

# Victorian Heritage Database Report

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## HABITANT



S309 Habitant  
PortPhillipBayPortMelbourneBe  
HistoricPhotograph

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### Location

File removed - 9 September 1999 - vessel broken up.

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S309

### Date lost

02/04/1958

### Official number

89390

### Construction material

Wood

### Propulsion

Sail

### Length/Breadth/Depth

225.00 Feet / 42.70 Feet / 24.00 Feet

### Builder

Sheffield, Wickwire & Co

## **Year of construction**

1885

## **Built port**

Cornwallis, Nova Scotia,

## **Built country**

Canada

## **Registration Port**

Windsor, Nova Scotia

## **Date lost**

02/04/1958

## **Cargo**

None<br /> Had formerly shipped kerosene from America (Gibson; Report of Melbourne Harbour Trust, 1894)

## **Owner**

In 1894, Sheffield, Wickwire & Co. As floating dock, owned by Melbourne Harbour Trust

## **Cause of loss**

Broken up<br />

## **Statement of significance**

<p>The Habitant was a floating dock at Williamstown for 60 years and was used by more than 2500 vessels</p>

## **VHR history**

3-masted Habitant had fortunately had discharged its cargo of kerosene when it caught fire at South Wharf about 5 am on 8 June 1894. The captain, Mrs Potter, their child and seven crew members were on board. Dunnage, soaked with kerosene, added to the flames' fury. Three miles of hoses from five steamers were used but could not reach the fire in the hatches, so the vessel was filled and the fire extinguished after 20 hours. Police inquiries failed to reveal sufficient grounds for an arrest although the fire was believed to have been deliberately lit. The Captain had reported quarrels among the crew and one man had been arrested for drunkenness that night. Vessel was apparently not insured. Considered too costly to repair, converted to floating dock, used by more than 2,500 vessels. Bow chopped off and a manually operated gate was installed. As a floating dock: length - top 216 ft, bottom 200 ft; breadth- top 36 ft; depth on sill 14 ft; able to take vessels up to 400 tons; time to empty dock 2 hours; ultimately hogged about 5 feet. Replaced by new dry dock at Williamstown in 1958. Towed to east of Sandridge Surf Lifesaving Club, Port Melbourne, for breaking up.