

Victorian Heritage Database Report

Report generated on - 18/10/24

MAY FERGUSON

Location

Maribyrong River, Footscray (Saltwater)

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

S460

Date lost

29/05/1892

Official number

None

Construction material

Wood

Hull

Steam yacht

Propulsion

Steam - Unknown

Length/Breadth/Depth

0.00 Feet / 0.00 Feet / 0.00 Feet

Builder

Employees of Mephan, Ferguson & Co.

Built port

Melbourne, Victoria

Built country

Australia

Date lost

29/05/1892

Owner

Nuttall (engineer) and others

Weather conditions

Bitterly cold night

Cause of loss

Destroyed by fire whilst at anchor

Statement of significance

<p>The May Ferguson is significant as an example of a privately built pleasure craft.</p>

VHR history

Rig listed as steam yacht. Pleasure craft built in spare time by its
 owners, employees of Mephan, Ferguson & Co. Robinson, the crippled
 caretaker who lived nearby in the bend of the Yarra and Salt Water
 Rivers, observed after midnight that the vessel was on fire. Jumping out
 of bed, and clad only in his shirt, he rowed to the May Ferguson.
 Standing on a pile, he tried to extinguish the flames by throwing water
 from a bucket but was unable to check them. The yacht gradually burnt
 down to the water's edge and sank. When Robinson, who was unable to
 swim, tried to return to shore, he found his dinghy had drifted out of
 reach. Eventually, suffering badly from being three hours semi-naked in
 the cold, he managed to drag himself to shore by means of a rope. The
 fire was believed to have been caused by embers from the engine furnace
 - the vessel had been used earlier that day. (ID 9, 152)