John Mortimer of Manumbar and the 1861 Native Police Inquiry in Queensland

by Malcolm D. Prentis

Parliamentary committees of inquiry into "Aboriginal problems" were common in the Australian colonies during and even after the frontier era. The opening of the Queensland pastoral frontier between the 1840s and 1860s produced a whole series of inquiries. Before separation, there were inquiries in 1845, 1846, 1857 and 1858. After separation, there were further inquiries in 1860 and 1861. Of these six inquiries, the 1857 inquiry has been frequently used in accounts of colonial race relations, while the 1858 inquiry related to the famous Hornet Bank massacre.

The 1861 inquiry focused on the Native Police and, possibly for that reason, has not until recently been so prominent in the published literature, although it has featured prominently in several unpublished theses. Winifred Cowin used the report in a very perceptive account of the Native Police in her pioneering and under-rated thesis, but could have strengthened her own case with more knowledge of the members of the Select Committee.1 John Taylor makes use of the report as a "distillation of the squating experience of the previous 20 years" and as a formative document in Aboriginal policy for 30 years to come, while theses by Walker and N. Taylor also refer to the inquiry’s report, but mainly for factual information on their specialized topics.2 There is a brief reference to the inquiry in a study of one of the witnesses, Captain Coley.3 Cryle’s study of newspapers in early Queensland looks at the part the press played in forcing an inquiry, and was the first one to take very much notice of the role of John Mortimer in this.4 Bill Rosser makes extensive use of the inquiry, even quoting John Mortimer’s evidence at length. However, Rosser’s main focus is on another incident.5 Henry Reynolds quotes from the evidence to explain the modus operandi of the Force.6

As we shall see, Mortimer’s intervention helped to bring to a head, pressure on the government and parliament to inquire into Aboriginal questions. The parliament decided on a Select Committee in April 1861 and elected the committee on 1 May. The committee met from 3 May to 12 July, examined 28 witnesses, and reported to the

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Legislative Assembly on 17 July. The terms of reference were to investigate and report on:

1. the condition and organisation of the Native Police force;
2. charges of unnecessary cruelty by the officers in dealing with the natives;
3. the prospect of civilising, or in any way improving, the condition of the Aboriginal population.

Four incidents were specifically investigated under term of reference number two, one of them the Manumbar incident vigorously reported by John Mortimer.

Before returning to the setting up of the Inquiry, it is necessary to examine the history of John Mortimer, especially at Manumbar, in the context of frontier life and race relations in the Wide Bay-Burnett region, and the activities of the Native Police in that region which led up to the events from 10 to 12 February 1861. These events led to Mortimer’s intervention.

THE MORTIMERS AND MANUMBAR

John Mortimer was born in rural Aberdeenshire, Scotland in 1810, son of a tenant-farmer and craftsman. His family background shaped an almost stereotypical Scot — a pious Calvinist who valued education and hard work greatly, was reserved, dour and stubborn, and was an inveterate migrant. Members of the family emigrated in the nineteenth century to the U.S.A., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. John Mortimer emigrated first to the U.S.A. In 1842 he was in Opelousas, Louisiana. By 1848, he was an Australian squatter. His younger brother Alec joined him ten years later via South Africa.

In 1865, two of his widowed sister’s sons came out from Scotland, one of whom was John Mathew, who became a minister and anthropologist of note and left some valuable information about his uncle and Manumbar station.

John Mortimer was a backwoodsman among squatters. He lived on the property and worked hard and long. His plain manner and appearance sometimes led to this being mistaken for one of his men. His honesty was legendary, as was his frugality. He was a skilled carpenter and joiner, building most of the station buildings himself. He and his wife kept a strict Sabbath on the station and ran a Sabbath School for both black and white employees and their children. He had a well-stocked library which he liked to see used. His stubborn adherence to principle is illustrated by a dispute he had with a minister in Louisiana who would not admit him to communion “unless he was able to state that he was a total abstainer”. Though the consequences were painful to a pious Presbyterian, Mortimer refused. He knew his doctrine better than the minister. He rigidly observed
the Sabbath and gave his employees the day off, but did not force
them to observe the day as he did. Mortimer’s nephew no doubt
had him in mind when he wrote in a poem that the squatter had won
his wealth “By hardship, thrift, and industry”.

