: ‘it is not fanciful to see the executive council becoming, during February to March 1831, an arena for the great race relations debate of early colonial Australia’.⁶⁷ In August 1830, the Executive Council concluded that ‘warfare’ by Aboriginal people was underway and that previous attempts to negotiate had failed. Members advised Arthur to instigate the action that later became known as the Black Line, or else a ‘war of extermination’ would ensue.⁶⁸



Extract from the 'Black Line field plan' of 1830 showing detail from Great Swan Port area

This apparently finally overcame Arthur's reticence to move with a heavy hand against the Aboriginal people. In Government Order 9, published 9 September 1830, Arthur launched the Black Line, where the military, supported by settler volunteers, would form lines to sweep across the south-eastern portion of the colony to capture the Aboriginal people and/or herd them into the Tasman Peninsula.⁶⁹ Government Order 11, 22 September 1830, gave more detail and at point eight directed:

Between the 7th and the 12th of October, Lieutenant Aubin will thoroughly examine the tier extending from the head of the Swan River, north, down to Spring Bay, the southern extremity

of his district, in which duty he will be aided, in addition to the military parties stationed at Spring Bay and Little Swan Port, by Captains Maclaine and Leard, Messrs. Meredith, Hawkins, Gatehouse, Buxton, Harte, Amos, Allen, King, Lyne, and all settlers in that district, and by Captain Glover and Lieutenant Steele, with whatever force can be collected at the Carlton and at Sorell by the police magistrate of that district.⁷⁰

Parker listed the local parties ‘as per ration book’, with George Meredith junior leading a party of ten men in the field operation.⁷¹ This is interesting, as it does not put Meredith senior personally on the line. He might have been there, or he might have ‘delegated’, but it is also conceivable that he resisted, given his opposition to anything to do with Arthur’s policies. If he did, his attitude would be in line with that of his friend and fellow government opponent Thomas Gregson, who, according to Bonwick, disapproved of aggression against the Indigenous people and thought that the latter were the original owners of the land and had been ‘usurped by the British crown’. Again, according to Bonwick, Gregson refused to allow his men to participate in the Black Line.⁷²

A public meeting was held in Hobart Town on 22 September 1830 to form a town guard to preserve the town peace while the military and able citizens participated in the Black Line. The opinions expressed in the meeting were harsh and absolute, as several quotations illustrate. Assistant Colonial Surgeon Dr Adam Turnbull was quoted as saying:

It has been said by Mr. Kemp, that to us only is this an exterminating state of warfare. But that does not alter the existing state of things. The war would be a war of extermination. It is so already, and a movement upon a large scale as at present proposed, is infinitely preferable to a lingering warfare ... The present plan will strike them with dismay – they will be either taken or destroyed, or driven into some of the recesses of the interior.⁷³

Solicitor-General Alfred Stephen, having emphasised that he was speaking as a private individual, not as a public officer, was reported as follows:

I say, sir, (Mr. Stephen here spoke with much animation), that you are bound upon every principle of justice and humanity, to protect this particular class of individuals, and if you cannot do so without extermination, then I say boldly and broadly exterminate!⁷⁴

The ‘class of individuals’ Stephen refers to is unclear – it may be the families of settlers, or their convict servants.

The Black Line effectively concluded by the end of November when the settlers were released from duty.⁷⁵ The exercise is usually regarded as a failure, with only two individuals captured. However, both Ryan and Calder have more recently looked at Arthur's *coup de main* in a more positive light in respect to outcomes, seeing some success in breaking the will of the Aboriginal people and advancing George Robinson's work in bringing them into managed locations.⁷⁶ Reynolds has made the same point.⁷⁷

There is no direct evidence of Meredith's attitude to the Black Line. He referred to it in a letter he wrote to Secretary of State Lord Glenelg in January 1836, which was an appeal to London to intercede on his behalf against the 'tyranny' he claimed Arthur was waging against him:

after the knowledge of my sentiments in reference to the now almost exterminated race of aboriginal natives of this island, and the lamentable policy adopted towards them – sentiments deliberately formed and conscientiously at variance with the tenor of those laudatory addresses obtained under the influence of official agency, upon the termination of that most extraordinary exhibition generally denominated “the Black Campaign” and since viewed with such a general reprobation from that time - the personal feelings of hostility towards me appeared to acquire additional strength in the breast of his Excellency.⁷⁸

