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## NATIVES AND SETTLERS ON THE NEW HEBRIDES FRONTIER 1870-1900

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In 1870 European settlers were arriving in the New Hebrides Islands (modern day Vanuatu) with high hopes of emulating the cotton economy of neighbouring Fiji, which was booming under the impact of a world-wide shortage of cotton following the American Civil War. They were not, however, the first Europeans to have close contact with the natives of the two islands, Efate and Tanna, on which they were establishing their plantations. During the previous three decades Australians had been stripping these islands of sandalwood, and when local supplies had been exhausted they had used the Efatese and Tannese as labourers on other sandalwood islands.[1] Consequently, with the added influence in the 1870s of an emerging labour trade with Queensland and Fiji, the islanders were already familiar with European trading ways and addicted to a wide range of European goods. A Queensland labour trader saw on Tanna in 1870 "every man with a musket over his shoulder," and the following year John Bates Thurston from Fiji found himself trading at Efate with "English speaking natives . . . as sharp as Jews of the Ratcliffe Highway."[2]

The receptions given to the planters by the two sets of islanders, however, were markedly different. In 1869 visiting missionary John Geddie reported that James Smith, owner of one of two flourishing plantations on the west coast of Tanna, was a worried man because his Efatese labourers had deserted him in favour of the other plantation, leaving him "defenceless among a savage people who have little regard for life and property." Indeed, a few days after Geddie's visit the battered body of Smith's only white employee "was cut up and sent to different parts of the island."[3] Two years later the planters on Tanna were, according to one report: "living in a state of most unpleasant suspense as the natives may shoot them any day. They have already killed three for which they have

not been punished, and it is more than likely they will do more damage soon."[4]

By 1873 the only European planters left on the island were the wily labour trader Donald Macleod and the notorious Ross Lewin, who always wore pistols at his belt and surrounded his residence with savage dogs and an armed Efatese bodyguard. However, despite Lewin's precautions, the following year he shared the fate of six murdered colleagues, and Macleod prudently decided to leave the island to the militant Tannese.[5]

On Efate, no such violent opposition was suffered by the cotton planters who by 1873 had migrated to the Havannah Harbour district, and built up a community of 31 mostly British settlers and a missionary family.[6] No European was killed on the island after the arrival of the first planters in 1867. Typical of the peaceful inter-racial relations was the settlers' ability in 1873 to organize the local tribesmen to welcome visiting British Naval Commander Thomas Suckling. "It all looked very imposing," wrote the young store-keeper, William Craddock, "as all the Englishmen and others walked this long double row of natives all armed with spears, tomahawks and bows and arrows." The natives thereupon feasted and then entertained the Europeans with "running, jumping in sacks, [and] three legged races." Best of all was the climbing of the greasy pole, after which each was rewarded with "a glass of grog and two sticks of tobacco, with extra for the chiefs."[7]

One explanation for the violence on Tanna was suggested by Geddie who thought that the planters' land purchases were not "properly understood by the natives."[8] But there were two sides to those transactions. It was later asserted that the land around Black Beach was so frequently sold by the Tannese "that if all the titles to the landing [place] . . . were in existence, one could build a causeway with them from Tanna to Erromanga."[9] Captain Markham of the British Navy carried out a more thorough investigation and concluded that the victims themselves were "the principal aggressors; and are thus the cause of these atrocities."[10] Certainly this contention is supported by the characters of some of the settlers, such as copra trader Thomas Davis, whom Craddock called "a thorough scoundrel, cruel and vindictive."[11] But there was probably also an indigenous ingredient in Tannese ferocity towards those Europeans who intruded beyond the limits of a convenient coastal trading station. E. A. Campbell who spent some months there in 1872 wrote:

> The Tanamen have a great name as warriors--sometimes it is said that they are the most warlike people in the South Pacific. This may be true, for it is a fact that they are much broken up into small tribes, which are continually at war with each other.[12]

As Cook had observed a century previously, this constant state of warfare probably made the Tannese "jealous of every new face."[13] Indeed, other Melanesian regions notable for violent indigenous reactions to Europeans, such as Malaita in the Solomons, also experienced much precontact internal warfare.[14]

