

Who was Black Mary?

Black Mary was the girlfriend of a notorious Tasmanian bushranger named Michael Howe. He had met her during one of his many raids on Aboriginal camps around 1815. Although she was not a bushranger herself, she helped Howe in many ways, particularly in finding hideouts in the bush, getting information about the movements of pursuing soldiers and Aboriginal hunting so that his gang would not be heard. She was a very loyal woman.



In 1817, Howe was being chased by some soldiers and Black Mary was with him. She began to tire as they soldiers were pushing them hard and to slow down. Seeing she couldn't keep up and was endangering him from being captured, Howe shot her.

Black Mary recovered from her wounds but swore revenge on Howe for betraying her and her trust and friendship. From then until he was killed she repeatedly led parties of police and soldiers into the bush, showing them all Howe's old hiding places and putting the police onto his tracks.

Unfortunately, nothing else is known about her, including her life after Howe was killed. Presumably she returned to her tribal ways.