John Mortimer and silent partner Andrew Anderson took up the
16,000 acre Manumbar run in 1848, the year J.C. Bidwill was
appointed as first Commissioner for Crown Lands in the Wide Bay
district, and the year before the arrival of Moreton Bay’s first
immigrant ship, the Fortitude. Manumbar was — and still is — remote,
in scrubby and rugged country just west of the range dividing the
Mary and Burnett watersheds and just north of the range dividing
the basins of the Brisbane and Burnett. In 1854, Mortimer and
Anderson took up an adjacent 16,000 acre block, Gallangowan. In
1857, two further adjoining blocks of 16,000 acres each, Toomcul and
Gobongo, were leased by John Mortimer alone, and Gallangowan was
transferred to John Mortimer and his brother Alexander. Two years
later, the leases on Manumbar, Toomcul and Gobongo, were
transferred to John and Alexander Mortimer. Then from 1864 to 1869,
Toomcul and Manumbar were transferred to Andrew Anderson and
from 1864 to 1868, Gobongo and Gallangowan were transferred to
Alexander Mortimer. In 1868 and 1869, all four leases were transferred
back to John Mortimer alone. Gobongo North, also of 16,000 acres,
was leased by John Mortimer in 1874. Between 1874 and 1885, the
size of each of the five runs was adjusted a few times. In 1875,
Mortimer sold a half share of the property to a relative, J. Henderson,
who became manager. Under the Crown Lands Act of 1884, the five
runs were consolidated into one, and divided into “resumed” and
“leased” halves, except for a number of pre-emptive purchases and
reserves.

In 1858 the Mortimers ran 4000 sheep on each of the four runs.
They were very slow to get out of sheep and in 1865 still had 16,000
sheep and only 2000 cattle. After a serious outbreak of sheep
catarrh, the Board of Sheep Directors bought the sheep at 4d and
6d per head and boiled them down, at a loss to the sheep fund of
£1876. Mortimer then very belatedly turned to cattle, long after all
his neighbours.

In the 1880s, Manumbar was besieged by plagues of brumbies,
kangaroos and the threat of small-holders. Mortimer was reluctant
to cooperate with the authorities in exterminating kangaroos. The
station had some fine horses in this period and perhaps for breeding
reasons, Mortimer did not help the brumby-catchers. He had told an
Aboriginal stockman, Jack Simpson, not to give away the brumbies’
whereabouts. Later, in the presence of the horse-catchers, he asked
Jack Simpson about them. Jack said “Oh, some dead, some dying,
and some wanting to die”. By this time, many of his neighbours
would have regarded Mortimer as dangerously eccentric. But he was never afraid to stand up for his beliefs against the world, good Calvanist that he was. Finally, after looking for a buyer for nearly ten years, John Mortimer sold the lease on Manumbar to Alonzo Sparkes and Lauchlan McKinnon, Brisbane butchers, in July 1887. He died within twelve months.

Manumbar was located near the western borders of the Kabi-speaking people, who occupied the coast between Bribie and Fraser Islands and as far inland as Barambah, where Kabi and Wakka folk were neighbours. The three “clans” or local groups closest to Manumbar were the Kaibabora south of Mt Widgee, the Baiyambora of the upper Yabba Creek and the Booyoora, centred between Manumbar and Gobongo. The last two were the groups with whom John Mortimer was to have most to do.

