This is a collection of material relating to Captain Alexander McCoy
Refer to the links to retrieve original material and further detail.

Alexander McCoy (c. 1822 – 29 September 1895)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray–Darling_steamboat_people#McCoy

Alexander McCoy (c. 1822 – 29 September 1895), originally from Portsmouth, was captain of the sailing ship *Gem*, then captained steamers *Leichardt* 1856–1858 and her sister ship *Sturt* 1856–1858. He sailed the *Leichardt* to Batavia 1859, for use as river transport for troops at Bangor Massam, Borneo during the Banjarmasin War. He brought the *Settler* through the Murray mouth 1861, then captained the *Maid of the Yarra* in the Spencer Gulf. He was instrumental in founding the Adelaide Steamship Company.[91]

Alexander McCoy married Margaret (c. 1826 – 8 July 1861). He married again, to **Annie Sanderson**, whose brother was **Francis J. Sanderson** of H.M.Customs, in 1862; they had a home in Alberton, then Molesworth Street, North Adelaide. He may have been a brother-in law of Captain Davidson.

Constable Alexander McCoy
https://willunga.nowandthen.net.au/McCoy,_Alexander_(Constable)

Alexander McCoy was born in Portsmouth, England in 1821 and baptised in 1822. His father, who was a paymaster in the Royal Navy, died when his son was only eleven years old. At the age of thirteen, at his own request, Alexander was sent on board a vessel as an apprentice and spent his fourteenth birthday in Sydney Harbour. Not liking the treatment he received on board the vessel, he ran away and shipped on board another craft. He had an adventurous life which included being shipwrecked and whaling in the Pacific. Alexander McCoy joined the Mounted Police on March 21, 1848 and resigned on January 12, 1852.

His obituaries also note that he went to the Victorian goldfields, where he was moderately successful. His goldfields experience would have occurred after he left the Mounted Police in South Australia and, in fact, his resignation may have ben prompted by a desire to go prospecting.

Constable McCoy was posted to Willunga around 1849 after performing his duties in Adelaide. He was then posted to Yorke Peninsula, Kapunda and Gawler.

In 1850, another mounted constable, John Guy, stated that his reason for resigning was "that McCoy, a junior constable, had been put over his head." Guy was reproved by the police authorities, as his name had often appeared in the defaulters' book for lapses in his performance. It is clear, however, that Alexander McCoy was a conscientious constable. Police records contain the following note concerning his service, "Has been Concerned in Eleven Cases of Felony. A very trustworthy and well behaved officer, Has never appeared in the Defaulter Book"

Gawler appears to have been his last posting as a mounted constable. He then became a small landholder in Gawler, perhaps buying land on the proceeds of his gold field adventures, and later was involved in coastal shipping. In 1875 or late 1874, he conceived the idea for a new steamship company on the Adelaide to Melbourne run. With the agreement of other Adelaide businessmen, a proposal was made to float shares for the Adelaide Steamship Company (ASC). He commanded a number of vessels in the Company, married and had a family. He became very well-known around Port Adelaide. In one of his obituaries it was said that "Captain McCoy could work a craft into and out of Port Elliot better than any one of his contemporaries."

Captain McCoy died on September 29, 1895. At the news of his death, the flags at the Port Adelaide Custom House, the commercial houses and all the vessels in the Port Adelaide harbour were flown at half-mast during the day out of respect to the deceased mariner. He is buried at the Nailsworth cemetery

The Scots in Australia :

Meanwhile in South Australia, four Scots between them owned more than half of a syndicate that operated four ships. They were Andrew Tenant, Thomas Elder, Robert Barr Smith and Captain Alexander McCoy. Tennant and Barr Smith were boyhood friends in Lochwinnoch, Refrewshire and Elder was Smith's brother-in-law. This group formed the nucleus of the Adelaide Steamship Company, founded in 1875. McCoy was the captain of theor first ship, he later went to Glasgow to liaise with Hendersons the shipbuilders. All the directors exce[t one were Scots and a majority of the directors were Scots until well into the twentieth century. Edinburgh-born John Darling (1852-1914), the leading wheat merchant of South Australia had shipping interests and was for a time president of the Shipowners Asscociation.

