“Bound for South Australia”
19th century Van Diemen’s Land
Whaling Ships and Entrepreneurs

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DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY
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Front cover illustration: Whaling log book of the vessel Wallaby, 27 June 1840 Encounter Bay, South Australia. Pages of the log have been covered over with post-cards (CRO MSS Log Box 19) (Photo K. Firth, June 2003)
Flinders University Maritime Archaeology Monographs
Series

Maritime archaeology has been taught at undergraduate level in the Department of Archaeology at Flinders University since 1996 and the first Bachelor of Arts Honours thesis in maritime archaeology was completed in 1997. The introduction of the Bachelor of Archaeology in 1997 saw undergraduate students specializing in maritime archaeology for the first time and the first Bachelor of Archaeology Honours thesis appeared in 1999. Then in 2002, a new Graduate Program in Maritime Archaeology was introduced resulting in the first Master of Maritime Archaeology thesis in 2003.

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This series aims to publish in full some of the honours and postgraduate theses as well as research reports written by staff and students in the field of maritime archaeology. Hopefully this will help to disseminate the results of research to the professional community in a simple, accessible and timely fashion. It is also hoped that this may encourage students to publish shorter-length journal articles derived from their research.

Associate Professor Mark Staniforth
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About Graduate Programs in Maritime Archaeology:
Biography

Kylli Firth has over 10 years experience in the historical and maritime archaeology fields. Kylli has completed an Honours Degree studying the early colonial history of South Australia. After her Honours Degree, Kylli went on to complete a Masters Thesis which focused upon maritime archaeology around the time of colonial settlement, particularly in South Australia and Tasmania. Kylli has recently started a PhD candidature with the Department of Archaeology at Flinders University of South Australia. Her current studies continue to focus on colonial settlement patterns, however she has moved away from maritime landscapes to agricultural and pastoral landscapes, with the intention of providing further understanding of how early colonists adapted to new and challenging environments.
Preface

Abstract

This research provides a comparative historical and archaeological analysis of the shore-based and pelagic (deep-sea) whaling industry of Tasmania and South Australia. This was an important maritime industry, which, more often than not, has been dismissed within contemporary Australian historical writings. It is argued that Launceston and Hobart Town whalers, who plied their trade during a relatively short but vital period of economic growth in colonial history, were familiar with the spoils of whaling, not only in their own coastal and oceanic waters, but also in those of South Australia.

The identities of this industry, both owners and workers, are examined. They were often well acquainted, either through business or through rivalry, and were entrepreneurs with a common goal. The whaling vessels were owned, captained and regularly exchanged within the same small group of men. The coastal whaling voyages and shore-based whaling establishments set up by these men opened up a significant number of frontier settlements along the South Australian coastline.

Historical documentary records combined with maritime archaeological evidence are employed to examine the nature and extent of the role played by the Tasmanian entrepreneurs in the development of the South Australian whaling industry.

Both maritime and historical archaeology are integrated to determine that a shore-based whaling station site existed at Fisherman’s Point in Spalding Cove, South Australia. It is confirmed that the whaling station was owned and operated by Henry Reed of Launceston during 1831 and 1832. Furthermore, the precise location of the site is determined from the documentary and archaeological evidence.
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Introduction

Australia was involved in whaling activities from the earliest days of European settlement. In South Australia whalers and sealers represented the first white settlers, albeit for short periods, probably from as early as 1802 (Bell 1991:45; Dunbabin 1926:3; Moore 1923-4:82). The whalers acted unwittingly as ambassadors and entrepreneurs on the richness of the available natural resources, both terrestrial and maritime. The whaling industry sustained and assisted economic development not only of South Australia but much of Australia’s early colonial settlement (Colwell 1969:3; Gibbs 1995:2; Lawrence and Staniforth 1998:7; Little 1969:117).

The remainder of this chapter will provide a brief introduction to the history of colonial whaling in southern Australia. It will summarise the migratory patterns and behaviours of two of the main species of whale as well as describe the three types of whaling activity. It will also describe the environments where the whalers conducted their industry. The intrusion of foreign whaling vessels as well as the activities of Tasmanian whalers will be presented. Finally, the decline in the industry will be discussed. This introduction leads to a better understanding of the way in which the Australia’s colonial whaling industry became established in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Colonial Enterprise

The first arrival of convict vessels in 1788 to the shores of Botany Bay in New South Wales meant that voyages back to Britain lacked a return cargo. Whales, however, had been seen spouting in plentiful supply along the southern passages on route to Australia (Colwell 1969:2-3; Gill 1965:66 and 113). The new colonists saw this as an export opportunity in contrast to crops, cattle and sheep, which would take time to become established and profitable in a new environment (Colwell 1969:3; Gibbs 1995:2; Little 1969:117). Gibbs has written that, “The Australian colonies quickly came to view whaling as a potential staple industry that could provide a lucrative product for export” (Gibbs 1995:43). The colonial whaling industry not only provided exports it also provided employment (Quinlan 1992:19). The sea offered an instant reward; whales were literally at the new colonies’ front door. In 1802 the Derwent River in Tasmania was considered a hazard as whales made the sheltered waters their safe breeding grounds. The Reverend Robert Knopwood from Hobart, in his diary covering the period 1803-1838, regularly noted the existence and ‘nuisance’ of whales mating and frolicking in most parts of the Derwent River (Nicholls 1977):

Whaling became Australia’s first industry. Long before anyone managed to wrest a crop from her stubborn soil, shear one of the millions of sheep that would eventually dominate her balance of trade,
or dig a single ounce of gold from her unexpectedly auriferous outback, the whalers were at work. (Ellis 1991:40)

The whaling industry experienced peaks of highs and lows due to trade embargoes, high duties and foreign competition. Nevertheless, it prevailed and continued for some fifty or so years from around 1802, declining dramatically around 1850. The decline experienced by the whaling industry will be discussed below (see section 1.9). Bach and others established that the “great era” of colonial whaling did not develop fully until the 1820s (Australian Academy of Technical Sciences and Engineering 1988:448; Bach 1976:74; Gibbs 1995:43). Nevertheless over the fifty year period it did provide a substantial, if sometimes erratic, income supporting the new colonies until agricultural and pastoral pursuits, and the mining industry produced the additional income that the colonies needed to survive (Gibbs 1995:2; Lawrence and Staniforth 1998:7).

The benefits of trade were also seen as fortuitous as whaling vessels were adapted to become trading vessels as the opportunity presented itself, and vice versa. Many agriculturalists and pastoralists showed more than a passing interest in whaling (Lawrence 1998:112). Australian merchants were noted to have a “beachcomber’s eye” for any new commodity that promised profit (Blainey 1985:105). Whaling was a maritime industry that capitalized on the benefits of colonial settlement, trade and expansion.

Townships, ports and industries, particularly shipbuilding in Tasmania, grew from the economic benefits of whaling (Blainey 1985:117; Chamberlain 1988:58). Coastal regions such as Eden and Two Fold Bay in New South Wales, Hobart Town, and the fishing village of Bicheno on the east coast of Tasmania, Portland Bay, Port Fairy in Victoria, and Victor Harbor and Port Lincoln in South Australia grew and flourished as a result of whaling activity.

**Whaling and Sealing: Integrated or Separate Industries?**

It must be noted at this point that this research focuses only on the whaling industry, particularly in South Australia. Acknowledgement of the sealers as entrepreneurs should not go unmentioned. Both maritime industries were conducted in entirely different ways. Whaling site selection will be discussed later in this chapter. Whalers were opportunistic men who could also apply their trade to sealing (Chamberlain 1988: iii; Coutts 1985:3; Gill 1965-66:123; Kostoglou 1995:36; Powling 1980:11) but the sealers were rarely able to undertake whaling. Whaling required specialised equipment, restricted locales, more men and capital; sealing could be done by one individual requiring few tools of the trade. As a result sealers were generally precluded from whaling. Kostoglou has stated that, “the overlap of sealing and whaling is difficult to assess” (Kostoglou 1991:36). Nevertheless, the two activities are often mentioned side-by-side, when in fact, they were largely separate industries.

**Whale Ecology and Migration**

Two main species of whale were the principal quarry of the Australian whalemen; the Southern Right Whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) and the Sperm Whale (*Physter macrocephalus*). The Southern Right Whale was sometimes referred to as the Black Whale. The term right whale had been given due to the fact that it was considered the right whale to kill (Francis 1991:20). The term right whale was applied as the whale became buoyant once it was killed, rendering the mammal considerably easier to either tow back to the main whaling vessel or to the nearby shore for processing. This particular whale sought calmer waters during the mating and breeding seasons. It quit “the boisterous ocean to seek the more tranquil waters” of sheltered bays and inlets around the time of calving (Blainey 1985:102; Ward and Robertson 1978:97). The right whale was a curious leviathan; it was a gentle and docile creature that showed little fear of
humans, unless it became fearful for its offspring’s life. Whalers took advantage of the strong mothering instincts of Southern Right Whales. The young calf would be harpooned and killed first with the whaler’s full knowledge that the mother whale would immediately come to her calf’s aid. As a result two generations were often taken in one attack.

The Sperm Whale was predominantly a creature of the deep. The whalers who chased these mammals generally did so in larger vessels and for longer periods of time, spending months or years without setting foot on land apart from the need to gather water or timber. Deep-sea or pelagic whaling dominated the industry in the latter period, particularly during the declining years after 1850 (Chamberlain 1988; Dunbabin 1926:3-7; Evans 1993, Vol 1:6). Whaling vessels travelled hundreds of nautical miles in search of the Sperm Whale. All processing and storing was done on board. Pelagic whalers on occasions crossed paths with their compatriots involved in shore and bay whaling. As previously mentioned, whalers were opportunistic. They were ready to adapt themselves to any form of whaling, wherever and whenever whales were in their sights (Kostoglou 1995, Vol 1:8). “If deep-sea whalers had a dry season, their favourite trick was to skirt the shores of Tasmania…or South Australia during the winter months, and lay off from the largest bay-whaling station they could find” (Colwell 1969:65). Sperm whalers “ran back to back” with bay and shore-whalers (Kostoglou 1995, Vol 1:8).

Whalers followed the migratory patterns of both species. The months of April to October saw the whalers hugging the coastlines of eastern Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia chasing the Southern Right Whales:

The general course of the Black Whale in these seas, as winter approaches appears to be from the south-east, consequently the southern shores of Van Diemen’s Land is first visited by them which may be about the beginning of April; they move on to Portland Bay others continue during the winter to arrive and pass forward. Of these which enter Encounter Bay while others it would appear strike the coast there for the first time. In like manner the whole southern shore of this continent is visited by them. (South Australian Register, 1 Jan 1842:3)

The deep-sea or pelagic vessels, however, chased the Sperm Whale during the summer season. The ultimate pursuit of the whale could be carried out through most months of the year, the only criteria for pelagic whaling being that the vessel was of a suitable tonnage. Furthermore the ship had to have capacity to store the end product oil, and to carry enough crew and stores to see out the long season.

**Foreign Competition**

A full analysis of foreign vessels cruising the whaling grounds of both the coastal and deep-sea waters is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, what needs to be addressed is that Australian colonial vessels were not the only whalers working the southern coastal regions. The explorer Edward John Eyre in his journal claimed, “Not less than three hundred foreign vessels visit annually whaling off the coast, and in seas contiguous to our possession in the Southern Ocean” (Eyre 1845:228). The shores of Fowler’s Bay in the far west region of South Australia for example, were “literally strewn in all directions with the bones and carcasses of whales” (Eyre 1845:227).

The vessels from Van Diemen’s Land in the early years of whaling suffered the indignation of not being able to compete for a time on the same level as the British, American and French vessels. “Complaints…by colonial fishers were loud and constant, as American and even Frenchmen were observed harpooning within sight of Australian land” (Campbell 1918:247). The new whalers on the scene lacked the initial capital and expertise that was a prerequisite for deep-sea whaling (Abbott and Nairn 1969:287). Pelagic whaling was a costly business, requiring experienced men who were familiar with the southern oceans and the habits of the migrating...
whale population. The Tasmanian whalers proved to be extremely resilient and purposeful as they were not deterred by this foreign invasion (Gibbs 2000:5).

**Three Forms of Whaling**

The Van Diemen’s Land whalers not only persisted in whaling for some fifty or more years, they also were able to turn their hands to all three main forms of whaling. The Tasmanian whalers were opportunistic; as whale stocks began to deplete in their own waters, they cruised westward, following the migratory path of the Black Whales that sought the sheltered waters of Victoria and South Australia.

**Shore-based whaling**

As the term implies, shore-based whaling was carried out from the shore. Whaling stations were located in bays, coves or inlets, protected from prevailing winds, tidal swells and the harsh conditions of the winter months (Gibbs 1995:184; McKenzie 1998:30). Shore-based whaling in Australia has been compared to the Basque whalers who, “over a thousand years ago…used to put out in their boats to harpoon whales, which they towed back to their shore-stations” (Dunbabin 1926:3; Ellis 1991:42). The methods of the Australian whalemen were not dissimilar to the ancient methods of the Basques (Evans 1993, Vol 1:14). Dunbabin saluted the colonial whalemen by suggesting that the, “Australian whaler was no imitator, his methods may have stemmed from the techniques of the Basques, however, he had to adapt himself to the profoundly different environment” (Dunbabin 1926:104).

One of the aims of this thesis is to establish typical features and specific environmental conditions, and suggest definitive locales of shore-based whaling sites along the coastline of South Australia. Peter Bell has suggested that:

> Some twenty five sites were investigated along the shores of South Australia, eighteen cannot be located or have no discernable evidence on the ground, another four have occupational remains, which can be linked to the documentary record. (Bell 1991:48)

Townrow also acknowledged that there were 25 possible sites; however she suggested that “nine have some in-situ remains” (Townrow 1997:9). Further to this, Staniforth, Briggs and Lewczak (2001:13) stated, “At least seventeen whaling stations are known to have existed on the coastline of South Australia before 1850.” Kostoglou (1995, Vol 1:1) stated, “The South Australian survey undertaken by Kostoglou and McCarthy in 1991 identified 18 fishery sites from literary sources and found material remains at seven” (see Map 1). This thesis does not intend, and cannot possibly cover all 25 whaling station sites. To re-visit all the locations noted by Kostoglou and McCarthy (1991) would be impracticable and too costly for a thesis of this nature. Nevertheless, this thesis will highlight some additional archival information that adds to the existing record.

The remainder of this chapter will address the so-called typical features, and preferred requirements of shore-based whaling stations. Shore stations were remote and often nowhere near existing settlements (Gibbs 1995:2). These stations were merely ephemeral outposts, strategically located to take advantage of the migratory pathways of the Southern Right Whales (Coutts 1985:36). The number of men left at these stations varied. While Evans suggested that “20 to 30 men working 3 or 4 boats” was the average quota (Evans 1993, Vol 1:37), Bell argued, “30 to 40 men with 5 or 6 boats” was the requirement (Bell 1991:46). It would be difficult to provide an exact figure as each station, or size of operation may have required fewer or more men depending on capital and investment inputs.
Map 1. Eighteen shore-based whaling station locations along the coastline of South Australia identified by Kostoglou and McCarthy (1991:69)

A 'typical' shore-based whaling station site required distinct criteria of physical and environmental features, both terrestrial and maritime. Reports suggest that the whalers chose a site. This may be correct; however, the general location and the migratory route of the whales also dictated the most probable region while the physical environment and available resources dictated the exact location. The suggested twenty-five whaling station locations along the South Australian coastline extended from the far west at Fowler’s Bay to the far south at Rivoli Bay (see Map 1).

The wintry weather conditions that the shore-based whalers had to endure suggested that locations were chosen in sheltered bays, inlets or coves. Not only were these locations more conducive to the conditions that the whalers preferred, they were also the protected aquatic environments at which the breeding and migrating whales found shelter. The whalers stayed on shore from April to October. They were supplied with scant materials from which they built shelter for themselves. These shelters were established to be no more than “crude huts” thrown together in a “ram shackle" manner (Evans 1993, Vol 1:37; Francis 1991:75). In most instances the accommodation was temporary although the whalers may have returned to the same place year after year. Townrow suggested that “permanency was not necessarily a feature” (Townrow 1997:31). Food supplies were sometimes minimal as they were expected to find their own supplies of fresh meat and water. Preserving and keeping food fresh would have been a very real concern (Chamberlain 1988:117). The mother ship would literally abandon the whalers until the season’s close, whereupon the men, the whale boats, equipment, whale oil and bones were duly
collected. According to Nash the shore-based whaling station owned by James Gardiner and William Young at Streaky Bay on the far west coast of South Australia was dismantled in 1844; “the men pulled down the huts and kept the slabs for firewood” (Nash 2003:90). The whalers lived hard and worked hard, risking life and limb every time they hunted a whale. Whaling was tedious, dirty, and physically demanding work.

As previously stated, shore-based stations were located in sheltered bays, along the migrating path of the whales. This was not the only criterion for a shore-based site. The processing of whales required specialised working areas, in particular a level area upon which to build temporary accommodation and a sheltered region for the try-works, to protect the constant fires burning while rendering the whale blubber down to oil (McKenzie 1998:30). The flensing or cutting-in area required a “sloping rock platform on the water’s edge” (Coroneos 1997:13). Nash has suggested that a “sloping pebbled beach” would be ideal for the flensing process (Nash 2003:67). A sandy protected beach upon which whale boats could be “drawn up” is another suggested requirement (Gibbs 1995:184). Kostoglou (1995, Vol 1:40) argued that the whalers in Tasmania had a “disdain” for sandy beaches. Above all the whaling station location required a look-out for spotting the whales, a deep anchorage for whaling ships to come in and out to drop off and collect the crew, oil and bone, and other sundry items. Whalers probably preferred to be within the path of trading vessels, so that they could supplement their meagre supplies by exchanging fresh water, meat and fish in return for spirits and tobacco.

**Bay whaling**

The maritime environment for shore-based whaling was also the same as for the bay whalers. Similar criteria applied: firstly, to be located in the path of the migrating whales; secondly, to anchor in sheltered bays or inlets; thirdly to be close to fresh waters and a timber supply for the burning fires of the try-works. The bay whalers lived on board their vessels because no accommodation was established on shore. “At many places along the coast, bay whalers dropped anchor, not bothering to erect buildings, but instead using their ships as floating stations” (Francis 1991:75). Should the location prove unsuccessful, the whalers hauled up anchor and moved elsewhere, whereas the shore-based whaling infrastructure was all on land and whalers had to see the season out. The bay whalers may well have utilised the shores of the bay for their try-works area, however all “cutting-in and coopering or storing of whale oil was done on board” (Crowther 1919:134). While look-outs may have been established on higher ground on shore, the whale boats and their crews of harpooners and rowers more often than not scoured the adjoining coastline waiting patiently for the spout of a whale. Once captured and killed, the whale would be dragged to the anchored whaling ship. Dakin declared that the bay whalers spread rapidly from the shores of Tasmania taking advantage of this method, applying it along most of the coast of South Australia (Dakin 1934:38). Rickard further suggested that it was the Launceston men who were the pioneers of bay whaling (Rickard 1996:118). This point was also emphasised by Dunbabin (1922:134), who stated; “Every bay and nook at one time or other was occupied by bay whalers in Tasmania.”

Bay whaling activities left few archaeological remains and confirmation of their locales would be difficult to prove. Archaeological investigations conducted at Fowlers Bay in South Australia did find the remains of a “well-formed whaler’s look-out” (Jones and Staniforth 1996:3). Crowther implied that shore-based whaling evolved from the principles of bay whaling and these were adapted not long after (Crowther 1919:134). Oyster (1980:21) suggested that bay whaling, particularly along the eastern coastline of Tasmania was within the realm of merchants with less capital. Lawrence stated that shore-based whaling required even less capital (Lawrence 2001b:211). Needless to say, both forms of whaling provided a quick and lucrative return and became the most popular forms of whaling until the whaling stocks of Southern Right Whales
began to dwindle. The decline of this particular form of whaling will be addressed later in this chapter. What became clear from this research is that bay whaling and shore-based whaling are two distinct types of whaling, though they are often referred to as the same.