**THE KABI AND WAKKA ABORIGINES**

There were two local factors which were to complicate and worsen race relations in the Wide Bay and Burnett area of south-east Queensland, including Manumbar. One was *Araucaria bidwilli*, the bunya tree, to be found in the Bunya and Blackall Ranges and elsewhere. Every January and February, large numbers of “foreign blacks” used to be welcomed by the Kabi and Wakka to feast on bunya nuts. They would come from as far as 200 miles (320 km) away, from the Richmond, Dawson and Macintyre Rivers. These trees were abundant around Manumbar. Not unnaturally, the squatters and other white settlers from the 1840s to the 1860s grew very apprehensive at bunya time. The whites believed that the tribes were conspiring against them, that the blacks were especially troublesome at this time, and even that they greatly hungered for human flesh in the bunya season. There was certainly evidence for an increase in stock-killing, though John Mortimer was to tell the Select Committee that he had not had more trouble at that time of year. Such was the settlers’ fear (one might even say paranoia) at bunya time, that the Native Police were specially mobilized and engaged in more “dispersals” than usual. Tension was always high. The second local factor was the proximity of the pastoral areas of Wide Bay to large areas of unoccupied coastal lands and areas of rugged mountainous land. Both of these types of locations were seen by nervous settlers as sanctuaries for aggressive Aborigines. As J.C. Taylor points out, “salt-water blacks” from Fraser Island and the coast began to raid the stations inland in the late 1850s and early 1860s, when their inland neighbours were beginning to settle on the stations. The common thread through these two local factors is the feeling of threat engendered in the white intruders by the coming of unfamiliar blacks, especially in large groups. Partly as a result of these factors, racial conflict was particularly prolonged in the Wide Bay-Burnett region.
Maryborough, "every acre of land in these districts was won from the aborigines by blood-shed and warfare".\textsuperscript{23}

It has been estimated that 55 Europeans were killed by Aborigines in the Wide Bay and Burnett region between 1841 and 1855 by the Wakka and Kabi, whose territory substantially covered the region. In revenge, perhaps ten times as many Aborigines were killed by Whites.\textsuperscript{24} Within the region, Gin Gin near Bundaberg and Widgee near Gympie had particular reputations for racial violence, though not as famous as Hornet Bank on the Dawson. The historian of the Hornet Bank massacre of 1857 believes that Wakka tribesmen were among the attackers.\textsuperscript{25} Hornet Bank had an enormous effect on the fear and aggression of settlers throughout Wide Bay and the Burnett as well as elsewhere. The settlers were strongly determined to "break" the tribes once and for all. The Kabi and Wakka were essentially broken by 1859, and the instrument of their fate was the Native Police.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{THE ABORIGINES AND NATIVE POLICE}

As early as 1850 and 1851 Kabi and Wakka people were starting to work on pastoral stations in the Wide Bay-Burnett area.\textsuperscript{27} This was to be an established form of economic symbiosis for a long time, with Aborigines receiving some food and clothing, other European goods and, often, protection against the Native Police. They worked as shepherds, stockmen and general station hands and often their extended families camped on the stations. They were thus able to maintain territorial and religious links. However, the squatters generally got the better of the bargain and exploited the cheap black labour available.\textsuperscript{28} Nevertheless, it is important to realise that situations varied. On the one hand, Walker can justifiably write:

\begin{quote}
Settlers came into the Maryborough District ... with a conceptual framework largely incompatible with the implementation of a policy of conciliation.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

On the other hand, there were some squatters who genuinely attempted conciliation and John Mortimer was one of them. Others giving evidence to the 1861 inquiry had also done so. Tom Petrie and Robert Christison, Scots like Mortimer, also protected "their" blacks against the "indiscriminate attentions" of the Native Police.\textsuperscript{30}

When Mortimer first arrived in 1848, he was based on the Toomcul block. While there he had had no problems with the Aborigines. It was only after moving to Manumbar itself that he had had sheep stolen; sometimes the thieves had skinned the sheep in the presence of the shepherd. There had also been nocturnal raids, huts had been robbed and a woman molested, though non-one had been killed. Understandably, it had been difficult to get shepherds to stay. He had
asked for police assistance, but they had generally ignored his requests. At least from 1852, John Mortimer had employed Aboriginal shepherds on Manumbar and the out-stations. Some were locals and some were from the Yabbar area nearby. However, before 1861, it appears that there was no permanent camp of "station blacks" on Manumbar. The Baiyambora appear to have moved from the Yabba area to camp in the home paddock of Manumbar at about this time. The move may, in fact, have been the direct consequence of the incidents of 1861 related below. In any case, some clan members had moved back and forth from Yabba to Manumbar before this.

