

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 17/08/24

HERCULES

Location

Apollo Bay

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S322

Date lost

15/12/1861

Official number

41482

Construction material

Wood

Hull

One deck, 2 masted brigantine, square stern, carvel built, no gallery, billet head

Propulsion

Sail

Number of masts

2

Length/Breadth/Depth

72.20 Feet / 22.20 Feet / 10.00 Feet

Built country

Sweden

Registration Number

Registration Port

Melbourne

Date lost

15/12/1861

Departure

Apollo Bay

Destination

probably Melbourne

Cargo

Split railway sleepers and timber

Owner

1856: Patrick Turnbull, merchant of Melbourne
 ?-1861:Alexander Cairns and Robert Amos of Melbourne:
mortgaged to Henry Alfred Coffey @ 25 October 1861

Master

not named

Weather conditions

Strong winds (SE?), heavy seas, strong current

Cause of loss

Forced ashore by heavy seas and strong current

Statement of significance

<p>The site of the Hercules has not been located so an assessment of its archaeological significance cannot be made. However it has local historical significance for being involved in the Apollo Bay timber trade. It would be of technical interest for any signs of wooden shipbuilding traditions and/or techniques used by Swedish shipwrights in the 19th century, or modifications to suit Australian conditions.</p>

VHR history

The Swedish built 140 ton brigantine Hercules was first registered in Melbourne in 1855, and was owned by Patrick Turnbull, merchant of Melbourne in 1856 (ASRO Melbourne Registry 1855-59). Its owners at the time of its wrecking in 1861 were Alexander Cairns and Robert Amos, and it was mortgaged to Henry Alfred Coffey.

 On Saturday 14th December 1861 the Hercules was lying at anchor in Apollo Bay after having taken on board a cargo of heavy sawn timber including split sleepers. The Captain had put out three anchors (Loney , 1979) however the next day the Geelong Advertiser reported that: “A telegram from Cape Otway yesterday announced the fact that, on Sunday morning at about two o“clock, this schooner laden with heavy timber had gone ashore at Apollo Bay, owing to the strong current and heavy ground swell occasioned by the

rough weather at the time. All hands were saved, but it was feared the vessel would prove a total wreck (GA 17 December 1861).
No further historical information relating to salvage attempts or auction of the hull or fittings has been located. Wreckage that might possibly indicate the site of the Hercules has neither been located nor reported.