

1. The writings of William Thomas

This treasure trove of records created by Assistant Protector William Thomas can be divided into two categories – those which he wrote for other eyes to read, and his private journals.

The public record

In the course of his duties as Assistant Protector, Thomas wrote monthly summaries, quarterly reports, six monthly returns of births and deaths, and annual reports, plus single-subject letters, to the Chief Protector mainly, but also to others: in addition, he made formal submissions to several Parliamentary Select Committees of Enquiry, 1843 and 1849 (New South Wales) and 1859 (Victoria). His regular reports as Assistant Protector were submitted to the Chief Protector in Melbourne. Robinson forwarded them to La Trobe who read them before forwarding them to the Colonial Secretary in Sydney, for the information of the Governor of New South Wales: in some instances, the Governor forwarded them in their entirety to London, for the information of the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. Some of these reports from Thomas were published in Parliamentary Papers in New South Wales and later Victoria, and in Great Britain.

After the Protectorate ended in 1849, Thomas was appointed Guardian of the Aborigines of Victoria. Then, after the establishment of the Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines in 1859, he was appointed the official Visitor: in the course of these duties his reports to the government were weekly. R Brough Smyth, the secretary to the Central Board, used much of Thomas' material in Smyth's two volume work, *The Aborigines of Victoria and other parts of Australia and Tasmania*, first published in 1876. Thomas also submitted a manuscript to La Trobe before he departed the Colony with the firm intention of writing a history of the early years of Port Phillip: La Trobe found himself unable to accomplish this history and sent all the manuscripts back to Victoria where they were eventually published in 1898 by the State Librarian, Thomas Francis Bride, as *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, including Thomas' manuscripts.

Of these public records, by far the greatest proportion is at the Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV), in a collection which is now closed on the grounds of fragility, but accessible in full on 16 mm microfilm at present, with a portion of it now digitised. A surprising amount has finished up in the Port Phillip boxes in the Archives Authority of New South Wales, to some extent duplicating what is

'I Succeeded Once'

in the PROV, but not entirely. The La Trobe Library has a significant collection,¹ and the National Archives of Australia at Archives Victoria holds the Thomas papers from his time of reporting to the Central Board (1859).

The private record

These are Thomas' journals, 28 volumes and boxes dated from 1834–1868, intimate daily records of his work and travels with the Aboriginal people, his feelings, his relationships, his interior life. They are amongst the treasures of the Mitchell Library, exceedingly fragile now and available for reading only on 35mm microfilm copies. With the exception of the period January to December 1839, published in *Historical Records of Victoria (HRV)*,² Thomas' private journals have not been transcribed.³ There is now an index available, and for this recent work, all researchers would be grateful.⁴ The Mornington Peninsula Shire purchased a set of the microfilms in 2005, and the present work is based largely on information from these microfilmed journals with reference to the public record where necessary.

The aim of this research and writing is simple – to bring the Bonurong out of obscurity, in so far as it is possible, and to convey some sense of them living and moving and having their being in their own country in the earliest years of contact with Europeans. Necessarily, this meant recognising them as individuals and families, and the recovered biographical details of the lives of 26 people are inserted into the text.

We are accustomed on the Mornington Peninsula to the ritual of acknowledging the original inhabitants prior to formal meetings, and flying the Indigenous flag, but we have had very little specific knowledge of these original owners of the land. The Bonurong disappeared from the land quite quickly, but that they disappeared from memory is more puzzling. The obituary for James and Eliza Dunbar, universally accepted to be the last of the Bonurong, was published with an illustration captioned 'Jimmy Dunbar and his lubra – The last of the Mordialloc tribe':⁵ not the last of the Bonurong, but the last of the Mordialloc tribe. This is a mistake on the magazine's part. There is no doubt that Europeans considered him as belonging to Mordialloc, but that was because Mordialloc

1 See 'The La Trobe Library collection of the papers of Assistant Protector William Thomas' (Fels 1989).

2 Edited by Michael Cannon (vol 2A, 1982, vol 2B, 1983). R Cotter's *A Cloud of Hapless Foreboding* (2005), is a re-publication of small selections from the complete published texts of Bride and Cannon.

3 Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) made a start but the funding was inadequate, Paul Paton, Manager, pers comm 11 October 2005.

