

Melbourn 1/7/1873

Respected Friend

D. Agnew

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Having received a Copy of the queries proposed by Brough Smyth of Victoria respecting the flint instruments used by the Aborigines of Tasmania I have endeavoured to gain information on the subject, as from personal observation I could say only that I had never known that in their attacks on the Europeans they had left behind on their flight being repulsed any other weapons except their spears & Waddies, & no instruments had ever been found at their encampments - but to be certain I have consulted an Old Inhabitant of the Oyster Bay District - John Radford & his Wife a daughter of the late Thomas Buxton of Mayfield.

who came early into this district & had many opportunities of observing the manners and customs of the Oyster Bay Tribe. This tribe traversed the East Coast from East Bay back northward as far as Salweenath or George's River where they would come upon the boundaries of the Break o' Day Tribe, it is not probable they went farther North if even so far -

Radford came here in 1818. the Natives then seemed friendly - although looked upon with suspicion by the Settlers - about this time a man was left by a party of Sealers in charge of their provisions & stores at a place named Grindstone Bay from their having

get

up a Grindstone there, and on their return from Sealing at the White Rock they found the man had been murdered & the provisions taken away & other Articles destroyed. It was some time afterwards that Mosquito joined this tribe and became their chief. Mosquito and Bulldog were two Sydney natives transported to Norfolk Island for the murder of a White Woman, Bulldog died at Norfolk Island & Mosquito was sent to Hobart Town, he remained in the "Trench" there some time and was afterwards permitted to work for the settlers at Pitwater, here he became acquainted with several old Aboriginal women who wandered about the Pitwater Settlement, and by them he was led to join the Oyster Bay Tribe - Mosquito travelled with this tribe as their Chief and

on one occasion the whole Tribe  
arrived at Grindstone Bay Hut  
there being then a Station belonging  
to one of the Gale Houses and in charge  
of John Radford; they encamped  
on the north side of a Creek opposite  
to the Hut on a Wednesday night and  
remained Thursday & Friday, making  
their spears & Waddies - Mosquito had  
picked up a Tin Pot and asked Radford  
if it was his saying he found it at  
a place near Major Lord's Bluff Radford  
recognised the Pot gave Mosquito some  
that were with him some Damper  
Mosquito told Radford that he had  
promised Colonel Sordel that he would  
tame the Natives and prevent them  
from annoying the Settlers, and that  
the Governor had issued an order that  
the Settlers should not molest the Natives  
The whole Tribe about seventy in  
number men women & children  
whilst remaining here were making  
or engaged in making the  
spears & Waddies and being

apparently

apparently friendly Radford  
had the opportunity of observing  
their manners & customs at this  
time in particular. To form their  
Spears & Waddies <sup>a lump</sup> of Black Flint  
was broken by any other Stone at  
hand and the piece with the sharpest  
edge selected. where with they scraped  
the Spear & pointed it, alternately  
scraping & hardening it in the fire  
until a very hard & sharp point was  
produced, and if the piece of flint  
lost its edge it was if large enough  
again broken or another piece selected  
The Spears were of different lengths  
proportionate to the prowess of the  
individuals who wielded them: the  
longest Spear found was one belonging  
to Ballaroyuna the chief who succeeded  
Mosquito it measured eighteen feet  
others 14 to 16 feet. The Waddies under-  
went a similar process to the spears  
the head part of the waddie was  
knatched by blows with the flint  
and

and in cutting down the ~~the~~  
tall straight stems for their spears  
or cutting off the pieces of the oak  
for their waddies they could have  
no other instrument than the  
pieces of flint if the spear was  
bent it was warmed on the fire  
and straightened across the knee  
Saturday morning arrived & the  
attack upon their friend Radford  
& his two companions commenced  
as is described in Bonwick's  
Book on the Aborigines - and for what  
Mosquito suffered death. There  
were no other weapons but spears  
& waddies in the hands of the Aborigine  
at this time with the exception of a  
club used by Mosquito, formed out of  
young Shebak torn up by its root &  
having a portion of its horizontal  
root left attached to the bulb, some-  
thing like an axe, it was a formidable  
weapon that would have knocked  
down an ox.

From Groundstone Bay Station the  
Tribe next appeared at The Buckton  
Mayfield

Mayfield, the alarm being given  
by Mrs Radford, <sup>then a child</sup> her sister, before  
the persons on the premises  
could be called into the Hut for  
safety, the Natives had smothered into  
it & stolen everything they could  
take away even to the only gun  
on the premises. Fortunately an  
old pistol ~~which~~ had been placed  
under a bed to keep it from damp  
as it was occasionally used to  
obtain a fire, with this pistol they  
were kept at bay until a pistol  
was in the night procured from  
Waterloo Point, in this case  
after they were driven from their  
camping ground & had left every  
thing behind them no weapon  
but their spears & waddies were  
found they did not even make  
use of the knives, and as for  
guns it was their custom to hide  
them in some concealed place  
The

One taken from Mayjeto was found many years afterwards, being laid bare by the bush fires, the barrels only remaining and the knives were left in the Gut. It seems that the Women had a practice of shaving each others heads with very small & sharp pieces of flint, when these pieces were blunt they would rub the edges together as if to sharpen them - a ring of hair was left around the crown of the head as an ornament. The Skin disease which was so prevalent particularly amongst the children was treated by the mothers placing the child across her knees, and with a blunt flat stick, something similar to the end of a table knife, pressing out the purulent matter & rubbing the parts with the marrow from the thigh Bone of the Kangaroo.

The Mothers carried their Babies under their Arms wrapped up in an Opossum or Kangaroo Skin, the flesh side outwards, it being scraped clean & smooth as they possessed no implements, the skins must have been taken off with

with the pieces of flint. The usual practice of cooking their food was by the Aborigines was to throw the Animal on the fire, which burnt off the hair, on the one side, the carcass was then turned & the charred & upper side scraped with a piece of flint, when thus finished, if a small animal as an Opossum it was cut by the head & tail and ~~the~~ the flesh <sup>torn off</sup> with their teeth until nothing more was left but the bones which were thrown to the dogs. I do not know how the women made the holes in the little shells that were strung on Sinews to form Necklaces, as they removed the outer surface of the shell by the aid of the fire & smoke, it would be easily pierced with a stick hardened & pointed in a similar manner to their Spears. When the Women were friendly with the Settlers they would make little rush baskets & give them to the children - The Ogater Bay tribe

Tribe appear to have had great dislike to be hampered with carrying any Articles except their Spears and Waddies with the exception of their care in carrying fire from place to place some of the party were always entrusted to carry & preserve a light the pieces of Bark used for this purpose; Unaccustomed to clothing they would even throw away Blankets that had been given them, it is therefore unlikely that they would carry flints with them, particularly as they well know where to obtain fresh ones - The Queries must therefore be answered as applying to the Oyster Bay Tribe of Aborigines by saying that they never used any made implements, trusting only to the pieces of flint they would pick up in their wanderings through the District

I shall be happy to supply any other information required

Y<sup>r</sup> remaining friend  
George F. Story