This inter-tribal warfare appears to be the main attribute of the Tannese environment not present on Efate, where by and large the tribes coexisted peacefully. Nevertheless, to the settlers at Havannah Harbour the Efatese were objects of fear as well as of fascination and limited fraternization. Craddock enjoyed listening at night to their "weird and wild" music, and he gained amusement from "watching the Niggers trying to catch the fowls, about a dozen after one poor unfortunate creature." But like his compatriots in contemporary Fiji, he could not free his mind of the fear of some mass uprising. "It is a wonder to me a regular raid for trade has not been made before now," he wrote early in his stay in the settlement. Two months later, when the armed Efatese lined up to greet Commander Suckling he thought "what an opportunity it would be to them to knock us all [on] the head if it was not for the fear of that little gunboat out in the bay."[15] The sporting events of that day of festivity smacked of the white master class rewarding with largesse their helots who entertained them. But such an image is illusory. As in other small Pacific beach communities where few white women were in residence--there were only three at Havannah Harbour in 1873--sexual relations were less elitist. Macdonald complained in 1874 of "the immoral relations which some of [the settlers] . . . have with native women."[16] One, John Young, said a visitor in 1878, lived with "a Solomon Islands woman . . . who rules him with a rod of iron."[17]

Exploitation was not a one-sided feature of race relations on Efate. The natives parted with their land for as little as three pence an acre for trade goods, like munitions, tools, tobacco and calico, whereas some of the original purchasers re-sold it for as much as seven shillings and sixpence per acre.[18] But the Efatese had no compunction in stealing the possessions of the Europeans, forcing Craddock to be "doubly careful in locking the store. Even the missionary suffered," he wrote, "on the day some natives sold Macdonald's stolen pumpkins."[19]And like their cousins in other parts of Melanesia they refused to subject themselves to the regimen of plantation labour on their own island.

By 1874, however, the bubble of economic prosperity at Havannah Harbour had burst because of plummeting world cotton prices. The planters had turned to maize and the number of resident Europeans had been almost halved. The following year the most substantial settler, Ben-

jamin Hebblewhite, declared that the loss he had made had swallowed up the profits from his store.[20] By 1876 there were a mere ten settlers left on Efate plus two missionaries and their families.[21]

New life was breathed into the European settlement on Efate in 1877 with the arrival of some refugees from the new colonial regime in Fiji. Dreams of revived plantations growing coffee or sugar, and visions of sheep and cattle stations were spurring on new efforts to re-build the ailing Havannah Harbour community.[22] However, on Tanna early in 1877 the sole copra trader was killed after confronting a native stealing his coconuts. For a short time only a couple of Presbyterian missionaries were left to carry on the uphill struggle of altering the local people's disdainful rejection of European customs and mores--exemplified by their refusal to cover the penis-sheath, their sole item of male attire, which disgusted so many Europeans who saw it.[23] Two new copra traders arrived by the end of 1877 to cater for the needs created on Tanna by the introduction of European goods. But apart from a couple of families on Aneityum who were engaged in whaling, and the planters on Efate, the only other European settlers in the group, there were less than a dozen copra traders living in the islands to the north of Efate.

Before the 1870s many areas in these northern islands still had never been visited by white men, unlike the southern region of the group which had been the centre of both the sandalwood trade and the work of the Presbyterian mission. For example, on Ambrym in 1872 the local people greeted F. A. Campbell and his companion "with much curiosity, feeling our arms and shouting with surprise." Nevertheless, Campbell discovered that, "tobacco is good trade on most islands," an indication of the extensive circulation of goods introduced by the sandalwood traders, and lately labour traders.[24] By 1877 the overseas labour trade had greatly increased the extent of European influence in the New Hebrides. On a tour of the group in 1877 Leo Layard, son of the British consul in Noumea, found at all his fourteen landing places returned labourers "who could speak English."[25] The now widespread introduction of European goods meant that islanders generally welcomed the prospect of a resident white trader coming to live with them to provide a steady supply of the new luxuries such as knives, tobacco and firearms that were rapidly becoming the necessities of daily life. This was the experience of two American copra traders, Chiffin and Johnston, who settled at Longana on coconut-rich Aoba in 1876. A visitor that year wrote:

> The natives up to the present have treated them with the greatest kindness. The chiefs have given instructions to the people to

> supply them with food gratuitously, and they voluntarily work without renumeration, receiving payment only for the nuts of which there is an inexhaustable supply.[26]

Indeed, the Aobamen, who reportedly attacked the crews of labour tradeships for no other reason than to roast and eat them, had even made Johnston "a chief among them," said another visitor in 1877.[27] But early in 1880 they killed him in retaliation for the arrest of one of their number by a British warship, which in turn was avenging their descent on the boat crew of a labour vessel.[28]