South Australian shipping lines: Adelaide Steamship Company
https://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=728

In 1875 or late 1874 Captain Alexander McCoy conceived the idea for a new steamship company on the Adelaide to Melbourne run. With the agreement of other Adelaide businessmen a proposal was made to float shares for the Adelaide Steamship Company (ASC).

The first ship of the new company was the *Flinders*, 521 ton, with accommodation for 112 passengers, built at Sunderland during 1874 and arriving Adelaide March 1875. *Flinders* had been built for the Spencer's Gulf Steamship Company but was placed on the ASC's Melbourne run when she arrived from the builders (the businessmen behind Spencer's Gulf SS Company were also involved in the new Adelaide Steamship Company.)

The *Flinders* was subsequently placed into the Spencer Gulf trade for which it had been intended, but in 1882 Spencer's Gulf SS Company amalgamated with ASC which thereby obtained *Flinders* and *Franklin*, another new steamer purchased by the latter company.

PORT AUGUSTA: SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S INLAND SEA "Jumping Off" Point For The Never Never"
https://sites.google.com/site/sahistoryarticles/home/no-23-port-augusta

Old Ships

Mention of the old Lubra should recall many memories. Like the Royal Shepherd and the Kangaroo, she belonged to the Spencer Gulf Shipping Company, the forerunner of the Adelaide S.S. Company of today. She had two well-known characters as skipper and mate respectively in Captain McCoy and Charlie Pointer. On one occasion a deaf and dumb collector, who habitually received substantial assistance from Charlie Pointer, incurred the mate's displeasure through telling tales out of school. Conversation between the two was conducted by means of a slate. This time when the mute produced his slate the mate wrote: — "Go to hell!" The dumb chap ambled off to Captain McCoy, and wrote indignantly— "Your mate told me to go to hell." McCoy looked at the slate, wrinkled his eyebrows, and wrote in reply — "Well, don't you go."

One more story about Charlie Pointer. He was addicted to two opposite hobbies— religion and profanity. One Sunday morning he was seated on the pier earnestly singing, to the accompanist of his concertina, "Scatter seeds of kindness," when an individual passed who was not exactly persona grata. Charlie put down the concertina, made a vicious kick at his enemy, and roared, "Get out of here you blankety blank blighter or I'll knock your blank head off." Then, as the enemy took to flight, Charlie resumed singing, more earnestly than ever, "Scatter seeds of kindness."

The Lubra was noted for her rolling. She was brought to Australia by Captain Gordon. When he was asked how he got her out from England, he answered, "We just rolled out."

S.S. Marion (1854 - 1862)
From : [Investigator Strait Maritime Heritage Trail](#)

The schooner rigged, single screw steamer Marion was built in 1854 at Glasgow, Scotland and imported for the Hobart - Melbourne passenger trade. In 1857 it was sold to South Australian interests for the Port Adelaide - Port Lincoln trade. The Marion was the first vessel to operate a regular steam shipping service from Port Adelaide to the Spencer Gulf ports. The iron hulled vessel of 197 gross tons measured 114.2 feet (34.8m) in length, 19.6 feet (6.0m) breadth and 10 feet (3.0m) depth.

