THE PIONEER LEGEND

OF

FRANK JARDINE

SUBMITTED BY: STEVE MULLINS
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Queen of the North, thy heroes sleep
On sunburnt plain and rocky steep:
Their work is done; their high emprise
Hath crowned thee; and the great stars keep
The secrets of their histories.
We reap the harvest they have sown
Who died unknown.¹

When Frank Jardine died at Somerset on the tip of Cape York Peninsula in 1919, he left behind him an immense diary consisting of some 40 volumes and embracing a period of over 50 years. On those pages was recorded the life of the far north's earliest and most enigmatic pioneer. His own account of the years he spent on the Cape as explorer, cattleman, administrator, pearler and planter, as well as the tale of his epic overlanding trip from Carpentaria Downs Station to Somerset during the wet season of 1864-65, would have provided an invaluable source for those interested in the pattern of European occupation of the Cape. Thankfully an edited version of the journal of the expedition was published in 1867 and copies survive, but the other volumes of Jardine's diary were taken by his eldest son 'Chum' to the Aru Islands in the 1920s and lost when the Japanese took control there during the Second World War. Partly in consequence of this the history of Frank Jardine has become an amalgam of legend and fact.

It is not difficult to understand how a man like Jardine fired the imaginations of the myth makers. He was a bushman 'with an instinct of locality which has been alluded to as having "La boussole dans la tete".' 'hardy and determined... with the blood of the old fighting Jardines of the border clans' coursing through his veins. His lifelong association with the pearling port of Somerset enhanced the reputation he had earned on 'one of the most remarkable expeditions in Australian history' and his marriage to the young missionary niece

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4 The Courier Mail, 15 May 1959, p.11.
6 The History of Queensland: its People and Industries, 3 vols.,vol.3.,1923,p.177.
7 ibid.
of Moliatoa, King of Samoa, along with the discovery of a sunken treasure of Spanish silver, was the stuff of Boy's Own annual. The purveyors of 'the pioneer legend' had hardly to exercise their romantic imaginations to be fascinated by a man once described by an acquaintance as 'an Elizabethan returned to earth'.

In his analysis of the literary development of the mystique surrounding the pioneer, J.B. Hirst makes the point that the lionizing of these men and women for their 'courage, enterprise, hard work and perseverance' is not unreasonable, but the failure of writers to take into account the 'social, legal or economic determinants' of their pioneering tends to skew the image.

When Joseph Conrad wrote,

To us, their less tried successors, they appeared magnified, not as agents of trade but as instruments of a recorded destiny pushing out into the unknown in obedience to an inward voice, to an impulse beating in the blood, to a dream of the future.

he might well have been enunciating the creed of those who chose to write the stories that helped create 'the pioneer legend'. Those traits that are invariably associated with the pioneer, the love of adventure and a heightened sense of duty, are the predominant themes in their works. The idea that their characters were driven 'by the irresistible urge of discovery' so that 'those who came after... will thus have a track to follow' is the unquestioned cant

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8 Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage, London, 1949, p.1083
11 Stanley Wilson, 'Frank Jardine; a personal note.' 28 August 1967, unpublished letter, R.H.S.Q.
12 J.B. Hirst, 'The Pioneer Legend' p.316.
15 ibid, p.133.
that justified, not only the pioneers, but also those who wrote their popular histories.

When Ion Idriess wrote the first novel to feature the exploits of Frank Jardine, The Great Trek (1947), he must have realised the man's complex nature, but he chose to ignore it. Instead he presents his readers with a stylized model of the pioneer/explorer. He also succeeds in developing the most grotesque stereotypes of the blacks who accompanied the expedition north, and those who tried to stop it.

"Boot belonga him hurt!" said Sambo ruefully. "I don't believe he even left a mark", grinned Binney. "He leave 'im mark!" exclaimed Sambo indignantly. "Big feller mark too much". "Show us!" challenged Binney. Sambo dropped his trousers and screwed his neck over his shoulder. But all declared they could see no mark. "He altogether mark," insisted Sambo, "me feel him". "We certainly cannot see a mark," smiled Mr. Richardson, "although the mule kicked him miles away." And they laughed at Sambo's black hide.16

Idriess acknowledged the moral dilemma posed by the Jardine expedition's violent clashes with the Aboriginal tribes on the western river systems of the Cape,17 but he rationalised it by emphasizing the restraint displayed by the leaders, and by pointing to the importance of the 'trek' to future generations of Australians.18 In this he was echoing the public consensus of opinion that showed little sympathy for the 'wild myalls' who had been responsible for the killing of Kennedy and Gilbert.19 But the Jardines were not merely explorers, they were overlanders as well; and for young men they were playing for very high stakes.20

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16 Ion Idriess, The Great Trek, p.17
17 ibid., pp.152-153.
18 ibid., p.133.
It would hardly be reasonable to suggest that Idriess should have analysed 'the objective long-term tendency of the relationship between the capitalist and the primitive communal modes of production, the dissolution of the non-capitalist mode and the subsuming of its agents into capitalist production relations' in order to show the Jardine expedition in realistic perspective. He was writing an adventure novel for boys who had received their schooling in such things from the likes of John Wayne and Ronald Reagan. In fact, Clem Lack and Harry Stafford make no bones about the fact that Australian frontiersmen should be celebrated in the same way as were those of the American 'wild west'. In the foreword to their book The Rifle and the Spear (1964) they wrote:

> We consider it was a sad commentary on our national pride and appreciation of our heroic past that the average Australian youngster knows all about Buffalo Bill but nothing about Frank Jardine and Alan McPherson.

In the chapter that deals with Frank Jardine they concern themselves almost exclusively with the overlanding expedition, and they treat it in the swashbuckling style of the American 'western'. Instead of generating horror at some of the more brutal incidents, they revel in the quality of the markmanship.

> Two blacks dropped, blood welling from the small holes drilled in their foreheads. Their companions, howling in superstitious awe at this demonstration of white man's magic, broke and fled into the heavy scrub. "Nice shot Alex," Frank grunted. "Same to you", Alex grinned, and they returned to the chores of making camp.

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23 ibid., p.
The similarity of style and content obvious in these two novelizations of the Jardine expedition is uncanny, given the fact that *The Rifle and the Spear* was written almost twenty years after *The Great Trek*, and both support Hirst's contention that the pioneer legend 'occurs in its purest form' in children's literature.\(^2\)

However Lack and Idriess had more to contribute to the pioneer legend of Frank Jardine. In an epilogue to the chapter that treats the Jardine expedition in *The Rifle and the Spear* Lack states unequivocally that Frank Jardine shot and killed Wini,\(^25\) the man made famous by Ion Idriess as 'the wild white man of Badu'.\(^26\) This Wini, or Wongai as Idriess prefers to call him, was supposed to have been a ferocious white cannibal who arrived on Badu (Mulgrave) Island in the Torres Strait, either in the late 1830s or early 1840s. By a combination of brutality and sheer luck it was believed that he became a chief of the Badu people, and led them in a campaign of terror against both neighbouring tribesmen and Europeans. The notion that Wini met his death at the hands of Frank Jardine seems to have come into vogue in the early 1950s, there being no definite printed statement about the matter until Frank Reid's *The Romance of the Great Barrier Reef* (1954).\(^27\) The killing of Wini is crucial to the Jardine legend, not only because it illustrates the romantic emphasis of the myth makers, but also because it is used by them to highlight Jardine's role as an agent of the *Pax Britannica* and goes some way to justify his ruthless methods.

Although Clem Lack asserts on many occasions that Jardine Killed Wini,\(^28\) Ion Idriess, the man who did so much to give substance to both legends, did not believe that the two had ever met.\(^29\) In fact Wini is all but ignored in *Coral*
Sea Calling: pioneer tales of Australia's northern waters. (1957), while Jardine is further lionized. This book, a more mature effort than The Great Trek, seeks to tell the tale of the European move into the Torres Strait, concluding with the birth of the pearl shell industry in the mid-1870s. Like Reid's The Romance of the Great Barrier Reef, its style is selectively anecdotal. There is no mention of Jardine's recall from Somerset to face an inquiry into his handling of the settlement in 1873, or any real attempt to come to terms with the violence of his pioneering.

The most recent novelization of the Jardine legend comes from Peter Pinney and Estelle Runcie. Their book, Too Many Spears (1978), while falling victim to the obvious weaknesses of the oxymoronic 'historic novel', does at least depict a more believably human Frank Jardine. The story begins with Jardine as Police Magistrate at Somerset, a position he took up in December of 1867, and closes with the romantic image of Frank taking his young Samoan bride to their new life on Naghir (Mt. Ernest) Island, early in 1874.

In Too Many Spears Jardine is the rugged individualist with no time for bureaucratic ineptitude, and a talent for the unorthodox. A scene in the book that depicts an incident where Jardine auctioned a boat on behalf of the Government and bought it himself epitomises this attitude.

'I said I'll buy her. As resident, I'll auction her. As Frank Jardine, citizen, I'll buy her.' He laughed at the extravagant concern on Chester's face. 'Unless a crab, or a Gudang, offers a higher bid.'

Pinney and Runcie do not steer away from the charge that Jardine was using the

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33 Queensland Govt. Gazette, 1867, p.1165.
34 Pinney & Runcie, Too Many Spears, pp.190-191.
35 ibid., p.100.
Somerset settlement to line his own pockets, they confront it and vindicate him. Technically, perhaps, he may have been guilty of drawing too fine a line between his own interests and those of the settlement, but only 'the rats of scandal and the twittermice of gossip' would condemn him for it. 'He was a magistrate, and as a magistrate he served the cause of justice, even if some accused him of pursuing his own advantage'.

Pinney and Runcie have revamped the Jardine legend for the consumers of a more cynical age. They acknowledge the 'debil debil Jardine' legends that are still retold by the surviving Cape York tribesmen, but dismiss them as the product of misunderstanding and superstition. Jardine was a fearsome opponent, but never merciless. The rumour that he may have been responsible for the massacre of almost the entire population of Murralug (Prince of Wales) Island is scotched in the most remarkable way; the blame being firmly placed at the feet of Wini, 'the wild white man of Badu'. The last thirty years of Jardine's life, so important for an understanding of the development of both the European and Aboriginal legends surrounding the man, have once again been left to the more obscure and staunchly traditional purveyors of 'the pioneer legend'; men like J.T.S. Bird, Robert Logan Jack and T.J. McMahon. Apart from an interesting anecdote in Idriess's My Mate Dick (1962), voices from the other side of the frontier had been ignored in European literature until the advent of Too Many Spears, and it is those voices that expose the vital chink in the armour of the pioneer legend of Frank Jardine.

36 ibid., p.186.
37 ibid., p.146
38 ibid.
39 ibid., p.105
40 ibid., pp.45-58.
42 Robert Logan Jack, Northmost Australia, pp.289-347.
43 T.J. McMahon, 'The Tiptop of Queensland', in The Queenslander, 10 Nov. 1917, p.29.
Unlike *Too Many Spears*, this paper does not promise 'the true story of Frank Jardine'. Rather it attempts, in a short biography, to come to terms with those issues embellished by the myth makers, and to raise others they have chosen to ignore. The unromantic economic facts of life that have determined the patterns of domination in the far north of this state need to be recognised so that those who pioneered the region can have their roles properly assessed. The movement of the cattle and fishing industries into the northern Cape area has had a profound effect on the traditional occupants. A.C. Haddon, leader of the prestigious Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits of 1898, wrote

> We went prepared to measure and study the Australian natives of the Gudang tribe... but they have all died out, or at all events none now live in their own country. The same remark also applies to neighbouring tribes... It was very saddening to be continuously pulled up in our researches by the oft repeated cry of "Too late!".

Ion Idriess, advocate for the pioneers, argues:

> Don't blame us for their passing. It is true that we, and the Chinese diggers, and cosmopolitan crews of the pearling and beche-de-mer fleets, introduced "civilized" diseases to them which thinned their numbers. But they were developing some resistance to the troubles we had brought upon them, and were standing up to us quite well, until "civilized" nations had to indulge in a World War and thus brought two storms of Spanish influenza raging down upon them. Their systems could not stand this new fury...

The fact that European diseases were largely responsible for the vanishing

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tribesmen, does not absolve the pioneers. Evidence taken before the royal commission into pearl and beche-de-mer fishing in 1908, makes it quite clear that the conditions of employment on the boats took a dreadful toll of people from the western river systems of the Cape.\(^\text{48}\) Prostitution and the sexual enslavement of Aboriginal women, followed by the inevitable ravage of venereal disease,\(^\text{49}\) was also a direct consequence of European economic exploitation.

Aborigines were a constant source of irritation for many of the pioneers of the northern cattle industry right up until the early years of this century, and Rowley writes that on the Ducie and Batavia rivers cattlemen would lure tribesmen to feast on a slaughtered beast, and then massacre them.\(^\text{50}\) 'Bertie Haugh', Frank Jardine's first out-station, was on the Ducie River.\(^\text{51}\) The terrible reputation Jardine and his contemporary Lachlan Kennedy have among the remaining Aborigines,\(^\text{52}\) is indicative of the monocular perceptions of the European myth makers. They have allowed their 'nostalgia for the life of the fearless, the free and the bold'\(^\text{53}\) to influence their assessment of many of our 'folk heroes', and this has been the case with Frank Jardine.

Perhaps the most poignant physical symbol of 'the pioneer legend' is the lonely grave in the bush. It lacks the sense of continuity and society comfortably associated with the graveyard and the reverence afforded it is more ideological than spiritual. Frank and Sana Jardine are buried just behind the beach at Somerset, and 'the smallness and shape of Jardine's grave

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\(^{48}\) Minutes of evidence taken before the pearl-shell and beche-de-mer royal commission, Q/V & P., pp.395-756, 1908, p.217.


\(^{50}\) ibid., p.179.

\(^{51}\) Robert Logan Jack, Northmost Australia, p.345.


\(^{53}\) Manning Clark, quoted in Rob Pascoe, The Manufacture of Australian History, Melbourne, 1979, p.47.
testifies to the fact that he was buried upright'. European legend would have it that this was at his own request, because, 'In life, he had bowed his head to none'. Many Aborigines from northern Cape York Peninsula believe a different story. They say that his strange burial was somehow due to the fact that he was a cruel man who had been responsible for the annihilation of the northern tribes. Whatever the truth of the matter, it is obvious that the man's memory depends for its regard on the cultural tradition from which it is evoked. It is hoped that by taking into account the aspects of his pioneering that have been distorted or ignored, this dissertation will go some way toward wringing the history of Frank Jardine from the legends.

54 R.A. Moncrieff, 'Saga of the North', Sunday Mail Color, 22 May 1977, p.17.
55 ibid.
56 Mrs. M. Wymarra, taped interview, Hargrave St., Thursday Island, 28 April, 1981.
CHAPTER ONE

'To a dream of the future'¹

When the directors of Bush Pilots decided to establish a tourist resort on fourteen square kilometres of land leased at the very tip of Cape York Peninsula, they may not have been aware that something similar had been suggested over one hundred years ago. John Jardine had been appointed by the Queensland government to establish a 'harbor of refuge' for shipwrecked sailors at a place called Somerset Point, on the eastern side of the tip of the Cape.² He was so taken by the climate that in a report to the Colonial Secretary in March 1865 he wrote, 'Somerset will be eagerly sought by invalids from the East as an excellent and accessible sanatorium'.³ However, to attract these Nineteenth Century antipodean tourists, the new settlement needed to develop into something more than the lonely out-post of the British Empire it was in 1865. At an auction held in Brisbane in April and May 1866, speculators showed that they had every confidence in the future of the settlement. They invested £2093 in the 109 allotments offered for sale from the town survey of Somerset, at an average of about £70 an acre.⁴ Given that B.P.A. paid only $3000 for the fifteen square kilometres they leased in the 1970s,⁵ it is obvious that to the investors of 1865 Somerset was expected to have a more promising future than as a refuge for shipwrecked sailors.

At the time of its beginnings in August 1864, Somerset was a joint enterprise of the colonial and imperial governments.⁶ The strategic importance of Torres Strait to British shipping since steamers had made it possible to pass in

² Governor Bowen to Sec. of State for the Colonies. 16 July 1864. Q.S.A. Gov./24 pp. 70-79
⁴ Record of Somerset land sale 2 May 1866 & 4 April 1866. Q.S.A. 66/3552 Col.A86.
⁵ Dick Barnes, 'Northern Safari', in People, 18 March 1981, pp.34-35.
⁶ Governor Bowen to Sec. of State for the Colonies. 16 July 1864. pp.70-79
both directions, meant that the British government was obliged to take an interest in any port proposed for the area. As early as 1824 a trading settlement had been established at Melville Island, partly in response to the uncertain future of Singapore, but with the signing of the Treaty of London in that same year the settlement became almost redundant. With the prospect of a north Australian commercial emporium all but dashed, the only chance for success lay in trading with the Maccassan fishing fleets for processed beche-de-mer. Accordingly the settlement was moved two hundred miles to the east where stone furnaces and wooden curing frames gave proof that the Maccassans were active. Ironically, just as Fort Wellington at Raffles Bay was beginning to attract a considerable number of proas, the imperial government, acting on early pessimistic reports, withdrew their personnel. By 1827 the whole venture had collapsed.7

Torres Strait was notorious, not only for its labyrinthine reefs and surging tides, but also for the ferocity of its inhabitants. Many ships had come to grief there, and when, after the loss of the Charles Eaton in 1834, searchers recovered from Aureed Island a grisly turtle-shell trophy adorned with dozens of human heads, seventeen of them European, its reputation was sealed.8 In 1835 an unmanned relief station was set up at Booby Island,9 and three years later the British Admiralty began building Port Essington, not far from the deserted Fort Wellington settlement.10 Extensive surveys were carried out in the 1840s by Her Majesty's Ships Bramble, Fly and Rattlesnake,11 and by the turn of the decade it was apparent to most that the logical place for a northern port was somewhere near the tip of Cape York Peninsula.12 But Port Essington

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7 Geoffrey Blainey, The Tyranny of Distance, Melbourne, 1966, pp.86-88.
9 ibid. p.18.
10 ibid. p.136.
11 ibid. p.xiv.
had proved a disaster, and when it finally collapsed in 1849 the British were in no hurry to replace it. The initiative had to come from elsewhere.

When George Ferguson Bowen arrived in Brisbane to become Queensland's first governor, he had already formulated a plan to create a series of ports to service the new colony's interior. The germ of this idea may have come from Bowen's patron, W.E. Gladstone, who as Secretary of State for the Colonies had expended considerable time and effort in establishing a settlement in 'North Australia' in 1847, only to see it aborted by a change of ministry following the general election of that same year. However the area that was once to be 'North Australia' had begun to prosper by the end of the 1850s and pastoral settlement had expanded as far north as possible. Ports were needed to service the new runs, and to facilitate any further expansion. Bowen proclaimed the Kennedy district, and in February of 1861 a party under the command of George Elphinstone Dalrymple proceeded north from Rockhampton to construct the township of Bowen on the coast at Port Denison. Townsville, Cardwell and Burketown were built in response to similar pressures, and by the end of the squatting rush of 1861-62, 'The plains of Promise were covered with cattle and the tracks of the stockman's horse marked the sand on the shelving shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria'.

But not all of Bowen's new towns were to be built in response to the needs of the expanding cattle industry. The Governor had in mind a settlement

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15 ibid., pp.9-11.
17 Anne Allingham, "Taming the Wilderness": the First Decade of Pastoral Settlement in the Kennedy District', in Studies in North Queensland History No. 1, Townsville, 1977, p. 23.
18 R.B. Joyce, 'George Ferguson Bowen...', p.32
at the very tip of Cape York Peninsula, which was an atavistic adventure more reminiscent of the 'limpet ports' of the 1820s. In December 1861 the governor wrote to the Colonial Secretary giving no less than eight different reasons why a port should be established on Queensland's northmost shore. Joyce summarizes these as:

- a port of refuge; a store depot; a coal port;
- a control post over the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders; a centre for geographical research, missionary enterprise and eventual colonization; a military defence post; a sign of the influence and prestige of Great Britain and, with highest hopes, the future Australian Singapore.

If the venture lived up to Bowen's expectations it would also bring that most precious commodity to the young colony; people. They would stream in from Britain along the Torres Strait route and populate Queensland from the north.