The cycle of violence that killed Johnston illustrates the dangerous environment in the northern islands for copra traders who ventured there in the late 1870s, unlike Efate where Layard reported: "a white man is now perfectly safe on any part of this island."[29] One who sought to tame this hostile environment, William Giles, had established himself on the island of Mai late in 1878 in partnership with a fellow Australian. Inspired by visions of a coconut plantation and market garden for the Noumea market, and helped by some returned Queensland labourers, they put up a dwelling house, store and sleeping quarters, and cleared and fenced sixteen acres. Giles was zealous to "civilize" the natives, but after eight months he was convinced that "it is almost, if not quite a hopeless attempt to ever civilize them in the true meaning of the word."[30] And when malaria, time, and expired contracts had reduced his establishment to just himself and two labourers, all also weakened by fever, Giles reported:

> The natives of the island began to get very bold [and] seeing how helpless we were daily they came down and stole things and poisoned my two kangaroo dogs and one day they set fire to and burned two of my houses. Finally they broke into my store and plundered it of nearly everything.[31]

The defeated Giles, rescued by a native mission teacher, joined his brother to start a new career at Havannah Harbour.

Unfortunately, Havannah Harbour was no healthy place for European settlers in the late 1870s. Though the natives left them in peace, the *anopheles* mosquitoes did not. "The whites are ill either with fever and ague, or dysentry," reported a labour trade government agent at Havannah Harbour in 1878.[32] This sickness combined with two disastrous hurricanes, which flattened settlers' houses, and a prolonged drought, which ruined their crops, had driven nearly all the planters away by the time the Giles brothers arrived in 1879; and soon these two left when one succumbed to

malaria.[33] In 1880 a traveller found only a couple of traders living at the harbour running two stores, mere "tumble-down shanties" stocked mainly with "cheap liquors and rusty old rifles."[34] Only two planters had survived in the district, significantly on the less malaria infested high ground behind Undine Bay and at the southwestern end of the harbour.

In the 1870s therefore, the European plantation economy had failed to take root in the New Hebrides; even resident traders obtained only a precarious foothold. This was not a unique phenomenon in Melanesia. In this decade European settlement in the Solomon Islands was slight, and in the Bismarck Archipelago the first German traders were also defeated in the 1870s by a combination of native hostility and malaria.[35] The bulk of the Melanesian region with its malaria-carrying mosquitoes and warlike inhabitants was one of the most inhospitable environments in the world for the thrust of European economic expansion that was growing apace in this decade. Together with unusually ferocious hurricanes and prolonged drought, indigenous inhospitality was overwhelming in the New Hebrides.

In 1882 Captain Cyprian Bridge, however, found yet another new handful of planters at Havannah Harbour. More significant, at Vila on the other side of Efate, was a show-piece plantation started two years previously by a Frenchman, Ferdinand Chevillard, "a man apparently of superior social position . . . highly educated." In all, Bridge counted twenty-three non-missionary settlers on the island, who with traders on other islands had rebuilt the settler population in the group to its level of 1873. As well, there were ten Presbyterian missionaries and their wives on islands as far north as Epi, and a Melanesian mission representative on Aoba.[36]

Bridge gave a generally favorable report on relations between settlers and New Hebrideans. "In every case the traders of British nationality expressed themselves satisfied with the behaviour of the natives near them; and as far as a visitor could judge, they were on friendly terms with them," he wrote. In fact, he was "rather agreeably surprised" by what he saw of "the bearing and general behaviour of the traders," observing: "As a rule they are considerate to their savage neighbours and of use to them, lending them their boats to go on distant trading expeditions and administering medicines to the sick."[37]

In a special investigation Bridge concluded that land sales between settlers and natives seemed to have been conducted with reasonable fairness to both parties. At times it had been difficult to discern who were the real native owners, for other claimants emerged now and then after a sale concluded. The law of might prevailed. The purchaser responded according to his estimation of the ability of the new claimants to prevent his

occupation. Such was the natives' preponderant power, settlers in these situations usually ended up paying twice for their land. Nevertheless, Bridge maintained:

> Missionaries and settlers who have been willing to reply to inquiries are unanimous in asserting that there is nothing repugnant to native custom and native ideas in the complete alienation by sale of land. . . . Occasionally there has been difficulty in getting the natives to understand the real nature of an out-and-out sale of land and its alienation in perpetuity. But when the principle has been comprehended all informants agree that it is respected even when the purchaser ceases to occupy the land acquired.[38]

