

**AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT**

**THOMAS BAINES**

**Sketches, 1855-57**

**Reel M397**

**Royal Geographical Society  
1 Kensington Gore  
London SW7 2AR**

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

**Filmed: 1961**

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

(John) Thomas Baines (1820-1875) was born in Kings Lynn, Norfolk, and was apprenticed to a coach painter. In 1842 he emigrated to South Africa and worked in Cape Town as a scenic and portrait painter and he was later an official war artist in the war against the Xhosa tribes in 1850-52. He returned to England to supervise the publication of *Scenery and events in South Africa* (1852).

In March 1855 Baines ailed to Australia to take up the position of artist and storekeeper on the Northern Australian Exploring Expedition led by A.C. Gregory. The party, comprising 18 men and 50 horses, left Sydney in July 1855 on the barque *Monarch* and the schooner *Tom Tough*. They sailed through Torres Strait and reached Entrance Island at the mouth of the Victoria River on 15 September 1855. The *Monarch* then departed for Singapore. From two bases on the Victoria River, Gregory and his companions proceeded to explore the interior. In April 1856 Baines accompanied Gregory and two others on a foray in which the Baines River was discovered. In June 1856 Gregory began a mounted journey to Moreton Bay, sending Baines and a small detachment on the *Tom Thumb* to Timor to obtain supplies. Baines was forced to sail west to Surabaya to have the boat refitted. The main mast was broken and he decided to abandon the *Tom Tough* and purchased a brigantine. In October 1856 the party began the return voyage to Australia. Baines did not reach the Albert River until 17 November 1856 and he found that Gregory had left two months earlier. On 27 November 1856 Baines departed on the return voyage along the west coast of Australia, stopping at Albany, and reaching Sydney on 31 March 1857. He presented a number of artefacts from northern Australia and the East Indies to the Australian Museum.

In 1858 Baines returned to South Africa and accompanied David Livingstone on a journey along the Zambesi. In 1861-62 he undertook an expedition to South West Africa with James Chapman, which led to the publication of his book *Explorations in South-West Africa* in 1864. In 1869 he led an expedition, on behalf of the South African Goldfields Exploration Company, to the Matabele king Mzilikazi. In 1871 he was granted a concession to explore for gold between the Gweru and Hunyani rivers. He died at Durban in 1875.

## THOMAS BAINES

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Four albums of watercolours, wash paintings and pencil drawings by Thomas Baines produced while serving on the North Australian Exploring Expedition, July 1855 – March 1857.

Most of the works are identified and many of them are dated. The following is a select list indicating the range of subject-matter.

Port Jackson

*Tom Tough and Monarch* leaving Sydney Harbour, 18 July 1855

Port Stephens, July 1855

Seal Rock

Aborigines, Moreton Bay

Brisbane

Mangroves

*Tom Tough and Monarch* leaving Moreton Bay, August 1855

Bribie Island, 18 August 1855

Great Palm Island

Cumberland Group

Curtis Island

Frankland Islands, 20 August 1855

Cape Tribulation, 21 August 1855

Port Albany

Possession Island, 23 August 1855

Torres Strait Islanders

Torres Strait Islands, August 1855

Aborigines in Howick Group

Entrance to Victoria River, 26 September 1855

Victoria River

Hostile natives, Victoria River, December 1855

Wickham River

Packhorses, Victoria River, January 1856

Gorge at Depot Creek, 12 March 1856

Aborigines, Victoria River, March 1856

Camp at Victoria River

Attack by Aborigines on Williams and Bowman

Making marked tree line for Gregory

Crocodiles and snakes

Eagle

Rock paintings

Baines River, tributary of Victoria River

Timor

Coastal profiles

Natives of Timor

Timorese woman

Sumbawa  
Flores  
Java, 3 September 1856  
Javanese proas  
Bali  
Lombok, 10 September [1856]  
Fishing boats  
Sharks, barracoutas, dolphins  
Trepang fishery  
Gulf of Carpentaria  
Sweers Island

King George's Sound  
Wilson's Promontory  
Cape Howe, 29 March 1857

Two photographs of Baines  
Photograph of memorial stone to Baines, erected by Robert White