List of multiple killings of Aborigines in Tasmania:

1804-1835

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Introduction

Tasmania (known as Van Diemen’s Land until 1855) was occupied for at least 30,000 years by a hunter-gatherer people, the Tasmanian Aborigines, whose population in 1803 was estimated at 7,000 (Lourandos 1997:244; Calder 1875:17). Contrary to a long and widely held belief that they were a stone age people who were destined to die out as a result of 10,000 years of isolation from the Australian mainland, more recent research indicates that they were a dynamic people who not only reshaped their culture and society during the Holocene, but were increasing in population at British colonisation in 1803. (Lourandos 1997:281) By 1835 only one family remained in Tasmania. The vast majority had been killed, or had died from introduced disease, or had been forcibly removed from their homeland. The only survivors were those who escaped government control - in a sealing community on the Bass Strait islands.

1803-1821: British colonisation of Tasmania

**1803: Informal colonisation** commenced when small groups of British men employed in the sealing industry on the Bass Strait islands, initiated seasonal contact with Aboriginal groups along Tasmania’s northern coastline. They traded seal carcasses and dogs in exchange for Aboriginal women for sexual and economic purposes. Sporadic conflict over women took place but few records exist of the details. By 1821 a permanent community of Aboriginal women, British men and their children had emerged on the Bass Strait Islands, forming the basis of the modern Aboriginal community today (Ryan 1996:66-72).

**1803-1804: Formal colonisation** began when the governor of the British colony of New South Wales established military outposts at the River Derwent in southern Tasmania and on the Tamar River in the north, in a bid to prevent the French from laying claim to the island. These outposts, consisting of military personnel, convicts and free settlers, gradually evolved into small agricultural communities around Hobart in the south and Launceston in the north. They were characterised by a break down in law and order enabling some convicts to escape into the bush; a shortage of fresh meat; and an imbalance between the sexes with one white woman to four white men.

**1804-1820: Conflict with the Aborigines** over the exploitation of their food resources began at once and although rarely reported, continued sporadically until 1820 and included mass killings of Aborigines, and the kidnapping of Aboriginal women and children.

Settlement map 1803-1816 1804, May 3: Risdon, River Derwent. A large group of Aborigines, men, women and children, suddenly appeared late morning on top of a hill behind the Risdon outpost, on a kangaroo drive. Misunderstanding their intentions, the officer in charge ordered two detachments of military to fire on the Aborigines in two separate engagements in which at least two Aborigines were killed. Then in a third engagement, another officer ordered of a small cannon loaded with grape and canister shot, to be fired at the Aborigines. They “dispersed” and, were chased “some distance up the valley” where “more were wounded.”

In their reports of the affray, the officers said that between 500 and 600 Aborigines engaged in a “premeditated” attack on the outpost and that in a defensive response, at least two or three Aborigines were killed and others wounded and an Aboriginal boy aged about 3 years, was orphaned.

Twenty six years later, a witness to the affray testified that about 300 Aborigines appeared over the hill and were surprised to see the area occupied by “strangers”/Europeans; they did not attack any colonist and
carried waddies for hunting rather than spears for fighting; and that the entire affray lasted for three hours in which “a great many” Aborigines were killed. A government official who visited the site a week later, testified that “five or six” Aborigines were killed. Another government official testified that about “four or five hundred Natives attacked... suddenly and unprovokedly, who were then fired on; no previous violence had been offered to them; [and that ] 40 or 50 natives were killed.”


**1804-1806: Tamar River.** Unknown number of Aborigines killed by military forces.

** (Ryan, 1996:77)

**1807-1808: Southern interior.** Two bushrangers, Lemon and Brown, were reported to have tortured and killed five Aborigines, two males and three females.

** (Fels, 1982:61).

**1809: Northern and Southern interior.** In a report to the governor of New South Wales, a government official noted the “considerable loss of life among the natives” from conflict with kangaroo hunters.