**Pelagic or deep-sea whaling**

Pelagic whaling differed considerably from bay and shore-based whaling. The distances covered by pelagic whaling’s much larger and sturdier vessels included thousands of kilometres. The deep-sea whalers chased the Sperm Whales hundreds of nautical miles from shore, and a single voyage may have taken months or even years. The vessels would not return to port unless their holds were full of whale oil and bone. Gibbs (2000:5) stated that the Australian pelagic whalers were “usually from Tasmania.” Chapter Eight presents the statistical information which directly relates the tonnages and vessel types to either the whaling operations of Hobart and Launceston. The merchants who invested their capital in these voyages were men of some means, as these deep-sea vessels were more expensive to equip. More crew were employed, and hard working and diligent captains and masters were appointed to oversee all the operations. Food had to last the long voyage, coopers were employed to make the barrels, and cooks prepared the food. The pelagic whaler’s life perhaps was not as satisfactory as those who fished from the bays and shores. There was no escape from the foul smell of whale oil, the work was relentless, the food meagre and monotonous, the conditions less tolerable. Dunbabin noted that deep-sea whaling flourished after the decline of bay and shore-whaling (Dunbabin 1925:27). The peak and prolific years of deep-sea whaling lasted from 1845-1851 (Chamberlain 1988:53). The Hobart whaling industry, notably the pelagic whaling industry is covered extensively in Chamberlain’s PhD thesis, *The Hobart Whaling Industry* 1830 to 1900 (Chamberlain 1988). The pelagic whalers were also reported to have undertaken bay whaling as the opportunities arose (Colwell 1969:65; Kostoglou 1995, Vol 1:8).

**Tasmanian Whalers**

Chamberlain’s research concluded that the Tasmanian whalemen from Hobart Town travelled “west-ward” as far as King George Sound in Western Australia. They cruised the Great Australian Bight in search of Sperm Whales and circled Kangaroo Island in South Australia (Chamberlain 1988:107). Whaling spread rapidly from Tasmania to much of the coastline of South Australia during the height of the whaling era in the 1830s (Dakin 1934:38; Hosking 1973, Chpt 2:25). As noted earlier Tasmanian whalers were opportunistic men who applied their skills to shore, bay and pelagic whaling, often utilising whichever method suited their needs. More often than not it was the Hobart Town whalers who were mentioned; however,

*We must not forget the men of Launceston in connection to bay whaling although their deeds are shrouded in secrecy compared with stories of Hobart. It was the Launceston men who made the southern coasts of Australia their happy hunting ground. (Dakin 1934:43)*

One of the aims of this thesis is to highlight that the Tasmanian whalers, both from Hobart and Launceston, sailed the bays and deep-sea waters of the coast of South Australia well before and after its official settlement in 1836. The other is to uncover some of these aforementioned ‘shrouded secrets’.

**The South Australian Company**

This research concentrates on the whaling industry prior to the official settlement of South Australia in 1836; therefore the interests of the South Australian Company will only be briefly discussed in this context. Mention must nevertheless be made that whaling played an integral role in the decision to establish a new settlement in this colony. The whalemen’s emphasis on the
The richness of the coastline of South Australia and the potential profits to be made from whaling became a strong drawcard.

The establishment of the South Australian Company in 1835 in London for the pursuit of the whale saw the first European settlers arrive on Kangaroo Island in 1836 (Bell 1991:46). Soon after whaling station sites were established at Encounter Bay, Thistle Island and Sleaford Bay on the west coast (Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991). This proved to be bad timing for the company, as the decline of whaling had already begun and was having an effect. “They did not realise that their knowledge was out of date, and that the uncontrolled slaughter of whales had started an alarming decline” (Parsons 1986:16). Foreign vessels were competing successfully with the whaling parties from Van Diemen’s Land. The prospectus of the South Australian Company stated that haste was necessary in settling South Australia for the whalers from Hobart Town were active along the coast (Dakin 1934:52). Added to this, the men of the South Australian Company were not as experienced in whaling matters. The South Australian Company struggled, and the huge profits it had expected did not come to fruition (Hosking 1973; Nelson 1998; Parkinson 1997). Competition from the Tasmanian whalers proved to be a thorn in the side of the South Australian Company, particularly at the Encounter Bay whaling station. According to Simpson Newland:

Now a new evil presented itself. The boats being built upon a new and improved model pulled much faster than those at that time used in this province. Not infrequently were the boats belonging to shore-parties within a few fathoms of the whale when the Van Diemen’s Land boats would shoot past them and fasten to the fish, thus disheartening the men and causing great dissatisfaction. (Newland 1920:21-22)

Decline

The decline in the whaling industry in all its forms coincided with several economic, agricultural, pastoral and industrial developments. This decline in whaling began around 1850 (Dunbabin 1926:3; Evans, 1993 Vol 1:6; Lawrence and Staniforth 1998:7). It should be noted that the whale population had become seriously depleted due to over-killing. Industrial commodities such as gas and kerosene replaced the properties of whale oil resulting in the decline in monetary value of both the Sperm Whale and Black Whale oil markets (Bach 1976:76-77). Merchants found new and more profitable uses for their vessels, such as the transportation of livestock, passengers and goods of trade to the up-and-coming new colonies (Blainey 1985:116). Young men were turning away from whaling as more opportunities arose to work on the land. Men who made money from whaling were finding that farming was a more profitable business, in some instances whaling was only considered as a supplement to their income. Gold fever also infected the whalemen and they left the industry “en masse” (Colwell 1969:96; Ellis 1991:109). Pelagic whaling experienced a steady decline right through to the 1900s (Chamberlain 1988).

Conclusion

The Tasmanian-based whaling industry has been linked, but not rigorously pursued in any great detail, to the colonial history of South Australia. The historical documentary record has failed to fully establish a correlation between the ownership of vessels, the partnerships formed, the exact locations or specific dates, or numbers of voyages undertaken. This thesis narrows this gap by applying a revisionist approach to re-examining as much as possible the primary source material available within the archives of Tasmania and South Australia. This thesis also highlights the ambiguities and inconsistencies that have been perpetuated and repeated throughout many secondary source materials.
The underlying theme of this thesis is that the Tasmanian-based whaling industry played a significant role in South Australia’s colonial history. This thesis also suggests that entrepreneurs of the whaling industry played a vital role in the early colonisation of the state. Whaling activity from Hobart and Launceston did not immediately cease once South Australia became a colony in 1836. The Tasmanian whalers were not initially discouraged when the South Australian Company began its whaling enterprise at Encounter Bay. As South Australia grew and prospered Tasmanian trading vessels reverted to whaling ships once their cargoes of cattle, sheep, wheat and passengers had been unloaded at various ports such as Port Adelaide, Encounter Bay and Port Lincoln.

This research has incorporated maritime and historical archaeology in order to establish the extent to which Tasmanian whalers played their role not only in whaling, but also in the early European settlement of South Australia. Gibbs (1995:5), Staniforth (1998:63) and Stuart (1998:10) have all agreed with Lawrence who has suggested that “little attempt has been made to analyse and synthesise the archaeological evidence to the historical data” (Lawrence 1998:11). The study will demonstrate that this research has analysed the historical record, and has connected it to the archaeological evidence so that the two complement each other.
Aims and Objectives

This study had three main research aims or objectives, and they are as follows. The first objective was to determine the level of interest that the Tasmanian-based whaling industry had in South Australia from the early to mid-nineteenth century. To achieve this it was necessary to identify vessel ownerships, destinations, and dates of departure and arrival from both Hobart and Launceston. This also included the identification of vessel types, tonnages, rigs, and the names of masters or captains, agents and partnerships.

In order to meet this objective, Chapter Five tracks the movements, the year and dates, and the destinations of several Tasmanian vessels from whaling log books and colonial newspapers. A comprehensive database formulated from this information has been placed in the Appendix of this thesis. This database provides a checklist against the primary source material accessed from the records of the Customs Board of Hobart, and shipping news from colonial newspapers accessed in Hobart, Launceston and South Australia. The principal secondary sources of information were Nicholson’s *Shipping Arrivals and Departures – Tasmania 1803-1833* (Nicholson 1983), and *Shipping Arrivals and Departures – Tasmania 1834-1842* (Nicholson 1985). Nicholson’s records cease at 1842, so to complete the database to 1850 the research included Broxam’s *Shipping Arrivals and Departures – Tasmania 1843-1850* (Broxam 1998). Subsequently, three maps were constructed illustrating the pattern of vessel movements, the date and year that they were in South Australian waters, as well as the names of other whaling vessels in the same region, in some instances the captains spoken to, and tonnages of oil on board (see Maps 1, 2, and 3). The statistical information on the number of identified whaling voyages undertaken by the Hobart and Launceston-based whalers has also been presented. From this data it has been determined how many of these whaling voyages were directed to South Australian waters, and the years of sailing.

The second research objective was to identify who the whaling entrepreneurs were, what level of interest, commitment and capital they had placed into whaling in South Australian waters. This study also seeks to establish if these people were associated with each other either through partnerships, vessel ownerships or family connections. To meet this objective Chapter Six presents the information about who the owners, masters, passengers or crew were on those voyages, vessels and who had whaling interests in South Australia. Chapter Six also explores the rationale behind the motivation of entrepreneurs and colonists such as the Henty family and Henry Reed. It follows the voyages of masters and captains such as John Jones and John Hart, and their progress from master to whaling station owner. Accordingly, this chapter examines the economic interests of investors such as the father and son team of Jonathon and John Griffiths, and private merchant Thomas Birch. Finally, the chapter discusses the archaeological implications of the speech presented to The South Australian Association by Frederick Hamborg.
Hamburg was a passenger aboard the whaling vessel *Socrates*, which was recorded as having visited Spalding Cove, in South Australia in May 1832.

The third research objective was to establish a definitive and precise location for the generically suggested shore-based whaling station referred to as Spalding Cove. This objective is addressed in Chapter Seven which investigates the historical documentary record relating to the history of Spalding Cove. This chapter applies the principles recommended by Townrow’s (1997) model for predicting shore-based whaling station locations. This chapter also presents environmental and geophysical information of the region, as well as archaeological artefact indicators.
A considerable gap appears to exist within the contemporary historical documentary record about the significance of whalers and whaling, and what part they played in the early establishment and development of colonial South Australia. Historical chronologies vividly describe the events that surrounded the colonisation of South Australia. Little mention however is made of the first European whalers who made the southern coastline of mainland Australia “their happy hunting ground” (Dakin 1934:43).

Although many books have been written on the history of Australia, there is only minimal reference to whaling. South Australian authors in particular have failed to elaborate in any significant detail, other than to document that whaling vessels had been in South Australian waters. Unfortunately, they provide little documentary evidence to suggest where these vessels came from, or how many had visited, or in which particular year (Borrow 1947; Casanova 1992; Cumpston 1974; Newland 1919, 1920-21, 1926, 1982; Parsons 1986). Simpson Newland described in graphic detail one particular whale chase that he witnessed at Encounter Bay on the southern coast of South Australia. He documented the activities of the whalers associated with the South Australian Company’s establishment at Encounter Bay, notably by describing the rivalry and competition engaged between the whaling ships from Tasmania. Newland wrote that these events were ‘adventuresome’, but failed to indicate whether the whaling ships were from Hobart or Launceston. He also failed to mention vessel names, ownership or the masters who captained them. He emphasised that the Tasmanian whalers at Encounter Bay presented “a new evil” upon activities of the South Australian Company’s men, the Tasmanian whale boats proved to be faster, and the whalers more experienced (Newland 1919:28). The above mentioned authors contributed historical accounts of certain events and activities of the whaling past. Their stories may be more narrative than historically based, however these works cannot be dismissed from the historical record. Their personal views and reminiscences provided varied impressions of an industry that has been interpreted in many ways. The validity of secondary source material may be questionable in some instances; nevertheless they do provide an overview of how the industry of whaling was perceived by a variety of historians, biographers and genealogists.

Australian histories have been documented with only the barest acknowledgement on the existence of a maritime enterprise upon which a number of the new colonies relied during their fledgling years (Bach 1976:4). Blainey had attributed this to the “apathy or reluctance” of some historians who had chosen to ignore the significance of a maritime history that played an important role not only with trade and transport, but also the early colonisation period (Blainey 1985:115). Lawrence (1998:114) has been more forgiving, suggesting that the lack of information available within the documentary record may also have contributed to this.
What has come to light from several works is that more often than not whaling had been interpreted as a “romantic stage” in Australia’s past. Lady Hasluck, for example, in her forward to the written works of Wace (1973) commented:

The author throws additional light on a romantic page of the period of early colonial settlement and reveals an exciting maritime activity that was going on around the eastern, southern and western coast of the continent. (Hasluck in Wace 1973:n.p.)

The era of colonial whaling in Australia would have been far from romantic, and it is unfortunate that the whalers and the industry have been portrayed in this manner. Hudson Fysh, in his biography on his grandfather, Henry Reed, also described whaling as a romantic occupation (Fysh LMSS49.1972: Chpt V1:1). Chapter Six will describe the activities of Henry Reed as he proved to be a driving force within southern Australia’s whaling history. The whalers and their associated entrepreneurs played a more significant role in the establishment of the southern colonies than simply being part of a romanticised past.

**Modern History and Historiographers**

Research conducted during the early stages of this thesis examined secondary source materials written by historians as well as biographers. This was done to identify the role and level of recognition placed upon the colonial whaling industry during the early to mid-nineteenth century. What has come to light is that historical works on Australia’s colonial past dealing with the whaling industry have been selectively neglected by many modern historiographers. The industry played an important role, not only in an economic sense, but also in the patterns of frontier settlement along the southern coastline of Australia (Blainey 1985:115). In many instances references to whaling and the industries’ entrepreneurs had been allocated a few lines or a single paragraph only. For example, David Day devoted two scant paragraphs on whaling. He briefly mentioned the monopoly placed on the industry by the East India Company, quoting statistical figures on the rise of vessel numbers from 5 to 76 in Sydney during 1827 to 1835 (Day 1997:74-75). Blainey (1980) contributed even less in his book, *A Land Half Won*, where one fleeting paragraph was devoted to whaling (Blainey 1980:21). The supporting editorial suggested that Blainey’s “vision of history brings a new insight” to the interpretation on the colonisation of Australia, yet whaling received little mention. The above two examples may well be exceptional, however this does display some of the apathy that Blainey promoted, and subsequently corrected some five years later (Blainey 1985:115).

Much of the available historical literature appeared to be narratives of the past with no significant or original data from which to draw relevant information (Blainey 1994; Camm 1987; Clark 1995; Day 1997; Gibbs 1969; Younger 1974). Many secondary source materials provided little in the way of significant primary source material. Authors such as Dakin (1934), Dunbabin (1922, 1925, and 1926) and Colwell (1969) have contributed significantly to the understanding of the whaling industry and the role it played in the history of colonial Australia. Their works were singularly focused on whaling, and therefore provided a wider overview on the topic. Lawrence (1998:115) suggested that it was “somewhat sad” that stories of the colonial era of whaling had been documented by only a “few clear sighted historians.” Dakin (1934: vii) has contended that the “study of whaling in Australasian waters is scarcely touched upon by modern writers.” He wrote this in 1934; from that date forward the majority of whaling literature would appear to be limited to specific regions or locales (for example, Casanova 1992; Cawthorne 1923; Cumpston 1974; Fysh 1973; Hart 1936; Learmonth 1934; Newland 1920-21; Nicholls 1977; Nunn 1989; Peel 1996; Philip 1936; Powling 1980; Ruediger 1980). Historical chronologies vividly describe the events and discoveries of inland and seafaring explorers and the importance of the agricultural and pastoral industries within the economy of the fledgling
states. Articles focus on the growth and expansion of transport networks, as well as the booming mining industries of the mid-1800s. Maritime pursuits and the significant role that whaling played during the struggling years of colonial settlement, however, go largely unnoticed (Bach 1976:4; Blainey 1985:115; Dunbabin 1925:1).

Australian heroes and honourable rogues have mostly been those connected to the land, pioneering explorers, memorable bushrangers, and convicts (Bach 1976:4; Lawrence 1998:115; Price 1972:52). Much of the historical emphasis has been placed on the colonial landscape, the inevitable struggle for soil, wealth and freedom. Kostoglou (1998:103) asked, “Who can name a famous whaler? These men we are seeking to study and add to the popular history of this country still to all intents and purposes are anonymous.” The acceptance of a national identity or “national character” is generally connected to the land and not to the maritime seascape (Bach 1976:3; Blainey 1985:115). Australian maritime history has literally been placed in the “backwaters” of contemporary historical references (Churchward 1949:59). Lawrence (1998:112) further commented that whaling “has failed to capture the historical imagination.”

This thesis will argue that the whalers’ maritime and terrestrial exploits played a much more significant role in the history of Australia than has been acknowledged to date. The arguments which will be presented within the following chapters strongly suggest that colonial growth and economic enterprise were derived from the riches of the sea. The existence of a maritime industry initially sustained the colonies of Western Australia (Gibbs 1995), Victoria (Townrow 1997), Tasmania (Lawrence and Staniforth 1998; Nash 2003), South Australia (Hosking 1973; Nelson 1998; Parkinson 1997), and to some extent New South Wales (Pearson 1985). Dunbabin, one of the historians who Lawrence (1998:115) suggested was “clear sighted” wrote:

> Australia is on the sheep’s back today; for many years in her early history she was on the whale’s back. Whaling and sealing were not merely picturesque episodes in the history of Australia; they provided the first important articles of export, and played no small part in the exploration of the southern seas… the whalers and sealers played a part as the pioneers and forerunners of settlement. (Dunbabin 1925:1)

This study focuses on the activities of the whalers, entrepreneurs and the vessels that plied the southern coastline of South Australia before, and shortly after official settlement took place in 1836. Research to date has indicated that the Hobart Town and Launceston entrepreneurs of the whaling industry were attracted to South Australia well before 1836, continuing their pursuits up to 1850 and beyond (Dakin 1934:26; Evans 1993, Vol 1:16; McKenzie 1998:29; Nash 1998:21). Research for this thesis involves material prior to 1850; after this time a strong decline in the industry was reflected by changing economies and steady growth in trade, transport, mining and agriculture.

**Primary Source Material**

The nature of material researched indicated that the archival records, held in both Tasmanian and South Australian repositories, were to be the most useful and relevant. Dakin noted:

> It is necessary to turn to special works, to articles and journals, but above all old manuscripts, letters, log-books, and century old newspapers to obtain information. (Dakin 1934:x)

Chapter Four will discuss the theory and methodology applied to the primary source material that Dakin advised researchers to address. Locating and understanding the complexities of primary source material can be problematic to those who are not seasoned historians; for the author it proved to be a most exciting and interesting challenge.
3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Archaeological Investigations

The 1990s brought about a decade of intense interest within the cultural heritage management of shore-based whaling station sites and locations, particularly in Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia. Several consultancy reports were produced for the relevant State Heritage Branches and similar agencies. These reports provided historical, geographical and archaeological evidence on the existence of more than one hundred whaling station locations along the southern coastline of Australia. This thesis draws upon the contributions of the following published and unpublished documents. The aim is to examine if any comparable relationships, such as site selection or whaling station manifestations existed for the shore-based and pelagic whaling industry of Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia. These three states were selected because this study follows the activities of entrepreneurs attracted to the colonial whaling industry, most of whom were attracted to the southern coastline of mainland Australia.

The intent of examining these archaeological reports was to identify whether a connection existed between the Tasmanian-based whalers and their activities along the coastline of South Australia. The migratory route of the Southern Right whales followed the coastline of Victoria, South Australia and continued along the Great Australian Bight. In light of this, it would be pertinent to suggest that a correlation existed between the shore-based activities of the Tasmanian whalers, both in South Australia and Victorian waters. It is logical to suggest that the Tasmanian entrepreneurs followed the path of the whales and were certainly opportunistic enough to set up shore-based stations in any bay that may have proven to be popular with the migrating whales. Therefore the reports written by Kostoglou and McCarthy (1991) on South Australian shore-based whaling station sites, Evans (1993, Vols 1 and 2) and Kostoglou (1995, Vols 1 and 2) on Tasmanian locations, as well as Townrow (1997) for Victoria were selected for comparison.

