

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Newly-discovered Black Line evidence presented by UTAS historians

Two newly-discovered documents have shed new light on Australia's largest military operation before the defence of Darwin against the Japanese.

University of Tasmania history PhD students Eleanor Cave and Nick Clement today presented historians at the Australian Historical Association conference in Launceston with new evidence from two involved in Tasmania's Black Line of 1830.

Eleanor Cave told the historians about the diaries of Robert William Lawrence, the son of the wealthiest man in Van Diemen's Land.

"The most detailed section of Lawrence's diaries spans six weeks between October and November that year when he led a party from Launceston to Sorell as part of the Black Line," she said.

"His account provides new insights into the chaotic reality of the Line."

Nick Clement used a private account of the Black Line by Henry James Emmett, a 21 year-old clerk in the Tasmanian Government's Treasury Department who was put in charge of convicts on the Line.

"Emmett's account helps us understand the day-to-day experiences of the civilians involved in the Black Line," he said.

"It offers telling perspectives from inside the line and is significant for the way we understand this remarkable event," he said.

NOTE: The Black Line was an attempt in 1830 by the government of Van Diemen's Land Government to round up all Aborigines by lining up people across the centre of Tasmania. It used 2,300 men for eight weeks, cost £30,000 and failed spectacularly.

Other highlights from Day Four of the conference include:

■ **Historical tales from the Bendigo Regional Archives Centre**, Michele Matthews, Bendigo Regional Archives Centre;

- **Greek immigrants in the 1920s – were they ‘white enough’?** Andonis Piperoglou, La Trobe University;
- **Re-presenting Wybalenna through never-before used writings of Aborigines:** Leonie Stevens, La Trobe University;
- **The effect on historical buildings of the demise of traditional trades training in NSW:** Ian Willis, University of Wollongong;
- **Weaving convict women’s life stories from Tasmania’s archives:** Lucy Frost, University of Tasmania;
- **Aboriginal ‘tribal’ entities in greater Sydney:** Michael Powell and Rex Hesline, University of Tasmania;
- **The fur industry in Tasmania’s central highlands:** Tim Jetson, University of Tasmania;
- **The battle between Australia and New Zealand over ownership of Macquarie Island:** Roger Kellaway, University of Tasmania;
- **Tasmanian entertainers on the Australian theatre circuit in the 1830s and 40s:** Desley Deacon, ANU; Nicole Anae, CSU; Michael Roe, University of Tasmania;
- **Illness and death on the convict voyages to Australia:** Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, University of Tasmania;
- **The impact of the ‘history wars’ on the Australian community:** Ann Clark, UTS;
- **The effect of the hippie trail on Australian understandings of Asia:** Agnieszka Sobocinska, Monash University;
- **Why Tasmanians to 1853 did not suffer from iodine deficiency:** Paul Richards, University of Sydney;
- **A first for Launceston: The coming of anaesthetic:** John Paull, University of Tasmania;
- **Person and place in the history of Launceston hospitals:** Eric Ratcliff, Independent scholar.

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