

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 12/07/24

FOAM

Location

Bass Strait, off Breamlea

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S261

Date lost

30/01/1880

Official number

78058

Construction material

Wood

Hull

Single deck, elliptic stern, carvel built, scroll figurehead, hardwood hull, deck and topsides of pine, copper fastened bottom, trenailed throughout, 45' length of keel, 51' overall.

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

2

Length/Breadth/Depth

45.80 Feet / 14.50 Feet / 6.60 Feet

Builder

Henry Plummer

Year of construction

1877

Built port

Gravelly Beach, Tamar River

Built country

Australia

Registration Number

93/1879

Registration Port

Melbourne

Date lost

30/01/1880

Departure

Lorne

Destination

Melbourne

Cargo

Ballast

Owner

10/1877-6/1879: Edward Taylor, Formby, TAS.
 2/1/1880: Joseph Gay, Richard Anderson, William Anderson and Richard Anderson Jnr all of Lorne, mortgaged 3/1/1880 165 pounds @ 10% with William Gardiner Sprigg, accountant of Melbourne.

Master

William Anderson

Weather conditions

Easterly gale

Cause of loss

Believed to have foundered in an easterly gale in light ballast

Passenger comments

Harris, a boy

Number of crew

2

Crew comments

Joseph Gay, William Collins

Statement of significance

The site of the Foam has not been located and therefore its archaeological significance cannot be assessed. It is representative of a typical vessel trading around the south-eastern coast of Australia, and has some historical significance for its role in the Tasmanian, and Lorne coastal trades. In particular it was associated with two well known families, the Taylors and the Andersons, who played important roles in the development of their northern Tasmanian and the Lorne communities respectively.

VHR history

The Foam was owned by the Anderson family of Lorne, and went missing without a trace in an easterly gale in Bass Strait while on a voyage to Melbourne. The Foam was built in Tasmania for Edward Taylor, one of the well known seven Taylor brothers who were all master mariners. It was described as a "handsome" vessel that had been twelve months in construction, made of hardwood with pine topsides and deck, copper fastened in the bottom and trenailed throughout. It was intended for the Tasmanian north-west coastal and Macquarie Harbour trades, and could carry about 36 tons of cargo on its registered tonnage of 20 (Taylor, 1998: 14). In its short, just over two year trading career it was involved in at least three search and salvage incidents of wrecks in Tasmania, before being tragically wrecked itself in Victoria. In November 1878 the Foam was sent to search for another of the Taylor family's vessels the cutter North Star, which had sunk in a squall. Using grappling gear they were able to find and recover the mud filled hull of North Star and salvage it. In December 1878 both the North Star and the Foam were employed in salvage, this time on the Dawn of Hope which had stranded. In December 1879 while on a regular voyage to Macquarie Harbour also found and reported the wreck of the Launceston ketch Sarah Ann, which had wrecked with no sign of the crew. Fortunately after a four day trip over 60 miles of rugged country all of the Sarah Ann's crew made it to safety (Taylor 15-16, 20). The Foam was bought by Richard Anderson et al of Lorne and re-registered in Melbourne on 29/12/1879. It was intended to carry timber outwards and general cargo inwards between Port Phillip and Lorne (Cecil & Carr, 1988: 7). Richard Anderson was a brickmaker by trade, and had made the bricks at brickworks in the hills behind Lorne for the construction of the Grand Pacific Hotel at Lorne. William Anderson, the master, was the eldest son - William Street in Lorne is named after him (Cecil, 1989: 48) It would have been a sharply felt and tragic loss to the Anderson family and the Lorne community when it was lost. Although it was only bought by Richard Anderson one month before it was lost, it was said to have been in the Melbourne and Louttit Bay trade for some time (Geelong Advertiser 9/2/1880). The Foam left Lorne on 30 January 1880 with a crew of three men and a boy, the same day an easterly gale that was to last three days blew up. The trip to Melbourne normally took two to three days but as the boat had not been heard of since its departure, Inspector Burton received a telegram on Saturday 7 February from Captain Payne, Chief Harbormaster of Melbourne stating that two men had started from Louttit Bay to search for wreckage and suggesting that troopers from Geelong should be sent along the beach towards Louttit Bay. Inspector Burton met the two men on Saturday afternoon. Two miles east of Puebla Point, some distance from the creek, the men found a dinghy lying on the shore which they identified as belonging to the Foam. They also found three empty cases, a small memorandum book, a life buoy, two large oars and a paddle belonging to a small boat. The next day Mounted-Constable Hamilton searched the shore from where the dinghy was discovered to the Barwon Heads but did not find any trace of the vessel or the crew. Richard Anderson himself walked from Lorne to Breamlea in search of any further wreckage or signs of the crew. The vessel was valued at &#pound;400.