4 See *The Thomas Papers in the Mitchell Library: A Comprehensive Index* (Byrt 2004).

5 *Illustrated Australian News*, 14 May 1877: 68.

was the designated reserve,⁶ not because he was an original owner. Thomas does not list him in the Family Connections Census of 1846 as belonging to Mordialloc, and in fact a great deal more research is required into the Dunbars and the presumed link Jimmy Dunbar/Big Jemmy/Yamerboke as both Thomas and Native Police records list Yamerboke as a Yarra black, belonging to the Mt Macedon section of the Waworong, not a Bonurong man at all. Thomas lists him in the 1851 census as Yammerbook, male, Warwoorong, alias Jemmy, lubra Koorregrook alias Sally.⁷ Redmond Barry defended *pro bono* Yamerboke and 11 other named men in January 1841, charged with assault and robbery at Peter Snodgrass' station on the upper Yarra.⁸ It is possible that there were two men named Yamerboke so more research is needed.

We have the benefit of a 1981 archaeological survey,⁹ and *Western Port Chronology*,¹⁰ and there is a thesis, virtually inaccessible,¹¹ and a two part journal article.¹² There is also the substantial work of the anthropologist Diane Barwick.¹³ But apart from those, it is true to state that we have been forced to rely on histories of local towns and areas and industries within the shire whose authors were simply not in a position to go right back to primary sources. There is as yet, no full length history of the Protectorate, though two pages of a recent book on Merri Creek are devoted to the Protectorate at Arthurs Seat.¹⁴ So not only have we had little detailed information about the Bonurong as a group, still less have we been able to recognise individuals and families speaking, acting, living on identifiable tracts of land: worse, we have endlessly propagated errors,¹⁵ for example the Tal Tals as a tribal name – it is in fact, an original misreading of Yal Yals which in turn is a corruption of Yearl Yearl, the name of the shellfish which at the time of European contact covered the rock platform between Cape Schanck and Point Nepean. Some histories of other municipalities contain good general accounts of the Bonurong, but people in districts other than the local

6 640 acres first mentioned in Appendix 2 of the second Report of the Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines (1862) as 'not gazetted' and carried forward each year remaining 'not gazetted'.

7 Thomas Journal, set 214, item 12: 143, ML.

8 Hart 1929: 141–142.

9 Sullivan 1981.

10 Cole 1984 has a small section on the Bonurong derived totally from original documents.

11 'William Thomas and the Port Phillip Protectorate, 1838–1849' (Crawford 1966).

12 Foxcroft 1940–1941.

13 For example, 'Mapping the past: An Atlas of Victorian clans, 1835–1904' (Barwick 1984); 'This most resolute lady: a biographical puzzle' (Barwick 1985); 'Coranderrk and Cumeroongunga: pioneers and policy' (Barwick 1972); 'Changes in the Aboriginal population of Victoria, 1863–1966' (Barwick 1971); 'Economic absorption without assimilation: The case of some Melbourne part-Aboriginal families' (Barwick 1962); 'And the lubras are ladies now' (Barwick 1974).

14 Clark and Heydon 2004.

15 *Mornington in the Wake of Flinders*, widely known, widely quoted, is a seriously misleading book because of its inaccuracies.

shire or council can hardly be expected to be aware of them.¹⁶ Mornington Peninsula Shire has commissioned an environmental thematic study to which the present work will make a substantial contribution.¹⁷

Most historians who have dipped into Thomas have generally regarded him as benign though ineffective. Mulvaney regards him positively:

He concentrated on the practical tasks of keeping them alive ... was more successful than any other first generation settler in attempting to comprehend and sustain Aboriginal society. His charges knew him as Marminata (Good Father), and he always administered indirectly through influence on their leaders. He had striking success in settling intertribal disputes and preventing racial strife. His bravery and moral conviction were undoubted, but his advocacy of Aboriginal causes made him unpopular in colonial society.¹⁸

This is a view of Thomas that I share, but it needs to be noted that this view is criticised in an article which finds Thomas to be seriously flawed on the grounds of his 'whiteness' and 'maleness'.¹⁹

Thomas was as able to construct a good English sentence, and write a polished formal report, as any other educated man in Port Phillip. But his journals were neither – they are characterised by sentences without verbs, an abundance of

16 This list is not exhaustive: Niel Gunson, *The Good Country: Cranbourne Shire* (1968); Richard Broome, *Coburg: Between Two Creeks* (1987); Gillian Hibbins, *A History of the City of Springvale* (1984); Susan Priestley, *Altona: A Long View* (1988).