The new governor was aware of the attraction of Java to southern business interests, and he sought the aid of the New South Wales government, as well as that of Britain, to swing his plan into action. There was some initial delay 'because of doubts as to the north-western territorial rights of Queensland', but by August 1862 he and Commodore Burnett of the Australian Station were steaming north aboard H.M.S. Pioneer to make the final choice of a site. They decided on Port Albany on the western side of Albany Island, but after a visit to the area by H.M.S. Hecate in 1863, it was thought more wise to situate the settlement on the opposite side of Albany passage, on the mainland. This elevated position, more open to the

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21 Bowen to Sec. of State for the Colonies, 9 December 1861, Q.S.A., Gov/23, pp.105-121.
22 R.B. Joyce, 'George Ferguson Bowen....', p.31.
23 Sydney Morning Herald, 17 March 1866.
24 R.B. Joyce, 'George Ferguson Bowen....', p.31.
25 ibid.
26 R.B. Joyce, 'George Ferguson Bowen....', p.31.
refreshing south-east trade winds, promised better health.\textsuperscript{28} It was a common belief that the failure of the early north Australian settlements could be attributed to the sickness caused by 'unwholesome exhalations' experienced at landlocked harbours.\textsuperscript{29} John Jardine's rhapsodising, supported by the more scientific meteorological observations of the naval surgeon attached to the settlement,\textsuperscript{30} Dr. Haran, must have been heartening news indeed to the supporters of the fledgling Somerset, namesake of the First Lord of the Admiralty.\textsuperscript{31}

On 3 August 1864 twenty Royal Marines, under the command of Lieutenant Robert Pascoe, disembarked from H.M.S. Salamander and prepared to begin the task of landing prefabricated building materials and provisions from the Golden Eagle, a merchantman chartered in Brisbane.\textsuperscript{32} The British government provided the initial finance for the settlement; the marine contingent; the naval surgeon, and had undertaken to make regular supply visits, but Queensland insisted on overall control of the outpost.\textsuperscript{33} Two hundred and fifty-two sheep were left to graze on Albany Island while the marines cleared the bush and Mr. Wilson, the government surveyor, began to survey the town site. By the middle of September Carnegie, the commander of H.M.S. Salamander, had his ship back in Brisbane and was able to report the successful establishment of Somerset to the governor.\textsuperscript{34}

John Jardine, who had been appointed Police Magistrate at the settlement, seemed eminently suitable for the position. He had been the Police Magistrate at Rockhampton and Gladstone since 1861,\textsuperscript{35} and Commissioner for Crown Lands in the Port Curtis district for three years before that.\textsuperscript{36} Born the fourth son

\textsuperscript{29} ibid., p.143.
\textsuperscript{30} Bowen to the Sec. of State for the Colonies, 12 Sept. 1866, Q.V.&P., pp.1187-1192, 1867, Removal of the detachment of the Royal Marines from Cape York, p.7.
\textsuperscript{32} J.M. Carroll, (ed.) 'Journey into Torres Strait', p.36.
\textsuperscript{33} J. Farnfield, 'Shipwrecks and Pearl Shells', p.69.
\textsuperscript{34} Carnegie to Governor Bowen, 19 Sept. 1864, Q.S.A. Gov./Al.,pp.593-599.
\textsuperscript{35} Queensland Government Gazette, 5 Jan. 1861, p.3.
\textsuperscript{36} Lorna McDonald, Rockhampton: a History of City and District, Bris., 1981, p.44.
of a Scottish baronet he joined the 1st. Regiment of Dragoons in 1835 at the age of twenty-eight, and two years later married Elizabeth Craig, the daughter of a Captain in the Royal Navy. He sold his commission as captain in 1839 and sailed from Scotland aboard the Dryade to take up a run near Wellington in New South Wales. In 1848 he found himself in financial difficulties and was forced to seek employment in the civil service, spending ten years as a Commissioner for Crown Lands in the Blight district before leaving for Queensland.37

Despite his military background, or perhaps because of it, he found it very difficult to get on with Lt. Pascoe. Jardine had had his military memories refreshed when he was gazetted Captain of the Rockhampton Company of the Queensland Rifle Brigade in 1860,38 but apparently these did not include any fondness towards young Lieutenants. The men who were ostensibly there to defend the settlement found themselves employed as builders, shepherds and gardeners.39 Disputes arose over the role of the marines, even though the matter had been discussed in official correspondence prior to the expedition leaving for Somerset.40 Pascoe was unhappy about Jardine's belligerent attitude towards the local Aborigines, and Jardine was skeptical about the Marines' ability to defend the settlement against Aboriginal attack.41 His years in the pastoral industry had bred in him a cynical attitude to the ability of a 'new churn' in the bush and he had learned to respect the martial capabilities of the Australian Aborigine while serving in the Rockhampton district.

Farnfield describes John Jardine as 'a disciplinarian, a keen naturalist and experienced bushman with an implacable attitude to Aborigines, whom he regarded as dangerous enemies of white settlement'.42 A disciplinarian and

39 Farnfield, 'Shipwrecks and Pearl Shells...', p.70.
41 Farnfield, 'Shipwrecks and Pearl Shells...', p.69.
42 ibid.
been a keen naturalist he certainly was, but his attitude to Aborigines needs closer examination. Having been a resident of central Queensland during the period of its bloodiest scenes of race war, Jardine saw at first hand that the Aborigine was capable of swift fierce action against European intrusion. There was the killing of five settlers at Mount Larcombe Station in 1855; the Hornet Bank massacre in 1857; the rape and murder of Fanny Briggs by two native policemen in 1860; an attack on the passengers of the ketch Elide in 1861, and the sensational Wills' massacre of 1861. Whether these attacks would have occurred if the pattern of European occupation had been different is still a matter for conjecture, but it was Jardine's opinion that the massacre of the Wills family and servants at Cullinlaringo Station could have been avoided had Horatio Wills been less trusting of the Aborigines and taken more stringent precautions. Nineteen whites died at Cullinlaringo, more than in any other confrontation with Aborigines on the frontier, and Jardine ordered 'the strongest measures and the most prompt action on the part of the Native Police and in fact everyone in the district'.

Fredrick Byerley, the man responsible for the editing of the journal of Jardine's sons' overlanding expedition to the Cape, had been aboard the Elida on her tragic cruise in 1861, and his opinions are clearly expressed in that journal. He wrote that

The utter faithlessness, treachery, and savage nature of the northern tribes is shown by their having twice attempted to surprise the settlement [Somerset] whilst Mr. Jardine, senior, was resident there, although they had been treated with every kindness from the first.

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44 Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 4 November 1861, Q.S.A., Col/A. 23.
48 F.J. Byerley (ed.) Narrative of the overland expedition of the Messrs. Jardine, Brisbane, 1867, p.78
John Jardine expressed himself in more pragmatic terms. His first impression was that the Cape Aborigines were 'in a lower state of degradation, mentally and physically, than any of the Australian Aboriginal tribes' he had seen previously.\(^4^9\) However he also wrote;

\begin{quote}
The natives of Cape York from the first have shown a friendly feeling towards them, [his sons] having, on their first arrival, met them about twenty miles from the settlement, and shown them the nearest way to it, and they have since been very useful in carrying timber to build huts, stockyards etc. etc.; and I believe that for the future, if well treated, they will offer no annoyance to the present settlers.\(^5^0\)
\end{quote}

He based this assessment of the situation on the knowledge he had acquired of the habits of the Gudangs and their immediate neighbours in the vicinity of Somerset. Jardine had read the account of the Rattlesnake's two sojourns at Evans Bay in 1848 and 1849 written by John MacGillivray,\(^5^1\) and saw no reason why the friendly pattern of Aborigine-European relations developed by the scientists could not be perpetuated by the settlers. It is amazing that he could be so optimistic after hearing from his two eldest sons how their overlanding party from Rockhampton had literally to battle their way to Somerset.

When John Jardine accepted his appointment to Somerset he suggested to the government that his two sons, Frank and Alick, should proceed north to the new settlement with a herd of cattle.\(^5^2\) This would ensure a supply of fresh meat to Somerset, open up a stock route for others to follow, and lay the foundations of a prosperous future for the Jardine family. The squatters who had rushed to the Kennedy district in the early 1860s were beginning to reap the rewards of their pioneering by 1864, and confidence

\(^4^9\) John Jardine to Col. Sec., 1 March 1865, in F.J. Byerley (ed.) \textit{ Narrative of the overland expedition...}, p. 82

\(^5^0\) John Jardine to Col. Sec., 1 May 1865, in F.J. Byerley (ed.) \textit{ Narrative...}, p. 87.

\(^5^1\) John Jardine to Col. Sec., 1 March 1865.

\(^5^2\) ibid. p.1.
in the northern pastoral industry was high. When all the attractive land in
the Kennedy district had been taken up, the squatters edged to the west and
north. In most cases the product was wool, but as seasons passed it became
obvious that conditions east of the Great Divide were not as suitable for
sheep as was first supposed. There was certainly good money in wool, but
cattle runs became more common as the squatters responded to the direct demands
of their environment.53

The primitive state of meat preserving technology in the early 1860s
dictated that the cattle herds could not stray too far from suitable markets.
As Gladstone and Rockhampton grew into substantial towns their demand for fresh
meat encouraged graziers in the Leichhardt district to switch from sheep to
cattle.54 Settlers as far north as the Kennedy district could also take
advantage of the port facilities in these two towns to export live cattle
to New Zealand and Melbourne,55 but it seems the buyers were reluctant to go
further north to the new settlements of Bowen and Cardwell.56 The irony of
this situation was that observers of the cattle industry expressed the
opinion that the greatest potential market for Australian beef was to the
north, in the Dutch East Indies.57 John Jardine decided to take his chance.
If Somerset was to become an 'entrepot for the trade of Torres Strait (sic)
and the North Pacific',58 then it might also provide access to 'those wealthy
Dutchmen'59 so tantalizingly close to our northern shores. If not, then a
thriving township meant a high price outlet for fresh beef at the very least.

A party was got together in Rockhampton under the leadership of John's
oldest sons Frank (22) and Alick (20). They were to be accompanied by three
European stockman; Charlie Scrutton, R. Binney and A. Cowderoy; four 'black boys';

53 Anne Allingham, "Taming the Wilderness", pp.67-104.
54 ibid. p.104.
55 ibid.
56 ibid. pp.111-112.
57 ibid. p.112
58 Byerley, p.
59 Robert Herbert to his mother, 18 Oct. 1864, quoted from Anne Allingham,
p.112.
Eulah, Sambo, Peter and Barney, and A.J. Richardson, a surveyor fully supplied and equipped by the government to map the party's course. The Aborigines accompanying the expedition were also supplied with 'horses, arms and accoutrements' at the Government's expense, but the Jardine family's investment must have amounted to something like three years of John's salary as a Police Magistrate. Legislation introduced into the Queensland parliament in 1861 and 1864, designed to combat the northern progress of the highly contagious cattle disease, pleuro-pneumonia, created a shortage that forced the price of disease-free cattle to around the £4 mark.

Besides the cost of the two hundred and fifty head of prime cattle that Frank bought from William Stenhouse of River Clarke, a man who prided himself on the quality of his stock, there were about thirty of the Jardines' own horses, and provisions for an estimated four months on the track to take into account. Although the brothers intended travelling light their pack horses were weighed down by more than a tonne of necessities, and it is little wonder that many pastoral adventurers were forced to call on the assistance of southern financiers to mount such costly ventures. However there is no evidence to suggest that the Jardines relied on anything but their own resources, and the responsibility must have been the most daunting prospect Frank and Alick had to face. Robert Logan Jack wrote, 'For them no glamour of romance shone in the far north to lure them to adventure. Their object was strictly business.'

In Byerley's 'amplification' of the journal kept by the two brothers he often refers to Frank as 'the Leader'. As the older of the two it was

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60 Byerley, p.xi.
61 Anne Allingham, pp.112-113.
62 ibid. p.50.
63 Byerley, p.42.
64 Anne Allingham. pp.107-108.
67 ibid. p.291.
natural for him to assume command of the expedition, and because he was very much his father's son it is difficult to imagine his settling for anything less. Born on 28 August 1841 at Orange in New South Wales, his first memories were of the land.68 The sons of pastoralists had few idle moments, especially when times were hard, and it was on his father's property that Frank learned the rudiments of the bushmanship for which he was later to become so well known. The story told by an old resident of Rockhampton of riding against the young Frank Jardine over hurdles erected by Jardine senior in a race in 1859, hints at the pride of a father in his oldest son, as well as at Frank's already established reputation as a horseman.69 The years of formal education spent at Sydney Grammar School70 added colour to his character by engendering in him a love of the classics71 that was sometimes strikingly incongruous in a man whose own drama was to be played out in the crude, and often barbaric theatre of the Queensland frontier.

On 14 May 1864 an overland expedition set out from Rockhampton under the command of Alexander Jardine, to make its way with horses and provisions to Port Denison.72 John Jardine senior had already set sail for Brisbane in the company of his third son, John, to join the contingent making preparations for the establishment of Somerset.73 The only instructions he left with Frank and Alick was that if they found themselves in desperate straits, they should 'stick together'.74 Alick's party made good time, and arrived without incident at Bowen on 17 June.75 Here they awaited the arrival of Frank and Archibald Richardson, who followed by sea. When the whole party was together at Bowen, and five more horses had been purchased for the use of Richardson, the expedition began to make its way to the station of

68 Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 4, 1851-90, p.471
70 A.D.B. p.471.
71 Frank Jardine to Murray Jardine, 19 June 1915. in possession of Murray Jardine
72 Byerley, p.1
73 ibid.
74 ibid. p.70
75 Robert Logan Jack, p. 290.
It was from Carpentaria Downs that the brothers intended to head north-west along the route already mapped by the ill-fated Leichhardt. They would follow Leichhardt's Lynd River till salty water told them they were nearing the Gulf, and then strike north for the Mitchell. It was at the Mitchell that Leichhardt was repulsed by the tribe that fatally speared Wilbert, so from that point on they would be travelling in country that was totally unknown. The Jardines were aware of the dangers that would confront them on their long journey from the Mitchell to Somerset, but Kennedy had roved that the alternate route north through the rainforest belt of the east coast was almost suicidal, and they knew that their cattle would probably fair better in more open country.

On 17 August the advance party started out for Carpentaria Downs, while Frank, with a smaller contingent rode south in search of suitable stock to buy. The expedition had been timed so that the cattle could be purchased when they were in peak condition, after the last of the expected rains, and pushed north during the driest months of the year. The existence of a number of large permanent streams flowing into the eastern Gulf had been known since the time of the early Dutch navigators, so water was not expected to be a problem. Frank's task was made difficult, however, by the presence of pleura in the northern herds, and he took the time to select sound stock. In the meantime the advance party reached Carpentaria Downs in 30 August, and Alick, so as not to waste time, decided to reconnoitre the expedition's expected course. He set out in the company of A.J. Bode, who was in search of new cattle country, to find the Lynd. Bode took him with his own black servant, and Alick enlisted Eulah, an aborigine who had been with the Jardine family for some time, and who was to be the party's 'pilot'. Alick passed through some very rough country till he found a river he thought to be the Lynd, but after following it from some hundred miles he concluded

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76 Byerley, p.1.
77 W.H. Traill, 'Historical Sketch of Queensland'. p.28.
78 Byerley, p.1.
80 Byerley, p.3.
that it was not, and decided to turn back to Carpentaria Downs.\textsuperscript{81}

On 14 September, Alick's party saw blacks for the first time since setting out. They 'rounded them up' with ease, and had a 'parley'.\textsuperscript{82} As Reynolds points out it was common for explorers to utilise 'detailed information picked from local groups' of Aborigines encountered along their way.\textsuperscript{83} Alick noted that these were little different from the tribes found around Rockhampton, and were armed only with reed spears and wommerahs.\textsuperscript{84} This 'parley' was of crucial importance to the expedition, and to an understanding of the pattern of confrontation that was to develop over the following months. The usual causes for hostility between different tribes and bands of Aborigines were quarrels over women, breakage of trading agreements, and trespass.\textsuperscript{85} The explorer Sturt was aware of the value of having Aborigines in an expedition who could precede the party and make the proper arrangements for the crossing of tribal territories.\textsuperscript{86} Whether Alick was aware of the problems that could arise from trespass is uncertain, but there is little doubt that Eulah was conscious of the implications of passing through land that had not been de-tribalized.

Though it is probable that Eulah could not speak the language of this tribe encountered so far from his own land, there seems to have been communication. Perhaps Bode's servant was from the locality and familiar with the dialect, and therefore able to act as interpreter. What was said at this meeting was not recorded, and it is likely that the two Europeans were ignorant of the proceedings, but whatever passed between the acculturated 'black boys' and their 'myall' counterparts, the Jardine expedition was in no way hindered in its progress by Aboriginal tribesmen until it reached the river systems of the Gulf. There were no other meetings of this sort on the

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{81} Robert Logan Jack, pp.290-291.
  \item \textsuperscript{82} Byerley, p.5.
  \item \textsuperscript{83} Henry Reynolds, 'The Land, the Explorers and the Aborigines', in Historical Studies, Vol.19, No.75, 1980, p.215.
  \item \textsuperscript{84} Byerley, p.5.
  \item \textsuperscript{85} Norman Tindale, Aboriginal Tribes of Australia, Canberra, 1974, p.328.
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Henry Reynolds, 'The Land, the Explorers and the Aborigines', p. 218
\end{itemize}
journey, the Aborigines being reluctant to place themselves in a vulnerable position, and the Europeans accepting the inevitability of confrontation.

Frank arrived back at Carpentaria Downs on 6 October to find his brother waiting.87 Three days were spent shoeing the horses, a task made more arduous by the heat and the fact that Frank and Alick were the only competent farriers with the party,88 and then the expedition was ready to make a start. At 5.45 am on the 11th the cattle began to move. As is still the practice, the droving plant followed later in the morning and passed the drovers during the day to set up the evening camp. By the 22nd they had made their way some one hundred and twenty miles down the valley of the Einasliegh. For two days they had been followed by a group of about fifty heavily armed Aborigines, but these vanished on the sixth day out.89 On the 18th thirty more natives were caught completely by surprise while fishing in a lagoon and quickly 'decamped'. The next day the party discovered the remains of a native still smouldering in the fire of a deserted camp. Frank speculated as to whether it was the body of an enemy killed in battle and then cooked for food, or 'a friend disposed of after the manner of their last rites',90 but whatever the reason for the pyre, the more salient point was that the Aborigines were once again taken by surprise.

On the 21st two more Aborigines were surprised, and they dashed howling into the bush.91 It seems that the expedition was completely unexpected in the lower Einasliegh valley, and consequently the inhabitants had not had time to consider the intrusion and formulate a course of action. Most probably unaware of their trespass the Europeans decided to linger for a few days at their thirteenth camp.92 The country had been exceedingly rough before this camp and the cows were beginning to calve, so it was thought the

87 Byerley, p.7.
88 ibid.
90 Byerley, p.12.
91 ibid.
92 ibid. p.13.
best to rest the stock. This also gave the brothers a chance to go
'majormitchelling'.

Richardson's calculations gave the latitude of camp thirteen as 17°34'32", just twenty miles south-west of Leichhardt's Lynd River. Accompanied by Eulah, the two brothers rode off in search of the Lynd. For three days they searched to the north and north-west, but with no luck. Forty miles to the north they came across a creek they named the Byerley, Fredrick having been a longtime friend of the family, and they blazed a trail from it back to camp thirteen for the cattle to follow. Frank had had some discipline problems with members of the party prior to their arriving at camp thirteen on the 22nd. They were minor but the altercation that occurred on the 27th with Richardson seriously threatened to divide the expedition.

Richardson expressed the opinion that they were on the Lynd and the brothers disagreed. Apparently the discussion became quite heated, and it affected the relationship between Richardson and the Jardines for the rest of the journey. Frank and Alick lost confidence in the surveyor, and he reverted to carrying out the tasks required of him by the government, and played no further part in guiding the expedition. According to Robert Logan Jack, an accomplished surveyor and explorer in his own right with a wealth of experience in the area, the fault lay with the mapping of Leichhardt. Added to this was the confusion caused by the tangle of tributaries that characterized the western seaboard of the Cape. The stand-off that developed between Richardson and the Jardines is symbolized by the fact that the Lynd does not appear on the map produced by Richardson for the government, or on that published in the Jardine journal.

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94 ibid. p.293.
95 ibid. p.296
96 Byerley, p.15.
97 Robert Logan Jack, p.294
98 ibid. p. 291
The frustration of not knowing exactly where they were was beginning to play on the nerves of the explorers. There was also the heat and dust of the late months of the dry season, which by now were severely affecting the eyes of all the Europeans. But the worst was still to come. On 5 November the brothers, accompanied by Binney, Eulah and Barney, set out from their sixteenth camp four and half miles north of Byerley Creek, leaving the rest of the party to break camp and follow, after they had mustered some horses that had gone missing the previous night. After travelling fifteen miles north they camped near a dry creek bed and waited for the others. But the horses proved difficult to catch and the following party were forced to make camp before overtaking the cattle. The Jardines dug in the bed of the creek for water but raised only enough to refresh their horses. Because of the condition of the cattle they had to move again early next morning, baffled by the delay of their pack horses. That afternoon they halted at Cockburn Creek and made their eighteenth camp. By this time their travelling provisions were totally used up. For three days they waited, living on possums till they were finally forced to kill a calf. On the 8th their prize stallion 'Maroon' died of poison or snake-bite, and about thirty of the cattle were missing. Alick's patience was at an end and he decided to ride back to see what was holding up the party with the packs.

Disaster had struck. While Richardson, Scrutton, Cowderoy and Barney were setting up their first camp after being left behind by the droving party, a grass fire had started. The camp was completely burnt out, and the loss of provisions was serious. Four hundred and twenty pounds of flour; all the tea save ten pounds; one hundred pounds of rice; two tents; a great deal of clothing, including two pair of boots; all the jam, apples and currants had gone up in smoke. However, the most disturbing loss for the party was the ammunition box together with twelve pounds of shot and five pounds of

99 ibid. p. 296.
100 Byerley, pp.16-18
gunpowder. Charlie Scrutton saved the expedition from catastrophe by rushing into the fire and salvaging a powder cannister just as the solder was beginning to melt along the joins.101

It is difficult to understand how experienced bushmen could allow a grass fire to jeopardise their whole expedition. Alick made it his habit to clear the ground of long grass around the tents that were used to store the provisions.102 It is a wonder that the others had not learned from his example, especially at such a desperately dry time of the year. In light of the events of the next month it is difficult to resist speculating that the fire was a deliberate act of sabotage carried out by the Aborigines who were to fight so tenaciously against the European intruders. But nowhere in any of the material relating to the incident is this implied. The brothers took stock of their position and then proceeded north.