This need not be taken at face value, as Meredith routinely placed himself at odds with anything the government attempted, although it would be consistent with the commentary above regarding his personal participation in the Black Line. A meeting of 'Landed proprietors and others', held at Waterloo Point (Swansea) in January 1831, sent an address of thanks to Lieutenant-Governor Arthur expressing gratitude for the Black Line and regretting they had not expressed their appreciation earlier. Most of the prominent settlers signed the address, but George Meredith did not, although his son, George junior, did.⁷⁹

In May 1831, at a public meeting in Hobart Town convened to air a number of grievances against the government, including government waste and taxation, interest rates and the absence of elected representation, Meredith moved a resolution blaming the government for the breakdown in relations between the races, 'no efficient measures having been timely adopted to conciliate or enlighten the Aborigines, or to prevent such excesses'.⁸⁰ Again, Meredith's prime objective was to attack the government, but his choice of issue was interesting and contrasted with the eleven other resolutions which chiefly concerned economic issues. Perhaps Meredith did feel some compassion about the issue.

Part of a letter from George Meredith to Arthur, as reprinted in the *Colonist*, 28 December 1832

After the completion of the Black Line, no incidents were reported in the Great Swan Port or adjacent east coast areas until October 1831.⁸¹ Then, on 13 October, Alexander Reid's hut was robbed by Aboriginal people. He reported this to District Constable Adam Amos and a search was undertaken, without success.⁸²

The Freycinet Line

A key event occurred on 21 October 1831 that led to the formation of what has been named the 'Freycinet Line'.⁸³ George Meredith wrote to Arthur reporting that 'a tribe' had re-appeared between his whale fishery and Schouten Passage, at the southern end of what is now known as the Freycinet Peninsula, but then generally known as 'the Shootens'.⁸⁴ Meredith's local whale fishery was at the location today known as The Fisheries, adjacent to the town of Coles Bay.

In his lengthy letter, Meredith explained the sequence of events, although his urgent message regarding assistance was mixed with criticisms of the local police magistrate at Waterloo Point, Francis Aubin. He stated that on Saturday, two days after the raid on Reid, he sent notice of it to Aubin, with a request that Aubin send a party to his fishery in preparation for the arrival of the Aboriginal people, as he anticipated. No one was sent, so Meredith dispatched his son, Charles, to the fishery to prepare a signal to advise if Aboriginal people had arrived. On the following Wednesday, a signal was received and a message sent to Aubin, but Aubin had left for

Great Swan Port, October 24, 1831.
Sir,—I did myself the honor to address to your Excellency, a letter dated last Friday night, and which, if due diligence were used in its transmission from station to station, would arrive in town in course of yesterday. By the post messenger of to-morrow, I shall dispatch the present, to make your Excellency acquainted with what has transpired in reference to the natives, and the exertions made by the residents of this district to capture or at least, to secure them within the Schouten Peninsular, until additional force arrives. And I should hope, it would prove gratifying to your Excellency, to witness such unequivocal display of spirit and energy, on the part of the population here, both free and bond, when any reasonable prospect offered of success attending their exertions. By accounts brought to me at noon this day, and confirmed by Mr. Adam Amos, jun. this evening, a line was formed when he left, of between seventy and eighty persons; and which in the course of to-morrow, will have increased upwards of one hundred; the private interests, and personal convenience of one and all, being made subservient to the great object in view, and although, I understand, a corporal only is with the few military there, and one prisoner constable with the civilians, the spirit of enterprize, and knowledge of this kind of service, evinced by those who take upon themselves the guidance of the parties employed, leave nothing to be wished for, but additional numbers to ensure success. It is impossible to ascertain the number of the natives enclosed; as, notwithstanding, they have passed, and re-passed within no great distance of the line; from bay to sea only two have been seen, and not more than twelve or fourteen footsteps have been counted; and I fear, from the fires seen along the hills, only part of the tribe are on the Schoutens; but be there many or few, they were safe within the line when the last express came away.