17 Graeme Butler and Associates, *Draft Environmental History*, 2008.

18 Derek J Mulvaney, 'Thomas, William (1793 – 1867)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol 2: 518.

19 Reed 2004: 87–99. In a section of this article headed 'White fantasy tropes in Thomas' writings', Reed uses the events of the night of 17 December 1839 to underpin her assertion that Thomas was afraid of Aboriginal sexuality. In fact, the night of 17 December 1839 is possibly the worst night of violence I have seen in the records. There were around 400 people encamped near the surveyor's paddock on the north side of the Yarra (the surveyors' paddock was located at what is now the corner of Flinders and Russell streets), including Barrabools from Geelong and Goulburn blacks: they had congregated in Melbourne since September, hoping for good things from La Trobe, the 'Big one Gubernor'. There had been night after night of drunkenness and violence, followed by corroborees. This night, Derrimut and Mr King arrived at the encampment drunk, and the Western Port chief Budgery Tom, irritated, threw a wonguim which happened to hit Derrimut. A fight ensued between Western Port men, unusual, very unusual. Budgery Tom was so badly wounded that Thomas thought he would die. The encampment settled down eventually, then about 11 pm two Western Port youths held down a thirteen year old Goulburn girl while ten or more ravished her. Thomas and Surveyor Smythe rescued her and Thomas proposed putting her in Mrs Thomas' tent. Her brother and sister refused, and insisted she be placed in their care. Then Thomas discovered that the alleged sister was negotiating with the males for a repeat. The encampment quietened down again, only to be disturbed half an hour later by a fight between the women, naked in front of banked up fires, the cause being the girl – some of the women were roundly abusing her for not keeping quiet while she was being assaulted. The sister was seriously cut open and a Western Port woman seriously injured as well. Thomas sent his own daughter out of the encampment, and it is for this action that Reed finds fault with him. My view is that it does not matter that Thomas was white and male: in this instance, with the chief believed to be mortally wounded, and normative behaviour gone by the wayside, it was simply prudent for Thomas to act as he did. To be fair to Reed who is a distinguished scholar, she was forced to work with general categories, there being no biographies available to her then. But Budgery Tom thought to be dying! No wonder there was chaos – had Reed had available to her biographical details of Budgery Tom, and his importance, she might have read the ensuing behaviours differently.

capital letters, abbreviations, eccentric spellings – they were basically notes of record for the book he intended to write. To publish the journals would require such editorial intervention by means of square brackets, sic, corrections, insertions and qualifiers and explanatory material, that the reading experience would be a trial; scholars would search it for facts relative to their own research, but few other readers would persevere.

Hence the decision to paraphrase, underpinned by what might seem an excessive use of footnotes, but in fact the notes function as an aid to further research: every observation can be found easily in the original and examined for what else Thomas might have written.

It would subvert the intention of the research to use the respectful and correct ‘the Indigenous people’ in this work. Blacks, natives, Aborigines, are Thomas’ varied descriptors and they are used here with no disrespect. Likewise for Boon Wurrung, the most correct name accepted by the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, to describe the people Thomas names variously as Bonurong, Bunerong, Boonorung, etc. As this history is mainly a record, albeit filtered through Thomas, and now through me, it would, in my view, amount to a distortion to use the modern spelling. Thomas called the people Bonurong on his ‘more correct’ census of 20 November 1839, and that spelling is used here in this work dealing with this earliest period; his first descriptor for the Yarra tribe was Waworong on that same census, so for the same reason, this spelling is used in this work.²⁰ In the same manner, I have followed Thomas’ locational descriptors of other groups, for example Goulburns, Mt Macedons, instead of the correct language descriptors. These strategies are an aid in being faithful to the period of the record.

Likewise with personal names: there is no correct spelling of personal names, so Thomas’ spelling, with all the variants, is followed. To standardise spelling would amount to subverting future identifications of individuals: one example will suffice. It has been published in a scholarly article that Mingaragon and Ningerranaro are one and the same person: in fact they are two separate Bonurong individuals, each a person of importance. Only the accumulation of all observations, with all spelling variants, and all collateral information could reveal this. Recording all variants is a methodological device which works in the direction of rigour in identification.