The Mortimers provided for the material wants of their station blacks, food, clothing and protection, and also for their spiritual well-being by providing a Sunday school and a strict Sabbath. The station blacks seemed to have a fair degree of freedom to move around as well as off and on the station. John Mortimer was very definite that protection of "his" blacks was a significant responsibility. He told them always to identify themselves as "Mr Mortimer's men" if in danger of being mistaken for foreign or dangerous blacks. While the station was intact and John Mortimer ran it, the "station blacks" could expect to live in a way which, while adapting to station life and incorporating European ways and material things, managed to allow them to continue "the fundamentals of their social behaviour and beliefs".

It was the Native Mounted Police who were to threaten the protection offered by John Mortimer to "his" Kabi. Even though there is no definitive complete history of the Force in Queensland, it is well enough documented not to require a detailed account here. From the early 1850s to the late 1860s, the Native Police were active in the Wide Bay and Burnett. Their headquarters in the 1850s had been at Yabba, not far from Manumbar, though by 1860 they had moved to Tinana near Maryborough. In 1869, just before they finally left Wide Bay, the headquarters were near Gympie.

The standard policies of the Native Police were "dispersal" of large gatherings of Aborigines, and punishment. At least by 1860, when primary resistance by the kabi had been broken, John Mortimer believed the force should act in a preventative fashion by patrolling regularly instead of retaliating when it was too late. Violent retaliation would not have been necessary if visits had been more frequent, he believed. As we have seen, areas like Manumbar received visits from "foreign blacks" every January and February for the bunya feasts. Most squatters became rather jumpy at that time of year and the Native Police were put on full alert. Until February 1861, however, Manumbar had received no visit from the force for eighteen months. This tends to confirm the impression given by the 1861 evidence from the officers that the force worked by "crisis management" rather than
planned, regular patrolling, regulations to the contrary notwithstanding.\textsuperscript{38}

The troopers were recruited for five years from outside the region as a matter of policy. It is likely that the Wide Bay troopers of 1860-61 came mainly from the Gumbainggar and Bandjalang of the north coast of New South Wales. Thirty members of these two tribes were recruited in 1857, a high proportion of the Queensland force. Some of them, therefore, may have known something about the area because some Bandjalang-speakers used to visit it for the bunya feasts.\textsuperscript{39} Dressed in green with red trouser-stripes and a smart white peaked cap or, while in action, undressed, the troopers preceded the white officers or sergeants into action. Usually operating in detachments of six to eight, they were feared and hated by the local Aborigines. The quality of the officers was very variable. One long-serving officer, Lt Frederick Wheeler, gave his opinion of the Aborigines to the 1861 inquiry: “I don’t think they can understand anything else except shooting them.” He also confessed, “I know so little of the blacks. They run before me. I never see them!”\textsuperscript{40} Even when the officers could control the troopers, regulations were breached — so much more was this the case when they could not control them. In the aftermath of Hornet Bank and at bunya time this control was on a hair-trigger.

**EVENTS AROUND NAMUMBAR IN 1861**

In February 1861, the customary tension developed in Wide Bay, as hundreds of visiting Aborigines moved through and into the area. The Native Police, under the local command of Lt Murray, were alert and active.\textsuperscript{41} There were complaints of cattle-spearng coming in from the bunya pine areas, particularly from Widgee Widgee station.\textsuperscript{42} Murray sent off a detachment to seek out the perpetrators, appointing a young and very inexperienced officer in charge, 2nd Lt R.R. Morisset, who happened to be the nephew of the force’s commandant, E.N.V. Morisset. R.R. Morisset’s report of what transpired was vague in the extreme. Because of “frequent and daring outrages of the blacks at the Bunya Bunya”, Lt Murray told him to patrol with a detachment. Morisset said that he found blacks gathered in “very large numbers” in many places. (He was clearly lacking in local knowledge.) They were killing cattle at “nearly all stations”, though this was later denied by two local stations. He was forced to fire two or three times to disperse groups of blacks.\textsuperscript{43}