Richmond, leaving a sergeant in charge. The sergeant sent a small party, as did Meredith and Amos, each via boat. Charles Meredith reported that the sergeant's party had returned to Waterloo Point after only a day. Meredith sent notes to District Constable Amos and 'the person in charge' at Waterloo Point about the situation. Amos sent a party of fourteen, and Meredith reinforced his contingent. The letter requested urgent support for Arthur to supply an authorised force while the local settlers contained the Aboriginal people on the peninsula.⁸⁵ Note that Meredith was maintaining at least the pretence of wanting only government officials to directly confront the Aboriginal people; this attitude would shortly change.

Colonial Secretary Burnett wrote immediately to James Gordon, the police magistrate at Richmond, and also to Aubin at Waterloo Point, commanding them to act with 'utmost promptitude' and to use 'every possible exertion' using 'the Civil and Military force of your district' to capture the Aboriginal people reported by Meredith.⁸⁶

On 24 October Meredith reported to Arthur that between seventy and eighty people had formed a sentry line at the 'Schooten peninsula' and that up to one hundred would be there the following day. Apparently unable to help himself, Meredith included a sniping remark about the lack of military/police support and added:

Aware as I am, how ungraciously any services of mine, are likely to be viewed by your Excellency, I would have forborne taking the prominent part I have done in this affair – had there been any one else, on whom the duty could have effectually devolved, or had the occasion admitted of delay.⁸⁷

A final letter from Meredith, a few days later, reported the failure of the line in capturing or containing any Aboriginal people, with the latter having rushed through the line on the evening of 25 October, between two stations manned by the military, due to a 'culpable neglect of duty' by one or more of them. He questioned why more official resources were not on hand, and ended his letter:

I must beg with deference to submit, that the Local Government has too long delayed those energetic and efficient measures, which can alone be relied upon under existing circumstances; and, although the happy alternative is no longer an option, that of securing and removing the Aborigines without effusions of blood, their atrocities may be checked by a generally organized plan, and due encouragement held out to those, who from habit and experience are competent to the peculiar service required; and for which the

military are not calculated, otherwise, than as auxiliaries. Trusting to the importance of the subject, as a justification of this obtrusion of my unsolicited sentiment.⁸⁸

The inference is fairly clear – at the end of a long guerrilla-type campaign between Aboriginal people and settlers, and with the failure of both the Black Line and his own Freycinet Line, Meredith was suggesting that certain of the civilian population be authorised to hunt down and kill the Aboriginal people, with auxiliary support from the military. To this, Colonial Secretary Burnett merely replied:

With respect to your sentiments, that energetic and efficient measures, with respect to the Aborigines, have been too long delayed, I am directed to observe, that His Excellency is, not surprised, that on a subject which admits of much difference of opinion, you should not be altogether satisfied with the course which has been adopted by the Local Government.⁸⁹

In January 1832, George Augustus Robinson led 26 remaining members of the Oyster Bay tribe into Hobart Town.⁹⁰ With this, the threat to Meredith's occupation of land by Aboriginal people passed and the killing of them by Meredith's men, undocumented but undoubtedly occurring, also would have ceased.

The final chapter in the Meredith family's contact with Indigenous people was played out by his son, George junior, who had a falling-out with his father in 1832, probably over land. He left for Sydney and in about September 1833, sailed from there on the *Defiance*, intending to trade with sealers along the south coast of 'New Holland'. He was wrecked near Cape Howe but made his way to Kangaroo Island in early 1834, where he based himself with an Aboriginal 'wife', Sal.⁹¹

George Augustus Robinson recorded witnesses claiming that George Meredith junior stole Aboriginal women and traded them amongst the sealers along the South Australian and Victorian coasts.⁹² Robinson heard from 'Matilda' on 23 July 1836 that she was present when Meredith junior was killed by two Aboriginal youths; the date is unknown but was estimated by Plomley to be in 1835 or as late as April 1836.⁹³ Plomley commented:

George Meredith [junior] was speared by the natives on the coast of New Holland, no doubt in retaliation for the injuries he had done to them. This was a just retribution. Many aggressions had been committed by the Merediths on the natives at Oyster Bay.⁹⁴

Conclusions

The story of the conflict between Aboriginal people and European settlers in Tasmania is still emerging and continues with the handicap of the lack of documentation of a significant part of the hostilities – the violence perpetrated on the Indigenous people by the settlers, their stock-keepers and convict servants. This paper has been presented in an attempt to expand the literature and detail as regards one settler with a significant land position and who has been portrayed in some areas as having been consistently hostile to Aboriginal people.

