THE
STORY
OF
VICTOR
HARBOR

by
A. A. STREMPEL
B.E., F.S.A.S.M., A.M.I.E, (Aust.)
and
J. C. TOLLEY

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE brief preface by the authors on the following page gives the reason for their research and subsequent compilation of this work.

The need for it however has been recognised for many years as evidenced by the interest shown, by visitors particularly, in the origins and subsequent use of many buildings and public works of which relics remain.

Plainly a history was required and it was indeed fortunate that two persons with the interest, ability and public spirit of the authors should have dedicated themselves to this work.

At the time of research both were members of the Royal Geographical Society (S.A. Branch) Inc. and of the Historical Division of that Society (of which Mr. Tolley is currently Chairman) ensuring a recognition of the necessity for sifting fact from fiction. In this they have been meticulous and yet produced a work which, it is felt, will hold the interested attention of readers.

My Council is indebted to the authors for their work and has pleasure in publishing "The Story of Victor Harbor".

W. BRIAN LALOR,
Mayor.
1965.

AUTHORS PREFACE

THE authors of this story were prompted to investigate the History of Victor Harbor because they had both been intrigued with the place from an early age. When people were questioned as to how or why such a thing was erected they were met with inconclusive replies. They therefore decided to search for the full and complete story themselves.

THE STORY

OF VICTOR HARBOR

A. A. STREMPEL, B.E., F.S.A.S.M., A.M.I.E., (Aust.)
and
J C. TOLLEY

FOREWORD

VICTOR HARBOR is a unique town in South Australia. It has been prominent in this State's history from the very earliest days. Although it has had periods of prosperity as well as depression in its long history, it has emerged as the premier tourist resort in this State.

Visitors must feel curious about the large works, the remains of which can still be seen in the port area. It was therefore felt that the interesting story which underlies these projects, together with some facts about the town should be made available for the interest of tourists to this area of the South Coast.

Some of the questions which are usually raised in the minds of visitors are answered in the text; such as

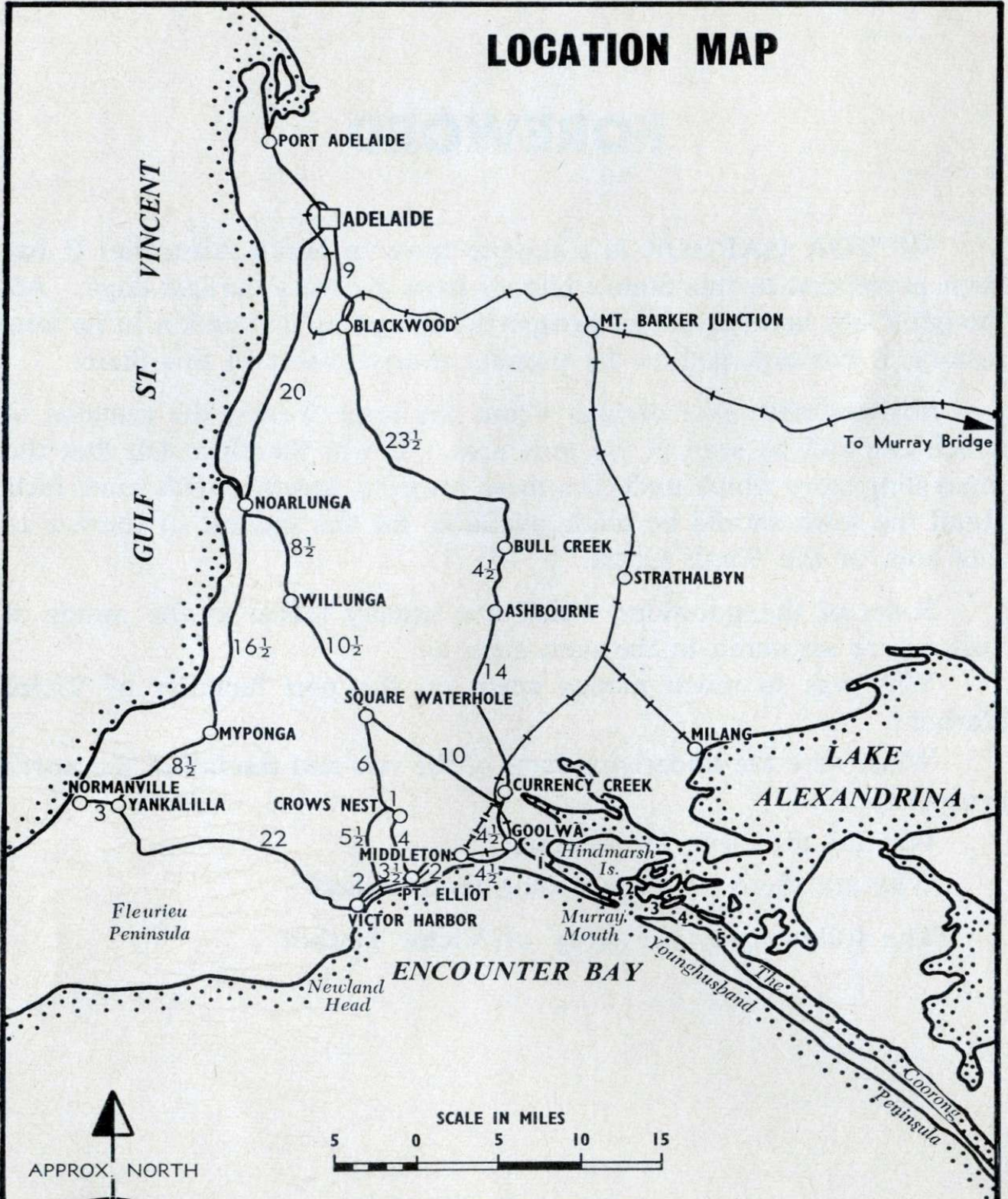Why was so much money spent on the port facilities of Victor Harbor?

What were the underlying facts of the rise and the fall of the port's prosperity?
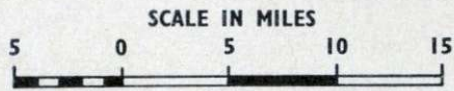
Was the area safe for shipping?

Why are there no ships calling there today?

The following is the story of Victor Harbor:

LOCATION MAP

PORT ADELAIDE

ADELAIDE

GULF ST. VINCENT

9

BLACKWOOD

MT. BARKER JUNCTION

20

23½

To Murray Bridge

NOARLUNGA

8½

BULL CREEK

4½

STRATHALBYN

WILLUNGA

ASHBOURNE

16½

10½

14

SQUARE WATERHOLE

MYPONGA

6

10

MILANG

8½

CURRENCY CREEK

LAKE ALEXANDRINA

NORMANVILLE YANKALILLA

CROWS NEST

1

3

22

5½

4

4½

GOOLWA

Hindmarsh Is.

2

3½

2

4½

1

MIDDLETON

PT. ELLIOT

Murray Mouth

VICTOR HARBOR

Fleurieu Peninsula

Newland Head

ENCOUNTER BAY

Younghusband

The Coorong Peninsula

SCALE IN MILES

5   0   5   10   15

APPROX. NORTH

RAA
ROYAL AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION · SOUTH AUSTRALIA

LEGEND

ROADS
RAILWAYS (Existing)
(Removed)
BARRAGES

Drawn by R.A.A. of S.A. from Sketch supplied by J. C. Tolley.

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WHALING

AT the time of the settlement of South Australia whale oil was a most important product used extensively in everyday life. The many reports of whales along the shores of the new colony prompted the founders to develop this industry and in fact it became the first South Australian industry although its course was over troubled waters.

In March, 1837, Capt. J. W. D. Blenkinsop, worked on behalf of a large and influential firm of Sydney merchants, Robert Campbell Junior and Company, set up a whaling station at Victor Harbor. About the same time the South Australian Company set up their station in the lee of the Bluff.

On 26th April, 1837, Capt. Crozier in H.M.S. Victor anchored in the lee of Granite Island, being piloted through the reefs by Capt. Blenkinsop. Crozier found good anchorage there and named the place Victor Harbor after his ship.

Capt. Blenkinsop established his whaling station about a half a mile north of where the present causeway connects the mainland with Granite Island. This station was later moved and set up on Granite Island. Blenkinsop built his home and established a garden in the vicinity of present day Cornhill Road. He named the place of the fishery "Anne Vale" after his wife. He called the harbor "Hind Cove" after his ship, but this was never officially recognised.

Towards the end of 1837 when the whaling season had finished it was reported that Capt Blenkinsop shipped 200 tons of whale oil from his fishery and that constituted the first commodity exported from Victor Harbor and in fact South Australia.

The whaling industry did not get off to a very happy start. From the beginning there was friction between the two establishments caused by the fact that the stations were close together and experienced whalers were few in the province at that time. It is recorded that the South Australian Company station endeavoured to entice away some of the men from the Victor Harbor station and when Captain Blenkinsop went to see Captain Wright of the Bluff station concerning the desertion of some of his men, he was ordered off at pistol point; such was the feeling at that time.

They were also beset with other difficulties, the most important being that the whales were not as plentiful as at first thought. So by 1839 we find that the two stations were under the control of the one man.

Unfortunately Captain Blenkinsop, two of his men and the South Australian Judge, Sir John Jeffcott, were drowned at the Murray Mouth in December, 1837. The Judge was on a tour of inspection of the area while waiting for a ship to take him to Tasmania. He had come from Adelaide to Encounter Bay in "John Pirie" and while in the anchorage at the Bluff the ship had been blown ashore.

Blenkinsop's body was the only one recovered and he was buried in his garden. His was one of the very early graves in the district. After his death Blenkinsop's whaling station was taken over by Mr. J. B. Hack.

By 1841 there was a decline in operations due to further difficulties. The industry functioned with varying success until about the middle sixties when it ceased altogether.

There was one further attempt to re-establish whaling in the area but like the first venture it did not last long. In 1870 a Mr. Ranford endeavoured to commence whaling again but in July 1871 the report stated. that no whales had been caught. This new venture was short lived and its failure sounded the death-knell of whaling in the vicinity. Several shipments of whale bones, collected from the foreshore, were sent to England for use in the pottery trade but this was short lived as well.