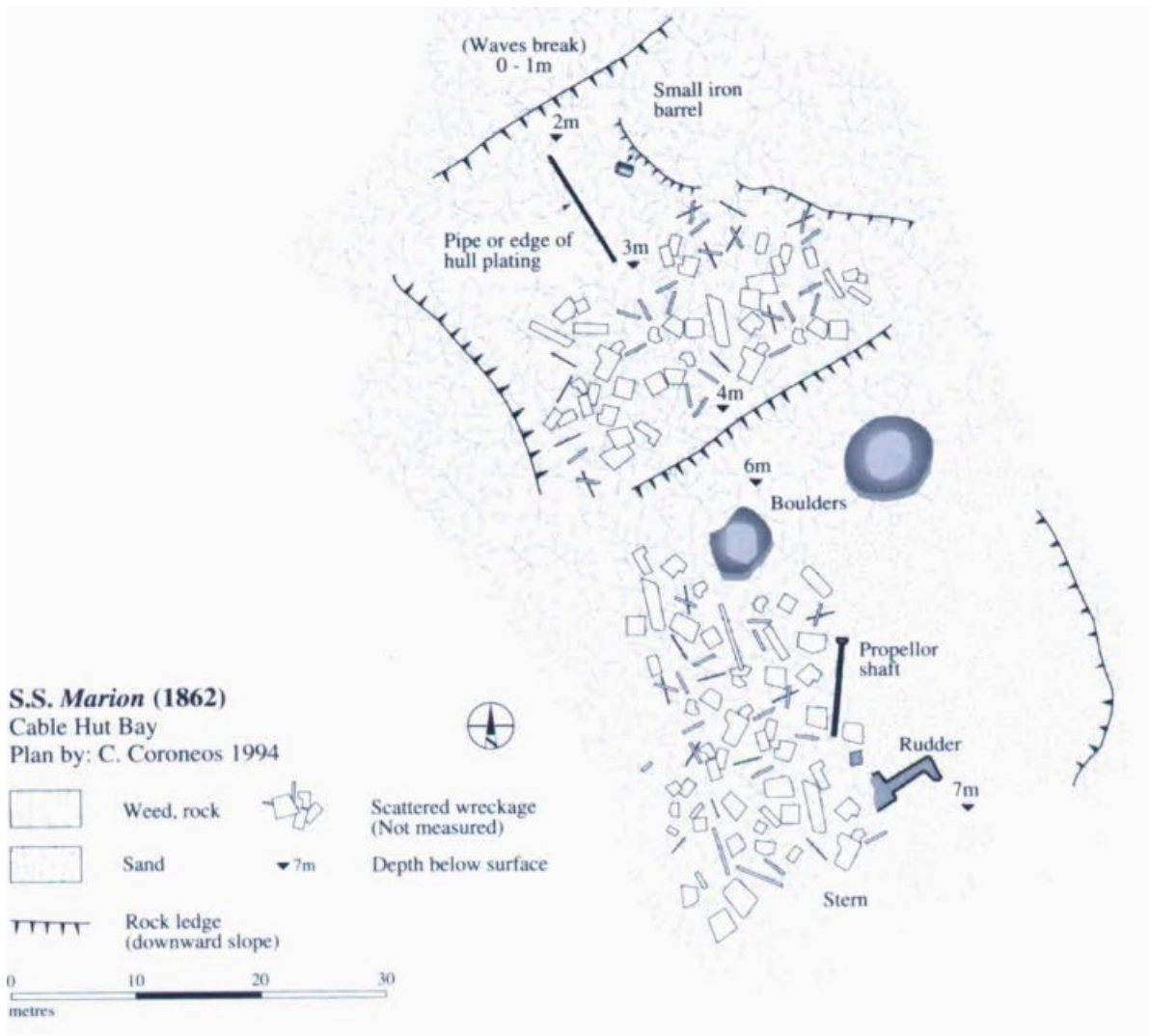Vessel of similar age and rig to the S.S. Marion.

On 11 July 1862 the S.S. Marion was en-route from Adelaide to Wallaroo under the command of Captain Alexander McCoy. On board were 35 passengers and 15 crew. Visibility became hazy while the Marion's chief officer was at the helm and, after passing Troubridge Hill, he became unsure of his position. Unexpectedly, heavy surf threatened out of the gloom. The engine was ordered full astern but it was too late, the advancing swells lifted the vessel onto rocks at the east side of Cable Hut Bay, 5 kilometres west of Stenhouse Bay.