George Meredith was an aggressive, self-important settler who not only resisted but fought back against anything or anyone he perceived to be against his interests. His visceral battles against William Talbot and Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur each lasted for years and did not take much to bring about. His final position in dealing with the Aboriginal people, that is, of ‘annihilation’ either by government policy or at the hands of settlers, could be regarded as in character. Yet the evidence, such as it is, suggests that this was a final, exasperated position of his, and not one he was quickly inclined to.

How much would Meredith have known about and encouraged violence by the settlers towards Aboriginal people, especially by their convicts, stock-keepers and shepherds? Although he spent long periods away from his farm, to suggest that he was ignorant of what was going on in the bush on his property is unthinkable. How much did he turn a blind eye or even encourage it? Had Meredith wished to directly order attacks on or killings



Creek Hut, attributed to Fanny Meredith. Creek Hut was occupied by Meredith c1822-27 (*East Coast Heritage Museum*)

of Aboriginal people prior to 1830, he would have had little hesitation in putting it in at least his private letters to his wife, amongst his other instructions on how to manage the farm and the workers in his absence. He would likely have also called for it in public or in letters to the government, as others were doing, yet we have no record of this, despite knowing that he did not shy away from the soapbox and demanding what he wanted.

George Meredith was an atypical colonial settler on the land in many respects. From his writings and pronouncements, it appears that he also did not fit the stereotype of the settler who wanted the Aboriginal people cleared of his land and wantonly murdered as a matter of course – that is, until 1831 after several years of escalating violence and his personal effort of ‘containment’ failed. Then, in typical fashion, he set his view forthrightly and with an extreme objective.

MALCOLM WARD was co-author of *Houses & Estates of Old Glamorgan*, which described George Meredith’s land activities. This paper is taken from his PhD thesis on Meredith. Malcolm thanks his supervisors, Stefan Petrow and Peter Chapman, for helpful discussions, Pamela Sharpe for alerting him to the McNally manuscript and the editor of THRA P&P for suggestions on the text.

ENDNOTES

- 1 For example, G. Calder, *Levéé, line and martial Law: A history of the dispossession of the Mairremener people of Van Diemen’s Land 1803–1832*, Launceston, 2010, p. 174.
- 2 N.J.B. Plomley, *The Aboriginal/settler clash in Van Diemen’s Land 1803–1831*, Hobart, 1992.
- 3 N.J.B. Plomley, *The Aboriginal/settler clash in Van Diemen’s Land 1803–1831*, Hobart, 1992, pp. 22–23.
- 4 M. Ward, ‘Striving for Independence: George Meredith’s Early Life and Campaigns in Van Diemen’s Land’, *Tasmanian Historical Studies*, in prep. See also D. Hodgson, ‘Meredith, George (1777–1856)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/meredith-george-2449/text3269>, accessed online 20 November 2018. Hodgson has the wrong date for Meredith’s birth – it was 1778, evidenced by a baptism record – see Ward, in prep.
- 5 C. Meredith, ‘Hon. Chas. Meredith’, B736, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales (hereafter ML, SLNSW), p. 3. For Archer, see N. Chick, *The Archer Heritage*, Longford, 2016, p. 107.
- 6 Meredith to his brother John, 2 April 1821, *Meredith Family Papers*, RS34/2, University of Tasmania, Special & Rare Collections (hereafter UTAS S&R).
- 7 G. Meredith, [Diary of George Meredith during two voyages to Oyster Bay in 1821], *Meredith Family Papers*, RS34/1, UTAS S&R.
- 8 Bathurst to Arthur, [recounting the history of the Meredith/Talbot land dispute], 29 November 1823, F. Watson (ed.), ‘Historical Records of Australia’, Series III, Despatches and Papers Relating to the Settlement of the States, Vol. IV Tasmania, 1821–December 1825, Sydney, 1821, p. 96. Hereafter this series will be cited in the format HRA [series], Vol. [number], [page number(s)], regardless of general editor.
- 9 Arthur to Bathurst, 10 August 1824, HRA III, Vol. IV, p. 160.
- 10 M. Nash, *The Bay Whalers Tasmania’s shore-based whaling industry*, Woden, 2003, p. 43.
- 11 G. Mortimer, *Observations and remarks made during a voyage to the islands of Teneriffe, Amsterdam, Maria’s Islands near Van Diemen’s Land ...*, London, 1791, pp. 17–21.

