

HISTORIES OF SEALING IN AUSTRALIA
No. 9.

JOHN WILLIAM ANDERSON,
a 'Black man'

and

ROBERT GAMBLE, from England,
sealing in the 1830s among the islands
of the Recherche Archipelago,
south-western Australia.

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October 2019

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PART 1. JOHN WILLIAM ANDERSON

Introduction

This account of John William Anderson, whose sealing career came to an abrupt end among the islands to the east of King George's Sound in Western Australia, began as a modest dossier in my *Histories* series No. 4 (an index to individuals involved in that trade), as one of a possible five John Andersons who were sealing in eastern waters during the early decades of the 19th century. His death was reported by Robert Gamble (also known as Gambell, Gemble and Gimble), a one-time associate.

Recently (July-August 2019) I obtained images of a series of official documents concerning events that brought Anderson to the attention of the authorities at Albany in King George's Sound in 1835. Viewed in relation to the entirety of my researches into the careers of individual sealers, this trove of contemporary official records is quite unique. Anderson is revealed as a crafty and ruthless man (as were so many itinerant sealers of that era, Gamble being such a one), but no other became the subject of such public scrutiny in a court of law, in this case before local Justices of the Peace. His violent behaviour and dealings with those subject to his control and whim are starkly revealed, but it can be said that the account of his basest revealed crime — being party to the callous murder of two Aboriginal men and two children (Appendix A, item #1) was matched by numerous reports and allegations over the years of violent acts against Aborigines (and other sealers), including murders, in the sealing grounds of Bass Strait. Robert Gamble was one of the accused.

At this distance in time it is impossible to comprehend what led these men to commit such abhorrent crimes, but I venture to suggest that the barbaric, ruthlessly repetitive nature of sealing itself may have been a potent factor. Seals of both sexes and all ages from yearlings to adults were clubbed, including lactating females (which doomed their orphaned pups to a slow death by starvation). Such relentless slaughter must inevitably have led to callous indifference to suffering and death of the defenceless, and brought out the worst in the nature of some men.

Organised and highly competitive, ship-based sealing was an inherently risky employment for members of gangs that were established and provisioned in semi-permanent camps established at the various grounds, or put ashore briefly for raids on seal colonies at out-of-the-way islands. But the dangers were much greater for those individuals who chose to hunt seals on their own account, not to make large profits (because they operated at too small a scale and without access to markets), but as a means to live free and unfettered, roaming at will among the islands, reefs and clusters of rocks lying off the southern coast. Dominant men like Anderson would have traded perhaps 150 or more prime fur skins to trade for a whaleboat worth at least £25, and in these vulnerable craft they had to be skilled boatmen to survive the ever present dangers when venturing in those unpredictable coastal waters, and hazarding landings on rocky shores open to the sea that are favoured by fur seals. Accidents and injuries were always likely; boats were lost and drowning was not an uncommon fate.

Fiercely independent, intolerant of restraint or interference and well aware that the colonial administration regarded them as social outcasts (many were ex-convicts and some were escapees) — it is hardly surprising that these men behaved as a law

unto themselves. To survive they had to be hard, uncompromising and resourceful. Under these circumstances a human life would have had little value.

As a prime example of his kind and given the documentary material at hand, it is instructive to consider John William Anderson and his activities in the context of his time and place — on the one hand in relation to the status of the seal colonies in the Recherche Archipelago which he exploited; and also to the importance of seal skins and seal oil to the fledgling settlements at Albany and Perth.

The fur seals of south-west Western Australia (the Long-nosed fur seal *Arctocephalus forsteri*) never yielded significant cargoes of skins or oil for those few sealing vessels that ventured west from Sydney, Hobart and Launceston when the far richer grounds in Bass Strait had become seriously depleted and the focus of colonial sealing entrepreneurs shifted to New Zealand and the subantarctic. Historically, the first sealer to prospect King George Sound did so much earlier. Isaac Pendleton, master of the brig *Union* of New York, voyaged from America to the Sound solely on account of the sketchy descriptions of seals encountered there that were recorded by the explorer George Vancouver in 1791 (Vancouver 1798: 33, 53). Pendleton arrived at the Sound in February 1803 (Fanning 1833: 316) only to find his confident expectations quickly dashed, and on the advice of Commander Nicolas Baudin, *Le Geographe*, whose officers were surveying the Sound, he hurried on to Kangaroo Island and Bass Strait where he collected a sizeable cargo (see his dossier, *Histories* No. 4).

When Dumont D'Urville, *Astrolabe*, visited the Sound in October 1826 (Rosenman 1987: 31-32, 33) he encountered two sealing gangs in whaleboats — one from Launceston with Aboriginal women, the other from Sydney with an Aboriginal man. Neither gang had much to show for their months there, although they were well equipped to hunt seals and at Middle Island they had access to an abundant source of salt for preserving the raw skins, which was easily obtained from a natural pan.*

* Now called Lake Hillier, in the NE corner of the island.

The settlement at Swan River was established soon after. It thrived, and to such an extent that in the 1830s Perth could boast two newspapers, which chronicled some sealing activity (see transcriptions below). However those ventures were speculative and small in scale, being limited to the crews of a few small boats. To the northward they hunted the large 'hair seals' (Australian sea lions, *Neophoca cinerea*) for their blubber-oil and skins, although the latter were used only for leather, while to the eastward the colonies of the more valuable fur seals scattered among the many small islands of the Recherche Archipelago received more attention. Visiting vessels could purchase or trade for parcels of skins at King George's Sound or take a few raw skins on their own account in passing, but the general tenor of the news reports of this intermittent activity indicate that it was of limited extent. A flourishing industry did not develop.

A report of seal skins exported from Fremantle and the Sound for the year 1837 published by the *Perth Gazette* of 27 October 1838: 172a is particularly revealing:— 'Table of Exports from the Port of Fremantle for the Year 1837. ... To the above enumeration must be added the exports from King George's Sound, amounting to ... Seal-skins ... £500.'

It seems that any hair skins taken were used locally, and that the total value of the fur skins (a rounded estimate) would have represented several small parcels of skins taken in the Archipelago and traded or sold cheaply to merchants at Albany, who then turned a profit by selling or trading them to visiting ships. The amounts of oil saved from those seals, if any, would have been insignificant. The Long-nosed fur seal is a small species and the low yield of blubber oil was hardly worth the considerable care and effort involved in trying-out and storing in well-coopered casks. Any oil procured would probably have been used locally, for lighting, in fact small quantities of seal oil were occasionally imported at Perth from the eastern colonies.

Perth newspaper reports:—

1833, 4 May. 'Imports, per *Thistle* from Launceston ... 2 Hogsheads seal oil.' (*Perth Gazette* 4 May 1833: 70c).

1834, 1 February. 'The *Thistle*, on her way to this port, left two boats well manned some distance to the eastward of King George's Sound, to collect seal skins, which abound in that quarter; the speculation, it is anticipated, will be a profitable one.' (*Perth Gazette* 1 February 1834: 226c).

1834, 30 April. Launceston. 'April 30.— *Thistle*, (brigantine,) Liddell, master, from Swan River; 300 seal skins, 4 tons rice, 300 bundles rattans, 40 tons salt,— J. and C.S. Henty.' (*Launceston Advertiser* 1 May 1834: 4d).

1835. 'About £1,000 worth of seal-skins has been sold at King George's Sound within the past year, to vessels returning to the sister colonies, at extremely low prices, say, from 13d to 15d. It is to be regretted, that some arrangement cannot be made to despatch all articles of commerce immediately from our own ports.' (*Perth Gazette* 19 December 1835: 618c).

NB: At 15d per skin the total estimated worth equates to 16,000 skins, but in view of the wholly tentative nature of estimates of skins passing through Perth, where records of its economic activity were supposed to be kept, no reliance can be placed on the estimate (another rounded figure, see next) of the value of skins passing through King George's Sound.

1835. 'Imports and Exports. The following tables of imports and exports since the year 1835, which are extracted from the accounts annually forwarded to the Home Government, do not appear to be formed with minute accuracy, but they afford the nearest approximation ... Goods imported into the Port of Fremantle during the year 1835 ... And twenty-four vessels (including two ships of war) which touched at King George's Sound during the year. ... Exports ... Seal-skins (from King George's Sound ... Estimated Value. £1,000.' (*Perth Gazette* 20 October 1838: 167bc).

1836, 11 June. '... General Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Colony of Western Australia, on the present State of the Settlement up to 1835, / ... The exports for the present year (1836) may be estimated as follows:—

Seal oil and skins at King George's Sound (the quantity uncertain but increasing) - - .' (*Perth Gazette* 11 June 1836: 708c / 710a).

1836, 3 December. 'If a party should be formed to make a trial, it is to be hoped they will receive every assistance from the Government, and not to be put about as the individuals were who prepared to go to the Southward sealing, and were refused the privilege of taking salt from the Island of Rottnest, without they rented the Lakes for twelve months, which could not benefit them during their absence. The delay gave time for a party to come from Van Diemen's Land where salt was 45s per ton, and to take at our very doors the source of great riches—the Seal Skins; at that time the seals being very abundant.' (*Perth Gazette* 3 December 1836: 809a).

1837, 9, 16 March. 'For sale at the Stores of Charles Pratt, Fremantle. Ex *Abeona* [arrived 14 February from Sydney]. A quantity of ... Seal Oil, ...' (*Swan River Guardian* 9 March 1837: 88b, 16 March: 93a).

1837, 4 May. 'on Carnac [Island] the hairy Seal abounds, and may be easily killed in the moonlight evenings.' (*Swan River Guardian* 4 May 1837: 110c).

1837, [30 June]. 'Statistical Report Upon the Colony of Western Australia, drawn up to the end of June 1837 ... Condition of the Colonists. Aggregate and Average Wealth. ... an accurate statement in column A of the amount of the several descriptions of Property within the Colony at the present time ... Value of Exports in 1837 estimated ... On seal-skins ... [column A] £500 ...' (*Perth Gazette* 16 June 1838: 95a, 13 October: 163c).

1837, 30 November. 'Captain Bannister accompanied by some men lately went in a boat to the Northward and killed nineteen Seals on a small island, about 30 miles North of Fremantle. Captain Thompkins who saw some of the pups on the beach at Fremantle declared them to be real *fur* Seal the skin of which is so valuable in the London market. The season for Sealing is just coming in. The whole of the coast to the North of Fremantle abounds with Seals, Turtle, &c. On the Island of Rottenest [*sic*], in a sunny day, Seals may be observed asleep on the beach and are easily killed by a blow over the nose with a cudgel. If the striker misses the part aimed at, it is rather dangerous work, as the animal when irritated is a formidable opponent. In very hot days the Seals repair into covert, and slumber under the shade ... Their course is tracked through the thickets and they become an easy prey to the hunter. (*Swan River Guardian* 30 November 1837: 257b).

1837, 4 December. 'On Monday morning last [4th] Captain Thompkins' and Mr Randlett's Sealing party left Fremantle on a cruise to the Southward for Skins, Oil, and as a matter of course, Swans for our Christmas dinners. ...' (*Swan River Guardian* 7 December 1837: 259c).

1837, 21 December. 'Captain Thompkins' and Mr Randlett's Sealing party returned from another trip to the Northward and brought to Fremantle 125 Seal skins, some of the Fur and others of the hairy species. Mr Randlett went 150 miles to the Northward of Swan River in an open boat. ... Thirty six Imperial gallons of Seal Oil equal to any sperm have been tried out, and if the try-pot had not broke, a great deal more would have been obtained. Mr Randlett has departed with two boats and six men on a similar excursion.' (*Swan River Guardian* 21 December 1837: 269c).

1837. Table of Exports from the Port of Fremantle for the Year 1837. ... To the above enumeration must be added the exports from King George's Sound, amounting to ... Seal-skins ... £500.' (*Perth Gazette* 27 October 1838: 172a).

1838, 23 June. 'In the matter of Joseph Randlett, Mariner, deceased. To be sold by Public Auction (by order of the Administratrix) ... 104 Hair seal-skins / 1 Cask of seal oil.' (*Perth Gazette* 23 June 1838: 97a).

1842, 3 September. '... The fur seal here, it is first observed, and I may remark that whilst the skin of the hairy seal, is only worth between four and five shillings, that of the fur seal fetched nearly fifteen shillings at King George's Sound, and has been sold in London for £2 2s. each thus affording a large profit to the buyer, more especially as the original price is generally paid in stores in which there is a large profit accruing ... [W.N. Clark]' (*Perth Gazette* 3 September 1842: 3b).

In the context revealed by the foregoing, Anderson had made a shrewd choice when he established a comfortable camp on Middle Island. Apart from its central location in regard to fur seal colonies in the archipelago it offered the unique advantage of an abundant source of natural salt obtained from a small shallow lake for preserving skins. But for all that he was just another vagabond sealer operating at a very small scale with one whaleboat and a small crew. The seal skins he took and sold or traded at Albany would not have netted him a large profit, and it seems that he was not equipped for rendering seal blubber which would have required a try-pot, and casks for storing the oil.

The stark details of Anderson's behaviour and activities revealed by the sworn statements taken from several witnesses in the Albany courthouse deserve close scrutiny, and with permission of the State Records Office of Western Australia I have provided faithful transcripts of all the relevant court documents in Appendix A. In the

following dossier on Anderson I have included details of my several investigations into his possible origins followed by an edited account his known history, cross-referenced to the relevant court documents. I have also included transcripts of two near-contemporary newspaper articles about him.

A fictional account of 'Black Jack' Anderson

A second reason for providing transcripts of the court papers *in extenso* is to debunk some of the dramatic fictions surrounding John William Anderson created in a novel by Elaine Forrestal titled *Black Jack Anderson*, which announced in the extravagant blurb on its covers that: Black Jack Anderson [was] 'Australia's most notorious pirate' and that 'Ruthless, passionate, charismatic and complex, Black Jack Anderson made a living by raiding passing ships off the southwest coast of Australia. The massive African-American was notorious in his lifetime, but this towering figure in Australian history has slowly been forgotten...until now.'

This response is not a criticism of her book, which I read with interest and would agree that she has constructed an engaging yarn. My sole reason for commenting on some aspects of her portrayal of Anderson (see Appendix C) is that her imaginative fabrication of a piratical career and aspects of the persona of the man has been too successful, to the extent that some media commentators, commercial interests, and others, have enthusiastically accepted her fictions as fact, thereby misleading a widening circle of uncritical and unsuspecting readers.

His origins unresolved.

How and when John William Anderson, 'a Black man', arrived in the colony is not known, but it seems that he was sealing in Australia by the late 1820s. However, considering that middle names were often omitted in official records and generally in notices and accounts in the colonial newspapers it is quite possible that he was one of at least four other John Andersons known to be involved with sealing prior to 1830 (see *Histories* No. 4). The time and place of their arrivals and their backgrounds are uncertain because there are numerous instances of John Andersons in the maritime records of the colony at that time, especially in ship musters — see the following list. Most of these individuals would have been Caucasians hailing from England, but in any case other ethnicities were not always noted.

Quite often I have found that an unskilled convict having served his time would turn to sealing, presumably because it offered immediate employment, a modest advance on which to live prior to sailing (to be deducted from future earnings) and, at least nominally, gangs were provisioned while in the field. An added attraction would have been a free and active life far from the harsh official and rigid social constraints on the activities of an indigent emancipist labourer making his way in the colony.