²⁰ Thomas’ Censuses. This ‘more correct’ census is to be found in its entirety in VPRS 10, unit 1/242, PROV, in Thomas’ best writing, with covering letters from Thomas to Robinson and Robinson to La Trobe. The same census is to be found in Thomas’ writing but not his best, at CY 3082, frames 47–52, ML. An incomplete and corrupt version (eg reading Winggolobin for Ninggolobin) of this same census is to be found in *Historical Records of Victoria (HRV)*, vol 2B: 603–607. Thomas describes his census as ‘more correct’ in relation to Dredge’s Census of 20 March 1839 (Robinson Papers, vol 54, A 7075/1, ML), and Thomas’ own ‘Names taken in encampment July 1839’, (CY 2604, item 1, frame 31, ML).

In the interest of directing the reader's attention to thoughts and feelings, Aboriginal utterances are in **bold**. Square brackets [] are used for editorial insertions, and standard brackets () are left for use by Thomas and other primary sources in direct quotations, as the sources used them.

Women's names do not appear often. A man of his times, Thomas most often referred to women as X's lubra, or by their European name, which clouds the identification because senior men had several wives. The most senior man of all the Bonurong, Mingaragon/Old Mr Man had three wives, sisters, of whom two shared the same name. Recovering female names will be a long-term project.

The major subject left out of Thomas' journal entries for the periods when he was on the Mornington Peninsula is his relationship with God. Thomas lived in the presence of God, his Heavenly Father: he began each day with scripture reading, and closed each day in prayer. He thanked God for every week, every month, every year of his life, and he began each year's journal with a recommitment of his life and work to the Divine Purpose: he wrote once that he really wanted to be a missionary. One of his earliest achievements, largely done at Tubberubabel, was to translate into Bonurong Psalm cxxi, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the first chapter of Genesis, all reproduced in Chapter 12 as a mark of respect for the language, and for the time and scholarship that Thomas and his major informant, the clanhead Budgery Tom, put into the translations. These have been published before, in 1859 and 1876, but these publications are held now in reserved and rare book collections, virtually inaccessible. Quite early he preached to them in their own language, and it adds to our sense of immediacy, what the Bonurong experienced, to see these translations again in print.

Apart from Thomas' personal relationship with God which is left to his future biographer, the practical matter of religious services *is* important, for several reasons – Bonurong men would not allow the women to attend Divine Service initially, and later, when that prohibition was relaxed, attending or not attending Divine Service was a means of expressing approval or disapproval of Thomas by the Bonurong. Divine Service was also an activity to which they brought traditional behaviour, for example when the men eventually permitted the women to attend with them, the women sat with their backs to both Thomas and the men, and Thomas had to persuade the women to face him at the front.²¹ So in this account, Divine Service is a constant, held twice every Sunday, morning and evening, noted when it was connected with significant action. There is later evidence of the Bonurong discussing the theological and philosophical concepts of God and Punjil, and requesting repeats of certain sermons, but it must wait till the later years of the history of the Protectorate are investigated so that the evidence can be read in its context.

21 30 May 1841 at Nerre Nerre Warren, CY 2605, frame 280, ML.

Another aspect of religious practice that *is* included is hymn singing, simply because the Bonurong gave every indication of enjoying it, as well as the flute played by Thomas' son. Thomas himself is quite matter of fact about his expectation that they would learn the hymns he taught them, but Samuel Rawson recorded that he was present at Jamieson's station on the river Kunnung (Yallock Creek) at Western Port in February 1840, when Thomas' Divine Service concluded with six white men and 'nearly all' of the 60 Bonurong singing the Halleluiah chorus:

when the sound rose on the night air and went echoing thro' the forest,
it filled one with greater awe and deeper religious feeling than I ever felt
before on hearing the finest performed service in an English cathedral.²²

I take that observation to mean that the Bonurong sang well and sang powerfully: a thin and miserable performance could not possibly have made such a profound impression on the 20 year old Rawson, an English youth just about to join his regiment at Parramatta.

Thomas' religious convictions intersected their lives in yet another important way, by sermons. In keeping with the judgemental theology of the early nineteenth century Thomas used threats of God's vengeance to condemn behaviours of which he disapproved – infanticide (Chapter 2), cannibalism (Chapter 8), the possibility of theft (see Toby's story in Chapter 4), and prevarication or deceit or dissembling (they did not apparently ever lie straight out): the use of emotional blackmail by Thomas is a part of the story, as is the reverse. In this story, as in the story of the Native Police, feelings matter.