- 12 F. Peron, *A voyage of discovery to the southern hemisphere*, London, 1809, pp. 216–23; N.J.B. Plomley, *The Baudin expedition and the Tasmanian Aborigines* 1802, Hobart, 1983.
- 13 M. Nichols (ed.), *The Diary of the Reverend Robert Knopwood 1803–1808*, Hobart, 1977, p. 78. Plomley, *Aboriginal/Settler Clash* at p. 13 interpreted 'skins' to be kangaroo skins.
- 14 J Kelly, 'First discovery of Port Davey and Macquarie Harbour', RS99/1, UTAS S&R.
- 15 H.L. Roth, (trans.), *Crozet's voyage to Tasmania, New Zealand and the Ladrone Islands, and the Philippines in the years 1771–1772*, London, 1891, p. 20.
- 16 *Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter*, 28 November 1818.
- 17 G.M. Parker, 'Some records of Great Swan Port and the municipality of Glamorgan 1820–1920', unpublished manuscript, 1950, *Parker Papers*, P1/6, UTAS S&R, p. F2.
- 18 *Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter*, 20 March 1819.
- 19 Meredith to his brother John, 2 April 1821, *Meredith Family Papers*, RS34/2, UTAS S&R.
- 20 Meredith to Sorell, 2 December 1822, HRA III, Vol. IV, p. 446.
- 21 G. Meredith, [Diary of George Meredith during two voyages to Oyster Bay in 1821], *Meredith Family Papers*, RS34/1, UTAS S&R.
- 22 Buxton to his family, 21 September 1821, MS902, National Library of Australia.
- 23 Meredith to his wife Mary, 2 March 1823, Box ED1, 339gg, Glamorgan Spring Bay Historical Society (hereafter GSBHS).
- 24 A. Amos, 'Diary 1822–1825', 689A, GSBHS.
- 25 For the Amos children: A.G. Amos and P. Benson Walker, *Family history of Adam Amos of "Glen Gala" and William Lyne of "Apsley"*, Hobart, 1963, p. 3.
- 26 Amos, 'Diary', GSBHS.
- 27 L. Ryan, J. Richards, W. Pascoe, J. Debenham, R. Anders, M. Brown, R. Smith, D. Price and J. Newley 'Colonial Frontier Massacres in Central and Eastern Australia 1788–1872, v2.0', Newcastle, University of Newcastle, 2017, <https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/detail.php?r=476> accessed 5 January 2019, checked 3 June 2019.
- 28 For an account of Musquito's life see M. Powell, *Musquito brutality and exile: Aboriginal resistance in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, Hobart, 2016.
- 29 Amos, 'Diary', entries for 6–10 July 1824, GSBHS.
- 30 Meredith to Arthur, 26 July 1824, Colonial Secretary's Office, *General correspondence*, CSO1/1/15, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office (hereafter TAHO).
- 31 N. Clements, *Black War: Fear, sex and resistance in Tasmania*, St Lucia, 2014, p. 50.
- 32 Amos, 'Diary', dates indicated, GSBHS.
- 33 Calder, *Levee, line*, pp. 160–81.
- 34 See H. Melville, *The history of Van Diemen's Land from the year 1824 to 1835 inclusive*, G Mackaness, (ed.), Sydney, 1965, pp. 48–55.
- 35 *Hobart Town Gazette*, 15 October 1825; Meredith to Arthur, 9 October 1825, Colonial Secretary's Office, *General correspondence*, CSO1/1/896/19043, TAHO; Kerr to Meredith, 25 October 1825, *Papers and correspondence with variety of people, including Joseph Archer, Adam Amos, George Frankland, Lieut. Colonel Sorell, T.D. Lord and others. 150 letters. 1801, 15 May 1819–30, Apr 1847, 12 Jan 1852*, NS123/1/4, TAHO.
- 36 Entry for 24 September 1825, National Library of Ireland Mss. 13,264, 'Diary of an Unidentified Soldier 1815–36', Robert McNally Memoir Project in progress by Professor Pamela Sharpe.
- 37 Calder, *Levee, line*, pp. 167–168.
- 38 L. Nyman, *The Lyne family history*, Hobart, 1976, pp. 12–13.
- 39 J. Lyne, *Reminiscences of John Lyne MHA*, NS854/1/1, TAHO, p. 21.
- 40 Lyne, p. 22.
- 41 Meredith to his wife Mary, 10 October 1826, *Meredith letters to his wife*, NS123/1/1 #25, TAHO.
- 42 *Colonial Times*, 1 December 1826.
- 43 Bryan to Smith, Colonial Secretary's Office, *General correspondence*, CSO1/1/316, p. 58.
- 44 Arthur to Goderich, 10 January 1828, HRA III, Vol. VII, pp. 26–29.
- 45 Calder, *Levee, line*, p. 174.
- 46 For the letters, see NS123/1/1 and NS123/1/4, TAHO.
- 47 Clements, *Black War*, p. 43.
- 48 *Colonial Advocate*, 1 May 1828.
- 49 Plomley, *Aboriginal / settler clash*, pp. 58–96, also Meredith letters and diaries in the collections of GSBHS, UTAS S&R and TAHO, plus newspaper reports at the time.
- 50 Executive Council, *Minutes of Proceedings of the Executive Council*, 10 April 1828, EC4/1/1, TAHO, pp. 302–303; Proclamation, 15 April 1828, in House of Commons, *Copies of all correspondence between Lieutenant Governor Arthur and His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies on the subject of the military operations lately carried out on against the aboriginal inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land*, London, 1831, pp. 5–7.
- 51 Melville, *History of Van Diemen's Land*, at p. 73 wrote 'a greater piece of absurdity can scarcely be imagined'; J. Fox, *Bound by every tie of duty: John Lewes Pedder, Chief Justice of Van Diemen's Land*, Melbourne, 2018, p. 219.
- 52 The declaration is reproduced as an enclosure in Arthur to Murray, 4 November 1828, HRA III, Vol. VII, pp. 625–35.