This completes one story of Victor Harbor "the whaling and whale bone industries" an unhappy and badly managed affair that did not enhance the reputation of the district.

VICTOR HARBOR AS A PORT

ANOTHER story of Victor Harbor, that of the Port, goes back to the earliest days of the Province of South Australia. It was decided to establish the settlement, to be formed under the Wakefield Scheme of Colonisation in the vicinity of the large river on which Capt. Charles Sturt had sailed his whale-boat in 1829-30. It was felt that this river could provide a means of transport for the people who would settle in the inland regions and enable them to get their produce to the sea coast quickly and cheaply. It was also felt that South Australia should have a share in the trade that would eventually develop and thus be a further means of revenue to the growing province. To meet these requirements it was realised a port should be established on the South Coast to handle the trade from the Murray River.

Following Capt. Crozier's favourable report on Victor Harbor, Capt. Lipson, Naval Officer and Government Harbormaster visited the locality and added his praise of the anchorage at Granite Island to that of Crozier.

Among various other praise-worthy reports, Capt. Hart in May, 1838, reported to Governor Hindmarsh that he considered the anchorage at Granite Island to be quite safe and he suggested that a breakwater be built about 100 yards in length and running in a north-easterly direction from the island and that 6 to 8 ships would be perfectly safe in the harbor so formed. This would be one of the earliest suggestions to improve the harbor, but these additions did not come for many years.

Governor Hindmarsh acted on these several favourable reports and the area was proclaimed a port on 26th June, 1838. It was named Victor Harbor following Capt. Crozier's nomenclature of the previous year.

The first vessel to call and load cargo at the newly proclaimed port was "Goshawk" which took on a load of whale oil in the lee of Granite Island in August, 1838. The new anchorage was much safer than the exposed Rosetta Harbor in the lee of the Bluff where three ships had been blown ashore the previous December.

On 20th June, 1839, "Lord Hobart" arrived from Holdfast Bay with 30 persons, including Rev. R. W. Newland. The party came ashore close to the landward end of the present causeway. They made their way towards the Bluff and established themselves in the area now known as Yilki. The rest of the party travelled overland by bullock wagon.

Let us turn back time and try to picture the arrival of this party from "Lord Hobart". There were fears of the natives and the unruly whalers and to add to this they had to find what shelter they could in the open at the Inman River on their first night ashore as it was already dark when they reached the banks of the stream, not a very happy start for strangers in a strange land. After many hardships they made good at their new settlement at Yilki.

Colonel George Gawler, second Governor of South Australia, was impressed with the prospects of developing the River Murray trade and establishing an outlet for the cargo at Victor Harbor. In a letter to the Colonising Commissioners in London dated 19th October, 1839 he suggested that vessels should be sent direct to Encounter Bay and to assist with their navigation a fixed light should be installed on Rosetta Head (The Bluff). Evidently this proposal was not acted upon.

Governor Gawler wished to get a clear picture of the potential like ly to develop from the introduction of steamers on the River Murray and he made an exploratory trip along the banks of the Murray almost to where Morgan now stands. The finding of this journey was that the greatest difficulty to be overcome was the unreliability of the Murray Mouth for shipping.

This outlet to the sea was so dangerous that these early proposers ruled out the possibility of ever being able to navigate vessels through the treacherous waters and so the only alternative was to build a port on the river near the sea and find an equally suitable place on the coast and connect these two installations overland.

The big elbow on the main channel of the Murray known by the natives as Goolwa (native name for elbow) was selected as the place for the river port and after much enquiry the sea outlet was to be established at Port Elliot, about 7 miles west of Goolwa. The two places were to be joined by either a road, a railway, or a canal. After much further deliberation the railway was chosen, mainly from an economic point of view. This line was eventually constructed in 1853-54 during Sir Henry Edward Fox Young's term as Governor of South Australia.

In spite of Port Elliot being chosen as the port for the Murray trade certain sections of the community still felt that Victor Harbor was to be preferred. Reports from surveys made as early as 1837 were all favourable for Victor Harbor whereas Port Elliot had hardly been considered. These people felt they would be proved correct in the long run, as in fact they were, although they were over-ruled about the selection of Port Elliot at the time.

They did not have to wait long. Port Elliot's life as a port was short lived. In rough weather a heavy sea rolls in and although Horseshoe Bay, the inner anchorage, was protected to some extent by Pullen Island one has only to examine the narrow entrance between the island and Commodore Point to realise the exceedingly dangerous nature of the locality as a port particularly for sailing vessels which predominated in those days. Later several wrecks occurred and in 1861 to the great joy of the promoters of Victor Harbor it was decided to close Port Elliot as soon as anchorage could be established in the lee of Granite Island.

In February 1857 the Treasurer, R. R. Torrens, instructed Captain Douglas to make an accurate survey of Victor Harbor showing the most suitable places for moorings to be laid down. He was also instructed to report to what extent, by what means, and at what expenditure Victor Harbor could be made into a commercial port. Douglas made his report and added that the anchorage would be safe in any weather. After the decision was made to abandon Port Elliot, Mr. W. Hanson, Colonial Architect and Inspector of Railways, was sent to Victor Harbor to report on the jetty required for the handling of cargo. He also reported favourably on the safety of Victor Harbor as an anchorage for large ships.

After receipt of Hanson's report the necessary authority to formally establish Victor Harbor as the port for the Murray Trade was obtained from Parliament and on 25th June, .l862, a contract was let to Mr. Gouge for £8,600 for the construction of a Jetty and Pier.

The work commenced the following month and by the end of the year 640 feet of jetty had been built. Work proceeded without interrup tion during the first three months of 1863, the piling being carried half way across the reef in the direction of Granite

Island. As the work pro ceeded difficulty was encountered in driving the piles owing to the lime stone crust of the reef.

With a View to avoiding any delay in the work an alternative proposal was made by the contractor to carry an embank ment over the remainder of the distance and to construct a wharf on Granite Island having an equal depth of water to that intended at the end of the contract jetty. After careful examination into and the probable effect on the harbor of the proposed alternative works it was de cided to adhere to the original plans and formal notice was given to Gouge requiring him to proceed in the terms of the contract. Soon after receiving this notice Gouge declared himself insolvent and his securities were therefore called upon to complete the works in the terms of the contract. After a suspension of the works, operations were resumed in November, 1863, under the direction of a Mr. Matthews, who was Gouge's original foreman.

During the early part of 1864 work was again impeded by the hardness of the ground but this difficulty was finally overcome, the piling being carried out to the full distance by the end of June. In addition to the work included in the original contract, a shed capable of holding eight loaded trucks was erected at the end of the jetty for the protection of goods awaiting shipment. Meanwhile the extension of the railway from Port Elliot had reached Victor Harbor.

At 3.00 p.m. on 4th August, 1864, after the railway extension had been officially opened the call of the band brought the visitors together again. A procession was formed, preceded by the band and the jetty was traversed by the large assembly. A bag of wheat was lowered into a boat as the first instalment of cargo to be shipped from the jetty. Mr. Dodson, the Chairman of the Encounter Bay District Council, then stepped forward and declared the jetty open for public traffic under the name of the Victoria pier. Three lusty cheers were given for the Queen and the Royal Family and the band struck up the National Anthem. At night a dinner was held at the Victor Harbor Hotel where about 60 guests sat down to a table "which literally groaned beneath the weight of the food". This was followed by a ball.

On the following evening the contractors for the railway (Redman) and the jetty (Matthews) held a dinner at the Port Elliot Hotel for the men employed on the works.

Now let us see how the contemporary press described the Victoria Pier: It is entirely constructed of colonial Gum. The pier consists of 89 bays each 20 ft. long, making a total length of 1,780 ft. Each bay is supported by 3 piles at each end with the exception of the head which for 7 bays has 5 piles and for 3 bays 7 piles in each tier. The outside piles are 12" by 12" and about 20 ft. long and the centre ones 14" by 14" by about the same length. The erection of the pier took nearly 2 years and cost about £8,800. The railway continues up to the end of the jetty where cranes are to be placed for loading and unloading cargo.

Even while the Victoria Pier was being completed there was strong local agitation for the subsequent extension of the jetty to Granite Island. This voice continued to grow louder while Victor Harbor's trade increased and the town began to develop.

The increase in trade in 5 years led the Government in 1869 to consider the extension of the jetty and the wharf accommodation at Victor Harbor and. the necessary machinery was set in motion. R. H. Ferguson, the President of the Marine Board, reported that "a breakwater was much to be desired but the requirements of the port were not such as to warrant the structure of a public work of this description for many years to come." He estimated the cost of the work at £10,640.

A Mr. Wentzel suggested 2 breakwaters 500 yards in length from Point Douglas, at the easterly end of Granite Island, and estimated the cost at £15,000. The Engineer in Chief, H. C. Mais, reported on the project and suggested a breakwater was essential. His estimate of the cost of extending the present jetty to Granite Island, constructing a wharf 500 ft. long in 10 ft. of water at low tide was £25,000. Other schemes were submitted, the cost varying from £41,298 to £54,000. Finally Mr. Wishart secured a contract for the extension of the jetty to the island as recommended by the Engineer in Chief.

The extension of the jetty and the construction of the first shipping pier known locally as the "Working Jetty" was authorised by Act of Parliament No. 28/1867. Wishart's tender of £9,072/1/6 was accepted on 21st June, 1872. The working jetty has since been removed but ran into the harbor in an easterly direction in continuation of the roadway from the end of the causeway.

It was at first intended to carry the jetty from the curve in the original structure across to Granite Island just touching the island and then continuing on into 8 ft. of water. It was pointed out to the Government that a large sum of money might be saved if the shipping pier were taken along a causeway cut out of the island instead of just "kissing" the land as proposed. Accordingly plans were modified and the causeway was made on the Island. This causeway forms part of the roadway at the end of the wooden causeway from the mainland and running towards the kiosk.

In July, 1872, Wishart erected a Blacksmith's Shop and sleeping accommodation on the island. On New Years Day a public picnic was held on the island, access being gained by the unfinished timber causeway. The gap next to the island being temporarily bridged with planks.