** (Oxley, 1809)

**1810: Southern Tasmania.** According to a Government Notice, bushrangers George Getley and William Russell, were said to have murdered and tortured many blacks and were themselves killed by them.


**1813: Southern Interior.** A Government Notice condemned the practice of killing Aborigines and kidnapping their children.

** (Shaw, 1971:36)

**1815, November: Oyster Bay East Coast.** After the destruction of 930 sheep by Aborigines, James Hobbs, a government official, testified in 1830, that a detachment of the 48th Regiment the next day shot 22 Aborigines. In 1852 the historian John West said 17 were killed.


** (Hobart Town Gazette 1816: August 31; 1817: March 29, October 25, and December 13; 1818: November 14; Watson, 1914:284)

**1817, March: Hobart.** When visiting missionary, Rowland Hassall, asked: “Why are there no natives seen in the town?” the answer given was - “We shoot them whenever we find them...”

* (Rowland Hassall Papers, ML, 1819: March 17)

**1819, March 18: Tea Tree Brush, Eastern tiers.** Stockkeepers shoot Aborigines following conflict over cattle on kangaroo hunting grounds.

* (Plomley 1991:93-94)

**1820: Agricultural economy.** The colonists occupied about 15% of the land between Hobart and Launceston, producing grain for export and running cattle for local meat consumption (Rimmer, 1969:327-351; Ryan, 1996:81). With the major causes of conflict overcome, Aborigines and colonists appeared to have reached mutual coexistence. At least four tribes developed reciprocal relationships with
settlers and stock-keepers about the seasonal exchange of women and the use of land in return for food (Ryan, 1996:73-82).

**1821-1830: Pastoral expansion**

Settlement map 1817-1830 Van Diemen’s Land was opened up for pastoral settlement to free settlers with capital. The colonial population dramatically increased from 7,185 in 1821 to 24,279 in 1830 (Rimmer, 1969:349; Hartwell, 1954:118). 6,000 free settlers took up land grants along rivers on the Eastern Midland Plain between Hobart and Launceston and along the Meander River west from Launceston. Supported by at least 5,000 convict stockkeepers and shepherds, they established sheep runs to produce fine wool for the textile mills in northern England. The entire area became known as the “Settled Districts” A further 60,000 hectares were granted to the Van Diemen’s Land Company in the north-west. The colony was transformed into a rapidly expanding wool export economy of nearly one million sheep, occupying about 30% of the island (Hartwell, 1954:118; Ryan, 1996:83-85). This area also contained five Aboriginal tribes and at least one other in the north-west, with a combined population in 1823 estimated at about 2,000.

**1823-1826: In the summer of 1823-1824**, stock-keepers broke reciprocal arrangements over the exchange of Aboriginal women and the use of food resources. Aboriginal men restored their lost prestige by killing stock-keepers and shepherds and their sheep and cattle. In response the government placed the Aborigines within the jurisdiction of British law, so they could be arrested and charged with murder. Four Aborigines were hanged for these offences. The settlers and stock-keepers however took the law into their own hands and organised the multiple killing of Aborigines, confident that they would not be charged, let alone convicted or hanged for their actions. Few incidents were recorded (Ryan, 1996:88). Mass killings map 1823-1826

1823, November 15: Sally Peak, East Coast. A group of Aborigines near Grindstone Bay confronted four stockkeepers about their abduction of Aboriginal women. The Aborigines killed two stockkeepers and wounded another, the fourth man ran to his master’s house to raise the alarm. The incident created widespread panic and was reported in great detail in the local press. Two Aborigines were convicted of murder and hanged in February 1825. But the reprisal killings that followed the original incident were not made public for 30 years, when historian James Bonwick interviewed James Gumm, the stockman who raised the alarm. He told Bonwick that a party of thirty colonists - comprising constables, soldiers, and neighbours, the master of one of slain stockkeepers, and the informant - set off in bloody revenge. They heard that a large group of the Aborigines were camped for the night in the gully by Sally Peak, ten kilometres from Bushy Plains, on the border of Prosser’s Plains. The stockman told Bonwick: “They proceeded stealthily as they neared the spot; and, agreeing upon a signal, moved quietly in couples, until they had surrounded the sleepers. The whistle of the leader was sounded, and volley after volley of ball cartridge was poured in upon the dark groups around the little camp-fires. The number slain was considerable.”

