

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 10/07/24

CLARENCE



S127 Clarence
PortPhillipBayColesChannel
Trench



S127 Clarence
PortPhillipBayColesChannel
Diver



S127 Clarence
PortPhillipBayColesChannel
Artefact



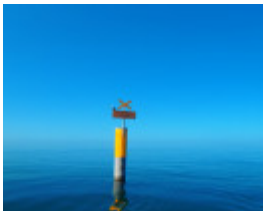
S127 Clarence
PortPhillipBayColesChannel
WoodRemnants



S127 Clarence
PortPhillipBayColesChannel
PortholeDetail



S127 Clarence SitePlan
diveinfosheet 1992



shipNo127 2013 09 11
1378856830484
NewClarence Pile

Location

Coles Channel, Port Phillip Bay

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S127

Date lost

02/09/1850

Construction material

Wood

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

2

Length/Breadth/Depth

51.00 Feet / 16.30 Feet / 8.70 Feet

Builder

Possibly William Lowe (Gesner, Peter; 1984)

Year of construction

1841

Built port

Williams River, NSW

Built country

Australia

Registration Number

4 of 1850

Registration Port

Hobart

Date lost

02/09/1850

Departure

Hobart

Destination

Melbourne

Cargo

Sheep Previous cargos included timber, coal, grain and wool (Broxham, G and Nicholson, I; 1988), general goods and cattle, passengers and timber

Owner

James Baynton, Thomas Barker

Master

Capt. William Dalton

Weather conditions

SE wind force 5 Clear

Cause of loss

Parted from her anchor and was driven ashore on the West Sand.

Statement of significance

The Clarence is significant technically and archaeologically as an example of an early Australian-built vessel. The schooner was built in 1841 on the Williams River in northern NSW. Most ships built in Australia during this time were constructed by rule of thumb, without using models and plans. There is very little evidence, therefore, of ship building techniques used by early Australian ship builders, except in the archaeological record. By studying the Clarence, archaeologists can learn more about the techniques employed by early Australian shipbuilders, to whom supplies in lumber and metal fastenings were tightly restricted.

*There is a 200m diameter Protected Zone around Clarence centred on position Lat: -38.20257, Long: 144.723253 WGS84. No entry is permitted unless a Permit has been authorised by Heritage Victoria. *

VHR history

The schooner Clarence was carvel planked with a square stern and standing bowsprit. The vessel was used in the trade of timber, cattle, sheep and other cargo between Sydney, Port Phillip, Port Albert and Twofold Bay until it was stranded and nearly wrecked in Warrnambool. After repair, of which there is also some indication that it was refitted to accommodate passengers, it transported passengers until late 1848. A female bust figurehead was added sometime during the period between 1842 and 1850, possibly after the vessel was stranded at Warrnambool in September 1847. In 1848, the Clarence was again used as a cargo vessel in Bass Strait trade, sailing between Port Fairy, Port Phillip, and Launceston.

On 2 September 1850, the Clarence ran aground on a sand bank in Port Phillip Bay while transporting 132 sheep from Melbourne to Hobart. It had anchored in Coles Channel for the night, when the cable broke after a southwest to south southwest wind blew up.

The sheep on board were rescued by Geelong residents, who would later enter into a dispute with the ship's owners. The result of the dispute is unknown. The loss of the vessel and cargo was estimated at £500.

The Clarence was first registered as a wood, 51-foot two-masted carvel-built schooner; 67 498/3500 tons with a square stern, standing bowsprit, no galleries and one deck. Timber samples taken from archaeological investigations revealed that the ship was made from a species of eucalyptus, which is indigenous to Australia.

The stranding at Warrnambool at the time brought about allegations of insurance fraud. An investigation was launched, though documents on whether these accusations were proven have not been located.