



DRAFT HISTORY REPORT

Mumirimina People of the Lower Jordan Valley

PROPOSED CONTENTS

1. The people; pre-invasion, contact and post contact p2-12
2. Lifestyle, geography and environment
3. Impact of colonization on area
4. Connection of today's Aborigines with the area and place: physical, cultural and physical
5. Implications for Aboriginal people of development

Aboriginal language words

Where possible, names of people and places are shown in *palawa kani* spelling. This is an alphabet devised specifically to show the original sounds of Tasmanian Aboriginal language, rather than the recordings made by scribes of many nationalities who tried to capture unfamiliar Aboriginal sounds in their own European – mostly English - spellings. For instance, Mumirimina is the *palawa kani* spelling of the word which G A Robins on attempted to transcribe as “Moomairremene”.

palawa kani spellings are followed by their pronunciations shown in smaller font inside brackets.

palawa kani names for people and tribes begin with a capital letter (Mumirimina; Tukulunginta), but the names of places and geographical features have no initial capital letter (kotalayna).

The people of the Jordan River Valley – the Oyster Bay tribe

kutalayna (Say: ku tah lie nah) is the Aboriginal name of the Jordan River. **kutalayna** runs through the territory of the Mumi rimina (Say: Mu mee ree mee nah), one of ten bands comprising the 'Oyster Bay' tribe. It was the largest tribe in Tasmania, with an estimated population of 800 people at the time of invasion. It covered 8,000 square kilometres of country along the east coast from St Patricks Head to the Derwent estuary and Tasman Peninsula, to the mouth of the Jordan River and inland to St Peters Pass in the midlands, east to the Eastern Tiers, and then northeast back to St Patrick's Head. The Mumi rimina band were in the country around Pittwater and Risdon. [Ryan:1996:17; Plomley 1992.Tribes:25; TAC *palawa kani* Program]



1. Oyster Bay tribe territory. [L. Ryan: The Aboriginal Tasmanians. 1996. p18]

The Oyster Bay people travelled through their territory on well-defined routes following seasonal foods and resources for traditional practices such as collecting

ochre, making stone tools, collecting reeds and grasses for baskets and ropes, and so on. They went to the coasts for shellfish and marine vegetables, to the marshes and lagoons for riverine birds and their eggs, and inland to the open forest and plains for kangaroo, wallaby and possum. Putaptilukana [Say: Pu tahp tee lu kah nah], chief in 1820 of the Lai remai remener band, told his people stories of earlier times when hundreds of whales came into Oyster Bay through the Schouten Passage, leaving some stranded in the lagoons and marshes. [Ryan 1996:15-20; GA Robinson journal 11 January 1831; Plomley 1987: 822; Cotton: 1979: 40-41]

Numerous native shelters and deserted fires were seen by both Bass (1798) and Peron (1802) in the Jordan River area, and both had friendly encounters with Aborigines. Names still seen on maps in the Jordan Valley, such as Hunting Ground, Native Corners, Native River Hut and so on, indicate some favourite places of the Oyster Bay people. The scattered archaeological sites of different sizes throughout the valley show the complex ways the land was used: seasonal hunting campsites along the river, places for stone collecting and working, swampy areas where reeds were collected and used. The absence of artefacts in some areas shows the routes between occupation sites. The large site at the contemporary levee was a major focus of occupation and activity with tool manufacture and day to day living as well as a hub for social and trading contacts where people brought stone in from other areas. Hundreds of people used this place. The Jordan Valley was one of the favoured hunting grounds where the Oyster Bay people gathered with their close allies, the Big River tribe. [Officer 1980; Ling Roth 1899: 168; R Paton email 8 January 2010]

Close to the early settlement at Hobart, and the fertility of their country making it desirable agriculture land, Oyster Bay people were drastically affected by colonisation almost immediately. The first recorded massacre took place in the country of the Mumirimina at Risdon Cove in 1804, when soldiers fired on a large group hunting kangaroo which included many women and children. An orphaned boy was kidnapped after the massacre, one of the first known children to be stolen by whites. An eye witness reported "*...the natives were driven from their homes afterwards and their women and children were taken from them by stock keepers..*". Their fires were not seen in the area after 1808. The best southern kangaroo hunting grounds were in Oyster Bay territory. With severe food shortages in the early colony, Europeans hunted kangaroo in increasing competition with Aborigines. By 1808, 100 Aborigines and 20 Europeans had been killed in conflicts over hunting grounds. [White 1830, HRA 3; Boyce 2004: 45-47; Ryan 1999: 75,77]

