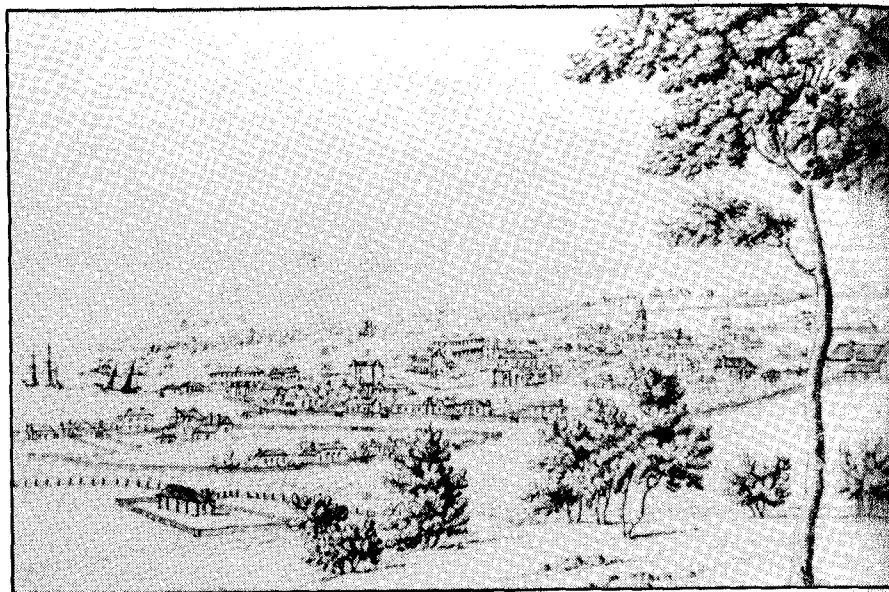




# Major Pery Baylee

Pery Baylee, (b. 1784?), commandant of convicts, was born at Limerick. On reaching his majority he entered the army. While on active service he took part in the capture of Martinique in 1809, and, next year, of Guadeloupe. On 5 November, 1812 he was promoted captain. As a member of the 63rd Regiment he left England in 1828 for New South Wales. Transferred from Sydney, he arrived at Hobart Town in the *Georgiana* in July, 1829, with his company: 3 sergeants, 2 corporals and 26 privates. He was listed a brevet major on 22 July, 1830. In February 1831 he was appointed commandant of Macquarie Harbour penal station and a commissioner of the peace, and reached his isolated post on the west coast of Van Diemen's Land in December.

He was steadfast in maintaining order and discipline, but his more lenient treatment gained greater respect and confidence from the prisoners that his predecessors had received. He had the open cordiality and compassion for which Irishmen are noted, and, where possible, he reduced severe treatment meted out by previous commandants, offered promotion to posts of greater responsibility or ease to those deserving it and recommended the favour of the governor for the best behaved, thus enhancing their prospect of return to Hobart,



Hobart Town, 1817.

which to some prisoners was next best thing to entire liberty. In a modest report to the colonial secretary in December, 1832, he gave much credit to the Macquarie Harbour chaplain Rev. J. A. Manton for the improved behaviour of the prisoners. During Major Baylee's term, much to the surprise of inhabit-

ants, G. A. Robinson arrived with parties of Aborigines he had mustered for transfer to Great (Flinders) Island, where arrangements had been made for their reception.

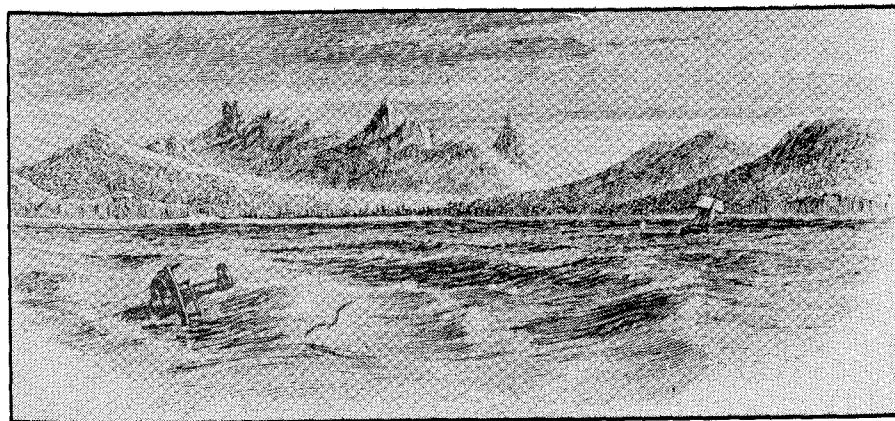
Orders for the abandonment of the Macquarie Harbour penal station, at a time when he considered his methods were proving successful, disappointed Baylee. With reluctance he transferred his prisoners to Port Arthur, and returned to Hobart on 25 November, 1833. Six weeks later he sailed for Madras with a detachment of the 63rd Regiment, having expressed his intention to return to Tasmania. The wish was not fulfilled; in 1842 he sold his commission and retired. His name then disappeared from War Office and other records.

### Sources

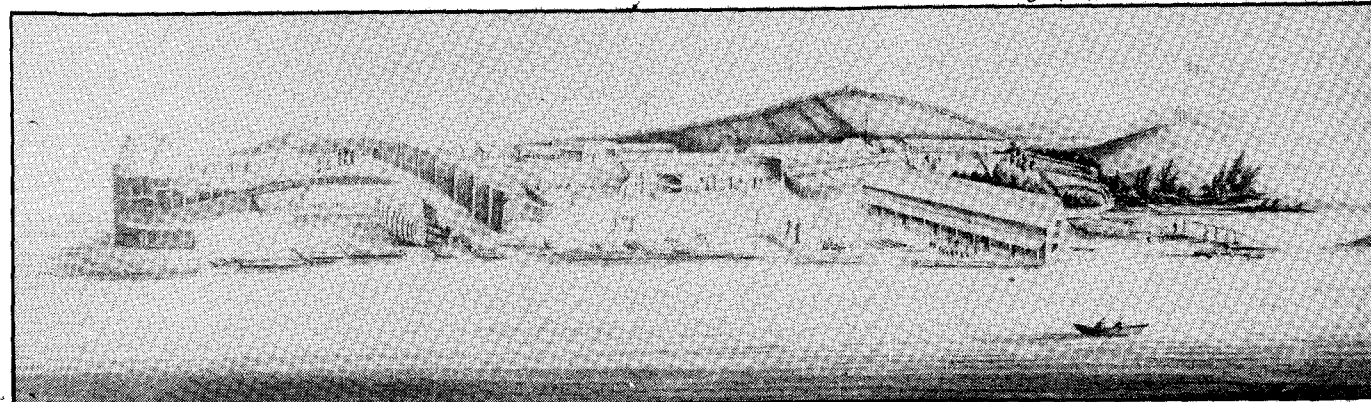
J. Backhouse and C. Tylor, *The Life and Labours of George Washington Walker*, (Lond, 1862); Ac No 4715, (TA).

E.R. Pretyman.

(Reprinted from the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*)



Flinders Island, from 'Cruise of the Beacon'.



The notorious penal settlement at Macquarie Harbour in Van Diemen's Land, (Tasmania), sketched by a convict artist, William Buelow Gould.