This assertion is at odds with the known difficulty in persuading Melanesians in other areas such as Fiji, New Caledonia and New Guinea, of the European concept of permanent alienation of land. In fact, Bridge's informants were wrong about "native custom," their opinion being influenced by the long acquaintance that the sellers had had with European commercial practices, for practically all the land sales to 1882 had been on the southern islands where there had been frequent trading contacts with Europeans since the 1840s. Indeed, the Efatese by the 1880s understood "the value of European money sufficiently to distinguish between a franc and a shilling," and were willing at times to sell land for purely monetary reward.[39] So at least on Efate by 1882 traditional native attitudes had changed to the extent of ready acceptance of European concepts of property, a fact also supported by the later absence of controversy about European land claims on that island.

Bridge, however, admitted one qualification to his favourable picture of race relations: "Everybody, traders and natives, is on highest behaviour when the Man-of-war is in the neighborhood, so there ought to be no haste in drawing conclusions."[40] This caution was justified, for from 1882 to July 1886 no less than thirteen resident traders in the New Hebrides were killed by natives, more than the total number of copra traders living there at the beginning of the period. As in the days of the sandalwood trade, reasons for this New Hebridean ferocity were diverse, ranging, according to investigations by European Naval officers, from "killed for continually ravishing native women" to "murdered for plunder."[41] Some were ruffians who deserved their fates, such as Peter Cullen, for whom the Tolman islanders of southern Malekula lay in wait in revenge for previous havoc he had wreaked among them. Less so Edward McEwan on Epi, who was reported to be "a quiet, inoffensive man" whose presence

was valued by the tribe he served. But that value made him a target for his tribe's enemies.[42] However, while there is no reason to doubt the suggested reasons for these two murders, it is hard to establish any generalisation about what motives predominated for all of them, both because of the variety of explanations in the cases investigated and the warning given later in the century by one such investigator:

> It is very difficult in the group to obtain reliable information with regard to outrages, as the natives lie in the most systematic manner. If they are friendly to the offending tribe, they are very likely to trump up evidence against one they are at war with, or turn on to the bushmen crimes for which they are responsible themselves. Often, when afraid to commit some crime themselves, the salt watermen will proclaim a truce with some bush tribe difficult of access, and hire them to commit the act.[43]

It was the custom for the commanders of the European naval ships patrolling the Pacific to avenge murders of their citizens in the islands. Because of the difficulty in discovering the actual murderers, the common method of punishment was offshore bombardment. So normal was such action by 1880, the New Hebrideans knew what to expect. The people on Aoba, after Johnston's death, asked "when a 'big ship' would come to fight the Murderers."[44]

Therefore the unabated violence in the first half of the 1880s suggests a lack of the deterrence that naval commanders hoped to create. New Hebrideans were probably like their Melanesian cousins on New Britain who did "not care 10 pins about being shelled; they just go inland and wait untill [sic] the war vessel has spent its fury."[45]

Consequently, in 1886, the islands north of Efate plus Tanna in the south, were still a primary frontier area, a "meeting point between savagery and civilization."[46] Despite the high murder rate the European population of the northern islands had crept to over twenty, mainly because of an influx of French settlers, who now also predominated on Efate.[47] Influenced chiefly by the formation in New Caledonia in 1882 of the *Compagnie Calédonienne des Nouvelles-Hébrides* (C.C.N.H.), which had the avowed aim of turning' the New Hebrides into a French colony, this new French immigration portended a significant change in the balance of power in the group between settlers and natives.

The new company promptly indulged in an orgy of land purchases; thousands of acres were bought by its travelling representatives seeking out the eyes of fertility, not for initial settlement, but for ultimate pre-

emption. A new principle of massive alienation of land had been introduced into the islands. And naturally the company's British competitors followed suit. They devoted little or no time to niceties such as seeking out the true owners, precisely delineating the boundaries, or carefully explaining the concept of permanent alienation. Consequently, unlike the land sales of the 1870s, the new acquisitions were subject to much dispute when settlers eventually tried to claim them.[48] In 1898 a French Naval officer observed that although settlers usually were able forcefully to evict the occupants of such land, at times the natives subjected them "to a thousand annoyances . . . which cannot end without the intervention of a man-of-war by regular acts of war."[49] In the early 1900s with a big growth in the European population in the group--from 331 to 1899 to 664 in 1906[50]--there were continuing cases of armed white men warding natives off their claims, violent New Hebridean retaliations, and a barrage of complaints by missionaries on behalf of dispossessed peoples.[51]

