1. Ben Boyd's search for labour

Benjamin Boyd was born on 21 August 1803 at Merton Hall in Wigtownshire, Scotland. His antecedents were ancient but impoverished landowners distantly related to the earls of Kilmarnock. Ben's father, Edward, went bankrupt in 1826 after his speculations in the West India trade, cotton mills and marine insurance failed. Ben, the second of Edward's five sons, setup as a stockbroker in London in 1825. He founded B. & M. Boyd in 1827 in with his younger brother Mark to invest in brewing, insurance and shipping. The firm prospered modestly in the late 1830s.[1]

The recovery in the English woollen trades early in the 1830s nearly trebled the average price of Australian wool during the first half of the decade. The spread of sheep across seemingly endless pastures was limited only by their capacity to breed, the availability of credit to buy flocks, and the supply of shepherds to tend them. By 1835 wool had overtaken whale oil and sealskins main source of export income for New South Wales. The Bank of New South Wales, rescued from insolvency by the governor by in the late 1820s, was paying half-yearly dividends of 44 per cent in 1835. The founding of the Bank of Australasia 1835 and the Union Bank of Australia in 1837 indicated the growing interest among British bankers in the commercial prospects of New South Wales. Money borrowed at high interest on little security fuelled a pastoral boom. Investors in England and India noted the rising prosperity of the Australian colonies.[2]

Boyd floated the Royal Bank of Australia in 1839 to share in the rising prosperity of New South Wales. The prospectus proposed raising money in Britain at low interest by selling debenture yielding five per cent and lending the money in New South Wales at ten per cent. Boyd was elected chairman of a board of ten directors drawn from London and Scottish financial circles. The bank issued 20 000 shares with a nominal value of £50

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[1] *Heads of the People,* 1 May 1847. Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer, 5-14, 91.

[2] Abbott, *Pastoral Age,* 62, 87. Holder, *Bank of New South Wale*s, I, 66. Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer, 17.

each. Uncertainty about the law of limited liability, notably in Scotland, made raising capital by selling shares risky and therefore difficult. By April 1841 the Royal Bank had 150 shareholders holding a total of 4501 shares on a deposit of £10 a share. Boyd paid for his 6000 shares with a promissory note. In effect, he placed himself at the head of a bank with a nominal capital of a million pounds for a personal outlay of £350. The bank's working capital of around £450 000 was to be raised by selling debentures.[3]

The *Wanderer*, Boyd's luxuriously appointed and well-armed schooner of 141 tons with a crew of 14, left Plymouth in December 1841. The six passengers included Boyd's youngest brother James; Oswald Brierley, a young maritime artist; and Henry Sewell, a solicitor on the Isle of Wight. A leisurely voyage of 179 days to Sydney took in Madeira, Teneriffe, Rio de Janeiro, Tristan da Cunha, Cape Town, and several islands in the Indian Ocean for supplies and sightseeing. Three steamers, the *Sea Horse*, *Cornubia* and *Juno*, and two sailing ships, the *Velocity* and *Terror*, had left England six weeks before the *Wanderer*.[4]

Joseph Phelps Robinson, born in 1815 into a Quaker family with interests in shipping, banking and brewing, was a distance relative of Boyd and a director of the Royal Bank but he held no shares. He travelled to New South Wales on the *Cornubia* with the staff and cash for the Royal Bank's operations in Australia. Despite Robinson's youth, Boyd relied on his managerial and accounting skills as well as his social tact and political acumen. As the member for the Port Phillip District in the Legislative Council from 1844 to 1848, Robinson was as a persuasive spokesman for Boyd's interests.[5]

The long anticipated arrival of the *Wanderer* at Port Phillip Bay in June 1842 was welcomed by the residents of Melbourne. Boyd was wined and dined at the Melbourne

[3]   Diamond, *The* Seahorse *and the* Wanderer, 17-25.

[4]   Diamond, *The* Seahorse *and the* Wanderer, 31-2.

[5]   *ADB*, II, 378.

Club. Georgiana McCrae, the natural daughter of the Duke of Gordon, recorded in her journal that Boyd attended a *bal masque* as Rubens wearing a broad leafed hat, and was considered *comme il faut* (socially correct).[6] Crowds lined Sydney harbour's foreshores when the *Wanderer* passed through the Heads in July. Boyd was given a warm welcome in Sydney: 'A yacht of the Royal Squadron, an apparently unlimited capital, an imposing personal appearance, aristocratic connexions, fluent oratory, and a fair share of commercial acuteness acquired at the Stock Exchange, at once and deservedly placed him at the apex of the colony's squattocracy'.[7]

The Royal Bank rented a property for £500 a year at Church Hill, near the corner of York and Bridge streets. Agencies were established in Melbourne, Hobart, Launceston and Adelaide. The Royal Bank opened for business from twelve to two on week days, mainly to transfer bills between England and Australia, discount bills for settlers, and arrange liens on stock and other property. Boyd's original intention had been was to establish a traditional bank but soon found that 'the whole system to be rotten', and unfavourable to normal banking operations. Boyd wrote to Mark in England that the colony was 'in a jam'. He informed the Royal Bank's board in London that New South Wales was in a general state of insolvency, with banks directing their efforts to staving off a crash by accommodating insolvent customers in the belief that if one bank fell all would follow. With mortgages on stock 'the only legitimate wealth of the Colony', he decided not to issue bank notes as originally intended. He expected that the value of stock and other property would recover within a year but, when it did not, he was borrowing money in his own name raised by the Royal Bank's sale of debentures in Britain.[8]

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[6] McCrae, *Georgiana's Journal,* 66-71.

[7] Sidney, *Three Colonies of Australia,* 130.

[8] Diamond, *The* Seahorse *and the* Wanderer, 37-9.

