

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

BRITISH MUSEUM. DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOGRAPHY

Drawings and paintings, c. 1840-90

Reel M424

**Department of Ethnography
British Museum
6 Burlington Gardens
London W1S 3ET**

**National Library of Australia
State Library of New South Wales**

Filmed: 1962

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Department of Ethnography in the British Museum was created in 1946. The ethnographic collections had previously been the responsibility of the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities. From 1970 to 2004 the Department of Ethnography was housed at 6 Burlington Gardens and for most of that time it was known as the Museum of Mankind. In 2004 it moved back to the British Museum in Bloomsbury.

The British Museum acquired the collection of drawings and paintings of J.B. Davis at the sale of his estate in 1883. Joseph Barnard Davis (1801-1881) was a Staffordshire doctor and editor of the *Journal of Anthropology*. He amassed the largest collection of skulls and skeletons in Britain, nearly all with histories. The collection eventually passed to the Royal College of Surgeons. Davis also collected portraits of Australian Aborigines. In 1867 he acquired a large collection of prints, drawings and ethnographic objects from the widow of George Augustus Robinson (1791-1866), who for twenty years had lived and worked with the Aborigines in Van Diemen's Land and Port Phillip.

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Portfolio 418, Drawings of Aborigines, Tasmania

1. Robert Dowling after Thomas Bock. Collection of small oil paintings of heads of Aborigines. Provenance: McClintock Family
2. Thomas Bock. Collection of watercolours of Aborigines and heads of Aborigines, some signed by Bock and others unsigned. Provenance: J.B. Davis Collection.
3. John Skinner Prout. 21 drawings of Aborigines, signed by Prout, pencil, crayon and watercolour, on thin paper mounted on thicker paper. Size: 25cm x 17cm.
4. Five charcoal drawings of Aboriginal heads, unsigned and undated, on tinted paper, mounted on white cartridge. Size: 11cm x 11cm. Provenance: J.B. Davis Collection.
5. Four blue watercolour drawings of Aboriginal heads, unsigned and undated, on white card. Size: 5cm x 5cm. Provenance: J.B. Davis Collection.
6. Small watercolour vignette, unsigned and undated, entitled 'The Natives of Tasmania bewailing the loss of their country'. Size: 9cm x 11cm. Provenance: J.B. Davis Collection.
7. William B. Gould. Portrait of a male Aborigine, signed by Gould, watercolour. Size (borders): 12.5cm x 9cm. Provenance: J.B. Davis Collection.
8. Two drawings of a canoe on one sheet. Provenance: J.B. Davis Collection.
9. Robert Neill. Watercolour vignette entitled 'Cape Barren Geese', signed by Neill, July 1850 (?). Size: 7.5cm x 15cm. Provenance: J.B. Davis Collection.
10. Benjamin Duterrau. Five etchings of Aborigines: Truggernana [Truganini], Woureddy [Woorady], Tanleboueyer, Mandargerna. Provenance: J.B. Davis Collection.
11. Plates I–XVIII of the 21 lithographic plates in the first edition of H. Ling Roth. *The Aborigines of Tasmania*, London, 1890.