** (Hobart Town Gazette December 3, 1823; Ryan, 1996:86-88; Bonwick, 1870:99)

1825, December: Dairy Plains, Meander River. John Cupit, a servant of William Stocker, alleged that he had been speared by Aborigines from Quamby Bluff. He and a “half-caste” woman, Dolly Dalrymple said they ‘fought off’ the attackers. The incident was reported in the Colonial Times on January 6, 1826. Further details were told to the government agent, G.A. Robinson, by a stockkeeper in August 1830 and match the information in a report of incidents in the area completed by the police magistrate in August 1831. Jorgen Jorgenson also recorded this incident in a manuscript he completed in 1837 and published in 1991. He claimed that Dalrymple killed 14 Aborigines, using a double-barrelled shot gun and that the surveyor, J.H. Wedge, was said to have seen 16 bodies. While Wedge’s journal confirms that he was in the area in late
December 1825 there are no recorded entries for this period. Historian Shayne Breen believes that this incident took place in 1827, at the height of conflict between Aborigines and stockkeepers in this area and that Cupit had shot Aborigines before.


1826, March 14: Great Swanport, East Coast. Following the alleged killing by Aborigines of a servant of settler Buxton, at Oyster Bay, the local magistrate recorded that a party went out after them and one Aborigine was wounded. A few years later Buxton’s neighbour, Dr Story interviewed Buxton’s daughter about the incident and sent her account to historian James Bonwick. She said that the party killed several Aborigines at their camp that night. It is possible that this incident took place in 1827.

** (AOT CSO 1/316/7578/1: 840, 17/1/31); Bonwick 1870:117)

1826, November 29: Government Notice. Magistrates authorised to use force against the Aborigines. Following the alleged killing of 18 colonists by Aborigines in ten separate hit-and-run incidents in the Settled Districts, the government authorised the police magistrates to treat them as “open enemies” when they committed such acts and to send out military detachments, assisted by armed settlers and their servants, in “active pursuit” (Shaw 1971a: 20-21). This measure was considered by the press as a declaration of war against the Aborigines (Ryan 1996: 92). The ensuing conflict would later be known as the “Black War”.

1826, December-1828, April:
The reports of 61 colonists killed by Aborigines in this period are found in 44 inquests located in the official archives. In each case it was made to appear that the Aborigines were the aggressors. No inquest was ever conducted into the death of an Aboriginal person. The evidence for an estimated 260 Aborigines killed in 21 separate incidents is found in reports in the local press, in settler memoirs, in the journals of government agent G.A. Robinson, in evidence by settlers to a government inquiry in 1830, in oral accounts of incidents collected by 19th century historians John West and James Bonwick and in accounts collected by local historians in the 20th century. These reports indicate that the colonists were more often the aggressors. While most colonists were killed in ones and twos in their stock huts in daylight, most Aborigines were killed in groups of five or more at night in the mountains on the eastern and western borders of the Settled Districts or on Van Diemen’s Land Company lands in north-western Tasmania. Most reports of multiple killings of Aborigines were vigorously denied at the time. The estimated number of recorded deaths on both sides in this period suggests an Aboriginal/colonial death ratio of nearly 5:1. Mass killings map 1826-1828

1826, December: Paterson’s Plains near Launceston. In the late 1840s, the historian John West interviewed settlers about a visit to Launceston by 200 Aborigines in December 1826. He recorded that: ‘When crossing Paterson’s Plains they were wantonly fired on by the whites, and in their return some of their women were treated with indescribable brutality. When they reached the Lake River, two sawyers, who had never before suffered molestation, were wounded with their spears.’ *(Shaw, 1971b:269)