The passengers and crew were landed safely on the nearby beach. Anxious moments followed when a passing vessel, the S.S. Lubra, appeared not to notice the distress flag and fire lit by the castaways. When all seemed lost, the S.S. Lubra altered course and rescued the shipwrecked group. The Wrecksite The wreck of the S.S. Marion lies at the base of a cliff, in 2-7 metres of water, east of Chinamans Hat Island, and to the south-east of the car park at Cable Hut Bay

Map showing the approximate location of the S.S. Marion wreck

Little of the hull structure remains to be seen because the wreck, which is scattered on a northerly axis for a distance of some 60 metres, is located on a predominantly rocky bottom in a high wave energy zone. The wreckage is divided into two distinct locations with the forward part of the ship broken and scattered over a shallow reef shelf, and the stern lying in an area of patchy sand in deeper water at the base of the reef.

S.S. *Marion* (1862)
Cable Hut Bay
Plan by: C. Coroneos 1994

□ Weed, rock		Scattered wreckage (Not measured)	
□ Sand		▼7m Depth below surface	
⊤⊤⊤⊤ Rock ledge (downward slope)			

0   10   20   30
metres

Amongst the wreckage of the stern the rudder is clearly visible lying at a depth of 7 metres, with the propeller shaft about 8 metres further inshore. Remains of machinery, possibly the engine, can be seen nearby. Seaweed and rocky crevices obscure the scattered remains of the bow, but frames, beams and the remnants of other structures can be identified. Fragile artefacts, part of cargo and fittings, can be seen lodged in crevices in the rock platform. The S.S. Marion is protected under the Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976. (Waves break) 0- Im Small iron barrel Pipe or edge of hull plating Boulders Rudder Scattered wreckage (Not measured) IX-plh below surface

Click to see the site on Google Maps
GPS Plot: Latitude 35° 17' 17.1" South Longitude 136° 55' 18.4" East

See details of the sinking and court proceedings here :
https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/50178912

An obituary of Captain Alexander McCoy

DEATH OF CAPTAIN McCOY - A PORT ADELAIDE IDENTITY.

Captain McCoy, an old Port Adelaide identity, died at North Adelaide on Monday morning. The deceased was born at Portsmouth in 1821. His father, who was a paymaster in the Royal Navy, died when his son was only eleven years old, and the latter was sent at the ago of thirteen on board a vessel as an apprentice at his own request, and spent his fourteenth birthday in Sydney Harbour; but, not liking the treatment he received on board the vessel, he ran away and shipped on board of another craft.

He was once wrecked on tho coast of New Zealand, where he lived with the Maoris, whose language he learnt. He was also engaged in whaling in the Pacific, but eventually went to the diggings in Victoria, where he was only fairly successful. His mate, however, did better, and between them they bought a schooner, with which they did a coasting trade. After that came the purchase of the Gem, and Captain McCoy eventually bought his partner out. Although with the characteristic reticence of his race the late Captain McCoy rarely said anything about his own affairs and devoted himself almost entirely to business, he was a popular man and much liked despite his reserve and bluntness.

It is related of him that many years ago, when a couple of river steamers were sent to Australia for the Murray trade, one proved not exactly what was most suited to that erratic stream, and Captain McCoy was sent in it to Batavia, with a commission to sell it to the Government, who wanted such a craft to assist in putting down some trouble in their possessions in Borneo.

Always ready for any enterprise, he got together a scratch crew, and accomplished the voyage success-fully, handing over the boat in due form. Captain McCoy had been identified with the Marine Board one way and another since Captain Douglas's time, and was always looked up to as an authority. He was officially associated with the Marine Board from the passing of the Act of 1881. When in 1875 the Adelaide Steamship Company, in which he was in a sense one of the founders, was started he was sent to Scotland to superintend tho construction of the Company's steamers — South Australian and Victorian— at D. W. Henderson's shipyard, Glasgow, and brought one of them out. He held the post of Marine Superintendent, and commanded several of the Adelaide Steamship Company's vessels from its inception. He had charge of the Victorian for some time in the trade between South Australia and Victoria, and won the reputation of being a careful commander, always solicitous for the safety of his vessel and the comfort of his passengers.