By 14 November the expedition had followed the Cockburn to the point where it became the Staaten. Believing it to be the Mitchell they travelled along its course, at one time being followed for three miles by a group of armed Aborigines making noisy gestures. When they turned on the tribesmen and stood their ground the Aborigines filtered away.103 Though utterly confused as to where they were the party kept moving on. A downpour, the first of the season, brought them to a halt on the 20th, and when it cleared in the afternoon there was a group of about twenty natives standing with their backs to the sinking sun. Before the travellers realized what had happened a shower of spears was landing all about them. There was some firing, but the tribesmen had chosen their ground well and none fell. Once again they vanished from sight, but kept the overlanders on edge by howling all night.104

102 Byerley, p.18.
103 Robert Logan Jack, p.298.
104 Byerley, pp.21-22.
The next day they awoke after fitful sleep to find thirteen of their horses missing. The Jardines sent their Aborigines out, and when they returned with the horses they reported that the hobbles had been broken and the animals split up and chased by the Aborigines. The camp was shifted three miles to the west where the feed was better and there was abundant water. On the 22nd Frank headed out in search of good travelling country for the cattle. Although he must have been on the alert a group of Aborigines managed to surprise him. After a shower of spears he turned in the saddle and fired in reaction. One fell and the others fled. Frank charged in pursuit and brought down another two as the tribesmen scrambled across a dry creek bed some three hundred yards wide. It was Byerley's opinion that the scarcity of caps and horseflesh was the only reason the Jardines did not ride out and effect a thorough 'dispersal'. Clearly the fire on the 5th severely eroded the martial advantage the brothers expected to have when passing through this most dangerous section of their trek.

The party was forced to stay at this camp for seven days while they retrieved scattered horses and cattle. The threat of starvation, and the constant attentions of mosquitoes, sand-flies and kites that repeatedly snatched meat from the fire, finally became too much, and one horse and eight cattle had to be left to roam the bush. On the 27th they decamped, with Frank riding ahead looking for the best ground. After making about nine miles he passed a group of natives who allowed him to go unchallenged. Two miles further on he was working his way along some scrubby sandstone gullies looking for tracks when a spear whistled past within six inches of his face. Pulling up he saw seven natives all standing quietly above him. The one who was spearless fell to Frank's tranter. He crossed to the other side of the river he had been following and met up with the rest of the party. They had been attacked in force but managed to inflict several casualties on the natives before they fled.

105 ibid. p.22.
106 ibid.
107 ibid. p.23
109 ibid. p.25.
The situation grew more serious day by day. The horses and cattle were
becoming emaciated, and the ration of flour and rice was strictly limited.
As the expedition had been making its way north-west it now found itself
ominously close to the coast. The country gave evidence of complete
inundation, and as it was now early December the debris in the trees must
have been a sombre reminder of their vulnerability. The Europeans knew that
they had at least one major river to cross, the elusive Mitchell, and if
they did not reach it before the rains they might never get across. The
party pushed north through tea-tree sand-flats and dry swamps, passing
two groups of natives fishing peacefully, till on 5 December they made their
thirty-sixth camp. The next morning they found that half the horses were
missing, and while a new camp was being established on better ground, Frank
and Alick went in search. The brothers recovered nine back at their thirty-
fifth camp, but on their return were greeted with the news that the mule had
been allowed to wander off with a full pack. Among the essentials it carried
with it was the spade that had served so well in the search for water. 110

A further week was lost in search of the mule and horses. The two
best horses were found; 'Deceiver' dead and 'Lucifer' uselessly mad, both
from drinking salt water. Scrutton and Cowderoy were sick from drinking
stagnant water, but no more time could be lost. The party again moved north
and were rewarded by finding good water and game. On 16 December, between
camp forty-one and forty-two, while Frank and Alick were riding ahead of the
main party, another group of Aborigines was encountered. They rushed the
cattle and 'defied the horsemen to come on'. 111 This they did, and the
natives retreated without a shot being fired. Later that same day they
returned and surrounded the party. This time the horsemen fired killing
eight or nine, 112 but this attack was only a prelude of what was to come.
On the 18 December, while Frank, Alick and Eulah were searching for a way to
cross the long awaited Mitchell River, a number of Aborigines were discovered

111 ibid. p.34.
112 ibid.
fishing. Upon realizing their situation they rushed to the other side of the river and then immediately began to swim back carrying bundles of spears. The riders cantered off in the direction of the camp with the tribesmen in hot pursuit, interpreting this as retreat. But then the horsemen propped, charged and fired a volley that brought reinforcements from the camp.

The natives at first stood up courageously, but either by accident or through fear, despair or stupidity, they got huddled in a heap, in, and at the margin of the water, when ten carbines poured volley after volley into them from all directions, killing and wounding with every shot with very little return, nearly all their spears being expended in the pursuit of the horsemen. About thirty being killed, the Leader thought it prudent to hold his hand, and let the rest escape.\(^{113}\)

Fifty-nine rounds were expended\(^ {114}\) and it is likely that many more than the thirty tribesmen that lay on the field would never live to fish the Mitchell again.

The tenacity of the Mitchell River tribesmen is epitomised by the man who hid in the water near the river bank waiting for the intruders to return. When the party passed with the cattle he hurled a spear before anyone was aware of his proximity, narrowly missing Scrutton. 'He paid for his temerity with his life'.\(^ {115}\) After having followed the course of the Mitchell to salt water by the 21st the brothers set camp. The natives had been keeping close watch on their progress from the trees, and now they decided to make their next move. At sunset someone in the camp noticed that the Aborigines were stalking them from behind green boughs. The brothers challenged this 'Birnam Wood' tactic by taking Scrutton and their four 'black boys' out of the camp to give chase. Dressed only in shirt and belt the brothers began to approach the living trees. The trees moved slowly back, and as the pace quickened a full-scale chase developed. The Aborigines dropped their disguises and tried to out-run their dangerous opponents, but privation had hardened the overlanders and they were difficult to shake. The chase

\(^{113}\) ibid. pp.35-36.  
\(^{114}\) ibid.  
\(^{115}\) ibid.
went on for two miles without a shot being fired, and then the brothers called a halt.\textsuperscript{116} Taken out of its context this 'Birnam Wood' incident might have been humorous, but the situation that had been allowed to develop was nothing short of tragic, and the chase betrayed instead a tinge of hysteria.

On Christmas Eve the rain set-in, but ironically water was still a problem because the sandy flat country absorbed the rain as soon as it fell. On Christmas Day fifteen miles was made to the north through driving rain, and the day's significance was marked by little more than a whispered 'Merry Christmas' on waking. It was not until the 28th that the expedition came to water enough to satisfy the cattle. The brothers named this creek Holroyd and made their fifty-fourth camp four miles to its north. A severe thunderstorm was threatening and the party was digging trenches and generally making itself ready when one of their native companions rode into camp. He had been trailing the cattle and the natives had been harrassing him all day. Now he reported that they were scattering the horses. Alick and Scrutton donned long mackintoshes to keep dry their Terry Breech-Loaders, and then mounted their horses. Frank slipped two Tranter pistols into his coat pockets and did the same. When the horsemen spotted the tribesmen they were amongst the horses, running them wild in the drizzle, but they quickly regrouped. As the horsemen moved forward the natives stood their ground.

At sixty yards the spears took flight and the carbines answered with effect. As the riders cantered closer still firing, the Aborigines stood mesmerized by the apocalyptic vision of these riders on the storm. Finally they gathered their wits and retreated into the bush, leaving a number of tribesmen strewn on the ground. The thunderstorm then broke in earnest.\textsuperscript{117}

The cattle stampeded that night and many of them had to be left behind, the wet season threatened to bog them down. The expedition struggled on through a myriad of creeks and swamps, until, in early January, it made its

\textsuperscript{116} ibid. p.37.

\textsuperscript{117} ibid: pp.39-40.
when the tribesmen fitted their spears into their woomeras, two shots rang out, and two tribal leaders fell dead. Their companions broke and fled, and the Jardines had won their last skirmish with the Aborigines of the western river system.\(^{123}\)

It rained almost every day now, and from camp sixty-seven to camp seventy-eight Richardson made no attempt to keep his chart, the going being too rough.\(^{124}\) At night the cloud cover made celestial navigation impossible, and swollen creeks often seemed like full-scale rivers. On 13 January a 'knocked-up' foal was slaughtered and dressed, and this provided a welcome addition to the scanty provisions. Two days later a native track was followed and the party caught its first glimpse of the Pacific Ocean since leaving Port Denison. This afforded Richardson a chance to take a bearing on Cape Grenville from near their seventy-fourth camp, and the expedition found itself less than a mile from the route of Kennedy. On the 24th the brothers made their seventy-eighth camp on what they thought to be King's Escape River. To avoid the fate of Kennedy, who had become hopelessly tangled at the mouth of the Escape,\(^{125}\) the expedition decided to 'head' the river. On the 25th the party followed the watercourse west, but instead of petering out and 'elbowing' to the east, it became more voluminous. After four days of travelling the eighty-second camp was set up as a depot, and the brothers, accompanied by Eulah went in search of a crossing.\(^{126}\)

The brothers were away for three days and returned without any encouraging news. On checking their stores they found that thirty pounds of flour had gone unaccountably missing, and it seemed they had fallen victim to the same selfish dishonesty that had marred both the Burke and Wills, and Kennedy expeditions\(^ {127}\). With every day of rain it grew more likely that the river would prove impassable, so it was decided to cross with some horses and leave the cattle at camp eighty-two, while the brothers retraced the river in search of a cattle-crossing. Saddles and rations were rafted across, and Frank, Alick and Eulah rode back towards

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\(^{123}\) ibid.
\(^{124}\) Robert Logan Jack, p.317
\(^{125}\) ibid. p.323.
\(^{126}\) ibid. p.326
\(^{127}\) Byerley, pp.61-65

Robert Logan Jack, p.326
the mouth. On the morning of 7 February they saw, through a mist of rain, the Escape entering the sea, and were more convinced than ever that their only chance was to push east from camp eighty-two.128

The scouts made their way back to the depot, and after three days of rest pressed on with their plan. The going was difficult, but on the 18th the party was elated when the river turned to the north at last. However when they pitched camp that afternoon they noticed a slight variation in its height, though the water was still fresh. Two days later there was no doubt. The river turned back to the west and the rise and fall was three feet and definitely tidal. Alick and Eulah climbed a tall tree and their suspicions were confirmed. There before them stretched the mouth of what was to become known as the Jardine. They were not on the Escape at all, and there was no way around. The only chance was to take a party north in search of Somerset. On 24 February they rafted across the river, and after resting for the night, set off.129

Only two miles were made to the north when Frank, Alick and Eulah were brought to a halt by the swollen waters of Cowal Creek. They spent three days smeared with fat against the mosquitoes and cold, waiting for the torrent to become passable, before they could proceed. With greenhide moccasins on their feet and emu feather caps to keep the rain from their eyes, they trudged on, until on 1 March, at three in the afternoon, they were confronted by a group of armed Aborigines. With the risk that their weapons would not fire because of the damp, the brothers prepared to make their last stand. But the natives started waving their hands and shouting 'Alico, Franco, Dzocko (Jock), Toby, tobacco and other English words',130 and the Europeans knew that they were at the end of their trek. The Aborigines guided them for two days, and on 2 March they were greeted by their father at Somerset.131

128 ibid. p.328
129 Byerley, p.64
130 ibid. p.67
131 ibid. p.68
Although the Jardine expedition did not discover promising grazing land or obvious auriferous country, it did make an immense contribution to the knowledge of the geography of Cape York Peninsula. But the cost was high. The tribes that had successfully defended their territorial rights against European interlopers since the time of Jansz and Carstenz, found that they had no answer for the breech loading rifle and the conical bullet. Their capacity to resist was limited by their confidence in their own experience, and the conservatism that had served their race so well through thousands of years of history. Had they realized how completely the overlanders depended on their horses, and acted more forcefully to nullify the advantage these gave them, they might yet have had one more victory against the European intruders. But the sixty or so tribesmen who fell to the Jardines' bullets were only the first of many hundred who would die as a direct result of the commercial exploitation of Cape York Peninsula. Frank Jardine never really left the Cape, and twenty years after the expedition for which he was honoured with the Murchison grant of the Royal Geographical Society, he returned to the western river systems to burn his name even deeper into the folklore of the Aborigines of the Peninsula.

133 Byerley, p.76
134 Robert Logan Jack, p.336
"CAPE YORK AND THE NEIGHBOURING ISLANDS"

Map by William J. Hennell
bound in his letter of 23 October 1868.
CHAPTER TWO

The dream turns sour.

By mid-March of 1865 the Jardine family was busy erecting stockades at Vallack Point, about three miles south of Somerset, for the few hundred cattle that had survived the trek from Carpentaria Downs. The local Gudang tribe made itself useful carrying timber and generally helping with the building of the out-station. For this they were given the usual rewards of tobacco and the unwanted portions of slaughtered beasts, but what they valued most was the alliance that this new situation offered. The Gudangs were a small, relatively weak tribe, with powerful enemies to their south and north. They had already experienced friendly, and mutually beneficial contact with Europeans, when the scientists from the Rattlesnake had been their guests at Evans Bay some sixteen years before. Frank was quick to realize the value of his new found friends, not only as a source of cheap labour, but more importantly as a buffer against the more belligerent tribes that were their mutual enemies. No one was to know that this alliance would be the cornerstone of the Gudang's destruction, and that within the space of a decade their tribe would be no more.

After going to such extraordinary lengths to get their cattle to Somerset the Jardines were determined to make a success of the venture. The cattle market was still buoyant, and the herd was pleuro-free, so they had every reason to be confident. When there was talk of compensating the family for the losses incurred on the expedition, Frank would not hear of it. The cattle had been purchased and overlanded as a private enterprise, and as such the Jardines expected no indemnity from the public purse. Byerley was most

2 John Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 1 May 1865, in F.J. Byerley (ed.) Narrative of the overland expedition of the Messrs. Jardine, Brisbane, 1868, p.87
4 Byerley, Narrative..., p.xii.
pressed by this reasoning, as have been many writers since, and he recognised in it 'a delicacy and nobility of sentiment as rare, unfortunately, as it is admirable'. The vision of Somerset as a 'new Singapore' was still firmly fixed in the minds of the Jardines, and the events of the year that followed the arrival of their herd at the settlement, served only to make more substantial this seemingly quixotic scheme.

A mail contract had been negotiated with the authorities in Batavia, utilising the shorter Torres Strait route. When the steamer Souchays arrived in Brisbane on 27 February 1866, only thirty-five days out of Batavia, the press hailed its impressive performance as ultimate proof of the success of the Torres Strait route. Besides the mail the Souchays also ferried a cargo of trade samples between the Chambers of Commerce of Batavia and Sydney, a move intended to stimulate the enormous potential of the trade route. Captain H.G. Simpson had also been sent with the steamer to acquaint the Batavian authorities with the position and purpose of Somerset, and that not only was the settlement intended as a 'harbor of refuge' and coaling station, but that it had also been declared a duty free port. The auction of town blocks must have been a source of great interest for many months before the actual sale took place in April and May 1866, because E.B. Kennedy states that speculators sailed from England just to take part. The Jardines were looking forward to a booming Somerset with a high price beef market that would make them wealthy men. They were not interested in any compensation from the Government.

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7 Byerley, p.xii.
8 The Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton), 1 March 1866.
9 Sydney Morning Herald, 9 March 1866.
10 Letter from Bowen to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 12 September 1866, Q.V.&P., pp.1187-1192, 1867, Removal of the detachment of the Royal Marines from Cape York, p.1.
At the end of the 1865 John Jardine left Somerset to return to his former position as Police Magistrate at Rockhampton. Frank and Alick went south as well, and the herd was left in the care of young John and Charlie Scrutton. Despite the generally confident atmosphere, Somerset had its problems, the most serious being the threat posed by the militant Yardiagans who occupied the country south of Newcastle Bay. John Jardine had correctly assessed the situation when he assumed that the Gudangs were not strong enough for unprovoked attacks on the settlement, but ironically it was they, not the feared Yardiagans, who drew first European blood. A Gudang was accused, rightly or wrongly, of having stolen a tomahawk and Jardine had him whipped. The tribe gathered to avenge this outrage and two marines were speared. One of them, Lt. Pascoe's servant Saich, died a lingering death after a spear was removed from deep in his chest. The situation became explosive, and in an incident where a canoe was pursued, five Aboriginal men and a boy were shot. At least two other natives were killed in the scrub around Somerset, and Jardine ordered that no native should come within the perimeters of the settlement under pain of death. The only exception to this was the son of an informer who had warned the settlement of the initial attack. Into these unfortunate circumstances sailed H.G. Simpson, John Jardine's successor as Police Magistrate.

Simpson had been an officer on the Rattlesnake when it visited the area in the late 1840s, and he must have wondered at the deterioration in relations

13 Queensland Government Gazette, 1866, p.224.  
14 David Moore, Islanders and Aborigines at Cape York, p.84.  
20 ibid.
with the tribes of Cape York. Frank had returned by this time, and was busy establishing another out-station some fifteen or twenty miles from the settlement. The Yardigaans had killed two Gudangs who had been accompanying Charlie Scrutton on an exploration looking for new country south of Vallack Point, and Scrutton himself was lucky to survive after having been speared in the neck. Frank had wandered dangerously close to Yardigaan territory, and they served notice that raising cattle on their borders was going to be no easy task. Frank became involved in several skirmishes with Aborigines as well, and in one he 'nearly lost his life while engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with a black'. From Rockhampton John wrote that the safety of the settlement depended very much on the presence of Frank and his party, who 'by their continual patrol of the country, in charge of cattle, have kept the natives in check'. But there is no doubt that Barney, Peter and Sambo, three of the Aborigines who had been brought to the Cape by the Jardines, had been creating a good deal of mischief in the camps of the local tribes, and as often in instances of frontier violence it is difficult to tell who were the original aggressors. Whoever was to blame, Simpson grew to rely on the experience of Frank Jardine, as the marines proved themselves virtually useless as defenders of the settlement.

But Frank's plans for a profitable future in the cattle industry depended on more than his frontier experience. Somerset needed to prosper. Unfortunately by the end of 1865 the Imperial government had lost interest in Somerset and they began negotiating to have the Marine contingent removed from the settlement.

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23 ibid.
25 ibid. pp.1-5.
when it was due to be relieved, in 1867. Bowen was still full of enthusiasm for this 'new Singapore', but his government had been sobered by the financial crisis of July 1866, and supply ships to the settlement became more irregular. They may also have been discouraged by the second cruise of the mail-steamer Soucheys. She had been plagued by delays, which meant that the mail contract was not re-negotiated at the end of the year. Frank must have also noted the failure of the first shipment of live cattle from Bowen to Batavia in 1866. The Dutch were not as enthusiastic as had been anticipated by the pundits, and loading the cattle proved 'a costly and inefficient exercise', each animal having to be hoisted aboard the ship individually. The Jardine family were beginning to regret having rejected the government's offer of compensation for the losses incurred on their overlanding expedition.

On 12 August 1867, John Jardine wrote to the Colonial Secretary arguing that the government should purchase his sons' stock and station. He justified this proposal by pointing out the necessity of fresh beef to the health of all those at Somerset, and that the government had failed 'for obvious reasons, to carry out their intentions for the advancement of Somerset'. He was concerned for the future of his son and the potential ruin of his family. John accepted the fact that financial climate would make payment in cash difficult, but he was willing to take a grant of land in its place. When the Colonial Secretary failed to make an immediate reply, Jardine wrote again.

29 N.L. McKellar, From Derby round to Burketown, Brisbane, 1977, p.1
30 Anne Allingham, '"Taming the Wilderness": the First Decade of Pastoral Settlement in the Kennedy District', in Studies in North Queensland History No.1, Townsville, 1977, p.112.
32 ibid., p.2.
threatening that unless some arrangement was reached he would instruct his son to abandon the property. On the same day the Under Colonial Secretary was writing his reply to the original proposal. His office was able to report that the matter had been put to the Executive Council, but that they were 'unable to entertain' the offer until the Legislature had discussed the uncertain future of Somerset. But John kept the pressure up with another letter, and eventually the government came around to his way of thinking. His proposal was accepted, and payment was to be made in land orders as soon as the move had been sanctioned by the Legislature.

However the government had been motivated by something more than altruism. Simpson's health had deteriorated badly in the tropics and it was now necessary to have him relieved. Frank Jardine was offered a job, and he had accepted before his father realized the offer had been made. Apparently Frank was not as concerned about his 'exile' as was his father, and now as the Police Magistrate at Somerset it was his duty to receive the cattle of Messrs. Jardine on behalf of the government. John Jardine senior had sent his third son, John, to help Frank muster the cattle in preparation for their being handed over to a government agent, and he could not have imagined that that agent would be his oldest son. Frank pronounced that the two hundred head mustered were all in good condition, and that the horses were broken in and 'quiet', as was to be expected considering their age.

