

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 18/08/24

ANONYMA

Location

Point Lonsdale beach, Port Phillip Heads

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S32

Date lost

03/10/1859

Construction material

Wood

Hull

Wood Square stern, carvel built, no galleries or head

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

2

Length/Breadth/Depth

62.10 Feet / 19.20 Feet / 7.50 Feet

Year of construction

1847

Built port

Boston, Massachusetts

Built country

USA

Registration Number

No. 17 of 1859

Registration Port

Melbourne

Date lost

03/10/1859

Departure

Pilot vessel, Port Philip

Cargo

Stores

Owner

April 1854: Victorian Government August 1854: Port Phillip Sea Pilot Service, No. 3 Company Anonyma .

Master

Apprentice Pilot Weekes

Weather conditions

Wind change from hard northerly to southerly

Cause of loss

Ran ashore. Officer in charge, Apprentice Pilot Weekes, went below without telling lookout and went to sleep. Lookout saw ship going onto reef, but would not call Weekes for fear of reprisal. (ID 9, 53)

Statement of significance

<p>it is impossible to assess the archaeological significance of the Anonyma as the site has not been located. However it is historically significant for its design and use as a pilot vessel, and for its role in the hydrographic charting, pilotage and navigation of Port Phillip.</p>

VHR history

The Anonyma was a 42-ton gross, two-masted wooden clipper schooner built in Boston USA, modelled as a smaller version of the world-famous yacht America (which gave its name to the America's Cup It was carvel-built with a square stern, and with spacious and airy cabin accommodation fitted out in 'great taste' (Argus 12/4/1853). Dimensions were 62.1 x 19.2 x 7.5 feet (20.2 x 5.2 x 2.8 metres). Used as a pilot vessel in Boston for some years, it arrived in Sydney in 1853 and was sold to the Victorian Government for the same use. It arrived in Port Phillip on 29 April 1854 and, after four months service as a government pilot cutter, was sold for £900 to seven Port Phillip pilots of the newly formed, privately-owned Port Phillip Sea Pilot Service on 26 August 1854, becoming the No. 3 Company vessel. There were three companies formed of 11 pilots each, and each company was named after their corresponding vessels, these being No. 1 Corsair, No. 2 Proserpine and No. 3

Anonyma.
 On the night of 2 October, the Anonyma was hove to off Port Phillip Heads in a strong northerly wind that, during the day, had caused the vessel to cruise outside the Heads quite close to shore. The officer in charge was Apprentice Pilot Weekes, who went below without notifying the watch look-out and went to sleep. During the night the wind changed to the south, reportedly the look-out saw the vessel drifting ashore but was fearful of calling Weekes and being told to 'mind his own business. The Anonyma was thus blown ashore on Point Lonsdale with no warning from the look-out and came to rest on a rocky shelf with its mast still standing and damage to its forefoot where the barque Glaneuse now lies (McGrath, Reminisces of the Pilot Service, p.2). It did not sustain much damage initially and most fittings and stores were able to be removed before it became a total loss. The subsequent inquiry led to Weekes dismissal from the pilot service for criminal neglect of duty. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment but was released after two months and drowned shortly afterwards in the Chatham Islands, New Zealand. Uninsured, the Anonyma was replaced by the Rip.
 The vessel gave its name to the Anonyma Shoal at Sandringham (on the eastern edge of Port Phillip Bay), because it was used in the discovery and survey of those rocks in 1853 while under government ownership. Some secondary sources incorrectly state the Anonyma was wrecked near Point Nepean. Contemporary newspaper reports say it was wrecked 'on shore about 1 mile outside Point Lonsdale (Argus 4/10/1859). The wreck site has neither been reported nor located, though timbers have been reported on the site of the Glaneuse, which was an iron barque. It has not been confirmed whether these are the remains of the Anonyma or of the Glaneuse.
 The Anonyma had an earlier collision with the Monumental City (ID 115)