Boyd bought Craignathan, a mansion built in the 1830s overlooking the harbour at Neutral Bay, and built a warehouse and wharf nearby at the water's edge. He established a coastal shipping line with the three steam packets and several sailing ships brought from England. He built a lighthouse and whaling station at East Boyd at Twofold Bay, and a boiling down works for sheep and cattle brought down from his inland squatting leases. He commenced building Boyd Town, a church, inn and cottages for workmen at Twofold. Bay. He invested much of the money to buy squatting leases totalling around three million acres.[9]

Boyd was quick to grasp the political economy of squatting. Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a critic of 'the dispersion of settlement' in British colonies, explained that squatting was more profitable than grazing sheep on bought land. Endless pastures and a mild climate supported the unlimited increase in sheep and, as wool was light and imperishable, it could be brought to market easily. Wool could be grown with little labour and therefore was not affected by 'the colonial curse, the scarcity of labour'. A strong market and high prices for Australian wool in England was creating fortunes for flock-masters, Wakefield concluded, but wool would eventually flood the British market, bringing down prices and ruining flockmasters.[10]

A Legislative Council committee reported in 1841 that, when sheep are kept on purchased lands, 'a large yearly allowance must be made for interest upon the capital sunk in their purchase'.[11] The governor, Sir George Gipps, explained that farming land could be made productive by the labour it employed but the value of grazing country was derived from the number of sheep it could carry. Settlers owning land within 'the limits of

[9]   Boyd's evidence, 3 June 1844, q. 14, SC crown land grievances 1844. Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer, 17-20, 23, 32-4, 61, 212-13.

[10]   Prichard, *Collected Works of Edward Gibbon Wakefield*, 128.

[11]   Report, SC immigration 1841.

settlement' acquired by grant or purchase pointed out that squatters had an unfair advantage: they did not have to pay quit rents on grants or interest on money borrowed to buy land.[12]

Reports of Oxley's explorations in New South Wales during 1818 drew attention to good grazing country in the west and north of the colony. Woolgrowers with insufficient land, Wentworth wrote in 1819, had only to move their flocks beyond the limits of settlement.[13] Peter Cunningham's discovery of Pandora's Pass through the Liverpool Range in 1827 opened the way for pastoralists in the Upper Hunter to move their flocks and herds onto the Liverpool Plains, and later to New England and the Darling Downs.

The Colonial Office instructed the governor in 1825 to divide New South Wales into counties as a preliminary to valuing land for future sale. A proclamation in October 1829 defined the Nineteen Counties, an area of 35 000 square miles in central-eastern New South Wales, beyond which settlers could not buy or lease land.[14] An Act in 1834 allowed for commissioners to be appointed to protect Crown land from 'Encroachment, Intrusion and Trespass'. However, the colonial government did not have the resources to stop squatters grazing sheep and cattle on 'waste land' beyond 'the limits of location'. An Act in 1836 allowed squatters to apply for licences for an annual £10 fee but with no tenure beyond a year or any entitlement to compensation for improvements. Without government surveys, squatters had to negotiate the boundaries of squatting runs with neighbours. Eight squatting districts were proclaimed in 1839.[15]

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[12] Gipps to Stanley, 18 May 1842, *HRA*, I/XXII, 44. Diamond, *The Sea Horse* and the *Wanderer*, 74-6.

[13] Wentworth, *Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales*, 416. Campbell, *'Squatting' on Crown Land in New South Wales*, 20, 42, 45, 48, 56-7.

[14] Burroughs, *Britain and Australia 1831-1855*, 142-3.

[15] Roberts, *History of Australian Land Settlement*, 39, 166-172. Campbell, '"Squatting" on Crown land in New South Wales', 1-6. 14-18.

Boyd took advantage of insolvent squatters to buy the licences for their runs and stock at bargain prices. He acquired 14 runs totalling 231 360 acres in the rugged Maneroo (Monaro) squatting district west of Boyd Town. Eleven runs, each employing about four stockmen, were stocked with cattle and horses; the other three carried a total of about 20 000 sheep tended by 14 shepherds. Cattle and sheep were driven down the winding track of the Wanderer Range to the salting works at Boyd Town.[16] Boyd engaged August Morris to find grazing land in the Murrumbidgee squatting district (now the Riverina). On his advice, Boyd bought Strathmerton, extending from the junction of the Murray and Edward rivers westwards and covering 700 000 acres carrying 70 000 sheep. Robinson held three runs in his own name in the Maneroo district, four on the Darling Downs and two in New England, and three at Port Phillip in partnership with Boyd, all bought with loans from the Royal Bank.[17]

Labour costs were the major cost in producing wool. Assigned convicts were the backbone of the wool industry from the late 1820s to 1840. 'Old hands' (ex-convicts) were hardened to monotonous and isolated life on sheep runs. Some were paid wages but were usually well below the rates demanded by free servants. A single justice of the peace could summarily sentence an assigned convict to a flogging for refusing to work, absconding, neglecting their flocks, drunkenness and even insolence. The 20 714 male convicts transported to New South Wales in the 1830s fell short of the demand for labour. Settlers eligible for assigned convicts were so numerous by May 1838 they would have

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[16] Lambie to colonial secretary, 6 May 1844, 46/844 in 4/2742, SARNSW. Lambie to colonial secretary, 26 February 1846, 47/1727 in 2759, SARNSW. Perkins, Monaro district items, 1823-1919 I, 221; II, 347, A3622-34, ML. Gipps to Stanley, 12 February 1846, *HRA*, 1/XXIV, 767-9. Wells, *Geographical Dictionary*, 250-1. Jeans, *Historical Geography of New South Wales,* 33, 123, 133, 145, 152. Campbell, '"Squatting" on Crown land in New South Wales', 57, 59.