The causeway was finished in 1875 and the goods shed was removed from the old. jetty to the island. The railway was extended along the new section of the causeway and jetty, the rails being laid by Mr. J. S. Harding. The "Working Jetty" was later widened by Mr. T. Whitford.

Even with the completion of this new pier there was still considerable delay as all cargo had to be lightered to the vessels which were moored in the harbor, there being insufficient depth of water alongside the Jetty for the larger ships now using the port.

Further proposals were made to increase the handling capacity of Victor Harbor. More cargo was coming down the Murray to Goolwa for shipment due to the increased inland settlement and the larger number of paddle steamers operating on the river.

After much enquiry it was resolved to build a breakwater 1,000 ft. long and a wharf big enough to enable large ships to tie up alongside.

When this proposal was carried in the House of Assembly on 25th July, 1878 there was great rejoicing in Victor Harbor, notwithstanding the fact that an Act had been passed in 1876 authorising the extension of the Kapunda. Railway Line to connect with the River Murray at the North West Bend (Morgan). The ultimate doom of Victor Harbor was not forseen when on 6th February, 1879, a public banquet to commemorate the passing of the vote to improve Victor Harbor was held in Read's Wool Store. Ninety persons, including the Premier and several members of the Legislature, sat down to dinner.

£121,460 was provided under Loan Act No. 77/1877 for these works. The contracts were let on 13th August, 1878 to Mr. John Robb for £11,271/14/O for the Screw Pile Jetty and £96,185/18/10 for building the breakwater.

The contract consisted of three main parts:

1. The construction of the causeway or road leading from the "Working Jetty" to the point where the screw pile jetty commenced.

2. From the end of this causeway an embankment or pier ran seawards in a north by east line for 500 ft. at which point the water had a depth of 21 ft. and the pier was continued a further 300 ft. on screw piles which gave a depth of 27 ft. at its extremity at high water. The pier had a width of 40 ft. and could accommodate vessels on both sides, sheltered by the breakwater. The screw pile jetty superseded an original scheme for a timber jetty.

3. The breakwater was designed to be 1,000 ft. long and 30 ft. wide at the top. It was to be constructed of granite, blasted from Granite Island and the top and seaward sides were to be formed of blocks weighing not less than 20 tons a piece. There was 39 feet of water at the seaward end and there it would be about 200 feet wide on the seabed. It ran in a north easterly direction from the north-east point of Granite Island.

The causeway running from the "Working Jetty" to the pier was made with materials already on the site. The rocks were blasted out and the area levelled. By November, 1878, two thirds of this work was completed and the railway track had been ballasted ready to receive the rails. The sea. wall of this causeway was later faced with granite blocks which gave it a neat finish as can still be seen today.

The stone pier was carried into the sea from the causeway and lead out to the screw pile jetty. The timber for the jetty arrived from Sydney in "Francis Guy" in August, 1878, while the screw piles arrived on "Atma" and were in course of erection by November. Progress with the piles was slow due to the hard seabed. Holes 4 ft. to 6 ft. deep had to be blasted from the limestone to receive the piles which were then screwed down into the rock to a depth of from 6 ft. to 9 ft. A few reached a depth of 11 ft. before they withstood the applied pressure. Under such circumstances. it was not surprising that sometimes only 3 piles could be driven in a week. After screwing down they were filled with a concrete of Portland cement, broken granite and screenings.

The wooden superstructure was commenced in April 1880 and by October. 20 bays had been completed and much of the decking laid. Before laying the decking the piles were tested with a load of 30 tons per bay, equivalent to 2 tons per lineal foot, and showed no settlement.

In order to protect the screw piles from the surging of vessels coming alongside. Jarrah fender piles were driven clear of the jetty and securing only at the cross heads and cross sills. This work was completed by the middle of l88l. Four sets of rails were laid on the jetty with a traverser at the head to transfer trucks from one line to the other.

The material for the breakwater was all obtained on the site from the island. Pegs were fixed along the island about 100 ft. from the seaward side and beyond this line so formed the contractor was not permitted to blast.

The breakwater was commenced early in 1879. Some of the rocks were transported from the quarry by cranes while the smaller material was moved by trucks running on temporary rails and a hopper barge also dumped material in the water. The barge deposited the rock in the sea until about 18 ft. of water remained, this being the minimum depth in which it could operate. Above this mark the stone had to be tipped in from the trucks or lowered into place by the cranes. The 20 ton blocks on the sea face were released from the cranes and as they rolled to "their watery resting place" assumed a slope of about 1 in 2. The smaller material was moved by horse-drawn truck, the horse stepping clear about 30 yards from the end of the works and the truck continued on till its progress was stopped by a beam, when the stone slid off into the sea. This went on till the required height was reached when the wooden staging supporting the rails was extended and the process was repeated.

During 1881 some differences occurred between the Engineer for Harbors. and Jetties and Mr. Robb as to the proper interpretation of the contract for the erection of the breakwater. The case was eventually referred to the Supreme Court. The judgement pronounced was in favour of the Government.

The work was completed in September, 1882, when "the last stone was thrown into the sea".

In order to obtain materials for the breakwater seven large blasts were fired, some of which caused widespread interest.

The first blast was fired on Saturday, 19th April, 1879. A tunnel had been driven into the island. At the end of the tunnel a right angle cross drive was made in two directions. At intervals along these two drives and in the main tunnel 5 chambers were excavated. 10,000 lbs. of blasting powder and 75 lbs. of dynamite were distributed in the chambers. The tunnel drives were filled with debris and the main entrance was blocked with large boulders and exceptionally heavy timber in order to contain the force of the blast.

The charges were wired to be fired electrically. At 4.15 p.m. Miss Robb, daughter of the contractor, pressed the firing handle – and such an upheaval of rock and soil took place as had never before been seen in the Colony. From the water the sight was grand as of a miniature volcano erupting, the disturbance of the ground had. been seen shortly before the sound reached the onlookers. The earth seemed to shoot upwards for some 80 to l0O ft. above the island and descend in graceful showers. An estimated 40,000 tons of rock were shifted, some boulders weighing as much as 150 tons.

A subsequent blast scheduled for mid May was a failure.

State Politicians showed great interest in the construction work at Victor Harbor and following a parliamentary inspection of tunnelling operations. and other work in progress the drive for the fourth blast was named the Parliamentary Tunnel, and the resultant blast was known as the Parliamentary Blast. Interest was so keen that as the scheduled date for the blast approached, all accommodation in Victor Harbor was taken and the Government vessel "Governor Musgrave" was in the harbor with the official party on board. When the blast was fired in January, 1880, it was an unqualified success and completely changed the appearance of the eastern end of the island.

"The whole point of the island was knocked into chaos completely, lifted up and tumbled about in a most fantastic style". An estimated 50,000 tons of rock were moved. In the evening the official party was entertained by Mr. Robb.

The final blast took place in September, 1881, when an estimated 30,000 tons of rock were moved.

The following are details of the blasts:

Date of Blast	Amount Displaced	Remarks
April, 1879	40,000 tons	
May 1879	Nil	Failure
August 1879	30,000 tons	Sea Tunnel
January, 1880	50,000 tons	Parliamentary Blast
April, 1880	20,000 tons	
May, 1881	22,000 tons	
September, 1881	30,000 tons	

It is of interest to note that the entrance to the drive known as the "Sea Tunnel", the second successful blast, can still be seen from the ocean side of the island.

The initial work on the breakwater was done by hand. In November, 1878, only temporary machinery was being used. The Railways Dept. had lent a 5 ton steam crane and several other cranes, none of them large, assisted with the work of raising and placing the stones.

By April, 1879, several more powerful cranes had arrived including a 20 ton steam derrick supplied by the Government. The latter was at work in June, and a sight worth seeing is the ease and facility with which it drags out and lifts as a feather the huge pieces of rock that have been secure and embedded for the last perhaps one thousand years, transhipping them to where it is to be hoped they may henceforth rest. The crane stood on a platform and railway of its own and was self-propelled, travelling to and from the end of the breakwater from the quarry. The railway was of very wide gauge and constructed of very strong material to bear the great weight not only of the crane itself but also the 20 ton blocks it conveyed. In the centre of this railway was another line of the 5'3" gauge for the trucks which moved the smaller stone for filling the interstices of the work.

The largest crane, a Ransom and Rapier, was imported by Robb and. commenced work in June, 1881. It weighed 75 tons and lifted and placed 25 ton blocks in a radius of 30 ft. "with ease, speed and safety". The crane was mounted on a frame leaving 1 1 ft. clearance in height by 16 ft. in width. In the closing stages of construction there were, in addition to this crane, a 22 ton travelling crane, the 20 ton derrick as mentioned above, two 12 ton, two 6 ton, and one 5 ton crane. All of these cranes were driven by steam. There were also several smaller hand cranes.

The trucks were 4 wheel railway type vehicles running on rails of the 5'3" gauge. Nine horses used for hauling them were stabled on the island.

The initial quarrying operations were carried out by hand using sledge hammers and chisels. Later, drills operated by compressed air, replaced the hand tools. A 12 h.p. engine was used for driving the compressor for the air drills. A 3" main pipe left the compressor and as it branched off diminished in size to a 1" pipe from which rubber tubing led to the drills at the rock face, which worked at a pressure of 60 to 70 lbs.

per square inch. Three Ford drills could be used at the one time. These were owned by Robb. In addition the Government supplied four Ingersoll drills. These latter drills required a large working area and were used in the tunnels, while the handier Ford drills were used where the work was more confined.

The workshops were erected at the end of the timber causeway from the mainland and consisted originally of 4 forges and a powerful steam engine driving a variety of machines. Later this engine drove a pump to supply the works with water as well as powering cutting, punching and drilling machines in the blacksmith's shop. As well as this big building there was also a portable shop near the works on the screw pile jetty where drills were sharpened and other similar work could be done quickly on the job.

The Hopper Barge "John Robb" was delivered in July, 1879 and was at work the following month. Initially it was loaded 2 or 3 times a day at the new jetty and carried from 24 to 26 truck loads of granite averaging four tons per truck on each trip, discharging its load on the site of the breakwater some distance from the shore thus producing a core of smaller blocks of granite, which was covered with heavier stone as the work progressed.

