

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 30/04/24

MAHOGANY SHIP

Location

west of Warrnambool

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S438

Construction material

Wood

Propulsion

Sail

Length/Breadth/Depth

0.00 Feet / 0.00 Feet / 0.00 Feet

Crew comments

Unknown if crew abandoned vessel, lost, survived or assisted by local Aboriginal people

Statement of significance

<p>The Mahogany Ship is historically significant as one of Victoria's oldest recorded shipwrecks, and for the mystery and legend that has made it one of Victoria's and Australia's maritime mysteries. Many believe that it is the wreck of an early European ship of discovery, but there is no historical evidence to support this view. It is archaeologically significant as the remains will provide the only known evidence to identify the vessel and its likely provenance.</p>

VHR history

Date of loss is listed as 1790 (?) in Bateson, Australian Shipwrecks Vol. 1.
 Originally reported by early sailors and settlers as an ancient wreck in the sand dunes near Warrnambool. It was described as appearing to have been made of a dark wood eg; Mahogany or teak, suggesting an Indian-built vessel but this has never been confirmed.
 McIntyre uses this unconfirmed observation as evidence in his book suggesting the Portuguese (using Indian-built vessels) discovered Australia up to 250 years before Captain Cook sighted the east coast.
 It could also be the remains of an early whaling ship, or floating wreckage that had washed up on the beach from a wreck thousands of miles away.