[17] Superintendent, Port Phillip, to colonial secretary, 20 January 1846, 48/279 (46/1580), SARNSW. Lambie to colonial secretary, 26 February 1847, 47/1727 in 4/2759, SARNSW. Wellings, 'Benjamin Boyd in Riverina', 116-8. *SMH*, 17 August 1848. *Argus,* 25 August 1848.

been entitled to just two assigned convicts each, and nine months later the ratio was approaching one to one.[18]

Reports abounded in Sydney the in late 1830s of plans to recruit labourers from India, China, the East Indies, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, even Africa. Williams Burns, who had proposed a settlement on the north coast of New Holland in 1823, suggested in 1837 that 'a whole cargo of good Timorese' could be hired for a dollar (4s) a month as shepherds, stockmen, labourers and gardeners. Their most 'objectionable propensity' was for betting on cock fights which they carried to great lengths. When they had lost their houses, wives and children, they drank bang until they went mad and killed all before them until they themselves were killed.[19]

The *Sydney Herald* in May 1838 reported the growing interest in Pacific Islanders: they were known for their sobriety and the care they took of sheep. Captain Duke was said to have sent to New Zealand in July for ten single and ten married Maoris to find out if they could be taught shepherding. The *Sydney Monitor* pointed to the New Zealanders working as labourers in stores and mills around Sydney: one was worth a dozen coolies. They could imported for £2 to £3 a head and, once 'civilized' by employment here, would return home as 'missionaries'.[20] Thomas Walker told an immigration committee in August that 111 settlers, 'in opposition to their own inclination', had sent for 1203 Indians and Chinese.[21] A letter in the *Colonist* published suggested that Negroes taken off slave ships and sent from Sierra Leone should be brought to New South Wales as 'apprentices' for five to seven years. Negroes were 'tractable and peaceful', many a rudimentary education and

[18] Coghlan, *Labour and Industry in Australia*, I, 203-4. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies*, 366-7. *SH*, 23 April 1838, 4 January 1839. Slade's evidence, 15 August 1838, SC immigration, 1838.

[19] *Colonist*, 21 September 1837.

[20] *SG*, 9 May 1838. *SH*, 3 May, 7 June, 25 July, 24 October, 30 November 1838. *SM,* 11 February 1839.

[21] Walker's evidence, 20 August 1838, SC immigration 1838. Glenelg to Gipps, 14 December 1837, *HRA*, 1/XIX, 202.

were fond of European comforts and, unlike the Australian Aborigines, were not given to wandering.[22]

A government notice in November 1837 announced that the assignment of convicts to settlers would be discontinued at an early date and advised employers to look to free labour.[23] An Order in Council in May 1840 ended transportation to New South Wales from 1 August.[24] The demand for labour was so great, the *Sydney Herald* reported, that 'our mechanics and imported immigrants are getting mad with the high wages they demand for their services'. New assignments ceased from 1 July 1841. The 25 5929 convicts assigned in 1839 had fallen to 7391 by 1843, to less than a thousand in 1846.[25] All assigned convicts had been withdrawn by 1847.

A small group of gentlemen described as 'philosophical radicals' met at London coffee house in March 1830 to found the National Colonization Society. Robert Gouger, the society's secretary, wrote a *Sketch of a Proposal for Colonizing Australia* based on his conversations with Edward Gibbon Wakefield, then in prison for abducting an heiress. 'Overpopulation' in the United Kingdom, he argued, might be reduced by selling land in the colonies for a 'sufficient price', high enough to pay the passages of emigrants but not low enough for them to buy land for several years.[26] The Society published a pamphlet urging the sale of Crown land in Australia, using the revenue to pay for assisted

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[22]   *Colonist*, 19 September 1838.

[23]   Glenelg to Bourke, 26 May 1837, *HRA*, 1/XVIII, 736. [NSW] *Government Gazette*, 18 November 1837.

[24]   Gipps, NSW LC, *SH*, 21 October 1840.

[25]   Normanby to Gipps, 11 May 1839, *HRA*, I, XX, 152-4, [NSW] *Government Gazette*, 8 October1839, 7 April 1841. *Australian*, 22 October 1839. *SH,* 5, 28 August, 21 September, 11 December 1840.

[26]   Wakefield, *Collected Works,* 163-9, 542-4, 778-83, 991.

emigration.[27] Lord Howick, a member of the National Colonization Society and parliamentary undersecretary at the Colonial Office, persuaded the secretary of state to abolish land grants and auction all Crown land at a minimum 'upset' price of 5s an acre. The 'surplus population' of the United Kingdom should be encouraged to emigrate to relieve unemployment and unrest at home, and mitigate labour shortages and reduce the 'disparity of sexes' in the Australian colonies. With land sales not expected to raise much revenue in the short term, assistance was limited to young single women to relieve the shortage of domestic servants with a bounty of £8, and of mechanics (skilled tradesmen) with families would be loaned £20 towards their passage costs to be repaid from their wages over two years. The first assisted emigrants landed in New South Wales in 1833. [28]

Most of the 6228 assisted adult male emigrants arriving by the end of 1839 found jobs in the towns as mechanics or domestic servants.[29] Employers complained that the few assisted emigrants willing to work on farms or squatting runs demanded 'exorbitant wages, and more rations than they could possibly consume without waste'.[30] Settlers complained that the cost of hauling supplies to feed the families of emigrants was greater than the profits from the flocks they tended. The few emigrants willing to work on farms, settlers complained, demanded 'exorbitant wages, and more rations than they could possibly consume without waste'. Even those who had been shepherds in the United

[27]   London Provisional Committee [of the National Colonization Society], *Statement of the Principles and Objects of a Proposed Society, for the Cure and Prevention of Pauperism, as Means of Systematic Colonization*, 2-3, 5-12, 28, 43,45, 67-8, 71.

[28]   Goderich to Darling, 9, 23 January, 14 February 1831; government notice, 1 July 1831; Darling to Goderich, 10 September 1831, *HRA* 1/XVI, 19-22, 34-7, 80-3; 149-50, 166-7, 850-1. Johnston, *British Emigration Policy*, chapters 2, 3.

[29]   Coghlan*, Labour and Industry in Australia*, I, 203-4. Madgwick, *Immigration into Eastern Australia*, 88-94, 114, 223.

[30]   *SH,* 9 March, 19 June, 21 December 1837. *SM,* 13 March, 14, 30 June 1837, 9 April 1838. *Australian,* 13, 16 June 1837. Davidson, *Trade and Travel in the Far East*, 200-2.