Frank Jardine was officially appointed Police Magistrate on 17 December 1867. From the government's point of view having Frank fill the position

33 ibid., J.Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 9 September 1867.
34 ibid., A.W.Manning to J.Jardine, 9 September 1867.
35 ibid., J.Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 21 October 1867.
36 ibid., A.W.Manning to J.Jardine, 8 November 1867, p.3.
38 J.Jardine to Col. Sec., 24 Aug. 1868, Q.V.S.P., (?) 1868-69, Purchase of..., p.3.
39 ibid., J.Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 12 Aug. 1867, p.1.
40 ibid., Frank Jardine to Under Colonial Secretary, 1 Jan. 1869, p.4.
41 Queensland Government Gazette, 1867, p.1165.
vacated by Simpson saved it the considerable expense of transferring a civil
servant to the most remote outpost of the colony. With the impending
departure of the Marine contingent the Colonial Secretary was also faced
with the problem of providing adequate defence for the settlement. A good
deal of debate had been entered into after the Imperial government had made
its intentions clear, and there was support from many quarters for the
Marines to be replaced by a party of native mounted police. This idea was
rejected on the grounds that discipline problems would develop if such a
force was posted so far from the restraints of 'civilization', and it was
decided that a small detachment of the Queensland Water Police was the most
suitable alternative.

John Jardine, who had been in communication with D.T. Seymour, the
Commissioner of Police, was under the impression that the Water Police were
only to be responsible for the settlement proper, and that native police
would be used to patrol the surrounding country. But the government had
read the situation well, and Frank found himself conducting patrols, because,
as he succinctly puts it, 'Mr. Howe (police inspection) has never been two
miles from his barracks, simply because he cannot find his way home again.'
The government must have been aware of the tragic state of race relations at
Somerset, but they chose to make an appointment that was unlikely to improve
the situation. They had accepted the inevitability of violent conflict, and
no one was more qualified to take charge under these circumstances than
Frank Jardine.

In Pinney and Runcie's account of the events of these years at Somerset,
they mention that Frank was known to many by the nickname 'Marmie', but they
were unable to trace its origin. Writing in the 1880s Traill mentions that

42 Removal of the detachment of the Royal Marines from Cape York, pp.1-6.
43 Ibid.
   of ..., p.3.
black troopers in the Native Mounted Police used the term 'maamie' when
informally addressing their white lieutenants. The pronunciation of these
words is so similar that it raises an interesting question; were Peter, Sambo
and Barney members of the Native Mounted Police? In Byerley's interpretation
of the Jardines' journal of the overland expedition of 1864-65, the three are
simply referred to as 'black boys', but there is a clear distinction made
between them and Eulah. In an expedition portrait there are two Aborigines
seated in front of Archie Richardson, Frank, Alick and young John Jardine.
These are dressed in the uniform of the Native Mounted Police, with double-
barrelled police carbines resting on their knees (see photo opposite page).
John Jardine had been allowed three Native Mounted Police for his own use
when he was appointed Commissioner for Crown Lands at Port Curtis, and it
is not improbable that these were assigned to be members of his sons'
expedition to Somerset, the precedent having been set on earlier private
journeys of exploration.

The most convincing evidence that Peter, Sambo and Barney were, or at
least were thought to be, native policemen, comes from the report of
W.T. Kennett, a teacher employed at Somerset by the Society for the Propagation
of the Gospel between February 1867 and August 1868. It appears that
Water Police were not sent to Somerset immediately on the departure of the
marines, and that ordinary town constables were employed instead. These
policemen, who were mostly Irish, were argumentative amongst themselves and
had a very poor regard for the Aborigines. With the Marines gone, and only
seven police sent to take their place, Frank Jardine once again allowed the
Gudangs to come back into the settlement and about ten of them found constant
employment doing menial tasks for the Police Magistrate.

47 W.H. Traill, 'Historical Sketch of Queensland', in A. Garran (ed.),
Picturesque atlas of Australasia, Sydney, 1886, p.23.
48 Statistical Register of Queensland, 1860, p.28.
50 David Moore, Islanders and Aborigines at Cape York, p.235.
51 W.T. Kennett, 'The Kennett Report, February 1867-June 1868', in David Moore,
Islanders and Aborigines at Cape York, p.246.
In May 1868 a European policeman threatened a Gudang that unless he brought him some spears the Aborigine would find himself in the lock-up. The Gudang retaliated by saying that he would spear the whiteman if he ever caught him alone in the bush. This fracas caused the Gudangs to quit the settlement.  

After a week or so had elapsed Frank became concerned and rode out to Vallack Point and found the station ransacked, and Eulah, who had been in charge there, dead. The raid had been lead by Peter, Sambo and Barney, whom Kennett describes as 'native police'. Three fowling pieces, two rifles, six carbines, two horse pistols, two revolvers and more than a thousand rounds of ammunition were missing. On the intercession of Kennett Jardine offered a free pardon for all but the three 'native police' if the stolen weapons and ammunition were returned. The Gudangs filtered back with the weapons and informed Jardine that Barney and Sambo were camped about three miles north of Somerset in the direction of Evans Bay. Frank persuaded the Cape Aborigines to capture the two deserters, which they did, and then rode out with his young brother John and 'executed' them. They were shot in the head and the neck and left to die in the scrub. This account was given to Kennett by the natives.  

The story of Peter, Sambo and Barney illustrates how the Queensland government was 'hedging its bet'. They had predicted a mutiny of the sort that had occurred at Somerset in May 1868, but they had appointed a man to the position of Police Magistrate who had in effect his own small force of 'native police'. Barney, Peter and Sambo had already been brought before Simpson to answer for depredations they had perpetrated against the Yardiagans, and Barney had been accused of murdering and eating the liver of a Gudang woman. But it was not until the raid on Vallack Point and the slaying of Eulah that Jardine resorted to this ruthless style of summary.
Kennett's report is the only text that deals with this incident in detail, and certainly no other mentions the involvement and subsequent fate of the three 'native police'. Although relations between the early police magistrates and missionaries were often strained, Simpson refers to Kennett as 'a most respectable man' and there is no reason why his account should be questioned.

Soon after the Jardine cattle had been handed over to himself as government agent in January 1869, Frank Jardine applied for leave. The leave was granted on half pay for three months, but his deputy did not arrive until 27 July. While he was waiting to be relieved Jardine received reports from the natives that a trading vessel, the Speerwah, had been attacked by Islanders and lay on a beach on Prince of Wales Island thirty miles from the settlement. Jardine had no serviceable boats at Somerset so he approached Captain McAusland of the schooner Melanie, lying at anchor off Somerset beach. McAusland lent him two boats and their crews and he went with four 'native police' to investigate. On a beach at Red Point on Prince of Wales Island Jardine found the burnt-out wreck of the Speerwah. The bodies of the murdered crew had been put into trees, but they were unrecognisable, being naked and headless. Jardine also discovered a camp full of ship's gear and Islanders dressed in shirts and trousers. The retribution meted out to the Prince of Wales Islanders has become part of the European folklore of the 'Straits', although there is no mention of it in official correspondence. Because of the importance of the Prince of Wales 'massacre' to an understanding of the

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56 Letter from Simpson to the Colonial Secretary, 28 July 1868, Q.V.&.P., pp.519-525, 1868, General Report on the Settlement of Somerset, etc., p.2.
57 Frank Jardine to Under Colonial Secretary, 1 January 1869, Q.V.&.P., pp.519-525, 1868-69, Purchase of ..., p.4.
58 Frank Jardine to Commissioner of Police, 3 January 1869, Q.S.A., Col/A142, 1870.
60 Frank Jardine to Col. Sec., 26 June 1869, Q.S.A., In-letter No.1655 1870.
Jardine legend', it will be investigated in detail in the following chapter.

When Jardine's officer, Henry Marjoribanks Chester, arrived at Somerset he was under the impression that his appointment was to be permanent. He had been posted to the settlement with only twenty-four hours notice, so some confusion as to the exact details of his transfer might have been expected. In June 1870 Chester was informed that he was to hand back control of Somerset to Frank Jardine. He was astounded:

"my appointment as P.M. at Somerset was absolute and without reference to any leave of absence granted to Mr. Jardine. I should certainly have declined an acting appointment of a temporary nature involving banishment from all society, in addition to a most expensive journey of upwards of 1,5000 miles upon such terms, more especially as I had at that time an offer of another appointment in Brisbane nearly as good in point of salary, and without these drawbacks."

Chester insisted that when Frank Jardine left the settlement in July 1869 he did so with no expectation of being posted back. The circumstances of Jardine's leave were certainly highly irregular. He had been allowed three months leave on half pay, but when he returned to Somerset he had been absent for a whole year on full pay. This might be partly explained by the fact that the ship Jardine had boarded to go south on 28 July 1869 had been able to make no headway against the prevailing south-east trades and was forced to turn before the wind and circle almost the entire continent before reaching Brisbane three months later. The length of this journey might have entitled him to some extension of his leave, but a year on full pay seems to have been excessive, and it does not explain how he came to be posted back to Somerset.

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53 ibid.
54 ibid.
55 ibid.
56 ibid.
Somerset's prospects had taken a turn since the bleak days of 1867-1868. The settlement had been maintained purely as a harbour of refuge for distressed seamen since the financial crisis of 1866, and for this purpose it had proved most successful. Jardine was able to report in April 1870 that since its inception in 1864 Somerset had provided succour for seventy-four persons. He added that one had been aboard a vessel registered in Queensland, a point which needed to be made to ensure that the Imperial government continued to allow ships of the Australian Station to carry supplies to the settlement without cost to the colony. Somerset had also acted as a convenient victualling port for a motley band of beche-de-mer fishermen who had been working the Strait since the 1840s. It was one of these, Captain William Banner, who first discovered commercial beds of pearl shell near Warrior Reef in 1868. The discovery gave Somerset another chance to prove itself as a trading port, and it also poses some interesting questions related to the return of Frank Jardine to Somerset.

The first official reports of the discovery of commercial pearl shell in the Torres Strait were sent to the Colonial Secretary in early September 1870, not more than a week after Frank Jardine took control of Somerset from Chester. However it is clear that Jardine was aware that shell had been taken from Warrior Reef in 1869, and that it had fetched £150 per ton on the market. When Jardine was on leave he arranged with A.H. Palmer, former Colonial Secretary and by this time Premier, to take with him a cargo of trade goods supplied by the government 'to foster a trade with the natives.

71 ibid.
of the adjacent islands as much as possible' when he returned to Somerset.

He persuaded Chester to remain at the settlement and made good use of his seamanship. On 17 September 1870 Chester set off from Cape York to investigate the pearling beds on Warrior Reef. There he found an operation controlled from the brig Pakeha and the schooners Bluebell, Kate Kearney, Melanie and the cutter Fanny, employing about one hundred and sixty kanakas. Chester had gone out in the Alerta, a cutter of about eight tons that had been recovered from near Cape Grenville after her crew had been murdered in late 1869. By this time the Alerta was in poor condition and Jardine decided she needed replacing. On behalf of the government he purchased a long-boat that had transported the survivors of the brig Freak to the settlement after their ship had been lost in Providential Channel on the Great Barrier Reef. He then auctioned the Alerta, that had been valued at seventy-five pounds by Chester just a year before, and bought her himself for two pounds ten shillings, an action typifying his attitude to the power he possessed at Somerset. Shortly after this dubious transaction he ordered a ten ton schooner called Vampire to be sent from Sydney at his own expense. There is no doubt as to its purpose. In 1873 Captain John Moresby, who was cruising the Torres Strait in the Basilisk to police the 'Kidnapping Act of 1872', reported to his commander that the Police Magistrate at Somerset owned three open boats as well as the Vampire, and that these boats kept forty natives constantly employed pearl-shell fishing.


Frank Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 1 November 1870, S.L.B. No.1., p.21.

H.M. Chester, entry for December 1869, S.L.B. No.1., p.12

Frank Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 31 December 1870, S.L.B. No.1., p.22.

H.M. Chester, entry in Dec. 1869, S.L.B. No.1., p.12.


The unusual circumstances surrounding Jardine's leave of 1869-70 suggests that he had been especially favoured by the government, and that the favours he had received came from the highest quarters: the Premier's office. A.H. Palmer had been the Colonial Secretary in charge of negotiations over the Jardine cattle, by which the family had been enabled to unload their stock at a price that exceeded their true value. The extension of Frank's leave coincided with Palmer's return to power as Premier, and it was Palmer who instructed Jardine to foster trade with the islands in the Torres Strait, providing him with goods from the government store for that purpose. He also personally signed the Vampire's trading licence while on a visit to Somerset in 1872. It was to be expected that the Jardines would have some influence with Palmer, given his political affiliations with the central Queensland region where the family had considerable prestige. But by 1873 rumours were circulating in Sydney which implied that the relationship involved more than the seeking and granting of political favours. There was talk that Palmer and Frank Jardine were partners in an unofficial pearl-shelling venture.

These rumours developed into accusations of more substance when, on the 28 July 1873 the Brisbane Telegraph published an article headed 'How the Port of Somerset (Cape York) is Managed', and called for a board of inquiry to be constituted to investigate the allegations made in the article. It was stated that Frank Jardine was engaged in a pearling operation for private profit, and that the operation was being supplied and manned at public expense; furthermore that Jardine refused to license any but his own boats, and that the prices

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80 Telegraph, 28 July 1873.
81 D.J. Murphy et.al., Queensland Political Portraits, Brisbane, 1978, pp.497-498.
83 Murphy, et.al., Queensland Political Portraits, pp.497-8. (Palmer was M.L.A. for Port Curtis 1866-78).
charged by him for government stores at the out-post were exorbitant. It also claimed that although a small percentage of the shell taken was sent down to the government store in Brisbane, nine-tenths of it found its way to the Sydney market, and the proceeds into the pockets of 'Jardine & Co.'.

The Telegraph added that,

*Visitors at Somerset state that Mr. F. Jardine occupies an almost autocratic position there; that he boasts of being safe from political attack while the present government are in power; that he can, in fact, do just as he likes, with Mr. Palmer at his back.*

Ten days later the Brisbane Courier published an article based on information received from the Colonial Secretary. The government explained the agreement reached with Frank Jardine in relation to the Torres Strait trade, and pointed out that to their knowledge he had not exceeded this charter. The government steamer *Kate* had taken the governor and the Colonial Secretary on a cruise of inspection to Somerset in 1872, and on that occasion there were no complaints from anyone at the settlement against Frank Jardine. Jardine had discretionary power to fix the prices of goods sold at the government store at Somerset, and the Colonial Secretary produced a 'formidable bundle of dishonored cheques and orders' received in payment for provisions, to emphasize the problems associated with this task. The Brisbane Courier concluded that

*the charges made against Mr. Jardine, are not likely to prove anything like so serious as they at first appeared, and that prompt action has been taken to have the matter thoroughly inquired into with a view to remove all reasonable ground of complaint, and correct any irregularities which have been committed.*

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86 *Telegraph, 28 July 1873*

87 *ibid.*

88 *Brisbane Courier, 7 August 1873*
But this semi-official retort did not satisfy the Telegraph. It insisted that there were masters of vessels in port in Brisbane who could corroborate most of the allegations made in its original article. The Telegraph laughed at the suggestion that because the Colonial Secretary received no complaints from government employees at Somerset, all was as it should have been. It quoted one man as saying that if he told all he knew of the affair he would not have accepted £1000 to stay at Somerset after the Kate had left. The circumstances surrounding Jardine's extended leave of 1869-70 were also put forward to add weight to the argument, and it was revealed that after Jardine had twice missed his passage to Somerset the government had chartered a schooner to take him north at a cost of £470 to the public. However the most embarrassing allegation as far as the government was concerned, and one that had been corroborated in reports received from Captain John Moresby of the Basilisk, was that Frank Jardine may have been contravening the provisions of the 'Kidnapping Act of 1872', by employing Islanders from outside Queensland waters in his operation. One of Jardine's specific tasks at Somerset was to police the 'Kidnapping Act'.

Palmer addressed an official letter to Jardine informing him of the public allegations that had been made against him, and implying that the government believed that they were based in truth. Palmer wrote that even had Jardine's pearling venture been conducted in a legal and proper manner, it was incompatible with his duties as a public officer 'placed in a very peculiar position', and that if the statements made by the press were confirmed by the commodore on the Australia Station and Jardine was unable to contradict them he would be asked to show cause why he should not be dismissed from the public service. On receiving this letter Frank wrote

Telegraph, 9 August 1873.
to the Colonial Secretary with his explanation. The Vampire had been purchased by him because the government had not provided a suitable vessel to facilitate the proper policing of the growing pearl-fishing industry. Jardine suggested that confusion had resulted from the fact that he had employed his own boat manned with government employees to this end. He had never been pearl-fishing, and the Vampire had never been out for that purpose. The open boats that Captain Moresby had observed pearl-fishing actually belonged to Frank's younger brother, Charles.

Jardine denied that he had been obstructing other seamen who wished to obtain licences to fish in the area, and that the only captains he had refused were those who could not provide necessary sureties required under the 'Customs Act'. To vindicate himself on this count he enclosed statements signed by pearling masters operating in the 'Strait' to the effect that he was performing his duties to their satisfaction. He also enclosed statements sworn before Charles Beddome, the man sent to be his replacement, and signed by the members of the Water Police, to verify that they had never been used in any but their official capacity while at Somerset. He concluded his reply to the charges made against him: 'I cannot feel satisfied until these aspersions have been authoritatively and publicly contradicted, I beg respectfully that a full inquiry may be held'.

The government obliged and Frank Jardine was called upon to present himself before a board of inquiry to be convened in Brisbane under the chairmanship of H.G. Simpson, Jardine's immediate predecessor as Police Magistrate at Somerset. Palmer was the first witness to take the stand and he immediately made a statement denying that rumours concerning a partnership between himself and Frank Jardine had any basis in fact. Of the

94 Frank Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 29 Nov. 1873, Inquiry into Somerset, pp.22-23.
95 ibid.
96 ibid.
97 see pages 38-39
98 A.H. Palmer, evidence given before the Inquiry into Somerset, pp.9-10
Twelve witnesses summoned to appear before the board, only three came forward to answer questions. The government refused to pay the witnesses' expenses, which made the attendance of key persons such as Coxswain Brown of the Water Police who was often given charge of the Vampire, practically impossible. Besides the considerable cost of a return passage from Somerset to Brisbane, no one could be certain exactly how long the inquiry would take.

A man named Cokerill was Jardine's main accuser. It was he who had supplied the Telegraph with the information providing the basis for the paper's initial article. Cokerill also had a letter printed in the Telegraph on 9 August 1873 in which he asked the Colonial Secretary whether he was aware that the natives of Cape York, both women and men, are taken to Murry (sic) and Darnley, both South Sea Islanders (sic), and of course outside the boundary of the colony, contrary to the Act of Parliament, and that part of the crew are natives of those islands, and are brought within the colony contrary to the law.

He added that if Coxswain Brown was to 'land' in Brisbane he would certainly 'let the cat out of the bag'. Because of his public statements Cokerill felt honour-bound to answer an advertisement placed in the newspapers by the board, calling on persons who were prepared to give information on the management of Somerset to come forward. But he was the only witness clearly against Frank Jardine who did so. On being questioned by the members of the board it became clear that Cokerill had personal grievances against Jardine, and his case lost some of its credibility.

39 Frank Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 29 Nov. 1873, Inquiry into Somerset, p.29.
100 J.T. Cokerill, evidence given before the Inquiry into Somerset, p.12.
101 Telegraph, 9 August 1873.
102 ibid.
103 Inquiry into Somerset, p.5.
John Cockerill was recalled by the board to be examined again after it had come to its notice that he had publicly stated he had been offered a bribe of £200 not to present his testimony. Cockerill was asked if this was true. He explained that he had been approached by a solicitor, but he was not prepared to name the gentlemen as his principal because he said they would deny the allegation and he had been advised that it would be 'highly actionable'.\(^{105}\) The board had no choice but to ignore his claim and he was not called to give evidence again. The next day a man named Green, who had been at Somerset from April 1870 to March 1871, testified he had no knowledge of any irregularities associated with Frank Jardine's management of the settlement, and he attributed Cockerill's allegations to a 'family failing': 'creating mischief'.\(^{106}\) The board concluded that none of the charges made against Frank Jardine could be substantiated by the evidence given before the inquiry, but added that the result was not 'fully satisfactory'.\(^{107}\) Without the testimony of the highly respected Captain John Moresby and the heavily implicated Coxswain Brown, the inquiry was little more than an exercise in government 'white-washing'. The members of the board suggested that a commission, having the power to hear evidence under oath and to compel witnesses to attend, was needed to arrive at the truth of the matter.\(^{108}\)

The commission was never held, and Frank Jardine returned to Somerset and to his young Samoan bride of three months, free of the shackles of public scrutiny. Few could have believed that Charles, only seventeen in 1872, had been the real authority behind the Jardine pearling interests, and in later life Frank publicly admitted that he had been pearling in 1872.\(^{109}\) With the

\(^{105}\) J.T. Cockerill, evidence given before the Inquiry into Somerset, p.18.
\(^{106}\) W.W. Green, evidence given before the Inquiry into Somerset, pp.19-20.
\(^{107}\) Inquiry into Somerset, p.4.
\(^{108}\) ibid.
\(^{109}\) Frank Jardine, evidence given before the Departmental Commission on Pearl-shell and Beche-de-mer Fisheries, 1897, pp.1273-1352, Q.V.&.P., p.30.
He devoted all his energy to the fishery. He moved his entire operation to Naghi Island (Mount Ernest), about fifty kilometres north of Somerset, where he was later joined in partnership by Charles Beddome, the man who succeeded him as Police magistrate at Somerset. Jardine returned to take charge of Somerset for a brief period in 1875 when the death of Police magistrate D'Oyly Aplin left the settlement without an administrator. He was relieved by Henry Chester who had been sent north by the government to supervise the transfer of the centre of administration for Torres Strait to Thursday Island. When Somerset was finally abandoned in 1877 Frank Jardine purchased the buildings that could not be dismantled and moved, and began once more to work cattle. His Naghi Island station was left in the capable hands of his wife's cousin, an enormous Samoan who had taken the name James Mills, and his fishing activities headquartered at Somerset where he formed a new partnership with James Clark, the future 'pearl king' of Torres Strait.