- 53 For a contemporary account, see N.J.B. Plomley, (ed.), *Jorgen Jorgenson and the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land*, Sandy Bay, 1991, pp. 81–96.
- 54 Arthur to Murray, 12 September 1829, HRA III, Vol. VIII, p. 607.
- 55 *Reading Robinson companion essays to Friendly Mission*, A. Johnston and M. Rolls, (eds.), Hobart, 2008, pp. 45–57.
- 56 Note 140, HRA III, Vol. IX, p. 764 and note 225, p. 819.
- 57 Original at: DL SPENCER 429, ML, SLNSW and reproduced, with minutes of evidence, in: House of Commons, *Copies of all correspondence*, pp. 35–55.
- 58 N.J.B. Plomley, (ed.), *Friendly mission*, 2nd ed., Launceston, 2008, p. 117.
- 59 Committee for the care and treatment of the captured Aborigines, *Minutes, 17 February 1830 to 16 September 1833*, CBE1/1/1, reel Z2744, TAHO.
- 60 Appendix 14, HRA III, Vol. IX, p. 1053.
- 61 Meredith, answers to questionnaire, Colonial Secretary's Office, *General correspondence*, CSO1/1/323, TAHO, pp. 355–58.
- 62 K. Windshuttle, *The fabrication of Aboriginal history, Vol. one, Van Diemen's Land 1803–1847*, Sydney, 2002, pp. 326–50.
- 63 Plomley, *Friendly mission*, pp. 344–345. Meredith wrote to his wife from Hobart on 24 January 1831: *Meredith letters to his wife*, NS123/1/1 #70, TAHO.
- 64 Plomley, *Friendly mission*, pp. 353, 355.
- 65 M.C.I. Levy, *Governor George Arthur*, Melbourne, 1953, p. 119.
- 66 Calder, *Levéé, line*, pp. 180–81.
- 67 P. Chapman, *Introduction*, HRA III, Vol. X, p. xxviii.
- 68 Executive Council, *Minutes of Proceedings of the Executive Council*, 27 August 1830, EC4/1/1, TAHO, p. 570.
- 69 Enclosure number 4 in House of Commons, *Copies of all correspondence*, pp. 64–66.
- 70 Enclosure number 5 in House of Commons, *Copies of all correspondence*, pp. 66–70.
- 71 Parker, 'Some records of Great Swan Port', p. F23.
- 72 J. Bonwick, *The Lost Tasmanian Race*, London, 1884, p. 87.
- 73 *Colonial Times*, 24 September 1830.
- 74 *Colonial Times*, 24 September 1830.
- 75 Government Order 13 of 26 November 1830, described in Calder, *Levéé, line*, p. 186.
- 76 L. Ryan, 'The Black Line in Van Diemen's Land: success or failure?', *Journal of Australian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (2013), pp. 13–14; Calder, *Levéé, Line*, pp. 187–89.
- 77 H. Reynolds, *Fate of a free people*, revised edition, Camberwell, 2004, pp. 51–52.
- 78 Meredith to Glenelg, 16 January 1836, *Papers of Sir George Arthur*, Vol. 47, *Case of G Meredith* 1824–35, ZA2207, ML, SLNSW.