Kostoglou and McCarthy (1991) identified the existence of 18 whaling station sites along the coastline of South Australia. The documentary record for each location varies considerably. Although Kostoglou and McCarthy provided comprehensive archaeological information on several locations, it is interesting to note that locations within the Spalding Cove region on the west coast of South Australia were simply scrutinised by the way of aerial survey only. “No surface features of any type were discernible within the Cove,” according to Kostoglou and McCarthy (1991:22).

However, Kostoglou and McCarthy (1991:22) cited Moore who stated:

The most recent account of Spalding Cove is given by a person by the name of Homburg, who visited it in May, 1832... The object of his visit to Port Lincoln was to carry hither a party of thirty persons with five boats, and the necessary implements for catching whales. The persons whom he left had been there three previous seasons for the same purpose, and had been successful. (Moore 1923-4:92-93 in Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991:22)

Either Kostoglou and McCarthy considered Moore’s statement had little credence, or they deemed the location of a whaling station in that locale of little significance. The report also indicated that locations such as Cape Jervis, on the south eastern coastline of South Australia were also recorded without visitation and were “identified circumstantially” (Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991:39). It appeared that Kostoglou and McCarthy were relatively selective about which sites they chose to investigate. This may have been directly related to the available historical information or to the lack of identifiable material cultural evidence, or lack of geological or geographical indicators. Nevertheless, analysis of the document revealed that sites such as Spalding Cove indicated that further research should and could be conducted. This was due to the fact that the location was inspected as part of an aerial survey. It was felt that this type
of investigation may well have missed some of the geographical features of the cove as well as extant artefact material. Chapter Seven will discuss the archaeology and history of Spalding Cove in significant detail. Kostoglou and McCarthy’s (1991) report, although some fourteen years old, still provides a valuable insight into whaling activities in South Australia and has subsequently been referred to by many other researchers.

The colonial whaling industry of Tasmania has been extensively documented by Evans (1993, Vols 1 and 2) and Kostoglou (1995, Vols 1 and 2). Evans identified 116 possible sites on the eastern coast of Tasmania. Many of these sites were replicated in Kostoglou’s report. In each case both consultants documented the history of shore-based whaling and identified the same historical archival information. From the available documentary record Evans concluded that “little correlation existed between the quantity and quality of the documentary evidence” (Evans 1993, Vol 1:5). Her report documented the location of, and archaeological evidence on, many of the sites indicating that the “layout” of the shore-based whaling station sites followed “a clearly defined pattern” (Evans 1993, Vol 2:26). Kostoglou’s (1995: Vol 2), report followed a more rigorous approach to the identification of archaeological evidence by the provision of extensive site plans, drawings and photographs. Kostoglou also provided a brief analysis of the artefact material located at many of these whaling station sites.

Townrow’s (1997) publication did not follow the same historical and archaeological focus as the above assessments. Her theories and methodologies were underpinned by physical observations on the topography, climatic and zoological indicators to provide a predictive model for the location of shore-based whaling station sites along the coastline of Victoria. Townrow correlated geophysical information against the historical record, emphasising that defined selection criteria existed in identifying both the maritime and terrestrial components to predict site location patterns. Not only does the report present representative aspects on site selection, but it also confirmed that the Launceston whalers were the main perpetrators of shore and bay whaling along the southern mainland of Australia (Townrow 1997:9). The most significant difference established by Townrow was that, in comparison to the high level of associated features of Tasmanian shore-based whaling stations, “sites in Victoria show a low density of associated artefacts and traces of structures are rare” (Townrow 1997:32). The report identified only four sites in comparison to the 119 locations in Tasmania documented by Evans (1993, Vol 2). Notably, the shore-based whaling stations in Tasmania were established after colonial settlement, and the availability and viability of continued seasonal use would indicate that permanent structural remains were more than likely. The small number of Victorian shore-based whaling station locations and lack of material cultural remains, plus identifiable structural features noted by Townrow, strongly indicated that the shore-based whaling industry was perhaps conducted in an opportunistic and temporary manner. Townrow further stated, “This makes positive identification and dating difficult” (Townrow 1997:32). These management reports have documented much on the structural and artefactual remains. However no synopsis or analysis of the sites or artefacts has been incorporated:

There is obviously an increasing body of material recovered from Australian historical sites, much of which has already been fully or partly described, and with a small quantity analysed and interpreted. (Gibbs 1995:333-334)

The above reports have identified that prevailing theories existed within the identification of geographical, historical and archaeological evidence on the location of shore-based whaling station sites. The reports were orientated towards conservation and heritage management, and the analysis of artefactual material and structural features proved to be minimal.
Previous Archaeological and Historical Theses

The foundation for identifying the literature material was sourced from reference material cited in previous theses on the topic of Australasian whaling. Gibbs’ PhD thesis, *The Historical Archaeology of Shore-based Whaling in Western Australia 1836-1979* (Gibbs 1995), provided the impetus from which this study evolved. Gibbs conducted a comprehensive study on the history and archaeology of shore-based whaling in Western Australia. Gibbs’ research explored the role of whaling and the development of Western Australian coastal settlements. He documented the nature of whaling stations, in particular the history and archaeology of Cheyne Beach, and provided a comprehensive database of vessels operating in the region, with particular emphasis on the impact of American whaling vessels. Gibbs examined the scale and nature of the whaling industry in Western Australia, explored the “frontier theory,” and acknowledged the relationship formed between the whalers and the indigenous communities in the region of the shore-based whaling station sites.

Previous research undertaken on the industry of whaling in South Australia has been largely limited to Honours theses, most of which addressed the industry post-colonisation after 1836, and the South Australian Company’s activities. The South Australian whaling industry has been previously researched by Benbow (2004), DeLeiuen (1998), Hosking (1973), Morphett (State Records RN820.1939:1-12), Nelson (1998), Parkinson (1997), Paterson (2004) and Thomas (n.d.). The research undertaken extensively relates to South Australian enterprise and does not address the activities of the Tasmanian whalers in South Australian waters. Nevertheless, each thesis has offered a valuable insight into the whaling industry, either in a regional sense or with an economic overview.

Luke Benbow’s (2004) Honours Thesis, *A Food Lovers Guide to Whaling: a study of whaler’s diet on Thistle Island shore-based whaling station*, using comparative data from the Tasmanian site of Adventure Bay shore-based whaling station, provides the first comprehensive analysis of faunal and cultural material remains from a shore-based whaling station site in South Australia. His research undertook a comparative approach to the artefact material located and interpreted from Adventure Bay in Tasmania by Susan Lawrence (Lawrence 2001a, 2001b). Benbow’s research provides an analysis of the material located at Thistle Island in South Australia which was excavated by Austral Archaeology (1993). This material had been held in storage and remained un-interpreted for some twelve years.

Attention must be drawn to the Tasmanian research undertaken by Buttrose (1998) and Chamberlain (1988). Buttrose’s thesis, *Trypots and Teacups: representations of the Van Diemen’s Land whalers*, added an interesting dimension to the history of shore-based whalers, in so much as it brought “life” to the everyday social and cultural activities of whalers in Tasmania. Buttrose’s research weighed heavily on the social and cultural meanings of artefactual material located on shore-based whaling stations on the east coast of Tasmania, particularly Adventure Bay. His thesis was linked closely to the works of Lawrence (2001a) who had conducted extensive archaeological fieldwork on shore-based whaling station sites at Adventure Bay and Bruny Island on the east coast of Tasmania. Buttrose’s thesis focused mainly on the social activities of the whalers, translating many of their songs into socio-cultural activities. Chamberlain’s PhD thesis, *The Hobart Whaling Industry 1830 - 1900*, provided informative statistical information on whaling export figures, history of vessels employed, types and tonnages, as well genealogies and family connections on the personalities connected to the Hobart Town whaling industry. Chamberlain’s thesis was principally concerned with the pelagic activities of the Hobart Town whalers. To date the only comprehensive study on the off-shore activities of the pelagic whalers associated with Tasmania can be attributed to the thesis written by Susan Chamberlain. Her thesis provided a comprehensive database which complemented this
research by confirming that many of the Hobart Town based whalers actively engaged in the industry of pelagic whaling in South Australian waters (Chamberlain 1988).

**Journal Articles**

The final phase of the literature review was to incorporate journal articles particularly those published in *The Archaeology of Whaling in Southern Australia and New Zealand* (hereafter abbreviated as AWSANZ) 1998. These papers stemmed from the AWSANZ conference of 1997. The AWSANZ project was initially instigated and implemented by Mark Staniforth of the Department of Archaeology of Flinders University of South Australia, and Dr Susan Lawrence from La Trobe University in Victoria (Available online at http://ehtl.flinders.edu.au/archaeology/awsanz/index.html). An international conference was held in 1997 at La Trobe University in Melbourne on Whaling Archaeology, with the collaboration and contributions of archaeologists, heritage managers, historians, academics and museum curators (Lawrence and Staniforth 1998:7).

Each contributor to the journal provided different cultural, thematic, historical, maritime and terrestrial aspects on the whaling industry both in Australia and New Zealand. The journal provided an avenue, and a foundation upon which several of the proposed hypotheses of this thesis were formulated. The articles also strengthened the underlying hypothesis that a significant gap existed within the historical documentary record on the activities of Tasmanian whalers in South Australian waters.

Staniforth (1998:57-63) contends that the South Australian whaling industry was divided into two distinct phases, the first being the involvement of the Tasmanian-based whaling industry before and after colonial settlement in 1836, and the second dating from the establishment of the South Australian Company in 1835. Staniforth’s article in AWSANZ represented the most significant contribution to the history of whaling in South Australia, while McKenzie (1998:29-31) documented the Tasmanian whaling connection to Portland Bay and Port Fairy in Victoria. This thesis includes an examination of the entrepreneurs of Launceston who established their shore-based whaling stations at Portland Bay and Port Fairy. McKenzie has suggested that the Tasmanian whalers and sealers were the first Europeans to settle in Portland Bay and Port Fairy, concluding that whaling, “thus not only preceded the settlement of Victoria but precipitated it” (McKenzie 1998:29). This study will also suggest that the whalers from Launceston similarly colonised South Australia before official settlement.

Michael Pearson’s (1998:93-97) article in AWSANZ on data collection proved to be most informative. The Appendix of this thesis presents a tabulated account on the tonnages of whaling vessels, the number of vessels employed in the industry, and the duration of operations. Pearson’s recommendations to provide a statistical inventory on the available information from shipping arrivals and departures were duly incorporated. The data is analysed in Chapter Eight.

Stuart (1998:98-102) suggested that field walking through the archaeological location or region was the most beneficial way to “feel” the maritime and terrestrial environment. Visually interpreting the “landscape and seascape” would provide the researcher with a sense of place, field walking was duly undertaken at Spalding Cove. Not only was this done as part of the author’s maritime archaeological survey of the region, it also encouraged the author to better understand the conditions of the physical maritime and terrestrial environment of a shore-based whaling site. Further discussion and analysis of Spalding Cove will be addressed in Chapter Seven.
Text-Aided Archaeology: Beyond Data Collection

The historical and archaeological documentary records have provided much statistical information. This information in some circumstances has proven to be either contradictory or fragmentary. The literature review identified that a re-evaluation and a revision of as much as possible of the available primary source material was needed. The statistical information should not only provide a chronology of events, it should also go beyond simple data collection. The collection of data should not necessarily be the major focus of historical archaeology, it should act as a foundation upon which to build and supply relevant qualitative information (Orser and Fagan 1995:16; Shanks and Tilley 1987:19). Historical archaeologists need to go beyond the collection of data by interpreting it. Connah (1998:5) has suggested that we need to extend meaning by applying descriptive information and analysis to the data that we so avidly collect. A collection of data is simply that, a collection of data, it does not contribute much if it remains static. As Mackay and Karskens (1999:111) have commented, “The real question is how to go about transforming the piles of reports, or other media, which informs and enlightens.” This thesis intends to go beyond mere data collection. The primary and secondary historical information has been gathered and tabulated and is presented in the Appendix to provide the necessary statistical information for the research. Together they have been analysed to provide further social, economic and cultural meaning to the industry of whaling, particularly in South Australian waters.

Conclusion

The secondary sources of information for much of the material reviewed in this thesis have proven to be vast, narrative-based, speculative and conflicting. It has nevertheless been necessary to consider each work on its own merits. Without doubt the most problematic outcome of reading some of these works has been the omission of reference lists or footnotes. However, they served a more than useful purpose in providing a chronology of events that should not go unrecognised.

The literature review incorporated five types of sources from which information has been gathered. Firstly, the primary documents from South Australia and Tasmania were accessed from archival repositories and these will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. Secondly, archaeological reports written by heritage consultants for various State Government heritage departments provided vital information on spatial arrangements, artefact material, structural remains, site locations and most importantly historical data. Thirdly being, the secondary source material upon which general historical, biographical, narrative and regional information on whaling matters was gained. Fourthly, academic works such as theses from universities in Western Australia, Tasmania and South Australia proved invaluable helping the author design a theoretical hypothesis and models upon which methodological foundations were laid. Fifthly and finally, unpublished reports and journal articles indicated that academic contemporaries from Australia and New Zealand have researched a wide variety of themes and topics within both the shore-based and pelagic whaling industries. In particular, the journal articles which emanated from the AWSANZ conference in 1997 will be referred to throughout this study, as they provided a direct link to the arguments put forward on issues such as site selection, archaeological evidence and material cultural remains.
Theoretical Perspectives

Theoretical perspectives, not only of one’s own research, but the research of others should be open to challenge and dialogue. We need to extend our research beyond accepting that one particular industry encouraged similar socio-cultural behaviours, living conditions, working arrangements, spatial use and the exploitation of maritime and terrestrial environments.

The literature review in Chapter Three established that a substantial gap existed in recognising the role that Tasmanian whalers had played in the early South Australian whaling industry. Specifically, this gap refers to how and when they extended their maritime and terrestrial-based interests beyond their own local waters. The author’s studies of the documentary record identified previous academic research and cultural heritage management reports, as well as primary and secondary sources which indicated that Tasmanian whalers had been active in South Australian waters. Issues such as the politics or economy of the Tasmanian whaling industry as it operated in South Australia, have to date not been dealt with. Although a number of authors have recorded isolated instances of entrepreneurs and identified vessels that were actively engaged in the pursuit of the whale in the coastal and oceanic regions of South Australia, few recognised that patterns of preferred whaling grounds had evolved. And that specific locations for shore-based whaling stations were used year after year by the same whaling parties and vessels. To date little has been documented on the tonnages of oil and bone exported from South Australia, or exactly where these whaling products came from. According to both primary and secondary sources whaling voyages in many instances had been recorded by indicating the year only, not the particular months, or how many voyages were undertaken during the season, and which vessels and groups of whaling entrepreneurs were involved.

The early phase of research identified a significant gap existing in the documentary record. Historical and archaeological reports such as those produced by Evans (1993, Vols 1 and 2), Kostoglou and McCarthy (1991), and Kostoglou (1995, Vols 1 and 2) were principally based upon, and designed for, cultural heritage management purposes. These reports appeared to be more specifically orientated towards the cataloguing of artefact material, the identification of structural remains and provided data sets of historical information. Very little interpretation or analysis of the material cultural remains in these types of reports has been attempted (Gibbs 1995, Vol 1:5).

The author’s preliminary investigations supported the findings that multiple interpretations and conflicting histories had been written with varying amounts of quality reference material being provided to justify particular statements and conclusions. Omissions of detailed referencing may
have proved frustrating, but this verified the need to revisit the most probable primary source to locate that information. The single most difficult task was to establish whether a thesis could be presented with limited access to whaling archival material, particularly in South Australia. The State Records of South Australia contain documentation mostly relating to the state, with minimal material available on the whaling industry prior to colonial settlement in 1836. A significant outcome of the research indicated there was a strong need to access interstate archival materials. As the research moved beyond the investigation of South Australian archaeological reports and previous academic works, it became apparent that the research base needed to incorporate the archival resources and collections available in both Hobart and Launceston. Fortunately Tasmanian colonial newspapers published in Hobart were locally available as they are held at the State Library of South Australia. Therefore, much of the data required in the interpretation of shipping records such as vessel names, masters, owners and agents, vessel departures and arrivals, and in some cases vessel types and tonnages, could be readily accessed and had been examined before checking the material documentation in Tasmanian archival collections.

The premise was, and still is, that the Tasmanian whalers played a much more significant role than has been previously acknowledged. It was also felt that the archaeological component of this thesis should re-examine the region referred to as Spalding Cove which had been cited by several authors as being one of the first shore-based whaling station locations in South Australia. Chapter Seven will concentrate on Spalding Cove, therefore further discussion on this site will be addressed in that section of the thesis. Kostoglou and McCarthy (1991) had identified from historical documentary sources that a shore-based whaling station existed there. As previously stated in Chapter Three, however, the cove was simply examined by an aerial survey and no signs of a whaling station site were visible (Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991:22). Based upon the research conducted at that particular stage, it was felt that there was further potential to directly link the Tasmanian-based whalers to South Australia. It was also felt that further research could provide substantial contributions to the early history of South Australia.

The documentary resources reveal that many geographical, environmental, and cultural social similarities existed throughout the colonial whaling industry of Australia. A component of the theoretical enquiry for this research led to the question: do we accept that the above similarities signify uniformity throughout the whole of the Australian colonial whaling industry? Moberg suggested that by accepting random elements of similarities, attitudes of bias occur from the beginning (Moberg 1981:2). This then led to the path of how best to interpret those similarities. For example, do we simply accept that similar artefact materials located at one whaling station site have the same cultural meanings or interpretations attached to them as those found at another? Do we suggest that all shore-based whaling stations had the same spatial arrangements, structure and features? Townrow (1997) inferred that there is a “defined selection of criteria” suggesting that there is a model for locating shore-based whaling station sites. This weighs heavily upon the topography of a site, the climate of a region and the migration pathways of the Southern Right Whales (Townrow 1997:22). From Townrow’s model can we then suggest that South Australian whaling sites may have been the same as those in Tasmania, and that the whalers conducted their activities in a similar manner?

This study will also investigate if any similarities existed in the motivations of the entrepreneurs who pursued their whaling activities from Launceston and Hobart. It will examine the external and internal environments that influenced these men (and occasionally women), to set foot on unfamiliar shore-based whaling station locations. The research will examine the cultural historical background, social connections, business partnerships and family ties of the Tasmanian whaling fraternity. In particular, this examination will identify the merchants, agents, owners and masters who sailed from Launceston. The research undertaken has confirmed that the
Launceston whalers preferred the southern coastline of Australia, and therefore it could be assumed that they might have had the biggest impact on the whaling industry in South Australian coastal waters. The theoretical proposition of this investigation is to ascertain the level of significance the Tasmanian-based whalers played as frontier explorers, colonisers and investors during the pre- and post-colonisation period of South Australia.

Confusing data sets of information derived from secondary sources during this research indicated that an historical revisionist approach was necessary. A thorough re-appraisal of the available primary source materials was needed to re-assess the prevailing inconsistencies. A complete re-evaluation needed to be undertaken to rectify many of the repetitive errors translated or mistranslated from the primary sources to the secondary sources. Much of the previous work undertaken by contemporary academic students on whaling (particularly in South Australia) appeared to have been summarised from and focused on the same secondary sources. Therefore they failed to identify incorrect data. This could be attributed to the fact that archival material on the activities of the Tasmanian whaling industry is scarce in South Australian repositories. To the author’s knowledge no archival research on whaling in South Australia had been done in Tasmania. It was hoped that re-appraising the original primary source material would clarify some of the inconsistencies encountered during the early stages of the research.