Another aspect of behaviour which is mostly left out because it is a constant is good manners. Thomas and the blacks appear to have greeted each other every morning and closed the day with good wishes: when either party was 'sulky', that is angry, these formal courtesies were withheld, and this appears to have been experienced painfully by both Thomas and the people. Shaking hands appears frequently in the text.

Violence and drunkenness were two issues which set Thomas' pen flying, with anxiety about the consequences, condemnation of Europeans who provided alcohol, prayers of intercession for deliverance from it and imaginings of a homestation in the hinterland free of alcohol. But violence and drunkenness are scarcely mentioned in this account on the simple grounds that *he* scarcely mentions them in his record of the Bonurong on their own land. There are four instances of gratuitous violence, an immediate physical response by a male to wounded feelings.

²² Samuel Rawson, 'Journal from November 1839 kept while forming a new station at Western Port on the southern coast of New Holland', Ms 204/1, NLA.

As for drunkenness, there are perhaps three records of an Aboriginal man turning up drunk at Tubberubbabel: as it is not credible that a man could leave Melbourne drunk, walk the whole distance, or catch a lift in one of Edward Hobson's boats or drays, or even walk from the No Good Damper Inn near Dandenong, and still arrive drunk at Tubberubbabel, these sparse records of drunkenness probably attest more to social bonding than anything else. There must have been European friends within walking distance with whom to share a drink. On the contrary, 'happy', 'peaceful', 'settled' are the terms Thomas used about them when they were at Buckkermittewarrer, Kangerong and Tubberubbabel.

Chapter 3 is the skeleton of the work: it only summarises the entries when he was in Melbourne concerned with all Aborigines from the various tribes, not just the Bonurong, but it does give a comprehensive account of all the activities in the periods when he was here on the Mornington Peninsula. This work concerns itself with the tiny details of place as well as people.

Because our knowledge of specific places of importance has been so scanty, for example the Martha Cove development has destroyed a major fishing site at the mouth of Brokil Creek,²³ three chapters have been devoted to amassing all the known records of the three Protectorate stations – Tubberubbabel, Kangerong and Buckkermittewarrer. Under the provisions of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic), cultural heritage values are defined broadly; actions which leave no material trace, for example memories, stories, stated opinions, activities are all considered to contribute to the heritage values of a site.

Tubberubbabel is on private land off the Old Moorooduc Road, inaccessible of course, but Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) will investigate it in case there remain some traces of the Protectorate.²⁴

Kangerong is securely identified at the flyover of Nepean Highway across the freeway, thoroughly disturbed in construction. Buckkermittewarrer is adjacent to the Dromana drive-in, a site which has been placed as a result of this work on AAV's site register, though at the time of going to press, it has a planning permit for development.

A fourth place, Kullurk, also merits its own chapter. The observations on Kullurk were compiled because that place was the Bonurong's own choice in 1840 for a reserve of land for their imagined future. Coolart, owned by Parks Victoria is a part of that land which the Bonurong selected: it possesses the historical significance appropriate for a future interpretive centre.

23 The original archaeological consultant's report was simply unaware.

24 David Clark, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, pers comm 1 September 2008.

Chapter 8, on the pre-contact massacres, is fundamental to understanding the prevailing fear of the Bonurong throughout the Protectorate year, a real fear which determined some of their actions. It has not been investigated in detail before, and it has led to consideration of contemporary evidence regarding the successive phases of inundation and drying out of Port Phillip over the last 10,000 years. For the first time, the evidence of the Bonurong that they walked across Port Phillip is confirmed by science.

The chapter on Johnny's death and burial is included because it is possible or even probable that we are walking over his grave at present, and that is unseemly. Johnny was closely engaged with George Smith (went to California with him), the person who in my view, helped to determine the nature of relationships on the Mornington Peninsula because of the bond he formed with Baddourup/Big Benbow from 1835.

Chapter 11 presents the astonishing story of Yankee Yankee, a son of the clanhead Benbow, a brother to Mary whose story is told in Chapter 6; Yankee Yankee married subsequently a daughter of the Warworong clanhead Billibellary. Yankee Yankee links the past with the present in profound ways, as some of the present people who claim the right to speak for the land are descended from the women abducted off the beach all those years ago.²⁵

This chapter examines as well, the available evidence related to the issue of the women said to have been taken from Western Port, reported to be living at King George's Sound in 1839. Strange as it seems, there has been no previous investigation of the circumstances of the abduction, all previous researchers having as their primary aim the recovery of the names of the people, as part of the overarching enquiry to establish genealogical links between past and present. This would not be considered acceptable in historical research – raiding a source for names, without considering the provenance of the source, or the related detail. The circumstances of a report *do* matter, and in the present case, the truth matters enormously to both claimant groups and to residents of the Mornington Peninsula.