- 79 'Address of the landed Proprietors and others of the District of Great Swan Port', *Papers of Sir George Arthur*, Vol. 28, *Aborigines*, ZA2188, ML, SLNSW. An original draft of the meeting requisition and the petition is: G.F. Story, 'Petition request regarding the capture of Aborigines', C7/58, UTAS S&R.
- 80 *Hobart Town Courier*, 28 May 1831.
- 81 Compilation in Plomley, *Aboriginal / settler clash*, pp. 96–99.
- 82 Examination of Alexander Reid, Colonial Secretary's Office, *General Correspondence*, CSO1/1/316/7578, TAHO, pp. 990–91.
- 83 E. Stoddart, *The Freycinet line*, 1831, Coles Bay, 2003; Calder, *Levéé, line*, p. 192, Clements, *Black War*, p. 166. Ryan, *Black Line* at pp. 13–14, called it the 'Third Line'.
- 84 Meredith to Arthur, 21 October 1831, with two 'notes', Colonial Secretary's Office, *General Correspondence*, CSO1/1/316/7578, TAHO, pp. 1001–1; *The Colonist*, 28 December 1832.
- 85 Meredith to Arthur, 21 October 1831, Colonial Secretary's Office, *General Correspondence*, CSO1/1/316/7578, TAHO, pp. 1001–1014. Additional information is found in a letter by Story to Arthur, 25 October 1831, *fc Aborigines* 39, 111B, GSBHS.
- 86 Burnett to Gordon and Aubin, Colonial Secretary's Office, *Letterbooks of Correspondence Addressed to District Police Magistrates*, CSO41/1/2, TAHO, pp. 85–86.
- 87 Meredith to Arthur, 24 October 1831, reprinted in *The Colonist*, 28 December 1832.
- 88 Meredith to Arthur, 27 October 1831, reprinted in *The Colonist*, 28 December 1832, pp. 2–3. This letter does not appear in Colonial Secretary's Office, *General Correspondence*, CSO1/1/316/7578, TAHO, with the related correspondence.
- 89 Burnett to Meredith, 3 November 1831, reprinted in *The Colonist*, 28 December 1832, p. 3. This letter also does not appear in CSO1/1/316/7578, TAHO with the related correspondence.
- 90 *Hobart Town Courier*, 7 January 1832 and 14 January 1832.
- 91 *Sydney Herald*, 30 September 1833; J. Rintoul, *Esperance yesterday and today*, Perth, 1964, p. 13; *Perth Gazette*, 3 October 1835.
- 92 N.J.B. Plomley, *Weep in silence*, Hobart, 1987, pp. 353, 366, 402, 405, 414–415, 670–671, 677; N.J.B. Plomley, and K. Henley, 'The sealers of Bass Strait and Cape Barren Island community', *THRAPP*, Vol. 37, No. 2–3 (June 1990), p. 90.
- 93 Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, pp. 366, 964.
- 94 Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, p. 353.