At a later stage in the breakwater construction larger stones, up to ten tons in weight, were handled and the barge had to be stengthened and later restrengthened. It was occasionally laid up for repairs on the beach but remained in use till the completion of the works.

The subsequent history of this barge may be of interest. Although built in 1879 it was still in use in 1933 when it was owned by W. S. & R. E.Merch of Port Adelaide, having been in continuous use in various capacities since its breakwater construction days. However the vessel was lost on 24th April, 1954.

A water supply was connected to the works on the island in October, I879. A well was sunk in the Government Reserve on the mainland near the commencement of the timber causeway. A 2" main was laid along the causeway and the water was pumped into storage tanks on the island where the whole of the works were supplied by gravitation.

During the construction period four workmen were killed, one by falling rock and three by an explosion while preparing a shot for blasting.

As. can be seen from the foregoing details the construction of the screw pile jetty and breakwater was carried out on a large scale and was one of the biggest undertakings attempted in South Australia up to that time. The amount of mechanical equipment assembled for the work was considerable as at that time mechanisation of large construction works was only in its infancy.
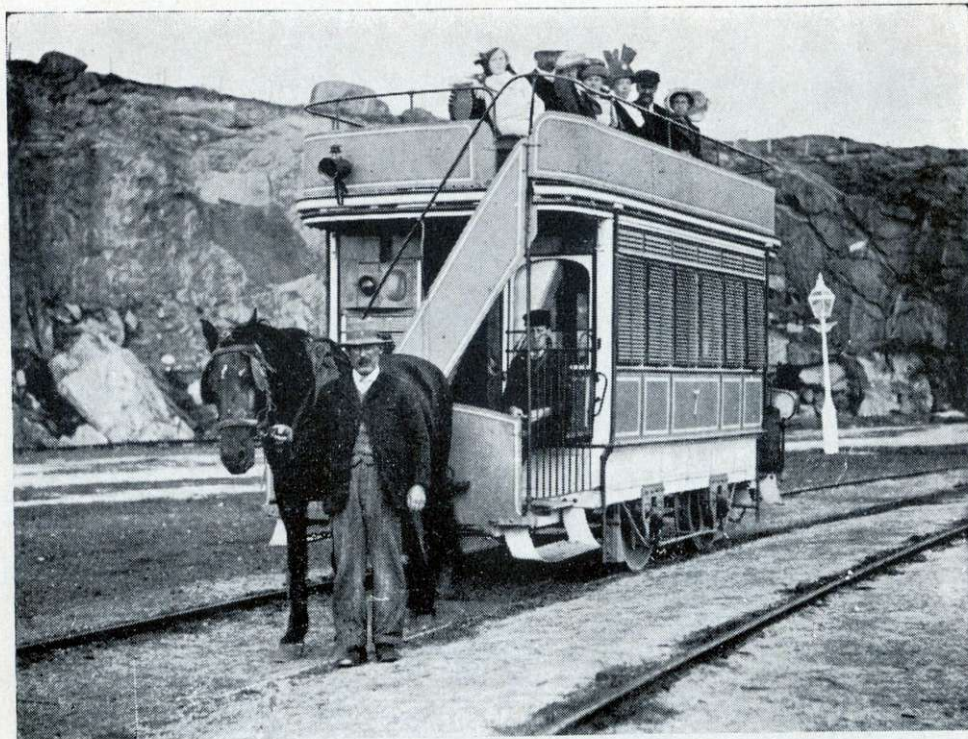
This is one more fact that adds to Victor Harbor holding a unique place in South Australian history.
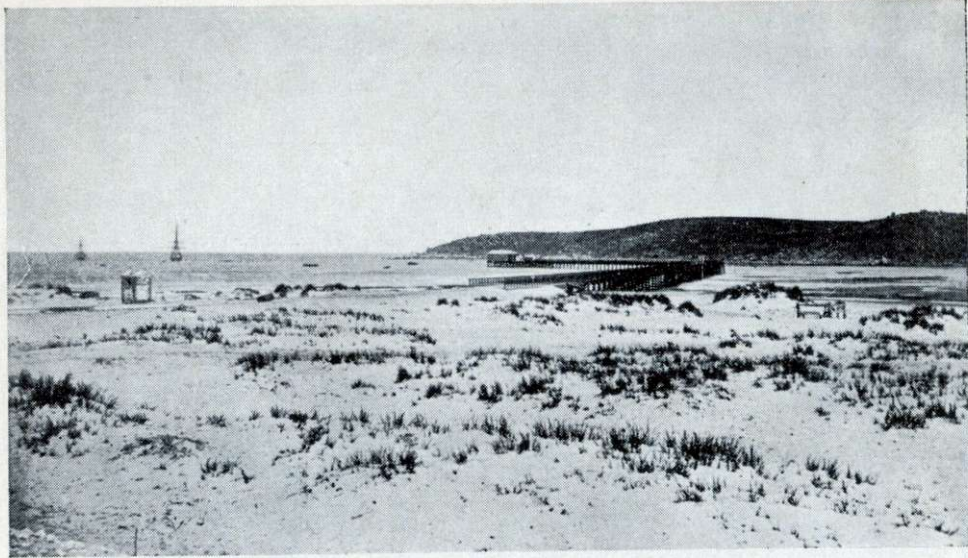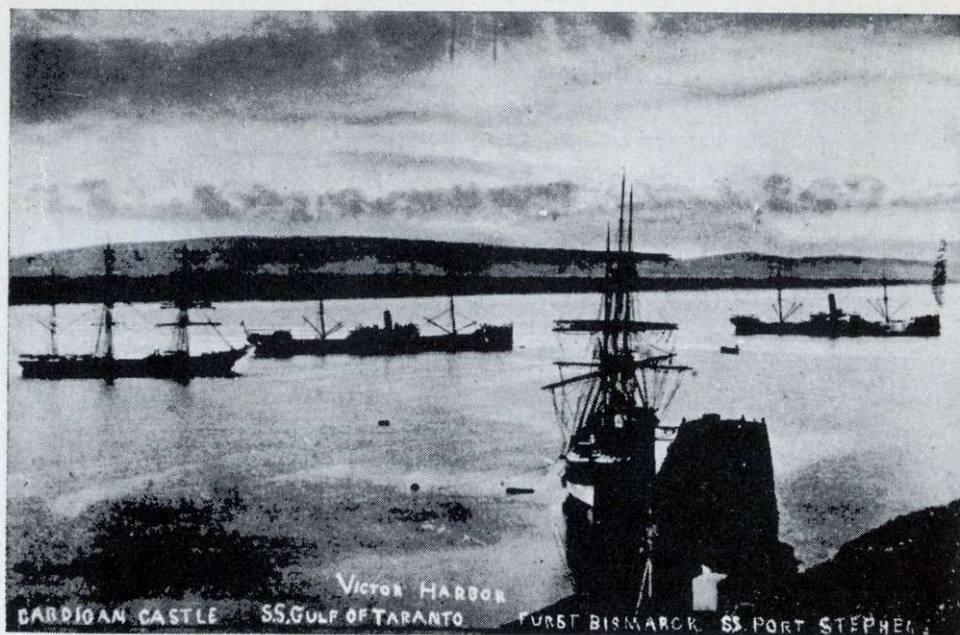
VICTOR HARBOR
Dated 10th December, 1867
Picture Titled: Victor Harbor Tramway and Jetty.
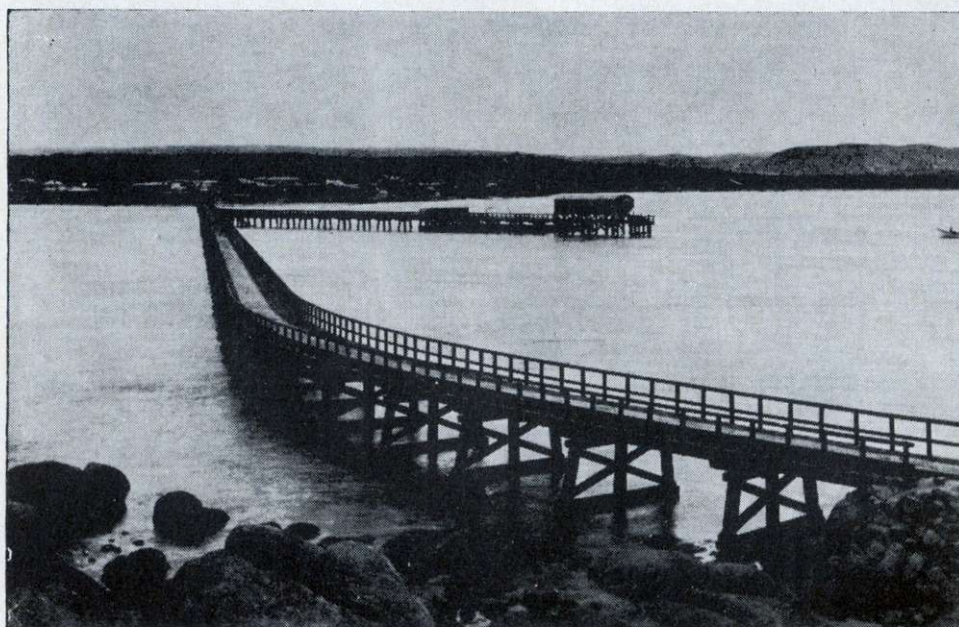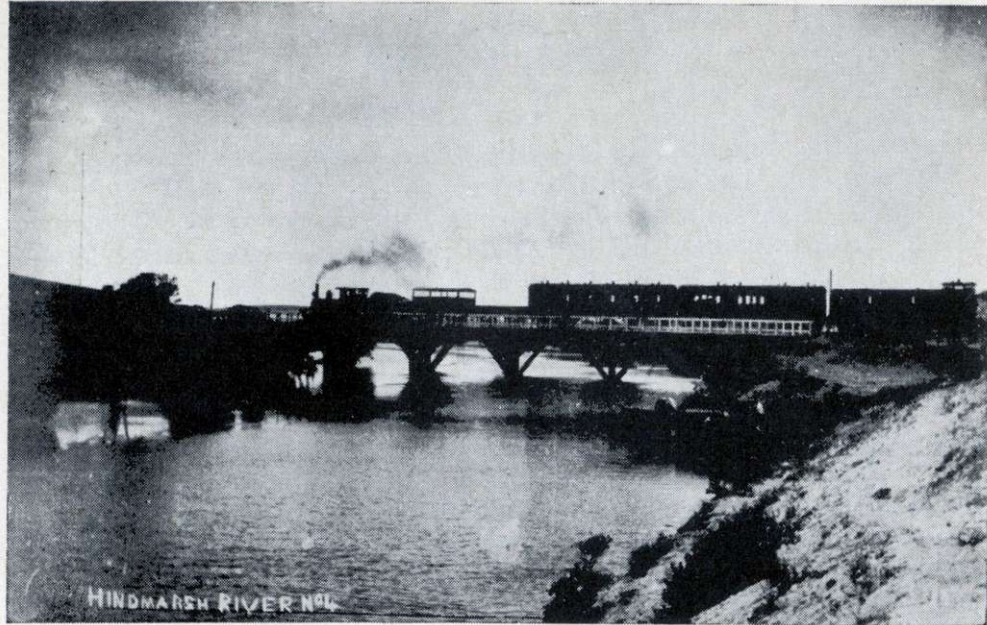Ships in Harbor: "Flinders" and ":Seashell" at anchor.