Increased pressure on a declining native population for labour to serve the new French plantations established in the 1880s led to a reduction in standards of recruiting and treatment of labourers. Contemporaries agreed that French recruiters were less squeamish in their methods than the normally more strictly supervised British, and lack of recruiting licenses for the latter residing in the New Hebrides drove them under the lax standards of the French flag.[52] Furthermore, though Bridge reported in 1882 that "all the labourers whom I saw appeared perfectly happy," he was rightly concerned about the absence of any supervisory authority.[53] By the 1890s mistreatment of labourers on the now mostly French plantations was rife. Queensland Government Agent Douglas Rannie in 1888 found one of a French settler's labourers "lying against a tree trunk with his hands over his head made fast with wire round his wrists; the lids of his eyes were being eaten by flies while ants attacked the ulcerated sores upon his body."[54] In 1891 a resident correspondent for an Australian newspaper accused the planters in general of managing their labourers like slaves.[55]A French Naval officer admitted in 1899 that the difficulty French planters had in recruiting labour showed how poorly they were regarded by New Hebrideans.[56]Indeed, a French inter-island trader, Matthew Rossi, confessed that he was no longer able to recruit for Efate because that island "had such a bad name among the natives."[57]

New Hebrideans who were reluctant to work on French plantations and who preferred trading with British settlers had a subtle revenge. The C.C.N.H. and its successor, the *Société Francaise des Nouvelles-Hébrides*, both had to be rescued by the French government from imminent bankruptcy.[58] Moreover, the natives were beginning to profit from the rising

prices they could demand for their labour. The competition between the two sets of European nationals and the consequent growth in the European population created this situation. By 1905 a planter on Santo wrote:

> The competition is keen for recruits and, in spite of the fact that fabulous (for a native) sums are being offered to induce them to work, it is as hard to get five men now as it was fifteen in the days gone by. Then they were certainties for a three year term, now they try to beat the hapless recruiter down one year to six months.[59]

And at the end of the 1890s French planters on Efate were being further troubled by local tribesmen who were helping discontented labourers to escape to the friendlier havens of Queensland labour ships, or the Presbyterian mission on the island of Nguna.[60]

Political rivalry finally induced the French administration in New Caledonia to dispatch 300 troops to the group in 1886 on the pretext of native atrocities, an action which resulted in the tightening of European control after 1887, and the establishment of a joint Anglo-French Naval Commission to replace the troops and regularly patrol the islands. The more rigorous reaction to native acts of violence had some impact. After a punitive expedition to avenge two murders of settlers on Aoba in 1897, a surviving trader thankfully remarked that "the natives throughout the island were much impressed . . . particularly with the arrest of the four natives who were accused of the crimes."[61]

Nevertheless, by the end of the 1890s parts of the New Hebrides were still dangerous for European settlers. Late in 1898 at South West Bay, Malekula, one of the two resident traders was murdered and the other was "living in terror of his life" because they "had cut down some trees round the house which the natives considered as sacred, and the destruction, of which, they said, was causing sickness and death in the village."[62] The commander of the warship investigating this murder in 1899 also inquired about the killing of a trader's wife on one of the islands off the coast of north-east Malekula and launched a punitive expedition against the still defiant citizens of Tanna.[63] Moreover, after a French trader on the south coast of Malekula was shot early in 1900, the instigator of the murder was "in a state of incomprehensible exaltation," declaring "that come what may he will purge the country of the white men who are there and he has no fear whatever of a ship of war."[64] So, although the preponderance of power that New Hebrideans had held over the early

settlers had slipped away, there were still large areas of the islands under their *de facto* control. In 1906 a British Naval officer explained: "it must be thoroughly understood that in most of the Northern Islands, and on Tanna in the South, absolute anarchy, chaos and even canibalism exist in the interior,"[65]