1826, December 9: Bank Head Farm, headwaters of Sorell Rivulet, Pittwater. When a mob of Aborigines were seen in the Pittwater area, the district constable, Alexander Laing and four soldiers of the 40th regiment went in pursuit and captured ten, including their leader, Kickertenerpoller. This incident was reported by the local magistrate James Gordon to the Colonial Secretary in Hobart later that day and then reported in two Hobart newspapers a week later. In March 1830, district constable Gilbert Robertson, in testimony to the Aborigines Committee, said that “14 of the Natives” had been killed in this incident. He said that the Aborigines “had got upon a hill, and threw stones down upon them; the police expended all their ammunition, and being afraid to run away, at length charged with the bayonet, and the Natives fled.”
One hundred and twenty years later, a local historian, Ray Bridges, said that Laing and his men “chased the Aborigines up the Sorell Valley” where they “destroyed them.”

** (Gordon to Co.Sec. AOT CSO, 1/331/7578/14:194-5; Colonial Times 1826: December 15; Hobart Town Gazette 1826: December 16; Shaw 1971a: 49; Bridges 1948)

1827, April 12: Elizabeth River, Eastern Midland Plain. On May 5 1827, the Hobart Town Gazette reported that three weeks earlier, Thomas Rawling and Edward Green, servants of settler Walter Davidson on the Elizabeth River, had been killed by Aborigines: “Several persons assisted by a small party of soldiers made immediate pursuit.” A week later the Colonial Times reported that: “...in the affray not less than 30 of the blacks were shot dead; and that such was the powerful strength of the tribe, that the assistance of the Military was called to the spot where the skirmish took place, in the rear of Mr David Murray’s farm, at the Elizabeth River.” News of the affray aroused widespread interest, because in the same issue of the Colonial Times another settler denied the incident by claiming there was no pitched battle and he could find no Aboriginal bodies when he visited the site the next day. However another settler later recorded the incident in his memoirs: “Having seen their fires in a gully near the River Macquarie, some score of armed men, Constables, Soldiers and Civilians, some Prisoners (convicts) or assigned Servants, who fell in with the Natives when they was going to their Breakfast. They fired volley after volley in among the Blackfellows, they reported killing some two score.....” There seems to be confusion about whether the incident took place at the Macquarie River or the Elizabeth River. However Hugh Murray’s land grant was located between the two rivers.

** (Hobart Town Gazette May 5, 1827; Colonial Times May 11, 1827; George 2002:13)

1827, late June: Western Marshes/Quamby’s Bluff. The deaths of six stockkeepers, including William Knight, were reported in four separate incidents with Aborigines between 23 and 30 June 1827. Two different accounts of the reprisal killings appeared in the same issue of the Colonial Times. The first account stated that: “The Military instantly pursued the blacks - brought home numerous trophies, such as spears, waddies, tomahawks, muskets, blankets - killed upwards of 30 dogs, and as the report says, nearly as many natives, but this is not a positive fact.” The second account stated that: “The people over the second Western Tier have killed an immense quantity of blacks this last week, in consequence of their having murdered Mr Simpson’s stockkeeper, they were surrounded whilst sitting around their fires when the soldiers and others fired at them about 30 yards distant. They report there must have been about 60 of them killed and wounded.” The official report of this incident however, refrained from mentioning the killing of any Aboriginal person at all. When the government agent, G.A. Robinson, travelled through the area in September 1830, a stockkeeper told him that William Knight was known to “kill Aborigines for sport.” However local historian Shayne Breen believes that the accounts in the Colonial Times, relate to two separate incidents.

** (Colonial Times July 6, 1827; AOT CSO 1/316/7578/1: 15-45; Plomley, 1966:219; Breen, 2006:pers comm.)

1827, November: Western Marshes. When Aborigines were alleged to have killed three shepherds and slaughtered 100 sheep in this area, according to the newspaper, the Tasmanian: “two parties of military were despatched, in order to join the Field Police in putting a stop to these outrages; and we trust his Excellency will follow up this matter with such measures as will entirely prevent any future occurrences of a similar nature.” In January 1828, when the Land Commissioners arrived in the area one of them noted in his journal at the junction of Brumby Creek and Lake River that: “mysterious Murders have also been committed in this recess, and have hitherto remained undetected.”