Rapid increases in European population saw land grants for farming increasingly granted along the major rivers – in the south, the Derwent, Coal, Jordan, Clyde and Ouse rivers. The "Settled Districts" coincided with the territories of the Oyster Bay, Big River, Ben Lomond and northern tribes. Conflicts erupted over land, hunting grounds, and the kidnapping and abuse of women and children. By 1820 the Oyster Bay and Midlands tribes had already been depleted. About 60 displaced Oyster Bay people congregated at Kangaroo Point (now Bellefleur) but after two of them were hanged in 1826, the group retreated to the borders of their territory and formed guerilla groups with the neighbouring Big River tribe. [Boyce 2008: 146-7; Ryan 1996:81; Felton 1999: 2:11-13; Calder 1875 cited in Parry 2003a:7]

Aboriginal resistance to occupation of their lands and brutality to their families began among the bands of the Oyster Bay tribe. Colonial accounts report rapidly escalating

series of confrontations and reprisals, with Aboriginal deaths and casualties inevitably the most numerous. In one instance, in 1828 seventeen blacks were shot in cold blood on the Jordan Lagoon by a party of armed colonists. The Big River and Oyster Bay tribes joined forces and fiercely defended their country. Martial law was enacted from late 1828 and while the "Black Line" in 1830 failed to produce the anticipated capture of Aborigines from the Oyster Bay, Big River, Midlands and Ben Lomond tribes, it did succeed in driving them out from the "Settled Districts". Between 1803 and 1831 the estimated population of Aborigines in eastern Tasmania was reduced from more than 2,000 to fewer than 100, mostly young men. [Ryan 1996:86ff; Ryan 2008; Plomley 1992; Bonwick 1870:67; Felton 1999:2:23]

The last of the Big River and Oyster Bay people were captured by government agent George Augustus Robinson in December 1831 somewhere east of Great Lake on the central plateau. They numbered sixteen men, nine women and one child, led by Big River chief Montpeillater and Oyster Bay chief Tukulunginta. Tukulunginta told Robinson that the

"reason for their outrages upon the white inhabitants [was] that they and their forefathers had been cruelly abused, that their country had been taken away from them, their wives and daughters had been violated and taken away, and that they had experienced a multitude of wrongs from a variety of sources. They were willing to accept the offers of the government..." "who Mr Robinson promised would readily comply with all their wishes and supply all their wants".

They believed the white man owed them compensation for the loss of their land. They travelled with Robinson to Bothwell and hunted that night on Den Hill. Local history has it they danced a corroboree in front of Bothwell's Castle Hotel on 5 January 1832 before walking on to Hobart to be removed to Flinders Island – this was their last corroboree on their own lands. [Robinson to Aborigines Committee, 25 January 1832, TSA CSO 1/332, in Plomley 2008: 601-5; Plomley 1987; 43 n.33; *Hobart Town Courier*, 14 January 1832; Ryan 1996:121-2; Felton 1999: 3:19 map; Bothwell Revisited, Bothwell Historical Society cited in Ratho Golf Links website 7.1.2010]

The *Hobart Town Courier* breathlessly reported that the residents of Hobart turned out to watch *"with...delight"* as Robinson paraded his captives into Hobart, and enthused that

"The removal of these blacks will be of essential benefit both to themselves and the colony. The large tracts of pasture that have been long deserted owing to their murderous attacks on the shepherds and stockhuts will now be available, and a very sensible relief will be afforded to the flocks of sheep that had been withdrawn from them and pent up on inadequate ranges of pasture ...which..has tended materially to impoverish the flocks and keep up the price of butcher's meat.." [Hobart Town Courier, 14 January 1832, 7 January 1832; Robinson's official report of 25 January 1832, in Plomley 2008: p602-6].

In order to lower the price of mutton, Aboriginal people were exiled to Flinders Island and the entire structure and fabric of their life destroyed. In less than 30 years, the 800 Oyster Bay people had been decimated to a score of survivors who would never see the Jordan River valley or any other part of their land again. The *Hobart Town Courier* also noted *"the very small number"* of Aborigines remaining free. By 1842, all Aborigines outside the "Settled Districts" had been incarcerated on Flinders Island. [Ryan 2008:23; Ryan 1996:112, 197-9; *Hobart Town Courier*, 14 January 1832]

Some of the captured Oyster Bay and Big River people are shown in sketches made by John Glover during the ten days they remained in Hobart before travelling to Flinders Island on 17 January 1832. “The natives that were sent from Hobart Town to Great Island 1832” is written at the bottom left of the sheet and “Montipoliado” is written beneath one figure, the second from the right in the top group; this is Montpeillater, the Big River chief.