J.B. Hirst believes that one of the reasons the pioneer story can be regarded as legendary is because of what it leaves out. The overlanding expedition of 1864-65 made Frank Jardine part of the heroic tradition of the pioneer legend, and the mythic power of that tradition caused his faults to be overlooked. The few writers who acknowledged that Jardine was brought before an inquiry to answer charges relating to his management of Somerset, do so only to point out how little the narrow-minded bureaucrats in Brisbane knew about frontier administration. Murdoch Wales even manages to romanticize the affair. He writes that Jardine resigned his position in disgust after

110 C. Aplin to Colonial Secretary, 30 November 1874, Somerset Letter Book No. 2, pp.225-226.
112 ibid.
113 J. Farnfield, 'Shipwrecks and Pearl Shells', p.75.
114 Frank Mills, taped interview, Pearl St., Thursday Island, 18 April 1981.
Official disapproval had been expressed at his having taken the government boat to fetch Sana Solio back to Somerset to become his bride.¹¹⁷ The surveyors of the pioneer legend refused to believe their heroes might have been motivated by anything less than the highest ideals. Consequently the scandal concerning Jardine's administration of Somerset was either ignored or repudiated in their works.

CHAPTER THREE

'their high emprise....'

Police magistrates on Queensland's colonial frontier played a crucial role in the struggle to adapt a new environment to the demands of European settlers. In remote situations they were required to carry out a variety of duties, often being the only government agents for hundreds of miles. Their most important task in these isolated areas was to ensure the safety of settlers from the attacks on life and property of 'marauding myalls'. For the police magistrates at Somerset this was a doubly difficult chore. They were expected to supervise the protection of the settlement in country surrounded by Aboriginal tribes with a reputation for being extremely hostile, and at the same time exert a civilizing influence on the acknowledged head-hunters of the Torres Strait. In the European tradition of the legend of Frank Jardine this aspect of his career takes precedence over any other, but it is not always seen in the same light. The heroic aspect of his bringing 'civilization' to the Torres Strait is epitomised by the story that credits him with shooting the renegade 'wild white man of Badu', who was supposed to have terrorized both black and white inhabitants of the 'Straits' in the period between 1840 and 1870. The other side of the coin is represented by a belief that Frank Jardine was responsible for a massacre on Prince of Wales Island that was so total that the indigenous tribe never recovered. Both these stories illustrate admirably the point that the historical image of Frank Jardine has become distorted and larger than life.

2. See introduction pp.5-6.
The existence of the so-called 'wild white man of Badu' first came to light with the rescue of Mrs. Barbara Thompson by the crew of the Rattlesnake at Evans Bay in 1849.\(^4\) When she was sixteen Barbara had run away with a seaman called William Thompson and later accompanied him on a salvage cruise to the Torres Strait aboard his cutter, America. In December 1844 the cutter was wrecked in a squall off Horn Island, and she was the lone survivor left clinging to the debris. When the storm subsided Mrs. Thompson was picked up by a group of natives who were out turtling, and taken back to Prince of Wales Island. As often happened to European castaways one of the older natives claimed her as the reincarnation of his dead daughter Giom, and she lived out the next five years as a member of the tribe. On 16 October she managed to slip away from her rescuers, who had allowed her to accompany them to a beach north of Evans Bay, and attracted the attention of some sailors who were doing the ship's laundry on shore. A long-boat rowed her out to the Rattlesnake where she was asked whether she wished to remain with the natives; she replied 'I am a Christian'.\(^5\)

The discovery of the white woman caused great excitement on board the Rattlesnake, and the scientists accompanying the survey lost no time in soliciting as much information from her as possible. She was interviewed constantly from the day she stepped aboard, the fear being that she would quickly lose command of the native tongue. During these conversations it was learned that a white man was living with the people of Badu, an island fifty kilometres to the north of Prince of Wales. Mrs. Thompson had been told by the natives that this man, known to them as Weenie, had arrived at Badu in a small boat after killing a companion and throwing him overboard.\(^6\)

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\(^4\) David Moore, Islanders and Aborigines at Cape York, Canberra, 1979, pp.76-80.
\(^5\) ibid.
\(^6\) ibid., p.145.
She had met the man and he had tried to persuade her to return with him to Badu. Because he was unable to speak English they conversed in the native tongue, and he gave her the impression he had been on Badu for about ten years.

Mrs. Thompson refused his offer, probably because she feared the people of Badu, but the matter was not to end there. On two later occasions the Badulaig had returned to Prince of Wales without Weenie to try to persuade Mrs. Thompson to return to their island. On the second occasion they came in strength and without their women. She wisely took to the hills and did not return until their canoes were well out of sight.

A zoologist with the survey, John MacGillivray, published a widely read account of the journey of the Rattlesnake, in which he described how through a combination of murder and intimidation, Wini, as he calls him, became the most important man amongst the people of Badu. He goes on:

\[\text{Wini's character appears...to be a compound of villany and cunning, in addition to the ferocity and headstrong passions of a thorough savage, - it strikes me that he must have been a runaway convict, probably from Norfolk Island. It is fortunate that his sphere of mischief is so limited, for a more dangerous ruffian could not easily be found. As matters stand at present, it is probable that not only during his life, but for years afterwards, every European who falls into the hands of the Badu people will meet with certain death.}\]

When John Jardine wrote his first report as Police Magistrate at Somerset in 1865 he commented on the ferocity of the natives of Badu, and attributed this propensity to the influence of a white man living amongst them.

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7 ibid., p.177.
8 ibid., p.144.
9 ibid., p.177.
10 ibid., p.144.
13 John Jardine to the Colonial Secretary, 1 March 1865, in F.J. Byerley (ed.), Narrative of the overland expedition of Messrs. Jardine, Brisbane, 1868, p.84.
is no reason to believe he came to this conclusion through first-hand experience, but it is certain he had a thorough knowledge of MacGillivray's book.\textsuperscript{14} At this point Weenie disappears from the literature until the early 1950s, when he re-emerged in Ion Idriess's \textit{The Wild White Man of Badu}, fleshed out, but still the same as MacGillivray had imagined him.\textsuperscript{15} Shortly after the publication of Idriess's book a feature article appeared in the \textit{Courier Mail} entitled, 'The White Cannibal King of Torres Strait'.\textsuperscript{16} The source for this story was claimed to be an old village headman from Badu called Sagege, and it is a hotchpotch of romanticized fact and pure fiction. In it Weenie is drawn as the epitome of all evil, and Frank Jardine as somewhat akin to the hero in a \textit{Phantom} comic, waging a lone crusade against cannibalism in the Torres Strait. Inevitably the story concludes with a shot from the rifle of a single unknown white man toppling 'the short but bloody regime of the White Cannibal King of Torres Straits (sic)'.\textsuperscript{17} Both Murphy\textsuperscript{18} and Reid\textsuperscript{19} are evasive as to who might have fired the fatal shot, and Ion Idriess is of the opinion Weenie was not shot at all.\textsuperscript{20} But Clem Lack\textsuperscript{21} and Pinney and Runcie\textsuperscript{22} are in no doubt: the wild white man of Badu was killed by Frank Jardine.

However David Moore's recent editing of the notes made by O.W. Brierly aboard the \textit{Rattlesnake}, during the 1848-50 survey, has led him to believe that Barbara Thompson's testimony 'completely refutes the traditional myth about "Weenie"'.\textsuperscript{23} Brierly was the survey's official artist, and this position allowed him time to indulge in more than sketching a record of the \textit{Rattlesnake}'s

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} ibid., p.83.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ion Idriess, \textit{The Wild White Man of Badu}, Sydney, 1950.
\item \textsuperscript{16} J.E. Murphy, 'The White Cannibal King of Torres Strait', in \textit{Courier Mail}, 14 February 1951.
\item \textsuperscript{17} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ion Idriess, \textit{The Wild White Man of Badu}, pp.231-232.
\item \textsuperscript{19} J.E. Murphy, 'The White Cannibal King of Torres Strait'.
\item \textsuperscript{20} F. Reid, \textit{The Romance of the Great Barrier Reef}, Sydney, 1954, p.59.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Clem Lack and Harry Stafford, \textit{The Rifle and the Spear}, Brisbane, 1964, pp.166-7.
\item \textsuperscript{22} P. Pinney and E. Runcie, \textit{Too Many Spears}, Sydney, 1978, pp.108-111.
\item \textsuperscript{23} David Moore, p.9.
\end{itemize}
journey. When Barbara Thompson came aboard the Rattlesnake she found in Brierly an acute and sympathetic listener. He recorded Mrs. Thompson's recollections verbatim in pencil, and reread them to her before making a final draft.²⁴ David Moore writes:

From Barbara Thompson's account (Brierly 1848:177) it would seem that 'Weenie' was a mild-mannered middle-aged man who had arrived in a small open boat and had been adopted by two Badu brothers; he assisted them in canoe repairing and all their daily activities, being careful not to provoke any hostility. MacGillivray (1852:807-8) suggests that he was a convict escaped from Norfolk Island, but the fact that he could speak no English and was dark skinned and pock-marked makes it seem more likely he was an Indonesian or Dutch sailor... Barbara Thompson's estimate of 'Weenie' was supported by Manu (one of the leading Kaurareg) who categorised him as a good man - 'kopi garki'....²⁵

In Moore's opinion MacGillivray 'misinterpreted what Barbara Thompson told him,' not only in relation to Weenie, but also with regard to her having taken a husband while living with the Prince of Wales' people. It seems MacGillivray was either blessed with an overly romantic imagination, or an accurate insight into the tastes of his future reading public.

MacGillivray supports his opinion of Weenie by citing the case of a trading vessel whose crew had been attacked by Badu Islanders in 1846 leaving three of them dead on a beach.²⁷ However he stops short of suggesting that the white man played a direct role in this massacre, and his source for the story, John Sweatman of the Bramble,²⁸ makes no mention of him in his memoirs. In fact Sweatman implies just the opposite when he comments that the natives of Badu were 'comparatively ignorant of Europeans'.²⁹ But in many respects David Moore's assessment of Weenie is hardly more plausible than that of MacGillivray. After ten years with the Badulaig it

²⁴ ibid., p.5.  
²⁵ ibid., p.9.  
²⁶ ibid.  
²⁸ ibid.  
would not be strange for Weenie to find Mrs. Thompson's Scottish brogue\textsuperscript{30} unintelligible. She described the man as being tall with light hair,\textsuperscript{31} so it is very unlikely that he was an Indonesian sailor, though he may have been Dutch. Mrs. Thompson also recalled that he had no intention of ever returning to from where he came,\textsuperscript{32} and this adds considerable strength to the contention that he was an escaped convict. The fact that he murdered his fellow traveller in their boat also supports this theory.\textsuperscript{33} It was certainly not the act of a 'mild-mannered' individual.

Weenie was living amongst the most ferocious tribe in the Torres Strait during a period when they had been responsible for the murder of at least a dozen seaman.\textsuperscript{34} If his diplomacy had been subtle in these first ten years, there is no guarantee that it remained so. With the discovery of Mrs. Thompson by the crew of the \textit{Rattlesnake}, and the steady increase of European traffic in the area, it is possible his tactics became more aggressive. If so, the supposed shooting of him by Frank Jardine acquires some clearer moral purpose. The most commonly accepted story is that the shooting occurred sometime in 1865,\textsuperscript{35} during a punitive expedition ordered by John Jardine as Police Magistrate to achieve that very end. However, in 1865 the Somerset settlement had no means to enable it to mount such an ambitious expedition. They were totally occupied with the threat of Aboriginal attack, and the Badulaig were a remote tribe who were not in the habit of visiting the mainland. If Weenie had been shot it would have been reported officially; the demise of such a dangerous fellow would have been feted. There was no such report.

Pinney and Runcie put the date of this encounter between Frank Jardine and Weenie into a more feasible time slot. They believe that Jardine shot Weenie in 1873, at a spot on the mainland just south of Somerset.\textsuperscript{36} In 1873

\textsuperscript{30} David Moore, p.5.
\textsuperscript{31} ibid., p.145.
\textsuperscript{32} ibid., p.144.
\textsuperscript{33} ibid., p.145.
\textsuperscript{34} ibid., p.144.
\textsuperscript{35} See Clem Lack and Harry Stafford, pp.166-7, F. Reid, p.59 & J.E. Murphy.
\textsuperscript{36} P. Pinney and E. Runcie, pp.108-111.
it was thought the settlement was under threat of attack from both Torres Strait Islanders and Aborigines. Missionaries had been driven off Cornwellis and Saibai Islands, and a pearl shelling station only eight miles from Somerset had been attacked and a man named Atkins killed. Atkins had been working as part of the Jardine pearling venture, and before he died he managed to get a message back to Somerset that the natives intended to wipe out the settlement. On the night this message was received Aborigines were seen prowling in the vicinity of the Police Magistrate's residence and the barracks. Next morning a horse was found with its throat cut, but no other damaged was reported.

Apparently Pinney and Runcie have transposed these circumstances and created a situation in which the Badulaig have landed at a point south of Somerset with Weenie at their head and are preparing to take the settlement by surprise. In their account Jardine is out riding and the two meet man to man. A contest ensues and Jardine shoots Weenie in the chest, mortally wounding him. He gathers up Weenie's distinctive spear and rides to find the canoes of the Badulaig. When they see that their savage leader is dead they break and return to the sea. Single-handed Frank Jardine has saved the settlement from massacre. The obvious question once again is why this act of extreme heroism was not mentioned in Jardine's reports.

The missionary teacher Kennett had considerable contact with the Aborigines and Islanders at Cape York, and in 1867 he was told by the Prince of Wales Islanders that 'Weeny (had) died six turtle seasons before (three years) at Bardoo, Mulgrave Island, leaving three adult half-caste sons'.

37 Beddome to the Colonial Secretary, 11 November 1873, Q.S.A., CPS 13c/c1, pp.122-123.
38 ibid.
39 ibid.
40 P. Pinney and E. Runcie, pp.108-111.
41 W.T. Kennett, 'The Kennett Report, February 1867-June 1868', in David Moore, p.244.
This would mean that Weenie died in 1864, the year before Frank Jardine arrived at the Cape. Barbara Thompson referred to him as being middle-aged when she met him in the 1840s, so at the time of his death he must have been about sixty, quite old enough to have died from natural causes. A Frenchman named Narcisse Poltier was brought into Somerset on May 1875, after having lived with the Aborigines on the mainland near Night Island for eleven or twelve years. Complete with a pierced septum and perforated right ear lobe, the only French he could speak was his own name. It is possible that this man contributed to the legend of the wild white man of Badu in much the same way as Eliza Fraser did to the legends surrounding Barbara Thompson.

The story of Jardine's triumph over Weenie highlights some of the flaws in the anecdotal tradition that has been so much a part of the popular histories of far north Queensland. While adding considerable prestige to the pioneer legend of Frank Jardine the story serves to disguise the measures taken by him to pacify the Aborigines and Islanders at Cape York by substituting romance for fact. In Too Many Spears Pinney and Runcie take this process one step further. There is a strong oral tradition in the Torres Strait that Frank Jardine was responsible for a massacre of Prince of Wales Islanders so severe that the population never recovered. Pinney and Runcie accept that Frank Jardine mounted a punitive expedition against these people, but they reject the contention that he was responsible for the massacre. They would have their readers believe that Jardine's force surprised the Prince

David Moore, p.145.
Aplin to the Colonial Secretary, 11 May 1875, S.L.B. No. 2., pp.289-290.
ibid.
David Moore, p.10.
of Wales camp just before down, and that when the fighting broke out Jardine found that the 'kanakas' who had accompanied the expedition were killing the natives indiscriminately and he fired at them in order to subdue them. When the Islanders finally tried to escape into the hills they were supposed to have been trapped by 'Wini' and another whiteman called Riddell, who were at the head of the Badu warriors. They ensured that the massacre was complete.47

That Weenie had any part in the supposed eradiction of the Prince of Wales people is highly unlikely. John Singe believes that the responsibility for their demise rested solely with Frank Jardine.48 But the facts of the case are so confused that it is not even certain that a massacre took place; Frank Jardine certainly makes no mention of it in his official report.49

When the Speerwah left Melbourne in November 1868 bound for Batavia there were two whites aboard: Captain Gasgoine, his son, and five Malays.50 In January she sailed from Bowen and instead of making straight for Batavia, spent some time trading with the Torres Strait natives for pearl and tortoise shell. While anchored off Wednesday Island in April 1869 Captain Gasgoine sent some of his crew ashore to collect fuel. He had become over-confident, and on a given signal the two parties were attacked.51 The heads were taken and the ship set fire. She drifted with the tide and eventually came to rest on a beach on Prince of Wales Island.52

Although this incident took place in April, news of it did not reach Somerset until June.53 Jardine had no boat at the settlement capable of

47 Pinney and Runcie, pp.108-111
49 Frank Jardine to the Colonial Secretary, 26 June 1869, Q.S.A. In-letter, No. 1655, 1870.
50 Chief Secretary Victoria to the Colonial Secretary Queensland, 9 December 1870, Q.S.A., In-letter No. 524, 1871.
51 Frank Jardine to the Colonial Secretary, 26 June 1869.
52 ibid.
53 Chester to Colonial Secretary, 10 August 1869, in S.L.B. No. 1., Mitchell Library, B 1414-1415, pp.2.3.
taking himself and his 'native police' to search for survivors, so he borrowed two from the *Melanie*, complete with crews, and set out. He found the wreck of the *Speerwah*, and a native camp full of ship's gear near Red Point. He also notes that many of the natives were dressed in shirts and trousers, but he does not mention taking any action against them. There are three possible explanations for this. The crew of the *Speerwah* were murdered on Wednesday Island, not Prince of Wales, and the fact that Jardine found the seaman's bodies placed up in trees indicates that the Prince of Wales Islanders had, in their own way, given the sailors a decent funeral. Jardine might have thought them innocent of the atrocity and taken no punitive action. Another possibility is that he 'dispersed' the natives so thoroughly he decided it would be wiser not to report the matter. This is unlikely, if only because the police party was small and Prince of Wales a very large and rugged island, providing easy escape routes for the natives. The third, and most likely possibility, is that Jardine thought it unnecessary to state that natives found dressed in European clothes after such an incident would be naturally shot on sight, and that he fired on them causing light casualties.

In a letter to the Colonial Secretary on 26 June 1869, Jardine wrote that he thought Mrs. Gasgoine, who had been reported as travelling on the *Speerwah*, was 'still alive amongst the natives of Badu'. He asked that Captain Bringham of H.M.S. *Virago* be sent north to give him assistance in the shape of a boat and crew. Apparently this did not come about, because when Henry Chester arrived to relieve Jardine on 27 July, he (Chester) immediately wrote to the Colonial Secretary complaining that because of the lack of a boat he could not visit Prince of Wales 'to bury the bodies and

54 Frank Jardine to the Col. Sec., 26 June 1869.
55 ibid.
56 David Moore, p.152.
57 Frank Jardine to the Colonial Secretary, 26 June 1869.
58 ibid.
Pinney and Runcie state that the massacre did not occur on the occasion of Frank Jardine's first visit to the site of the wreck, but on a subsequent one almost immediately afterwards. They maintain that he returned with the crews of the Active, Fanny, Matilda and Bluebell, with the intention of avenging the murdered crew of the Speerwah and finding Mrs. Gasgoine. However if Jardine had managed to neutralize the perceived threat posed by the Prince of Wales Islanders, it seems unlikely he would not have returned to Red Point to bury the Europeans whose bodies were left rotting in the trees. This task was in fact left to Henry Chester, who was also under the impression that the Islanders had not been punished for the Speerwah atrocity.