* (Tasmanian 1827: November 16; McKay 1962:74)

1827, November 17: Eastern Marshes. In this incident, reported in the Hobart Town Courier, it was stated that: “Field police fell in with 150 Natives who attacked them with Stones, one of which struck Rogers a blow on the head. The Field Police expended 17 Rounds of ball cartridges and killed two of the
dogs, but are not certain whether any of the natives were hurt, on fixing their bayonets and charging, the natives retreated.”
* (Hobart Town Courier 1827: November 24)

1827, Undated: Western Marshes. Travelling through this area in September 1830, government agent G.A. Robinson was told by a stockkeeper that: “Lyons and some others on horseback, who were in quest of cattle, fell in with a tribe of natives and drove them into a small lagoon and shot several, and from there they drove them to the foot of Ritchie’s Sugarloaf and shot all the others except an old man and a woman who begged for mercy and were suffered to go away. At the Long Swamp, he said, several were shot by Murray or Murphy and two others; he said it was cruel thing for them in this case and they ought to have been punished.” The stockkeeper also told him that at Gibson’s stock hut the Aborigines had tried to spear a man who then sought assistance from other stockkeepers who surrounded an Aboriginal camp at night and shot nine of them. Robinson was also informed by the surveyor of the Van Diemen’s Land Company of an incident at “The Retreat”, a cattle run on the Meander River, where stockkeeper Paddy Heagon “shot nineteen of the western natives with a swivel gun charged with nails; and that a native named Quamby had disputed the land occupied by the whites and that he had successfully driven them off, but he was afterwards killed with others.”
** (Plomley, 1966:197-8, 218)

1827, December: Meander River, Ritchie’s Hut. According to a historian of the Van Diemen’s Land Company, a group of its employees, taking 11 pairs of oxen from Launceston to Circular Head, were attacked by a “strong party of Natives who were however ‘severely handled’.”
* (Lennox 1990:170)

1828, January: Cape Grim. North West Tasmania. Richard Frederick, master of the Van Diemen’s Land Company sloop, Fanny, told Mrs Hare, wife of the captain of the Caroline, then in port at the headquarters of the Van Diemen’s Land Company at Circular Head, that he, his crew and four shepherds had surprised a party of Aborigines at Cape Grim, killing 12 before retreating to their ship. Mrs Hare recorded the incident in her dairy which was published a century later. The manager of the Company in a report to his superiors in London admitted to the attack but claimed there were no casualties because “the guns mis-fired.”
** (Lee 1927:41; AOT VDL 5/1 No.2, 14/1/28)

1828, February: Cape Grim. Four shepherds employed by the Van Diemen’s Land Company, Charles Chamberlain, John Weavis, William Gunshannon and Richard Nicholson, crept up on a group of Aborigines mutton-birding and shot 30 dead and then threw their bodies to the rocks below. The incident was reported to the lieutenant-governor in Hobart in November 1829 and he ordered his agent, G.A. Robinson to conduct an investigation during his visit to the area between June and September 1830. Robinson interviewed two of the four perpetrators who confirmed the number killed and the location of the incident but denied that more than one woman had been shot. He also interviewed an Aboriginal woman witness, who confirmed the number killed but insisted that many women were shot. However, the manager of the Company, in a despatch to his superiors in London, reported that only six Aborigines were killed and several wounded and then revised down the number killed to three.
*** (AOT CSO 1/333/7578/18:116-117; Plomley, 1966:175,181; AOT VDL 5/1:104-105)

1828, March 19: Tamar River. In reprisal for killing a stockkeeper in this area, the Hobart Town Courier reported that: “a party of volunteers came up with murderers at Bullock Hunting Ground, where 4 men, 9 women and a child of the Black people were killed.”
** (Hobart Town Courier 1828: March 22)