2. J Glover sketchbook No. State Library of New South Wales

Oyster Bay people

Very little is known about many hundreds of lives as a direct result of the devastation of Aboriginal society and dispossession of ancestral lands. All we know about Lattaneporelityer, to take one instance, is that he was a man of the Mumi rimina nation at Kangaroo Point and was taken from Hobart to Swan Island in March 1831. [Plomley 1987: 872; GA Robinson journal 3 March 1831]

Following is something of what is known of people from the Oyster Bay bands who spent time in the Jordan River Valley.

People’s names are given in *palawa kani* where possible, and pronunciation shown in smaller font. Names shown in square brackets following are European spellings – ways the whites tried to reproduce the sounds of the Aboriginal name, and English names given to the people by Robinson and others.

Oyster Bay warriors

Tukalunginta [say: Tu kah lung een tah] (Tongerlongerter; King William) was the chief of the Oyster Bay tribe, a very tall man who had part of one arm cut off. His early years



3. **Tukalunginta** (Tongerlongerter). T. Bock, early 1832. British Museum.

were spent with his people enjoying their traditional life until the whites invaded their lands. During the Black Line he had passed through the soldier's fires, evading capture. He told of one time when he and his tribe had been attacked at their fire, with two men killed and three women beaten on the heads until killed, then burnt in the fire. Tukulunginta was shot in the arm. One of his men cut the broken limb off above the elbow and burnt the stump. Another version of the injury given later by others described how the arm had been crushed in a rat trap hidden in a cask of flour in a stock keeper's hut, and only by cutting the hand off could he escape. "A "government officer" later described how Tukulunginta always kept his injured arm hidden under a blanket or rug and never liked answering questions about it. The fifth man from the right, kneeling, in the top line of the Glover sketch seems to have a piece of cloth, the only object shown with any of the sketched people. [See Image 2, p5]

During his later years at Wybalenna, Tukulunginta constantly urged Robinson to allow the people to leave, saying "*What, do you mean to stay till all the black men are dead?*" Tukulunginta died at Wybalenna in 1837. [Bonwick 1870:111, cited in Plomley 2008:618; GA Robinson journal 3 July 1832, 19 December 1835, 21 March 1837; Plomley 1987:908,929; Plomley 1991: Jorgenson 91-3]

Paparamina [Say Pah pah rah mee nah] the infant son of Tukulunginta, was the one child captured with the Oyster Bay and Big River people. He died a few weeks after they were taken to Flinders Island. His mother **Rrumatimitja** [Say Rru mah tee mee tchah] (Droomteemyer) cut the skull from his body and wore it constantly "*on her bosom*" until she "gave" it to Robinson in 1837. This was one of several such ceremonial amulets worn by the people for protection against sickness and misery. Robinson collected this skull, the jawbone of Tatiyana brother of Kalamaruwinya, a bone of the brother of Rrumathapana, and several other amulet bones; they were later sold to the Royal College of Surgeons in London and some were eventually returned to Tasmanian Aborigines in 2002 and 2009. [GA Robinson journal 27 February 1832, 1 July 1832, 18 February 1836, 20 February 1836, 20 October 1837, 28 October 1837, 4 November 1837, 15 November 1837; Plomley 1987: 874; Melville 1835 Pt 2:128, cited in Plomey 1987:892; J Backhouse journal 12 October 1832, in Plomley 1987: 229; Walker 1897: 98 (?); TAC Repatriation research documents]

Black Jack, Aboriginal name unknown, was from the same tribe as Tukulunginta. He was tried twice for murder in 1824 and convicted although there was no evidence of his guilt. An observer noted he had no chance to defend himself since he could barely understand English, and described Jack as "*a legitimate prisoner of war*". He was hung with Musquito in 1825 in the Hobart gaol which was then on Murray Street at the corner of Macquarie Street. A cast of "Black Jack's" face was found in the Allport Collection of the State Library of Tasmania and returned to Tasmanian Aborigines in 2007. [Plomley 1991:Jorgenson 96; Melville 1835: 31-33; TAC Repatriation documents]