Consequently I have included the following records of John Andersons who were transported before 1823. The primary sources are the Convict Transportation Registers Database maintained by the Queensland State Library, and the Colonial Secretary's Papers 1788-1825 (NSW State Records). I chose 1822 as the cut-off year reasoning that those sentenced to seven years then or shortly before would have served their time by the end of 1829. Such searches have occasionally revealed a sealer's convict origin, but in this case none of the following 12 John Andersons likely to have been alive and fit in the 1830s can be connected to the black sealer:—

Convicts:—

1. 1788. Convict per *Scarborough / Lady Penrhyn*. Murdered 1816. (NSW State Records, Col. Sec. Papers, image ##5108, 5109, per Ancestry.com.au)

1790. Convict per Second Fleet. Sentence **Life** (Qld database) / 1801, pardoned by Governor Hunter; a settler at Port Jackson. NSW General Muster 1800-1802 (Baxter 1988: 118, BF075; 123: BG133).

2. 1814. Convict per *Somersetshire*. In 1825 was still a prisoner employed at Windsor, i.e. was sentenced to 14 years or Life (Col. Sec. Papers).

3. 1818. John Flack Anderson, convict per *Neptune*, 7 years, FBS July 1826 (Qld database) / John Anderson, convict, per *Neptune*, sentence 7 years, government employ at Newcastle. NSW General Muster 1822 (Baxter 1988: 10, A00277).

1818. John Henderson, convict per *Neptune*, listed as Anderson (Col. Sec. Papers) / John Anderson, convict, per *Neptune*, sentence 14 years, government employ at Newcastle. NSW General Muster 1822 (Baxter 1988: 10, A00278).

NB: 'The undermentioned Prisoners having absented themselves ... John Anderson per *Neptune*, age 54 (SG 18 September 1823, Suppl: 1a); his description indicates he was European.

4. 1819. Convict per *Atlas*. FBS October 1825 (Col. Sec. Papers).

1822. John Anderson, convict, per *Atlas*, sentence 7 years, government servant at Liverpool. NSW General Muster 1822 (Baxter 1988: 10, A00276).

5. 1819. Convict per *Hibernia*, to VDL FBS April 1825 (Qld database).

NB: His Conduct Record (LINC Tasmania), is not revealing.

6. 1819. Convict per *Baring*. FBS September 1832. (Col. Sec. Papers) /

1822. John Anderson, convict, per *Baring*, sentence 14 years, government servant at Parramatta. NSW General Muster 1822 (Baxter 1988: 10, A00274) /

1824. Prisoner at Port Macquarie, in Pilot boat's crew, escaped, item dated 29 September 1824 (Col. Sec. Papers)

NB: A Joseph Anderson listed in the 1823-1825 NSW General Muster, per *Canada* [4th voyage, arrived 1819], sentence Life, 'runaway from Port Macquarie' (Baxter 1999: 9, #10421).

7. 1821. Convict per *Speke*. 7 years, FBS August 1827 (Qld database).

1821. Convict per *Speke*. 14 years, FBS September 1839 (Qld database).

8. 1821. Seaman on *John Barry* [arrived 7 December 1821] (Col Sec Papers).

John Anderson, Certificate of Freedom, per *John Barry*, labourer at Sydney, NSW General Muster 1822 (Baxter 1988: 10, A00271) / Arrived Sydney 7 December 1821, mustered on *Active* for New Zealand on 22 December 1821 with Governor's permission (NSW Ships Musters 10 December 1816-16 April 1825).

9. 1822. John Anderson, convict, per *Guildford*, sentence 7 years, government servant at Parramatta. NSW General Muster 1822 (Baxter 1988: 10, A00275).

1822. Convict per *Guildford*. FBS October 1828 (Qld database).

1822. John Anderson, convict, sentence **Life**, government servant, to S. Lord. NSW General Muster 1822 (Baxter 1988: 10, A00271).

1825. John Anderson, convict, sentence **Life**, government school master at Wilberforce. NSW General Muster 1825 (Baxter 1999: 9, #10416).

NB: Not considered, as freedom from their life sentences could only be by an absolute pardon, granted at the Governor's pleasure, and usually only after serving many years.

Ship muster lists:—

1815, 17 June. 'John Anderson, free in the *N'hampton*' / Convict transport *Northampton*, Tween, arrived Sydney from London (Cumpston 1977: 97), see No. 14.

10. 1817, 29 November. No. 42/134. late hired Convict Transport *Lord Eldon*, James Lamb, bound for Calcutta. ... 13. John Anderson, Seaman

11. 1818, 27 May. 'No. 19/158. Muster of the (late Convict) Ship *Batavia* of London, William Lamb, bound for Bombay [mustered] 27 May 1818. ... 29. John Anderson, seaman.'

12. 1818, 8 June. 'No. 22/161. Muster of the *Neptune* (late Convict Ship) of London, Robert Cams, bound for Batavia [mustered] 8 June 1818. ... 31. John Anderson, seaman.'

1818, 5 May. Transport *Rambler*, Cams, from London (Cumpston 1977: 110)

13. 1818, 19 September. 'No. 31/170. Muster of the Brig *Rambler* of London, Simon Smith, bound for the Fishery off New Zealand & NSWales [mustered] 19 September 1818. ... 6. John Anderson,

seaman.'

1818, 24 August. Whaler *Rambler*, Simon Smith, arrived Sydney from South Seas (Cumpston 1977: 113)

14. 1818, 3 October. 'No. 35/174. Muster of the Brig *Jupiter*, bound for the Derwent in VDL [mustered] 3 October 1818. ... 6. John Anderson, came free in the *N'hampton*.'

1818, 30 October. John Anderson, seaman, crew list of the *Jupiter*, cleared from Hobart bound to Port Dalrymple and Macquarie Harbour (LINC Tasmania, Departures, CUS33/1/3, p. 50, original not seen).

15. 1819, 29 January. No. 9/192. Ship *Tyne*, (late Irish Convict Transport), ... 9. John Anderson, seaman.'

16. 1819, 13 April. 'No. 18/201. Muster of the (late Convict Ship) *Lord Sidmouth* of London, William Gunner, bound for Calcutta [mustered] 13 April 1819. ... 6. John Anderson, boatswain.'

17. 1819, 10 November. 'No. 10/233. Ship (late Convict Transport) *John Barry* of Whitby, Stephenson Ellerby, bound for Calcutta. ... 28. John Anderson, seaman.'

18. 1820, 6 September. No. 48/291. (late Convict Transport) Ship *Mangles* of London, John Cogill. ... 1. John Anderson, Seaman

19. 1820, 15 November. No. 61/303. (late Convict) Transport *Agamemnon*, Robert Surtees, bound with troops to Madras. ... 4. John Anderson, Seaman.'

20. 1823, 18 September. *Recovery*, William Fotherly, bound to Batavia & Calcutta ... John Anderson, Seaman, Came in the Ship.'

21. 1825, 12 March. *Nereide*, Benjamin Boyes, bound for Hobart Town. ... John Anderson, Mate, Came in the Vessel.' (NSW Ships Musters 1816-1825; Ancestry.com.au, first page not provided).

Additional records from the Colonial Secretary's Papers:—

22. 1817, 17 June. Discharged from the [HM barque] *Elizabeth Henrietta* at own request: 'Bench of Magistrates. 6th Dec'r 1817} As to false Muster. ... The log produced. Entry read - 17th June 1817 "Disch'd John Anderson, ... Seamen ...' (NSW State Records, Colonial Secretary's Papers, images ##6125, 6126 per Ancestry.com.au)

23. 1820, 1 February. John Anderson, seaman on *Princess Charlotte*.

1823, 7 February. John Anderson, seaman, crew list of the *Princess Charlotte*, cleared from Hobart bound to Port Jackson (LINC Tasmania, Departures, CUS33/1/3, p. 278, original not seen).

24. 1822, 21 May - 4 June. John Anderson, seaman on *Mary Ann*. Charged with neglect of duty, trial, discharge.

NB: [James](#) Anderson, seaman, departed Hobart 12 May 1822 in *Mary Ann* for Port Jackson (LINC Tasmania, Departures, CUS33/1/3, p. 208, original not seen).

Archives Tasmania (LINC Tasmania website), ship departures:—

25. 1820, 12 October. John Anderson, seaman, crew list of the *Rambler*, cleared from Hobart bound to Fisheries (LINC Tasmania, Departures, CUS33/1/3, p. 106, original not seen).

26. 1822, 26 February. John Anderson, seaman, crew list of the *Britomart*, cleared from Hobart bound to Port Jackson (LINC Tasmania, Departures, CUS33/1/3, p. 106, original not seen).

Plomley and Henley, in their book *The Sealers of Bass Strait* (1990: 34), commented that '... the name John Anderson is found for a number of vessels visiting Bass Strait ...' They listed the following, but did not cite their sources:—

1. John Anderson *alias* 'Abyssinia' and 'Abyssinia Jack', a free man who arrived in Sydney per the transport *Archduke Charles* on 16 February 1813.
2. John Anderson, arrived Sydney on the *John Barry* from London on 26 September 1819.

3. John Anderson, arrived Sydney on the *Northampton* from London on 17 June 1815 [*HRA* 1.8: 553] and ran from her. *

* The only person who arrived on the *Northampton* that I have found to have absconded from her was George Bass, see muster of the Schooner *Henrietta Packet*, [p.] 41, No. 29/121, September 1817 (NSW Ships Musters 1816-1825).

NB: Whether this John Anderson ran or was discharged, the chronological sequence suggests that he next sailed in the Brig *Rosetta*, Griffiths, for the seal fishery on 1 January 1816 (*SG* 16 December 1815: 2d, 6 January 1816: 2c). He may have continued serving on her until September 1818 (including trips to Kangaroo Island), when she was sold to the Tasmanian government.

1818, 3 October. 'No. 35/174. Muster of the Brig *Jupiter*, bound for the Derwent in VDL [mustered]

3 October 1818. ... 6. John Anderson, came free in the *N'hampton*.'

4. John Anderson, one of the crew of *Endeavour* from Sydney for Bass Strait and King Island on 9 June 1818.

NB: He was not listed on the Official Muster of the *Endeavour* on 28 May 1818 (NSW Ships Musters 10 December 1816-16 April 1825), but he may have shipped on board before she sailed twelve days later.

5. John Anderson, ex *Lady Nelson*, one of the crew of *Alligator* which sailed for the seal fishery on 10 June 1823.'

Plomley and Henley also included:

6. James Anderson on the *Nereus* from Sydney for Bass Strait on 9 November 1824, and on the *Alligator* for Kangaroo Island on 9 April 1825 [*SG* 29 May 1823: 4c].

7. James Anderson, a convict, per *Mary* from Cork arrived Sydney on 25 August 1819.

NB: Only one male convict arrived on this first voyage of the *Mary* and his name was Michael Marion/Merrin. Source: two entries in the 1823-1825 NSW General Muster: 'Marion, Michael / Convict / *Mary* (1) / Arrived: 1819 / Sentence: 7 / Employments: GS, Wm Howe, Minto.' (Baxter 1999: 382, #32048); and Merrin, Michael / Convict / *Mary* / Arrived: 1819 / Sentence: 7 / Employments: Government Servant to Thomas Sylvester, Sydney.' (Baxter 1999: 394, #32770).

NB: He died in Dubbo, NSW in 1862 (Australia Death Index, Ancestry.com.au).

My own listings of sealing voyages that involved a John Anderson suggest that at least four individuals were involved, but incomplete records of voyages and other unresolved uncertainties prevent tracing their separate careers. In any case none of the 27 John Andersons recorded above was referred to as a black man.

John William Anderson. His known activities, 1833 to 1836.

What follows is a brief sequential account of Anderson's activities in south-eastern Australia and later in Western Australia, from 1833 to his reported death in 1836, drawn from the voluminous court records transcribed in full in Appendix A, items ##1-47, and to which readers are directed for the full details of what contemporaries described of his activities or were alleged by them to have transpired.

1834, September. Anderson was sealing from base on Long Island, evidently a sealers' name for Thistle Island which lies off the western side of the entrance to Spencer Gulf in South Australia (items ##1-3). In September he visited George Meredith at Kangaroo Island, where Meredith had recently arrived in a whaleboat from the wreck of the schooner *Defiance*, of which he was master, at 'Cape Howe Island' (evidently Gabo Island) in September 1833. In the boat was James Manning, an un-named crewman and Meredith's native wife. They assisted Meredith to establish a dwelling and a garden. Manning went with Anderson and his crew to Thistle Island, sealing.

1834, November. Anderson and Manning were at Bird Island * when visited by Meredith who accused Manning of robbing him of £4 10 shillings, and proceeded with threats and Anderson's assistance to relieve Manning of that amount (items ##1-3).

* Not an official or otherwise recognised name. This island was presumably situated in the vicinity of Thistle Island. The bird which gave the island its local name was probably the Short-tailed shearwater or mutton bird, *Puffinus tenuirostris*. The un-fledged young were a favoured seasonal staple in the sealers' diet. Burrow-nesting mutton birds would have then been densely abundant in season on many of the islands in the region.

1834, November. Four men in another whaleboat (George Roberts, John Howlett,

Harry ----? and William Forbes) were at Thistle Island, and presumably were engaged in sealing. From Boston Island these men abducted five native women and two men from the adjacent mainland in the vicinity of Port Lincoln. On the (Boston?) island, in concert with Anderson, the two native men were murdered, and two infants at breast were taken from their mothers and disposed of by an old servant native woman who was ordered to do so (see items ##1-3).

1835, January / February. The *Mountaineer*, a small cutter of just 23 tons, Evanson Jansen master, arrived at the Thistle Island. Manning paid Jansen £3 to be taken to King George's Sound, the cutter's ultimate destination. Anderson sailed in his whaleboat in company with the cutter to Middle Island in the Recherche Archipelago, where Manning remained, commenting that Jansen was always drunk. Manning lost his remaining money and accused Anderson of stealing it, which Anderson evasively denied, (items ##2, 3) or became threatening (item #18). Nevertheless Manning persisted in accusing Anderson of the theft, and implicated Isaac Winterbourne, one of Anderson's associates (items ##9-11, 12, 13-15, 19-20, 21, 23-24).

NB: Boston Island, just to the east of Port Lincoln in 34° 43' S., 135° 55' E.

1834, 4 November. 'Launceston. Departure. ... On Tuesday [4th], the *Mountaineer*, Biornson [*sic*, C.L. Biornson], master, for King George's Sound.' (*Launceston Advertiser* 6 November 1834: 3e).

1834, 9 December. '*Mountaineer* arrived [Portland Bay] from Launceston bound to King Georges Sound on a Sealing Voyage, Johnson [*sic*] Sealing Master.' Edward Henty's Journal (Peel 1996: 42).

1835, early February. Charles Lambert Biornson, sealing master of the *Mountaineer*, after arriving at Middle Island on 6 or 7 February noted that several items were missing from the cutter (item #21).

1835, 22 February. *Mountaineer* arrived King Georges Sound (Nicholson 1985: 16, citing a wreck report, but which?) / Arrived Albany, Evanson Jansen master, having called at Middle Island and **Long Island in the Recherche Archipelago** (WA Museum Shipwreck Database).