1828, March: Macquarie River -Eastern Midland Plain - Ross. After Aborigines killed three stockkeepers and a settler in three separate incidents in this area, the Hobart Town Courier reported that:
List of multiple killings of Aborigines in Tasmania: 1804-1835

“(s)everal parties went after them. One party overtook them and killed five.”
* * (Hobart Town Courier 1828:March 22)

1828, March: Jordan Lagoon. In two separate incidents in this area, Aborigines were alleged to have killed two convicts and a settler. Their deaths were reported by a settler to the Colonial Secretary in Hobart. When government agent, G.A Robinson travelled the area in November 1831, he was told by another settler, that in reprisal, stockkeepers “killed seventeen natives; that they had first killed seven and they then followed them to the lagoon and killed ten more. The natives could not get away.” The historian James Bonwick relates that when the Presbyterian clergyman, John Dunmore Lang, visited the area in 1841: “A spot was pointed out....where seventeen ...had been shot in cold blood. They had been bathing in the heat of a summer’s day, in the deep pool of a river, in a sequestered and romantic glen, when they were suddenly surprised by a party of armed colonists who had scoured the passes, and I believe not one was left to tell the tale.”
** (AOT CSO 1/323/7578/6; Plomley 1966:503; Bonwick, 1870:67)

1828, April: Elizabeth River. Eastern Tiers. Henry Beames, stock-keeper to settler, William Robertson was alleged to have been killed by Aborigines. The magistrate in the area, James Simpson, ordered a party of stockkeepers, soldiers and field police to pursue the Aborigines. In his report to the Colonial Secretary a few days later he said that: “it is believed that 17 Aborigines were slaughtered.” This incident was later raised at the Aborigines Committee in March 1830 by district constable Gilbert Robertson who testified that he heard that 70 Aborigines were killed and that two guides who were with the soldiers should be questioned. Two other settlers, in evidence to the same committee, confirmed the incident but disputed the number killed. One said that “two parties fired upon the Natives and killed them by a cross-fire; but that some of them ran off.” The other settler said that the soldiers “had been out for a long time and had done nothing.” The two guides were never questioned about this incident. More than twenty years later, the magistrate James Simpson, recalled this incident to historian James Bonwick. He said that the soldiers “shot indiscriminately at the group” and “that no Government inquiry was made into the well-known circumstances.”
** (AOT CSO 1/316/7578/1:127; Shaw, 1971: 48-49; Bonwick, 1870:62)

1828, April 15: Proclamation. Van Diemen’s Land was officially divided into the Settled and the Unsettled Districts. After more than a year of open conflict with the Aborigines, the government issued a Proclamation ordering the Aborigines out of the Settled Districts entirely. It established a chain of military posts along “the confines of the settled districts” and posted 68 extra soldiers with orders to warn off the Aborigines and to capture those who attempted unauthorised entry (Shaw 1971:22-26). By then over 100 soldiers were on duty in the Settled Districts supported by about 20 field police.

1828, April- October: At first the measures appeared to work, for few Aborigines were seen in the Settled Districts during the winter of 1828. But in the spring, Aborigines were alleged to have killed 13 colonists in 11 separate incidents, including a daring attack near Oatlands in which they were alleged to have killed the wife of a settler, her daughter and servant and severely wounded two other daughters. While this incident was widely believed to have been in reprisal for the mutilation and killing of two Aboriginal women, it was also the trigger for further action by the colonial government (Hobart Town Courier 1828: October 18, November 1 and 8; Shaw 1971:285).