John Mortimer was much more precise about events. On Sunday 10 February, “a little before sunset”, Mortimer heard the sound of gunshots not far from the Manumbar head station. An Aboriginal shepherd ran to the homestead and reported the shooting of blacks by Native Police, so John and Alec Mortimer rode out to investigate and met a party of troopers accompanied by Mr Giles Jr, of Widgee Widgee and another person they assumed to be a police officer and
later learned was young Morisset. The other man said they had dispersed a group of blacks who had been spearing cattle and whom they had pursued from Widgee Widgee. The Mortimers told them they had the wrong blacks; those they had "dispersed" had done no harm. The police detachment camped overnight at Manumbar. John Mortimer testified later that the numbers of Aborigines gathered for the bunya season that year were smaller than for many years: about 200, mainly camped at Yabba. In his personal experience, no sheep or cattle had been killed.44

The next day, several of his black employees told John Mortimer that the Native Police had shot many blacks and had since gone to Yabba. He followed his employees to a waterhole one and a half miles (2.5 km) from the homestead and found two Aboriginal corpses with bullet wounds. Another body was found at the old camping ground and later yet another body was found. Three of the dead were elderly men. Meanwhile, Morisset and his men had crossed the range and killed another Aboriginal on the track to Yabba. When they arrived, they arrested two deserters and camped. The local blacks de-camped and moved to the Yabber head station for protection. One left a blanket behind which was purloined by a trooper; when he went back to reclaim it, the trooper threatened to shoot him. The proprietor of Yabber station, Mr Swanson, had to go to 2nd Lt Morisset and identify the blanket.

On Tuesday 12 February, Swanson and one of his Aboriginal employees accompanied the Native Police to stop them shooting any peaceable blacks. They were unable to prevent an attack on the blacks' camp. Two long-time employees were shot and wounded despite their doing as Swanson and Mortimer had told them: they stood their ground and called out "Bale you shoot. Bale you shoot. Me belonging to Mr Mortimer", and "This fellow Mr Swanson's blackfellow, baal shoot him". Another elsewhere was killed and hidden in a hollow log.45

Unfortunately, Mortimer and Swanson were not eyewitnesses to the actual killings, but knew when to take literally what their black employees told them. The Mortimer brothers were furious, but knew there could be no prosecution because of the inadmissability of Aboriginal evidence. Their credibility as protectors and as Christians was at stake, and they had a strong sense of justice and an apparently genuine feeling for their employees. John Mortimer had been incorporated into the Kabi kinship system as a member of the Barang section. When he died in 1888, Mortimer was mourned in customary fashion by Buyu Marom, whose acquittal of a murder charge he had secured years before.46
On 22 February, John and Alec Mortimer wrote a statement of the events of ten to twelve days earlier in the form of an open letter "To the Officer in Command of the Party of Native Police . . .", and sent it as a paid advertisement to the Brisbane Courier. The family tradition later was that this course of action was necessary because the Courier refused to publish it as a letter. This is unlikely. First, there is the slowness of the mails via Nanango, and the fact that the notice was published only three weeks after writing. Secondly, as Cryle points out, the colonial press had a "practice of printing ex-parte statements as advertisements".

The letter was extremely sarcastic and contemptuous of Morisset and his troopers, using "the hunt" as a metaphor. The Mortimers asked whether the elderly victims were shot because they had been spearing and stealing stock or simply because they were slower than the young men. The two wounded men were long-term employees and totally innocent. The shooting had been indiscriminate, cruel and well outside the force's commission, and they wanted the force's political masters to know about it.

Accordingly, only three days after the Courier published the letter, Premier R.G.W. Herbert wrote to John and Alec Mortimer asking for more particulars and evidence of their allegations, and wondering why they hadn't simply reported the incident concerned directly to the government. On the latter point, the Mortimers' reply on 3 April was not very clear, but a reasonable deduction is that they did not want their complaint to get "lost" in the proper channels.

Family tradition has it that John Mortimer was "instrumental" in having the activities of the Native Police investigated. Now, as we have seen, the Manumbar incident was but one of four to be investigated by the Select Committee, but the timing is significant. At virtually the same time as Premier Herbert would have been reading the Mortimers' April letter, the government announced an inquiry. It was either the last straw or too public to be concealed. John and Alec Mortimer, therefore, deserve considerable credit for forcing an inquiry.