He was inseparably associated with the old days of sailing ships, and could tell interesting stories of his experiences which would have furnished Clark Russell with material for a romance of the antipodes. A good many years ago he was associated with Captain Ward in the steamship Lubra, and was one of the promoters of the Spencer's Gulf Steamship Company.

Ultimately this Company's operations were extended, and the Adelaide Steamship Company eventuated. The well-known Gem, cutter, formerly an English yacht, was a craft with which he was associated, and he sold her in 1875. She was employed in the coasting trade, principally in wool and wheat, and it used to be said that Captain McCoy could work a craft into and out of Port Elliot better than any one of his contemporaries. It was only on Sunday that Mr. J. Turnbull, an old friend of the deceased gentleman, saw him at his residence, Molesworth Street, North Adelaide, and found him fairly well, indeed he had no idea that the end was so near.

Captain McCoy attempted to move a heavy letterpress some weeks ago, a rather risky effort at his advanced age, and strained himself. He had been attended by Dr. Verco, his trusted medical advisor. The deceased nautical celebrity leaves two sons, Messrs. G. McCoy, who is in the Civil service, and Frank McCoy, who is at present in Cue, Western Australia, Mr. F. J. Sanderson is a brother-in-law.

At Port Adelaide the news of the death of Captain McCoy, who for so many years had been identified with the shipping interests of the place, was received with profound regret by his many friends. Tho flags at the Custom House, the commercial houses, and on all the vessels in harbour were half-masted during the day out of respect to the deceased mariner. The funeral takes place on Wednesday.

Last night, our Shipping Reporter wrote : — Captain Alexander McCoy, who died on Monday, was one of those properly known as a pioneer of the shipping interest, and for half a century he devoted his best energies in fostering aud improving the shipping and taking advantage of every change for the better which was from time to time devised.

It may well be said he grew with the shipping interest, and was about as strict a type of hardworking colonist as could be found. In point of fact he was always ready and eager to improve as the circumstances and changes of the colony demanded. After serving a short time in the troopers he noticed an opening for a trader from Port Adelaide to Port Elliot, and purchased a very smart cutter named the Gem, in command of which he established a regular line of traffic, and he thus recognised the possibilities of the River Murray, which was but little known at that time.

After Captain Cadell opened up the river traffic in his flat-bottomed steamer Captain McCoy sent to Scotland for two iron craft to be put together here, and he superintended the construction of the Sturt and Leichardt, two steamers which did excellent service in the early days of river traffic. Then he pur-chased a fine schooner named the Crinoline for intercolonial work, and became part owner of a barquette named the Englebart, which made successful voyages to and from India, and was once or twice chartered by the Government on Northern Territory service.

His love of progress always seemed to lead him towards steam, and being of a clear, far-seeing disposition he soon saw an opening for steamers to enter on the Spencer's Gulf trade. In association with Captain Ward Captain McCoy soon put the Marion and Lubra in commission, Captain McCoy having the former till by some mischance she was wrecked in the bay near the Althorpes which bears the name of the ill-fated steamer.

Then he remained on shore and took an active part in the Spencer's Gulf trade, and employed many steamers, such as the Kangaroo, the Coorong, and others. About twenty years ago he was mainly instrumental in getting from home the Victorian and South Aus-tralian, boats equal to the trade of the day. Meantime the spirit of rivalry had broken down freights and passage-money to the lowest possible ebb, and it was soon seen by the captain what good results would ensue from amalgamation.

This was one of Captain McCoy's master strokes, for unostentatiously he was the principal one to carry out the arrangements which led to the formation of the present Adelaide Steamship Company. Ho was on the Commission of the Peace for many years. In private he was a most estimated man of rare principle and acquirements, and to those privileged to enjoy his friendship he was as a book containing much valuable knowledge which was as the service of those who sought it.