In the context of their contribution to the pioneer legend of Frank Jardine, Pinney and Runcie's use of the supposed capture of Mrs. Gasgoine by the Islanders is very significant. It serves to add a lustre of chivalry to any action taken by Jardine to rescue her and punish her abductors. In a passage depicting Jardine's initial efforts to locate and rescue Mrs. Gasgoine they write,

Sick at heart, Jardine watched their eyes and wondered if they lied. Assuredly she had been taken captive, and quite possibly still lived, but he had no way of finding where she was. And it had been made clear that she had married Muralug. This meant incessant ritual rape by warriors who, recovering the fluids from her body, mixed them with honey and drank them as libation to the gods that lived within them.
In 1869 Harriet Gasgoine was probably tucked safely away in her home at Prahran, near Melbourne, for she had not gone with her husband to Batavia.\(^{65}\)

In April 1870, after having spent a great deal of time and effort trying to solve the mystery of Mrs. Gasgoine's disappearance, Henry Chester had to admit that he did not believe the story concerning her,\(^{66}\) and in December the Queensland government received a letter from the Chief Secretary of Victoria, writing on her behalf asking for official confirmation of her husband's death.\(^{67}\)

But there is still the mystery of the passing of the Prince of Wales Islanders. Writing of the Speerwah incident David Moore says:

> It is obvious that there was considerably greater slaughtering of the Prince of Wales Islanders than was mentioned in the official reports. The result of all this was that the Kaurareg (P.O.W. Islanders) were decimated and the survivors scattered elsewhere for fear of further reprisals.\(^{68}\)

In a report written in August 1871 Henry Chester states that the Prince of Wales Islanders had been punished for the part they played in the Speerwah massacre, but he does not say how severely, or by whom.\(^{69}\) When he took control of Somerset from Jardine he became obsessed with the incident. In December 1870, when he received news that three canoes from Prince of Wales were trading with the Aborigines on Albany Island, he went across and bought some bows, arrows and tortoise shell from them, telling them that if they

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\(^{65}\) Chief Secretary Victoria to Colonial Secretary, 9 December 1870, Q.S.A., In-letter, No. 524 of 1871.

\(^{66}\) Chester to the Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1870, S.L.B. No.1., p.15.

\(^{67}\) Chief Secretary Victoria to Colonial Secretary, 9 December 1870.

\(^{68}\) David Moore, pp.12-13.

returned with him to Somerset they would be paid in tobacco. On their arrival at the settlement Chester had their leader taken prisoner and let it be known that he would be held hostage until the return of Mrs. Gasgoine. He gave them a deadline of one week, after which they could expect their headman to be killed. For obvious reasons this ruse failed, and Chester was forced to release his prisoners after twelve days had elapsed.70

But this was not the end of his efforts. On 5 April 1870 Chester boarded H.M.S. Blanche with eight native troopers who were now officially stationed at Somerset, and nine Cape York natives, to proceed north in search of Mrs. Gasgoine and those who had perpetrated the Speerwah massacre. More Aborigines were recruited at Possession Island, and together with twenty-five 'blue-jackets' a party set out in the ship's pinnace and cutter 'to try and communicate with the Karraragos (P.O.W. Islanders)'.71 At one-thirty on the morning of the 6th, Chester anchored off the northern extremity of Horn Island and sent his troopers to reconnoitre a native camp site on Prince of Wales.72 These native troopers were a particularly desperate group, five of them having been released from St. Helena 'with considerable portions of their sentences for serious crimes unexpired',73 and if they had made contact with the Islanders there probably would have been violence. However they returned just before dawn to report the camp recently deserted.74

At daylight the expedition weighed anchor and made for Wednesday Island, where, according to Jardine's information, the Speerwah massacre had taken place. On the leeward side of the Island scouts reported the presence of four canoes, so Chester went ashore and after a march of two and a half miles, surprised a camp of Naghi Islanders. The warriors prepared to resist, but on seeing themselves outnumbered thought better of it. While Chester

70 Chester to the Colonial Secretary, 31 March 1870, S.L.B. No. 1., p.14.
71 Chester to the Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1870, S.L.B. No. 1., p.15-16.
72 ibid.
73 Chester to the Colonial Secretary, 18 April 1870, S.L.B. No. 1., p.17.
74 Chester to the Colonial Secretary, 14 April 1870, S.L.B. No. 1., pp.15-16.
busy disarming the men, the native women and children managed to make the canoes and push off about three hundred yards from the beach. Finding various articles of ship's property in the huts, Chester had the small village burned to the ground. He then ordered shots to be fired over the drifting canoes, and the women and children reluctantly returned to the beach. On searching the canoes more ship's gear was recovered, including a file, some knives, a book of English grammar, pamphlets printed in Welsh, a work on algebra and five leaves of poems. When a chronometer case was produced, the owner of the canoe broke and ran for the sea. He was shot down as he struggled to the surf. Acting on information volunteered by the Gudangs, Chester singled out three men accused of being ringleaders in the Speerwa attack. They were handed over to the native police and executed.

Henry Marjoribanks Chester had been a lieutenant in the Indian Navy before joining the Queensland public service, and he had seen action in the Persian Gulf, 'in the suppression of piracy and slave-trading.' Chester had very firm ideas about how native peoples could best be taught to respect the supremacy of British law. The Italian naturalist and explorer D'Albertis recalled how on one occasion Chester, who had been travelling with him to the Fly River on the southern coast of New Guinea, had 'lined up his black troopers and had them fire at an anthill to dissuade the people of Tawau from robbing the teachers'. On the same journey in 1875, Chester fired at natives along the banks of the river, and after a break-down in trading negotiations over a pig, he intimidated the New Guineans with gunfire and pillaged their village to obtain valuable decorated heads and other artifacts. John Goode also suggests Chester may have been dishonest when writing his report of this trip to the Fly. D'Albertis and the missionary Macfarlane both claim that six native police were with Chester

75 ibid.
board the Ellengowan, while his report maintains there were three.\textsuperscript{79}

Perhaps Chester was protecting himself against criticism that he had left Somerset under-manned. There is no doubt that Chester had the temperament, and if anything, more opportunity than Frank Jardine, to take extreme retaliatory action against the Prince of Wales Islanders. Whether he did or not is a matter for conjecture.

The most intriguing account of the Prince of Wales massacre comes from the pen of Meston. Writing of a journey through north Queensland for the Queensland\textsuperscript{er} in 1897 he tells how the Prince of Wales men 'captured, killed and ate eighteen men from a Dutch man-of-war'.\textsuperscript{80} He then goes on to describe how this act was avenged:

\begin{quote}
About 500 men from Prince of Wales, Hammond, Thursday and Horn Islands were assembled, holding high festival at midnight. The flags and bunting from the wrecked vessel were stretched on trees in a wide circle round the camp. The war dances and heavy meal of roast Dutchman over-came them, and they were nearly all in a profound slumber when the avengers appeared on the scene. These consisted of a party of white men and about fifty Polynesians, Malays, and aboriginals \textsuperscript{sic}, all effectively armed. Then began a slaughter, grim and complete... And when it was all over, at least 200 cannibals had departed to where they would never taste roast Dutchman any more. Never did a tribe of savages more richly deserve all they received. One white man who was present told me he would have been brained by a club if one of his own blacks had not shot the savage at the exact moment.\textsuperscript{81}
\end{quote}

Although Meston's story is riddled with the inaccuracies and romantic inventions common in these Nineteenth Century travelogues, he claims to have been in communication with a man who was actually a participant in the massacre. For obvious reasons he does not give a name, but for the

\textsuperscript{79} John Goode, The Rape of the Fly, Melbourne, 1977, p.146.

\textsuperscript{80} A. Meston, 'A Tour in North Queensland, Part III', in Queensland, 28 Jan. 1897.

\textsuperscript{81} ibid.
greater part of his journey round the Cape his host and informant was Frank Jardine, and it is difficult to imagine who else Meston could have been in contact with who would have had first hand knowledge of an event so early in the history of the European occupation of the Cape.

Writing in 1871 Chester states that the only two tribes punished for the Speerwah attack were the Prince of Wales and Naghi Islanders. He agreed with Jardine's first official report on the matter, with respect to the involvement of the Badu Islanders, but maintains that they had gone unpunished. Chester had punished the Naghi Islanders himself, so in 1871, according to Chester, the only people Frank Jardine could have acted against were the Prince of Wales Islanders. This action could have taken place on Jardine's first visit to the wreck of the Speerwah, when he reported seeing natives dressed in European clothes. If it did then it is obvious that the massacre was nowhere near the proportions described by Meston. However David Moore's term 'decimated' might be applicable in its literal meaning. Using information gleaned from Brierly's interviews with Mrs. Barbara Thompson, David Moore estimates the population of Prince of Wales to have been about one hundred in 1849. By the time of the Speerwah attack it may have been considerably less. In 1867 the Prince of Wales Islanders approached the missionary teacher Kennett to help them make a treaty with the people of Badu. He writes:

The feud had existed for many years and originated in the forcible seizure of a Korrarega (P.O.W.) woman. Each tribe was, I believe, heartily tired of a war which had considerably thinned their numbers, and were anxious for peace.

To decimate a tribe numbering eighty or ninety would take about ten rounds of ammunition, quite within the capabilities of the small force Jardine took

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82 Ibid; and A. Meston, 'A Tour in North Queensland, Part II', in Queenslander, 16 January 1897.
83 J.M. Carroll (ed.) 'Journey into Torres Strait', p.40.
84 Frank Jardine to the Colonial Secretary, 26 June 1869.
86 Ibid., pp.260-261
Moore's contention that 'the survivors scattered elsewhere for fear of further reprisals' does not stand up to scrutiny. On 9 June 1871 two ships, the Reichstag and Tavistock, ran aground on a sandbank near Friday Island. Henry Chester happened to be in the vicinity. He boarded the Reichstag, and with the help of about twenty Prince of Wales Islanders, helped to heave her off. In June 1871 Chester visited the very site where the Speerwah had been beached and camped with men who had taken part in the attack. They were peaceful, and according to Chester, had learned to respect the retributive potential of the native police. As late as 1898 Haddon was able to observe Prince of Wales Islanders dancing, and Frank Mills maintains that his father, who had once been Jardine's overseer on Naghi Island, recruited men from Prince of Wales when he began pearling on his own account sometime around the turn of the Century. Jardine may have shot some of the Prince of Wales Islanders in 1869, but it is most unlikely that he was responsible for their extinction.

But Meston's account can not be dismissed out of hand. There survived a sketchy but similar report of a dispersal in 1873. When Beddome was sent to Somerset to relieve Jardine after the scandal surrounding his administration he was informed of some very disturbing events. He wrote to the Colonial Secretary:

Mr. Jardine informed me that the natives, both on the mainland and islands, had been committing murder and depredations; a pearl-sheller's camp eight (8) miles from the settlement was attacked, and a man named James Atkins brutally murdered.

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89 Frank Jardine to the Colonial Secretary, 1 July 1871, S.L.B. No. 1., pp.25-26.
90 J.M. Carroll (ed.), 'Journey into Torres Strait', p.41.
92 Frank Mills, taped interview, Pearl St., Thursday Island, 18 April 1981.
JAMES Atkins had been employed in the Jardine pearling venture,\textsuperscript{94} and his murder alone would have been enough to provoke savage reprisals by the Europeans. But Atkins had managed to send a message into the settlement that the natives intended to attack and annihilate Somerset. The native missionaries from the northern islands of the Torres Strait had been driven back to the settlement, and Jardine had to lend the \textit{Lizzie Jardine} to Reverend Murray of the London Missionary Society, so that those who had stayed behind could be rescued.\textsuperscript{95} There is no reason to believe that there was any connection between the attack on Atkins' station and the expulsion of the missionaries, but it must have created a siege mentality at Somerset.

Though he wished to avenge the murder of Atkins and negate any threat to the inhabitants of Somerset, Jardine found himself short of a boat. This problem was overcome when some pearl-shellers offered to join the parties sent out. Two boats were made ready and the expedition divided into three, one by land and two by sea.\textsuperscript{96} Beddome writes,

\begin{quote}
they encountered the natives about thirty miles from here, who were in large force and showed a most determined resistance. I am thankful to report that they were properly dispersed.\textsuperscript{97}
\end{quote}

Although the killing of Atkins might have been carried out by Cape Aborigines, an argument can be made for the involvement of Torres Strait Islanders. The attack was launched at a time when the seasons were changing, and the pearlers would have been making ready to leave the 'Straits'.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{94} Frank Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 20 November 1873, Q.V.&.P., 1874, pp.1003-1035, Report on the Management of the Harbour of Refuge Somerset, pp.28-29.
\textsuperscript{95} Charles Beddome to the Colonial Secretary, 11 November 1873.
\textsuperscript{96} ibid.
\textsuperscript{97} ibid.
\textsuperscript{98} Frank Jardine to the Colonial Secretary, 19 February 1872, S.L.B. No. 2., pp.7-8.
incided with the end of the Islanders traditional trading season, and they would have been on the verge of returning north for the rains, after having gathered at various islands of the Prince of Wales group.99 The increased traffic in the 'Straits' caused by the expanding pearling industry, and the growing numbers of South Sea Islanders both seaman and missionaries, must have been causing the Torres Strait Islanders great concern. Jardine reported that when he went on a cruise in 1872 to investigate the islands for a suitable site for the proposed new administrative centre, the Islanders constantly tried to confuse him as to the location of fresh water.100 They did not want another Somerset right in the middle of their home islands.

If the attack on Atkins' station was carried out by an alliance of, say Badu, Naghi and Prince of Wales Islanders, with the complicity of some of the mainland Aborigines, then Meston's account of the dispersal that followed makes more sense. When Kennett acted as supervisor for the treaty between the Islanders of Badu and Prince of Wales he noted that 'The chief part of six different tribes, including those of the settlement, had assembled'.102 Perhaps Kennett had inadvertently helped weld the peoples of the southern 'Strait' into a force confident enough to defy the white

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99 David Moore, p.161.
100 Frank Jardine to the Colonial Secretary, 25 October 1872, S.L.B. No.2, pp.57-8.
101 ibid.
102 W.T. Kennett, in David Moore, p.247.
certainly Chester believed three tribes were responsible for the Speerwah massacre of 1869.\textsuperscript{103} Beddome writes that the dispersal took place thirty miles from the settlement,\textsuperscript{104} which, if it was thirty miles to the north-west, would place it somewhere in the Prince of Wales group. Weston's 'party of white men and about fifty Polynesians, Malays, and aboriginals',\textsuperscript{105} would describe perfectly the two crews of pearl-shellers who volunteered to take part in the avenging of Atkins.\textsuperscript{106} The party sent by land might have been a precaution against the possibility that a force of natives was already on the move towards the settlement as Atkins had warned.\textsuperscript{107} It is very doubtful that three groups of this sort could have been sent out in 1869.\textsuperscript{108}

Meston's account probably forms the basis of the popular European tradition of the Prince of Wales massacre, and if it is a combination of events that took place in 1869 and 1873, it goes some way to explaining the disappearance of another tribe: the Naghi Islanders. When the Rattlesnake visited the area in 1848, this was a much larger group than the Prince of Wales people\textsuperscript{109} and they did not have to suffer a slow war of attrition with the people of Badu. But D'Albertis, writing of his visit to Naghi in 1875, says,

\begin{quote}
The natives of the Island are all but extinct and the few that do exist there are subjects, after a fashion, of a white man named Jardine, who has established a mother-of-pearl fishery there.\textsuperscript{110}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{103} J.M. Carroll, p.40
\textsuperscript{104} Charles Beddome to the Colonial Secretary, 11 November 1873.
\textsuperscript{105} A. Meston, in Queenslander, 16 January 1897.
\textsuperscript{106} Charles Beddome to the Colonial Secretary, 11 November 1873.
\textsuperscript{107} ibid.
\textsuperscript{108} Frank Jardine to the Colonial Secretary, 26 June 1869.
\textsuperscript{109} David Moore, pp.260-261.
Perhaps the Naghi Islanders were the main losers in the 1873 massacre, and Jardine took advantage of the situation to set up his pearling interests there in 1874. If so, the implications of this set of circumstances are damning for Frank Jardine.

But the disappearance of the Prince of Wales Islanders is no mystery. They were a small, vulnerable group, who suffered greatly at the hands of both their European and Islander neighbours. Jardine probably shot several in 1869, and more may have died in 1873. Aplin writes of a devastating measles attack in 1875 that 'cleaned off' the whole of the Gudang tribe 'and a very large number from Prince of Wales and other islands', and this is corroborated in MacMillan's biography of Sir William Macleay, so by the turn of the 1880s there must have been very few Prince of Wales people left. If Frank Mills is correct in recollecting that his father recruited the Islanders for his pearling fleet then it is likely that the last of the Prince of Wales Islanders saw their days out on Naghi. Jardine may have contributed to their ending, but not in the simple heroic flourish described by Meston.

112 D. Aplin to the Colonial Secretary, 2 August 1875, S.L.B. No. 2, p.314.
114 Frank Mills, taped interview, Pearl Street, Thursday Island, 18 April 1981.
As Farnfield points out, it is very difficult to detect the presence of white women at Somerset. There were billets for married men, and the native troopers had their 'gins', but single white women must have been rare indeed. Consequently miscegenation, or the taking of 'black velvet', as it was more commonly known in colonial Queensland, probably followed much the same pattern at Somerset as Evans describes for the rest of frontier Queensland. Simpson writes that on one occasion Frank Jardine was forced to dismiss one of his white workers because of his 'constant interference with the black boy's gins', but according to information received by the missionary teacher Kennett from Aborigines who worked for Jardine, the Police Magistrate himself fathered a half-caste child while he was in charge at Somerset. Casual relationships of this sort were common on the frontier, and there is no reason to suggest Jardine forced himself on the woman in question, but in 1873 he actually married a young Samoan girl, and in Nineteenth Century Queensland this type of liaison was far less acceptable. Despite the fact that Sana Solio was the niece of the King of Samoa, a Christian missionary, and probably quite beautiful, to the average Queenslander at that time she would have been little

1 John Bon, 'Keyp Yop Adud Ged', on Songs of Aboriginal Australia and Torres Strait, Ethnic Folkways Library, FE 4102, 1964.
4 ibid.
7 R. Evans, 'Harlots and Helots', p.109.
more than a 'kanaka', and Jardine a 'gin jockey'. Frank Jardine was the kind of man who expected deference, and would not tolerate ridicule. Consequently it is logical to assume that by 1873 he had decided never to return to live permanently in the society of his parents in the south.

With the removal of the centre of administration for the Torres Strait from Somerset to Thursday Island in 1877, Jardine virtually disappears from the pages of official correspondence, though he continued to act occasionally on behalf of the government. According to Stanley Wilson, a man who made several visits to Somerset in the early years of this century, Jardine accompanied Hugh Milman to investigate allegations that an Aboriginal girl had been whipped with a sting-ray tail at one of the Gulf missions in 1910, and until the very last days of his life he had supervised the doling out of blankets to the remnant of the northern Cape tribes who gathered at Somerset every year for that purpose.

Jardine was also in charge of transport for the Cape York telegraph line from 1884 to 1886, but even during this period of public service his attention was not distracted from his private ventures. While working on the line he discovered what he believed to be viable cattle country on the upper reaches of the Ducie River and returned to establish an out-station there in 1887, which he named Bertie Haugh after his two sons. However strong was Jardine's sense of public duty it cannot be said that he let it dominate his own interests, and from 1877 till his death in 1919 he concentrated his energy on making a success of his private enterprises in pearl shell, cattle and copra.

From the very beginning Jardine's enterprises had a profound effect on the traditional inhabitants of the Cape and Torres Strait. The overlanding
expedition of 1864-65 blundered its way up the Cape having no regard for the territorial rights of the tribesmen encountered. That this was accepted as normal practice by Europeans on the frontier does not alter the fact that the expedition helped lay the foundations of the violent pattern of interaction between Aborigines and pastoralists that characterized the early cattle industry on the Cape. The pastoralists who moved into the northern Cape region in the 1880s and 1890s knew that they would be confronted by more than just a trying physical environment. The Jardine expedition had demonstrated that determinedly hostile resistance could be expected from the Aborigines, and the success of the expedition in reaching Somerset seemed to vindicate the methods used. The pastoralists were prepared to fight fire with fire. A correspondent to the Queenslander who claimed to have had experience in the northern cattle industry wrote,

So long as we have country to settle, so long as men have to trust their lives to their own right hands, so long shall we come in contact with the natives, and aggressions and reprisals will take place...Is there room for both of us here? No. Then the sooner the weaker is wiped out the better, as we may save some valuable lives by the process.14

Besides his Vallack Point (1865) and Bertie Haugh (1887) out-stations, Frank Jardine also established Lockerbie station on Laradunya Creek some twenty kilometres south west of Somerset and Galloway another six kilometres closer to the west coast of the Cape.15 Shanahan, who wrote for the Queenslander under the pseudonym "Sidelights", visited Lockerbie in 1896 and reported that for the previous three or four years Jardine had been having a great deal of trouble with Aborigines spearing his cattle.16 Other pastoralists

16 ibid.
were having similar problems, and Edwin Watson from Merluna station and Charles Massy from Rokely station were killed while trying to secure their runs.\(^{17}\) J.T. Embley, who had acquired an interest in Lacklan Kennedy's York Downs station at the head of Mission River sometime in the late 1880s or early 1890s, welcomed the establishment of the Weipa Mission Station because he 'had already suffered the depredations of the natives among his cattle and had been forced to take stern measures in self-defence'.\(^{18}\) In 1896 one of W.E. Parry-Okeden's officers reported that in the six years between 1889 and 1895 the number of Ducie River Aborigines in the vicinity of Bertie Haugh had diminished by about one hundred.\(^{19}\) Many of these missing tribesmen may have been taken to work as divers on the beche-de-mer boats but it is also likely that some fell victim to 'stern measures' taken by Frank Jardine while establishing his new cattle run.