HORSE TRAM No. 7.
Commenced the Passenger Service to Granite Island.
in December, 1894. This car was withdrawn in 1931.
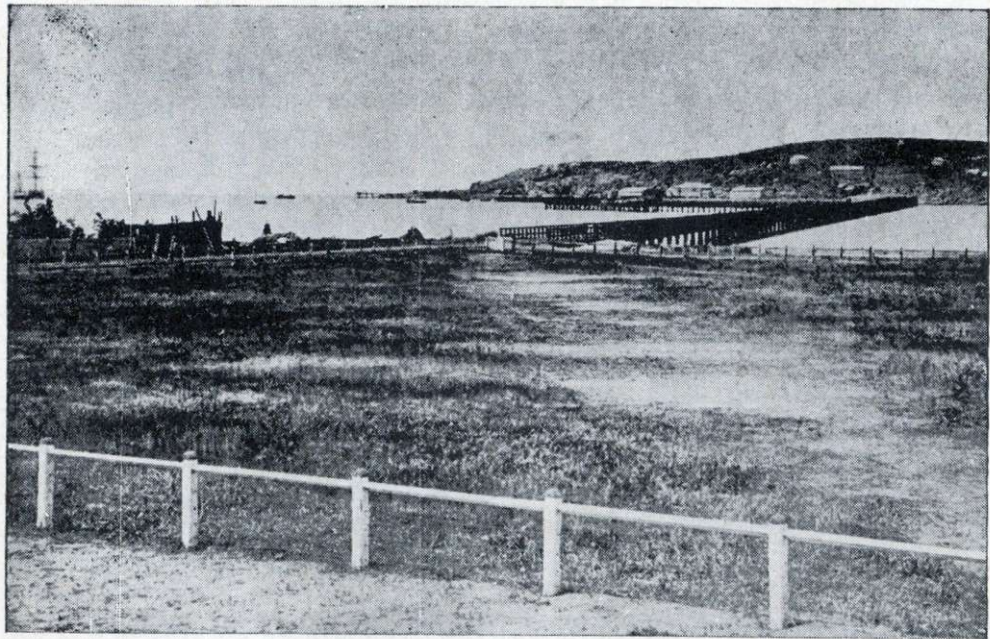
19

VICTOR HARBOR, DECEMBER, 1894.

VICTOR HARBOR, ABOUT 1911.

TRAIN ON OLD HINDMARSH BRIDGE.

VICTOR HARBOR, DECEMBER, 1870.

Ships on extreme left of picture: "Garnett',
with smaller "Queen of the South" alongside.
Barge on beach "John Robb", used in Breakwater construction.

SHIPPING

WHILE Port Elliot was the principal loading place a few vessels called at Victor Harbor, but little cargo was handled. In June, 1861, the brig "Content" anchored near Granite Island and loaded a cargo of Milang wheat from the River Murray paddle steamer "Sturt". The master of the brig spoke highly of the safety of the anchorage. In 1862 the Government laid down strong moorings and in the following year the small coasting schooners began to call regularly.

Immediately operations were moved to Victor Harbor from Port Elliot in 1864, sea traffic increased and because of the added safety of the anchorage at Granite Island, more ships began to call and it was ob vious that the boundaries of the port, as originally proclaimed, would have to be extended.

Accordingly on 13th July, 1865, a further pro clamation was issued increasing the area of the port and proclaming the harbor to be known as Port Victor. This renaming of the port is most important and an interesting story can be told. The boundaries were al tered and extended in 1893 and again in 1915. A later proclamation in the Government Gazette dated 16th June, 1912, did not change the boundaries as previously listed but did alter the name of the port back to the orginal nomenclature of Victor Harbor.

The reason for this change of name is interesting. A French barque "Eugene Schneider", whose master could not speak English, was due to load a cargo of wheat at Port Victor. He misinterpreted his chart and sailed for Port Victoria in Spencers Gulf. While entering this latter port and disregarding the signals from the Harbormaster, he ran his ship aground. Fortunately he managed to refloat the barque with little or no damage. When his error was finally pointed out to him he set sail for Pt. Victor. Meanwhile, the vessel being overdue at Port Victor, and no satisfactory explanation being forthcoming, the cargo of wheat was sent back to Goolwa and finally sent via Murray Bridge to Adelaide and there shipped in another vessel. When the "Eugene Schneider" arrived at Port Victor on the 6th January, 1921, there was no cargo for her. She had then to wait till the 30th of the same month for a favourable wind before she was able to sail. Due to the similarity of the names of the two ports and that a serious accident was narrowly averted, it was decided to change the name of Port Victor back to its original Victor Harbor, and thereby obviate cause for doubt in the future.

Particularly during the earlier years of the port the majority of the vessels calling were coastal. Towards the later stages there were in comparison more overseas steamers, but the busiest times were in 1870's, 1880's and l890's.

The contemporary newspapers give some idea of the volume of trade that once moved over the wharves. As early as November, 1870 it was reported that the railway was bringing 300 to 400 bales of wool from Goolwa to Victor Harbor for shipment. This was quite consider able when it is realised the amount of handling necessary. ln May, 1878, there were four large sailing ships in the port loading wool and some copper together with sundry barges and a steam lighter. These four ships loaded in all 12,200 bales of wool, quite a considerable cargo for those days.

At some stages in the life of the port blame for the slow turn round of ships was thrown on the lack of facilities of the railway, but in March, 1882, it was reported that there were no serious hold-ups and in May of the same year a big wool cargo came

down to Goolwa and between fourteen and fifteen thousand bales were moved over the railway in a short time, a remarkable quantity considering that horses provided the tractive power.

About this time the iron ship "Argus" of 1,500 tons loaded 6,100 bales of wool in 27 working days. The normal rate of loading vessels by using lighters was 300 bales per day.

In January, 1883, the rate of loading by lighter had increased to about 1,250 bales per day. The masters of the vessels all spoke highly of the port.

On completion of the screw pile jetty cargo could be brought direct from Goolwa to the ships side and this could have obviated the double handling involved by the use of the lighters. Strange to say, in spite of the quicker turn round provided by this jetty, the majority of vessels from overseas discharged their cargo or ballast at the jetty and then moved out to one of the moorings and loaded their cargo by means of the lighters. It seems that the jetty was kept available mainly for the regular coastal vessels which discharged or loaded small quantities of cargo.

In spite of the facilities for handling large cargoes quickly, the North West Bend Railway took all the trade from above Morgan. Goods from the lower Murray stations still came through Victor Harbor, but of course the volume was not very great. For a time it appeared there may have been a revival with the opening up of the Pinnaroo District but once again the increase in cargo that looked like being substantial was not forthcoming as the wheat was directed over the ranges to Adelaide. After this set-back Victor Harbor rapidly declined as far as a sea port was concerned.

The first vessel to use the new screw pile jetty was the coastal steamer "Penola". It tied up at 1.00 p.m. on 3rd November, l88l, and after loading 260 bales of wool sailed at 6.00 p.m. the same day. It was thus the first vessel to load a cargo direct from a pier at Victor Harbor. Prior to this all loading and unloading was carried out by means of the lighters. It was not till the morning of 12th March, l884, that the first overseas vessel, "Locksley Hall", tied up at the screw pile jetty.

As mentioned before most of the cargo passing through Victor Harbor was lightered. The barges were loaded at the wharves and were then winched out with cables to the ships where the cargo was once again handled into the holds. The barge was then taken back to the wharf to repeat the process. By today's standards, an expensive method in costs and labour, but nevertheless it was the most effective in the conditions prevailing up to the beginning of the 20th Century.

The following particulars relating to two of the barges used_for lightering cargo to the ships at Victor Harbor are interesting:

"Lady of the Lake".
This was a wooden barge built at Victor Harbor in 1855 by Jenkins. It had one deck, a square stern and was carvel built. It was 44'9" long by 13'11" beam and 4'3" depth of hull. The barge was dragged ashore at Victor Harbor during a heavy storm and was broken up on 3rd October, 1877.

"Mary".
This was an iron barge built at Victor Harbor in 1878. It had one deck, a sharp stern, a straight stern, and was carvel built with iron frames. It was 52'9" long by 13'8" beam and 5'3" depth of hull. It was subsequently broken up at Victor Harbor.

Very substantial moorings were laid down for securing the ships.

This was evidenced by two large anchors being recovered from the har bor bed. They were over 8 ft. long and the flukes measured about 17 inches long by 16 inches wide. The chains also were of very stout pro portions.

The majority of the cargo handled outwards was wool although large tonnages of wheat were shipped, particularly during the latter stages of the active life of the Port. Small quantities of "copper cakes" were shipped from time to time, mainly during the 1860's and 1870's.

In January, 1893, mine props were shipped to Moonta, South Australia in the schooner "Eclipse" and a further shipment was sent in June the same year. In April, 1896, the schooner "Bronzewing" took telegraph poles to Port Augusta, South Australia. This timber had been cut in the heavily timbered areas in the hills inland from Victor Harbor. 150 tons of railway sleepers, possibly supplied by the saw mills at Echuca, Victoria, were taken by the coastal steamer "Kintore" to Port Augusta for use in the maintenance of the railways radiating from that centre.