Kikatapula [Say: Kee kah tah pu lah] (Kickerterpoller; Black Tom; Tom Birch) and his tribe had seen the "*first ship*" off their coast - probably the Baudin expedition which visited Oyster Bay and Maria Island in 1802. Kikatapula was stolen by whites when about nine years old, living with the Birch family who owned farms in Richmond, Jericho and Lovely Banks. He escaped and rejoined the Oyster Bay tribes in about 1822, taking part in the fighting immediately. In 1824 he was arrested for murder with Black Jack, Musquito and two others but he was released without trial, possibly because he could implicate the local constable in a massacre of fourteen blacks. Because Kikatapula spoke English as well as several Aboriginal languages, Robinson recruited him as a

guide and promised him some land in return for his services; Kikapula chose one of the islands in the lagoons near the Arthur Ranges. He was never given the land. He died at Emu Bay in May 1832 and was buried there, his grave marked with a log fence. [Plomley 1991:Jorgenson 75; Felton 1991:5:11-13; GA Robinson journal 13 March 1830, 19 November 1831; Plomley 2008: 121 n42; 126 n64; 612 n49; Plomley 1987: 801; 851; Cox 2006]

Kalamaruwinya [Say: Kah lah mah ru ween yah] (Calamarowenye; Tippo) a Mimirina man, was born about 1812 at Kangaroo Point. The presence of soldiers drove his tribe further north on the Jordan River to Lovely Banks (Melton Mowbray) but when the settlers reached there, he saw many of his people killed and the tribe again fled. A renowned fighter, Kalamaruwinya participated in several guerilla attacks with the Big River people, and travelled with them to fight alongside the Port Sorell people against the invading whites. He was captured at Port Sorell in 1832 with four others. Until it was taken by Robinson, he wore as a protective amulet the jawbone of his brother **Taytiyana** [Say: Tie tee yah nah], who had been killed at Captain Clark's farm between the Jordan and Clyde rivers, northeast of Bothwell. Kalamaruwinya died at Wybalenna in 1860. [GA Robinson journal 9 December 1836, 17 November 1837, 26 March 1832; Plomley 1987: 800, 850-1,87; Plomley 2008: 510 n280; 611 n36; Notes given to Prout in 1845 by Robert Clark, Catechist at Wybalenna (contained in Ethdoc 915) British Museum website; Felton 1999: 4:38; 3:19 map; Plomley 1991:Jorgenson:71-2,145-6].



4. **Kalamaruwinya** (King Tippo). T. Bock, early 1832. British Museum.

Rrumathapana [say: Rru mah dthah pah nah] (Drumerterpunner; Alexander) was kidnapped as a child with his sister Tipilungita. He escaped later and joined the fighting; he was captured with the Oyster Bay people in 1831. His name is an Oyster Bay word for wombat and another name given for him (Moomeriner) is in fact the name of the Mimirina band itself. Rrumathapana wore a bone from his dead brother as an amulet against sickness and misfortune, until Robinson took it in 1837 at Wybalenna. He died at Oyster Cove, the date not known but probably before 1855. [Plomley 1987:189, 874, 909, 944-5; GA Robinson journal 14 November 1837]



5. **Rrumathapana** (Alexander). JS Prout. 1845 Wybalenna. British Museum.

Oyster Bay women

Hundreds of Aboriginal women and girls were captured, killed and brutally abused by settlers, convicts and sealers. Many of the women whom Robinson later took from sealers on the Bass Strait islands were Oyster Bay women. Some of these were Bullrer, Drometehenner, Looerryminer, Maytepueminner, Meeterlatteenner, Pairrertee mme, Polle rrelbemer, Punge neeterlatteenner, Tencotemanener, Pinegommeyaner, Pilunimina, Tanalipunya (Tanlebonyer) and her sisters Mimermanne me and Tekartee, as well as nameless others. [Plomley and Henley 1990; Plomley 1987: 796-875]

Tanalipunya [Say Tah nah lee pu nyah] (Tanlebonyer; Sal) was abducted from Little Swanport with her two sisters. Her captor prostituted her to other sealers for a fee of one kangaroo skin for a night. In 1830 she was taken from the islands with two other women to act as guides to the soldiers for the Black Line. Robinson then took her as one of his guides. During this time she became wife to Manalakina [Say: Mah nah lah kee nah] (Mannalargenna), a chief of the north eastern people. Tanalipunya died in 1835.