1828, November 1: Martial Law proclaimed in the Settled Districts. This measure authorised the military to shoot on sight any Aboriginal person found in the Settled Districts. (Ryan, 1996:99) The government gave substance to the measures by ordering small parties of eight to ten soldiers from the military outposts to provision themselves for 14 to 16 days at a time and to actively search for the Aborigines in the Settled Districts with a view to their capture (Shaw, 1971:26). By March 1829, nearly 200 armed men in 23 separate parties scoured the Settled Districts with orders to capture Aborigines or to
shoot them (Shaw 1971:30-33). In February, 1830, the government introduced a bounty of five pounds for every adult Aborigine captured and two pounds for every child (Ryan, 1996:102). Mass killings map 1828-1830

1828, November-1830, October: There is evidence to estimate that in this period, at least 135 Aborigines were killed in 29 incidents, in which 109 died in at least 10 multiple killings. In the same period it is estimated that 75 colonists were killed by Aborigines in 53 incidents with an estimated Aboriginal/colonial death ratio of nearly 2:1. The fact that fewer Aborigines appear to have been killed in this period, suggests either that few Aborigines remained in the Settled Districts or that information about multiple killings was covered up.

1828, December 6: Tooms Lake, in mountains in Eastern Tasmania. An armed party of 9 soldiers, two constables, and a guide, surrounded an Aboriginal camp at day break. The guide, John Danvers, reported to the police magistrate at Oatlands: “One of them getting up from a small fire to a large one, discovered us and gave the alarm to the rest, and the whole of them jumped (sic) up immediately and attempted to take up their spears in defence, and seeing that, we immediately fired and repeated it because we saw they were on the defensive part, they were about twenty in number and several of whom were killed, two only were, unfortunately taken alive.” The Hobart Town Courier also reported the incident: “The party of the 40th regiment which was led into the bush by John Danvers and William Holmes, is returned, bringing with them a black woman and her boy, the only prisoners made in the attack upon the Aborigines at the Great (Tooms) Lake at the source of the Macquarie River. Ten of the natives were killed on the spot and the rest fled.”

*** (AOT CSO 1/320/7578/5: 322; Hobart Town Courier 1828: December 13)

1829, January: St Paul’s River, East Coast. A report in the Launceston Advertiser stated that: “Nine were killed and three were taken, near St Paul’s River.”

** (Launceston Advertiser 1829: February 9)

1829, January-March: East Coast. In 1830, a settler, Robert Ayton, wrote to the colonial secretary about another incident at this time. “On this occasion not less than sixteen of them were massacred and gathered into heaps and buried.”

* (AOT CSO 1/320/7578/ 5: 152-4)

1829, March: Richmond, Coal River. A report in the Hobart Town Courier stated that: “One black native was brought in on Friday being one of a party of six, the five others were shot in the pursuit.”

** (Hobart Town Courier 1829: March 7)

1829, March 13-17: North Esk River, near Launceston. A report in the Colonial Times noted that three colonists, Mary Mellor, James Hales and Thomas Johnson were speared and killed by Aborigines and two other stockmen were reported missing, believed killed. “(S)ome of the Aborigines were pursued and six Aborigines were killed - 4 men, a woman & child.”

** (Colonial Times 1829: March 20 and 27)

1829, June: Pittwater. Following a series of raids by 15-20 Aborigines on huts for food in which they killed two stockkeepers and wounded at least three others, a party pursued them, and returned with missing booty. The magistrate reported that “particular object of this non-commissioned officer [was] to capture ....without loss of life, but as they fled on the approach of the Party, I am [sorry ] to state that it is supposed eight or ten of the natives were severely wounded.”

** AOT CSO 1/316/7578/1:281,832; AOT CSO 1/321/7578/5, 1829: 16 June; Hobart Town Courier 1829: June 13 and 20)
1829, September 1: *East of Ben Lomond*. John Batman, the leader of a government roving party, made a dawn attack on an Aboriginal camp, numbering 60 or 70 men, women and children. In his report of the incident to the police magistrate at Oatlands, Batman estimated that 15 Aborigines died of wounds, and that he executed two other wounded prisoners.

*** (Campbell, 1987:31-2)

1829, October: *Clyde and Ouse River*. After a series of Aboriginal attacks on shepherds’ huts and the killing of seven colonists, “without warning an expedition was fitted out in the night and a terrible slaughter took place.”