Kingdom preferred almost any occupation to 'crawling after sheep'.[31]

The arrival of the last convict ship at Sydney in November 1840 coincided with the first signs of the collapse of the pastoral boom. Grain prices fluctuated wildly and demand for luxury goods collapsed, forcing insolvency on millers and merchants.[32] Overheads and profits in the wool industry had been converging for several years. The average price for Australian wool had peaked at 24d a pound in 1836 and dropped to 16d by 1840. The market for live sheep slumped during a drought from 1837 to 1839. On the other side of the ledger, the cost of supplies, freight and labour rose steadily. Wages for free farm labourers and shepherds had risen from £16 in 1836 to over £30 by 1838. Interest of up to fifteen per cent weighed down on settlers who had borrowed money to buy land, stock and supplies.[33]

Banks called in defaulting loans, forcing insolvent settlers to sell land, squatting licences and stock to cover debts. About 1500 merchants, landowners and squatters were declared insolvent from 1842 to 1846. Ruined gentlemen converted their carriages into hackney cabs or worked as bullock drivers. Some managed runs under agreements with surviving squatters for a share in the profits from wool sales and stock increases. Squatters survived by boiling down sheep and cattle for tallow to export to England.[34]

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[31] *SH,* 9 March, 19 June, 21 December 1837. *SM,* 13 March, 14, 30 June 1837, 9 April 1838. *Australian*, 13, 16 June 1837. Bowman's reply, q 5; Bettington's reply, q 11, SC immigration 1838. Davidson, *Trade and Travel in the Far East,* 200-2.

[32] Gipps to Russell, 1 February 1841, *HRA,* 1/XXI, 198-200. Dyster, 'Prosperity, prostration, prudence: business investment in Sydney, 1838-1851', 56-8.

[33] Davidson, *Trade and Travel,* 158-62

[34] *SH*, 29 October 1838, 4, 23 January 1839, 16 July 1840, 9, 20 August 1842. S*MH,* 1 January 1850. Henderson, *Excursions and Adventures in New South Wales,* II, 243-5, 257. Mundy, *Our Antipodes,* I, 101.

The termination of transportation, Wentworth lamented, 'had been the fruitful source of all the misfortunes, calamities, confusion and distress, which had prevailed in the colony since 1842. Old and respectable families colony were 'dropping off, borne down by the insupportable burden of the price of labour'.[35]

The abolition of transportation rested on official expectations that Crown land sales would yield sufficient revenue to pay for all the labour that the settlers required. The governor issued immigration orders to the value of almost a million pounds to the pay the passages of the 48 081 assisted emigrants landing in Sydney from 1838 to 1842. Adult male emigrants, many 'encumbered' by families, totalled 17 753 but their numbers were more than offset by the rapid decline in convicts assigned to settlers.[36] An increase in the minimum price of Crown land from 5s an acre to 12s in 1839 reduced revenue from land sales fall from £324 072 in 1840 to £18 313 in 1842. The governor attempted to raise money for assisted emigration by collecting unpaid quit-rents, raiding the military chest, withdrawing all government funds from colonial banks, and selling debentures. With the land fund empty, the governor suspended assisted emigration in May 1842.[37]

If Crown land could not be sold, Governor Gips asked the Legislative Council in September 1842, 'where is money to be obtained to procure immigrants?'. Squatters benefitted from the land so they should contribute to the costs of assisted emigration.[38] Gipps published the first of two sets of squatting regulations on 2 April 1844: runs were

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[35] Wentworth, *SMH*, 2 February 1843. Wentworth, LC, *SMH,* 19 August 1843. Wentworth's evidence, 25 October 1843, qs 4-6, SC monetary confusion, 1843. Wentworth, LC, *SMH*, 10 April 1848.

[36] Normanby to Gipps, 11 May 1839, *HRA*, I/XX. 152-4. [NSW] *Government Gazette*, 8 October 1839. Madgwick, *Immigration into Eastern Australia*, 233. Burroughs, *Britain and Australia 1831-1855*, 255-7, 269-74.

[37] Gipps to Stanley, 6 May 1843, *HRA*, I, xxx. Gipps, LC, *Australian*, 12 May 1842. Madgwick, *Immigration into Eastern Australia,* 193, 223. Buckley, 'Gipps and the graziers of New South Wales, 60-7, 100-1. Burroughs, *Britain and Australia*, 385.

[38] Gipps, LC, *SMH,* 10 September 1842.

limited to twenty square miles or a carrying capacity of not more than 4000 sheep or 500 cattle, with an annual £10 licence fee for each run. The second set of regulations was released through a member of the Legislative Council on 3 May: after five years squatters had to purchase 320 acres of each run at a minimum upset price of £1 an acre, with another 320 acres every eight years thereafter.[39]

Squatters struggling to remain solvent cried ruin and formed the Pastoral Association to take their grievances to London. Boyd was elected chairman and Robinson treasurer. Archibald Boyd in London was already lobbying members of Parliament and the Colonial Office. Francis Scott and his elder brother, Lord Polwarth, met with Lord Stanley at the Colonial Office to explain the privations endured by squatters from insecurity of tenure and the ruinous price of labour. Lord Stanley at the Colonial Office declined to support the appointment of a House of Commons committee to investigate the squatter's grievances. Scott delivered a speech—written by Archibald Boyd—in the House of Commons arguing the squatter's case for 'pre-emptive rights' over runs. Five hundred copies were printed for public distribution. Back in New South Wales, the Legislative Council appointed Scott their Parliamentary Agent in London. Boyd, Wentworth and others raised funds to establish the *Atlas*, a weekly edited by Robert Lowe, to put the squatters' case before the public. Boyd was elected unopposed to the Legislative Council for the Port Phillip District in August 1844 but attended few sittings before resigning early in 1845. A select committee, consisting entirely of members aligned with landed and squatting interests, including Robinson, was set up to inquire into Crown land grievances.[40]

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[39] *SMH*, 13 May 1844. Buckley, 'Gipps and the graziers of New South Wales' 82-6, 92-3.

[40] Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and* the Wanderer, 69-88.