Thirty years of settlement, the overseas labour trade and the work of missionaries all combined to reinforce the external changes to the way of life of New Hebrideans started initially by the sandalwood trade. The technological revolution wrought by imports of European goods had now penetrated all islands. "Nearly all the natives speak sufficient English, or . . . *'Beche-de-mer* English,' to make themselves understood; and . . . they are keen hands at a bargain, and fully appreciate the value of money and tobacco," wrote a British Naval observer in 1900.[66] But even the missionaries found it hard to alter fundamental aspects of life-style. Witness the Presbyterian mission's lack of faith in its own native teachers: "A Native Teacher is of very little use without a wife. Indeed, as immorality is *the* sin of our islands, we insist upon all teachers being married before they are entrusted with an outstation."[67] Early twentieth century anthropologists attested to the stubborn survival of Melanesian patterns of living, especially in the areas untouched by Christianity, which at the turn of the century were considerable since, as the Presbyterian mission admitted in 1897, the islands north of Epi and also Tanna were "still mainly heathen."[68]For example, on one of north-east Malekula's off-shore islands, where there had been sufficient European contact to induce the islanders to abandon native canoes in favour of whale-boats, Felix Speiser, in 1912, discovered that the old customs had been very well preserved. Indeed, he wrote: "in spite of their frequent intercourse with whites, the people of Vao are still confirmed cannibals."[69]

One significant effect of permanent European settlement on New Hebrideans was to reduce their number. Admittedly the most recent demographic study of the group maintains the old views of this "fatal impact" have been exaggerated. Nevertheless, from the lost decades of the nineteenth century until the 1930s there was a definite decline in the native population. And the fragmentary evidence suggests that the islands most affected were those with long standing or heavy European settlement, especially those islands with a small land area that allowed wholesale devastation by epidemics of introduced diseases.[70] These factors are illustrated by the three areas which, according to missionary reports, had the highest ratios of deaths to births from 1899-1900: densely settled Epi, tiny Futuna, and first settled Aneityum.[71] Comparison with the more lightly European-occupied Loyalty Islands, where the indigenous popu-

lation remained relatively stable, also suggests that settlers contributed significantly to high mortality rates in the New Hebrides.[72]

Besides diseases, two other depopulating factors were "guns and grog," But for the nineteenth century this view has been challenged. As Dorothy Shineberg and Kerry Howe have argued, the short-ranged, inaccurate and slow-firing smooth-bore muskets with which Melanesians were mostly armed up to the 1870s were not the deadly weapons that they have been imagined to be.[73] F. A. Campbell noted in 1872 that the widespread use of firearms on Tanna "in no way implies that there is a very great amount of hard fighting or of bloodshed." He explained that when attacking an enemy village the Tannese were careful to remain at such a safe distance that few on either side were hit; the traditional ambush caused more loss of life.[74] Giles, after his experience on Mai, was even happy to see the use of guns by natives increasing over the use of "poisoned" arrows, because "with the arrow they can shoot very accurately and its wound is fatal in nine cases out of ten, whereas with the gun it is a question of chance and even if hit you may recover."[75] Giles did note that modern breech-loading rifles were being introduced into the group by 1877. In fact "sniders" were in great demand in the New Hebrides in the 1880s. But the greater range, accuracy and rapidity of fire of the new weapons did not deter the Presbyterian Mission Synod from arguing in 1890 that British settlers should be permitted to sell them in the interests of increasing the British population in the New Hebrides. The missionaries insisted that guns were now part of the New Hebridean way of life and had not caused any increase in mortality.[76]

Nor, initially, was alcoholic drink a new dread curse. Howe has shown that Loyalty Islanders acquired no addiction to it in the nineteenth century.[77] Up to 1900 this was largely true of the New Hebrides. Although in 1874 the Presbyterian Mission Synod expressed alarm about introduction of intoxicating drink into the islands by the new settlers, Craddock, who was concerned about this, saw few cases of drunkenness among New Hebrideans at Havannah Harbour.[78] Julian Thomas, an Australian journalist who toured the group in 1883, declared: "It is a mistake to suppose that much liquor is traded to the natives. They are not sufficiently civilised for that."[79] This contention is supported by the silence of the Mission Synod on the subject for the rest of the century, apart from concern that the mission itself remain free from the taint of the liquor trade. The Reverend Hugh Robertson of Erromanga asserted in 1891: "The natives are wonderfully temperate compared with white people," though he remarked that some "acquired a taste for intoxicants" while labourers in Queensland.[80] And in 1895 Peter Milne on Nguna claimed that the Chris-

tians, who were a majority of the people in his missionary district, were all "tea-totallers."[81] Not until 1906 did the Synod again voice concern about increasing sales of liquor to the natives when the Presbyterian *New Hebrides Magazine* described it as "a comparatively new element of antagonism to the work."[82]

Up to 1900, therefore, the impact of European settlement on the New Hebrides was less devastating than tradition has depicted." And many retained much of their pre-contact culture, borrowing from the settlers only what suited them. Indeed, in the first thirty years of permanent European settlement, the natives of the New Hebrides showed much independence in their contacts with the "blessings" of civilization.