**A VERY SELECT COMMITTEE**

On 1 May, the Select Committee was elected by the Legislative Assembly. The squatter-dominated house may have been forced into an inquiry, but signalled its intentions by the makeup of the committee. Cowin noted in her 1950 thesis that the committee was so dominated by squatting interests that some potential witnesses refused to testify, but no action was taken to penalize them. It was even worse than she realized. Including chairman R.R. MacKenzie, five of the seven members were squatters, one was a farmer and station manager, and the seventh had a son in the Native Police. They were
not even representative of squatters generally. Only the chairman was a Scot and three were Anglo-Irish. Two of them actually owned stations in the Burnett valley. Pointedly, the M.P. with possibly the greatest concern for the Aborigines, Dr Henry Challinor of Ipswich, was not selected. The chairman proved to be very skilled at interrogation and at guiding the committee to the desired conclusion.

MacKenzie needed to be a skilful chairman, as several witnesses presented evidence contrary to the committee's opinions. Apart from John Mortimer, witnesses included Tom Petrie, Challinor, R.B. Sheridan (the Maryborough Customs Officer) and James Davis, as "Duramboi", one of the "wild white men". These men gave evidence of blatant crimes by Police officers and troopers and named them. They refuted some of the more outlandish anti-Aboriginal prejudices held by the committee. (For instance, those concerning buggery and cannibalism). When Mortimer could not be shaken of the opinion that the Aborigines were no more troublesome at bunya time, MacKenzie and the committee alluded to the "geographical limitations and narrow knowledge of the witnesses". MacKenzie was very defensive of both squatters and Native Police and regarded the Myall Creek hangings as judicial murder. His questioning of Challinor and Mortimer was quite aggressive and pedantic.

John Mortimer was questioned roughly in the middle of the two months' sittings, on Thursday 20 June. He was asked 181 questions, mostly by MacKenzie himself. MacKenzie and Mortimer, two hard-nosed Scots, were a good match for each other. The committee could not shake Mortimer's own evidence but cast great doubt on the reports of Aborigines which he had accepted as true. The committee could then take the work of 2nd Lt Morisset and his uncle instead. Three of the last five witnesses were Native Police officers. Between 10 and 12 July, the committee discussed its report which was presented to parliament on 17 July. Its most lengthy findings related to minor internal reforms of the Native Police. It was critical of the behaviour of some officers but not of the system itself and made specific recommendations about tightening up recruitment, discipline and housekeeping. On the third term of reference, on civilizing the Aborigines, the committee recommended a trial of the Missionary Cotton Company scheme as outlined by ex-missionary J.L. Zillman. Nothing was to come of this.

The second term of reference concerned the four incidents of "unnecessary cruelty". The committee could not "countenance the indiscriminate slaughter which appears on more than one occasion to have taken place". It then proceeded to exculpate the force per se of the murder of Fanny Briggs at Rockhampton, to justify Lt J.O'C. Bligh's attack on Maryborough blacks, and merely to reprimand the
The annual blanket distribution to Aborigines at the Brisbane court-house on Queens Birthday 24 May 1863, after the 1861 Inquiry had covered-up the Government’s real attitude to them.
egregious Lt Frederick Wheeler over his attacks at the Logan and Fassifern. On the Manumbar matter, the committee engaged in double-talk. Lt Murray was to be sacked largely because he gave command of the detachment to the inexperienced R.R. Morisset. The committee then accepted without question Morisset's report that the Aborigines had "attacked the police in the first instance". If they found no fault, why was Murray to be removed? What is even odder is that a few years later, Bligh, Wheeler and Murray were vying for the post of Commandant. Evidence from Mortimer, and others through him, was simply ignored. Not surprisingly, the Brisbane Courier did not allow the Native Police issue to die, and opposed the findings of the committee. In 1863, the Maryborough Chronicle criticised the force as "a system of protection by the extermination of the blacks", indicating that disenchantment with the force had spread to the bush. As Walker argues, some squatters were so disgusted with the force that they would put up with Aboriginal depredations rather than call in the Native Police. If they did have the Native Police come onto their properties, they accompanied them in order to protect their black employes, just as Swanson of Yabber and Mortimer had done in February 1861.