There were also some interesting items in the inwards cargo. In 1865 telegraph poles. were brought by the schooner "Gem" from Fremantle, Western Australia, for use in the building of the local telegraph lines. In 1866 there was evidently a shortage of potatoes on the South Coast as a cargo from Warrnambool, Victoria, was unloaded in April. In May, 1867, the iron rails and other equipment were discharged for the Strathalbyn to Middleton Railway.

In June, 1877, the big cylinders for the eastern approach across the low lying land to the then new Murray Bridge (the present road bridge) were brought round from Port Adelaide in the coastal schooners "Legal Tender", "Gambier Lass" and "Post Boy". The cylinders had arrived from England in "City of Singapore" with similar ones for the Jervois Bridge then being built across the Port River, Port Adelaide. After being unloaded at Victor Harbor the cylinders were taken by the railway to Goolwa and then by paddle steamer to the construction site.

In August, 1879 all the hardwood for the new screw pile jetty was discharged from the "Francis Guy" and in the following November the screw piles were unloaded from "Atm" at the works site. 300 tons of fencing-wire for settlers along the Murray passed over the wharves from "Argus" in March, 1882.

From this time on the cargo was mostly stores for the settlers and by about 1910 the decline of the port was apparent. After the first World War it seemed there may be a revival with the opening up of the Mallee Districts but this was short lived as was previously stated the wheat was sent direct to Port Adelaide by the railway.

The following statistics have been included for the information of those interested:

On 20th December, 1864, the schooner "Elizabeth" sailed direct for Dunedin, New Zealand, with a cargo of bran and pollard on account of Mr. Bowman of the Middleton Mill. This constitutes the first direct sailing overseas of a ship carrying cargo from Victor Harbor.

On 6th January, 1865, the 363 ton barque "Clan Alpine" was the first vessel to sail directly to London from the port. Although it was not recorded, the cargo was possibly

wool. The 486 ton barque "Hindoostan" took a cargo of 1,234 bales of wool direct to London on 23rd April, 1865.

The first vessel to discharge cargo direct from overseas was Cap tain George Johnston's new paddle steamer "Murray". She called at Victor Harbor on 17th June, 1866, and unloaded an unassembled river paddle steamer brought out as cargo and destined for use on the Murray by Johnston. This small steamer was later put together at Goolwa and was named after that port on the River Murray.

The largest vessel to anchor in the harbor was H.M.S. "Hood" of 42,000 tons, which paid a courtesy call on 15th March, 1934, together with H.M.S. "Repulse" and 5 other warships. This visit must have been one of the most spectacular sights in the long history of the port.

The largest commercial vessel to anchor in the harbor was the 5,810 ton steamer "Oaufa" which called on 15th November, 1915, but did not load or discharge any cargo. The largest vessel to load cargo was the 4,885 ton steamer "Peshawur" which took on board 669 bales and 102 bags of wool on 25th November, 1911.

The last vessel to load cargo of any consequence was the steamer "C3" which took 438 bales of wool on board on 22nd December, 1914, and sailed the same day.

Before closing the story of the shipping which used the port, mention must be made of the unusual happening of the 1,162 ton Norwegian barque "Margit". She arrived on 13th September, 1911, to load 1,967 tons of wheat. During the evening before she was due to sail, the Captain went ashore to advise the Harbormaster of his time of departure. He left the Harbormaster to rejoin his ship in a small dinghy and was never seen again. The dinghy and one oar was located but the Captain's body was never found. After the Court of Enquiry, which could find no explanation for the disappearance of the Captain, and which also delayed the sailing of the barque, the ship's carpenter was appointed Third Mate. "Margit" finally sailed on 10th November, 1911.

She did not get far and went ashore on the Coorong. The subsequent Court of Enquiry stated that due to the inexperience of the Third Officer, who was on watch at the time of the mishap, the barque sailed in too close to the shore and ran aground. All the crew reached shore safely.

When news of this tragedy reached Victor Harbor, the lifeboat "Lady Daly", stationed there, was prepared. As the usual crew was not available in time a. scratch crew of local men had to be raised to man the lifeboat. By the time "Lady Daly" reached the wreck, the cargo of wheat had sprung the timber and was giving off dangerous fumes and the barque was beginning to break up. After completing their job at the wreck the lifeboat set out to return to Victor Harbor. Due to an offshore wind "Lady Daly" was blown far out to sea and to the great worry of the townsfolk did not reach Victor Harbor for three days. But consternation soon turned to joy when the lifeboat and its crew finally returned safe and sound.

From the foregoing it can be seen that Victor Harbor had a busy and interesting life in its heyday. It was developed early in the history of the state and played no small part in assisting in the development of large sections of the interior along the River Murray not only in South Australia but in Victoria and New South Wales as well. Once the breakwater was completed the largest ships then operating could anchor in safety in the harbor, and the safety of the port is shown in the fact that there were no serious

mishaps to any vessels in the harbor during the whole of its active life. No doubt many people would like to look back and see it in its heyday with fully rigged sailing ships at anchor under Granite Island as was frequently the case during its busy days.

Now let us look at some of the interesting sidelights of the port of Victor Harbor.

Victor Harbor was regarded by the authorities of sufficient importance and strategically placed to be a lifeboat station. Although no authentic records can be found it is presumed that a lifeboat was first stationed there about 1869 because in that year a shed to house a lifeboat was erected on the head of the original jetty which ran to the east ward from the timber causeway connecting the mainland with Granite Island.

About the beginning of the present century it was decided to construct baths along part of this jetty head and the lifeboat shed was later moved to the old "Working Jetty". It is pf interest to note here that these baths were demolished in 1955. They had fallen into a bad state of disrepair and had not been used for some time.

The "Lady Daly", a rowed lifeboat, was stationed at Victor Harbor for many years. It was first mentioned in the Marine Board Report of 1877 and it remained in service until it was replaced by the modern motor lifeboat "Arthur Searcy" in March, 1925. This motor lifeboat was in service till it was sold in 1941. It has not been replaced.

With the development of the harbor it became obvious that a lighthouse would have to be installed if vessels were to use the port facilities in safety. The first light consisted of "the largest American engine headlight". It was erected on a tripod 17 ft. high at the seaward end of the breakwater. It was kerosene operated and was a fixed white light visible 5 miles and came into operation on 31st December, 1883.

Owing to the difficulty of moving along the top of the breakwater in rough weather to light the lamp, a Mullers "Alpha" patent gas making machine, designed to burn gasoline, was substituted for the original lamp in 1884.

The position of the light at the end of the breakwater was not altogether satisfactory and it was later dispensed with when a new light, kerosene operated and visible 10 miles, was erected on the eastern end of Granite Island and commenced operation on 1st June, 1892. This light, erected in a small wooden building, remained in service till it was replaced by a new automatic, continuous, gas operated light which began flashing on 13th November, 1951.

A fixed, red secondary light was fixed on the end of the screw pile jetty early in 1914 and continued to operate until the 30th September, 1932. This installation was removed in 1952. In 1955 an electric, fixed light was re-established on the screw pile jetty to act as a guide for fishing vessels using the harbor.

When the Victoria Pier was being erected, it will be remembered, the contractor had difficulty in sinking the piles in the limestone reef and suggested that the contract be amended to permit the building of a stone pier. The authorities refused, saying that a solid structure may cause the harbor to silt up. Whether this would have occurred had a stone causeway been built is difficult to say but there is, however, evidence that there has been very little, if any, silting in the harbor. lnJanuary, 1882, a diver, working on the construction of the breakwater found 6 "cakes of copper" lying on the seabed, After some investigation it was found that these had been lost overboard during loading operations on the steamer "Omeo" five years previously. This clearly

shows that from a maintenance point of view Victor Harbor would not have been a drain on finance in keeping the Port to its designed depth of water.

The only record of a dredge being in port was in April, 1916, when the dredger "Adelaide" was employed for one month deepening sections of the harbor.

GRANITE ISLAND

SOME historical facts relating to Granite Island may prove of in terest at this juncture.

Today, of course, the island is the "piece de resistance" of the tourist attractions of Victor Harbor, but as can be seen from this short history, its role in the story has varied from the site of a whaling station, to an overseas port, until now it forms the main promenade of tourists. By strange coincidence, the ownership and control of Granite Island has also been varied.

it was declared a reserve on the order of the Surveyor-General on 6th May, 1856. Subsequently Mr. J. A. Johnson claimed the island under Parliamentary Land Order No. 325. Torrens had previously claimed. it in I857 but he accepted two other sections in lieu thereof.

Apparently nothing was done to beautify the island until 1888 when a permit was granted to the District Council of Encounter Bay to plant trees and protect them. This permit was renewed in 1897. In the same year, a strip of land from high water mark to 60 links inland from the railway line between the timber causeway from the mainland and the screw pile jetty was reserved for Railway purposes.

No further action was taken until 1910 when the island was placed under the control of the Railways Department. This Department immediately set about cleaning up the debris, machinery and other "impedimenta" which had remained. on the island following the completion of the breakwater and screw pile jetty.

At the same time, a pathway was constructed around the island, additional trees. were planted, seats and swings were erected and a ramp was made to the top of the cliff at the eastern end of the island. This was possibly the first real attempt at beautification.

Certain parts of the island were placed under the control of the Harbors Board in 1914, which authority now maintains the causeway, screw pile jetty and the gardens.

The future control of the island is at present in abeyance but it is hoped that when the controlling authority has been determined, the island will undergo another programme of beautification and thus enjoy its rightful place in the tourist attractions of Victor Harbor.

In the Marine Board Report of 1884 it was recorded that a house, then on Granite Island, had been purchased for the use of the lighthouse keeper and pilot. From that time this building was the residence of the Harbormaster till it was demolished following a change in the position of this official in 1959. At the time the house was in a bad state of repair and it was deemed too costly to put it into good order again.

Merchandise and goods were transported between the piers on Granite Island and Victor Harbor mainland by trucks, drawn initially by horses. This. practice continued after the inauguration of steam traction to Victor Harbor in 1885. Later small locomotives were used for shunting, although the exact date of commencement is not known.