A thorough re-examination of daily shipping news from colonial Tasmanian newspapers was also undertaken. This was done to present a comprehensive database which could be tested against the hypotheses put forward in this chapter. For example, the Hobart Town Gazette started publication in 1816, the Colonial Times was published from 1825 onward, and the Hobart Town Courier began in 1827. These newspapers were identified as being the most consistent and extensive when it came to recounting the maritime activities of whaling vessels. Chapter Eight will present statistical information on the movements, dates, destinations, ports of registration and ownership of both the Hobart and Launceston-based whalers.

Archaeology generally relies on structural features or material artefact remains being located at a site. Combining the disciplines of history and archaeology may seem simple enough, however, as this research will demonstrate, one discipline appeared to weigh more heavily than the other. The archaeological evidence of whaling sites in South Australia, as noted in Chapter One, appeared to be elusive (Bell 1991:48; Kostoglou 1995, Vol:1; Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991; Townrow 1997:9). One should not be fazed by the absence of “material things,” or obvious structural remains or features to identify that whaling station sites existed in particular locales. As Staniforth et.al., (2001:13) have stated: “Finding these sites is frequently difficult due to the ephemeral nature of evidence left by the whalers as well as the isolation of the sites.” Jack (1993:135) suggested that archaeology in itself may not necessarily answer all the questions. The lack of archaeological evidence forces us to think in a lateral way, to search for alternative avenues of enquiry.

The theoretical basis of this thesis is placed firmly within the sub-disciplines of historical and maritime archaeology. What this chapter intends to demonstrate is that the theoretical basis for this thesis was not influenced by the initial lack of documentary material or archaeological evidence. In fact it determined that a substantial gap in the historical and archaeological record did exist. The lack of and the apparent misinterpretation of information provided the impetus to accept the challenge that further research could close that gap. The following will explain and define the methodology and reasoning behind the choice of materials and sources.
Methodology

The literature review in Chapter Three discussed some of the merits and the disadvantages of incorporating, or being solely dependent, on secondary source materials. Secondary source materials such as history books on Australia’s and South Australia’s colonial past should not be underestimated, because they can supply supportive and substantial information. They can also include references to primary source material not found elsewhere. These works often provide an historical overview of a particular event describing a time or place, or perceptions of what occurred in the past and why.

The critical use and choice of the archival material researched, will be addressed in terms of where it was sourced, some of the problems encountered, etc. This section will also highlight the importance of first-hand historical accounts and events recorded in diaries, journals and reminiscences. In particular the documents written by people such as the Henty family from Portland Bay, Richard Copping and James Robinson, all whaling identities from Tasmania, and the Reverend Robert Knopwood who kept detailed daily accounts of many of the day-to-day events in Hobart Town. These people provided direct knowledge and information on many of the whaling activities and names of entrepreneurs, and vessels from Launceston and Hobart. For those who did not keep personal records, the, “very names of almost all of them have been long forgotten, and are to be found only where they are still preserved – in old documents still kept in the archives of Hobart” (Dunbabin 1926:7).

James Deetz stated, “Much of the historical archaeology is in the digging of the archaeology sites, but these sites are not the sole sources of information” (Deetz 1977:6). The “digging” of information from archival and library sources provides its own problems, leading Schuyler to write, “Every archaeologist should be something of a historian” (Schuyler 1978:8). There are many truths and untruths within the primary source material, and an assessment must be made about what is there, what is not, why it is there, who wrote it and when. “Biases of those who recorded them cannot be analysed and interpreted but in fact will invariably taint the research” (Beaudry et al., 1991:162). It is important to recognise the validity, reliability and completeness of information. Gaps may appear, omissions may exist, and reasons need to be established as to why this occurred. Gibbs observed that the so-called ‘documentary record’ on the whaling industry and its associated personalities was produced by people who in most instances had no connection to, or understanding of the industry (Gibbs 1995:5). This being said, whaling log books, diaries, and reminiscences were written by those who were closest to the whaling industry- people who were directly involved. This is not to say that their records were not skewed or biased. They may, however be closer to the truth than to those not directly associated with the industry.

Examination of the documentary record focused on primary resource materials which would provide a direct connection to the vessels and entrepreneurs of the Tasmanian whaling industry. Therefore, this research concentrated on colonial shipping news, or shipping intelligence, as it was sometimes referred to. These were cross referenced with customs records accessed from the Archives Office of Tasmania. The diary accounts from the Henty family’s shore-based whaling station at Portland Bay were also cross referenced with the above accounts. The Hentys recorded vessels sailing past their establishment, vessels in the bay and the captains or masters who they dined with, as well as traded and competed with. The Appendix provides the statistical information on voyages undertaken, dates of arrival and departure from Hobart and Launceston, tonnages and rig types, as well as known owners and masters.

Initial research strategies indicated that an appreciation and understanding of the available archival primary or documentary sources is a prerequisite. One has to be an avid historian to be
able to assess the validity, significance and content of archival materials. It is important to
recognise what is written in the document, and it is also important to recognise what is not. What
has not been written is often as significant as what has. The original author may have been
influenced by editorial concerns or political boundaries, and may have recorded only small
details or variable amounts of information. It is also important to recognise the validity of these
sources, to also consider who created the document and why. The theoretical underpinnings of
this research began with a complete reconsideration of the documentary record.

A considerable component of the documentary research for this topic was conducted in
Tasmania. Staniforth wrote, “Archival and newspaper documentation…exists in Tasmanian
archives and newspapers and not in South Australia” (Staniforth 1998:63). Having taken this into
account it was felt that a revision of the archival sources available in the State Archives of South
Australia, in particular letters from The Colonial Secretary’s Office and official Police Records,
and Court Proceedings were investigated in the hope that they may reveal some information on
the activities of the Tasmanian whalers. These documents highlighted the presumed interference
of foreign vessels in the local whaling industry but provided little mention of Tasmanian
activities. The research identified and confirmed that the South Australian archives hold very
little information on whaling activities conducted from Tasmania. The State Records of South
Australia do hold a significant number of government and non-government primary sources
specifically about the whaling interests of the South Australian Company, while information
from these sources may well hold as yet unidentified material, unfortunately this information to
date has remained elusive.

In the late 1930s Morphett commented:

To persons anxious to find a comprehensive account of the whaling industry in South Australia, the
records are numerous but disappointing, a wealth of detail is found in some points and very meagre
information on others. Statements are made and not followed up. Names flicker in and out of the
record. (Morphett, Research Notes 795-825. 1939:1)

A study period of three weeks was conducted at institutions such as the State Library of
Tasmania in Hobart, particularly the Crowther Collection, and the Archives Office of Tasmania.
The Maritime Museum in Hobart was included in the itinerary, as this museum provides an
excellent visual display of scale model whaling vessels, whaling equipment and historical
interpretations of Hobart’s whaling history. Mike Nash from the Department of Tourism, Parks,
Heritage and the Arts kindly provided access to archaeological reports conducted on the shore-
based whaling industry of Tasmania. To complement the author’s research, Launceston State
Library, the Queen Victoria Museum and the Community History Library were also accessed
during the final week. It should be mentioned also that contact was made with the appropriate
librarians and archivists to assess the availability and extent of archival material. Library
catalogues such as Talis in the State Library of Tasmania were accessed via the internet at the
following website address: http://www.statelibrary.tas.gov.

“The Crowther Collection held by the State Library of Tasmania is claimed to be probably is
Australia’s best reference collection” (Gill 1965-6:127). This collection holds all manner of
documentary and artefact material connected to Tasmania’s whaling industry. The vast and
varied material ranges from original whaling log books, diaries, publications, radio broadcasts,
paintings, whaling artefacts, reminiscences and private papers (Chamberlain 1988:iii; Evans
1993, Vol 1:2; Mercer 2002:3; Nash 2003:4). With the kind permission of Mr. Tony Marshall,
senior Librarian, Heritage Collections, permission was granted to photograph, without a flash
light, several pages of the log book of the barque Wallaby, a whaling vessel (Figures 4.1 and
4.2). The Crowther Collection proved a valuable and worthwhile resource, in particular the
handwritten whaling log books which will be discussed further in this chapter and Chapter Five.
Museum collections and historical society holdings both in South Australia and Victoria were also included in the research for this study. Lawrence wrote, “Locally derived information…local memories, and artefacts held at local collections provides an enriched understanding” (Lawrence 1998:112). The Beachport Museum on the south-eastern coast of South Australia, for example is operated and managed by volunteers of The National Trust. The museum collection provided a representative display of whaling equipment such as try pots and implements such as lances and spades, most of which are labelled as having belonged to the Henty family from Portland Bay in Victoria. Portland Bay is approximately 200 hundred kilometres south from the small shipping village of Beachport. More than likely it was visited seasonally by the workers employed in the Launceston, Port Fairy and Portland-based whaling industries. The large open curved sandy bay at Beachport is known as Rivoli Bay. One secondary source documents that the Hentys, in partnership with William Dutton, had established a shore-based whaling station in this region, ‘probably some-time in the early 1830s’ (Berger 1978:11). However, the diary kept by the Hentys during their days at Portland Bay did not mention the Rivoli Bay whaling station (Peel 1996). The Hentys did not begin to record their activities at Portland Bay until November 1834; therefore the Rivoli Bay shore based whaling station may have been established before that date. Chapter Six will discuss the Henty’s whaling interests in South Australia.

The Victor Harbor Whaling Museum and The National Trust Museum at Encounter Bay both provide a striking visual display on whales and whaling history in that region. The Portland Bay Maritime Museum’s collection on the history of whaling in that particular region included paintings, colonial newspaper articles, whaling implements and artefact materials. Disappointingly, the Port Fairy’s Historical Society’s rooms held little information or interpretation on whaling activities or their historical links to Port Fairy. Artefact material which had been located from the wreck of the brigs Thistle and Socrates was on display. However the description and interpretation of the cultural artefacts was minimal.

In contrast Griffiths Island at Port Fairy provides a walking trail which emphasises the biological environment and the whaling history of the island. John Griffiths (see Figure 3) had established a shore-based whaling station on the island. Visual signage at appropriate stops provides the tourist with a sense of history and place. The conservation measures placed upon the fragile nature of the islands nesting Mutton Birds required the visitor to adhere to walking trails, and therefore any remains of Griffith’s whaling station were obscured by the dense low-lying vegetation and restrictions placed on walkers. The South Australian connection with John Griffiths will be discussed in Chapter Six.

**Whaling log books**

“A ships log book has been described by one author as being a ‘business document in which the master accounted to the owner for the operation of the vessel and the employment of the crew’” (Downes 1996:6). The most exciting part of this research has been the reading of whaling log books. According to Dakin to, “the reader with an imagination and some knowledge of sea-ways the logs are…often thrilling” (Dakin 1934:69). The Crowther Collection holds several volumes of these magnificent journals. Much conjecture has been written on the contents of these historical manuscripts. Dakin also described the log books as being “strangely laconic” (Dakin 1934:9). Marginal notes, brief as they were not only illustrated the fluke of the whale to signify daily catches, they also occasionally recorded notable daily events. For example the log of the Wallaby recorded that “James Taylor Died at 6pm with the wound witch [sic] he had received on the 26th May with a Spaid [sic]” (CRO MSS Log Box 19). Jones has stated that the analysis of log books can be “laborious” (Jones 1986:482), but Colwell’s opinion, that there “is a wealth of
excitement and human trajectory in the logs of Australian whaling ships,” (Colwell 1969:104) is also that of this author.

Log books are invariably brief in their explanations of daily activities, their authors being “more familiar with steering wheel and sails, with blocks and tackle than the way of ships. They were mightier with the harpoon than with the pen” (Dakin 1934:69).

The log books of the whaling vessels reviewed for this research were the barques *Wallaby*, *Fortitude*, and *Emu*, and the ship *Lady of the Lake*. (CRO MSS Log Box.17.18.19, MLA 4361 CX Reel 12183). All are canvas-bound and hand-written and considering the penmanship- they are legible if slightly faded. The manuscripts are large, entries recorded are brief explanations of the day’s catch, weather conditions, vessel repairs and the whales that were lost (Chamberlain 1988:65). If a whale was captured the tail or fluke was illustrated next to that day’s entry so that at the end of the voyage the person who fastened to the fish received their share of the lay, “the ultimate pay-out from the voyage” (Miles 1998:80-81).

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the whale’s tail and the names of the harpoonists. Figure 2 illustrates the hand-written record, the location noted to be Encounter Bay, South Australia. The whale’s tail illustrated on the bottom right hand page noted that the captain of the vessel *Wallaby*, fastened a whale on Thursday 25 of June, the year 1840. The entry records, “Whale alongside and commenced cutting in at sunset” (CRO MSS Log Box No.19).

![Figure 1](image-url)

**Figure 1.** Whaling log book of the vessel *Wallaby*, 27 May 1840. This entry illustrates that particular day’s catch (CRO MSS Log Box 19) (Photo by K. Firth, June 2003)

Relevant information such as the direction of voyages and the meeting at sea of various vessels and captains recorded in the logs will be addressed in the following chapters. What has been recorded reveals an interesting trail of events, locations and personalities. It is probable that what was entered in a whaling log book differed to some extent to what actually happened. “There were many times when the bravery of the whalemen must have been truly demonstrated but the logs never speak of it” (Dakin 1934:69). Latitudes and longitudes of voyages and catch locations were not always noted. Passing vessels and their captains and cargoes were occasionally mentioned. The daily records documented in a log book may have been deliberately obscured to confuse the competition by failing to mention exact whaling ground locations (Casanova 1992:8; Learmonth 1934:26). Some authors of log book entries appeared to have been more fluent and recorded more than others; some were very informative, while others were extremely brief.
Captains and masters of the whaling vessels generally were not the authors of the daily events. For example, the log book of the *Emu* was kept by Richard Copping who was recorded as being the ship’s mate. The journal that he was in charge of was dated 3 July 1849 to 18 December 1850 (MLA 4361:134, CX Reel 12183).

![Whaling log book of the vessel *Wallaby*, 27 June 1840 Encounter Bay, South Australia. Pages of the log have been covered over with post-cards (CRO MSS Log Box 19) (Photo by K. Firth, June 2003)](image_url)

**Figure 2.** Whaling log book of the vessel *Wallaby*, 27 June 1840 Encounter Bay, South Australia. Pages of the log have been covered over with post-cards (CRO MSS Log Box 19) (Photo by K. Firth, June 2003)

**Diaries, journals and reminiscences**

Little did the diarists of the day realise that their records of everyday events would become informative history pages of a colonial past. The Reverend Robert Knopwood entered meticulous details of daily events of the goings-on in Hobart Town from 1803 to 1838. “The sum total of these thirty years of entries is a record unique in the history of this island” (Nicholls 1977:xi). Knopwood recorded vessel arrivals and departures, almost as if he had a personal interest in them. He knew most of the captains, cargoes carried, passengers, prisoners, etc. On Friday 26 January 1816, for example, Knopwood wrote, “Mrs. Lucas, Mr. Clark and Mary M’Carty came to see my garden. I called on Mr and Mrs Birch. What with the visitors and the different people from ships, the town is full of company” (Nicholls 1977:224). Lucas (a whaling station owner), McCarty and Birch (ship owners and agents) all had some connection to whaling (Crowther 1935-6:6; Lawson 1949:35; Nicholls 1977:283; O’May 1978:22). On Friday 28 March 1817, Knopwood’s diary entry reads, “Arrived the brig *Spring*, Capt. Bunster from Kangaroo Island with skins” (Nicholls 1977:252). The *Hobart Town Gazette* confirmed Mr. Dennis McCarty’s whaling connections by the advertisement, “Wanted immediately, for a whaling voyage on board the Brig *Spring* twelve active willing men who will find encouragement – apply to Mr. Dennis McCarty” (*Hobart Town Gazette*, 12 April 1817:3). On Thursday 4 June 1818, Knopwood stated he had “dind” [sic] with Mr. Luttrell, Lt. Robinson, Mr. Young, and Mr. Birch (Nicholls 1977:283). Luttrell, Robinson, Young and Birch were once again, whaling entrepreneurs. Chapter Six will discuss many of the above identities in more detail and their connections to whaling in South Australian waters.

The Henty family journal held at the State Library of Victoria provides a vivid chronology of events. The Hentys families’ interests generally involved farming activities; however, whaling activities supplemented family members’ income until their farming interests were established
on a sounder footing (Peel 1996). The journal entries cover a five-year period from 19 November 1834 to 6 July 1839:

- **Edward Henty** 19 November 1834 to 31 August 1836
- **Francis Henty** 1 September 1836 to 2 March 1838
- **No Entries** 6 January 1837 to 16 April 1837
- **Edward Henty** 28 February 1838 to 6 July 1839

The Hentys took landholdings at Portland Bay in Victoria, and gradually established it as a trading and fishing port. The diary entries record not only their whaling activities but also those of passing vessels. The Hentys daily noted vessels in and out of Portland Bay, and they also recorded vessels passing ‘westward,’ presumably to whaling grounds in South Australia. The journals record the masters and captains they entertained and traded goods with. The Hentys search for suitable agricultural land saw them explore much of the South Australian coastline, particularly the bays and inlets around Port Lincoln. Their property at Portland Bay was principally a farming concern, however they never failed to see the advantages of whaling as an income supplement. Chapter Six will discuss further the activities of the Henty family and their interests in South Australia.

Briefly, “Reminiscences,” as they have been referred to, of James Robinson and Richard Copping, recorded personal details on daily activities on board “colonial and foreign vessels” (Chamberlain 1988:173; CRO.PQ.639.22COP; CRO.NS.222). James Robinson and Richard Copping’s journals were reminiscences of singular voyages, some directly connected to whaling activities in South Australia.

### Colonial newspapers

Historical research simply cannot be conducted without the inclusion of contemporary newspapers. What has come to light from this research is that the colonial press exhibited significant power through the written word. The main publication for Tasmania did not go to press until 14 years after settlement in Hobart in 1802. The first publication of the *Hobart Town Gazette* was in 1816. The colony was without a newspaper for some considerable time and Hobart Town residents were not privy to exclusive news on the happenings of their colony (Staniforth 1999:95). The newspapers of Tasmania contained little on the whaling industry. Crowther lamented, “It is very difficult to obtain accurate particulars of the early history of whaling in Van Diemens’s Land. The press of the day gives only a scant paragraph from time to time” (Crowther 1919:134). The diary of Reverend Knopwood therefore, provides much data on the early colonial history of Tasmania before the first newspapers were published.

The principal colonial paper researched for Tasmanian news was the *Hobart Town Gazette*, first issued on 1 June 1816. It “became a mine of information on the day to day incidents of the whaling industry” (Gill 1965-6:126). Competition between various newspapers appeared rife as each endeavoured to denigrate the other. Dakin wrote, “Verily the papers of those days are not without amusement for the searcher today” (Dakin 1934:39). For example the Launceston publication, *Cornwall Press*, called the *Hobart Town Gazette*, a “paper which is exclusively confirmed to government orders and government patronage, and in consequence becoming rich. Editorial squabbling, they degrade all parties concerned, and are like a vomit on the public” (*Cornwall Press*, 12 May 1829:2).

Tasmania produced its fair share of short-lived publications, which invariably incited much competition. The following newspapers are available at the State Library of Tasmania and the Archives Office of Tasmania in Hobart. The list is by no means complete, however, it demonstrates the short-lived nature of many of these early publications (see list below). It is
difficult to assess why they did not survive, other than to suggest that competition with the major
ewspapers of the day was difficult.