1835, 14 March. *Mountaineer* departed Albany and sailed eastwards to continue sealing. On board: Jansen + 2 crew: James Ward and Thilt + 5 passengers: James Newell, his two sisters Dorothy & Mary, Mary's husband Matthew Gill, & **Mr Church Owens** [*sic*, William Church; Owens listed but no given name] (WA Museum Shipwreck Database).

NB: Charles Biornson was also on board.

1835, 22 March. *Mountaineer* anchored in Thistle Cove (item #4).

1835, 24 March. *Mountaineer* went ashore in a gale, wrecked, all saved (item #4).

NB: Stone (2006: 640) briefly reviews earlier published references to this wreck, citing inconsistencies and errors, but adds no new detail to the above.

1835, 3 April. Jansen, six men (Charles Biornson, seamen James Ward and Thilt, passengers William Church, James Newell, and Matthew Gill), and two women (Dorothea Newell and her sister Mary Gill) arrived at Middle Island in a whaleboat from the wreck of the *Mountaineer* at Thistle Cove on the adjacent mainland (item #4). Biornson found the missing items in Anderson's possession (item #21).

1835, c. end of May. According to James Manning, five of the above from the shipwreck left for King Georges Sound in the cutter's boat, without provisions (item #2). However, according to James Newell, about three weeks after they landed on Middle Island - Owens, Moore, James Ward, Thilt, [John] White, and the boy James - went away in the *Mountaineers* small Whale boat to proceed to King

Georges Sound (item #4).

NB: Newell's statement could at first be construed as meaning that those who departed in the whaleboat had all arrived at Middle Island from the wreck, but Moore, White and the boy James did not sail in the *Mountaineer* from Albany.

1835, 23 June. Anderson, having finally decided to release James Manning and James Newell, landed them on the adjacent mainland to walk to King George's Sound, but he denied them provisions, money or even a charge of gun powder to light fires (items ##2-3, 22).

The first of the following newspaper articles about John William Anderson enlarge on the above, containing further details which must have been obtained from Newell and Manning shortly after the Albany court hearings. The second makes several dramatic claims apparently based on rumour and hearsay:—

1833 – 1835. ‘The following narrative has reached us by the recent arrival from King George’s Sound ... On the 9th of August last, two English lads, named James Newell and James Manning, reached King George’s Sound from the mainland opposite Middle Island, after experiencing the most bitter privations for nearly seven weeks on the main, and about two years on the islands in Spencer’s Gulf. ...

They sailed from Sydney in the month of August, 1833, in the *Defiance* schooner, of about 25 tons burthen, lading with provisions for trading with the sealers on the islands on the southern coast of Australia, and bound to King George’s Sound and Swan River, commanded by Mr. George Meredith. They were wrecked in September of the same year on Cape Howe Island [Gabo Island?]. They went in a whaleboat with the commander, one man, and a native woman, to Kangaroo Island ; the remainder of the crew of the schooner (six men) determined to make for Sydney, and accordingly started, in another whale-boat : they never heard what became of them. They did not reach Kangaroo Island until February, 1834, being five months, during which time, they state, they were doing their utmost to make the passage. (It is to be regretted that we have not here a more detailed statement of the manner in which these five months were occupied—it is idle to imagine that they were so long a time ‘*doing their utmost to make the passage!*’). They established themselves on Kangaroo Island, built a house for the commander and his native wife, and made a garden. In September, 1834, a black man, named Anderson arrived at Kangaroo Island, in a boat, from Long Island [[Thistle Island, see statement by C.L. Biornson made at the Albany Court House, 9 September 1835](#)], with another black man, named John Bathurst. Manning and his companion took a passage with them to Long Island. They were obliged to continue working in the boat, sealing, to obtain their provisions. In November, 1834, George Meredith, their commander, whom they left on Kangaroo Island, came to a bird island, where they happened to be, and accused Manning of having robbed him of 4l. 10s. and, with loaded pistols, and with the assistance of Anderson, took from him the sum of 4l. 10s. There was another whale-boat on Long Island, with four men in her, named George Roberts, John Howlett, Harry and William Forbes. In November, on Boston Island [34° 42' 11" S, 135° 55' 57" E], the people in this latter boat caught five native women from the neighbourhood of Port Lincoln ; they enticed two of the husbands into the boat, and carried them off to the island, where in spite of all remonstrance, on the part of Manning, they took the women in Anderson’s boat round a point a short distance off, where they shot them, and knocked their brains out with clubs. Manning believes they still have the women in their possession, with the exception of Forbes, whose woman ran away from him

shortly after they were taken to the island. Two of the infants had infants at their breasts at the time their husbands were murdered ; an old woman was compelled to take them away, and carried them into the bush. Another native endeavoured to swim to the island, to recover his wife, but was drowned in the attempt. In January, 1834, a small cutter, called the *Mountaineer*, commanded by Evenson Janson, arrived at the island, in which vessel Manning paid 3l. , for his passage to King George’s Sound ; Janson being always drunk, by some misunderstanding, Manning lost his passage. Manning and his comrade frequently begged of Anderson to land them on the main, that they might walk to King George’s Sound, ; but he refused. When Manning landed on Middle Island from the *Mountaineer* he had 50l. in his possession, in Spanish dollars and English specie. This money Anderson stole ; he was seen counting it with a man named Isaac, who had also another lot of money rolled up in canvas. Early in April, Janson, the master of the *Mountaineer*, arrived at the island, in a boat, with six men, and two women,—the vessel having been driven on shore in Thirtle Cove [*sic*, Thistle Cove, 34° 01' S, 122° 11' E]. About the end of May, five of these people left the island, in a boat, without any provisions, intending to proceed to King George’s Sound. On the 23rd of June, Anderson, at the solicitation of Manning, and his fellow traveller, James Newell, landed them on the mainland, but would not give them a charge of powder. They subsisted chiefly on limpits [*sic*], and on roots of grass ; but were sometimes, for days, without little or nothing to eat. They found at all times sufficient water, although they never left the neighbourhood of the coast. Arrived at Henty, Oyster Harbour, on the 9th of August, reduced almost to skeletons, and having almost lost the power of articulation.

It is interesting to know, that these lads owed their safety entirely to the humane treatment they met with from the natives of the White Cockatoo, Murray, and Will-men tribes. From the moment they fell in with them, their exertions were unabated to restore them sufficiently to enable them to accomplish their journey ; they nursed, fed, and almost carried them at times, when, from weakness, they were sinking under their sufferings. . . .

The general vagueness of this report, more especially the five months’ delay unaccounted for, had left an impression unfavourable to the lads’ statement ; but on reference to the *Sydney Herald* of the 24th of October, 1833, two months subsequently to the departure of the *Defiance* from that port, we find the following paragraph:—

“The schooner *Defiance*, Captain Meredith, which has left Sydney about a *month*, (the variation in the lads’ statement of a month, after so long a lapse of time, may be reasonably accounted for), on a sealing voyage, was unfortunately wrecked on the coast, about 15 miles below Two-fold Bay,—all hand saved. The schooner *Blackbird* has gone in search of the wreck. The *Defiance* had about 400 worth of property in her when the accident occurred, and not insured.

NB: The statement that the *Defiance* was wrecked 15 miles south of Two-fold Bay, on ‘Cape Howe Island’, does not compute. There is no island on the NSW coast south of that Bay. However, estimates of distance long after the event are unreliable, and the only island in the vicinity of Cape Howe is Gabo Island, which lies about 5 miles further west and is at least 30 miles by sea from Two-fold Bay.

It is to be regretted that our informants were not more minute in their inquiries ; a little acuteness in their inquiry would have opened to us the conduct and characters of those employed on the southern coast as sealers, by our neighbours in Van Diemen’s Land. Passing, as they represent they did, along the coast in a whale-boat, with ample time for observation—five months,—although we cannot doubt the fact, indeed, believe it to be fully confirmed, leaves an hiatus in the narrative, which may be gratifying to some of our romantic readers, but is annoying to us, searching as we do

for facts. ...

The habits of the men left on the islands to the southward, by whaling, or sealing vessels, have long borne the character given them by Manning and Newell ; it appears, therefore, deserving of some consideration by what means their practices can be checked, as future settlers in the neighbourhood of Port Lincoln will be made to expiate the crimes and outrages of these lawless assassins.' (*Perth Gazette* 3 October 1835: 575a-b).

[1842, 8 October]. 'Remarks Respecting the Islands on the Coast of S.W. Australia. ... [Continued] ... The great rendezvous of the sealers was the [Recherche] Archipelago of Islands to the eastward of Doubtful Island Bay, where they chiefly subsisted on wild geese and seal's [*sic*] flesh, and occasionally made a run to King George's Sound to purchase flour and other necessities, and sell their seal skins. Another party of sealers composed the crew of the *Mountaineer*, a small craft from Van Diemen's Land, which was wrecked near the Archipelago many years ago. In sealing expeditions, the crew, instead of wages, receive a share of the profits, and they are all on a footing of equality. The owner of the boat has one share for himself, and one for the use of the boat, and he is generally the headsman. One of the most daring of these people was a man of colour of the name of Anderson, and lawless as these men, they looked up to him with a sort of dread. Anderson usually carried a brace of pistols about him, knowing that he held his life by a very precarious tenure. By persevering exertions he had amassed a considerable sum of money, and usually kept one or two black women to attend him and administer to his wants, when not engaged in sealing. One of his crew met with an untimely end near Doubtful Island Bay, and the body was to be seen some years ago lying under a fall of water, with the throat cut from ear to ear. The constant wash of the water kept it a state of good preservation. Many were the conjectures respecting this body, and suspicions of foul play on the part of Anderson were loudly expressed, but no information was ever laid before the authorities, and if any of his crew were entrusted with the buried secret, they faithfully kept it.

The favourite resort of Anderson was *Manduran* Island [Middle Island], one of the isles of the Archipelago. This is one of the finest islands off the main, and contains some natural salt pans, from which immense quantities of that commodity might be annually obtained. The soil of Manduran is likewise good, and is well adapted for agricultural purposes. The late Mr. Henty, when on that part of the coast, took away with him to Van Diemen's Land a considerable quantity of the salt as a specimen. Strange to say, the salt on this island is of a reddish colour, formed probably by some vegetable substance. The last time Anderson paid a visit to Manduran he had a full boat's crew with him, and a black woman, but neither he nor the woman were ever more seen, and when the boat returned to King George's Sound the crew reported that he had thrown himself overboard, and the female had died of cold. Anderson had about him a considerable sum in specie, which the sealers usually strap around their bodies in a leathern belt, so suspicious are they of foul play amongst themselves, and he likewise had money concealed at the Sound, but this was in all likelihood distributed amongst the sharers in the plunder of the dead. Having quarrelled among themselves, one of the gang unfolded the mystery. They got quite disgusted with Anderson's harshness, and determined to remove him, but were puzzled how to accomplish it, as he was a stout, powerful man, and being armed was always on his guard. At last, one day when he was asleep in the tent, one of them entered and, taking deliberate aim, blew his brains out. The corpse was thrown into a

hole, and covered over with earth, they then shared the booty, and killed the native woman in case she would afterwards tell the tale. / W.N. Clark. (To be continued.)' (*Perth Gazette* 8 October 1842: 3d-4a).

NB: Writing six years after Anderson's reported death in December 1836, Clark did not favour his readers with any clue to his source or sources. Considering that sealers were generally very close-mouthed about their activities, due in part to competition for seal skins and certainly to avoid any scrutiny and interference by the authorities, the highly coloured and dramatic nature of Clark's tale strongly suggests that it was based on rumour and hearsay.

1835, c.11 August. Anderson's sealing boat seen at Bald Island by John William Andrews. Was left there in charge of John White, one of the boat's crew. Andrews, Anderson and Winterbourne thence to King George's Sound in a boat said to belong to Anderson. Statement by J.W. Andrews, 8 September 1835. (item #16).

NB: Bald Island, Recherche Archipelago, in 34° 55' S, 118° 28' E.

1835, 6 September. Anderson, Winterbourne and Andrews, arrived King George's Sound from Bald Island. (#16).

1835, 10 November. Anderson returned to Middle Island after an absence of about ten weeks [he had visited Bald Island] and found his two native women absent and various articles including five seal skins missing from his hut. (#34).

1835, 24 November. Anderson found one of the women on Twin Peaks Island, who said she had been taken from Middle Island by J.W. Andrews who had told her Anderson was lost, i.e. dead. (##34, 35).

NB: Probably the larger North Twin Peak Island, in 33° 59' S., 122° 51' E.

1835, c.1 December. Anderson visited Thistle Cove and found that an anchor and chain cable he had salvaged from the wreck of the *Mountaineer* were missing ... and was later told that Andrews had offered the cable for sale. (#35).

1836, 18 March. John William Andrews made complaint in the Albany courthouse that Anderson had landed on Michaelmas Island the previous day and removed various articles belonging to him (#27). That Anderson had landed on Michaelmas Island from his sealing boat in King George's Sound on 17 March and removed various articles the property of John William Andrews was attested to by several witnesses. (##30, 31, 32).

NB: Michaelmas Island, in 35° 03' S, 118° 02' E.

1836, 18 March. Anderson claimed that he landed on waterless Michaelmas Island to reclaim the two native women removed from his camp at Middle Island, and to learn if Andrews had taken the five seal skins, and the salvaged anchor and cable. (#33).

1836, 18, 19 March. The Court found that Anderson did take the articles belonging to Andrews but without felonious intent. Andrews was satisfied that Anderson agreed to return the articles, and that Anderson was bound over to the sum of Twenty pounds not to interfere with his (Andrews') property whatsoever. Anderson to pay all the court and witnesses's costs. (##37, 39-40).

PART 2. GAMBLE / GAMBELL / GEMBLE / GIMBLE, Robert / Bob.

GAMBLE, Robert, Bob GAMBELL, Bob GEMBLE.

Origin: Said to have arrived free in the *Surry*, but not traced. The *Surry* made several voyages to the Australian colonies.

Women: None of Tasmanian origin (?)

Notes:

1. Sealer for three years, including 10 months on King Island (1831).
2. Arrived on the *Surry*, which brought prisoners to the colonies on four occasions: July 1814, December 1816, March 1819, and March 1823, and there were trading voyages as well.
3. Gamble shot MUR.RER.NING.HE (Kit) at the Kent Group, and had earlier shot a woman at Hunter Island.
4. Employed by Hugh Macguinnis [*sic*] of Carlton on his schooner.
5. Perth Gazette 7 [*sic*, 8th] October 1842 reported that Bob Gemble was still living on Bald Island about 20 miles east of King George Sound with his black gins and his children.

(Plomley and Henley 1990: 45).

Voyages of the ship *Surry* from England to Australia:—

1. 1814, 27/28 July. 'The Male Convict Transport Ship *Surry* which arrived ... on the 28th instant, having brought a malignant Fever ... of which the Master [Paterson], first Mate and forty other Men have died ...' (SG 30 July 1814: 1a/2a).

1814, 8 November. 'On Tuesday last [8th] sailed for China the ship *Surry*, Captain Raine.' (SG 12 November 1814: 2a).

2. 1819, 4 March. 'On Thursday last [4th] arrived the transport ship *Surrey*, commanded by Captain Raine, ...' (SG 6 March 1819: 2c).

1819, 12 March. '*Surry*, ship, Captain Raine ... sailed for Van Diemen's Land March 12.' departed Sydney for Hobart Town (NSW Pocket Almanack 1820: 118).

