

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 18/10/24

HABITANT



S309 Habitant
PortPhillipBayPortMelbourneBe
HistoricPhotograph

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
 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

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.