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<tr>
<td><em>Morning Star</em></td>
<td>28 November 1834 to 23 October 1835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bent’s News</em></td>
<td>9 January 1836 to 28 December 1838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Colonial Record</em></td>
<td>24 June 1836 to 24 June 1838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tasmanian Weekly Despatch</em></td>
<td>1 January 1841 to 25 June 1841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Teetotal Advocate</em></td>
<td>3 April 1842 to 30 December 1843</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shipping arrivals and departures from Hobart and Launceston newspapers under the headings of
“Shipping Intelligence” or “Shipping News,” were identified as the main source of information
on whaling and vessel activities. The extensive research and comparative analysis of shipping
details against Customs Board records noted that the ambiguities and inconsistencies occurred
throughout. Nicholson established that details “of a few actual departures and arrivals are
missing” (Nicholson 1983:1). On rare occasions a few lines were granted for items of interest.
For example, masters or captains were duly noted should they arrive in port with substantial
tonnages of whale oil or bone. The crew, however, were of little consequence or interest to the
press. “The journals or newspapers of the period devoted little space to local happenings. The
doings of the different whaling parties were given brief notice” (Philp 1936:15). Shipping news
did provide relevant information, however it became apparent that many discrepancies occurred.
Vessel names and identities connected to the whaling industry often had their names mis-spelt.
Departure dates and arrivals were not always recorded, it was simply stated that vessels departed
either Hobart Town or Launceston ports. Colwell concluded, “If they were mentioned in a
newspaper it would be when they returned to port, and then it would only be a comment on the
size of the cargo” (Colwell 1969:39).

The South Australian press did not go unnoticed by the Tasmanian press. The *Hobart Town
Courier* reported that the *South Australian Gazette* “sometime back contained very little
interesting matter relative to local information and progressive improvement alike gratifying the
statesmen and the philanthropists, but now its entire columns are filled with topics which are
neither credible or profitable” (*Hobart Town Courier*, 1 December 1837:2). The *Port Lincoln
Herald* was not without its Adelaidean critics as Pitt charged it to be a “shabby little oddity” (Pitt
1946:31). Of the *Port Lincoln Herald*, the *Hobart Town Courier* stated that the paper: “Got up in
a very credible manner” (*Hobart Town Courier*, 26 April 1839:2). Banter including
complimentary and uncomplimentary comments was found during the course of this research,
evidence that each paper had its own economic, social and political agenda.

Editors of the time knew little about the whaling industry, the news was often second-hand,
arriving at the editorial desk sometime after the event. The reports were written from behind the
desk and not at the waterfront, where the activity of arrivals, departures and the unloading of
cargoes occurred (Casanova 1992:8). As the colonies of South Australia and Tasmania
prospered, mention of whaling in the shipping news columns diminished considerably. The
papers became more concerned with passenger lists, cargoes and trade items. The publications
became predictable, shipping news varied little in content, and on occasion it appeared to not
have been allocated a place within their columns at all. Gibbs’ research also identified that the
frequency of newspaper items on the whaling industry in Western Australia suffered a decline in
reporting around the same period (Gibbs 1995:35).

**Government documents**

Tasmanian Government records were accessed through the Archives Office of Tasmania in
Hobart. The two main sources of research material were taken from the government records of
the Customs Board in Hobart and the private ledgers written by John Griffiths of Launceston.
Time constraints and resources limited the research of any other documents; however, it was felt that these two would provide relevant shipping information. Nicholson has suggested that the official records of the Customs Board often did not include all the relevant details of smaller private or government owned colonial vessels (Nicholson 1983:1).

**Customs Board**
- Register of Colonial Vessels of the Port of Hobart.
  - 19 January 1830 to 16 April 1855
  - (CUS/38/1 – CUS/38/5)

**Ledgers**
- Launceston Ships Chandler.
  - 4 Volumes 1836 to 1842
  - (NS473/13-16)

The detailed ledgers created by John Griffiths provided an insight into the dealings of the Launceston Fishing Company (LFC). Unfortunately, the first seventy one pages of the ledgers are missing as are several pages throughout (Carroll 1989:67; Dyster 1980:20-31). The large cumbersome ledgers are principally concerned with monetary issues such as payments to the fishing company partners, the purchase of equipment, and payment of lays to whaling crews. Little was found that identified vessel movements or whaling grounds. The handwritten records were difficult to decipher, the writing faded and hard to read. A brief overview of each volume of the *Launceston Ships Chandler* (LSC) showed that little was actually written on whaling activities. Chapters Five and Six will expand further on the individuals who were the shareholders of the LFC. Further detailed research on these ledgers may well provide further information; unfortunately this would require weeks or months to complete.

Official government documents from the State Records in South Australia were also incorporated as part of this research. As previously mentioned, this archival material was mostly concerned with post-colonial settlement principally related to the activities about the South Australian Company. However, *Letters Received by the Colonial Secretary from 1836 to 1851*, and *Research Notes* also held at the State Records of South Australia, indicated that the company was concerned with the intrusion of its station sites by activities Tasmanian whalers, and were equally disenchanted with foreign vessels lurking in South Australian waters.

**Archaeological Perspectives**

Archaeological investigations of several sites were limited to surface survey only. Excavation of a proposed whaling station site proved impossible as permission was not forthcoming from the Department of Environment and Heritage, Adelaide (pers. comm. Mr. Terry Arnott, Maritime Heritage Adviser, 3 April 2002). Therefore, much of the archaeological interpretations came from the documentary record. The information gleaned from log books, diaries and journals will be addressed in the following chapters. Latitudes and longitudes recorded in whaling log books indicated the routes that the vessels followed in the pursuit of both the Sperm Whale and the Southern Right Whale. The results will be discussed in Chapters Five and Eight.

Lawrence has suggested that without “tangible evidence of physical things there is little room for archaeological endeavour” (Lawrence 1998:113). However, the geophysical environment of several proposed whaling station locations suggested that the maritime and terrestrial settings provided significant indicators that these sites could reveal definitive archaeological information. The “nature and distribution of archaeological sites across the landscape are generally very strongly influenced by environmental factors” (Hughes and Sullivan 1984:34; Townrow 1997). The locales which involved pre-disturbance survey revealed many, if not most, of the prerequisites preferred by whaling parties. The hypothesis undertaken concluded that the lack of
surface surveillance work undertaken by Kostoglou and McCarthy (1991) at Spalding Cove required further consideration. Stuart emphasised that there, “is no substitute for field walking...No amount of research can match the experience of actually being in the environment” (Stuart 1998:101). Chapter Seven will discuss the theory, methodology and field walking archaeological investigations on a possible shore-based whaling station location at Spalding Cove on Eyre Peninsula in South Australia.

Conclusion

The theoretical and methodological revisionist approach undertaken for this thesis relied heavily on the documented record, the written word weighed far more heavily in this research than the archaeological record. This is not to say that the two do not complement each other. Site visitation confirmed many of the validated documentary sources; this was successful in confirming one significant whaling station location. The documentary record in some instances however proved to be evasive, fragmented and scant. Nonetheless, the piecing together of small amounts of information from different sources often led to instances of confirmation of a particular point, thus adding credence to what initially appeared to be insignificant.

Research has identified that the whalers, not so much the entrepreneurs of the industry were a poorly represented and documented group of people. The historical record shed little light on these individuals, or any specific events associated with them. The most direct and supportive information on the owners, merchants, masters and agents came from newspapers, diaries, log books and reminiscences. The social perspectives of the whaling industry were misleadingly romanticised by many of secondary sources. The museum collections and displays also perpetuated and confirmed the myth that shore-based and pelagic whaling was a romantic and adventurous era of Australia’s colonial past. The rationale behind this study is that Tasmanian shore-based and pelagic whaling had an important influence on the colonisation of South Australia and has been under-documented. Previous historical and archaeological works have failed to research to any extent the archival sources of information held in Tasmania. The research undertaken in Tasmania therefore identifies some of the gaps in knowledge that will be presented in the following chapters.
5

Whaling Vessels

The main aim of this chapter is to determine when and where the Tasmanian-based whaling vessels pursued the Black and Sperm Whales in South Australian deep-sea and coastal waters. The following section will address the primary and secondary sources assessed during the research, and it will identify some of the difficulties in the collation and cross-referencing of this material. Statistical data in the form of graphs demonstrating the number of whaling vessel registrations, and total number of whaling voyages from both Hobart and Launceston will be presented in Chapter Eight. This chapter will provide maps on whaling voyages which have been plotted from the latitudes and longitudes recorded from the whaling logs books of the *Fortitude* and the *Emu*, both vessels having been registered in Hobart in 1848 and 1849 respectively.

Shipping Records

This study examines the contextual historical record to confirm the dates and destination of these whaling voyages. This research extrapolated information from primary source materials such as whaling log books, government records and colonial newspapers. The *Hobart Town Gazette*, the *Colonial Times* and *Hobart Town Courier*, all provided some of statistical information recorded in the Appendix. To fill in some of the gaps which were either not located or documented in the above sources, government documents such as the *Register of Colonial Vessels of the Port of Hobart*, 19 January 1830 to 16 April 1855 were examined. The information obtained from the register is also presented in the Appendix. Most of the shipping information relating to the above items was concerned with the Hobart Town whaling fleets and entrepreneurs.

For the purpose of this study it was also necessary to identify the level of interest from the Launceston whaling industry. The LSC from 1836 to 1842 consisted of four large volumes of journal entries documenting the activities of the LFC (NS 473/13-16). John Griffiths, Michael Connolly and the Henty family were at various times in partnership or acted as shareholders. All three had interests in whaling. John Griffiths was not only a renowned shipbuilder, at various times he acted as an agent and owned shore-based whaling stations at Port Fairy and Portland Bay in Victoria (Dyster 1980:20). His whaling activities will be discussed further in Chapter Six. The aforementioned journals written by John Griffiths reported mostly on business and running costs; little was documented on whaling voyages, dates or destinations. However, mention was made of the company’s interests in pursuing the possibility of establishing a new colony in South Australia which was referred to as the ‘Gulf St Vincent Speculation’ (Dyster 1980:20). The first 71 pages of the journals are missing; therefore the basis upon which the LFC was founded could not be fully established. The *Launceston Advertiser*, first published in 1829, provided further shipping information from the port of Launceston.
Compiling the two volumes of Nicholson’s *Shipping Arrivals and Departures Tasmania 1803-1833*, and *Shipping Arrivals and Departures Tasmania 1834 – 1842*, undertaken by Nicholson required 10 years’ research for Nicholson (Nicholson 1983, 1985). To undertake a revision of all the resources that Nicholson examined is beyond the scope of this study. The chronology of information on shipping arrivals and departures, and the “Index to Persons” recorded in Nicholson’s works were cross referenced with the above mentioned primary source materials. Nicholson’s records ceased at 1842. Graeme Broxam continued to document shipping information up until 1850 in his similarly titled *Shipping Arrivals and Departures – Tasmania. Volume 3. 1843 – 1850* (Broxam 1998). The Appendix in this thesis provides a tabulated account of the dates of voyages, destinations, general comment, ports of vessel registrations, types of rigs and tonnages taken from Nicholson’s and Broxam’s accounts. The information contained in this table is only concerned with shipping details that were directly linked to South Australia. The assessment of voyage lengths proved difficult to determine as not all arrivals and departure dates were recorded, and it is difficult to sort out the ownership of all vessels (Pearson 1998:93). Considerable variations occurred in shipping and customs documents, and little was recorded on tonnages of whale oil or whalebone (Downes 1996:5). Whaling voyages in some instances covered vast distances and many months or years, therefore proving it difficult to confirm when and where the whale oil or whalebone came from. Gaps appear in the database, highlighting the type of information that was omitted from the reference source. Where omissions or anomalies occurred the database simply responds to that information. The database also includes the shipping records of Parsons and Sexton (Parsons 1980; Sexton 1990), who both extensively recorded the maritime history of South Australia, and it was felt that their contributions provided useful information.

Philp has stated that it “is often puzzling to know which vessel is referred to, and the shipping records that are preserved are sometimes just as perplexing” (Philp 1936:20). Pearson (1998:93) identified that “nearly half of all Australian-based whalers alternated between whaling and general merchant voyages.” This study is concerned only with recorded shipping voyages such as vessels that had been on a whaling expedition, or that had been in South Australian coastal and oceanic waters. Nicholson had stated that there were “inevitable gaps” within the shipping records of Tasmania, and recognised that this was the case within his own research (Nicholson 1983:1). These gaps could be attributed to the fact that the government of the day and the colonial newspapers failed to record most the arrivals and departures of vessels or their destinations (Nicholson 1985:1). For example, the *Hobart Town Gazette* reported, “On Tuesday last arrived the brig *Spring* belonging to Thomas Birch, Capt. C.Feen, from the fishery: within this last ten weeks this vessel had procured about 10 tons of Black Whale oil” (*Hobart Town Gazette*, 7 Sept. 1816:n.p.). The shipping news did not indicate where the vessel had been whaling. The *Spring* had been actively sealing in South Australia around this period (Nicholson 1983:38-44). Although it could not be confirmed that the *Spring* was also conducting whaling ventures in South Australia, it is reasonable to suggest that this may well have been the case.

Vessel names, tonnages and types were often misquoted leading to inconsistencies and some confusion (Lawson 1949:18; Sexton 1990:8). “Ocean going craft changed owners with startling regularity, which adds to the difficulty of effective research, and still more confusion is caused by the ships being re-named” (Ruediger 1980:61). Shipping reports on occasions in some colonial newspapers appeared to be inconsistent or erratic. These publications in the first instance were printed weekly or even monthly and not all shipping movements were documented, and the dates of arrivals and departures were often incorrect or misleading (Sexton 1990:9). In the process of extensively cross-referencing the material from whaling log books, government documents, diary recordings and newspaper articles, the author feels that the irregularities and consistencies in other writers’ works have been identified. The database in the
Appendix records what has been documented and what has not, thus providing the reader with an unbiased view on the availability of information.

**Vessel Destinations, Types and Tonnages**

This investigation has loosely applied the term ‘whaling vessel’ to ships that appeared to have been directly or indirectly involved with whaling. Chamberlain (1998:46) defined that “the major difference between a merchant vessel and a whale ship was the former transported goods and passengers to a specific destination while the latter was a place of work.” Tasmanian trading vessels had been improvised for much of the whaling period for the business of pelagic, bay and shore-whaling. Chamberlain (1988:58) further stated that “many of these vessels were not specifically built for whaling. The shipping records clearly state that the ships used for whaling in Australia were not necessarily designed for that purpose” (Pearson 1998:93). Chamberlain stated the first whaling vessel registered in Hobart was in 1830 (Chamberlain 1988: iii). Unregistered and registered vessels were actively engaged in whaling from Hobart before this time. Whaling vessels registered in Launceston from 1831 to 1845 and vessels registered in Hobart from 1832 to 1850 are recorded in Figures 10 and 11 (see Chapter Eight). These graphs demonstrate the number of whaling vessels registered in any one single year. The graphs illustrate that the whaling industry in Hobart and Launceston experienced years of highs and lows. Figures 12 and 13 plot the total number of all voyages from Hobart and Launceston to South Australia compared with the number of confirmed whaling voyages. This information has been more extensively recorded in the Appendix.

Vessel types and tonnages varied considerably. Chamberlain recorded schooners to be 50 to 80 feet in length, and between 50 and 90 tons. Brigs or brigantines were 60 to 80 feet in length, and between 100 to 160 tons. Barques or barks have been documented in some instances as being 80 to 110 feet in length and between 120 and 360 tons (Chamberlain 1988:53). “It is likely that few of them…complied with any text-book identification of the ‘typical’ nineteenth century whale ship” (Chamberlain 1988:46 and 53). The Appendix records the variations in tonnages of many of the vessels which were identified as being in South Australian waters. The variation in tonnage of these so-called whaling ships could be attributed to the fact that they had to improvise and adapt their vessels to the specific task at hand. For example, davits had to be added to accommodate and lower whale boats, and the sides of the vessels had to be strengthened to support the weight of the whale during the cutting-in process (Chamberlain 1988:46 and 53). Added to this the deck had to accommodate the iron trypots and supports for the tryworks (O’May 1978:28). The information collated from this table suggests that the larger whaling vessels came from Hobart and the smaller vessels from Launceston. The interpretation of vessels types and tonnages and the resultant forms of whaling employed, as well as the rise and decline in vessel registrations and numbers of voyages, and the implication on vessel destinations, will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

From the above it can be surmised that the Tasmanian whalers saw fit to use different vessel types and variations of tonnage for different whaling purposes. The author suggests that the smaller vessels were too small in size and tonnage to pursue pelagic whaling activities. These vessels were employed to conduct whaling activities connected to either shore-based or bay whaling. Deep-sea whaling vessels had to be “extremely seaworthy because of the work they were expected to carry out and the length of time they had to remain at sea” (Chamberlain 1988:65; Jones 1986:25).

The information translated from whaling log books, for example the recorded latitudes and longitudes, allowed the researcher to track the movements of these whaling vessels. Map 2 demonstrates the route taken by the barque *Emu* during the whaling season from 30 July 1849 to
29 August 1849. The *Emu* whaled in South Australian waters for a four week period, returning to southern Tasmania on 9 September 1849 (MLA 436/1:134. CX Reel 12183). No documentary source was located during the research, other than the records in the log book of the *Emu* to indicate that the vessel had been fishing in South Australian deep-sea waters. Map 5.2 plots the voyage of the barque *Fortitude* from 14 July 1848 to 23 October 1848 (CRO MSS Log Box 17). The vessel spent most of this time on the south west-coast of Kangaroo Island, many miles out to sea. The *Fortitude* appeared to sail closer into shore on 12 and 17 August 1848.

The log book of the *Fortitude* recorded sightings of other whaling vessels in waters around Kangaroo Island (see Figure 4). The following information was taken directly from the log, and is quoted verbatim in the following paragraphs. Not all the latitudes and the longitudes were recorded and many were incomplete. In some instances the vessels sighted and the captains spoken to, as well as the tonnages of whale oil and whalebone, were recorded. Vessel maintenance was also been documented. Following are the excerpts from the whaling log book of the *Fortitude* and the *Emu*. Map 2 plots the latitudes and longitudes of the *Emu*’s voyage from 30 July 1849 to 28 October 1948. Map 3 plots the voyage of the *Fortitude* from 18 July 1948 to 25 October 1848, while Map 4 records other whaling vessels sighted by the *Fortitude* during its whaling operations in the south-western waters off Kangaroo Island.

“Log book on Bord the Barque *Emu* from Hobart Town. John Watson, Master, on a whaling voyage kept by Richard Copping, mate. 3rd July to 1849 to 18th December 1850.”

30 July 1849
Latitude 36.1. Longitude 133.25E.

5 August 1849
Latitude 37.16. Longitude 135.51E.

29 August 1849
Latitude 36.25S. Longitude 133.27.45E – Blowing a strong gale.

2 September 1849
Latitude 36.11S. Longitude 136.6.15E. Kangaroo Island in sight ENE bearing 9 leagues. At sundown shortened sail, a light breeze and clear weather.

9 September 1849
Latitude 42.30. Longitude 143.36E. Blowing strong, squalls of hail and rain. Stowed the jib, stowed the main sail.

10 September 1849
Latitude 42.30. Longitude 143.35E. Weather same, blowing very hard with dark rainy weather.

13 September 1849
Latitude 43.26. Longitude 145.1.45E. Fresh breeze with showers of rain, saw the land in the eastern quarter. Spoke the brig *Pryde* 250 barrels of sperm oil. Spoke the barque *Lady Emma* 250 barrels of sperm oil. At sundown shortened sail, a strong breeze with squally rain. The southwest cape bearing east distance 4 leagues.

19 September 1849
Got underway. Bruny Head north, Tasmania.

28 October 1849
Latitude 38.49S. Longitude 154.20.50E. Spoke the barque *Wallaby* trying out a Black Whale having got one Black Whale and one Sperm Whale since last. Several Finbacks seen. (CX Reel 12183-MLA 436:1-134)
“A Journal Kept on Bord the Barque *Fortitude* on A Voyage Whaling in the South Sea from Hobart Town Jany 13th 1843.”

**Tues 18 July 1848**
Heading towards South Australia.
Latitude 38.51S. Longitude 139.81E.

**Friday 4 August 1848**
Latitude 36.26S. Longitude 136.20E.
Several ships in sight at Noon.

**Saturday 5 August 1848**
Latitude 36.24S. Longitude 136.4E.
Several ships in sight. Spoke the brig *Pryde*.

**Saturday 12 August 1848**
Latitude 36.50S. Longitude 137.20E.
Steady breeze, fine weather, spoke the Barque *Wallaby* and Brig *Emma*.

