

## Land Invasion

© The Tasmanian Invasion - pt 3

### Sealers

European Sealers were working in Bass Strait from 1798; some were convicts or ex-convicts, some were sailors. The Tasmanians and the sealers both profited from the relationship that grew between them. Seal - and kangaroo-skins and women were exchanged for flour, tobacco, tea and most importantly dogs.

Some sealers, however, violated this relationship by raiding Aboriginal groups for women and killing the men that tried to protect them.

By 1830 the North East group - once 500 strong - numbered 72 men, 6 women and no children. Each sealer had at least two women working for him. At first they were very cruelly treated. In time however, the community settled down. Sealers and Aboriginal women married and families grew up. The women's traditional skills, first sealing and then muttonbirding, became the mainstay of a thriving community.

Taken from "Aboriginal People of Tasmania" © Commonwealth of Australia