1819, 18 March. 'On Thursday [18th] arrived the ship *Surry*, Captain Raine, ...' (HTG 20 March 1819: 2c).

1819, 21 April. 'On Wednesday [21st] returned from Hobart Town, which she left on the 7th instant, the ship *Surry*, Capt. Raine.' (SG 24 April 1819: 2b / HTG 10 April 1819: 1a).

1819, 25 July. 'On Sunday morning last [25th] sailed for England the ship *Surry*, Captain Raine.' (SG 31 July 1819: 2b).

3. 1820, 20 August. Hobart. 'On Sunday last [20th] arrived from England the ship *Surry*, Captain Raine, with merchandize.' (HTG 26 August 1820: 2a).

1820, 24 September. 'On Sunday last [24th] arrived from England via Hobart Town, which she left the 8th instant, the ship *Surry*, Captain Raine, with merchandize.' (SG 30 September 1820: 3a).

1820, 10 December. 'On Sunday last [10th] sailed the ship *Surry*, Captain Thomas Raine, for coast of Peru.' (SG 16 December 1820: 3a).

1821, 2 June. 'This morning arrived from Valparaiso, with 15,000 bushels of wheat, in excellent condition, a quantity of tobacco, and sundries, the ship *Surry*, Capt. Raine.' (SG 2 June 1821: 2b).

1821, 4 September. 'On Tuesday [4th] sailed for Macquarie Island the ship *Surry*, Captain Raine. The *Surry* will soon return, as she is only to land a gang with provisions.' (SG 8 September 1821: 3a).

NB: Robert Gamble not listed on muster of the *Surry*, taken on 23 August, either as crew or a sealer (NSW Ships Musters 1816-1825).

1821, 6 December. arrived from Macquarie Island, with 310 tons of oil on board, the ship *Surry*, Captain Raine.' (SG 8 December 1821: 3a).

1822, 15 February. 'On Friday last [15th] sailed for England, the ship *Surry*, Captain Raine.' (SG 22 February 1822: 2b).

NB: Robert Gamble not listed on muster of the *Surry*, taken on 23 August, either as crew or a sealer (NSW Ships Musters 1816-1825).

4. 1823, 6 March. 'On Thursday [6th] arrived, the ship *Surry*, Captain Thomas Raine, with 150 male prisoners, ... She left Portsmouth the 29th October last, and comes direct.' (SG 13 March 1823: 2a).
1823, 6 May. 'On Tuesday last [6th] the ship *Surry*, Capt. Raine, sailed for the cedar grounds, ...' (SG 8 May 1823: 2a).
1823, c.20 July Ship *Surry* arrived Sydney from Port Macquarie (Cumpston 1977: 143).
1823, 17 August. 'On Sunday [17th] sailed for England, the ship *Surry*, Captain Powers, ...' (SG 21 August 1823: 2a).

'Gamble came to the colony in the *Surrey* [*Surry*] (Captain Raine). He was employed by Hugh McGuinness/Macginnis of the Carlton on board his schooner. The *Surrey* made a number of voyages to Port Jackson under the command of Captain Raine between 1814 and 1823, sometimes with convicts, sometimes not.' (Plomley 1966: 1013; 2008: 475 note 86).

NB: A Hugh Macginnis (Senior) on a list of persons owing quit rents in Van Diemen's Land, in the District of Clarence Plains, 1819-1822 (Colonial Secretary Index 1788-1825. NSW State Records) / 'Hugh M'Ginnis, jun., ... I have resided at the Carlton about 12 or 13 years [from 1817/1818] ... Hugh M'Ginnis, senior, ... In June 1825 I resided at the Carlton ...' (*Colonial Times* Hobart 17 November 1830: 3c-d).

NB: Although Gamble cannot be placed on any of the *Surry*'s arrivals, if he had been discharged at Hobart in March 1819 he could have been employed by McGinnis soon after. No other record found of his activities in Tasmania or elsewhere until 1829. He possibly remained in Macginnis' service until he went sealing.

1829-1931. Gamble / Gambell. 'Sealer 3 years (10 months on King Island). Informed Robinson that he had been told by Dobson that a sealer named Knight had been murdered on King Island by his associate so as to gain possession of his two VDL women and some seal skins. Knight was killed by a blow on the head with a tomahawk. Dobson also told him of the murder of a VDL woman on King Island by beating her with a club. The woman was from Cape Grim and had been forcibly removed to King Island.' (Plomley 1966: 1013; 2008: 1054).

NB: Derived dates and estimates of age are based on June 1831.

[1830]. Native woman MUR.RER.NING.HE, alias Kit, shot by Bob Gambell at Kent's Group, George Augustus Robinson's Journal, 11 October 1830 (Plomley 1966: 246, 338; 2008: 281).

1830, 9 December. Sent by the Governor in the brig *Resource* from Hobart to Robinson at Swan Island, '... is a free man and had been in the straits sealing for a short time.' Robinson Journal (Plomley 2008: 323); 'Gamble, a free man, had come to the colony in the *Surrey* (Captain Raine) and at the time of entering Government service had been employed by Mr Hugh Macginnis of the *Carlton* on board his schooner. In support of his application [to the Aboriginal Committee] Gamble said that he had been 'a long while in Bass's Straits' and knew all the islands there 'well'. He arrived at Swan Island on 9 December.' Robinson Journal (Plomley 1966: 443, n, 86; 2008: 475, n. 86).

1831, 3 March. Engaged as coxswain on Robinson's boat, in spite of Robinson's protests. Robinson Journal (Plomley 1966: 319, 329, 359, 361-362, 443 n. 86, 450 n. 118; 2008: 352; 483, n. 118).

1831, 9 April. John Anderson, at Kents Group with Robinson, said that 'Gamble shot the woman from inside the house; he was firing at a stump and the woman jumped up from behind the stump and run into the house when she was shot and took the man she lived with by the collar and then dropped down dead. Saw the grave where she was buried.' Robinson Journal (Plomley 1966: 338, 356; 2008: 372).

1831, 30 April. Gamble sent in quest of sealers' women at the Stack Island, but Tucker and eight others proceeded earlier to remove them; Gamble in league with

them? Robinson Journal (Plomley 1966: 347; 2008: 380).

1831, 19 July. Robinson informed that ‘Gamble had gone in [to Hobart?] a prisoner for shooting the two [*sic*] black women.’ Robinson Journal (Plomley 1966: 381; 2008: 413, 424).

1831, 29 July. Robinson interrogated Tibb who was present when the woman was shot, positively declared that he [Gamble] concealed himself and waited, and when the woman came near then deliberately took up his musket and shot her through the body.’ Robinson Journal (Plomley 2008: 424).

1831, 1 August. Joseph Mason related a story told by Gamble of a New Zealander at Cape Barren who buried a half-caste child alive to stop its crying, that Gamble laughed heartily whilst reciting ‘the monstrous and inhuman circumstance.’ Robinson Journal (Plomley 1966: 392; 2008: 425).

1831. List of members of Robinson’s expedition in search of natives: Robert Gamble, boatman, coxswain (ex-sealer; charged with murder of two native women, July 1831). (Plomley 2008: 511).

?????

1836, 16 January. Albany Court House. Robert Gamble appeared as witness in the case of Isaac Winterburn / Winterbourn (a sealer associated with Anderson), charged with assaulting Charles Lambert Biomson [*sic*, Biornson] a mariner, on evening of 12 January at the Ship Inn, Albany. (##25-26).

1836, 2 November. Albany Court House. Robert Gamble / Gemble appeared charged with striking Mrs Earl in the face on the afternoon of 31 October at the Ship Inn, Albany, apparently in retaliation for a light blow received from the lady [(##43-44). Attested to by witnesses Samuel Hawkes (##41-42) and John Anderson * (##43-44).

* No evidence to suggest that this could have been the sealer John William Anderson.

1836, 2 November. Albany Court House. Two Justices of the Peace found that Gamble struck Mrs Earl on account, he claimed, of Earl having circulating a report that he, Gamble, had cohabited with Mrs Anderson, the wife of John Anderson, during his absence. Gamble was fined one pound sterling, with costs. (##45, 46).

1842, (8 October). Bob Gemble, ‘living on Bald Island, about thirty kilometres to the eastward of King George Sound, with black women and his children by them.’ (*Perth Gazette*, 8 October 1842; Keneally 2009: 301).

Appendix A. Albany Court Records relating to John William Anderson, and Robert Gamble, 1835 - 1837.

Transcribed with permission of the State Records Office of Western Australia.

NB: The State Records Office reference code extends only to date, and on some days multiple hearings were recorded. To allow precise cross-referencing in my texts to individual documents transcribed here I have allotted each a unique number, in square brackets— series #1 to #47. These numbers refer to the individual digital images provided by SROWA, so that a document written on both sides of a leaf (recto and verso) has two sequential numbers. Similarly, the images of a document of more than one page but written on the recto only are also numbered sequentially. However, please note that on those days of multiple hearings my imposed chronological sequence is tentative at best.

NB: Many of the following series of court records were written on various printed forms, each specifically designed according to the nature of the hearing. For emphasis I have highlighted the printed words of the first two examples (items ##6, 7) in bold. All handwriting is rendered in italics. My insertions within a transcription are in square brackets. An asterisk within a transcription indicates an annotation beneath. Explanatory comments are preceded by the notation 'NB:'

[#1, #2, #3] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 13 August 1835

NB: Written on a wide sheet folded once vertically creating a recto, then opened to a verso of a left and right hand page.

[Recto. #1]:

The Declaration of James Manning

Passenger for Swan River Sailed from Sydney [^] in the month of August 1833 -in the
Defiance Schooner about 25 Tons burthen laden with [^] *Provisions* for trading with the
Sealers on the Islands, on the South Coast of Australia, [^] & bound to K. G. Sound & Swan
[River] Commanded by Mr Geoge [sic] Meredith ~~in the month of August 1833~~. Was
Wrecked in Sept, of the same year on Cape Howe Island, Went in a Whale boat with
the Commander, One Man, and a Native Woman, to Kangaroo Island; the remainder
of the Crew of the Schooner, Six men, went to Sydney, in another Whale boat, never
heard what became of them - Did not reach Kangaroo Island till February 1834.
being five months doing their utmost to make the passage - Remained at Kangaroo
Island, & built a house, and Garden for the Commander, whom he left there, with his
Native Wife. In Sep't 1834. A Black man named Anderson arrived at Kangaroo Island
in a boat with one other black man named John Bathurst, from Long Island. They
gave him [^] ***Declar't*** / a passage to Long Island. Was obliged to continue working, in
the boat, in order to obtain provisions - In Nov'r 34 George Meredith came to a Bird
Island where [^] ***Declar't*** ~~the~~ boat was and accused Decl't of having robbed him of
4^L 10^s - and with loaded Pistols, and the assistance of Anderson and robbed Decl't of
4^L 10^s - There was another Whale boat on Long Island with ~~three~~ four men in her
named George Roberts, John Howlett, Harry, and William Forbes - In Nov'r on
Boston Island the people in this ~~boat~~ latter [^] ***boat*** caught 5 Native Women from the
neighbourhood of Port Lincoln, and enticed ...

[Verso #2]:

... two of their husbands into the boat, / ~~One other Native was drowned~~ and carried them off
to the Island, where in spite of the remonstrances of ***Declar't*** they, Anderson,
Roberts, Harry - Forbes, and Bathurst went with the two native men in Andersons
boat, just round a point, where they shot them, and beat their brains out with Clubs,
& ***Declar't*** believes they still have the women in their possession, except Forbes, the
women he had, having ran away shortly after. Two Infants the women had at the
breast, at the time, they murdered their husbands - they gave to an Old woman &
made her carry them into the bush - / ~~One other Native was drowned endeavouring to swim to the~~
Island [*for his Wife, see #9*] In Jan'y 1835. A small Cutter called the ***Mountaineer*** [^]
Commanded by ***Evanson Janson*** arrived ~~at the~~ / at the Island in which ***declar't*** paid 3^L for
his passage to King Georges Sound. Jansen [sic] always being Drunk ***Dec't*** remained
on Middle Island. Anderson with his boat also went to Middle Island with the
Mountaineer, ***Decl't*** frequently begged Anderson to land him on the Main, that he
might walk to King Georges Sound, but he refused. When ***Declar't*** landed on Middle
Island from the ***Mountaineer***, he had 50^L / 46 .16 [sic] in his possession. in Spanish
Dollars & English Silver - This money Anderson Stole. ***Declar't*** saw it in his
possession, counting it, with a Man named Isaac - Saw also another Lot of money in
his possession rolled up in Canvas - Early in April Jansen the Master of the
Mountaineer arrived at the Island in a boat with 6 men and two women, the vessel
having been driven ashore, in Thistle Cove - About the end of May five of these people
left the Island in the boat, for King Georges Sound, without any provisions - On 23^d
June Anderson at the ...

[Verso #3]:

... request of the Declar't & his fellow traveller James Newell ~~was~~ landed them, on the main Land, but would not give them a charge of Powder - Subsisted chiefly on Limpits, and on roots of Grass, but were sometimes 5 days, with little, or nothing to Eat - found sufficient water, never left the neighbourhood of the Coast, reached Henty, Oyster Harbour on the 9th August.

[signed] James Manning

Declared before me

this 13th day of August 1835.

for his Wife - [see left column above]

[signed] Rich'd Spencer

[#4, #5]. SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 19 August 1835

[Recto]:

Declaration of James Newell states that he sailed from Albany in the **Mountaineer** Cutter commanded by Jansen on the night of the 14th of March 1835 - there embarked from Albany besides Declar't, Matthew Gill, and his wife, her sister Dorothy Newel [sic], Mr Church – Owens there were two Seamen besides named James Ward & Thilt - Anchored at Thistle Cove about the 22nd of March. The vessel wrecked on the Shore of Thistle Cove, the second day after they anchored - Jansen saved a large sum of money rolled up in Canvas, & a small quantity of Brandy, & flour. They all remained at Thistle Cove for ten days, five Natives joined them there, were quite civil, and did them no injury They then all went in the whale boat to Middle Island, a Black Man named Anderson, ~~a man~~ an Englishman named Isaac — James Manning / one named Frank — one - White a boy named F[r]ancis - and three Native women two of them living with Anderson, and one with Isaac - Anderson had a Whale boat which he calls his now, the other men were under his orders, belonging to his boat he has also a house, and garden Declar't engaged as on[e] of the boats Crew in Anderson's boat, & went Sealing around the neighbouring Islands - till June - About three weeks after they landed on Middle Island - Owens, Moore, James Ward Thilt -White, and the boy James - went away in the **Mountaineers** small Whale boat to proceed to King Georges Sound never heard of them since but on his Journey up along the Coast saw two Men walking on an Island with green bushes on the middle of it, saw no smoke - believes it was about half way up from Middle Island - On the 23d June Anderson landed Declar't and James Manning on the main land for them to walk to King Georges Sound, without any provisions, Isaac gave ...