**Thursday 24 August 1848**
(No latitudes or longitudes recorded)
Spoke the *Prince Regent* of Hobart Town. Capt. Gardiner 8 weeks out 100 barrels Sperm oil.

**Friday 25 August 1848**
Latitude 35.42S. Longitude 135.6E. At 4.00 spoke the ship *Alexander Coffin*

**Saturday 27 August 1848**
Latitude 36.13S. Longitude 135.4E.
Ship running to the SSE. Spoke the Brig *Marianne*. Capt. Collins of Hobart Town at noon. Sighted Kangaroo Island distance about 40 miles.

**Monday 11 September 1848**
Latitude 36.39S. Longitude 136.45E.
At sunset spoke the brig *Johanna*. Capt. Chamberlain 6 months out at 15 tons of Sperm oil.

**Wednesday 13 September 1848**
Make all sail Kangaroo Island NE about 30 miles at 8.00. A Sperm whale in sight at 9.00. Lowered all boats at noon, returned without success. Latitude 36.44S at 2.00pm. Taket [sic] to the NE at 4.00. Sperm whales in sight at 5.00 lowered all boats. The chief mate boat steerer missed. The Captain got fast and killed the whale at 7.00. Got her along side shortened tail at 8.00 commenced cutting in.

**Sunday 17 September 1848**
(No latitudes or longitudes recorded)
Spoke *Alexander Coffin*. Carpenter repairing boat.

**Wednesday 20 September 1848**
(No latitudes or longitudes recorded)
Spoke ship *Pacific*. Captain Gardiner 9 months out at 800 tons, 30 barrels of Sperm oil.

**Thursday 21 September 1848**
(No latitudes or longitudes recorded)
Carpenter repairing boat. Men employed about the rigging. Spoke the Barque *Emma*. Capt Watson 3 months out 40 barrels Sperm oil.

**Friday 22 September 1848**
Repairing sails.

**Thursday 3 October 1848**
Latitude 36.36S. Longitude 136.51E.
Spoke the Brig *Johanna* 23 tons Sperm oil

**Saturday 14 October 1848**
Repairing jib

**Monday 23 October 1848**
Latitude 39.8S. Longitude 142E.
Ship heading ENE at Noon. All sails employed about the rigging. Spoke the Brig *Johanna*.

**Wednesday 25 October 1848**
(No latitudes or longitudes recorded)
Heading Southward, the SE of King Island. Sunset, calm lowered two boats.

(CRO MSS Log Box 17)
Map 2. Voyage of the vessel *Emu*
Map 3. Voyage of the vessel Fortitude
Map 4. Voyage of the vessel *Fortitude* and the vessels sighted
Conclusion

This chapter confirms that at least 23 Tasmanian based whaling vessels were actively engaged in whaling activities in South Australian waters during 1814 to 1849. The statistical information has been presented in three different formats to demonstrate the volume, years, destinations and movements of whaling voyages. The database in the Appendix on Tasmanian whaling activities in South Australia has been tabulated from primary and secondary sources. The Appendix also records the dates, destinations, comments relating to owners, captains, agents, cargo, passengers, ports of vessel registration, type of rig, tonnage of the vessel, and the reference source. The data presented in this detailed table confirms whaling vessel activities in South Australia from 1830 to 1849. Figures 10 and 11 present the number of whaling vessels registered in Hobart from 1830 to 1850, and Launceston from 1831 to 1845. Figures 12 and 13 compare the actual number of confirmed non-specified voyages to South Australia against the confirmed number of whaling voyages from Hobart and Launceston.

The database in the Appendix was used to plot the statistical information provided in Figures 12 and 13. The graphs illustrated in Chapter Eight confirm that the whaling industry in both Hobart and Launceston experienced years of fluctuating highs and lows. The graphs also present the volume of whaling voyages, and the year the voyages were undertaken. Interpreting the results based upon the findings of this chapter will be discussed in Chapter Eight. The following chapter will present the known owners, agents, masters and captains, and passengers of the above identified whaling vessels.
Personalities

Much of the secondary source material examined during this research has, as stated previously, portrayed colonial whaling as a romantic and exciting era in Australia’s past. Accounts of Australia’s early history often provide a somewhat dry account of events, leaning more towards chronology rather than the personal accounts of individuals. Newspaper publications rarely acknowledged the individual deeds of the whalers, tending to focus on political and economic agendas. Nevertheless, due praise was given when substantial tonnages of whale oil or bone landed upon the docks of Hobart Town and Launceston.

Diaries, journals, and reminiscences have proven to be the most valuable when it came to identifying personal information about these men. Hudson Fysh, grandson of Henry Reed, when writing his novel about his grandfather’s younger years provided an interesting study of a man who received little mention within the historical record (Fysh LMSS49.1972; Fysh 1973). The diaries of the Henty family, edited by Lynette Peel, added a dimension to the agricultural, pastoral and whaling pursuits of this pioneering family (Peel 1996). Reverend Robert Knopwood noted that many whaling identities socialised with the upper echelons of Tasmania’s elite. On 4 June 1818, for example, Knopwood recorded that he entertained Mr. Abbott, deputy judge advocate, Mr. Archer, magistrate, Lt. Robinson, H.M. 48 Regt, Mr Lord, Mr Luttrell, Mr Young and Mr Birch (Nicholls 1977:283). Lord, Luttrell, Young and Birch all had varied associations and economic interests with the Tasmanian whaling industry.

To date little has been written about whaling crews. Buttrose has suggested that because of the “nature of the work and their lives,” the whalers did not warrant particular mention (Buttrose 1998:13). Chamberlain also noted, “We read little of these men unless they were deserters or trouble makers…their heroic deeds are of little consequence.” The historical literature generally fails to mention the men who risked life and limb every time they put out after a whale. The whaling vessel crew lists perhaps are the only documentary record of these men (Lawrence 2001b:213).

Research has been frustrated by the apparent lack of initials or full names of whaling personalities. In some cases it has been found that it would not have been possible for one master or captain to have sailed as many voyages or vessels as recorded. They would hardly have put foot on land before they would have had to return to sea, or certainly would have started whaling in their childhood years. There were, for example, three Captain Wisharts in the whaling industry during the period being studied, Henry, Thomas and James (Learmonth 1934:29). “Fathers, sons, brothers all in the business of whaling, either together or on separate occasions” (Gibbs 1998:4; Jones 1986:172). The Henty family was another typical whaling family (Peel 1996). The whaling enterprise of the Hentys will be discussed further in this chapter. The industry appeared to
encourage nepotism and “was one of the most pernicious influences controlling the selection of whaling crews” (Chamberlain 1988:104). One example was William Young, owner of the *Abeona*, who employed his brother-in-law, “Campbell as Master” on his vessel in November 1845 (Broxam 1998:52-58). During the months of April, September and November 1845, the *Abeona* had visited Streaky Bay in South Australia (Broxam 1998:53; CUS38/2/8; NS543/118).

**Capital**

Two types of whaling were within the economic reach of any modest entrepreneur, one being bay whaling, and the other shore-based whaling (Colwell 1969:24; Dyster 1980:21). The requirement of between 20 to 40 crew, and 3 to 6 whale boats suggested by Evans and Bell, would have some significant but manageable investment outlays (Evans 1993, Vol 1:37; Bell 1991:46). The whalers were paid a share of the profits in the form of lays, a structured wage tier calculated on their standing within the whaling party. Equipment had to be purchased, such as trypots, casks, harpoons, etc. The whalers, although supplied with slops which were ultimately deducted from their share of the lay, had to be also supplied with food, rations of tobacco and alcohol. According to Colwell, any person “with capital to buy a whaleboat and equipment was never short of a crew” (Colwell 1969:25). Chamberlain’s research identified Hobart’s whaling entrepreneurs to have come from many backgrounds, including publicans, tradesmen and politicians turning their investments towards whaling (Chamberlain 1988:316). Colwell suggested that they were young men of drive and capital (Colwell 1969:70). One notable father and son team, Jonathon and John Griffiths, capitalised successfully from an off-shoot of the whaling industry-boat-building. They were not only vessel owners, masters and agents, but also boat builders of some repute. The Griffiths, like the Hentys combined their interests with the ownership of whaling stations and a farming enterprise at Port Fairy in Victoria (Cumpston 1974:102; Parsons 1986:7; Powling 1980:12).

**Owners, Masters, Merchants, Passengers and Crew**

The following account of whaling identities does not intend to be a detailed biography of each individual. This section intends to highlight some of the more interesting accounts of their whaling activities. It will also focus on the role these people played within whaling activities in South Australia. The following paragraphs will identify significant owners, masters, merchants, agents, passengers, women and children who have been documented as having had a connection to the whaling industry in South Australia.

**The Henty’s: Whalers, farmers, agents and merchants**

Henty is the surname of a pioneering family, headed by one Thomas Henty, whose members reached Australia from England between 1829 and 1837, and became important pastoralists and merchants in Tasmania and Victoria (Pratt 1979:486). In 1833 Thomas Henty (1775-1839) became a magistrate and in 1835 director of the Cornwall Bank in Launceston (Pratt 1979:486). His son James (1800-1882) pursued his own mercantile and banking interests in Launceston as well, and formed the company Henty and Co. in 1835, shipping wool, wheat and whale oil to England (Pratt 1979:486). William Henty (1808-1881) and Charles Henty (1807-1864) also preferred to remain in Launceston, William becoming a solicitor and Charles a banker (Pratt 1979:487). Despite the fact that the Henty family may have been divided by distance, the family and business pursuits remained closely linked (Peel 1996:1). The documentary record tends to note the members of the family as either the “Henty Brothers” or simply the “Henty’s [sic]”. In some instances it became difficult to determine which family member was being referred to. Stephen (1811-1872) and Edward (1810-1878) were the major entrepreneurs in the whaling
industry conducted from Portland Bay and therefore the following details relate to them specifically.

Stephen (aged 23) and Edward (aged 24) intended at first to follow their pastoral interests in Portland, however they found that the bay and the adjacent deep-sea waters were plentiful in both the Black and Sperm whales (Peel 1996:1). They settled at Portland Bay in 1834 and combined whaling with farming during the early years (Peel 1996:1). Their maritime enterprises in the latter years moved away from whaling, to trade - transporting sheep, cattle, goods and passengers particularly to South Australia, and networking from Launceston and Portland Bay in Victoria (Learmonth 1934; Peel 1996). The Hentys have been quoted as being, an “adventurous family, so well known throughout Australia” (*South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 18 June 1836:8).

The search for suitable land from 1832 to 1834 saw Edward and Stephen Henty spending many months at sea surveying much of the southern coastline of Australia (Anderson 1998:34; Nicholson 1983:20; Peel 1996; Ruediger 1980:65-66). The brothers saw the southern mainland of Australia as rich in resources on land and sea, the shores being untouched and ready for terrestrial and maritime exploitation (Bassett 1962:246):

I, James Liddell of Queensland in the colony of Victoria, Master Mariner, do hereby solemnly and sincerely declare that I was Master of the *Thistle* of Launceston, owned by the Henty Brothers, in 1832, and under instruction I called in at Port Lincoln, South Australia in the course of a voyage to Swan River in Western Australia for the purpose of conveying back to Launceston Mr. Edward Henty, who has gone by the Barque *Carnarvon* to inspect the country around Spencer’s Gulf. (Ruediger 1980:51)

It appeared that Edward Henty found the South Australian coastline of particular interest as he navigated and explored the coastal waters of Eyre Peninsula and Spencer’s Gulf on several occasions. A chronology of events records that Edward had more than a passing interest in Port Lincoln. The Hentys vessel *Thistle* has been recorded as visiting Port Lincoln in April 1833. In a letter written by Henry Camfield on 9 April 1833, “Edward is gone to Spencer’s Gulf whaling for six months, he left Saturday 3 April. Edward returned to Launceston on 6 August 1833 with 50 tons of oil” (Cumpston 1974:108). During this six month period Nicholson stated that in July 1833 Edward “visits Kangaroo Island” on board the schooner *Elizabeth* under the command of John Hart (Nicholson 1983:214). The record becomes somewhat confusing at this stage as Nicholson added on 4 August 1833, Edward Henty and 4 passengers were on the *Thistle* with ‘30 tons of oil and tobacco’ sailing for Kangaroo Island, Spencer’s Gulf and King George Sound (Nicholson 1983:214). Edward Henty arrives in Launceston on 6 August, but is reported to be sailing for Kangaroo Island on 4 August; the reported tonnage of oil by Nicholson is 30, and by Cumpston as 50 (Cumpston 1974:108; Nicholson 1983:214). These kinds of inconsistencies somewhat cloud the historical record. It could be suggested that both Stephen and Edward Henty were whaling at the same time and in the same region. In December 1833, Stephen and Edward both sailed in the *Thistle* from Portland Bay to Kangaroo Island, then to Port Lincoln and on to King George Sound (Sexton 1990:25-26). The historical record stated that the Henty’s undertook several voyages along these particular coastal regions. A substantial gap becomes evident within the record, this coinciding with the early years of the establishment of the Portland Bay settlement in November 1834 (Peel 1979:1). This may suggest that the Hentys were kept busy with their interests at home. 1 October 1837 sees “James Henty and child, John Henty and John Griffiths” on board the *Elizabeth* arriving at Hobart Town from Gulf St Vincent (*Hobart Town Courier*, 6 October 1837:4). The shipping news did not indicate what their interests were in South Australia or why John Griffiths would be travelling with James and John Henty. The Henty’s again enter the South Australian whaling record one month later in November 1837: “Sleaford Bay – Our enterprising neighbours the Hentys of Portland Bay have collected upwards
of 300 tuns in only three boats and a small cutter at anchor” (South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register, 11 November 1837:1). Some four years later the South Australian Register reported the Henty party captured three whales at Encounter Bay (South Australian Register 19 June 1841:3). It would appear that the Hentys whaled in South Australian waters sporadically, combining their maritime trading interests with whaling as and when the time and opportunity arose.

**Jonathon and John Griffiths: Whalers, farmers, ship builders, agents and merchants**

Jonathon Griffiths was born in Stone, Gloucestershire, in March 1773. At the age of thirteen he was sentenced to jail for theft and arrived as a convict in Sydney on 28 June 1790. He had only been in Sydney some five weeks after which he was transported to Norfolk Island. “Jonathon was put to work and learned about boat building” (http://freepage.genealogy/rootsweb.com/sealark/john%20griffiths). Jonathon Griffiths and his son John were to become prominent boat-builders in Launceston. In 1827 Jonathon launched the vessel Resolution and in the same year his son John launched the schooner Henry (Cumpston 1974:102). Jonathon Griffiths was to remain in Launceston whilst John pursued his whaling activities, settling in Port Fairy and establishing not only pastoral interests but also a shore-based whaling station at Griffith Island in 1836 at the age of 35 (Dunbabin 1922:141).

Just like the Henty’s, John Griffiths combined agricultural and pastoral activities with whaling, and established his shore-based station in Victoria. “Land and sea were there for the taking…they staked out grazing land behind the tryworks on Port Fairy Beach” (Dyster 1980:23). Messrs. Griffiths, however, had financial interests outside Port Fairy, and that was a notable shipbuilding yard in Launceston. Both father and son were actively involved in the shipbuilding industry, employing some 50 men at their establishment in Launceston (Cumpston 1974:102; Dunbabin 1922:135; O’May 1840. NS 543/118/1:3; Powling 1980:12). Chamberlain has stated that the shipbuilding industry in Tasmania was, “one of the most positive aspects of the whaling industry” (Chamberlain 1988:58).

John Griffiths not only established his whaling station at Port Fairy in 1836, he extended his industry further a field to South Australia. John Griffiths had been noted to have had “moderate successes at the whaling station at Hog Bay on Kangaroo Island” (Cumpston 1974:120). He visited Kangaroo Island on several occasions and it would appear that he traded there as early as 1829 when the schooner Henry (which he built and owned) arrived at Launceston with salt and kangaroo skins from Kangaroo Island (Hobart Town Courier, 21 March 1829:2). Griffiths not only saw Kangaroo Island whaling as a way of making money, he also was happy to purchase salt and skins to supplement his income. John Griffiths’ whaling station at Hog Bay appeared to have continued to operate throughout 1832, 1833 and 1834 when it was reported that he took provisions to the establishment (Cumpston 1974:120; Nicholson 1983:204). Figure 3 shows the Port Fairy plaque commemorating the life of Captain John Griffiths.

**Thomas Birch: Merchant, builder**

Thomas Birch, like Jonathon Griffiths was also transported to Sydney as a convict. Crowther (1935-36:6) described Birch as having “led an eventful life…from a convict to become a constable and an influential man.” The rise from convict to a respectable citizen saw Thomas Birch mixing with the elite of Hobart Town (Nicholls 1977:283).
Reverend Knopwood recorded the activities of Thomas Birch, a “notable whaling figure” from Hobart Town. On 16 September 1816 Knopwood wrote, “Early this morn Mr. Birch’s brig the *Sophia* came up a second time filled with oile [sic] which he caught this season” (Nicholls 1977:209). It is unfortunate that Knopwood did not indicate where the *Sophia* had been, or whether it was seal oil or whale oil on board the vessel. Thomas Birch’s interests were in the ship-building industry of Hobart, his maritime activities focusing on being the owner and merchant of his vessels, employing others to captain his ships (Crowther 1935: CRO.PQ 639.22). During 1816 - 1817, Thomas Birch had built and owned the *Henrietta Packet* and *Sophia* (Nicholson 1983:53). On 28 March 1817 and on 23 May 1817 the *Henrietta Packet* had been recorded as having been on sealing voyages to Kangaroo Island, “returning with salt and skins” (Nicholson 1983:44; Nunn 1989:29). The *Sophia* arrived at Kangaroo Island three years later in April and June 1820, returning to Hobart Town “with salt and skins” (Nicholson 1983:60). It is interesting to note that the *Sophia* once again entered the historical record noting on the following occasions, “whaling at Kangaroo Island” during the months of August, September, and November 1820 (Nicholson 1983:62-63). The *Sophia* sailed to Kangaroo Island in May, June and August of 1821, returning to Hobart Town “with a full cargo of oil” (Nicholson 1983:71-73). The historical record indicated that the interests of Thomas Birch were in whaling and sealing; it would appear that Birch did not discriminate between the two activities. Thomas Birch remained the owner of the *Sophia* up until 22 February 1822, when the vessel was purchased by the Tasmanian Government and re-named the *Duke of York* (Nicholson 1983:73).

**John Hart: Sealer, whaler, station owner, captain**

Captain John Hart was an enterprising figure having combined his whaling exploits with sealing. He sailed the vessel *Elizabeth* which had been built by Messrs. Griffiths in November 1831 in Launceston (*Launceston Advertiser*, 14 December 1831: n.p.). Hart was the master of the vessel between the years 1831 - 1834 (Borrow 1947:47; Nunn 1989:43). John Hart was employed by the Griffiths family, yet during his years as master and captain of the *Elizabeth*, he also managed to set up whaling station establishments with his partner Jacob Hagen. Secondary sources state that he visited Kangaroo Island on three separate occasions during these years and that he had
“trod the plains” of Adelaide several years before settlement (Sexton 1990:24; State Records of South Australia Research Notes, 50-99 Vol 2:51). Parsons has argued that “this seems based on flimsy evidence” (Parsons 1986:8). As noted much of the history on John Hart’s pre-colonial settlement of South Australia in 1836 appears predominantly in secondary sources; nowhere else could the author confirm these reports. Nelson’s Honours thesis titled Right Place Wrong Time: the archaeology of bay whaling. Kangaroo Island 1840 - 1845 also acknowledged that primary source material was limited, stating “there is very little information to be gained from the archival sources” (Nelson 1998:17). John Hart was an adventurous young man in his early twenties, like the Henty brothers, and he spent some time exploring the coastline of South Australia (Carroll 1989:60).