An incident that occurred on the Ducie River in 1893 serves to illustrate how violence had become a way of life at Bertie Haugh. The region had long served as a recruiting ground for the beche-de-mer and pearl shell fishermen who worked the northern coast and Torres Strait, and when two Europeans, Charles Bruce and Sam Roe, were murdered by their crew of Ducie River Aborigines recruited at Bertie Haugh, an expedition was got together to arrest those responsible. Twelve native troopers under the command of Senior Constable Conroy of Thursday Island and accompanied by Charles Bruce's brother sailed for the Ducie River to which it was assumed the natives had returned. While their boat was going up the Ducie Aborigines hurled spears at them from both banks of the river. Such was the terror these tribesmen instilled in the troopers that when they were landed they made their way straight to Bertie Haugh firing their weapons in the air to keep the enemy at bay. On hearing this commotion, Harry Price, Jardine's Melanesian overseer, organised his three

\(^{17}\) ibid., p.344.
\(^{18}\) ibid., p.345.
companions and they made ready their arms. Bertie Haugh was a veritable fortress, with loopholed walls and some fifty rifles and muskets and a twelve-inch swivel gun all loaded. The troopers managed to reach the safety of the station, and then when the coast was clear they began walking to the tip of the Cape. They arrived back on Thursday Island to find that Conroy and Bruce had reported them massacred at the hands of the Ducie River blacks.21

It is obvious from this story that Jardine's men at Bertie Haugh were kept in a constant state of military preparedness. They were aware of their vulnerability to outnumbered intruders, but for the sake of Frank Jardine's investment they were obliged to protect his stock and station from pilfering and attack. Ever since his early days at Vallack Point Jardine had used acculturated Aborigines and other non-Europeans to patrol his cattle. The first of these were Barney, Peter and Sambo, two of whom Jardine shot after they had deserted and killed another of his Aboriginal servants in 1868.22 A similar incident occurred in 1871 when five native troopers ransacked Vallack Point. Jardine succeeded in capturing two of them, but they were shot while 'resisting arrest'.23 He then employed Johnny Murray, a half-caste Maori, to assist in 'looking after the cattle and doing "Native Police duty" when required'.24 Jardine was also heavily reliant on information passed to him by the Gudang tribe who were the traditional inhabitants of the Vallack Point run, and on at least on occasion this saved his life.25

It is probable that Frank Jardine employed much the same tactics on the Ducie River in the 1880s and 1890s as he had at Vallack Point in the 1860s and 1870s. But the success of his pastoral operations depended on more than

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21 ibid.
22 See p.44.
24 Frank Jardine to the Colonial Secretary, 29 November 1873, Board of Inquiry into the Management of the Harbor of Refuge, Somerset, Q.V.&.P., 1874, pp.1003-35, p.29.
the ability to protect his stock from Aboriginal attack. Most of the stock on the northern Cape York Peninsula is only marginal cattle country, and during the pearl shell boom of the 1880s when prosperous Thursday Island provided a reasonable market for beef produced on the Cape the industry relied on a cheap source of labour that suited its seasonal requirements. Aboriginal clans whose traditional patterns of food gathering had been disrupted by the introduction of cattle had either to steal from the pastoralists to survive, or offer their labour when it was needed in return for rations. Frank Jardine's long experience on the northern frontier made him an extraordinarily formidable opponent and those whose country he occupied soon learned which was the easier course.

But the adaptation of Aborigines to new modes of labour was a difficult task and the relationship between employer and employee in the frontier situation was often dangerously tenuous. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the beche-de-mer fishing industry. The process of catching and curing the sea slug was labour intensive and mainland Aborigines were favoured by the European boat owners as crew because their use kept costs down to a minimum. However the mainland Aborigines were often unaware of what they were getting themselves into when they boarded the boats, so that in many cases their recruitment was little short of kidnapping. The government passed laws to try to regulate recruitment but they were flagrantly abused and poorly policed. When a Thursday Island resident engaged in the fisheries was asked why Aborigines should not be employed on the boats he explained, 'They suffer from the disease known as "nostalgia", and they commit all sorts of crimes to get back to their country'. The mutiny of Aboriginal crews was such a common occurrence in the beche-de-mer industry...

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27 Henry Reynolds, The Other Side of the Frontier, Townsville, 1981.
28 Evidence given before the Departmental Commission on Pearl-Shell Fisheries, Q.V.G.P., pp.1301-1352, 1897, p.22.
29 ibid.
30 ibid.
that in 1890 Saville-Kent was able to comment on the most common route taken by the Aborigines to get back to their own country south of the Batavia River.\textsuperscript{31}

In 1908, after having given evidence that two thirds of all the men who had returned to his mission after working on the béche-de-mer boats died of consumption within six months of their being landed, Nicholas Hey of Mapoon recommended that all the Aborigines north of his mission should be collected and placed on an island under government supervision. He believed that this was the only way the ties that bound them to their land could be broken so that they would be fit for steady employment.\textsuperscript{32}

It is not quite certain when Frank Jardine entered the béche-de-mer trade, but it must have been quite soon after he had established Bertie Haugh in 1887 because his schooner Lancashire Lass and seven 'swimming boats' were working the Barrier Reef for béche-de-mer in 1889 when they accidently discovered 920 pounds of Spanish silver dollars.\textsuperscript{33} The skipper of the Lancashire Lass on that voyage was Sam Roe, the same man who was killed by his crew of Ducie River Aborigines in 1893 while fishing in partnership with Charles Bruce. By 1893 Jardine had left the industry because he found it unprofitable\textsuperscript{34} and was preparing to go to Burma where he spent eight months investigating the pearl fisheries for the Burmese government.\textsuperscript{35} However while he was engaged in the industry it is probably safe to assume he recruited his swimmers on the Ducie River, and that Sam Roe continued the practice when he began working on his own account. If this was the case then Frank Jardine had found a way to cure the 'disease known as "nostalgia"'. Any of his crew who decided to steal a boat and make for their own country would be aware that it was now also Frank Jardine's country, and that he would be unlikely to let them go unpunished.

\textsuperscript{31} W. Saville-Kent, Report on the Pearl and Pearl Shell Fisheries of North Queensland, Q.V.\&.P., pp.727-734, 1890, Vol.3., p.6.
\textsuperscript{32} Evidence given before the Pearl-Shell and Béche-de-mer Royal Commission, Q.V.\&.P., pp.395-756, 1908, Vol.2., pp.217-223.
\textsuperscript{34} Evidence given before the Pearl-Shell and Béche-de-mer Royal Commission, Q.V.\&.P., 1908, p.230.
\textsuperscript{35} Evidence given before the Departmental Commission on Pearl-Shell and Béche-de-mer Fisheries, 1897, p.31.
for long. His heavily armed camp at Bertie Haugh was so strategically placed that Saville-Kent believed an efficient police camp in the vicinity would accomplish much towards the suppression of mutinous bêche-de-mer crews.\textsuperscript{36}

Before the introduction of the diving apparatus in the mid-1870s\textsuperscript{37} the technique for collecting pearl-shell was much the same as that used for bêche-de-mer, and many of the European skippers who pioneered the pearl shell industry had gained their experience in the bêche-de-mer fishery. However the profit margin, at least in these early years, was much greater for the pearl-shellers and as a result their crews received better treatment.\textsuperscript{38}

When Moresby reported Jardine's alleged pearling activities in March 1873 he was supposed to have had in his employ five Melanesians and thirty-five natives of Cape York and Torres Strait.\textsuperscript{39} There were good beds of shell close to Somerset in shallow water that could be easily worked by swimmers diving from Jardine's three open boats.\textsuperscript{40} These could return to Somerset each afternoon, or make camp at other convenient spots along the coast, so there was no need for Jardine to go to the expense of a 'floating station' system that provided accommodation for divers while they were at sea.

Aborigines from the Somerset area provided a cheap and tractable workforce. There was no specific legislation enacted in Queensland at this time to protect their interests and they probably worked for rations. Not having to spend long periods at sea in poor conditions meant that their health would not have suffered as much as that of those who worked on the bêche-de-mer boats.

\textsuperscript{36} W. Saville-Kent, Report on the Pearl and Pearl-Shell Fisheries, 1890, p.6.
\textsuperscript{38} N.A. Loos, 'Aboriginal Resistance on the Mining, Rainforest, & Fishing Frontiers', in Lectures on North Queensland History, Townsville, 1974, p.171.
\textsuperscript{40} Evidence given before the Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-mer Royal Commission, 1908, p.229.
When Police Magistrate C.D'Oyley Aplin inspected Jardine's Naghi Island station in 1875 he reported that the fourteen Cape York Aborigines employed there showed an improvement in health that resulted from an 'abundant and wholesome diet and regular employment'. But their life cannot have been an easy one. The Melanesians who supervised their work in the boats had a well deserved reputation for mistreating Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and the swimmers' good health was probably more a matter of economic good sense than moral obligation. When the Italian explorer and naturalist Luigi D'Albertis visited the island in the same year as Aplin he commented that Jardine's employees were little better off than slaves.

The Torres Strait Islanders who worked for Jardine at Somerset before he moved his pearling operation to Naghi were from two of the eastern islands in the Strait, Murray and Darnley. Men from these islands had been recruited by beche-de-mer fishermen before the discovery of commercial pearl shell, and missionaries were at work amongst them by 1871. Consequently Murray and Darnley Islanders were frequent visitors to Somerset and Jardine had them signed onto his boats under the regulations that governed all seamen, though it is unlikely they received more than ten shillings a month in rations for their labour. Until 1879, when the border was moved to within sight of the coast of New Guinea, Murray and Darnely were outside Queensland's territorial waters and the employment of their natives was legally doubtful under the vague provisions of the Kidnapping Act of 1872. The act was intended to

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41 C.D'Oyley Aplin to Colonial Secretary, 3 March 1875, Somerset Letter Book, No.2, Q.S.A., CPS 13c/c1, pp.263-270.
45 John Singe, The Torres Strait: People and History, Brisbane, 1979, pp.91-93.
46 Evidence given before the Inquiry into Somerset, pp.28-29.
47 Frank Jardine to Colonial Secretary, 1 October 1872, Somerset Letter Book, No. 2., pp.54-55.
regulate the recruitment of labourers from the islands of Melanesia for work on the cotton and sugar plantations of Queensland, and until 1875 when specific clauses were added to exempt those working as boat crews no one in the industry was sure how it applied to fishing in the Torres Strait.48

One of the issues that emerged during the course of the inquiry into Jardine's management of Somerset was his employment of Murray and Darnley Islanders, and this must have been one of the major considerations that prompted his move to Naghi. In 1872 the Queensland border had been extended from the three mile limit to sixty miles from the mainland.49 This meant that it encompassed Naghi, which then became one of the islands under Queensland's jurisdiction closest to the lucrative pearl beds of Warrior Reef. From Naghi Jardine could utilize the remnant of the island's population, supplemented by mainland Aborigines, without having to be concerned about the legal implications of crossing the border with non-Australian coloured crews. It also meant he did not have to resort to the expensive 'floating station' system that was being adopted by his competitors to work Warrior Reef and the new grounds further afield. Jardine personally supervised his station on Naghi from 1874 to 1877.

As shell became more difficult to find it was necessary to fish in deeper waters. This necessitated the introduction of the diving apparatus, which consisted of a helmet, weighted suit and air pump. Though Jardine preferred to rely on cheap labour to give him a competitive edge it soon became necessary for him to invest in 'pump boats'. He eventually fitted out four boats with the apparatus, which cost about £240 in 1875,50 and hired European divers to work the deeper water.51 These Europeans were independently minded men who demanded high wages for their work, and when they accumulated enough capital to buy their own boats replacements had to be found. It was soon

48 ibid.
50 C. D'Oyley to Colonial Secretary, 3 March 1875, S.L.B. No.2., pp.263-270.
51 Evidence given before the Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-Mer Royal Commission, 1908, p.226.
discovered that Melanesians could be trained to do the job just as well as Europeans and Jardine began to use them exclusively, expressing the opinion that 'if a white man will stick to it (diving) he is a blackfellow'.

In 1877 Jardine left his Naghi Island station in the hands of his wife's Samoan cousin James Mills and returned to Somerset. He was joined in partnership by James Clark and together they built up a substantial fleet. By the 1880s Frank Jardine was employing fifteen Malays and Manilamen, sixteen Melanesians and thirty-two Aborigines and Islanders. Sometime in the early 1880s the partnership was dissolved and the fleet split up. Clark moved his part of the operation to Friday Island and continued to expand, while Jardine carried on in much the same way as he had always done. When the shell became seriously depleted in the mid-1880s and the Government introduced legislation to regulate the employment of Aborigines and Islanders in the Queensland industry the majority of the Torres Strait fleet took part in a general exodus to the new deep water finds off Darwin and the northern coast of Western Australia. But only those pearlers who like James Clark had invested in the 'floating station' system and deep water equipment, could take advantage of the new western finds. During these years of change Frank Jardine was busy working on the overland telegraph and discovering new cattle country in the Batavia and Ducie River basins, so he may have been out of touch with the changing circumstances in the Strait. When he finally addressed himself to the problem his response was to recruit cheap Aboriginal swimmers from the Ducie River and employ them fishing for beche-de-mer on the eastern shoals of the Great Barrier Reef, outside Queensland's territorial waters and free

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52 Ibid.
54 John Single, p.571.
55 N. Pixley, 'Pearlers of North Australia', pp.14-15
56 J.P.S. Bach, 'The Pearlshelling Industry and the "White Australia" Policy', p.204
from the restrictions of the Native Labourers Protection Act of 1884. This was Jardine's last venture as a fleet owner and, except for the discovery of a treasure of Spanish silver coins, it was an abject failure. He left the fishing industry altogether in 1892.

Though Frank Jardine sometimes hired European skippers like Sam Roe to captain his larger boats the basis of his northern enterprises was cheap non-European labour. All his ventures were in seasonal industries and the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders he employed could be laid off when there was no work. They could also be relied upon to supplement their rations by resorting to traditional hunting skills, thereby relieving Jardine of some of the financial burden of supporting so many workers. The Melanesians he employed could also support themselves. Those who came to the Straits as seamen of long standing would have been expert at extracting food from the sea, and those recruited 'green' or who had filtered north after their time had expired on the plantations, would not have quickly forgotten the traditional skills of their home islands. Besides the obvious cost advantages of non-European labour there was also the matter of its tractability, though this was largely dependant on the character of the employer. An indication of Jardine's thinking on the subject is apparent in his attitude to Japanese workers. They were capable, diligent and willing to work for low wages, but they tended to band together to protect their interests. Frank Jardine told the 1897 Departmental Commission on Pearl-shell and Beche-de-mer Fisheries that he would never employ them.

It is difficult to say how much direct contact there was between Jardine and the majority of his workers. The task of turning hunter-gatherers into wage labourers was not an easy one on the frontier, and as Mervyn Hartwig points out it was doubly difficult 'where the attempt at resocialization has been preceded

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57 Evidence given before the Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-Mer Royal Commission, 1908, p.230.
58 ibid. p.225
59 Evidence given before the Departmental Commission on Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-Mer Fisheries, 1897, p.30.
In the initial stages of his projects his supervision must have been close, probably relying on the strict system of reward and punishment used on other parts of the frontier to ensure the cooperation of his workers. However because his interests were often situated hundreds of miles apart his personal attention to them must have been sporadic. To overcome this problem he employed Melanesians as overseers, not only of his pearling stations as in the case of James Mills, but also of his cattle runs and copra plantations. The vast majority of Melanesians at work in the Strait had come of their own accord, attracted by wages that made many of the trappings of European society accessible to them, and a physical environment reminiscent of their home islands. The activities of European fishermen and missionaries had created a power vacuum amongst the traditional inhabitants of the Torres Strait which the Melanesians were more than happy to fill. Many of them became influential members of the different island communities, and a few were eventually successful enough to operate their own fleet of luggers. For these reasons the Melanesians could be regarded as junior partners in the exploitation of Torres Strait, and after Jardine had had some experience of them as workers he recognised these useful propensities and applied them to his own ends.

While it is possible to come to some understanding of Jardine's relationship with the peoples of Cape York Peninsula by referring to European sources, a more complete picture emerges when Aboriginal folk traditions are taken into account. The number and variety of stories told by the surviving Aborigines of

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61 Henry Reynolds, The Other Side of the Frontier, Townsville, 1981, pp.139-142.
62 Frank Mills, taped interview, Pearl St., Thursday Island, 18 April 1981
64 Frank Mills.
66 ibid.
northern Cape York about Frank Jardine is astounding. They chronicle the brutal history of conquest, dispossession and exploitation that was an integral part of the taming of the northern wilderness. Many of the stories do not conform to the chronological dictates of European history, but this is to be expected given that the tribal Aborigine was, as Stanner says, 'a-historical in mood, outlook and life', and that those who inherited the traditions of European contact were struggling to survive, both spiritually and physically, under the new laws and taboos of their conquerers. However some of the traditions relating to Frank Jardine coincide sufficiently with the documentary evidence to make them impossible to ignore. Others serve to illustrate that those who were dispossessed by the European exploitation of the Cape have an imaginative 'pioneer legend' of their own.

Frank Mills, who now lives on Thursday Island, was a boy of thirteen when Frank Jardine died. His father had been Jardine's overseer on Naghi for many years, by the turn of the Century was working on his own account. Though Jardine had allowed his financial interest in the Naghi station to lapse he still visited the island occasionally and stayed in the house he had built for himself in 1874. Frank Mills' memories of these visits are understandably vague after so many years but he has vivid recollections of being taken to see Jardine on his death bed at Somerset. It must have been a frightening experience for a boy of his age, for not only did the man have a voice, 'like it come out of a cave', but he was suffering the final ravages of leprosy. Frank Mills' impression was that the people on Naghi regarded Jardine as an awesome character to be approached with deference. However he could not recall

69 Frank Mills.
over hearing any traditions from the working people of Naghi to explain why this was so.

By the time of Frank Jardine's death in 1919 James Mills had been in control at Naghi for more than forty years. When Haddon visited the island in 1898 the original inhabitants were on the verge of extinction, there being only two old men and an old women left alive. Most of the people who had worked for Jardine for those few years in the 1870s when he personally supervised the station had either died or moved on, and with them went the stories that might have thrown some light on their relationship with their white master. As the Twentieth Century progressed so did James Mills. He and his sons brought lugger crews from all over Torres Strait to live on Naghi and in the years before the Second World War the island supported a community of between two and three hundred people. A new and more relevant folklore was woven about the exploits of the Naghi Island fleet, and the years of Frank Jardine's reign were completely forgotten. This process had already begun when Frank Mills was a boy. Although the people on Naghi Island feared Jardine it was apparently not because of any memory they had of his time there. They feared the reputation he had brought with him from the mainland. Indicative of this is that when Frank Mills was asked why he thought his father's workers reacted to Jardine in the way they did, he explained that 'they reckoned he was some kind of bushranger'.

There is no evidence to suggest that there are any surviving Aboriginal traditions that portray the coming of Jardine's overland expedition in the 1860s. The people of Mapoon, who represent the remnants of many different

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72 Frank Mills
73 These stories were still in currency when the author was working in Torres Strait for Alfie Mills of the Manahki in 1974.
74 Frank Mills.
75 Conversation with Professor B. Rigsby, Head of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Queensland, December 1980.
Peninsula tribes, believe that Jardine's arrival coincided with that of another cattleman, Lachlan Kennedy:

Jardine and Kennedy came through Batavia River. Jardine wanted to put his station 50 miles up - you can still see the stone walls he made for his footpath. They were killing people all the way up. At Dingle Creek they killed most of the tribe.76

They claim that the tribesmen resisted so fiercely that Jardine was forced to move north to Somerset:

You see from all the Seven Rivers, that was all wiped out. Mr. Jardine took over from up at Catfish Creek (on the Ducie River due east of Mapoon) right up to Somerset. They were wiped out completely. The only child he saved he grew up as his son, but the rest were wiped out. They had no chance because Mr. Jardine had his armour on. That's how they could not spear him. The spears were broken on his armour.77

Further north at Cowal Creek the Aborigines tell of how Frank Jardine used to pick up babies by their ankles and smash their heads against trees,78 and Mrs. Marjorie Wymarra claims that Jardine once gathered the Aborigines to share a slaughtered beast, but instead of being fed they were all murdered and then thrown into an enormous fire.79

These stories emanate from the period in the late 1880s when Jardine was establishing Bertie Haugh, and C.D. Rowley believes that incidents like the one described by Mrs. Wymarra did occur in the Ducie and Batavia River areas at that time.80 The idea that Jardine wore armour when he meant to confront the Aborigines might seem ludicrous, but it is not beyond the realms of possibility. Luigi D'Albertis was reputed to have worn a chain-mail coat on

77 Jean Jimmy, quoted in The Mapoon Story by the Mapoon People.
78 ibid.
79 Mrs. Marjorie Wymarra, taped interview, Hargrave St., Thursday Island, 29 April 1981.
his expeditions to the Fly River, and when his 1877 expedition ended in disaster his boat only just made it to Naghi where Jardine was able to assist him. Frank Jardine had a taste for military memorabilia. Two cannons were propped outside his Somerset residency and the sword of Griffin the Clermont gold escort murderer adorned its walls, so the idea of owning a chain-mail coat might have appealed to him if the opportunity had arisen.