His mind was full of the incidents of his early life and voyages, the relation of which would fill a book, and his knowledge of the rise and progress of our shipping was unique. There have been few men in our midst whose whole life was so consistently passed in the study of matters maritime, and fewer who had a record for general success. There is the prospect of the Adelaide Steamship Company remaining in a prosperous condition, which was in a great measure brought about by Captain McCoy.

It has been the writer's pleasure to go on side by side in shipping matters with the late captain for nearly half a century, during which time the latter was always a philosopher and friend to refer to in knotty technical maritime matters, in the solution of which he was seldom wrong.

An obituary of Captain Alexander McCoy

DEATH OF CAPTAIN McCOY

A WELL-KNOWN MARINER.

General regret will be felt in shipping circles throughout Australia at the death of Captain Alexander McCoy, who recently retired from his position as warden of the Marine Board in consequence of failing health. The captain had been connected with the Adelaide Steamship Company ever since its establishment in 1875, and it was under his supervision that the steamers Victorian and South Australian were built at the shipyards of Messrs. D. & W. Henderson, Glasgow, nearly 20 years ago.

Of the excellent work done by these two boats the captain was very proud, and on the occasion of the luncheon given on board the Marloo a few months ago he referred to the fact that the original engines are still running at the same rate of speed as when the vessels were launched. Captain McCoy had charge of the Victorian during several voyages between Adelaide and Sydney, but he retired from active work on the sea about 18 years ago. Since that date he has discharged the responsible work of marine superintendent in connection with the Adelaide Steamship Company on shore, but he retired on a pension shortly after Mr. Turnbull relinquished the secretaryship.

He had been ill for some time, and his death, which occurred at his residence, Moles-worth-street, North Adelaide, at 6 o'clock on Monday morning, was not altogether unexpected. Captain McCoy earned the respect and esteem of all with whom he was brought in contact by the excellence of his work and the genuineness of his character, and during his long career afloat and ashore he made thousands of friends. Captain McCoy had a very adventurous life.

He was born at Portsmouth, England, in 1821, and owing to his father's position as pay-master in the Royal Navy was brought into close, connection with seafaring matters in his very early years. When he had reached the age of 11 his father died, and two years later the lad shipped as an apprentice on board a vessel bound for Australia. He reached Sydney in time to spend his fourteenth birthday there, and having found that life was very hard and rough on board the ship left her without having obtained the necessary per-mission. After this he joined several coasting vessels, and on one of his voyages was wrecked on the New Zealand coast.

He spent a considerable time there, living among the Maoris, and learnt their language. After he left New Zealand he crossed and re-crossed the Pacific in the long-ago days when the sperm whale was captured amid the sunny islands of the equator, when there was no patrol of European and American war vessels, and when the arm of the strong alone ruled in the South Seas.

On one occasion Captain McCoy accomplished an especially difficult piece of navigation. Two small steamers, originally built for use on the Euphrates, were brought to Australia for the Murray trade, but were found to be unfit for the purpose intended, and the captain was engaged to take one of them to Batavia, the Government of which place were probable pur-chasers.

A crew was got together, and the long, and in such a small vessel, risky voyage was safely accomplished. The steamer was sold to Dutchmen, who used her in putting down a rising at Banlermassing, in Borneo. His seafaring experiences were stopped for a while when the Victorian diggings broke out, as he and a mate joined in the hunt for gold. His mate was successful, but he was not particularly so. Later on he became associated with the shipping trade between Port Adelaide and Port Elliot.

The late Captain Jenkins and he were interested in a smart little craft named the Gem and other boats connected with this branch of shipping. On the introduction of the steamship service to Spencer's Gulf ports he was given command of the steamer Marian, and was master

of her when she ran on the rocks near Cape Spencer and shortly afterwards foundered. Although a number of passengers were on board no lives were lost, the vessel remaining on the bank of a steep rock until all on board had reached the shore. She then slid back into deep water, where the hull is still believed to be lying.