Primary source material on Captain John Hart appears at this point to be elusive. Secondary sources however, suggest that he established whaling stations along the coastline of Kangaroo Island as early as 1831 at Flour Cask Bay and Doyles Bay, being followed closely by his employer John Griffiths (Ruediger 1980:65). John Hart’s whaling and sealing exploits saw him travel further afield toward the west coast of South Australia Baillie wrote that between 1831 to 1832, “Hart visited Port Lincoln and traded stores in exchange for 7000 skins from Thistle Island, from an escaped Vandemonian” (Baillie 1978:166). John Hart regularly sailed back and forth from Tasmania. On, 12 October 1832 he departed the port of Launceston “in ballast” on a voyage to Kangaroo Island in the Elizabeth (Nicholson 1983:20). Interestingly, Hart left Kangaroo Island just six days later on 18 October 1832 for Launceston with “23 tons of oil, 52 whale bone, and a passenger Mr. Trimlett” (Carroll 1989:61; Sexton 1990:24). It is not indicated from which whaling station John Hart had collected the oil, bone or the passenger Trimlett. It would appear that Captain Hart travelled to Kangaroo Island on more than three occasions. He had been reported to have been there again in November 1832, returning to Launceston with “1 tun oil and passenger,” the name not stated (Cumpston 1974:121). Nicholson recorded John Hart as “collecting” Edward Henty from his Portland Bay establishment in July 1833, taking him to Kangaroo Island (Nicholson 1983:214). Nicholson stated that Edward Henty was “collected” from his establishment at Portland Bay in 1833, however the Henty Journals record that he did not settle there until November 1834 (Peel 1996).

Documentary records do not state exactly where on Kangaroo Island or Henty’s interest in Kangaroo Island, other than he had visited there. John Hart not only established whaling stations on Kangaroo Island in 1831-1832, he spread his industry to Encounter Bay in 1835, but the specific locale was unknown (Hart 1936:9). John Hart continued to be associated with South Australia by being employed as the whaling station manager of the South Australian Company’s venture at Encounter Bay. Captain Hart had a profound influence on the establishment of South Australia as he was one of the entrepreneurial figures who on several occasions returned to England with glowing reports on the fertile plains of the southern coast of Australia (Ballantyne 2002:44). Hart eventually become a prominent figure in South Australia’s early history, and on three occasions became the Premier of South Australia (Parsons 1986:9; Nicholson 1983:58).

**John Jones: Master**

The documentary record has provided a basic chronology of events concerning Captain John Jones. Jones acted as captain of the vessel Henry built by John Griffiths in 1829 and owned by Henry Reed, who had considerable interests in South Australia (Cumpston 1974:102). It would appear that Jones carried out his duties as master in an efficient manner, sailing to and from Kangaroo Island on several occasions from 1831 to 1834. He was somewhat of an explorer spending time investigating the waters of Spencer’s Gulf and Gulf St Vincent. The following excerpts of John Jones’ voyages will be presented in chronological order as information of a personal nature on this man is still elusive.
The first whaling accounts on Jones appeared thus, “June to September 1831, Captain Jones, commander of the Henry delivers stores to Kangaroo Island for Reed’s whaling establishment” (Nunn 1989:45). Norman stated that during this period, Captain Jones in the schooner Henry owned by Henry Reed of Launceston took “whaling parties” and “stores” to Kangaroo Island bringing “back oil.” No tonnage or definitive locations to this date have been stated (Norman 1938:69). On 24 September 1832 Jones arrived at the port of Launceston from Kangaroo Island with “47 casks, 13 tons of oil, 46 bundles of bone” (Cumpston 1974:106; Nicholson 1983:202; Sexton 1990:24). He sets sail on the same day returning to Kangaroo Island (Nicholson 1983:204). In February 1833 Captain Jones on this occasion, sailing once again in the schooner Henry, for “merchant John Griffiths,” supplied whaling gear and provisions for Griffiths’ whaling station at Hog Bay (Cumpston 1974:120; Proceedings of The Royal Geographical Society 1920.Vol 22:73-75; Nicholson 1983:208; Nunn 1989:45). Cumpston and Nunn noted that on this occasion John Jones took with him passengers John Sinclair, John Taylor, and the latter’s wife and child, further stating that, “These could have been the first European women to go to Kangaroo Island” (Cumpston 1974:107, Nunn 1989:45). Records indicated that John Jones during his voyages engaged in sealing expeditions whilst exploring the possibilities of locating good land, soil and water in Spencer’s Gulf (Fysh LMSS49.1972: n.p.). In June 1833 it is stated that he spent time exploring Gulf St Vincent and Cape Jervis (Fysh LMSS49 1972. n.p.; Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society 1920.Vol. 22:73-75). Napier stated that it was during this month and year that Jones “crossed over to Cape Jervis on the south side of which about 8 miles he found a small bay” (Napier 1835:251). It had been noted that this particular bay was not laid down in any chart, affording good shelter and anchorage for vessels of 400 tons with a good stream of water running into it (Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society 1920.Vol 22:73).

The last recorded reference to be made of Captain John Jones recorded him as exploring Gulf St Vincent in 1834, searching for fresh water as Kangaroo Island had been reported as experiencing a drought (Nunn 1989:46). The following section will establish Henry Reed’s employment of John Jones as an advisor on the suitability of land and the possibility of suitable whaling station sites along the coast of Spencer’s Gulf and Gulf St Vincent.

**Henry Reed: Whaling station owner, merchant**

Unhappily records of Henry Reed’s whaling activities are almost entirely absent, no logs of those wonderful adventurous trips, no records of whales caught. In typical fashion he listened with inherent interest to the tales he heard from whaling by the adventurous. To this end he got together with two parties William Effingham and John Sinclair and purchased from John Griffiths the pioneer Launceston ship builder the brig Henry. (Fysh LMSS49 1972)

There is regretfully little personal information on the whaling entrepreneurs of Tasmania. It is only through genealogical research such as that undertaken by Hudson Fysh on his grandfather Henry Reed that we can access any information about this particular man. Henry Reed displayed a pioneering spirit that saw him expand his whaling interests to the frontiers of isolated bays and inlets, particularly the waters of Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. What follows is again simply a chronological order of events that outline some of the documented dates and locations of whaling trips that Reed’s two vessels the Henry and the Socrates undertook from 1831 to 1834 (Cumpston 1974:119; Nicholson 1983:78).

Henry Reed had whaling station establishments both on Kangaroo Island and at Portland Bay. Norman wrote that Captain John Jones had taken stores back and forth from Portland Bay and Kangaroo Island on several occasions during 1831 (Norman 1938:69). Norman did not record the location of Reed’s whaling station site on Kangaroo Island. Nunn and Crowther established that Henry Reed was part owner of the vessel Henry, the other being John Sinclair (Crowther...
1935-36:n.p.; Nunn 1989:45). Research did not indicate if or when Henry Reed became the sole owner of the *Henry*. The *Launceston Advertiser* reported:

> The Henry arrived with 10 tons of oil. The Henry’s trip is the first to the fisheries and its success will be an inducement to others to further enterprise on account of our merchants as whaling is an important part of colonial enterprise. (*Launceston Advertiser*, 29 August 1831:2)

There appears to be a six month gap in the historical record. Henry Reed’s activities appear to be either not recorded or simply did not warrant a mention. Contradictory accounts appear in the following items: “20 April 1832 *Henry* to Port Lincoln in ballast from Launceston with Mr. Trimlett of Reed’s establishment. However, on her return to Launceston 3 June it was stated that Trimlett set up a whaling station in the sheltered bays of Kangaroo Island instead of Port Lincoln” (Sexton 1990:24). Trimlett had been in the South Australian region for six weeks. The contradiction appears at this point in time as “24 April 1832 Captain Gibbons is to proceed to the new colony of Port Lincoln with Mr. Trimlett on board as passenger” (*Hobart Town Courier*, 24 April 1832:2). The *Hobart Town Courier* stated that there was an already an establishment at Port Lincoln at that time. Further to this it was reported on 23 September 1832, some five months later, “By late arrivals we learn that one or two vessels may be this time expected to anchor at Port Lincoln with the nucleus of the new colony projected at that station” (*Hobart Town Courier*, 23 September 1832:3). It would be pertinent to suggest the two vessels were the *Henry* and the *Socrates* owned by Henry Reed. The documentary record once again became elusive, for Henry Reed and his counterparts were no longer mentioned in the shipping records.

**Frederick Hamborg (Hamborg): Passenger, mate**

Extensive research of archives in South Australia and Tasmania has revealed little about this man. The London Metropolitan Archives record Frederick Hamborg’s date of birth as 14 June 1796, which makes him to be thirty seven years of age when he presented his statement to the South Australian Commission on 26 December 1833 (London Metropolitan Archives X023/016). To date this has proven to be the only information on Frederick Hamborg that the author been able to locate. Hamborg has been quoted and re-quoted many times (Borrow 1947:n.p.; Cumpston 1974:119; Fysh LMS49 1972; *Hobart Town Courier* 24 April 1834:2; Kerr 1980:33-34; Kostolgou and McCarthy 1991:22; Martin 1836:343-344; Moore 1923-4:72-73; Nash 2003:90; Parkinson 1997:42-43; Sexton 1990:24; Wakefield 1834:26-27, 1838:22). Yelland suggested that Frederick Hamborg’s speech was used to gather information so as to promote the South Australian Association’s interests in the establishment of a new colony at Port Lincoln “James Henty, Henry Reed, Frederick Homburg all promoted the south coast of Spencer’s Gulf” (Yelland 1999:24). The exact words stated by Mr. Frederick Hamborg have been broken down, quoted in short sentences, paragraphs and in some instances skewed to suit the author’s own purpose. Therefore, the following statement of Mr. Hamborg will be quoted in full. Much of what Hamborg asserted will be addressed in the following chapter. His comments on his visit to Port Lincoln, in particular Spalding Cove, will be addressed separately as the archaeology of Spalding Cove relied heavily on his interview. His account is as follows:

Frederick Hamborg, 3, White Lion-street, Islington.

Q. Have you visited the South Coast of Australia?
A. Yes, I visited Port Lincoln in May 1832, in the *Socrates* brig, belonging to Mr. Reed, of Launceston.

Q. Where did you anchor?
A. On the eastern side of Spalding Cove in seven fathoms of water- it was good holding ground, being blue clay.

Q. Is the anchorage safe from winds?
A. Yes, it is safe from all winds, being nearly land locked.

Q. How long were you sailing from Launceston?
A. We went right before the south-east wind to the harbour, and were only two days and a half on the voyage; the usual passage is six days. When we returned, the wind blew from the north-west, and we made the passage in the same time. We sailed to the southward of Kangaroo Island.

Q. For what purpose did you go to Port Lincoln?
A. To land a whaling party consisting of thirty persons with five boats, and the necessary implements for catching fish.

Q. Is it usual for parties to be left on shore with a view to catching whales?
A. Yes, the men whom I left had been there during the three seasons; they had left their huts standing.

Q. Do they commonly succeed in this object?
A. Yes, whales are very commonly met with close in shore – they are the black whales; the Sperm whales are rarely met with, being further to the southward. Seals also are very numerous.

Q. Are any other kinds of fish abundant in the neighbourhood?
A. Yes, in great numbers and variety; I found the following amongst them. Grey mullet from 2 to 3 lbs; soles, mackerel, herrings, snappers, jew-fish, salmon, trumpeters, parrot-fish, sting-ray, muscles, oysters, cockles, rock rod, turtle, etc.

Q. Did you find any fresh water?
A. Yes, abundance; two streams of fine water as clear as crystal run into Spalding Cove from the southward; they amply supplied us. The sealers depend for their supply of water on these sources.

Q. Did you go far inland?
A. About a mile and a half.

Q. What was the appearance of the country?
A. The country resembled Port Augusta; there was plenty of wood, some of it very large. Amongst the trees I saw cedar, which would cut into two feet planks; beefwood, tulip wood, stringy bark very large, huon pine, and iron bark. There was plenty of wood which would answer for ship and boat building, and for spars.

Q. Was there any grass?
A. Yes, plenty of grass; about knee deep; it was quite green and numbers of kangaroos and other animals were feeding on it, the kangaroos were large and well fed; they were as fat as any I have ever seen.

Q. Did you see any natives?
A. Yes, they were numerous and peaceful; they assisted us in carrying water to the ship and in other matters. For a little tobacco and with kind treatment I am convinced they would work well.

Q. Did you find any white people settled there?
A. No; but some had settled themselves on Kangaroo Island; they had, however, been very troublesome, and Government therefore sent a brig down about two years ago and took them away. They are none there now, nor on the neighbouring islands. I have read over this evidence, and declare it to be correct.

(Signed) Fred. Hamborg. 4, Adam-street, Adelphi. 26th Dec. 1833'

(South Australian Association:1834: 70-71)

This lengthy passage revealed much about Hamborg’s visit to Spalding Cove. He was obviously an observant man as he named all manner of marine fish, and gave an excellent description on the vegetation. However, the trees such as the huon-pine and cedar would not have been in the South Australian environment at that particular time. Frederick Hamborg perhaps was not as knowledgeable on Australian flora as he was on fauna. As previously acknowledged this passage will prove a vital component within the interpretation of the maritime and terrestrial archaeology of Spalding Cove presented in Chapter Seven.

The Launceston Advertiser reported that the “Socrates had been at Spalding Cove in March 1832” (Launceston Advertiser, 17 March 1832:2). This account confirms that at least one voyage had been undertaken by the Socrates to that region, however it could not be verified if Frederick Hamborg had been on that particular voyage, or if in fact the vessel had visited a whaling party at Spalding Cove at that time. Hamborg’s account did not state if he was a passenger or a mate on board the Socrates. Edward Gibbon Wakefield was one of the strongest promoters and supporters of the South Australian Association. His plan for a new colony in South Australia encouraged him to refer to Frederick Hamborg’s statement on more than one occasion (Wakefield 1832, 1834, 1838). The minutes in the Prospectus dated 26 December 1833 recorded
that a “number of bankers, merchants and ship-owners were present at the meeting” (Yelland 1999:14-15). Wakefield placed great faith in Hamborg’s description of Port Lincoln and in particular Spalding Cove as he reportedly “gathered all the information available as to the quality of the soil, the rivers, the harbours, whaling and sealing” (Yelland 1999:24).

**Conclusion**

This chapter highlighted the most prominent and regular whaling identities who had connections to South Australia. What has become obvious to date is that many of the vessels, their captains and owners appear to be consistent. Lawrence wrote, “It became apparent that the players...owners...were one and the same” (Lawrence 1998:111). It also is apparent that they were men of some capital means, owning pre-existing businesses providing investment opportunities with an industry of seasonal activity. Kostoglou stated that these entrepreneurs had pre-existing businesses which they “ran in tandem with their new found whaling pursuits” (Kostoglou, 1995 Vol 1:42). The income generated from whaling also indicated that it was a supplementary income to pastoral and agricultural activities such as those run by the Hentys of Portland Bay and John Griffiths at Port Fairy. Thomas Birch from Hobart carried on his shipbuilding enterprise with whaling as did the Griffiths from their Launceston- based shipbuilding yards. These entrepreneurs also became the traders and transporters of consumer goods, cattle, sheep and wheat as well as providing transport for people to the new colonies: “merchants, shipowners, and investors who sank money did as much to put Australia on its feet as those who put money into pastoral activities” (Colwell 1969:104). The culture of whaling saw second and third generations continuing family whaling pursuits until the 1850s when the industry began to rapidly decline.
Spalding Cove

Historical and archaeological investigations of Spalding Cove have been somewhat piecemeal. Kostoglou and McCarthy’s report stated that Spalding Cove was “examined as part of an aerial survey, no surface features of any type were discernible within the cove” (Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991:22). No land-based survey work was undertaken of Spalding Cove by Kostoglou and McCarthy. Based upon the limited archaeological investigations undertaken in the area it was felt that Spalding Cove should be re-examined.

It has often been suggested that Spalding Cove was a whaling station site (Borrow 1947:3; Cumpston 1974:119; Fysh LMSS49 1972; Hobart Town Courier, 24 April 1832:2; Kerr 1980:33-34; Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991:22; Martin 1836:343-344; Moore 1923-4:92-93; Nash 2003:90; Parkinson 1997:42-43; Port Lincoln Herald, 22 March 1935:n.p.; Sexton 1990:24). What has not been clarified is that Spalding Cove, pictured in Figure 4, covers some 10 square kilometres of sea. Furthermore there are many bays, inlets and sandy beaches dotted along the cove’s foreshore, and anyone of these may have at some stage been used by whaling parties. Kostoglou and McCarthy stated that the only primary source reference to Spalding Cove came directly from Frederick Hamborg’s statement (Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991:22).

Figure 4. Spalding Cove overlooking the cove from the eastern shore (Photo by K. Firth 19 December 2003)

The Department of Archaeology at Flinders University of South Australia, undertook archaeological field walking in November 1997. The archaeological investigations were limited to surface surveillance observations at several suggestive locations. The region has not
undergone any archaeological excavations. Spalding Cove forms part of the Lincoln National Park and therefore any future excavation undertakings would be most unlikely. The following will be an historical and archaeological terrestrial and maritime investigation of Spalding Cove proper. However, what will become apparent is that the investigations lead to a definitive locale which the author suggests is the actual location of the whaling station site described by Frederick Hamborg during his visit in May 1832.

**Historical Background of Spalding Cove**

Frederick Hamborg’s statement is the only reliable primary documentary source which indicated that the Spalding Cove region was visited by whaling parties (Moore 1923:92; South Australian Association 1834:70-71). Other authors have used various sections of Hamborg’s text within their own work, no more primary source material has been found from these to add to the history of Spalding Cove. Peter Bell recorded that the whaling station at Spalding Cove existed about 1832, and that the ownership and precise location are unknown. Bell further suggested that the documentary record is from secondary source material and considered it to be “poor” (Bell 1991:55). However, the *Launceston Advertiser* reported that the *Socrates* had been at Spalding Cove in March 1832, a few months before Hamborg’s visit in May 1832 (*Launceston Advertiser*, 17 March 1832). Nicholson recorded that on 4 April 1832, on board the vessel *Socrates* (owned by Henry Reed) was Mr Trimlett, passenger bound for the “new colony at Port Lincoln in ballast for whaling” (Nicholson 1983:87 and 97).

Spalding Cove was named in 1802 by Matthew Flinders after the town of Spalding in Lincolnshire, England. Matthew Flinders “bestowed” some thirty place names along Eyre Peninsula after his hometown and his close associates (Brown 2000:172). Flinders wrote in his journal of his explorations along the coastline of South Australia:

> Betwixt Cape Donnington at the entrance, and Surfleet Point, was a large cove with a sandy beach at the head, capable of sheltering a fleet of ships, if the depth should be sufficient, as it appeared to be, to receive them; this was named Spalding Cove. Wood was not wanting there, but no stream of water could be distinguished. (Flinders, Vol.1. 1801-1803:141)

It should be noted that Matthew Flinders anchored at the bight of Spalding Cove at the height of South Australia’s summer in February 1802. Frederick Hamborg’s visit was in May 1832, and one could assume that the winter environment would have been somewhat different. The navigational chart by Matthew Flinders’, *Chart of Terra Australis. South Coast. Sheet 111, 1802*, indicated that he did not venture into Spalding Cove, which would account for the brief description he gave above (Flinders: 1802). Baillie wrote that Matthews Flinders anchored under Stamford Hill past Cape Donnington and that he stayed in the region for a period of 10 days. Baillie also wrote that Matthew Flinders did not venture into Spalding Cove and that during this period there was no water to be found (Baillie 1978:10).