The imperial Australian Lands Act 1846 divided New South Wales into three districts.[41] An Order in Council in March 1847 allowed squatting leases in the settled districts to be auctioned off on sixty days' notice for a minimum price of £1 an acre. Leases In the intermediate district were permitted for eight years with a right of pre-emption and compensation for improvements. In the unsettled districts, where Boyd had most of squatting runs, runs of up to 12 800 acres or a carrying capacity of 4000 sheep could be leased for up to fourteen years with an annual license fee of £10 and a right of pre-emption.[42] Around 1600 squatters held a virtual monopoly over Crown land beyond the Nineteen Counties.[43] Grazing country leased for less than a farthing an acre was a triumph for squatters. Even so, when details of the settlement reached Sydney in mid-1847, the Royal Bank was insolvent, forcing Boyd to borrow money wherever he could to pay his employees.[44]

Wages for shepherds fell as low as £12 a year at the nadir of the depression. The unemployed in Sydney, especially men with families, stayed in town on government relief rather than to take jobs in the interior. Some of the unemployed thought they would be better off leaving the colony. Seven hundred sailed for Valparaiso in 1843, ignoring warnings about half-savage natives, vengeful Spaniards, fever, heat, vampire bats and huge rats.[45] Later that year sixty mechanics left Sydney for Hong Kong to face poor housing and an unhealthy climate.[46]

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[41]   [GB] 9 & 10 Vic, c 54.

[42]   Burroughs, *Britain and Australia 1831-1855,* 321-4.

[43]   Buckley, 'Gipps and the graziers of New South Wales', 82-6, 2-3, 101-2. Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer. 68-92.

[44]   Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer, 63.

[45]   Boyd's evidence, 27 September 1843, q. 8, SC immigration 1843. Abbott, 'The emigration to Valparaiso in 1843', 1-16.

[46]   Davidson, *Trade and Travel in the Far East,* 264. Miller to Deas Thompson, 13 July 1845, Deas Thompson papers, III, 139, 1531-3, ML.

Wool production in New South Wales increased in every year from 1842 to 1846 while the total value of exports rose in every year except 1844.[47] Rising wool prices in 1845 ended boiling-down on a large scale and encouraged the expansion of squatting in remote pastoral districts, notably to the north and west of Moreton Bay. Ricardian laws of supply and demand did not determine wages in remote squatting districts: increasing the labour supply allowed squatters to increase the size of their flocks or occupy more grazing land. The capacity and willingness to pay higher wages was determined by overhead costs and expectations of higher wool prices.[48]

By September 1843 Boyd was employing about 200 shepherds on runs west of Twofold Bay and along the Murray River, paying them up to £30 years with rations, including tea and sugar. Boyd advertised in the Sydney press offering a hundred men free passages to Twofold Bay on the *Velocity*. About five hundred applied at his office on Church Hill. The men hundred men selected, some with families, were shipped to Boyd Town. Oswald Brierley offered them wages of £16 to £20 a year, recorded their names, divided them into parties of twenty, and issued rations for the journey inland. Brierley gave a Toamba black a blue shirt to take them up the mountains to Boyd's runs in the Maneroo pastoral district.[49]

Boyd explained his ideas on labour and immigration when he gave evidence to an immigration committee two weeks later. Too many people were employed in 'occupations of convenience, luxury, and pleasure', he testified. Herding masses of population together in towns and suburban districts was 'unrequired and unproductive'. People starving for want of employment should be sent to the interior so they could forget their 'Sydney

47   Coghlan, *Labour and Industry,* I, 444-5. Butlin, *Foundation of the Australian Monetary System,* 316.

48   Windeyer, LC, *SMH*, 19 May 1847. Abbott, *Pastoral Age*, 64.

49   Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer, 121.

habits of dissipation and indolence'. Unless the wages of shepherds capable of managing large flocks could be reduced to £10, he saw little prospect to the colony returning to prosperity. Eliminating tea and sugar from shepherds' rations would reduce 'waste and extravagance'. A shepherd on £10 a year was as well off as one on £25 because lower wages met 'all his necessary wants' and he would spend the difference in public houses.[50]

Shepherds and watchmen lived under tarpaulins or in slab huts, subsisting on a diet of salt beef or boiled mutton, damper and tea. Endless days were spent trudging through the bush under the summer sun behind their grazing flocks, and guarding sheep penned in hurdles against dingoes frosty on winter nights. The smell of sheep was all-pervasive. Flies, fleas, lice and mosquitoes were a constant nuisance. Shepherds on remote runs could go months without talking to anyone except their hutkeeper and an overseer once a week. Shepherds spent as much of their time as they could and most of their wages in the nearest grog shanty. Many of Boyd's shepherds soon discovered that they were being underpaid and left his runs as soon as they found a better paying job. Boyd claimed that the Master and Servant Act could not effectively enforce labour agreements in remote squatting districts without a court of Petty Session.[51]

An immigration committee asked Boyd in 1844 how the colony could fund an extensive system of immigration. He pointed to press reports from England that 78 000 paupers were starving on London streets. Those burdening English parishes, he argued, should be sent to Australia. A 'grand system of emigration . . . must force itself upon the mother country' to bring out a hundred thousand emigrants. A loan from an English capitalist of a million pounds, guaranteed by the government, could be secured by allowing 'fixity of tenure' for pastoral leases on Crown land.[52]

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[50] Boyd's evidence, 27 September 1843, qs 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15. SC immigration 1843.

[51] Boyd's evidence, 19 October 1846, q. 40, SC crown land grievances 1845.

[52] Boyd's evidence, 3 June 1844, qs 13, 17, SC on monetary confusion, 1844.

When wool prices began rising in 1845, woolgrowers ceased boiling down on a large scale. Some occupied new country beyond the declared pastoral districts. Boyd's workforce had risen from 200 to 800 since 1843, while wages for shepherds had nearly doubled.[53] Prospects for resuming assisted emigration were bleak. Crown land sales had raised £54 900 between 1843 and 1846, barely enough to cover administrative and survey costs. Debentures sold in London paid the passages for the 1539 adult male emigrants arriving in 1843 and 1845.[54] The governor offered to raise another loan in London for assisted emigration in 1847 but found little support in the Legislative Council.[55] The Colonial Office authorised a loan of £100 000 secured on Crown revenues in New South Wales to resume assisted emigration. The first of 5027 assisted emigrants funded from the loan landed in February 1848.[56]

When transportation to New South Wales ended in 1840, convicts in the United Kingdom sentenced to transportation were selected for a program of 'moral reformation' through contemplation, solitude and religious instruction in English prisons. Some were then sent to Van Diemen's Land to serve a period of probation leading to a ticket-of-leave. The colony's depressed economy had difficulty absorbing the 16 771 male and 3342 female convicts arriving from 1841 to 1845. Many given a ticket-of-leave had difficulty finding employment. Squatters at Port Phillip formed societies, funded by levies on sheep and cattle, to bring these 'expirees' across Bass Strait. Although given a free passage, the 'expirees' were not asked sign a labour agreement. If they refused a job offer at £16 a

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[53] *SMH,* 19 August 1843, 1, 6 January, 10 February, 19 May, 15 June 1847. *Atlas,* 13 February 1847. *GA,* 13 February 1847. Coghlan, *Labour and Industry*, I, 444-5.