## NOTES

1. See Dorothy Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood: A Study of the Sandalwood Trade in the South West Pacific, 1830-1865,* Melbourne, 1967, passim.

2. James L. A. Hope, *In Quest of Coolies,* London, 1872, p. 32. Thurston, "Journal of a Voyage from Ovalau . . .," 14 May 1871, quoted in Deryck Scarr, *The Majesty of Colour: A Life of John Bates Thurston,* vol. 1, *I, the Very Bayonet,* Canberra, 1973, p. 146.

3. *Christian Review and Messenger of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria,* February 1870, p. 10.

4. Diary of W. G. Farguhar, *Schooner "Petrel,"* 24 December 1871, no. 496, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (hereafter P.M.B.) National Library of Australia, Canberra (microfilm).

5. John Westwood, *Island Stories*--Being Extracts From the Papers of Mr. John Westwood, Mariner of London and Shanghai, Shanghai, 1905, p. 19. John Moresby, *Discoveries and Surveys in New Guinea and the d'Entrecasteaux Islands: A Cruise in Torres Straits of H.M.S. "Basilisk,"* London, 1876, p. 116. Lieutenant-Commander T. Suckling to Commodore F. H. Stirling, 31 July 1873; Commodore J. G. Goodenough to Admiralty, 16 November, 24 December 1874, Royal Navy Australian Station. Records of the Commander-in-Chief (hereafter R.N.A.S.), vol. 33, National Library of Australia (microfilm).

6. Suckling to Stirling, 31 July 1873, *loc. cit.* Diary of W. R. Craddock, Craddock Family Papers, MSS 1021, Mitchell Library, Sydney (hereafter M.L.), *passim.*

7. Ibid., 2 August 1873.

8. *Christian Review and Messenger,* October 1871, p. 13.

9. Wallace to Matthew, n.d., quoted in Deryck Scarr, *Fragments of Empire: A History of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1877-1914,* Canberra, 1967, p. 199.

10. Albert Hastings Markham, *The Cruise of the "Rosario" Amongst the New Hebrides and Santa Cruz Islands, Exposing the Recent Atrocities Connected with the Kidnapping of Natives in the South Seas,* London 1873, pp. 227-8.

11. Craddock Diary, 21 June 1873.

12. F. A. Campbell, *A Year in the New Hebrides, Loyalty Islands, and New Caledonia,* Geelong, 1873, pp. 162-3.

13. J. G. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery,* Cambridge, 1961, vol. 2, p. 493, n. 3.

14. In Queensland the Tannese along with the Malaita men proved the most volatile of the Pacific Island labourers, and these two groups "singled each other out as natural enemies." Peter Corris, *Passage, Fort and Plantation: A History of Solomon islands Labour Migration 1870-1914,* Melbourne, 1973, p. 89.

15. Craddock Diary, 27, 3, 5 June, 2 August 1873.

16. *Australian Witness and Presbyterian Herald* (Sydney), 15 August 1874, p. 2. For interracial sexual and other social relations in Fiji and other Pacific island beach communities see John Young, "Evernescent Ascendancy: The Planter Community in Fiji" in J. W. Davidson & Deryck Scarr (eds.), *Pacific Islands Portraits,* Canberra, 1970; and Caroline Ralston, *Grass Huts and Warehouses: Pacific Beach Communities in the Nineteenth Century,* Canberra, 1977.

17. Leefe to Gordon, 10 March 1878, Records of the Western Pacific High Commission Secretariat (hereafter W.P.H.C.), Inwards Correspondence, 4/78, Western Pacific Archives, London.

18. W.P.H.C., Land Register, Book A, folio 34. Joint Court of the New Hebrides Records, Land Judgment no. 116, Joint Court, Vila.

19. Craddock Diary, 5, 6, June 1873.

20. Goodenough to Admiralty, 16 November 1874, R.N.A.S., vol. 33. Private Journals of Commodore J. G. Goodenough, X, 28 April 1875, MSS 899, M.L.