It is tempting to dismiss the charge that Frank Jardine was responsible for the murder of Aboriginal children by claiming it to be the product of minds embittered against him. However there is one story, almost as horrific, that has become part of the tradition of a European Australian family. A man who was connected with the construction of the telegraph line to the tip of the Cape in the mid-1880s was concerned about Aborigines vandalizing the finished work. After asking one of the Jardines how he had handled similar situations in the north, he was told that the best method was to brand the bodies of the Aborigines after they had been shot. Those that survived would be sure to stay away from anything carrying that brand. There is no doubt that the Jardine referred to was Frank, and it cannot be such a large step from branding corpses to killing babies.

Jardine’s supposed invincibility is a theme that runs through a few of the Aboriginal legends about him. There is a story of when he was riding in the bush and his Aboriginal companion informed him that they were being followed by men who intended to kill him. That evening, after his companion had left him, Jardine rolled up a log in his blanket and placed it inside his mosquito net. He then climbed into the tree on which the net was hung and

84 Conversations with Mrs. Fran Braddy, 298 St., Rockhampton, March 1981.
waited. As the tribesmen came one by one out of the night to spear him they were shot. Almost all the men of the tribe died, and when the survivors returned to their camp they told of how Frank Jardine could not be killed. This story is either based in fact or it is related to a similar legend among Europeans. In the European version the Jardines were warned that one of their out-stations was to be attacked so they placed logs in their beds and hid in the bush outside. When the tribesmen stormed into the room the Jardines closed the door behind them and fired in through the windows. Only one Aborigine survived, and he, though never fully recovering his senses, became a devoted servant of the family.

P.J. Trezise writes that 'when the aborigines [sic] found that their spears were useless against the snider rifles of the invading miners and cattlemen, it was natural that they should retire to their rock-shelters in the ranges and resort to sorcery'. In a cave at Albany Pass near Somerset a faint Aboriginal painting can be discerned depicting a white man in hat, belt with revolver, and breeches, flogging a dark crouching figure. David Moore suggests that the painting could relate to an incident in the 1860s when Frank's father, the original Police Magistrate at Somerset, had an Aboriginal whipped for stealing an axe. However official correspondence concerning the matter states that the native was birched, while the image of the white man on the cave wall at Albany Pass seems to be holding a whip. The whip was an indispensable part of everyday life for a stockman like Frank Jardine and perhaps the painting was part of a ritualistic attempt to transcend his legendary invincibility.

85 Mrs. Karjorie Wymarra.
88 David Moore, Islanders and Aborigines at Cape York, Canberra, 1979, p.305.
89 ibid., p.252.
An indication of the durability of this legend is provided by the ghost stories the Cape Aborigines tell about Frank Jardine. These are so common they are about to be exploited as part of the Peninsula's tourist attractions. While some of them may have been fabricated to pander to the curiosity of visiting Europeans, others are told in good faith. Mrs. Marjorie Wymarra recalls that after her marriage in 1940 she and her husband rode from Cowal Creek to Somerset to visit her father who was caretaker of the old Jardine homestead. In the late afternoon on the day of their arrival she was left alone in the house to light the wood stove and boil the billy. While she was sitting by the stove she heard a noise like the dragging of chains and turned to look down the hall. There was the figure of a large man climbing the front stairs silhouetted by the afternoon light. He walked slowly down the hall towards the kitchen, but when Mrs. Wymarra stood up he vanished, though his footsteps were still audible. She ran outside and waited for her father and husband to return. When she told them what had happened her father said, 'O that's Jardine, He'll never rest. Whenever I got visitors he like to show-off. He probably see you are a beautiful young girl'. She replied, 'Well he wont see me again!', and from that time on whenever she was inside the house she always stood by an open window ready to make good her escape. Even today with all trace of the old house gone few of the older Aborigines feel comfortable about spending the night too near Jardine's grave. How much more reluctant would they be if they knew the Latin words on the Jardine family Coat of Arms, Cave Adsum, meant 'Beware, I am present'?

An old Somerset resident, known simply as Billy Somerset, used to tell a story about Frank Jardine that has two variants, and all three versions are instructive. Old Wymarra, Marjorie's step-father-in-law, occasionally worked for Jardine on his copra plantation at Somerset. One morning Jardine

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92 Mrs. Marjorie Wymarra
93 ibid.
told Wymarra to help the other men move some heavy stones. He refused, accusing Jardine of not having given him his due in tobacco for the last job he had done. Jardine was furious and started towards his house to get his gun, but Wymarra did not wait. He made for the beach and swam across the pass to Albany Island. By the time he made the island Jardine was waiting to get a clear shot, and as Wymarra scrambled for the safety of the rocks he fired. Wymarra tripped and Jardine missed, bringing down a coconut with the ricocheted bullet. Wymarra spent the whole day hiding behind the rock waiting for Jardine to forget about him, sustained by the fallen coconut.95

Attempting to adapt Aborigines to the hard regular work of establishing a copra plantation was an extremely frustrating task for the European planters, and this is borne out by Jack McLaren's account of his years at Simpson Bay. He began using Aboriginal labour in 1911 to clear land for his Utingu plantation on the western coast of the Cape, some twenty-five kilometers from Somerset. In his book My Crowded Solitude he gives the impression that he was a tolerant employer, interested in the culture and welfare of his workers.96 This is corroborated by the good reputation he has amongst the descendants of those workers.97 However he admits to having always carried a revolver in his pocket, and on one occasion when his venture was threatened with ruin because the Aborigines were determined to go 'walkabout' he was tempted to use it to convince them to stay.98 It is not implausible that McLaren's contemporary, Frank Jardine, would have resorted to violence if he had found himself in a similar situation.

But it is not possible to generalize about labour relations at the

95 Mrs. Marjorie Wymarra.
97 Mrs. Marjorie Wymarra
98 Jack McLaren, pp.94-95.
It may have been a special case. Billy Somerset regarded Jardine and Wymarra as rivals of long standing, and his story suggests Jardine's dishonesty was the cause of the rivalry. However W.E. Roth reported in 1902 that Wymarra was one of the Aboriginal 'bosses' who were able to avoid work because they made their living recruiting labour and women for use on the luggers. If he carried on these activities at Somerset Jardine would have reacted with hostility, if not from a sense of moral outrage, then in response to the threat Wymarra posed to his absolute authority. Whatever the truth of the matter it is clear that the Aborigines who retell this story believe Frank Jardine was prepared to shoot a man for disobeying him. They also derive satisfaction from the irony of old man Wymarra defiantly feeding on the coconut brought down by Jardine's shot.

Dan de Busch, a half-caste Samoan who grew up at Somerset, used to tell a story very similar to the one told by Billy Somerset. By this account Jardine saw through his telescope an Aborigine fishing from the rocks on Albany Island. He picked up his rifle, took careful aim, and shot the man in the chest shattering a shell ornament he was wearing. Jardine then summoned some of his workers and told them to row across to the island to collect a crocodile he had just shot. When they beached their boat and searched the rocks they discovered the dead Aborigine. John Singe writes: 'The wanton killing put a chill of fear through the whole Somerset community, such intimidation probably being Jardine's intention'. If this is a true account it demonstrates far more vividly than the Wymarra incident the

99 Mrs. Marjorie Wymarra.
101 John Singe, pp.57-58.
102 ibid.
terrible lengths to which Jardine was prepared to go to ensure his workers' obedience. If it is simply a variation of the Wymarra incident then the exaggeration provides a measure of the hatred his memory stirred in the people he had exploited.

The third story in this trilogy tells how Frank Jardine once noticed a Japanese fisherman climbing a tree on Albany Island to pick coconuts. Jardine aimed his rifle and a coconut exploded just as the fisherman was about to pull it down, the inference being that he regarded himself as 'lord of all he surveyed'. Frank Jardine's ability as a marksman was much admired by the Europeans who wrote of his pioneering, but for those on the 'other side of the frontier' his rifle was a symbol of their subjugation. Because of the role he played in the rescue of Europeans from the wreck of the Quetta in 1890, ships that passed through Albany Passage observed the custom of lowering their flags at Somerset Point in salute. For many years this gesture was a physical manifestation of the tribute paid by Europeans to the pioneer legend of Frank Jardine. In fact there are two pioneer legends of Frank Jardine, and the proponents of the other believe the sea captain's salutes were made in deference, for fear of being fired upon by Jardine's cannon.

Perhaps the most striking example of this duality is to be found in the legends that surround Jardine's grave. Before he died he ordered Lifu, the Melanesian overseer of his Somerset plantation, to dig his grave so that he could be buried standing up facing the sea. Apparently this was done, and

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105 Henry Reynolds, The Other Side of the Frontier, Townsville, 1981.
107 Rev. Dave Passi.
108 Frank Mills.
as the final act of a man who had spent his whole life 'taming the northern wilderness' its symbolism was not lost on those writers who admired his 'pioneering spirit'.

The smallness and shape of Jardine's grave testifies to the fact that he was buried upright. It was characteristic of the man that this should be at his own request. In life he had bowed his head to none. Always honest, brave and forthright, he had heewn his own way, and he died as he had lived - man-size.\(^{109}\)

But Jardine's grave is also symbolic for those who were the victims of his pioneering. It is a commonly held belief amongst the Cape Aborigines that Jardine's workers buried him standing up so that his soul would never rest,\(^{110}\) and although this is almost certainly incorrect it testifies to the potency of the other pioneer legend of Frank Jardine.


\(^{110}\) Mr. Marjorie Wymarra.
CONCLUSION

'We reap the harvest they have sown.'

When Francis Lascelles Jardine died of leprosy on 18 March 1919, five months before his seventy-eighth birthday, the *Queenslander* eulogized him in a lengthy article headed, 'Passing of the Pioneers'. This obituary was more of a paen than an elegy, and it displayed in a few thousand words nearly all the characteristics of the literacy tradition of the 'pioneer legend', as they have been described by John Hirst. The writer devoted most of his space to rekindling the adventure and romance associated with the 1864-65 expedition to the tip of Cape York Peninsula. The details of Jardine's subsequent fifty year career on the far northern frontier are provided in one sentence: 'Mr. Jardine was an extensive cattle raiser at Somerset and other stations'. The rest is nothing more than generalities and flattering cliches;

- a wonderful and remarkable man...
- an amazing specimen of strong and vigorous manhood..., who truly blazed the trail..., with that true spirit of enterprise..., the hero of many adventures...

The article is a celebration of the 'pioneer spirit' and goes beyond the expected laudatory style of an obituary. It is written in praise of the pioneer legend of Frank Jardine rather than the man, and is riddled with factual inaccuracies that reflect the writer's priorities. Even Jardine's

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3 *Queenslander*, 29 March 1919.
5 *Queenslander*, 29 March 1919.
6 ibid.
The age at death was given wrongly: he was described as a man of over eighty years.7

The 1864-65 expedition was the cornerstone of Jardine's reputation. The popular appeal of nationalistic rhetoric ensured that it was remembered as an act of the greatest heroism. In the words of Henry Reynolds, 'Explorers walk tall through the pages of Australian historiography',8 and in a land where national heroes were scarce it was regarded as almost unpatriotic to be critical of their efforts. While contentious social, political and economic considerations have caused scholars to debate the squatters' status within the literary tradition of the 'pioneer legend',9 the role of the explorers is unambiguous. They were seen as men of exemplary character who were driven by the noblest motives. Giles wrote: 'An explorer is an explorer from love, and it is nature, not art, that makes him so'.10 Major Sir Thomas Mitchell sought 'fame in the history of a new continent',11 and to the patriotic writers of pioneer history this was considered a laudable ambition. Sturt emphasized the role of duty, and stated that he explored 'with an earnest desire to promote the public good'.12 The creators of Frank Jardine's pioneer legend ascribed all these motives to him, and they stressed the concept of duty:

"Will our trip really benefit Australia?", queried Binney. "It will settle the question as to the type of country that runs along the western coast of Cape York Peninsula", answered Frank. "It will prove that portion of the country at least is suitable for cattle; it will put new rivers definitely on the map; it will mark the way to the new settlement at Somerset. Those that come after us will thus have a track to follow should any decide to open up the country in detail".13

11 Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Australian Explorers..., p.12
12 Charles Sturt, quoted in Fitzpatrick, p.12.
13 Ion Idriess, The Great Trek, Sydney, 1947, p.133
Geoffrey Dutton writes:

There is probably no ancient concept that appeals less to the modern Western world... than duty... Yet it is a key concept in nineteenth century [sic] and particularly Victorian history, and those who were driven by it sometimes became heroes, sometimes monsters of twisted rectitude.¹⁴

Though the Jardine expedition left behind scores of Aboriginal dead, the purveyors of the 'pioneer legend' were unwilling to consider the possibility that the sense of duty, that they credited Frank Jardine with, might have distorted his moral judgement. They regarded the tribesmen of Cape York Peninsula as exceedingly aggressive and treacherous, and the fate of the Kennedy expedition was used to exemplify this opinion. The Jardines faced these 'savages' as the vanguard of European civilization in the far north, so the battles they fought were fought in a noble cause. It was not until Australians began to lose their unquestioning faith in the superiority of Western civilization that the killing of Aborigines on the frontier was seen as anything less than a necessary evil. In the case of Frank Jardine the first doubts were expressed by Charles Barrett, who wrote in 1947:

Yes it was an epic journey. But the story told in that rare little book, Narrative etc, reveals its high cost in human lives. There are dark blots on the bright shield of achievement. Many blacks were shot by members of the expedition.¹⁵

As Rob Pascoe puts it, 'the historian must understand the values and beliefs of his characters in order to understand their motivations'.¹⁶

The writers of the popular histories of Frank Jardine have attributed him with values and beliefs he may never have had. Jardine made it a matter of

public record that his expedition to Somerset was a private enterprise with the object of overlanding cattle for profit.\textsuperscript{17} There is no evidence to suggest he was motivated by anything other than the financial interests of his family and himself. But as Hirst says, 'The pioneer legend is a literary mode or type of history which shapes material in its own way',\textsuperscript{18} and its writers have chosen to underestimate, and often ignore, the role of the economic imperative in Jardine's pioneering. Even a superficial study of his career subsequent to the overlanding expedition confirms that this motive dominated any desire he might have had 'to promote the public good'. Which is not to say he was driven solely by greed. For some financial success is often only a means to an end. It can open the door to power, independence, and even social respectability.

It is impossible to come to any satisfying conclusions about Frank Jardine's racial attitudes. He married a Samoan woman and loved his half-caste children, so he cannot have judged men by colour alone. After visiting Somerset in 1898 Haddon wrote: 'Mr. Jardine is probably the oldest resident in the Straits (sic), and has seen a great deal, but he does not care about the natives, and could tell us very little...'.\textsuperscript{19} On the other hand Stanley Wilson who had many conversations with Jardine in his later years says:

'he had a sincere regard for them [the Aborigines] and thought that in a couple of generations they would be an intelligent people'.\textsuperscript{20} Charlie Scrutton, one of the members of the 1864-65 expedition, out-lived Jardine by thirteen years. In his later years he gave almost all he had to the Aborigines 'as a sort of atonement' for the times when it had been 'necessary to "disperse" the natives'.\textsuperscript{21} Whether or not Frank Jardine felt the same need to make amends

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17] See pp.36-37
\item[18] J.B. Hirst, p.322.
\item[20] Stanley Wilson, 'Frank Jardine; a personal note.', 28 August 1967, unpublished letter, R.H.S.Q.
\end{footnotes}
for his past is a matter for speculation. Perhaps the most that can be said
is that he was a 'pragmatist' who arrogantly believed that as a white man he
had the right to demand compliance from those he felt were his inferiors.
If they stood in his way they would be ruthlessly supressed. If they
cooperated they would be tolerated, and perhaps even liked.

For many reasons Aborigines are beginning to take their rightful place
in Australian history and the reputations of men like Frank Jardine, who
were instrumental in their subjugation, will suffer as a consequence. They
will serve the cause of 'black nationalism' in this country, just as they
once served that of 'white nationalism'. Now they will be depicted as
archetypal villains rather than heroes. But it would be wrong to deduce
that racial hatred was at the root of frontier violence. A more crucial
element was 'the ruthless, singleminded and often amoral pursuit of material
progress' that was the true driving force behind European expansionism.
The emergence of Aboriginal history has certainly forced European Australians
to take a more sympathetic view of those who were dispossessed by our
pioneers, but the 'pioneer legend' is resilient and will retain its influence.
Its adaptability is graphically illustrated by Jardine's obituary in the
Queenslander. The writer concludes by fantasizing about what wonderful
soldiers the Jardine brothers would have made, 'somewhere in France, with
Maude in Mesopatamia, at the Lone Pine, or leading our boys charging the Huns
on horseback with fixed bayonets, at Roumania or Beersheba'. In his
imagination he has metamorphosized the old explorers in order to incorporate
them into the ranks of the nation's new heroes.

As Hirst points out the 'pioneer legend' can hardly 'help being
conservative in its political implications. It encourages reverence for the
past; it celebrates individual rather than collective or state enterprise; and

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22 Henry Reynolds, Aborigines and Settlers, Melbourne, 1972, pp.X-XI.
23 ibid. p.XII.
24 Queenslander, 29 March 1919.
it provides a classless view of society...".25 When the political pendulum takes a swing to the right in this country it can be expected that the 'pioneer legend' will be called on once more to perform the horatory role it had in the past. The late 1970s and early '80s has been an era when politicians have been able to hold power because they have promised to reduce the 'size' of government and stimulate private enterprise; to shift the accent from collective to individual effort. Pioneers are held up as examples of what can be achieved by the individual who relies on his own resources. But just how independent were the pioneers? Few expeditions of exploration were got together in this country without at least some help from the government, and many explorers were government employees. Many of our pioneer settlers would not even have arrived on these shores had it not been for schemes of assisted immigration. Even the gold diggers demanded government protection from foreign competition, and men like Robert Logan Jack were sent out at public expense to discover new fields. The 'pioneer legend' feeds on nostalgia; the yearning for a freer more independent past they may never have existed.

In a discussion of the future of black-white relations in Australia Henry Reynolds suggests that 'Australians may find it harder to share their history than their wealth'.26 But is this really the case? Few Australians would be unwilling to admit that the Aborigines have suffered greatly since the arrival of Europeans, but the sensitivity of the 'hip pocket nerve' should not be underestimated. Governments need to spend much more on Aboriginal health, housing and education, but they do not because that kind of expenditure is unpopular with the Australian public. With the promised prosperity of the 'resource boom' taking a long time to materialize, the Aboriginal push for land rights in the mineral rich states will become an even greater issue of contention. A similar reaction can be expected against environmentalists if the economy takes a prolonged

25 Hirst, p.316.
26 Henry Reynolds, The Other Side of the Frontier, Townsville, 1981. p.166
turn for the worse. 'The ruthless, singleminded and often amoral pursuit of material progress'\textsuperscript{27} is still one of the dominant themes in Australian history.

This dissertation has been an attempt to examine how closely the pioneer legend of Frank Jardine resembles the real man, so it is in a sense a biography. However its main purpose has been to demonstrate how a people who are anxious to develop a sense of nationhood create heroes to embody the virtues they believe characterize their nation. There is no doubt that Frank Jardine possessed many of the qualities that the myth makers attributed to him. He was physically courageous and very determined. But he was also arrogant, ruthless and self-centred. Whatever were his motivations, few people but himself and his immediate family benefited from his pioneering. He died a bitter man at Somerset, physically destroyed by leprosy and almost financially destitute. The romance that inspired writers like Idriess and Reid had died long before. Jardine left his wife nothing in his will, claiming that his death would 'be but the second part of our separation, therefore will not be felt'.\textsuperscript{28}

His main concern was that his plans for a copra plantation at Rattlesnake Point on Prince of Wales Island should go ahead. It seems that from the day he set out from Rockhampton in 1864, till the day he died in 1919, he was unwilling to let anything stop him from pressing on with his ventures.

\textsuperscript{27} Henry Reynolds, Aborigines and Settlers, p.XII.
\textsuperscript{28} Frank Jardine's Will and Testament, QSA., W'46/1919.
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PASSI, Rev. Dave. Taped Interview, 89 William St, Rockhampton, 19 Aug 1980. (Reverend Dave Passi is a minister of the Church of England and was born on Murray Island. His forefathers were leaders of the Murray Island people before the coming of the Europeans, and his family are familiar with the traditions of the Torres Strait. He now resides on Thursday Island.)
WYMARRA, Mrs. Marjorie. Taped Interview, Hargrave St, Thursday Island, 29 Apr 1981.
(Mrs. Marjorie Wymarra is of Aboriginal descent and was born in the Normanton area in 1923. She was taken to the Mapoon Mission as an infant. At the age of seventeen she married Nick Wymarra, the son of Jack McLaren and an Aboriginal woman. Her husband was brought up by Wymarra, one of the last leaders of the Somerset tribesmen. Mrs. Wymarra's father spent many years as caretaker of the old Jardine homestead at Somerset. She now resides on Thursday Island and is active in the Thursday Island Cooperative.)

OTHER MATERIAL