[54] Madgwick, *Immigration into Eastern Australia,* 193, 223.

[55] Gipps to Stanley, 25 October 1845; Grey to FitzRoy, 30 August 1847, HRA 1/XXIV, 606-7, 1/XXV, 728-9. Debates, NSW LC, *SMH,* 19 May, 12 August, 22 September 1847.

[56] Burroughs, *Britain and Australia 1831-1855*, 273-4.

year, they were told they would have to fend for themselves. About 2000 expirees had landed at Port Phillip by November 1846. A government official reported that numbers would have been greater if more employers had subscribed to the immigration societies and the feeling of settlers in the district against the convict 'taint' had not been so strong. The British government, noting the steady trickle of expirees to Port Phillip, sent 1727 'exiles', or 'Pentonvillians', with conditional pardons to Port Phillip from 1844 to 1849.[57]

William Gladstone, secretary of state for the colonies from December 1845 to July 1846, suspended transportation to an overcrowded and depressed Van Diemen's Land. He proposed a new penal colony at Wide Bay north of Morton Bay. His successor, Earl Grey, scrapped the idea as impractical and too costly. Grey asked the New South Wales governor if the colonists would accept 'a modified and carefully regulated introduction of Convict Labourers'. After eighteen months in an English gaol, they would be given conditional pardons and shipped to New South Wales to work for the settlers.[58]

William Bland moved for a Legislative Council debate on reviving convict assignment in October 1846. Although squatting interests were willing to support any plan for restricting convict 'exiles' to the interior of the colony, they hesitated to support Bland's motion for political reasons.[59] Robinson, for example, declared his opposition to a revival of assignment, telling the house that that the government should seek some other way of keeping the exiles in the interior where their labour was most urgently needed.[60]

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[57] Stanley to Gipps, 4 August, 29 September 1843, *HRA*, 1/XXIII, 73, 166. *SMH*, 13, 20 March 1844. NSW LC debates, *SMH*, 6, 14 June 1844. La Trobe to Gipps, 27 March 1845; Gipps to Stanley, 9 April 1845, CO 201/ 357, 321-2; 317-19, Lonsdale to colonial secretary, 13 November 1846, CO 201/369, 605-8. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies*, 298-302, 312-4.

[58] Gladstone to FitzRoy, 30 April 1846, *HRA*, 1/XXV, 34-7. Grey, HL, 5 March 1847, *Hansard*, 3s, XC, 898-913. Grey, *Colonial Policy*, II, 1-7, 84-7. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies*, 312-20.

[59] NSW LC debates, *SMH*, 9, 14, 17 October 1846

[60] Robinson, LC, *SMH*, 14 October 1846.

Wentworth claimed that transportation was 'the most human, the most inexpensive, the most benevolent, the most efficient, and the most reformatory system of secondary punishments that was ever invented'. He moved for a committee, with himself as chairman and stacked with members sympathetic to squatting interests, Robinson included, to decide how 'the evil might be submitted to with the least possible inconvenience to themselves'. Bland withdrew his motion for a debate on assignment.[61]

Boyd's understanding that convict exiles would be employed 'in the Pastoral Districts of this Colony, where it is found next to impossible to induce Bounty immigrants to proceed' implied a return to the old assignment system. He told Wentworth's committee that 'there is no major employer of labour in the colony that would not prefer a ticket-of-leave man to a bounty immigrant'. Wages for shepherds had increased from £10 to £30 in two years. Ten thousand hands could be employed immediately on runs outside the Nineteen Counties. Solitude would allow convict shepherds time for reflection on the demoralising influences of living in crowded communities. The committee reported that convicts should be assigned to squatters in pastoral districts rather than receive conditional pardons or tickets-of-leave allowing them to take any job.[62] Earl Grey informed the governor in that convict assignment had been condemned so conclusively 'that I cannot anticipate the possibility of it ever being resumed'.[63]

Boyd sent a lengthy letter—published in August 1847—to Sir William Denison, lieutenant-governor of Van Diemen's Land, arguing that the 20 000 convicts with a ticket-of-leave were struggling to earn a livelihood in his economically depressed colony. Instead of employing expirees on the government's 'Utopian' scheme for building cottages for

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[61]   Wentworth, LC, *SMH*, 19 August 1843.

[62]   Report, 5-6; Boyd's evidence, 19 October 1846, qs 2, 4, 5, 13, SC renewal of transportation 1846.

[63]   Grey to FitzRoy, 3 September 1847, *HRA* 1/25, pp. 235-8.

assisted emigrants with families, 10 000 expirees could be offered useful and valuable employment as shepherds in New South Wales. Indeed, 5000 expirees from Van Diemen's Land and exiles from the United Kingdom had already come to Port Phillip and Moreton Bay. Unemployed expirees could be given unconditional pardons to proceed to New South Wales where they would find jobs in the pastoral districts. While assisted emigrants with families would benefit New South Wales in the longer term, the colony's revenues could not afford the heavy expense of bringing them from the United Kingdom. Boyd conceded that labour shortages had driven him to import natives from the New Hebrides. While this experiment had been attacked by the 'uninterested and unthinking', the 'humane influences and practical utility' of importing such natives would apply equally to the removal of unemployed ticket-of-leave holders from Van Diemen's Land.[64]

Earl Grey informed the New South Wales governor in 1848 that 'exiles' would be sent to the colony with a ticket-of-leave allowing them to take any job at market wages. The first of the six ships bringing a total of 1617 exiles did not reach Sydney until June 1849; the last ship arrived at Brisbane in April 1850.[65] Editorials, petitions and public meetings denounced this 'revival of transportation'. Grey bowed to colonial public opinion and suspended further shipments of exiles. An Order in Council in 1850 ended transportation to New South Wales.[66]

Before leaving England, Boyd informed the Colonial Office of his plans for developing the resources of Australia and adjacent islands. He intended to build harbours and coaling depots for his ships along the New South Wales coast to improve communications in this rapidly improving quarter of the globe. He intended visiting the Pacific Islands. If he found

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[64] Boyd, *A Letter to his Excellency Sir William Denison*, 3-5, 7, 11-16.

