

Crayfish Point

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The area known as Crayfish Point occupies the land originally located to Jacob Billet in 1813 by Governor Macquarie¹. It forms a promontory on the western shore of the Derwent estuary which was visited by fishing parties from the earliest years of the settlement at Sullivan Cove in 1804. "The Diary of Reverend Robert Knopwood²" records that fishing parties were frequently sent out, returning with good catches of crayfish and other species.

On the 24th March 1818 the Reverend Robert Knopwood wrote³:

"Before 8, my little orphan girl and self with C. Williams and 2 men, 4 native girls, went down in my boat 6 miles on the river to Crayfish Point. There the native girls dived down for the fish and caught a great many, and came home in the evening."

Then on the 26th March 1818⁴:

"At 7 am, we and the same party as on Monday went down the river to Crayfish Point where the native girls caught some very fine crayfish and me, with our hooks and lines, some very large rock cod and pirc (sic) etc."

Another mention of Crayfish Point in the Reverend Robert Knopwood's Diary is in the entry for the 14th June 1824⁵:

"Miss Abbott, the late D[eputy] judge advocates daughter landed from the ship [Guilford] at Crayfish Point: declind (sic) going to England."

Then on the 24th February 1831⁶:

"I went to Kangaroo Point to see the Regatta. 21 boats started: they were not to use an oar or spritt, only sail. They started from Mulgrave Battery and came round a boat in Kangaroo (sic) Bay, and round a boat anchor (sic) off Cray Fish Point. The keel of the boats all the same length, 17 feet."

That the name of this promontory was in popular use as early as 1826 is illustrated on the accompanying map⁷ which also shows that there were established farms in the area at that time.

In 1885, during a Russian war scare, Colonel Legge, an Ex-Royal Artillery Officer from

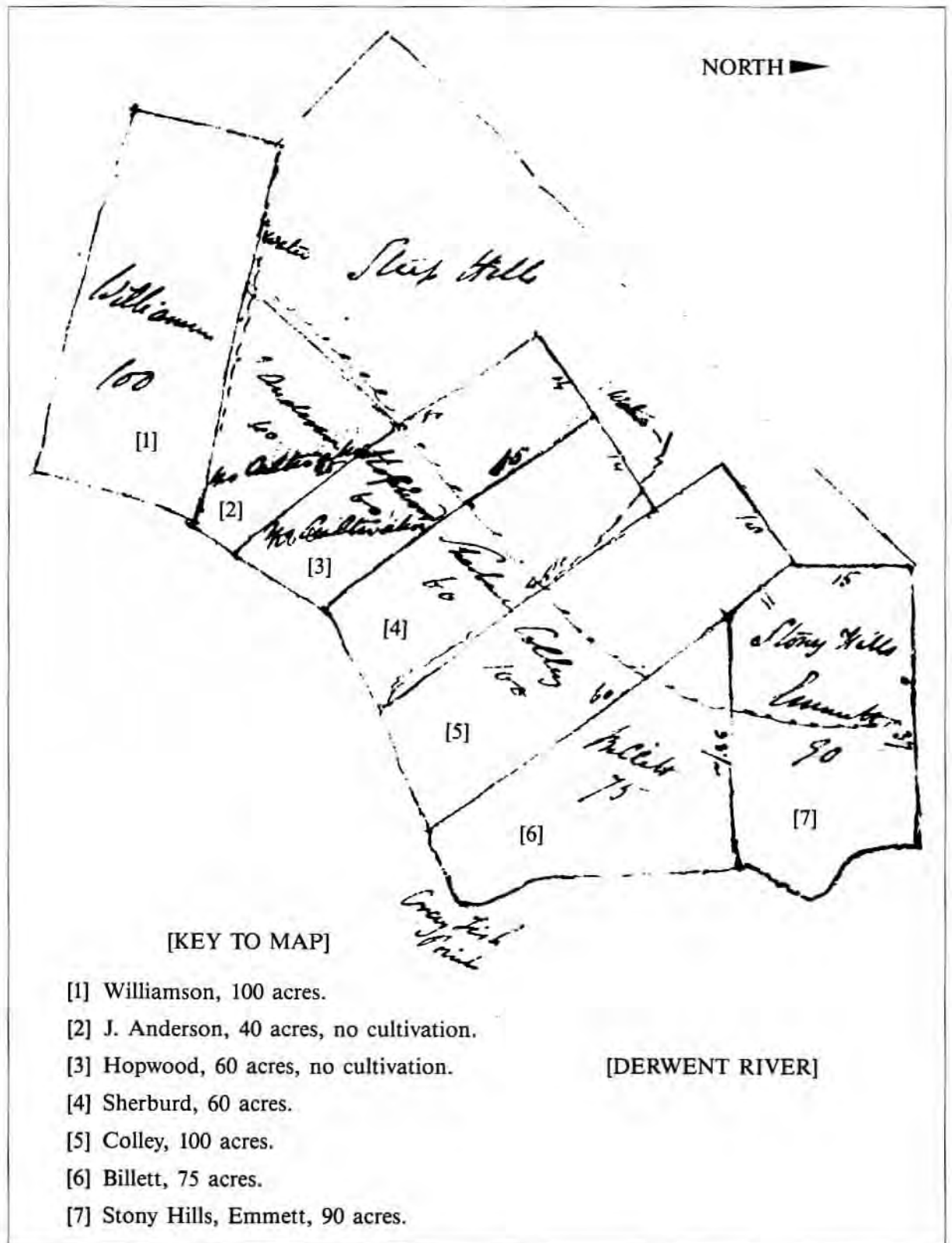
England, advised that a system of defence for engaging hostile ships be set up well down the river and out of range of the town and the docks. This plan involved setting up a gun battery at Crayfish Point and another at Jane Point [South Arm]. However his scheme was not implemented⁸.

Today Crayfish Point is the site of the Animal Quarantine Station, Tasmania Department of Sea Fisheries Marine Research Laboratory, sewerage treatment works, fire station, bowls club, scout hall, tennis club and open parkland with barbecues. This area is accessible via Nubeena Crescent and there is a walking track around the foreshore from Seaview Avenue to Tarooma Crescent.

References

1. LSD 354/1, p. 96, AOT.
2. Nicholls, M. (ed.), *The Diary of the Reverend Robert Knopwood 1803-1838*, Tasmanian Historical Research Association, 1977.
3. *Ibid*, p. 277.
4. *Ibid*, p. 277.
5. *Ibid*, p. 426.
6. *Ibid*, p. 578.
7. CSO 1/263, p. 231, AOT.
8. Dollery, E.M., *Defences of the Derwent*, Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers & Proceedings, Vol. 14, no. 4, (April 1967) p. 162.





The earliest known map naming the location of Crayfish Point, 1826. Note the bridle track, marked by a looped line, which is now the Channel Highway.

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Taken from Bareena Road, showing the tree-lined Crayfish Point area, with the Bowls and Tennis Clubs in the centre, 1986.

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