

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 19/10/24

DEBORAH

Location

Reclaimed Land, Newport, Port Phillip Bay, Yarra River entrance

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S163

Date lost

1885

Construction material

Wood

Hull

Hackmatack, beech, pine, spruce; felt and yellow metalled 1848; classified A1 Lloyd's 1849

Propulsion

Sail

Length/Breadth/Depth

0.00 / 0.00 / 0.00

Year of construction

1847

Built port

Nova Scotia

Built country

Canada

Registration Port

Liverpool (1850)

Date lost

1885

Cause of loss

Abandoned in Greenwich Bay, and later broken up

Statement of significance

Potentially historically significant as example of convict hulk. Archaeological significance could be limited due to ships being broken up. At the time of the first gold rushes, many vessels were abandoned by their crews on Port Phillip Bay. Lawlessness was rife, and existing penal institutions were unable to cope with the number of criminals being gaoled. The Deborah and Sacramento were therefore purchased by the Government in 1853 for hulking as prison ships and were moored off Williamstown with three other prison hulks Lysander, President and Success.

VHR history

A barque, formerly owned by Darby & Co. arrived from Bristol on 15 Sept. 1852, carrying cargo, 18 first-class passengers and 236 steerage. Purchased as a convict hulk, the Deborah housed refractory seamen, mainly deserters, pending arrangements to ship them as crews on undermanned outgoing vessels. Other prisoners were to be used to build wharves. The Deborah and Sacramento became torpedo stores ships at Naval Depot, Fishermen's Bend. Lay alongside hulk Sacramento in Greenwich Bay in 1878. Recent extensive research by Wayne Manallack casts doubt on some secondary sources on the history of the convict hulks and whether the hulks, marked on a map as being under the reclaimed land at Newport, are indeed the convict hulks. However, if two convict hulks are buried there, it seems likely they are the Sacramento and Deborah - not Sacramento and President, as claimed by Wilson Evans, but not substantiated by documentary evidence.