* (Bonwick, 1870:66)

1829: *Clyde River*. In December 1835, Tongerlongter, an Aboriginal chief of the Oyster Bay tribe, told government agent, G.A. Robinson that in the neighbourhood of the Den Hill, his group of Aborigines came across two men cutting wood. “The men were frightened and run away. At night they came back with plenty of white men (it was moonlight), and they looked and saw our fires. Then they shot at us, shot my arm, killed two men and three women. The women they beat on the head and killed them.”

** (Plomley, 1987:325)

1830, March 10: *Clyde River*. In a report to the police magistrate at Oatlands, the leader of one roving party said that the leader of another, “fired at a party of natives. He had no recourse left but to fire at them and by the traces of plenty of blood some of them were wounded if not mortally.”

** (AOT CSO 1/316/7578/1: 189)

1830, August 22-27: *Clyde River*. A report in the *Colonial Times* said that the stockkeepers and servants of settler Captain Woods had killed several Aborigines and captured Petelega a “chief”. When government agent G.A. Robinson visited the area in November 1831, he was informed that the servants of settler, H.M. Howells “had shot several natives. Mr Sinnott said he saw two men and one woman laying on a hill that had been shot.”

** (*Colonial Times* 1830: September 4 and October 16; Plomley 1966:506)

1830, October 1: *‘Black Line’*. Martial law extended across the entire island in preparation for a ‘levee en masse’ against the Aborigines

1830, October 7-November 30: The Black Line was a human chain of about 2,000 armed men comprising 500 troops, 700 settlers and 800 convicts and former convicts, that swept through the Settled Districts, from north to south, over five weeks, in the expectation of capturing Aborigines from four tribes. Records indicate that two Aborigines were killed and two others captured, leading the press to declare the Line a failure. But it did succeed in driving out the Aborigines from the Settled Districts.

1830, December-1835, February: Government agent G.A. Robinson captured about 50 Aborigines who had fled the Settled Districts, and about 200 other Aborigines from other tribes in other parts of Tasmania for deportation to Flinders Island in Bass Strait. Many died between capture and deportation (Ryan, 1996:169). In February 1835, G.A. Robinson reported to the Colonial Secretary that “the entire aboriginal population are now removed” to exile at the Aboriginal Establishment on Flinders Island in Bass Strait (Plomley,1966:926). Another Aboriginal family was captured in 1842 (Ryan, 1996:197-199).

**Conclusion**
List of multiple killings of Aborigines in Tasmania: 1804-1835

The war on the pastoral frontier in Tasmania had terrifying consequences for the Tasmanian Aborigines. At the outset, in 1823, an estimated 2,000 Aborigines were in the war zone. By 1831, an estimated 448 at least, had been killed by the colonists, or 22% of the population, and that an estimated 413 had lost their lives in 27 known multiple killings of five or more.

The practice of multiple killings, matches the evidence from the pastoral frontier in the colony of Victoria between 1835 and 1859 and in the Gulf Country in Northern Australia between 1872 and 1900 (Clark, 1995; Broome, 2005; Roberts, 2005). In Victoria, it has been estimated that 10% of the Aboriginal population were directly killed by the colonists, mostly in multiple killings (Broome, 2005:80-81). So in Tasmania, more Aborigines were killed in a shorter period, than perhaps in any other part of Australia.

However, there was also a high loss of life among the colonists on the Tasmanian pastoral frontier. It has recently been estimated that at least 250 colonists were killed by Aborigines in at least 113 separate incidents where between one and two colonists were killed and two incidents where four colonists were killed (Ryan, 2006; Plomley, 1992:58-100). This makes an Aboriginal/colonial death ratio of less than 2:1, far lower than the nearby colony of Victoria where in the period 1835 to 1859, the death ratio is estimated at 12:1 (Broome, 2005:80-81).

The major difference between Tasmania and pastoral frontiers in other parts of Australia is that the combatants on both sides lost their lives in great numbers. The Black War in Tasmania was a mighty struggle for possession of the country. The Aborigines lost the war, with a huge loss of life. The survivors were deported from their country.

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*Tasmanian* 1827: November 16