

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 01/05/24

ARABIA

Location

Railway Pier, Sandridge, Port Phillip

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S37

Date lost

12/11/1860

Construction material

Wood

Hull

Oak Fir, 3 decks, bolted, copper sheathed. Surveyed New York 1853, classified first class hull and materials.

Propulsion

Sail

Length/Breadth/Depth

0.00 / 0.00 / 0.00

Registration Port

Brunswick, Maine,

Date lost

12/11/1860

Departure

Liverpool

Destination

Melbourne

Cargo

Large general cargo had been discharged, except for 1,500 iron rails (400 tons) UID 9, 152

Owner

Capt. Harding, James Badger and others (Australian Shipping Record 1983)

Master

Captain Harding

Weather conditions

Not known

Cause of loss

Under charter to the White Star Line, Liverpool, UK. Captain and Mrs Harding and family had retired at 10 pm, aroused by ships bell ringing to sound alarm of fire at 11.00pm. All unharmed. Moorings were cast off, ship drifted away from the pier. With cargo discharged, Arabia was lighted so attempts to scuttle ineffectual, with vessel rising above water. then the fore and main masts fell over the side, thus lessening draught still further. Began to fill about 5.00am, had sunk by 8.00am - an obstruction to craft alongside the pier. Fire may have been caused by a half extinguished match close to fore hatch where fire broke out but the official inquiry could not determine the cause of fire. However, in view of failure of water hose, need for ridged adherence to port and harbour regulations emphasised at Inquiry. Sunken hull raised by Messrs Robbins, stevedores, towed to shallow water before being broken up. However in 1864 it was still a hinderance to shipping using Railway pier. Praise for harbor officials and volunteers from other vessels who attended fire. (UID: 9)

Passenger comments

Wife and family of Captain Harding (UID: 9)

Statement of significance

<p>It is impossible to assess the archaeological significance of the site since the structural remains have not been inspected and would have largely been damaged in the fire. It is of some historical significance and even social significance in regards to the praise given to those individuals who attended to the fire onboard.</p>

VHR history

Under charter to White Star Line, Liverpool, UK. Captain and Mrs Harding and family had retired at 10 pm, aroused by ship's bell ringing to sound alarm of fire at 11 pm. All were unharmed. Moorings were cast off, ship drifted away from pier. With cargo discharged, Arabia was lightened so attempts to scuttle were ineffectual, with vessel rising above water. Then the fore and main masts fell over side, thus lessening draught still further. Began to fill about 5 am, had sunk by 8 am - an obstruction to craft alongside pier. Fire may have been caused by a half-extinguished match close to fore hatch where fire broke out but the official inquiry could not determine cause of fire. However, in view of failure of water hose, need for rigid adherence to port and harbour regulations emphasised at Inquiry. Sunken hull raised by Messrs Robbins, stevedores, towed into shallow water before being broken up. However, in 1864 it was still a hindrance to shipping using Railway Pier. [No further record located. Not in Lloyds . Not the Arabian owned by WhiteStar! Praise for harbor officials and volunteers from other vessels who attended fire.
 The tug Sophia was quickly sent to the ship which was then towed away from the pier. She was soon a mass of flames fore and aft, the flames spreading through the rigging and rising to the royal mast heads. An attempt was made to scuttle her but it was not successful until 6am. The origin of the fire was unknown.