[Verso]:

... Manning two Charges of Powder to make fire with but no Shot Knows that James Manning had 46 L-15 s - Sewn up in his Cloaths bag, in Andersons charge, that Manning wanting his bag, when they came away; found the Money gone and taxed Anderson with having taken it, on which Anderson took up a Gun, to shoot Manning; and on the latter putting the Muzzle on one side Anderson & Isaac both drew their Seal knives, and threatened to murder him the next day Decla't Saw Anderson, & Isaac in thick bush, counting the Money, when he called Manning, and they both saw it; also the money rolled up in Canvas, which belonged to Jansen, and had also been Stolen from him - When Anderson saw Manning had detected him with the money, he offered to give him Fifteen Pounds, but Manning would have all, or none - They never saw a Native during their journey till within two days of King Georges Sound they were very kind to them, giving then some Kangaroo flesh & a piece of dead Whale -

fetched them water, and made them fire - never crossed a river / or rivulet in the whole distance, till they met the Natives - Arrived at King Georges Sound 9th August - Declared before me

At Albany this 19th day of August 1835
[signed] *Richard Spencer*

[#6] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 7 September 1835
[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of Dorothy Newell of Albany in the said Colony, ... , taken on oath this 7th day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five before Sir Rich'd Spencer of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, acting in and for the said Colony, in the presence and hearing of [blank] charged before [blank] the said Justice with [blank]

This deponent saith, *that last Evening Richard Evans came to the house of Depon'ts Father and offered to send to the Town for Bread and Cheese and Grog, putting his hand in his Pocket saying that he had plenty of Money, and at the same time offered to send immediately to purchase a Gown saying that he could afford to buy a Gown now, that he had more Money than when Depon't was here before; made his money Jingle in his Pocket, at the same time saying that he had as much as Ten Pounds about him. That he would give Depon'ts Father some Money in the Morning if he would agree to his Marrying Depon't to-day* [*day' is written over 'morrow'*].

[signed] *Dorothea Newell*

Sworn before me at Albany
this Seventh day of Sept'r 1835
[signed] *Richard Spencer J:P:*

[#7, #8] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 7 September 1835
[Recto]:

I.
Colony of Western Australia to wit } The information and complaint of James Manning of Albany in the said Colony, [blank] , made on oath before me, Sir Richard Spencer , Esquire, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the said Colony, the seventh day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five

The said James Manning, on his oath saith
That about the beginning of June last on Middle Island he had Forty six Pounds Sixteen Shillings consisting of Four Sovereigns and a number of Spanish Dollars and English Silver sowed up in a Canvas Bag, ^ which was sewn up in a Canvas cloaths bag rolled up in a Coat, which he gave in charge to Anderson for greater Security that during the Absence of Anderson from the island he Depo't discovered that his money had been taken out of the bag, and the bag was sewn up again - On Anderson's return he denied all knowledge of it and one or two days after Depon't in Comp'y with James Newell saw Anderson and a man named Isaac sitting in a bush with Depon'ts bag of Money in their possession. Depon't saw Isaac take up the bag of money and hand it to Anderson who put into his Jacket Pocket.

Sworn before me this 7 Sept 35 Rich'd Spencer J.P. [signed] James Manning

[Verso]:

The Parties were acquitted of the Charge. Albany, Ninth day of September 1835.

[signed] Rich'd Spencer J.P. / P[eter] Belches J.P. / Alex[ander] Cheyne J.P.

[#9] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto]:

2.

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of: *James Manning* of *Albany* in the said Colony made on oath this *Eighth* day of *September* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty five before us two [^] *Sir Rich'd Spencer & Peter Belches Esq* of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the said Colony, acting in and for the said Colony, in the presence and hearing of *John Anderson and Isaac Winterbourne* charged before us the said Justice with *having feloniously stolen certain monies belonging to Deponent*

The deponent saith, *that John Anderson offered him or said he would give Dep't fifteen pounds ~~part of his money~~ because Dep'ts money was in his Anderson's possession where it was lost, this was in presence of Isaac Winterbourne & Jas. Newell. When he saw Anderson, and Isaac, with his bag of money, he immediately claimed it from Anderson, who said it was not Depon'ts. Depon't then asked him to take it out of his pocket again & let him see it, which he refused. Isaac Winterbourne also said that it was not Depon'ts money, and that Depon't should be careful how he accused people of robbing him, without he would swear to it. Anderson declared ~~that~~ after the Depon't had seen the Money in his possession that if it was on the Island he would find it in 24 hours - but he never found it - shortly after this, Depon't was sitting in a small Hut, when he heard Anderson exclaim where is that Bloody Convicts Bastard, he than placed a loaded Gun at his breast accusing him of having stolen **forty** / fifty [overwritten] odd pounds desiring him to return the money immediately. When Depon't pushed the gun on one side, Anderson drew a Sealing Knife and threatened to cut Depon'ts Throat Isaac Winterbourne had a naked knife in his hand at the same time, & called Depon't a bloody wretch and [^] *said* he had stolen his money also. There were present William Church, and Francis Mead - Anderson ran from Depon't. & several other persons on the Island accusing them of the same robbery, and threatening them, he and Mary Gill and Dorothy Newell calling out, crying out that they had not got the money - he then heard the gun fired, and William Church told the Depon't that Anderson fired it close the Church's head.*

[signed] James Manning

Sworn before us at Albany

this Eighth of September 1835.

[signed] Rh'd Spencer J.P. / P Belches J.P.

[#10] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto]:

3.

On the morning that Depon't was landed on the Main Land to walk to King George's Sound Anderson told Depon't that if he should find his Money he would bring it with him into Port, & that he would prosecute the Man on whom he found it. Anderson consequently mentioned the amount of Depon'ts money in presence of Jansen, &

others. Had seen the coin when Depon't paid him Three Pounds for Provisions - At the same time that Depon't Discovered Anderson, and Winterbourne with his bag of money he saw another Canvas parcel lying on the ground which James Newell told Depon't contained Money belonging to Johnson [an alias of Biornson's], which Johnson had lost - The bush in which Depon't discovered Anderson and Winterbourne with his money was situated about 150 Yards from Anderson's Hut, both Newell and himself saw them at the same time, does not recollect that any words passed between them before they were seen by Anderson, and Isaac the latter of whom immediately collected a few shillings that were out of the bag, and gave it to Anderson who put it into his Jacket - It was a few days after this transaction that Depon't left the Island - Anderson frequently told Depon't that Johnson must have his money and at other times that the women must have it. Depon't replied that no person but himself Anderson had Twine of the same description with which the bag had been sewed up again, after the money was taken out. Depon't had asked every one on the Island for a Needle ful [sic, full] of twine to sew a pair of Trousers, but they had none. Anderson told Depon't to be quiet, that when he should catch Johnson in the Bush, he would frighten him.

[signed] James Manning

*Sworn before us at Albany
this eighth day of Sep't 1835*

[signed] Rich'd Spencer J.P:

[signed] P Belches J.P. Alex Cheyne J.P.

[#11] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto]:

4.

and soon make him turn it up - he said that Johnson had an opportunity of taking the money out of the Store when he went in to resalt some Skins - Depon't said no that he had watched him to prevent his overhauling ~~you~~ his things - Anderson said on the morning Depon't discovered his money in A's possession that he would rather blow dep'ts brains out than take his money, and let him go to Port without any, after Depon't had behaved so well to him Anderson.

Sworn before us at Albany this Eighth day of Sep't 1835

[signed] Rich'd Spencer J.P. / P Belches J.P.

Questions by the Prisoners.

Was anyone present when you placed your Cloaths bag in my charge. No one was present but two black women who live with you. The bag was in the Charge of Anderson two or three weeks before Depon't missed his money, Missed it the night that the Hut took fire. Both Anderson, and Isaac were absent from the Island that night. It was possible for other persons to enter the Hut in Anderson's absence, without his knowledge, but not in the day time without the knowledge of Anderson's women, but the money might have been taken whilst they were asleep. Made no effort to take the bag from him, was afraid, was in fear of his Life never told any person that he had seen his bag of money in Anderson's possession.

[signed] James Manning

[#12] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia } To wit

The examination of James Manning continued taken on Oath before the Undersigned Justices of the Peace for the said Colony -

Deponent saith

I am enabled to swear that the Bag which I saw John Anderson and Isaac Winterburn have in their possession containing Money was my Bag that was stolen from me, from the circumstance of a particular seam being on the top of the Bag, and the seam alluded to was the only distinguishing mark on it, was not marked in any other way Newall [sic] was with me at the time above stated.

I never noticed any painted letter on the Bag.

[signed] *James Manning*

Sworn before me at Albany

This eighth day of September 1835

[signed] *Richard Spencer J.P.:*

[signed] *Alex Cheyne J.P.*

[#13] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto]:

1.

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of James Newell of Albany, in the said Colony,, taken on oath this Eighth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five before Three of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the said Colony, acting in and for the said Colony, in the presence and hearing of John Anderson and Isaac Winterbourne charged before us the said Justices with having feloniously stolen certain monies belonging to James Manning

This deponent saith that he arrived at Middle Island about the beginning of April last, that he found the Island in the possession of John Anderson Master of a Sealing boat there was on the Island a man named James Manning, that about a week, or two after Dep'ts arrival on the Island James Manning shewed him a bag made of Canvas which he told Depon't contained / money, it Rattled & shook it & Depon't heard as he supposed money jingle, and Manning told Dep't that the small bag contained 46-16-0 - had no more conversation about the money, or bag, till Manning told Depon't that his money had been taken out of his Cloaths bag, and the bag sewn up again - About three days after this Going into the bush to cut a stick in Comp'y with Manning Deponent saw John Anderson and Isaac Winterbourne sitting on the ground in a bush, with the bag of money which Manning had shown him as belonging to him lying on the ground between them, which Isaac took up, and gave to Anderson, who put it under his Coat - Manning then went close up to Anderson, and said, that is ^{My} money, give it to me it is mine. and no one else Anderson said no it is not your money it is my money, it is not yours at all - Anderson then said here's fifteen Pounds, as you are going to Port. I will give you, as you have lost your Money, and lay the blame upon me. Manning said he would not take it, he would have all. or none They then both went away, and did not say any more. Did not hear Isaac say anything.

Sworn before us at Albany

this eighth day of September 1835

[signed] *Richard Spencer J.P.:*

[signed] *Alex Cheyne J.P.*

his X Mark

his

James X Newell

mark [Clerk's hand]

[#14] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto]:

2.

Is quite sure there was no money on the ground, when he first saw the bag lying between Isaac and Anderson. The morning they left the Island, when in the boat, Anderson said If he found the money he would bring it into Port, and Prosecute the man who had it. Before Depon't saw the ^{bag} money in Anderson's possession, heard Anderson say if it was on the Island, he would have it in 24 hours - Told no one he had seen the bag in Anderson's possession, was afraid to do so. Recollects the morning after Manning had missed his bag of Money, John Anderson said he had lost 40 odd pounds, and heard him abuse Manning and point a Cocked Gun at him, threatening to shoot him if he did not return his money. Heard Anderson afterwards threaten every person, that was left on the Island - Heard Anderson afterwards ^{the} same day / go to Manning and say he was sorry for what he had said to him, accusing him; for that he had found his money, this was at the door of Manning's Hut - Heard Johnson say that he had lost all of his money between 70 and 80 Pounds. Never heard of any other person having lost money whilst he was on the Island. Heard Manning say that he had got his Money at Sydney, from the Sale of all his property, and that he was going to Swan River, when he was wrecked - Saw Anderson fire a Gun close to Church's head when he accused him of robbing him, at the same time saying that he would think no more of taking a Man's Life

*Sworn before us at Albany
this eighth day of September 1835
[signed] Richard Spencer J.P:
[signed] P Belches J.P.*

*his X Mark
James Newell
his
James X Newell
mark [Clerk's hand]*

[#15] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto]:

3.

*than he would of that; if he robbed him. Was afraid to mention having seen Anderson in possession of Manning's bag because he always carried a Gun about with him, Saw Anderson Draw a Sealer's knife out from behind him, when Manning put the Muzzle of the Gun on one side, saying if he didn't let go the Gun, he would Cut his Throat - At the time Depon't saw the bag on the ground between Isaac and Anderson is quite sure that he did not see any thing else lying on the ground near them - Does not recollect ever having told Manning that he had seen a Canvas parcel, containing money which Johnson had lost - is certain that he never made such a statement - Was positive that the bag he saw on the ground between Isaac, and Anderson, was the same bag Manning had shown ^{him} from a Mark on it, which he believes was the letter R -
On the Witness being asked if he could particularize any letter of the Alphabet he could not do it.
Is sure there was some mark on the bag like a letter - Had no other mark by which he could swear to the bag, if he saw it again - Depon't thinks that three weeks, or a month elapsed from the time Manning shewed him his bag, and the time he saw it in possession of Anderson - the bag was never in Depon'ts hands.*

Sworn before us at Albany
this eighth day of September 1835
[signed] Richard Spencer J:P:
[signed] P Belches J.P.

his X Mark
James Newell
his
James X Newell
mark [Clerk's hand]

[#16, #17] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of *John William Andrews* of Albany in the said Colony made on oath this *Eighth* day of *September* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-*five* before *Three* of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the said Colony, acting in and for the said Colony, in the presence and hearing of *John Anderson and Isaac Winterbourne* charged before us the said Justice with *having feloniously stolen certain monies belonging to Deponent James Manning*

The deponent saith *that on Sunday morning the sixth Instant he arrived in this harbour in a Whale boat said to belong to John Anderson, first saw the boat on Bald Island, about 26 days since [c.11 August] - Has no money now in his possession belonging to any person in the boat, but there is some money belonging to Anderson in charge of Samuel Hawkes, Landlord of the Ship Inn. John White one of the boats crew is left in Def'ts boat at Bald Island.*

[signed] *John Willieme [sic] Andrews.*

Sworn before us at Albany this Eighth day of September 1835

[signed] Richard *September [sic]* J:P:
[signed] *Alex Chayne J.P.*
[signed] *P Belches J.P.*

[Verso]:

Case of Manning versus Anderson & Winterbourne
7 & 8 Sep't 1835

[#18] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of *Francis Mead* of Albany, in the said Colony, ... , taken on oath this *Eighth* day of *September* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-*five* before *three* of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the said Colony, acting in and for the said Colony, in the presence and hearing of *John Anderson and Isaac Winterbourne*, charged before us the said Justices with --- [blank]

This deponent saith, *That on the passage from Long Island, to Middle Island, in a small vessel called the Mountaineer, he saw James Manning with a quantity of Gold and Silver money, counting it, does not know the amount. On the night Anderson's Hut took fire on Middle Island Manning told dep't that his bag of Money had been taken out of his Cloaths bag - Never heard Manning or Newell say that they had afterwards seen the bag of Money in the possession of John Anderson, and Isaac Winterbourne - Recollects the Day that Anderson said he had lost some money, Anderson with a loaded gun in his hand said he would blow the brains out of any man that had got his money, and immediately after fired off his gun pointed in the air, Church was at one end of the table, and Depon't at the other - Depon't never before*

this, heard that Anderson was in possession of Money - This took place fourteen, or fifteen days after Manning had told Depon't that his bag of Money was gone. Had Heard Manning say that he was afraid of Anderson - Heard Anderson threaten Manning, if he did not give him his money he would shoot him, heard a sort of a scuffle - Knows Isaac Winterbourne had money when he first came to the Island Saw Anderson borrow 3 Sovereigns from Isaac - There were no visible means of Anderson receiving any money between the time he borrowed 3 Sovereigns from Isaac and the ...

[signed] Francis Mead afs [aforesaid]

*Sworn before us at Albany
this eighth day of September 1835.*

[signed] Richard Spencer J:P:

[signed] P. Belches J.P.

[signed] Alex Cheyne J.P.