[GA Robinson journal 11 October 1830, 30 October 1830, 7 August 1831; Plomley 2008:825; Felton 1990.3:45]



6. **Tanalipunya** (Tanlebonyer). Duterreau 1834/5

Drometehenner [say as written, it's English spelling] (Dromedenner; Daphne) was walking by the shore at Swanport when she was captured by sealers who shot a great many of her tribe. Some time later she escaped from the sealers and rejoined her people. Her first husband Martrolibbenner of Pittwater/Coal River was shot through the head and killed in an attack on a band of Oyster Bay people near the lakes; the white men took her and the wife of Tukulunginta away. Robinson later captured her and sent her from the hospital in Hobart in 1831 to his first island "settlement" on Swan Island. She was still alive at Wybalenna in 1845. [GA Robinson journal 3 March 1831, 4 March 1831, 8 March 1831, 19 December 1835; Plomley 1987:798; 856; Felton 1999. 4:39; Notes given to Prout in 1845 by Robert Clark, Catechist at Wybalenna(contained in Ethdoc 915) British Museum website]



7. **Drometehenner** JS Prout. 1845 Wybalenna. British Museum.

Pilunimina [Say Pee lu nee mee nah] (Plowneme; Pangum; Flora) was kidnapped when a young girl. She spent years in slavery in the sealers' camps on the Bass Strait Islands until removed by Robinson, who then used her as one of his guides to locate Aborigines in the bush. Later she became the wife of Oyster Bay man Kalamaruinya; they both died at Oyster Cove in 1860. At Wybalenna she wore a protective amulet containing cremation ashes under her chin to soothe a sore throat. Robinson took two of these cremation ash amulets from the people; they were later sold to the British Museum and eventually returned to Aborigines in 2006. [Plomley 1987: 945; GA Robinson journal 13 January 1831, 13 July 1831, 19 August 1837, 25 May 1838; Plomley and Henley 1990: 81; TAC Repatriation documents]



8. Pilunimina in 1845 at Wybalenna (Flora). JS Prout. British Museum.



9. Pilunimina in 1858 at Oyster Cove (Flora). Nixon/Beattie.

Oyster Bay tribe Stolen Children

Kidnapping of Aboriginal children for domestic and farm labour was widespread from the early years of the colony. Government records between 1810 and 1831 list over 60 known children either living with settlers or destitute after having run away from or been abandoned by their masters. Some stolen Oyster Bay children were :

“Robert Hobart May”, the two year old boy taken after the massacre at Risdon Cove in 1804 in which his parents were killed; nothing is known of him after 1806.

An unnamed boy, working as a stock keeper, found dead at Pittwater in 1817 *“and is at present supposed to have been murdered”*.

Tipilungita [Say Tee pee lung ee tah] (Teebelongeter/ Margaret Pearson), captured when about five with her brother Rrumathapana during a raid on her people at Little Swanport. Both her legs were broken at the time, laming her for life. In 1834 she was found dead, aged 15, outside the soldier’s hut she lived in at Wybalenna.

Shiney (John Shinall, Aboriginal name unknown), born about 1809 in the Carlton area of the Mimirina, lived a tribal life with his family until land grants were given in that area after 1812, after which he lived with a white family; it is not known what happened to his own family. He worked as a farm labourer and was unique among the Mimirina of his time in being able to live peacefully in the area of his birth all his life – although this was only possible at the cost of losing his traditional way of life among his own people. That benign acceptance by white society was based entirely on his usefulness as a labourer - after his death in 1839 his body was mutilated because of his race and his severed head preserved in alcohol was only eventually returned from Dublin University to Aborigines in 1990.

Robert, Aboriginal name unknown, was taken from the bush in 1810 when about 18 months old and lived with a white family at Richmond. He became skilled at hunting, shooting, farming and with boats. In 1829 he was removed to Robinson’s “mission” on Bruny Island. Governor Arthur agreed with Robinson that Robert be given 10 acres of land, farm tools, a cart, a bullock and a boat, intending to use Robert as an example for captured Aborigines to encourage them to take up farming. Robert was never given the land. Robinson recruited him to assist hunting Aborigines in the bush, and he travelled throughout Tasmania in 1830 and 1831 in company with Kikatapula and others. He became sick after visiting Robinsons first “settlement” on Flinders Island, at the time when the infant son of Tukulunginta died there and many other Aborigines also were sick. Robert died shortly afterwards in Launceston. He was buried in the Launceston cemetery in March 1832, and fourteen of the Aborigines who travelled with Robinson followed his coffin.

[Fels 1982: 64-5; White 1830, HRA 3; Boyce 2004: 45-47; Plomley + Henley:23-25; Ryan 1996:75 Ryan 2008:6; Plomley 2008: 477 n 106; 946 n10; Plomley 1987: 909, 910; Smith n.d:3-4; GA Robinson journal 8 August 1829, 18 February 1830, 25 November 1830; Plomley 1987: 849; GA Robinson journal 23 March 1832, 24 March 1832; Plomley 2008: 121 n42; 126 n64; Felton 1999. 5:8-10]

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