A photograph appeared in the "Observer" in January, 1911, with the caption, that the locomotive illustrated was the first on Granite Island, but this is open to doubt.

A standpipe was erected on the island near the old goods shed, presumably for locomotive working, in October, 1911l.

In 1894, the South Australian Railways commenced a passenger service across to the island using horse trams. Tram No. 7 was sent to Victor Harbor in December, 1894. This car was built by the English firm of Brown, Marshall & Co., and had originally been imported for the Strathalbyn, Goolwa and Victor Harbor Line, being placed in service in May, 1879. It was transferred to the Kadina system in 1887 and 4 years later was taken into Islington Workshops for repair. It was then transferred to Victor Harbor. The service commenced during the Christ mas holidays and the "Southern Argus" remarked, "The newly instituted tramway, which carries you across from the Railway Station to the Breakwater is a long felt want ably filled. I only grumble at the small charge of 3d. Return – surely a little advance on that would not make those who now care to patronise it use shank's pony. It is excellently timetabled and well managed and undoubtedly a great boon." No. 7 was a double decker, seated 36 people and had a tare weight of 3 tons 2 cwt. This car remained at Victor Harbor till 1931.

In 1910 car No. 25 (ex Municipal Tramways Trust, Adelaide) was converted from 4'8" gauge to 5'3" gauge and sent to Victor Harbor where it remained till it was condemned in 1929. 43 passengers could be accommodated in this double decker car.

When the Moonta system was closed in 1931 cars number 5 and 6 (built by Duncan and Fraser in 1883) were brought to Islington, repaired, (No. 6 costing Â£300) and transferred to Victor Harbor where they remained. until the service was closed in 1954. These two cars had a tare weight of 2 tons 2 3/4 cwt. each.

For some considerable time the cars also ran between the Raliway Station and the Hindmarsh River. As a safety measure, no train could leave Port Elliot for Victor Harbor till the tram from the Hindmarsh River Bridge had arrived at the Victor Harbor Station and conversely no tram could leave Victor Harbor till the Adelaide bound train had reached Port Elliot.

The trams to the island were originally run by the South Australian Railways. Subsequently they were leased to Mr. George Honeyman, who had previously driven them for the S.A.R. After driving for 37 years his place was taken by his brother Hugh, who drove them for 17 years, before retiring in 1954. The service was offered for lease but no offers were received. The Harbors Board announced its intention to rebuild the causeway with the consequent removal of the railway lines. The trams were thereupon sold. Later No. 5 tram was repurchased by the lessee of the island kiosk, who ran it for a limited period from the end of the causeway to the kiosk. This service ceased and No. 5 stood for some time derelict on the island. It gradually fell to pieces and the remains were dumped in the sea as it was becoming dangerous to the children who loved to play on it.

The present service to the island is provided by a "train" consisting of a camouflaged Ferguson tractor and four locally built 4-wheel carriages.

TOWN DEVELOPMENT

VICTOR HARBOR, as a town, did not exist until 1863, although prior to this time several small huts had been erected on the town site, but the only substantial building was the Police Station, erected near Police Point, the point of land at the commencement of the causeway to Granite Island. This station was put up about 1840. It was not demolished till 1912.

In August 1863 two bridges, one over the Hindmarsh and the other across the Inman River, were opened. These structures were designed by Mr. Rogers and built by Mr Gouge. They gave easy access to the point of land where Victor Harbor is now situated and their opening marked the beginnings of organised settlement within the boundaries of the town.

Before 1863 people had to ford the rivers or cross them at their mouths and consequently the present town area was not visited by many people.

As seemed usual in those days, much ceremony attended the opening of the bridges. On the appointed day 100 horsemen set out from Port Elliot. On reaching the Hindmarsh River, Mrs. R. W. Newland, wife of the Rev. R. W. Newland, was asked to declare open the new bridge which was named the Alexandra Bridge. The party then moved on to the Inman River where the bridge was opened and named the Newland Bridge in honour of the Rev. R. W. Newland, who arrived in the district with his party in 1893. To round off this gala day a big banquet was held in the evening.

Present day Victor Harbor consists of three original sections, Nos. 15, 16, and 17 in the Hundred of Encounter Bay. These sections were first surveyed in 1839 by Messrs. Moulton and Hall and were granted to

Section No. 15, Arthur Fydell Lindsay, on 29th September, 1839.
Section No. 16, Richard Blundell, on 24th September, 1839.
Section No. 17, Governor J. Hindmarsh, 1839.

As all subsequent land dealings were of a private nature, no official records are available and it is difficult to follow the various transactions that ensued.

In 1863, Victor Harbor was again surveyed, this time as a private town, by Mr. L. J. Hyndman and after this was completed the real development began. The first stone house was built on the site of the present Hotel Victor. After a short time this house was licenced and became the fore-runner of the present, modern hotel. Mr. George Smith was the first licencee.

The large railway goods shed was built in 1864 to cater for the traffic on the original horse drawn railway and is still doing good service.

The telegraph station was also completed that year and with the telegraph line finished, communications with Adelaide were much improved.

The Crown Hotel was built on its present site and licenced in 1865. In that year the town's first bank was opened by the Bank of South Australia. That building was later used by the Union Bank.

By 1867 the Harbormaster's residence had been built and was known as the Harbormaster and Collector of Customs House and is the present Railway Station Master's residence. During the same year, a large sawmill, owned by Mr. Wentzel, was established in the vicinity of the present Grosvenor Hotel. This mill was taken over by Mr. Goodwin. Timber felled in the hills behind Victor Harbor, known as the Hindmarsh Tiers, was cut there.

The contemporary newspapers of the day reported that by the middle of 1868 there was a large number of buildings being erected and that the town was "assuming important proportions". Among those buidings would be several large wool stores erected along the railway line. Two of the owners of these stores were Mr. G. S. Read and Mr. A. H. Landseer. This latter prominent man was actively connected with the River Murray Trade and had other large interests along the river. These stores were used for dumping and storing wool awaiting shipment. The present R.S.L. Clubrooms now occupy Read's old wool store.

Gertymore, now named Strathmore, was the first boarding house established in Victor Harbor.

The third hotel to be built was the "Australâ", licensed in 1881. The licence was later allowed to lapse and the hotel became a guest house and was renamed "Pipirikiâ", a Maori name, which took the fancy of the owner, Mr. Ellis, while on a trip to New Zealand. This building has now been converted into flats.

In 1882 the National Bank called tenders for their building to be erected on the corner of Yankalilla Road (present day Coral Street) and Ocean Street.

Phillip Wheaton conducted the first general store in Victor Harbor and the business was taken over in 1891 by David Bell. The store has recently changed hands again.

The Grosvenor Hotel was built and licenced in 1896. The Town Hall was built during 1904 and 1905 and the Council Chambers about the same time.

Victor Harbor continued to grow at a steady rate so that by 1914 the administration of the town had become too complex for the District Council of Encounter Bay to handle efficiently. So it was decided to proclaim a Corporation of Victor Harbor. The area of the Corporation was bounded by the Hindmarsh and Inman Rivers and ran roughly 2 miles inland from the coast. Accordingly on 28th May, 1914, the Corporation of the Town of Victor Harbor came into being to administer the area. The new authority was better able to look after the welfare of the people as well as provide better roads and footpaths than was possible under the old administration. so the appearance of the town improved and more imposing buildings were erected.

The E. S. & A. Bank opened for business during 1923 and the present building was erected in 1927. The Commercial Bank began operations in 1928 and its present building was erected in 1930. The Savings Bank of South Australia also opened their premises in 1928.

The Victoria Steam Laundry was the first one established in the town and was opened on 30th January, 1925.

The present picture theatre replaced a previous building built in 1934 that was destroyed by fire about 4 years later. Picture shows were also shown during the busy season in the Wonderview, now used as a Youth Club.

As can be seen from the foregoing, the town assumed important proportions, particularly during the 1930's, when many buildings were erected. But the greatest growth has been since the 1939/45 War. Houses have been built in a number of sections, almost to the boundaries of the Corporation and this building activity seems likely to continue while Victor Harbor remains a major tourist attraction in South Australia.

With the steady growth of the community a permanent water supply was essential and in 1914 construction began on a reservoir on the Hindmarsh River to supply the town and the surrounding areas on this part of the South Coast. The reservoir was opened on 26th July, 1917. Its original capacity was 90 million gallons and cost £69,000. The holding was later increased to 130 million gallons and it has continued to serve the growing area. With the big increase in the population since the end of the 1939/45 War the demand for water has increased beyond the reservoir's capacity and the supply is now augmented by pumping water from the River Murray at Goolwa. Reticulation has also been improved by laying bigger mains.

Victor Harbor's streets were first lit by kerosene lamps. Not being very efficient they were replaced with carbide lights. Because of the large increase in the cost of carbide during the 1914/18 War they were abandoned, and for a time there was no street lighting in the town.

In 1919 a Delco plant was installed at a cost of £1,000 and this supplied the lighting requirements of the town till October, 1923, when the Harbor Electricity Co. Ltd. came into being. This Company gave the town a general and domestic lighting and power supply. In July, 1958, the Company was taken over by the Electricity Trust of South Australia and because of the bigger potential of the Trust, electricity has now been extended to the outlying areas.

Electric Light was first installed on the causeway to Granite Island during the Christmas Week of 1924.

TRANSPORT

RAIL

AS has been mentioned earlier, the failure of Port Elliot as an overseas port, was responsible for Victor Harbor becoming the premier shipping place on the South Coast. Port Elliot had been connected with Goolwa. the River Murray port, by rail in 1854. With all the Murray trade to be shipped via the new port at Victor Harbor it was necessary that the railway be extended from Port Elliot and estimates were prepared in 1861 for the extension of the line.

The two major structures on the Port Elliot-Victor Harbor line were both built by private contractors. The Alexandra Bridge, which carried both the rail and road traffic over the Hindmarsh River, was built by Mr. Gouge and opened by Mrs. Newland, the wife of the Rev. R. W. Newland, in August, 1863. The builder of this bridge, Mr. Gouge, also had the contract for the construction of the Victoria Pier at Victor Harbor (see earlier reference). The other structure, the Watson's Gap Bridge, was built by Mr. Redman and was completed at the end of 1863.