[#19] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto: ... theft / loss / disappearance?]

*... of Manning's bag during that period Anderson had been to T * G^t Island, and Thistle Cove - was alongside a small Vessel called the **Isabella** ~~when~~ the money was borrowed to pay the Commander of the Vessel for a Gun purchased from him. The Vessel was then under weigh, on her voyage - About an hour after the Disturbance, Anderson had made, respecting the loss of his money, Depon't went to James Manning who was in his Hut and told him if he knew any thing about the mans Money meaning Anderson's to let him have it, and not to keep a parcel of innocent persons under accusations he smiled, and Depon't said you have got the money, or know something about it - Depon't then called Anderson who came over, and Depon't told him that James Manning would give him his money. Manning then said to Anderson can you blame me for taking this money, when you know mine has been Stolen from me, and Anderson aswered [sic] no I cannot blame you. James Manning / then ...*

[signed] Francis Mead

*Sworn before us at Albany
this Eighth day of September 1835.*

[signed] Richard Spencer J:P:

[signed] Alex Cheyne J.P.

* A rather vague and sketchy letter T, resembling an I or J. Assuming G^t = Great, a search of colonial newspapers, early sailing directions, and modern gazetteers failed to yield any possible combination with a word commencing with an I or J. I take the shorthand to represent The Great Island, which would identify it as Mondrain Island, the only large island between Middle Island and Thistle Cove. Great Island would be appropriate as Mondrain is easily the largest island in the Recherche Archipelago.

[#20] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 8 September 1835

[Recto]: *... said to Anderson now you can get me my Money, you know where it is, and Anderson said he would get him his money in 24 hours but it would cost him some trouble, Depon't recollects now you name it, that he said, if it was on the Island - The three men left on the Island when the Hut was burnt were named - Manning, Church and Depon't there were also two Women living in the Hut where the Bag was. James Manning told Depon't that it was his own money which he gave to Anderson for fear that Anderson would shoot him - Depon't never heard whilst on the Island that Manning and Newell had seen the bag of money in the possession of Anderson, and*

Isaac - When Manning smiled & gave up the money to Anderson, Depon't saw nothing to suppose that Manning was giving up the money from Fear. Did not hear Manning ask Anderson not to expose him he might have said so Depon't was so much pleased he did not pay attention.

[signed] Francis Mead

Sworn before us at Albany
this eighth day of September 1835.
[signed] Richard Spencer J:P:

[#21] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 9 September 1835

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of *Charles Lambert Bianson* [sic] of Sydney in the ~~said~~ Colony of *Australia* taken on oath this *Ninth* day of *September* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-*five* before *Three* of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the said Colony, acting in and for the said Colony, in the presence and hearing of *John Anderson and Isaac Winterbourne*, charged before us the said Justices with *having feloniously stolen certain Monies belonging to James Manning*

This deponent saith, that *James Manning* in the month *January* last sailed as a passenger in the ***Mountaineer*** from *Thistle Island* to *Middle Island*. *Manning*, paid for his passage Depon't always ^{heard} that *Manning* had money in his possession. In returning to the *Island* in *May*, or *June* Depon't heard that *Manning* had lost his money - immediately that they landed on the beach *Manning* went down to the boat and addressing *Anderson*, told him that he had lost his money *Anderson* asked who he suspected, *Manning* said that he suspected no one but him *Anderson* - During the time Depon't was absent in the boat with *Anderson*, they had a conversation in which *Anderson* talked of burying several *Articles*, Depon't told him that where a man had plenty of money he could buy all those *Articles* he wanted, *Anderson* replied that he was a hundred pound Man every morning he rose in *Middle Island* - he added that if he had plenty of money, he had more of Depon'ts. Before this, *Anderson* asked Depon't to lend him *Ten Pounds* & he would repay Depon't in *Skins*, when he was able, or Depon't could leave the *Island* - When the Deponent arrived in the ***Mountaineer*** at *Middle Island* from *Thistle Island* [^] on the *6th* or *7th* *Feb'y* he missed several *Articles* from the vessel, *One Ash Oar* marked *Lennard* (?), *25 feet two Inch Rope*, *One new frying pan*, these articles Depon't found in the possession of *Anderson* when he returned to *Middle Island* in *May* - At which time he [^] Dep't had in his possession *Sixty five Pounds*, some odd *Shillings*. this money Depon't buried in the *Tent*.

[signed] C L Biornson

Sworn before us at Albany
this ninth day of September 1835.
[signed] Richard Spencer J:P:
[signed] Alex Cheyne J.P.
[signed] P. Belches J.P.

[#22] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 9 September 1835

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia. to Wit } Deposition of *Biarnson* [sic] continued

*the second day after his arrival on the Island, the day after this Anderson asked Depon't to lend him Ten pounds and on the following day Depon't on looking for his money found it had been taken away - Heard Manning ask Anderson to give him only 5 Pounds of his own money that he might not go to Port without a penny in his Pocket. Heard Anderson say that he had got his money back from Manning but he did [^] **not** want to have it mentioned - Depon't states that Anderson searched every article belonging to Manning the morning that he left the Island, in the boat, on the way to the Main Land*

[signed] C L Biornson

*Sworn before us at Albany
this Ninth day of September 1835.*

[signed] Richard Spencer J.P:

[signed] P. Belches J.P.

[signed] Alex Cheyne J.P.

[#23, #24] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 1, 9 September 1835

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of *Dorothy Newell* of Albany in the said Colony, , taken on oath this *9th* day of *September* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-*five* before *Us Three* of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, acting in and for the said Colony, in the presence and hearing of *James Manning John Anderson and Isaac Winterbourne*, charged before *us* the said Justices with the robbery of *James Manning*

This deponent saith, *I heard that James Manning had lodged a Clothes Bag containing [^] money in the Store Room of Anderson but I cannot call to my recollection who told me so It was a general report amongst the people on the Island - I have heard Manning state that the Aforesaid money was stolen from his Bag - but I did not hear that the money as in the bag until there was a report that Manning had lost it. - While the Bag was in the Store it was quite possible for other people to enter and open the Bag without the knowledge of Anderson during the period that Anderson was absent from the Island my sister Mary and myself Slept in the Store Room where the Bag was lodged and we were frequently absent from the Store during the day time for 2 or 3 hours at a time, there was no door or other means of securing the Store Room so as to prevent persons from entering There were no Black Women in the hut during Andersons absence as he took them with him, about 3 weeks after I landed on Middle Island I went to live with John Anderson during the time that I was living with him Anderson I never heard him say that he was in possession of any money till the time when he reported that he had been Robbed. Two days after Anderson said he had been Robbed he recovered the Money which was in a Canvas Waist Belt which Anderson showed to me. I saw the Coin which Consisted of Sovereigns, dollars, Sixpences, and Two Shilling pieces, I think ...*

[Verso]:

... I think it possible that Anderson might have been in possession of money when I first went to live with him without me Knowing it. The day before Anderson returned to the Island I left Andersons [^] Hut in Company with my sister Mary and during our absence some person had been there and opened Andersons Box we then questioned Frank Mead as to whether he knew any thing about it which he said he did not we then put the same question to Wm Church who gave the same answer we then went to

James Manning and accused him of opening the Box which he denied but acknowledged having turned it on one side and shook it, he then asked my Sister and Myself ^{to Swear} / on the Bible that we should not tell Anderson what had happened, which we refused, The day after that Anderson returned to the Island and when he opened his Box he discovered that his money had been taken out, upon ^{which} he accused my Sister and me of the Robbery we denied any knowledge of it, and my Sister then informed ^{him} that Manning had acknowledged having turned up the Box and shook ^{it} during our absence - Manning ^{told} My Sister and me not to mind what Anderson said about having his money for he Manning knew we had not got it. I heard Manning promise my Sister to send her a Gown and some Flour Tea and Sugar if he could get them on his arrival at King Georges Sound. This promise was made after Anderson had recovered his Money and 2 or 3 days previous. Mannings departure from the Island I saw Mathew Gill with Two or Three Pounds in his possession which he said was left with him by Anderson with the purpose of purchasing a Gown for my Sister This was about 3 or 4 days After my arrival on the Island -

[signed] Dorotheae [sic] Newell

*Sworn before us at Albany
this Ninth day of September 1835
[signed] Richard Spencer J.P:
[signed] Alex Cheyne J.P.
[signed] P Belches*

[#25, #26] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 16 January 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of *Robert Gamble* of *Albany* in the said Colony, ... , taken on oath this *Sixteenth* day of *January* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty- *Six* before *Two* of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, acting in and for the said Colony, in the presence and hearing of *Isaac Winterburn* , charged before ... the said Justices with *Assaulting and beating Charles Lambert Biomson [sic] Mariner on the Evening of the 12th day of January 1836*

The deponent saith, *That on the Evening of the 12 Inst I went to bed in the Ship Inn between the hours of Eight and Nine PM as near as I can recollect - Isaac Winterburn Slept in the same Room and our Beds are placed so close that they touch each other and he the said Winterburn was in Bed when I went into the Room About an Hour after I went to Bed I heard some person speaking but I didn't know whether the person was inside or outside the Hall & I asked Winterburn who was in bed at the time if he knew who was speaking and he answered that he thought it was Charles Lambert Biomson - After Isaac Winterburn said in answer to my question that he thought it was Biomson who was speaking he continued in Bed ~~for~~ about half an Hour after to my certain Knowledge as about that time I got out of my Bed for a drink of water and Winterburn was then in Bed asleep I am certain Winterburn did not get out of his [^] Bed / After I asked him if he knew who was talking and he said that he thought it was Biomson I saw him continue in his Bed for at least half an hour after that - I was asleep or dosing between the time that I went to Bed between the Hours of Eight or Nine and the time when [^] that / I heard a person talking when I asked Isaac Winterburn if he knew who it was and he said ...*

[Verso]:

... that he thought it was Biornson - I have frequently heard Biomson and Winterburn arguing -

Sworn before us at Albany
this 16th day of Jan'y 1836

(signed) Robt Gamble

(signed) Richard Spencer J.P.

(signed) P Belches J.P.

[#27] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 18 March 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The information and complaint of *John William Andrews* of *Albany* , in the said Colony, , made on oath before me *Sir Richard Spencer Kt. Esquire*, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, for the said Colony, the Eighteenth day of March , in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty- Six

The said *John William Andrews* , on his oath, saith
Yesterday about 3 or 4 o'Clock in the afternoon, John Anderson, Master of a Sealing boat landed on the Island Michelmas in the bay of King Georges Sound, and took therefrom a bag of Flour cont'g about 50 pounds, two Saucepans & One Iron Pot with other articles, the property of the as'd John William Andrews - among the rest a small pouch cont'g 34, or 35 Spanish Dollars

[signed] *John W Andrews*

Sworn before me

at Albany this 18th day of March 1836.

[signed] *Richard Spencer J:P:*

[#28] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 18 March 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } To *William Thomas* of *Albany* , in this said Colony, Constable.

WHEREAS *John W. Andrews* of *Albany* , in the said Colony , hath made information and complaint upon oath before me *Sir Rich'd Spencer Kt. , Esquire*, one on His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the said Colony, that

John Anderson Master of a Sealing boat landed on the Island of Michelmas [sic] on the afternoon of yesterday about 3, or 4 oClock, & took therefrom a bag of flour containing about 50 pounds, also two Saucepans, & one Iron Pot, the property of the af'd John W. Andrews -

These are, therefore, to command you forthwith to apprehend him, the said *John Anderson* , and to bring him before me, to answer unto the said information and complaint, and to be further dealt with according to law.

Given under my hand and seal the *Eighteenth* day
of *March* , 183 6 [signed] *Richard Spencer J:P:*

[#29] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 18 March 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } To *William Thomas* of *Albany* , in this said

Colony, Constable.

WHEREAS *John W. Andrews* of *Albany*, in the said Colony, hath made information and complaint upon oath before me *Sir Rich'd Spencer Kt.*, Esquire, one on His Majesty's Justices of the Peace of the said Colony, that

John Anderson Master of a Sealing Boat now on the Beach at Princess [Royal harbour] did land on Michelmas [sic] Island yesterday about 3, or 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, and take therefrom a bag of Flour, 2 Sauce Pans, & other articles the property of the af'd J. W. Andrews

and that Richard Evans and Charles Burns are Material Witnesses to be examined concerning the same William Mary & John White

These are, therefore, to requite you to summon the said *Rich'd Evans and Charles Burns*, to appear and be at *My house* aforesaid on the *Eighteenth* day of *March* at the hour of *Eleven*, in the *fore* noon, to answer to [^] *testify their knowledge concerning the premises* ~~the said Information and Complaint, and to be further dealt with according to law~~; and be you then there to certify what you shall have done in the Premises.

Given under my hand and seal the *Eighteenth* day of *March*, 1836 [signed] *Richard Spencer J:P:*

[#30] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 18 March 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of *Richard Evans* of *Albany* in the said Colony, [*blank*], taken before *Sir Richard Spencer Kt.* of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, acting in and for the said Colony, the *Eighteenth* day of *March*, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-*six*

In the presence of ~~The said~~ *John Anderson* being charged before the said Justice, on the oath of *John William Andrews* of *Albany*, with *having taken off the Island of Michaelmas a bag with about 50 lbs of Flour, two SaucePans, & one Iron Pot the property of the af'd John Wm Andrews*

upon his examination, now taken before [*blank*], saith
*That yesterday he was passing Michelmas Island in a Sealing boat commanded by John Anderson that observing some women onshore Anderson called to one of the women by name, and desired Witness to jump on shore which he did, and to go and see if there was any thing to Eat there; Witness did not return to give Anderson any Answer - Shortly after Witness came down the Hill and saw Anderson mixing some flour to boil for the men in the boat they having no Provisions. Anderson told the women he would return them the flour next day - Anderson asked the Women if they would go to Albany, they said yes, and immediately handed all their things & cloaths, Pots & Kettles into the boat - Anderson landed them [^] *the women* on the shore at the entrance Princess Royal harbour, and passed their things out to them - Witness handed the things into the boat - a large bag & a small bag of flour, some kettles, pots, & baskets, a knapsack, and several other articles. Anderson stowed them away into the boat when he got in - Supposed the things belonged to the Women, and the boats crew of Andersons boat - Anderson told his Native Woman to take the women to Newell's house, an to store the things away in the bush - Witness*

*supposes Anderson meant to keep the Women for their boat, heard him say so -
The first thing Anderson did when he got into the boat at Michaelmas Island to store
away the knapsack*

[signed] *Rich'd Evans*

Swore before me this

18th day of March 1836 [signed] Rd Spencer J:P:

[#31] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 18 March 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of *Charles Burns* of *Albany* in
the said Colony, ... , taken before *Sir Richard Spencer Kt.*, of His Majesty's
Justices of the Peace, acting in and for the said Colony, the *Eighteenth* day of *March*
, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty- *six*
in the Presence

~~The said~~ *of John Anderson*, he being charged before the said Justice , on the oath of
John William Andrews of *Albany* , with *having landed on the Island of Michaelmas*
in the afternoon of yesterday, and taken therefrom a Bag of Flour Cont'g about 50
Pounds, two Sauce Pans & one Iron Pot with other articles the property of the af'd
John William Andrews

upon his examination now taken before *Sir Rich'd Spencer* , saith
He belongs to the Sealing boat under the Command of John Anderson that in the
afternoon of yesterday in passing Michaelmas ^{Island} they saw some women running
up the Hill and immediately Richard Evans, & John Anderson landed. Evans &
Anderson called to the women and they stopt & then came down the Hill. Shortly
afterwards Evans handed a parcel of things into the boat amongst others a large, & a
small bag, & a knapsack - part of the things were stowed away by John Anderson &
part by others - some kettles, & Pots. The women then came in the boat. Landed
them, & all the articles that were handed into the boat at the Island, at the entrance to
Princess Royal harbour - Anderson told the women to go over the Hill with his
Woman, to Newells house, the boy would shew them the way, and to stow away the
things in the bush - Anderson had seen these women in Anderson's boat before -
Heard Anderson say to the boats Crew, that he intended to take these women away in
his boat, when he sailed again - Did not hear Anderson say if they were willing to go -

[signed] *Charles Burns*

Swore before me

at Albany this 18th March 1836

Richard Spencer J:P:

[#32] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, [18 March] 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of ... of ... , in the said
Colony, ... , taken before ... of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace,
acting in and for the said Colony, this ... day of ... , in the year of our Lord
one thousand eight hundred and thirty- ...