For example, one claim made is that three women were at Point Nepean, a 'special' place, the implication being for women's ceremonial business,²⁶ but the participant witness account of Matilda, which is reproduced in full, relates how the men who were present attempted to thwart the abduction, and the local people present at an interview with Robinson on 28 December 1836 told him that the tribe was down at Point Nepean hunting: knowledge of the primary sources which attest that men were present would not permit the abduction to be cast as a women only event. Another account states that Robert Cunningham joined

²⁵ Barwick 1985.

²⁶ Briggs 2000.

a whaling crew and eventually settled in Western Australia, which is definitely not so, as will be seen from his biographical details.²⁷ And if, as one source states,²⁸ the little girl claimed to be Louisa Briggs came back to Melbourne, aged 'about 18 years' at a time when 'there were only three houses', her return would have been in the short time frame of one year: that is between the arrival of the Europeans in 1835 when there were no buildings, and the Police Magistrate's report of 10 June 1836 which stated that there were 13 buildings.²⁹ As it is also believed that Louisa Briggs was born in 1836³⁰ there are problems with evidence that need to be reconciled.

Two separate applications to become a Registered Aboriginal Party, submitted by the Boon Wurrung Foundation Ltd, and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, were declined on 27 August 2009 by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council (VAHC). In its published reasons for the decision, the VAHC specifically stated that persons from both groups are descendants of the women abducted off the beach: there is no question about that. The VAHC did not however, come to a decision on the evidence before it, to register one applicant over the other. I infer from this that more primary research would be welcome, and the lengthy quotations in this chapter, mostly from primary sources, are intended as a contribution to knowledge, useful to the two groups, as well as broadly informative for the interested local reader.

As they stand, the biographical details of the 26 persons give some sense of the nature of relationships, of the complexities of individual lives, and the range of experiences. Some names appear in Thomas' record of early colonial experience, and appear again later in records from Coranderrk and in Indigenous genealogies. Only the patient accumulation of biographical details will make it apparent whether they are the same people.

The book concludes with the scholarly translations which Thomas made with the help of Indigenous people, only one of whom he names – the Western Port chief Budgery Tom. Although there is no summary statement of argument, my concluding remarks are given in an Afterword.

It remains only to permit Thomas to make his own assessment of the part played by Mrs Thomas in his work, and to have the second-last word – his claim of 'success'. It was written in 1843 as the Protectorate was re-locating for a second time from a designated Aboriginal station, this time from Nerre Nerre Warren to Merri Creek:

27 Rhodes and Compton 2005.

28 Briggs 2000.

29 *HRV*, vol 1: 41.

30 Lowe 2002: 1.

In taking my leave of this station I cannot but express my feelings. Few have entered the Colony more desirous of a sphere of usefulness than me and my affectionate partner. However unsuccessful we may have been, few have endeavoured more to accomplish that for which we were engaged. I think I may venture to assert that none who have entered Australia have gone through greater hardships and suffering than myself, nor has my partner been without her trials, myself ever wandering while she has been unprotected, and with scarce a covering to shelter her, and just as a comfortable place was ready, for her to be informed that she was not to enter it. The failing of that station may be attributed to many issues, tho' its proximity to Melbourne may be considered primary, yet there are others. The Protector has no power to relieve the wants of Aborigines unless sick – I used a discretionary power once and succeeded at Arthurs Seat.³¹

The last word is reserved for the Bonurong themselves, out of the mouth of Yankee Yankee, quoted in full, in its context, in Chapter 11. Reminding Thomas that the Bonurong had stopped with him at Tubberubabel, and worked, and wanted to sow potatoes, and obtain Kullurk as their reserve, they accused him of letting them down and going away. We must be careful not to read too much into this evidence of Bonurong agreement with Thomas' plan, but there can be no doubt of the *fact* of agreement, and to that extent, Thomas was entitled to claim that his plan was a success.

31 Thomas Journal, CY 2605, item 5, frame 282, ML.