The Alexandra Bridge had a span of 190 ft., a width of 30 ft. and the decking was 13 ft. above water level. It was constructed of timber and rested on piles 21 ft. to 27 ft. long. It was built in four bays each of 30 ft. span, and the two approaches had a combined length of 70 ft.

The Watson's Gap Bridge was considered to have "beauty of design, great strength and gracefulness of appearance". It had a span of 290 feet, supported by eight main and four abutment piers, trussed in the main bays and braced in the abutments. The height above the "common roadway" was 27 ft. The structure rested on piles, which were iron shod, driven to depths varying from 15 ft. to 17 ft. 45,000 lineal feet of hardwood was used in its construction.

Robert Redman was the successful tenderer for the construction of the permanent way, signing the contract on 4th February, 1863. The new line deviated from its original course just north of the large cutting at Port Elliot and ran into this town where a new station was built. It ran on down to the sea coast which it followed to the boundary of the Government Reserve at Police Point at the commencement of the Granite Island causeway at Victor Harbor. The length of this extension was 4 miles 30 chains. The line was built with 35 lb./yd. rails laid on sleepers 8 ft. long by 9 inches by 4 inches, laid at 3 ft. centres.

The Port Elliot-Victor Harbor line was opened for goods traffic on 1st April, 1864. Four months later, on the 4th August, the line was officially opened by Mr. Dodson, Chairman of the District Council of

Encounter Bay. The railway authorities provided special services from Goolwa and Port Elliot. At the latter place a ceremonial arch had been erected at the commencement of the new line. 400 persons were transported from Port Elliot in the five available vehicles, the journey occupying 30 minutes. At three o'clock the opening ceremony was con ducted at the jetty when the line was declared open and the jetty was named (see earlier reference).

Following considerable agitation from the settlers in the neighbourhood of Strathalbyn and district, a line was built from Strathalbyn to connect with the Goolwa-Victor

Harbor line at Middleton. The first shipment of wheat on this new line was forwarded in February, 1869, the line being formally opened two months later. With this new connection one could board a coach at the Criterion Hotel in King William Street, Adelaide, and travel by way of Macclesfield to Strathalbyn. There one would change to the horse tram and reach Victor Harbor in eight hours travel from the city. Travel in the 1870's had its many variations.

The rate of travel was increased slightly with the conversion of this line to steam traction in 1865. The necessary authority for this changeover was obtained in 1883 when a Bill was passed authorising the construction of a loop line from Currency Creek to Goolwa and the conversion of the horse traction line from Strathalbyn to Currency Creek and the Goolwa to Victor Harbor section into a locomotive line. The old horse line from Currency Creek to Middleton was to be abandoned.

A branch locomotive line was constructed from Mount Barker Junction, on the "Intercolonial Line", to Strathalbyn. This section was opened in two stages. reaching Strathalbyn on 15th September, 1884.

From now on the days of "Fidget", "Bob", "Baldy" and their kind were numbered as on the 17th December, 1884, the "loop line" was opened for traffic and steam trains were then able to work to Goolwa, horses still being used from this latter station to Victor Harbor, the passengers transferring at Goolwa. Steam traction was extended to Victor Harbor on 1st April, 1885.

A further improvement in train travel was possible in 1907 with the re-laying of the track between Strathalbyn and Victor Harbor with heavier rails and the replacement of the old timber structures. The old Watson's Gap Bridge, 2 1/2 miles from Victor Harbor was replaced with a reinforced concrete arch bridge, the first of this type in South Australia. A new bridge was constructed over the Hindmarsh River, leaving the old timber structure for the road traffic. This new Hindmarsh River Bridge was also constructed of reinforced concrete on the "Beam and Slab" principle and was the first of its kind to be used for railway traffic in Australia. With these improvements it was possible to eliminate the previous change of locomotives at Strathalbyn, thus saving time at that station and also improving the running time to Victor Harbor.

ROAD

ROADS were opened in 1853 connecting Victor Harbor and Port Elliot with Goolwa along the coast and Yankalilla by way of the Inman Valley. The road to Port Elliot formed the first connection between Victor Harbor and Adelaide as this coast road linked up with the road from Willunga via the Crow's Nest Road. An alternative link with Adelaide was completed in 1860 when the road via Blackwood and Bull Creek was linked with Goolwa.

The road to Yankalilla was not properly defined till 1863 and in 1864 the section on Porter's Hill, to the west of Victor Harbor, was re-surveyed to ease the steep gradient and was rebuilt.

The present main road from Adelaide via Willunga originally ran to Port Elliot by way of the Crowâ's Nest Road and was used from about 1847 as the mail route. It had been in use for some time prior to that date. Parts of the Crow's Nest Road were improved in 1864 and with the establishment of the town of Victor Harbor and the replacement of Port Elliot as the port on the South Coast it was decided to shorten the route to Victor Harbor and a new road was surveyed in 1865 down Cut Hill.

This new approach was opened in 1866. The contract for the construction of the picturesque stone wall along a section of the road way wassigned in 1867, the builder being Mr. Jabez Grimble. The wall was completed in 1868. The actual work was done by local stone masons and the wall was built to be a retaining wall on the steeper sections of the descent.

Travelling in those early days was quite an undertaking. The first overland link between Victor Harbor and Adelaide was by bullock Wagon and the journey of about 55 miles usually took three days. Later this mode of transport gave way to the coach and by 1867 Cobb & Co.'s coach was operating between Adelaide and Port Elliot in 7 3/4 hours and the price of a single fare was 14/6. A little later it was reported that the return journey, Adelaide-Victor Harbor-Adelaide, took 19 hours.

Let us cast back our thoughts and picture just how those travellers must have felt on arrival at Victor Harbor after being jolted round in a coach travelling over roughly formed limestone roads. Passenger comfort in those days could hardly be imagined. Now it may be realised why settlers in the early days travelled only when it was absolutely essential. The comparison of 7 hours in a jolting coach with 1 1/2 hours or less in a modern car travelling on a billiard table finished road needs no further comment.

With the petrol engine becoming more reliable several enterprising individuals commenced a regular service to Victor Harbor via Willunga using Packard and Reo passenger cars. These services quickly became popular to the detriment of Railways revenue. Determined to recoup some of their losses the Department decided to enter the Road Transport field themselves. Accordingly in 1925 a road motor service was started, using Fageol, White and Reo motor coaches.

Following the passing by the State Legislature of the Motor Transport Control Act of 1927 the Railway were forced to abandon their road. service as from 12th March, 1928. However the Act was late! repealed and the road service was re-introduced at the end of the same year. With. the subsequent appointment of the Transport Control Board, the Victor Harbor route was declared a "controlled route" and the Railway were forced to finally abandon their road service on 30th April, 1931. Since that time private operators have maintained the service by road and it has grown in popularity and except for a cessation during the 1939/45 War, it has continued to carry more and more passengers.

The road to Victor Harbor via Willunga was bitumenised in 1928 and both tourists and townsfolk were pleased because the journey was shortened and it was much cleaner and more comfortable to travel by road than had been possible in the past. This same road has recently been rebuilt to remove many of the curves through the hills south of Mt. Compass and now the trip is even more comfortable than before. This new road should encourage more tourists to make the journey as it can be done safely now in 1 1/2 hours or less.

THE BLUFF OR ROSETTA HEAD

No story of Victor Harbor can be considered complete unless some reference is made to the prominent, natural feature which dominates the town, and is the first object to catch the eye of the visitor.

It has been known as the Bluff since the earliest times but it was offically named Rosetta Head by Governor Gawler in 1839, in honour of the wife of George Fife Angus. Its early history was colourful, being near the site of the South Australian Company's Whale Fishery and the Bluff was used as a look-out for the whalers. A small flagstaff was erected on its summit and when the look-out man sighted a whale he raised a flag to warn the men at the station to get ready for another chase.

The land comprising the section on which the Bluff is situated was sold to South Australia's first Governor, Captain John Hindmarsh, on 20th February, 1840. He was one of the strong supporters of that group of people who was interested in establishing the capital of South Australia on that part of the coast, and as, no doubt, he wanted land in this vicinity he was in the excellent position of being able to select the choicest site in the whole area.

The section of land was laid out under the direction of Governor Gawler under the same conditions as ten sections were laid out at Port Adelaide, comprising the port of the Province. These land transactions were carried out about the same time. It was intended that the land was to be used as private wharves, and the boundaries were beyond the waterline, whereas in all other surveys a strip of land was reserved for Government use where it bordered the sea.

It was not till 1854 that the Government erected the present jetty at the Bluff and then the newly formed Inman District Council was asked to build a road to the new wharf. The ceremony of the turning of the first sod of earth to mark the commencement of this road was performed by Mrs. R. W. Newland, in June, 1855.

Immediately work began Hindmarsh sued the District Council for damages. amounting to £48,000 because the council was encroaching on his. land. The result of this summons was that the Inman District Council was declared insolvent. After lengthy litigation a settlement of £2,000 was agreed upon in 1859 and the Government assumed control of all the land in Hindmarsh's section.

Other than a mining venture on the Bluff itself, nothing more was done in the area for many years and it was left in its natural state with little or no improvements being made. Finally in 1938 the Bluff and the surroundings were declared a recreation reserve and were placed under the dontrol of the Encounter Bay District Council, as they remain to this day.

CONCLUSION

THIS then concludes the story of the many facets of Victor Harbor. We have seen the first shipment from the port being whale oil, from the local whale fisheries, to the great days when large vessels called and loaded cargoes of wheat and wool, and how this activity ceased quite quickly due to the Government's centralisation policies. Even the hoped-for revivals were soon killed by these same policies.

We have seen the town grow from a few rough huts into a thriving Corporation with large buildings worthy of any community and we have seen how the character of this town has changed from a commercial aspect into a place with a great tourist potential. This is the only facet that Victor Harbor can rely on now, but if this tourism is fostered this area of the South Coast will be able to maintain its place as the premier tourist resort in South Australia. Although it appears from this story that "the cards have been stacked against it" from the beginning, it can, with astute guidance, overcome its past disappointments and be a "must" for all visitors to see who come from within and outside the State.

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