21. Cardozo to Governor of New Caledonia, 4 July 1876 Des Granges Papers (microfilm), Department of Pacific & South East Asian History, Australian National University, Canberra. "Plantations in the New Hebrides" in "To Commander-in-Chief," 29 October 1876, R.N.A.S. vol. 33.

22. L. Layard to E. L. Layard, 28 July 1877, in Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 14 November 1877, Colonial Office Records, London (hereafter C.O.), 83/15. Leefe to Gordons, 10 March 1878, W.P.H.C., Inwards Correspondence, 4/78.

23. E. L. Layard to Commander-in-Chiefs, 14 May 1877 and enclosures, R.N.A.S., vol. 14. An example of the reaction to the penis-sheath was W. T. Wawn's in 1875: "In Tanna . . . where the missionaries have not prevailed upon them to adopt the waist-cloth or a more European style of dress, the men appear simply more disgusting than if they contented themselves with nothing at all." William T. Wawn, *The South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade,* repr., Canberra, 1973, p. 20.

24. Campbell, *A Year in the New Hebrides,* pp. 132, 122.

25. Layard to Layard, 28 July 1877, in Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 14 November 1877, C.O. 83/15.

26. Journal of C. Rudd, *Mary Eliza,* 4 September 1876, Journals of Government Agents, 1876-1914 (hereafter J.G.A.), no. 4, Agent General of Immigration, Central Archives of Fiji, Suva.

27. W. E. Giles, *A Cruise in a Queensland Labour Vessel to the South Seas,* ed. Deryck Scarr, Canberra, 1968, p. 73, note 94, pp. 91-2.

28. H. S. Chiffin to L. Layard, 10 March 1880, in Layard to Gordon, 7 April 1880, W.P.H.C., Inwards Correspondence 60/80.

29. Layard to Layard, 28 July 1887, in Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 14 November 1877, C.O. 83/15.

30. Giles, *A Cruise in a Queensland Labour Vessel,* p. 69.

31. Affidavit by W. E. Giles, 13 November 1884, W.P.H.C.. Land Register. Book A. folios 112-4.

32. Journal of J. Gaggin, *Dauntless,* 3 April 1878, J.G.A., no. 10.

33. Commodore Wilson to Admiralty, 22 May 1879, R.N.A.S., vol. 33. Giles, *A Cruise in a Queensland Labour Vessel,* pp. 30-l. It has been suggested also that British labour recruiting bans caused this exodus (Scarr, *Fragments of Empire,* p. 182), but the planters who survived were still able to procure labour from foreign ships. See Captain C. A. Bridge to Sir G. W. Des Voeux, 9 August 1882, W.P.H.C., Inwards Correspondence, 138/82.

34. Walter Coote, *Wanderings, South and East,* London, 1882, p. 123.

35. Corris, *Port, Passage and Plantation,* p. 99. Charles A. Valentine III, "An Introduction to the History of Changing Ways of Life on the Island of New Britain," Doctoral Dissertation University of Pennsylvania, 1958, p. 76. Peter J. Hempenstall, *Pacific Islanders Under German Rule: A Study in the Meaning of Colonial Resistance,* Canberra, 1978, pp. 120-2.

36. Great Britain House of Commons, *Correspondence Respecting the Western Pacific and the Labour Traffic,* London, 1883, p. 157. Bridge to Des Voeux, 27 July, 16 August 1882, W.P.H.C., Inwards Correspondence, 112, 138/82. An incomplete version of Bridge's census is published in Patrick O'Reilly, *Hebridais: Répertoire Bio-Bibliographique des Nouvelles-Hébrides,* Paris, 1957, p. 260.

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39. Ibid.

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41. Lieutenant-Commander C. H. Cross, "A list of Europeans and other traders who have lost their lives by the hands of the natives of the New Hebrides between 1882 and July 1886" in Admiralty to Foreign Office, 22 September 1886, Great Britain Foreign Office Confidential Print (hereafter F.O.C.P.), 60/5522. For a discussion of massacres and motives during the sandalwood era see Shineberg, Chapter 16, *They Came for Sandalwood.*

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43. Captain A. M. Farquhar, "General Report on the New Hebrides," 3 October 1899, in Admiralty to Foreign Office, 20 April 1900, F.O.C.P., no. 7388. Note also the warning against generalizing about patterns of violence between New Caledonians and Europeans in Bronwen Douglas,"Conflict and Alliance in a Colonial Context: Case Studies in New Caledonia," *Journal of Pacific History,* vol. 15, 1980, pp. 21-51.

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