[65] *SMH*, 12 April 1848, 12, 19 June 1849, 18 September 1850, 31 July 1851.

[66] *SMH*, 11 April, 13 June 1850, 31 July 1851. Grey to FitzRoy, 30 October 1850, CO 201/437, 362. Grey to FitzRoy, 4 June 1851, CO 202/60, 57-8. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies,* 323-7.

any 'sufficiently inviting', arrangements would be made with the natives for establishing settlements.[67] Boyd's only commercial venture in the Pacific was to send *British Sovereign* to the New Hebrides for sandalwood in January 1847.[68]

Boyd had hazy notions about entering the China trade. Interest among Sydney's merchants in trade with China had revived after the Opium War ended in August 1842. The Chinese might buy British manufactured goods, the *Sydney Morning Herald* ventured, but the restrictive trade policies of the Chinese government prevented them from doing so. Australian sheepskins and wool would find a large market in the cold north of China. Chinese avidity for trepang and bird's nests might extend to such 'foreign delicacies' as salt beef and pork.[69] A London merchant cautioned Wentworth not to anticipate any immediate benefits from the opening of the five Treaty Ports.[70] Jardine Matheson advised that only sandalwood, which had become scarce during the Opium War, would pay.[71]

Boyd had good contacts in China. His cousin, William Sprott Boyd—not to be confused with his older brother of the same name—worked for Jardine Matheson at Canton. Ben asked him in 1842 for information on the market in London for Chinese silks and tea.[72] Boyd sent to two ships to China and Singapore in 1842 with salt provisions but demand

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[67]   Boyd to Russell, 8 October, 1840, *HRA*, 1/XXI, 54-5.

[68]   Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood,* 65, 72-3, 109-11, 190-3, 201.

[69]   *SMH*, 5, 6 December 1842. *Australian*, 16 December 1842. Stanley to Gipps, 7 March 1843, *HRA*, 1/XXII, 582. Order in Council, 24 February 1843, *NSWGG,* 1843, II, 1049. Home to Parker, 19 April 1843, CO 201/334, 22.

[70]   Brooks to Wentworth, 1 December 1842, Records of Robert Brooks & Co, FM4, 2384, ML.

[71]   Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood,* 80, 109-11, 136.

[72]   Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer, 90-1.

was weak and the high prices they asked for discouraged buyers.[73] Samuel Browning, an employee of the Royal Bank, toured China and the Eastern Seas in 1843. On returning he informed Boyd about the prospects of trade with the countries visited.[74] Boyd told an election meeting in November 1844 that he was going to China to introduce Australian wool but the voyage never eventuated.[75]

By 1846 profits from squatting runs seemed the only way of saving Boyd from being crushed by the interest accumulating on his loans from the Royal Bank. His letters to the board in London explained that cheap labour was essential if squatting was to yield greater profits. The security of every penny invested in Australia depended on an enlarged system of transportation and assisted emigration. With no prospect of obtaining assisted emigrants or convict exiles from Britain or expirees from Van Diemen's Land, he had to find other sources of cheap labour. Robinson told the Legislative Council in May 1847 that, unless some plan could be devised to bring labour from the mother country, it must be got from India or China, or wool-growing must be given up. Asiatic coolies would be an acceptable alternative if the convicts offered by the British government were not forthcoming. The house rejected Robinson's motion for a petition London to lift the prohibition on coolie emigration from India to Australia.[76]

Boyd had informed the board in London in 1843 that he had been 'offered many Chinese families for little more than the costs of their rations.[77] Three years later he told the committee on transportation that he was considering procuring labour from 'China,

[73] Boyd's evidence, 27 September 1843, q. 21, SC immigration 1843.

[74] Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer, 152-3.

[75] *SMH*, 16 September 1844

[76] Robinson, LC, *SMH,* 19 May 1847.

[77] Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer, 120,

India, and the Islands of the Pacific, of a description well adapted to our purpose, at one-half of the wages and expense of rations, at a rate of passage not exceeding £5 per head, and in our own ships'.[78] Robinson read to the Legislative Council a labour contract for Onee, one of 380 Chinese coolies recruited at Amoy in 1845 and 1846 for sugar planters on Bourbon (Reunion from 1848). Onee was indentured for five years at £4 16s a year with rations but no clothing or free return passage to China.[79] Chinese coolies recruited at Amoy did not begin landing in Sydney until October 1848.

Boyd began employing Aborigines in 1844. King Budyimbree and his tribesmen at Twofold Bay signed on as deck hands for the *Wanderer* and whaling ships. Newspapers described them as 'remarkably useful during the whaling season' and 'excellent stockmen'. William Wells recorded that the Aborigines were progressing towards civilisation through their useful and arduous labours on whalers. However, Aboriginal deck hands soon tired of the novelties of life at sea and civilisation and returned to their hunting grounds.[80]

By 1846 squatters were considering importing 'a number of the more civilized Blacks' from the Pacific Islands or New Zealand. 'Brave, sagacious, and intelligent', one editorial ventured, 'they [Maoris] are almost a magnificent race'. The 'disturbed' state of New Zealand and French 'persecution' of the Tahitians explained why Pacific Islanders would be willing to work in New South Wales.[81] The press reported rumours that Boyd was

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[78] Boyd's evidence, 19 October 1846, q.13, SC renewal of transportation 1846.

[79] Robinson, LC, *SMH*, 2 October 1847.