In effect, the Select Committee managed to admit that the Native Police had been dreadful but should continue to be the government's main agency in Aboriginal affairs for the next thirty years, and say that missionary efforts at civilization should be supported but not how. Aboriginal welfare was to be left largely to those relatively few graziers and farmers like John Mortimer whom the committee had tried to discredit. After 1861, the Baiyambora of Yabba were based at Manumbar, and were well settled in there until John Mortimer retired in 1887. After this, the land was cut up and the Kabi remnants were moved on to reserves — Durundur and later to Barambah.

John Mortimer's intervention in Aboriginal policy can be seen as a failure — at the Select Committee and in the long run. His attitudes and actions towards "his" Aborigines between the 1850s and 1880s were generally consistent with his humanitarian beliefs and, in the context of his time, positive and humane. His respect for the Aborigines as persons, though tempered by some of the customary disrespect for their culture, was passed on to his nephew, John Mathew, whose life work in anthropology was to help white Australians understand that culture. In this sense, John Mortimer did not strive entirely in vain.
APPENDIX
From *Brisbane Courier* 16 March 1861 (note errors in signature and date).

To the Officer in Command of the Party of Native Police, who shot and wounded some Blacks on the Station of Manumbar, on Sunday, the 10th instant.

Sir,—If in future you should take a fancy to bring your troopers upon the Station of Manumbar on a sporting excursion we shall feel obliged if you would either bag or bury the game which you shoot as it is far from pleasant for us to have the decomposing remains of four or five blackfellows laying unburied within a mile or two of our head station. If you will do neither please be kind enough to remove the corpses from waterholes near the head station from which we sometimes use water for culinary purposes. As most of the blacks you left dead on our run were feeble old men, some of them apparently not less than eighty years of age, will you please to inform us whether these hoary sinners are the parties chiefly engaged in spearing bullocks and "cramming monkey"; &c.; or whether you just shoot them because the younger ones are too nimble for you. Besides the four or five you left dead on our run, you have wounded two of our station blacks, who have been in our employment during lambing, washing, and shearing, and all other busy times for the last eight or nine years, and we have never known either of them to have been charged with a crime of any kind. One of them came to the station with a bullet wound through one of his thighs, another through one of his arms, and another through one of his hands; the other had a bullet wound through one of his arms. These blacks, being in our employment, very naturally look to us for protection from such outrages, and we are of opinion that when you shoot and wound blacks in such an indiscriminate manner, you exceed your commission, and we publish this that those who employ and pay you may have some knowledge of the way in which you perform your services.

We have, &c.,
T. & A. MORTIMER
Manumbar, Feb.22, 1860.

ENDNOTES

9. ibid., p12; J. Mathew, Whenever I remember the day . . ., ms in possession of Dr J Mathew, Kew, Vic., p9.
12. R.Y. Mathew, op.cit. p22; Department of Public Lands, Manumbar Run Correspondence 1885-1918, QSA LAN/AF110.
16. C. Green, Reminiscences of the old days . . . 1870s to . . . 1939, ts, JOL, 1939, p6.
17. QSA LAN/AF110; G.W. Anderson, letter to J. Mathew 4 July 1887, 21 November 1881 (J. Mathew papers, JOL).
32. J. Mathew, Career of Campbell the Aboriginal Bushranger (ms, 1880, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Studies, Canberra) p3.

33. J. & A. Mortimer, letter to Colonial Secretary, 3 April 1861, QSA COL/A14.


42. J.D. Dale, *op.cit.* pl4.

43. *Report* p152.

44. J. & A. Mortimer, *Brisbane Courier* 16 March 1861; J. & A. Mortimer, letter to Colonial Secretary 3 April 1861; *Report* p105.

45. J. & A. Mortimer to Colonial Secretary 3 April 1861; *Report* p105-6.

46. J. Mathew, *Two Representative Tribes* pp107-8, 137.

47. For text see Appendix.


51. *Brisbane Courier* 16 March 1861.


60. *Report* pp101-5.


63. *idem*; see B. Rosser, *op.cit.* passim.


67. W. Cowin, *op.cit.* pp. 52, 55, 56. Other examples were Robert Christison of Lammermoor and Tom Petrie.