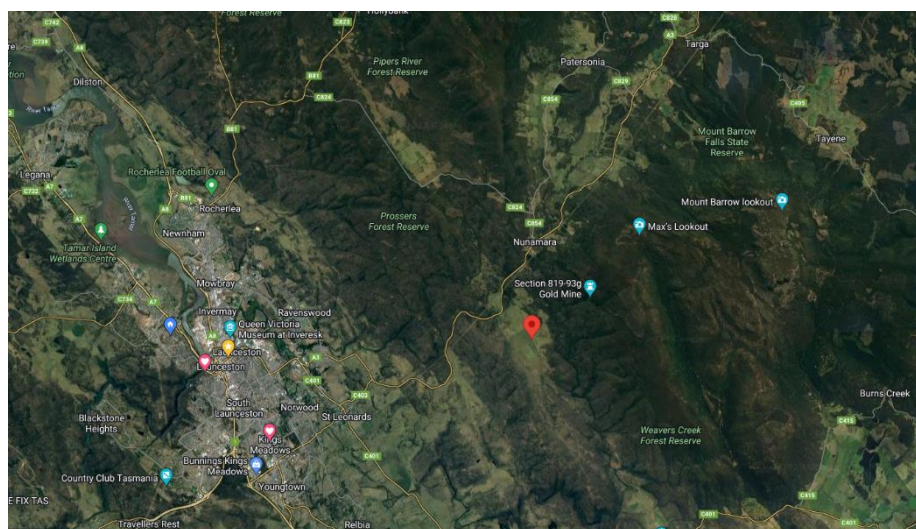


ABORIGINAL PEOPLE  
OF KANAMALUKA

## Murders at Bullocks Hunting Ground

Bullocks Hunting Ground is a large parcel of land located on the St Patricks River, not far from St Leonards, near Nunamara. It would have been an important place for Aboriginal People because of its proximity to the river and fertile land, and rich deposits of red and yellow ochre.

The primary sources below reveal that by 1829, acts of violence and counter-violence had escalated in the area around Launceston during the so-called 'Black War'. Cut off from their traditional access to food and water, Aboriginal People raided the homes of colonists, stole their food, and wounded and killed several people. In retaliation, Aboriginal People were murdered at Bullocks Hunting Ground by 'volunteers'.



Location of Bullocks Hunting Ground on the outskirts of Launceston

Newspaper accounts give the names of settlers who were wounded and killed and provide gory details of the attacks. However, the Aboriginal People who were killed are not identified. They may have been members of the **Ben Lomond Nation** who were making their way east to Launceston, or **Leterremairrener** people from the eastern side of the Kanamaluka/Tamar River.

They may have been a small group who survived the earlier attack on the larger group of Aboriginal People to the southeast at St Paul's River and the Eastern Marshes at the end of January.

**The Country Post'**, in *The Hobart Town Courier*, 21 March 1829.

Launceston, March 20.—I know you wish to hear the news from this quarter: I have some of an awful description to tell you about those cruel and merciless savages the Blacks. After they had speared Mr. Bell's man a few weeks ago, they gave chase to Mr. Charles Dry, who escaped them by the speed of his horse; they, however, a day or two afterwards surrounded his hut, near the Western river, and although there were four men in it with arms and ammunition, they blockaded the huts from 11 o'clock in the forenoon until sun-down, when they disappeared

During this interval the white people fired several times through holes they made in the roof, but without doing any execution. One of Mr. Dry's men was induced to go out of the hut with a loaf of bread, intending to throw it towards the Blacks, when he received a spear in his right knee from an artful boy who was crawling by the side of a tree near the hut.

As the poor fellow was wounded, the Blacks gave great shout. Many of them spoke good English, but their words were extremely indecent.

On Tuesday last they made their appearance near Launceston, and robbed one or two huts near the Cataract, and on Friday they were seen on the North Esk river, a short distance from Launceston, when they robbed three or four farm houses, and killed a woman and two men at the farm of a man named Mellor.

They also speared a man in his master's barn, and another who was on the road to Patterson's plains with a bag of flour upon his back; both those persons are badly wounded, and are now in the Hospital.

Two stock-keepers are also missing, and are supposed to have been killed by the Blacks in the same neighbourhood. Several parties have been sent in pursuit, but the soldiers and constabulary were unsuccessful.

Yesterday morning a party of volunteers came up with the murderers about 12 miles from hence, at a place called **Bullock's hunting ground**, where four men, a woman, and a child of the Black people were killed. One of the men that were shot had on a red coat which was stolen from the Commandant's stock-keeper, in a hut near the Cataract hills. I am told there is a woman amongst them who formerly lived at Launceston for several months.

*Ibid:* The black natives on Friday about mid-day went to the farm of a settler named Miller, and killed Mrs. Miller, and two men named James Hales and Thomas Johnson.

Miller came up to the house whilst the blacks were there, and made his escape by running. The blacks then went to the farm of a settler named Russel, and severely wounded two men.

There are also two stockkeepers missing, one of them servant to Mr Towers, the other to Mr. David Williams. Several small parties went after them. One party overtook them and killed five. The blacks then took post on a hill, (it is said to the number of about 150) and set the party at defiance.

Finding them make so formidable an appearance, and having broken one of their muskets, they were compelled to retire. Some fresh parties have since gone in quest of them. Miller's house is only about 2 miles from Launceston, but on the further side of the South Esk.