The said ... being charged before ...
the said Justice ... , on the oath of ... , of ... , with ...

upon his examination taken before ... , saith

Was in the Sealing boat commanded by John Anderson, yesterday afternoon when they landed, on Michaelmas Island and saw some native women come in the boat saw some things handed in the boat one knapsack they were handed in the boat by Richard Evans, and John Anderson, and Witness stowed them away, they were landed at the entrance of Princess Royal harbour. every thing was handed out of the boat, that was taken from the Island. All hands were stowing the boat. All hands assisted handing the things out of the boat

[signed] W^m. May

[#33] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 18 March 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of *John Anderson* of *Albany* in the said Colony, ... , taken before *Sir Richard Spencer*, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, acting in and for the said Colony, the *Eighteenth* day of *March* , in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty- *Six* in the Presence

The said *John Anderson* being charged before the said Justice , on the oath of *John William Andrews* of *Albany* , with *having landed on the afternoon of yesterday on Michaelmas Island and taken therefrom a bag cont'g about 50 Pounds of Flour, two Sauce pans an Iron Pot & several other articles his property*

On being called upon for his defence

~~upon his examination~~ now taken before *me* , saith

*That he went inshore to Michaelmas Island to take off two women that John William Andrews had formerly taken from him, the one from Middle Island, the other from Doubtful Island - and to find out from the women if Williams [sic, Andrews?] had taken **five** [written over 'six'] Skins from Middle Island, & an anchor, & Cable from Thistle Cove, that he Anderson had fished up from the wreck of the **Mountaineer**, & 500 percussion Caps, with other things which he had lost during his absence from Middle Island. The Native woman [F?]athom * Depon't left on the Island declares that she saw John William Andrews & Charles Biarnson [sic] take the Skins from the Prisoners Hut The women were without water on Michaelmas Island which induced him to bring the women away -*

John Anderson [Clerk's hand]

Sworn before me at

Albany this 18th day of March 1836

[signed] *Richard Spencer J:P:*

* *Fathom* - a nickname? Because Aboriginal personal names can be long and complex sealers almost universally gave their subservient women a short English name, such as Mary or Ann, but some were demeaning, e.g. a male specific such as Duncan, Jock, Isaac; or derisive such Boatswain, Bung, Jumbo, Penguin, Smoker (Plomley and Henley 1990: 73-74).

[#34, #35] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 18 March 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The information and complaint of *John Anderson* of *Albany* , in the said Colony, ... , made on oath before me

Sir Richard Spencer Kt. Esquire, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, for the said Colony, the Eighteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty- Six

The said John Anderson, on his oath, saith that on the 10th of Nov'r he returned to Middle Island after an absence of about ten weeks and found that some persons had been to the Island, and taken from ~~you~~ his Hut, Twelve fur Skins of the Seal, 7 of which belonged to Charles Biarnson [sic], and five to himself, Fifteen Pounds in Money, 500 Percussion Caps, one brass Cock. One Hone - 1 Ball Mould, 1 Barrel of a Fowling piece. 4 Iron Spoons marked A.N. on the Handle, about 15 fathoms of Rope. he at same time discovered that two Native women left by him on the Island had been removed.

On the 24th Nov'r he found one of the Women, on an Island called the Twin Peaks * with only two small children, she told him that Jno William Andrews had taken her from Middle Island, and landed her there She did not wish to leave middle Island, but Andrews told ... [end of a half-page, cut neatly at a slight angle.]

* Twin Peaks. Probably the larger, northern-most of the two islands named the Twins by Flinders on 14 January 1802, (Flinders 1814 (1): 86) but named *Twin Peaks* on his associated Chart of the South Coast, Sheet 1.

[Verso]:

... her that he /Anderson ^ was lost. About the 1st of December he [went?] to Thistle ^ Cove and found that an Anchor and Chain Cable which he had recovered from the wreck of the **Mountaineer**, in Thistle Cove, had been carried ^ away. also some Blocks - Last night Isaac Winterbourne told him that Biarnson had thrown the Anchor, & Cable, in the water. John M^l. Thale told Dep't that Andrews had offered the Cable for Sale.

John Anderson [Clerk's hand]

[#36, #37] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 18 March 1836

NB: This is the verdict of the Court with regard to the complaint of John William Andrews against John Anderson:—

[Recto]:

The Colony of Western Australia } To Wit

Be it remembered that on the 18th day of March in the year of our Lord eight hundred, and thirty six At Albany in the Colony of John W. Andrews - came before me Sir Rich'd Spencer Kt. one of H. M. Justices of the peace for the S. Colony, and made Information, and Complaint that on the 17th day of ^ ^{this current month} March about 3 or 4 oclock in the Afternoon John Anderson Master of a Sealing Boat, did land on the Island of Michaelmas, in the Bay of King Georges Sound, in the Colony of John W. Andrews and took therefrom a Bag of Flour, and divers other articles the property of the of John William Andrews. Whereupon the said John Anderson having been brought before me by Warrant to answer the said Charge declared that he John Anderson did land of the of Island to take off two women who were in want of Water - and having heard the Evidence of Richard Evans, Charles Burns, and Williams [sic, Andrews?], It appears that John Anderson did carry away in his boat from off the Island several Articles belonging to John William Andrews which he had landed with the women near Albany, but it does not appear that he had any felonious Intent to steal the above Articles. John William Andrews ~~was at~~ expressed himself satisfied with John Anderson bindi'g himself to proceed immediately with Andrews in search of the

abovenamed Articles, and John Anderson was ordered by me ...

[signed] Rich'd Spencer J:P:

[Verso]:

... to Order in to Recognizance himself in Twenty Pounds, and two sureties of Five Pounds each that he John Anderson shall not at any future time, or place interfere with, or meddle with, or injure any goods or Chattels or any property whatsoever belonging to J. W. Andrews and also that he John Anderson should pay all the Costs, and charges of this Prosecution viz. for the Witnesses, Constable, and Justice Clerks Fees the latter amounting to One Pound, Sixteen Shillings -

[signed] Rich'd Spencer J:P:

[#38] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 19 March 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } Be it remembered that on the ~~Eighteenth~~ [^] ~~Nineteenth~~ day of *March* , in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty- Six

John Anderson of Albany , in the said Colony ~~James Newell~~ [^] *Thomas Symers* and *Solomon* of Albany , in the said Colony, ... , personally came before me *Sir Richard Spencer* , and ~~Patrick Taylor Esq.~~ , Esquires, ~~two~~ [^] ~~one~~ of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said Colony, and acknowledged themselves to owe to our Sovereign Lord the King (that is to say) the said *John Anderson* the sum of *Twenty Pounds* , and said ~~James Newell~~ ^v *Thomas Symers* the sum of *Five Pounds* and the said *Solomon* the sum of *Five Pounds* , to be levied on their goods and chattels, lands and tenements, respectively, to the use of our said Lord the King, his heirs and successors, if the said *John Anderson* shall make default in the condition here under-written.

Acknowledged before me

The condition of the above written Recognizance is such, that if the above bound *John Anderson* shall ¹ ~~personally appear before the said Justices of our Lord the King, assigned to keep the peace within the said Colony, and likewise to hear and determine divers felonies, trespasses and other misdemeanors in the said Colony, committed at the next General Quarter Sessions of the Peace to be holden in and for the said Colony, then and there to answer to our said Lord the King, for and concerning~~ *The feloniously taking and carrying away from the Island of Michaelmas a bag containing about 50 pounds of flour, two Saucepans, and Iron Pot, & sundry other articles his property of the value of Fifteen Shillings* ²

1. From this point the following is written between the lines of print:—

not at any future time or place interfere with, or meddle with any goods or Chattels or any property belonging to John William Andrews particularly such as Andrews may from time to time deposit or leave in any uninhabited Isl'd

2. This written statement is crossed out by six downward angled strokes of the pen, and the sheet of paper is here pasted over by a strip of paper, written on as follows:—

Island off the Coast of Western Australia, or on any part of the shores of the above named Coast

Then the above written Recognizance shall be void. But on proof before any two [^] *H.M.* *Justices of the Peace for the said Colony, that any such Trespass on the Property of the afores'd John William Andrews shall have him committed, by the above bound*

*John Anderson or any of the Crew of the boat under his Command, the above sums shall immediately be levied, by the order of the said Justices.*³

3. This sentence is also crossed out by six downward angled strokes of the pen. It was written over a final printed sentence as follows:—

and to do and receive what shall by the Court be then and there enjoined him, and shall not depart the Court without license,—then the above written Recognizance shall be void.

[#39, #40] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 19 March 1836

NB: The sheet has been folded across twice and the central portion is heavily foxed and stained; both left and right edges are ragged.

[Recto]:

*Colony of Western Australia to wit { Be it remembered that on the 19th of March 1836, John Anderson of Albany in the said Colony Thomas L. Symers and James Newel [sic] ~~Solomon~~ of Albany in the said Colony personally came before me Sir Richard Spencer Kt. of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said Colony and acknowledged themselves to owe to our Sovereign Lord the King (that is to say) the said John Anderson the sum of Twenty Pounds, the said Thomas L. Symers * the sum of Five Pounds, and the said James ~~Solomon~~ Newel, the sum of Five Pounds, to be levied on their goods and chattels, lands and tenements, respectively, to the use of our said Lord and his heirs and successors, if the said John Anderson shall default in the condition hereunder written*

Acknowledged before me

[signed] *Richard Spencer J:P:
Albany 18th [sic] March 1836 {*

*John Anderson [Clerk's hand]
James Newel [Clerk's hand]*

* Captain Thomas Lyell Symers, mariner and farmer at Albany.

NB: The names John Anderson and James Newel are written heavily in ink over faint pencil renderings.

The condition of the above written Recognizance is such that, if the above bound John Anderson at any future time, or place, interfere with, or meddle with, or injure any goods, or Chattels, or any property whatsoever, belonging to John William Andrews, particularly such as Andrews may from time, to time deposit, or leave on any uninhabited Island, off the Coast of Western Australia, or any part of the shores of the above named Coast, then the above written Recognizance shall be void.

[Verso]:

*Recognizance
John Anderson
James Newel*

[#41, #42] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 2 November 1836

[Recto]

Colony of Western Australia

The evidence of Samuel Hawkes of Albany in the said Colony taken before Peter Belches & Patrick Taylor Esq'rs two of his Majesty's justices of the peace, acting in & for the said colony, the second day of November, 1836

The said Samuel Hawkes being duly sworn saith that on the 31st of October 1836. about 4 o'clock p.m. Robert Gemble & Mrs Earl were both in the Ship public house & Gemble had on his Knee, a child which is under the care of Mrs Earl - which Mrs

Earl requested that he would put down. But he, Robert Gemble, paid no attention to her request. When Mrs Earl removed his hat, & gave him a blow on the head. But whether in anger or not, the witness cannot say. Robert Gemble said to Mrs Earl, that if she did ...

(signed) *P Belches J.P.*

[Verso]:

... not desist, he would return the blow. which threat he afterwards put in force. But whether from Mrs Earl having repeated the blow or not, ~~the~~ witness cannot say.

Witness then interposed, & prevented any further violence [^] from / being done by either party

Witness heard Gemble state that his Reason for striking Mrs Earl was not because of the blow she had given him, but on account of Mrs Earl having spread a report that he, Robert Gemble, had slept with Mrs Anderson.

(signed) *Samuel Hawkes*

(signed) *P Belches JP*

(signed) *Patrick Taylor J.P.*

[#43, #44] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 2 November 1836

[Recto]:

Colony of Western Australia to wit } The examination of *Robert Gamble* of *Albany* in the said Colony, ... , taken before us Peter Belches & Pat'k Taylor Two of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace, acting in and for the said Colony, the *Second* day of *November* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty- Six

The said John Anderson ~~being charged before ... being duly sworn the said Justice ... on the oath of ... of with ... upon his examination now taken before ...~~

That about 4 o'clock p.m. of the 31st of Oct'r Robert Gemble & Mrs Earl were both in the Ship public house. Robert Gemble had a child on his Knee, which is under Mrs Earl's care. Mrs Earl requested Robert Gemble to put the child down, as it was crying. Which Robert Gemble paid no attention to. Mrs Earl then took off his cap & gave him a slight tap on the side of his head. which appeared to be done in play. Robert Gemble immediately rose up & struck Mrs Earl in the face. Witness then in conjunction with Samuel Hawkes interposed to prevent any further violence - After which Robert Gemble said that he had not struck Mrs Earl on account of the blow he had rec'd from her, but because she had circulated a report that he, Robert Gemble, had been cohabiting with John Anderson's wife during his absence.

[Verso]:

Mrs Earl struck Robert Gemble with her hand.

Witness observed that Gemble had a South-wester on & not a hat.

his
(signed) *John Anderson X*
mark [Clerk's hand]

NB: Not witnessed.

[#45 / #46] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 2 November 1836

NB: Two separate pieces of paper.

[Recto, written on a slip of paper]:

The defence of Robert Gemble made before us ~~That~~ Saith , that he did not hear Mrs Earl tell him to put the child down, or he would have done so.

(signed) *P Belches J.P*

(signed) *Patrick Taylor J.P.*

NB: Undated, apparently written before judgement was given.

[Recto]:

Having considered the evidence brot forward by Mrs Earl against Robt Gamble for an assault committed by him on the thirty first of October 1836, as well as the Evidence for the defence, it appears manifest that Robt Gamble did inflict afflict violence on Mrs Earl, not on acc't of any blow which he had rec'd from her, but on account of a report which he states that Mrs Earl had circulated, that he Robert Gamble had cohabited with Mrs Anderson, the wife of John Anderson, during his absence; we therefore fine the said Robert Gamble the sum of one pound stg, to the King, and pay costs of the suit.

Albany, King Georges Sound

2 Novr 1836

(signed) *P Belches J.P*

(signed) : *Patrick Taylor JP*

[#47] SROWA Series 1686 Cons 348, item 2, 29 March 1837

[Recto]:

I Robert Gamble Mariner of Albany in the Colony of Western Australia do Solemnly Swear that on ~~or about~~ the 25th of Dec'r I buried John Anderson on an island called Maundrin island.*

Sworn before me Patrick Taylor JP the 29th of March 1837. - }

[signed] *Robt Gamble*

* A phonetic variation of Manduran, see ?