[80] *MM*, 13 April 1844. Boyd's evidence, 19 October 1846, qs 2, 5, 10, 11, SC renewal of transportation 1846. Robinson, NSW LC, *SMH*, 19 May, 2 October 1847. Wells, *Geographical Gazetteer of the Australian Colonies*, 70.

[81] *PPH*, 4 May 1847. *Australian*, 20 May 1847

planning to bring down a thousand Pacific Islanders a month on his steamer, the *Juno*.[82]

Robinson told the Legislative Council in May 1847 that Boyd's whaling fleet employed

many Maoris and South Sea Islanders as deckhands. Their satisfaction with wages below

half what Europeans were asking made them essential to the profitability of the industry.

Five months later, Robinson explained that the idea of employing 'savage labour' for the

wool industry was founded on the success of the New Zealanders recruited over the last

five years to overcome the shortage and high cost of deck hands on whaling ships.[83]

Squatters meeting at Brisbane in May 1847 preferred Indian or Chinese coolies, or

expirees from Van Diemen's Land, to Pacific Islanders. A call to squatters at Port Phillip to

stake their money on New Hebridean labour found no takers.[84] Wentworth, preferring

'Christianized heathens' from Polynesia over Melanesian cannibals, asked his brother-in-

law, Robert Towns, to find out if Maoris would be willing to engage as shepherds for five

years.[85]

Boyd managed the Royal Bank's operations in New South Wales on the principle that 'as

little information as possible be given to the public'. In 1845 alone he drew £44 027 in

loans from the Royal Bank to cover his soaring losses from whaling, coastal shipping and

building Boyd Town. The Royal Bank's debentures sold in 1840 for a total of £260 000

were to mature at the end of 1846. The bank's secretary asked Boyd for an accounting of

the Royal Bank's assets and operations in New South Wales. If no remittances were

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82   *MBC*, 4 July 1846, 22 May 1847. Darvall, Sadlier, *SMH*, 13 January 1847. *PPG*, 1 May 1847.
      PPH, 4 May 1847. *Australian*, 20 May 1847. Robinson, NSW LC, *SMH*, 19 May 1847.

83   Robinson, NSW LC, 19 May, 2 October 1847. *MBC*, 4 March 1848

84   *MBC*, 4 July 1846, 22 May 1847. *SMH*, 13 January 1847. *PPG*, 1 May 1847.

85   *PPG*, 1 May 1847. *PPH*, 4 May 1847. CN to editor, *PPH*, 18 May 1847. Wentworth, LC, *SMH*, 19
      May 1847. *MBC*, 5 June 1847. *SMH*, 15 June 1847. Towns to Jones, 11June 1847, TP 307/57,
      73-4.

received from Australia by the end of the year, the Royal Bank would be wound up and the directors called on answer to share and debentures holders.

A board meeting in November 1847 voted for a call of £5 on each share to cover losses. Boyd was liable for £30 000 on his 6000 shares. When he failed to send accounts to London revealing the extent of his debt to the Royal Bank, institutional investors pressed the board to elect William Sprott Boyd chairman and send him to Sydney to wind up the Royal Bank. He landed in Sydney on 13 March 1848 with a power of attorney authorising him to take over the running of the Royal Bank. He discovered that Boyd owed the Royal Bank £336 295 9s 6d, Robinson £23 585 16s 10d, and the Australian Wool Company £79 485 5s 5d.[86]

Boyd transferred much of the property bought with loans from the Royal Bank to William Sprott over the next twelve months. William Sprott sold the three million acres of squatting leases slowly to prevent glutting the market. Robinson transferred his squatting runs in New England and Moreton Bay to William Sprott seven weeks before he died of scarlet fever at the age of 33. Boyd sold his whaling ships and parcels of land in the Nineteen Counties, and borrowed money against the collateral of his other ships to continue his social whirl of dinners at Craignathan, race meetings, balls and weekend parties on the *Wanderer*. When Boyd's employees at Boyd Town sued him for £2500 for unpaid wages, the police arrested him. He spent a few days in Darlinghurst goal until bail was posted. Following two more failed calls on Royal Bank shares, the directors in London replaced William Sprott with Samuel Browning to manage the bank's affairs in the colony. Boyd left the colony on the *Wanderer* in October 1849 for the Californian goldfields.

Boyd luck had no luck in California. On returning to New South Wales in 1851, he 'mysteriously' disappeared on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. Boyd, accompanied by a native boy, went ashore in a small boat early in the morning of 15 October. About

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[86] Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer, 143, 161-2, 212-3.

fifteen minutes later crewmen on the *Wanderer* heard two shots from the shore. A large number of natives armed had gathered on the beach and in canoes. An armed party of four went ashore in a whaleboat to look for Boyd. Natives in canoes tried to capture the whaleboat but were driven off by grapeshot from the *Wanderer*'s swivelling   two-pounder. The shore party found Boyd's sword belt and ammunition pouch but nothing else. Over the next two days shore parties found the head of Kapentania and then ransacked and burned two small villages but found no trace of Boyd.

John Webster, an island trader who joined the *Wanderer* at San Francisco, wrote the only surviving account of Boyd's last voyage. The *Wanderer* left Guadalcanal for New South Wales on 18 October. On reaching the east coast three weeks later, a gale drove the *Wanderer* on to the bar at Port Macquarie on 11 November. The crew and passengers came ashore but heavy seas broke up the ship within days. Following the loss of 'our commander', Webster lamented, 'an evil fortune brooded over the yacht'.

Captain Truscott, an islander trader, docked at Sydney on the *Oberon* in 1854 with news that Boyd's initials had been found carved on a tree on Guadalcanal. Several ship owners, including Robert Towns, wrote to the colonial secretary offering to search for Boyd. The Royal Navy sent HMS *Herald* to Guadalcanal in December 1854. The natives told Captain Denham that Boyd had been speared. They then persuaded the captain to buy Boyd's skull for twenty axes. The skull was later identified as that of a Papuan native.[87]

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[87]   Webster, *Last Cruise of the Wanderer*, 108-28. *SMH*, 7 May 1863. Diamond, *The* Sea Horse *and the* Wanderer, 166-86, 199-211.