For some years he had command of the steamer Lubra, and was transferred from her to the charge of the steamer Flinders, which was brought out from England for the Spencer's Gulf Company by the late Captain Alexander Hay. On her arrival from England she was thought by the company to be too large for the gulf trade, and so she was commissioned to run between Port Adelaide and Melbourne.

Such support was given to the trade that it was decided to enlarge the operations of the company, and the ultimate result of this step was the establishment of the Adelaide Steamship Company. Captain McCoy, who had taken much, interest in the welfare of the company, was sent to Scotland to superintend the construction of two new vessels for them — the South Australian and the Victorian. They were both built in 1876. The former Captain McCoy sent out first and he brought out the latter himself.

He remained in charge of the Victorian for some time, and on relinquishing command became marine superintendent of the company's service ashore, a position he retained till the time of his death. The extensive alterations to the steamers Claud Hamilton, Penola, Rob Roy, and others were conducted under his supervision. Captain McCoy was a warden of the Marine Board before the existing Marine Board and Navigation Act became law as a Government nominee, but of late years he represented the shipowners.

At the time of his retirement from the board he was senior warden. His resignation, which was announced at the meeting held on September 5, was due to ill-health. He was a recognised authority on nautical matters and did excellent service on the board. When his death became known at the Port flags were flown at half-mast at many of the business establishments and on the vessels in harbor.

The deceased gentleman leaves a widow and two sons, Mr. George McCoy, of the Survey Department, and Mr. Frank McCoy, a solicitor at Cue, West Australia. Mr. F. J. Sanderson, the ex-Collector of Customs, was his brother-in-law.

Our shipping reporter writes : — Captain McCoy was one of the pioneers of the shipping interest of South Australia. Alter serving a time in the troopers he noticed the opening for a trader from Port Adelaide to Port Elliot, and bought a smart cutter named the Gem, in command of which he established a regular line of traffic, and was thus brought in contact with the possibilities of the River Murray, which was little known at that time.

After Captain Cadell opened up the river traffic in his flat-bottomed steamer Captain McCoy sent to Scotland for two iron craft to be put together here. In due time he superintended the construction of the Sturt and Leichardt, two steamers which did excellent service in the early days of the river navigation. Then he purchased a fine schooner named the Crinoline for intercolonial work, and became part owner of a barquette, the Englebart, which made successful voyages to and from India, and was once or twice chartered by the Government on Northern Territory service.

He soon saw an opening for steamers in the Spencer's Gulf trade, where Ports Augusta and Pirie rapidly came into note, and with Wallaroo on one side and Lincoln on the other, demanded something better than the small fry which had for years carried sundry stores for settlers. The change was sudden, as with Captain Ward the Marion and Lubra were soon in commission, Captain McCoy having the former till she was wrecked in the bay near the Althorpes, which bears the name of the ill-fated steamer.

He afterwards remained on shore and took an active part in the Spencer's Gulf trade, which employed many steamers such as the Kangaroo, the Coorong, and others. About twenty years ago he was mainly instrumental in getting from England the Victorian and South Australian,

(which were quite equal to the existing trade and proved most valuable boats. He was the principal agent in carrying out the arrangements which resulted in the formation of the Adelaide Steamship Company, in which service he remained as ship's husband till very shortly before his death.

In private he was a most esteemed man, of rare principles and aquirements, and to those privileged to enjoy his friendship he was like a book containing much valued knowledge, which was at the service of those who sought it.

There have been few men in our midst whose whole life was so consistently passed in the study of matters maritime and fewer who had such a record for general success. We have received the Port Pilot, a monthly paper for the parish of Port Adelaide. We have received the Postal Guide for October, the October number of the Garden and Field, the Australian Journal for October, and the Prince Alfred College Chronicle.