Appendix B. Persons named in Albany Court hearings relating to John William Anderson, refer Appendix A.

At Long Island [Thistle Island], September 1834. Refer Manning (#1, #2).

John Anderson, a 'Black man'

John Bathurst

William Forbes

John Howlett

George Roberts

Harry ----?

Master of the *Mountaineer* - Evanson Jansen / Janson

***Mountaineer* departed Thistle Island in January 1835** Refer Biornson (#21).

***Mountaineer* arrived Middle Island 6 or 7 February 1835** Refer Biornson (#21).

NB: The *Mountaineer* did not stay long, and arrived at King Georges Sound on 22 February

(Nicholson 1985: 16).

***Mountaineer* departed Albany 14 March 1835** Refer Newell (#4).

1. Evanson Jansen, master
2. Charles Biornson, mate ? (#21).
3. James Newell
4. Dorothea Newell
- 5 & 6. Matthew Gill & wife Mary (nee Newell)
7. Mr Church / William Church, named by Manning (#9).
8. ---- Owens
9. James Ward, seaman
10. Thilt / Kilt, * seaman

* The Albany Court clerk's capital K and 'Th' are often indistinguishable, but on balance the name appears to be Thilt rather than Kilt. I could not find any record of a person of either surname, but a convict named Michael Kitt was free at the time of the *Mountaineer's* departure from Launceston for King George's Sound. His Certificate of Freedom states: 'No. 32/011 / Date: 3 September 1832 / Michael Kitt / Ship: *Mangles* (4) / Master: Coghill / Year: 1826 / Native Place: Limerick / Trade or Calling: Herdsman / Offence: Forged notes in possession / Place of Trial: Limerick City / Date of Trial: 22 July 1825 / Sentence: Seven years / Year of Birth: 1790 / Height: 5 feet 7 inches / Complexion: Dark Ruddy / Hair: Dark brown / Eyes: Dark / General Remarks: *blank*.' There is no reference to a Michael Kitt in *The Launceston Examiner*, or recognised by a search of Archives Tasmania via their LINC website.

Present on Middle Island when *Mountaineer's* people arrived. Refer Newell (#4).

John Anderson

Isaac Winterbourne

Frank --- (#4) / Francis Mead (##9, 18-20) / Frank Mead (#24).

NB: Francis Mead sailed on the *Mountaineer* from Long Island to Middle Island. Was he one of Anderson's boat crew ? and went on board the cutter to create more space on the whaleboat ?

Francis a boy (#4).

---- White (#4) / John White (#17).

---- Moore (#4).

James Manning

At Middle Island, departed on *Mountaineer's* whaleboat. Refer Newell (#4).

James Ward

Thilt

---- Owens

---- Moore

[John] White

and the boy James

On Anderson's sealing boat.

Richard Evans (#30).

Charles Burns (##29, 31).

William May (#32).

At Albany

John Michael Thale (#35).

Appendix C. 'Black Jack' Anderson - fiction becomes fact.

Referring to the background of Elaine Forrestal's imaginative novel *Black Jack Anderson* (Penguin Books, 2008), it is important to note that on page 245 she states:—

'I based this fictional account on known facts, but at times the evidence was sketchy at best, and *occasionally* [my emphasis] I altered details to suit the story I wanted to tell.'

My own investigation into the sealing career of John William Anderson (including references listed by Forrestal) indicates that the only *factual* evidence available which reveals aspects of his nature and activities are the sworn oral statements by several witnesses recorded by the clerk of the Albany Court and duly attested to by the presiding Justices of the Peace. And since the main aim of my Index to Sealers (*Histories* No. 4) is to seek and collate primary historical records, I generally ignore hearsay and folklore sources except to question their veracity.

As I commented in the Introduction, Forrestal's novel is of no significance as history *per se*, but her engaging and seemingly authoritative accounts of Anderson's origin in America, the means and date of his arrival in the Colony, his piracies, notoriety, and his death has since received wide attention and has come to be accepted as established fact by some later commentators (and another author of historical stories) — their credulity encouraged perhaps by Forrestal's disingenuous use of the adverb '*occasionally*' and her acknowledgement of assistance from the Esperance Bay Historical Society (Inc.), the Battye Library (Perth), Fremantle Maritime Museum; and gratitude for an anonymous colleague's 'assistance with meticulous attention to every detail'.

Be all that as it may, the unquestioning dissemination of Forrestal's fictions as historical truth has unfortunately gained wide currency and acceptance in Australia on news outlets, commercial websites, by the author Graham Seal, and even on Wikipedia, see following examples:—

<perthnow.com.au> *The Sunday Times*, June 14, 2008. Entertainment: John Hallam, 'Pirates of Esperance.' Features Elaine Forrestal and her book. (retrieved 4 August 2015).

ABC Esperance, 14 October 2011, 11.38 AM AWST. A precis of Forrestal's tale but not credited to her. With an added risible embellishment: 'His extraordinary story has captured historians and authors - for over ten years he and his crew escaped capture and made a fortune off stolen seal skins.' (retrieved 4 August 2015).

The West Australian - News. 26 March 2012. Angela Pownell, 'In Search of Pirate Black Jack.' (retrieved 4 August 2015).

<inexplainable.net> Yona Williams, Posted on 29 March 2012. Information and Theories. 'The Hunt for Black Jack Anderson.' (retrieved 4 August 2015).

<goodreadingmagazine.com.au> Dr. Susan La Marca. 'Black Jack Anderson' by Elaine Forrestal. Teachers Notes. (retrieved 4 August 2015). Refers to Forrestal's meticulous research.

<inspirationoutdoors.com.au> 'Australia's First Pirate-Black Jack Anderson' (accessed 3 September 2019).

<woodyisland.com.au> 'Black Jack Anderson based himself on this [Middle] island to launch raids on

vessels making their way between Adelaide and Albany.' (accessed 3 September 2019).

<justalittlefurther.com> 1 April 2014. 'Middle Island - An Aussie Pirate's Hideout.'

<gregtanney.wordpress.com> 5 June 2010 'Black Jack Anderson'

Graham Seal, *The Savage Shore. Extraordinary stories of survival and tragedy from the early voyages of discovery*. Allen and Unwin, 2015. (Repeats fiction of Anderson's arrival on a whaler named *Vigilant*).

<en.wikipedia.org> 'Black Jack Anderson.'

<en.wikipedia.org> Recherche Archipelago, item 2.2 Islands ... Middle Island, states '... The pirate Black Jack Anderson based himself on this island to launch raids on vessels making their way between Adelaide and Albany.' (accessed 3 September 2019).

NB: Paterson and Souter [2006], who conducted archeological investigations on Middle and Boxer Islands, mention Anderson and cite early Perth newspaper references (see transcriptions above).

Other modern references to Anderson not seen; unavailable digitally via TROVE:

Weekend Mail, 13 June 1959, p. 6.

West Australian, 20 July 1974, p. 21.

Esperance Traveller, Autumn 1987, p. 22 / Autumn 1990, p. 43.

Esperance Express, 8 December 1992, p. 11.

Comments on some of Forrestal's constructs.

1. The nickname 'Black Jack'

Coined by Forrestal. In all the contemporary references that I have consulted (Appendix A), there is no physical description of the man. If James Manning had not mentioned his colour (item #1) all later researchers would have assumed him to be European.

2. Alleged family history in America

While it is possible, even probable that 'Black' Anderson hailed from America, other sealers with thoroughly European names such as John Campbell and Robert Williams were identified in contemporary records as 'African blacks'. And many other 'black' sealers were New Zealanders (Maoris), Pacific Islanders, and some were Australian Aborigines — and were generally known by their tribal names but it was not unusual to find them listed on a ship's muster simply as John, Jacky, Charlie, Tommy, &c. In short, there is no direct evidence that Anderson was Afro-American, and consequently no factual basis for Forrestal's appealing account of his birth and growth to manhood there; or of his alleged imposing physical size.

3. Arrival in the Colony (Forrestal, p. 25).

Anderson did not arrive in King George's Sound on the 28th of September 1827 on an American whaler named *Vigilant*, Captain Carpo. Two American whalers named *Vigilant* are known, but neither was at sea at or even near that year. Both are listed by Lund (2001: 703) as follows:— The first, home port unknown, Hugh Williamson master, departed c.1804, cruising ground unknown (although according to Richards (1993) that vessel was whaling in the South Atlantic in 1804). The second American *Vigilant* sailed from New Bedford, Massachusetts, on seven voyages between 1852 and 1879 under seven different masters. None were named Carpo; in fact no American whaling captain of that name is known to Lund, *op. cit.*

Considering, for the sake of argument, that Anderson arrived on a British whaler

named *Vigilant*, seven voyages by a ship of that name are known (Chatwin, British Southern Whale Fishery Databases), but again none visited King George's Sound. The voyages occurred as follows:—1801 to November 1802 / January 1803 to February 1805 / October 1805 to ? / 1819 to August 1821 / October 1831 to August 1835 / October 1835 to December 1838 / and March 1839 to August 1842. With reference to the period of Anderson's known activities the *Vigilant's* fifth voyage, Swain master, is of interest because she visited Sydney from 8 April to 9 June 1833 to tranship oil for London (Nicholson 1977: 96), and again from 21 October to 24 November 1834 (Nicholson 1977: 119). Fortunately a crew list is available (BSWF Databases), and there was no Anderson on board when she sailed from her home port.

4. Failed raid on *HMS Shannon* (Forrestal, p. 66).

The *HMS Shannon* was a 38-gun frigate launched in 1806. She fought in the Napoleonic wars, and in other northern theatres; but never visited Australian waters. Coincidentally the following named features in south-western Western Australia commemorate her famous victory under Captain Philip Broke against the American frigate *USS Chesapeake*, Captain James Lawrence, in 1812 — Broke Inlet, Shannon River, and Chesapeake Road in Shannon National Park.

5. Alleged repeated piracies

Colonial newspapers routinely reported shipping movements and maritime events. Even one reported piratical act on any of the much-frequented trading routes between colonial ports would have received prominent press coverage, whereas repeated attacks would have provoked a storm of strident demands for decisive government action. There are none.

A search of Australian newspapers via Trove (July 2015), for the phrases 'Black Anderson' and 'Black Jack Anderson' yielded just one item:— 'Black Anderson. A Story of the South Coast'. (By "Polygon"), in the *West Australian*, Perth 31 August 1929: 5b-c. It is a very colourful story based on an account published 87 years earlier by William Nairne Clark in *The Perth Gazette* of 8 October 1842 (see transcription in Anderson's dossier) in which "Polygon" describes the extraordinary preservation of the body of a murdered man under a waterfall whom Clark suggests was killed by Anderson. Although Clark was writing at a time soon after Anderson's own death, his tale of the man and his sealing activities is similarly dramatised and accordingly should be treated with due caution.

NB: Nairne Clark would have had a sharp eye and ready pen for a good story. He had edited the other of the two earliest Perth newspapers, *The Swan River Guardian*, from its inception on [6] October 1836 to 15 June 1837 and was editor and publisher from 22 June 1837 to the final issue on 22 February 1838.

Next, a Trove search for 'Anderson the pirate' yielded four related references to such a person, but he was not 'Black' Anderson the sealer:—

1831, 9 November. 'We are glad to state that the notorious bushranger named Anderson or Henderson who has for some time past been a pest to the settlers in the district of Illawarra, has been apprehended by the Police corporal Shanahan and privates James Shannon and Wm. Irvin of the same corps, after a very arduous pursuit of above 150 miles over a most difficult part of the country, in which they were obliged to leave their horses. ...' (*Sydney Herald* 8 November 1831: 3b).

1832, 16 November. 'John Anderson or Henderson, ... were jointly indicted for stealing ... at Congo, on the 11th May.' (*Sydney Herald* (19 November 1832: 3c)

1832, 12 December. 'After undergoing the torture of the scourge two or three times, and the punishment of solitary confinement, for refusing to walk the steps of the treadmill, the sentence of the

prisoner Anderson or Henderson was not thought by the Magistrates who passed it to be commuted. ...' (*Sydney Monitor* 12 December 1832: 2d).

1832, 13, December. 'Anderson the pirate, who has been so long under examination, turns out to be the notorious Bevan,* who escaped from Macquarie Harbour about two years since in the company of a man named Betham, after committing a foul murder. It is expected that Anderson will be forwarded to Hobart Town, to take his trial for the offence, ...' (*Sydney Herald* 13 December 1832: 2e).

* The notorious escapee and bushranger Bevan was shot and killed in 1830 [*sic*] (*Colonial Times* Hobart 26 February 1830: 3a).

1832, 13, December. 'Anderson or Henderson, who has been convicted by the Supreme Court of diverse capital felonies, and is at present under examination for piracy, is said to be the same man who was formerly known in Van Diemen's Land by the name of Bevan, ...' (*SG* 13 December 1832: 3b):

1832, 29 December. 'Anderson or Henderson, the Illawarra and Bateman Bay pirate, ...' (*Sydney Monitor* 29 December 1832: 2f).

6. Use of the words 'piracy' and 'piratical' in the context of colonial maritime events

NB: Acts of plagiarism by colonial newspapers were also termed piracy.

Any attempt by convicts to escape by covertly stealing a vessel or seizing one by force was automatically, in the legal context, an act of piracy. These events were generally reported as a 'piratical seizure' and there were many in the early history of the Australian colonies. For instance, a Trove search by these keywords for the decade 1827 to 1837, during which Anderson was active, yielded over 60 references, dealing with the seizure of the brig *Wellington* (1827), schooner *Liberty* (1827), a small boat (1828), brig *Cyprus* (1829), a whaleboat at Norfolk Island (1830), schooner *Schnapper* and a pilot boat (1831), schooner *Caledonia* (1831), schooner *Jane* (1832), the sloop *Badger* (1833), brig *Frederick* and a schooner of 11 tons (1834), cutter *Alice* (1835), and a small boat (1835).

Consequently any convict who escaped by boat and joined the itinerant sealers operating in Bass Strait or living on Kangaroo Island or other islands further west, was in the eyes of the colonial administration unquestionably a pirate. And although many sealers had no criminal record or were ex-convicts who, having served their term, were free agents, the colonial press inevitably stigmatised the whole fraternity of itinerant sealers as runaways, debased, an evil, savages, a banditti of bushrangers, desperadoes, &c., and, of course, as pirates ... infesting those waters ... and maintained that they posed a threat to shipping. The sealers' frequent acquisition of Aboriginal women, often by violent abduction and subsequent subjugation, only served to enhance their unsavoury reputation.

As far as the sealers' alleged piratical activities are concerned I have not found a single contemporary evidentiary account of a predatory event in either the colonial press or in official records — nor did any of those commentators who maintained sealers were such a threat refer to a single particular instance of piracy. On the contrary, for men living from hand to mouth in the more remote places, passing ships were a welcome source of basic foodstuffs, powder, shot, and rum, which they acquired by bartering seal and kangaroo skins, and fresh vegetables if they maintained gardens. This mutually beneficial trade became well established and a regular practice (e.g. at Kangaroo Island), but was condemned by some commentators who argued that these men and their families should be swept from the islands.

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Acknowledgements

My thanks to David Whiteford, Archivist, State Records Office Western Australia, for his prompt and enthusiastic responses to my queries concerning records of the Albany Court in 1835 and 1836 concerning John Anderson's and Robert Gamble's activities.