This thesis argues that previous historical and archaeological investigations have failed to precisely locate the shore-based whaling site. Much can be gained by interpreting the documentary record by piecing together the small snippets of information that may have previously been dismissed as irrelevant. The following will demonstrate that by a thorough re-examination of the documentary record, complemented by further archaeological investigations into the maritime and terrestrial environment of Spalding Cove, the establishment of an exact location becomes possible if not probable.
Location

Spalding Cove lies within the region mapped as Port Lincoln (Spalding Cove Topographic Maps 6028-1 and 6028-11). Spalding Cove, shown in Map 5, is situated on the south-eastern side of Lower Eyre Peninsula. It is contained within the Jessieu Peninsula and lies within the Lincoln National Park. The cove lies between Cape Colbert and Surfleet Point (Spalding Cove Topographic Maps 6028-1 and 6028-11, 1:50000. Zone 53. 586000E. 6151500N).

Map 5. Spalding Cove Topographic Maps 6028-1 and 6028-11. 1:50000

Theories and Hypotheses

Having read many different versions of Hamborg’s statement, it became apparent that previous authors who chose to quote Hamborg perhaps did not fully comprehend the importance of his description. Hamborg provided vital information on his exact whereabouts within Spalding Cove. Emphasis previously focused on the year that he was in the region not so much on the actual location. The analysis of Hamborg’s interview led the author to investigate further his
statements that he had landed a whaling party there in May 1832 in the vessel *Socrates* (owned

The following points reveal some of the information that led to further investigation of the Spalding Cove region:

- *Socrates* anchored on the eastern side of Spalding Cove
- Anchored in seven fathoms of water
- Safe from all winds
- Nearly land-locked
- An abundance of water
- Plenty of wood and grass

The above details were matched with the geographical environment, and from this it became strongly suggestive that further archaeological survey work both of the terrestrial and maritime environment was warranted. As discussed in Chapter Four, Iain Stuart’s suggested approach to viewing the landscape and seascape was used as a starting point for this investigation. Stuart stated further, that to understand the site one must experience the environment, that there is no substitute for “field walking” (Stuart 1998:101). Westerdahl (1992:6) has asserted that the “landscape is accordingly of the utmost importance in the survey phase of maritime archaeology.” Much was gained by the implementations of their recommendations. Field walking was duly undertaken at several probable locations. It quickly became apparent during this exercise that many locations along the foreshore would have been unsuitable as whaling station sites. Hamborg’s statement was re-examined so as to better understand exactly where in the cove the vessel anchored, and from which direction he examined the landscape.

As previously stated Spalding Cove lies within the Lincoln National Park, therefore archaeological investigations were limited to non-disturbance surface surveillance work only. One week was allocated to this exercise. Not all the foreshore areas were examined as some proved inaccessible. Field walking was occasionally obstructed due to the dense vegetation. Many bays and inlets were not considered as having any discernable features that would suggest or identify them as shore-based whaling station sites.

An overall visual examination of the Spalding Cove proper indicated that its eastern side was the most probable location for a shore-based site (see Map 5). Hamborg stated that he anchored on the eastern side of Spalding Cove in seven fathoms of water. The “best anchorage is in the bay south of the summit of Cape Colbert 34’44”S. 135’59”E” (Great Britain Hydrographic Dept. 1973:72) as shown in Map 5.

**Archaeological Investigations**

Interpretation on the depth of anchorage within this proximity indicated that it is approximately 6-7 fathoms. At the southern-most region of Spalding Cove the depth declines rapidly to approximately 3-4 fathoms, while at the western shore the anchorage is between 5-6 fathoms. These figures were transcribed from the conversion chart on the *Port Lincoln and Approaches Navigation Chart* (South Australian Department of Marine and Harbours Survey 1973).

Observations during the field walking exercise indicated that the western shore of Spalding Cove would be subjected to prevailing northerly winds. Conversely, the eastern side of the cove appeared to be protected by a backdrop of dense vegetation, limestone cliffs and kilometres of hinterland, as well as the crescent shaped curvature of Cape Colbert (Map 5). Hamborg stated that he had anchored “safe from all winds.” Further observations of the region noted several smooth granite outcrops running directly into the sea (Figures 5, 6 and 7). Kostoglou noted:
Where calm and deep water allowed towing of the whale carcass to shore, slaughtering could occur at the water line if a working platform was located there. Since the whale had to be turned to obtain all the blubber, the carcass had to remain partially submerged. Natural rock floors sloping gently into the water were therefore prized for this purpose. (Kostoglou 1995, Vol.1:26)

Figure 5.  Fisherman’s Point: Aerial Image. Survey 5439. Photo 005, 9 January 1998. Scale 1:2500 (Mapland South Australia). 1) Anchorage at seven fathoms; 2) Cleared farming land; 3) Limestone cliff; 4) Artefact location, bricks; 5) Possible flensing platform area; 6) Plateau

The southern end of Spalding Cove consists of a wide sandy beach with shallow water stretching for some distance (Figure 4 and Map 5). A suitable anchorage point in this bay could not be determined due to the shallow nature of the water. As noted in Chapter One, Kostoglou stated that the whalemen had a “disdain for sandy beaches” (Kostoglou 1995, Vol 2:40). This would then place most of the southern area of Spalding Cove out of the overall preferred location for a shore-based whaling station site.
The first day’s field walking exercise determined which locations would be the most suitable, and which ones required further examination. The following days were spent in non-disturbance surface surveillance work in the regions considered to be most probable. The maritime and terrestrial criteria for shore-based stations have been previously addressed in Chapter One. However, it should be stated that areas suitable as flensing platforms, probable trywork areas, plateaus of flat sheltered areas for accommodation, timber and any obvious associated artefact material determined the exact locations where this surveillance work would be concentrated.

Figure 6. Fisherman’s Point: Granite outcrop overlooking Spalding Cove (Photo by K. Firth, 19 Dec 2003)

Figure 7. Fisherman’s Point: Possible flensing platform (Photo by K. Firth, 19 Dec 2003)
Maritime and Terrestrial Environments

Maritime environment

As stated previously Spalding Cove covers some 10 square kilometres of water. The cove has many bays, inlets and sandy beaches. Granite outcrops dominate much of the eastern side of the cove (Figures 6 and 7). Seals (*Australian Sea Lion*) were seen to be basking on the granite outcrops. Sea-gulls and cormorants were in abundance. Hamborg mentioned that he saw a large variety of fish species. The Port Lincoln region is well known for fishing, therefore Hamborg’s description of the aquatic wildlife is mostly likely to be correct. Port Lincoln and the Lincoln National Park are tourist attractions, campers were seen in the area of Spalding Cove, and sailing vessels were anchored in the waters of Fisherman’s Point.

Fisherman’s Point on the eastern side of the cove was the area of most interest. Many of the features Hamborg mentioned consistently brought the surveillance work to this area. The area of Fisherman’s Point had all the criteria for a shore-based whaling station site. Artefact material located at the base of the limestone cliffs of Fisherman’s Point suggested that this may well have been the whaling station site that Hamborg described in his interview to the South Australian Association. Engine Point immediately to the north of Fisherman’s Point (see Map 5) was also extensively examined. The immediate area around Engine Point lacked any significant vegetative protection from prevailing winds, and the granite outcrops dominated the foreshore. Examination of Map 5 illustrates that Engine Point is bounded by granite outcrops. The small bay to the north of Engine Point could have been considered the most appropriate area for the setting up of tryworks; however the immediate backdrop to the bay afforded little protection from winds. The area was surveyed for artefact material such as bricks, ceramics, or any structural features; none were located at that time. Therefore, it was considered that Engine Point was not the site of the Spalding Cove shore-based whaling station mentioned by Hamborg and others.

Terrestrial environment

A description of Spalding Cove has been presented in the preceding section. The area of most interest was Fisherman’s Point, and a more detailed outline on the terrestrial landscape of this section of Spalding Cove will be addressed in the following. Figure 5 provides an aerial photograph of Spalding Cove, highlighting the possible locations that could be identified as being unique in the selection of shore-based whaling stations.

According to Hamborg there were “Two streams of fine water as clear as crystal running into Spalding Cove from the south west” (South Australian Association 1834:70). No water courses were located during the week of survey investigations. Hughes and Sullivan (1984:35) suggested that due to, “the absence of detailed environmental information…the archaeology is obliged to collate such information from a variety of sources.” Therefore, the Department of Environment, Port Lincoln Branch was approached so as to examine any topographical maps, or aerial photographs it may have in its possession. No obvious inland water courses were noted in the immediate vicinity of Spalding Cove. What should be highlighted is that the aerial photograph was taken in summer (Mapland Survey 5438. Photo 005, 9 Jan. 1998). The archaeological field work was also in summer. “Had there been a thunder storm to produce these streams at the time of his (Hamborg) visit?” (*Port Lincoln Herald*, 22 March 1935:n.p.). Hamborg was in Spalding Cove in May 1832, and this may well have been the case. Kostoglou inferred that, in “65% of cases, the stations contained or stood beside seasonal water courses which would have possessed water during the winter whaling season” (Kostoglou 1995, Vol 1:41).
The eastern shore-line of Spalding Cove was surveyed as much as possible. Access to some areas was restricted by a dense understorey of vegetation such as prostrate creepers, low coastal shrubs and native grasses. Walking surveys were limited to pathways and sections of open woodland. The native vegetation consisted of Coastal Mallee (*Eucalyptus diversifolia*), Blue Gum (*E. petriolanis*), Sugar Gum (*E. cladacalyx*), Sheaok (*Allocasuarina verticillata*), Whibley’s Wattle (*Acacia whibleyana*), and Chalky Wattle (*A. cretacea*) (Department of Environment and Heritage 2002:7). The above native trees which Hamborg described as “plentiful” would have provided timber for fuelling the trywork fires, building huts and as he suggested, boat repairs. The eastern hinterland of Spalding Cove consists of cleared agricultural and pastoral farming land. Abandoned farm machinery has been discarded along the roadside. Debris was scattered around the region consisting of fragments of ceramics, bottles, tin, concrete and wood. The pastoral and agricultural history of Spalding Cove after the whaling era will not be discussed, other than to mention that there is a distinct possibility of artefact contamination by re-deposition from regional farming. This could obscure any material located within the possible shore-based whaling station site.

Fisherman’s Point, south of Cape Colbert indicated most, if not all the environmental conditions suitable for a shore-based whaling station site (Figure 5). The bay is protected from prevailing winds. Limestone cliffs approximately five to seven metres in height abut the long sandy beach and provide a sheltered area away from winds. The floor directly beneath the cliff base was generally flat with some rocky outcrops. This section of the beach however, would have provided the ideal location for tryworks (Figure 5). Granite outcrops form natural rock platforms jutting into the sea, the sea bed falls away rapidly, the water being quite deep in some sections (Figure 7.4). The anchorage in the bay is approximately “7 fathoms” (South Australian Marine and Harbours Survey Map 1973). No fresh water was located in the vicinity of Fisherman’s Point. The surveillance work was carried out in December 2003, the weather was hot and the conditions dry. A re-examination of Spalding Cove during the winter season may well indicate fresh water in the area by the way of small streams. A flat plateau existed adjacent to the limestone cliffs and granite outcrops. All the above maritime and terrestrial environments indicated that Fisherman’s Point proved to have all the necessary criteria for a shore-based whaling station.

**Archaeological Survey 1997**

The Department of Archaeology at Flinders University of South Australia conducted non-invasive survey work in 1997 at Spalding Cove. The cove was extensively examined during the period, however for the purpose of this thesis Fisherman’s Point will be addressed only. The same maritime and terrestrial features of the site still existed in 2003, and the site has not undergone any modifications, construction or development works. The survey of Fisherman’s Point uncovered material artefact remains; these were by no means extensive or informative. As mentioned previously the consideration for contamination of artefact material from re-deposition is strong considering that Spalding Cove is popular with visitors and is situated in Lincoln National Park. A list of artefact materials located at Fisherman’s Point during the survey is as follows:

- base of earthenware cup
- iron fragments
- 1 mulberry decorated tea cup base
- 1 maroon striped tea cup base
- 5 maroon red plate fragments
- 5 white tea cup fragments
- cobalt blue small circular bottle
- 1 olive green glass fragment
- 1 mulberry ceramic – leaf design
- scattered green glass shards
- 2 fragments wide mouth pickle jar
- 1 pale green glass small bottle
• 1 white tea cup fragment
• rectangular medicine bottle
• pale olive green pickle jar markings ‘FBH’

The above ceramic artefact materials were fragmentary, no discernable dates were identified, and no identifying patterns were distinguished. However, the pale olive green pickle jar inscribed with “FBH” has been identified as c.1896-1913, manufactured by the Adelaide Glass Works at Croydon in South Australia. The initials “FBH” stand for “Frederick Boulton Hughes” who was manager of the glass works during the above period (Boow 1991:181). The date of the pickle jar post-dates the whaling station occupation by more than sixty years; therefore, it could be assumed that the rest of the material artefact remains may well fit within this timeframe. The proximity of farming land and the fact that the area is and has been a popular tourist attraction suggests that the site was disturbed over a considerable period.

Archaeological Survey 2003

A descriptive analysis of the maritime and terrestrial landscape of Fisherman’s Point has been presented in the previous sections, therefore the environment will not be addressed in the following. The geographical terrestrial environment of Spalding Cove did not contain any structural cultural remains, or indicators that the landscape had been in any way modified to accommodate a shore-based whaling station. No ceramic, glass or metal artefact material remains dating to the 1830s period were located during the field work.

However, three coloured bricks were located within close proximity to each other, and were wedged between granite rocks at the base of the limestone cliffs close to the shoreline. No identifiable manufacturer’s markings were visible on any one side of the bricks. The bricks were red in colour, appeared porous, no identifiable features were apparent, apart from what appeared to be burn marks, or some form of consolidated black substance on one side of one brick. Campbell (1994:43) suggested that red bricks were specifically made as fire bricks, and that the porous nature had been formed during the firing process as the grains in the brick fused together. The bricks were not removed from the site, and therefore chemical analysis of the burnt material was not possible. Nash (2003:69) stated that piles of burnt stone or bricks lying close to the shoreline are the most obvious markers of tryworks. The bricks also had evidence of considerable wear from erosion on all four sides, and were by no means complete in size (see Figures 8 and 9).

Conclusion

Much of Frederick Hamborg’s statement to the South Australian Association guided the archaeological component of the research to the definitive locale of Fisherman’s Point located on the eastern side of Spalding Cove. It was felt that the interpretation of Hamborg’s statement provided a good descriptive analysis of the region. The research undertaken for this thesis found that any documentation on whaling station sites in South Australia has remained elusive. On this occasion, however, it is felt that by re-examining Hamborg’s statement, comparing his description to the bays and inlets of Spalding Cove, indicated that the shore-based whaling station he described could well have been located at Fisherman’s Point. The lack of cultural material remains proved frustrating but predictable. The plateau area provides picnic facilities, rain water and public amenities. The anchorage at Fisherman’s Point proved popular as on more than one occasion boats were observed in the curvature of the cove. Campers remained on the site for the duration of the survey. Spalding Cove is commonly known in the area as a whaling site, and therefore the souveniring of artefact material would be a real possibility. The three
fragmented red bricks lodged in rocks under the limestone cliff face were considered as significant material indicators suggesting that Fisherman’s Point was a shore-based whaling station location (Townrow 1997).

**Figure 8.** Red brick located at the base of the limestone cliff (Photo by K. Firth, 19 December 2003)

**Figure 9.** Red brick located at base of limestone cliff – dark unidentified markings on fore face of brick (Photo by K. Firth, 19 December 2003)
Results and Discussion

The preceding chapters have identified that twenty-three Tasmanian-based whaling vessel owners/operators chose to pursue their whaling interests in South Australian waters. More specifically, this expanded on the activities of those people from Hobart and Launceston who were very much engaged in the whaling industry from 1820 to 1849. The research undertaken for this study has resulted in a database that provides the most comprehensive analysis undertaken to date on the activities, movements and destinations of whaling vessels from Hobart and Launceston to South Australia. The database also identified vessel types, tonnages, ports of registration and dates of whaling activities. This database also presents the owners, masters and agents who were connected to each other or to particular whaling vessels. Figures 10 and 11 respectively present the number of whaling vessels registered and owned between 1830 and 1850 in Hobart and Launceston, Tasmania.

The Documentary Record

This investigation has examined the historical record and has compared it to the archaeological evidence. The evidence put forward in this study suggests that Fisherman’s Point, at Spalding Cove, was the location of the shore-based whaling station that Frederick Hamborg described. Furthermore, this study also suggested that Henry Reed from Launceston was the owner of that whaling station during the whaling season in 1831 and 1832. The research undertaken in Tasmanian archives, and in particular the Crowther Collection demonstrated that the Tasmanian-based whalers played a far more active role than had been previously acknowledged in South Australian secondary sources. The whaling vessels *Fortitude* and *Emu* were both registered in Hobart in 1848 and 1849 and operated in South Australian waters. This study recorded the latitudes and longitudes from the whaling log books of the *Fortitude* and *Emu*, and identified the routes and dates of voyages undertaken to the fisheries. These were subsequently plotted to demonstrate the distances travelled and locations of the pelagic whaling grounds, (see Maps 2, 3 and 4). The log book of the *Fortitude*, for example also recorded that eight other whaling vessels were within close proximity to each other, these were the *Johanna*, *Wallaby*, *Emma*, *Pryde*, *Marianne*, *Alexander Coffin*, *Prince Regent*, and the *Pacific*, (see Map 4).

Seven of these whaling vessels were registered in the port of Hobart; but the *Alexander Coffin* was an American whaling ship (Broxam 1998:140). The barque *Wallaby* was sighted by the *Fortitude* on 12 August 1848 and was within close proximity of Kangaroo Island (see Map 4) (CRO MSS Log Box 17). The log of the *Wallaby* unfortunately did not provide the same detailed information such as the latitudes and longitudes, but stated that the whaling vessel was at Encounter Bay in South Australia on 27 May 1840 (CRO MSS Log Box 19). It can be confirmed that the barque *Wallaby* not only ventured into Encounter Bay but also fished in the southern
waters off Kangaroo Island. Furthermore it was active in South Australian waters for at least eight years. These log books provide a valuable primary source from which first-hand information can be gleaned.

Figure 10. The number of whaling vessels registered and owned in Hobart, Tasmania between 1830 and 1850

Shipping news on pelagic whaling activities was often well out-of-date as these voyages lasted months or even years. The confirmation of whale catches, whaling ground locations, and tonnages of oil processed, and stored on board could not be absolutely verified in many instances. Shipping news proved unreliable and incomplete (Pearson 1998:93). Parsons has also made this point:
Whaling captains, of necessity, a crafty lot, and not given to letting others know of a good fishing ground, and reports of their activities on the west coast of what is now South Australia were extremely garbled stories and deliberately distorted reports. (Parsons 1981:2)

![Figure 11. The number of whaling vessels registered and owned in Launceston, Tasmania between 1830 and 1850](image)

The research identified that news about whaling activities in newspaper shipping columns during the early 1840s became rare. This coincided with the same period that witnessed a decline in whale stocks, and this also coincided with the early 1840s economic depression (Chamberlain 1988; Dyster 1980:23). The colonial newspapers were diverting their focus away from the maritime pursuits of whaling towards the economic benefits of colonisation further into Australia’s interior, trade and the export markets. Blainey has suggested that whaling vessels increasingly improvised their desks and holds to become trading vessels, and that they were more interested in “profitable coastal runs” (Blainey 1985:116).

**Whaling Vessels: Types, Destinations and Dates**

The database in the Appendix identifies the destination of voyages from Launceston and Hobart to South Australia, and also records the vessel types and tonnages. What has been established is that a minimum of fifteen whaling vessels departed from Hobart over a period of eleven years from 1838 to 1849 (see Figure 12). The Hobart fleet consisted of six barques, six brigs and three ships, all established by Chamberlain to be larger vessels (Chamberlain 1988:53). Eight smaller whaling vessels were identified as being Launceston-based and they were most active during a six year period from 1830 to 1836. The vessel types were the smaller of the whaling fleets from Tasmania, consisting of two schooners, two cutters, one sloop and two brigs. From this it can be confirmed that Hobart-based whaling vessels were predominantly the larger built ocean-going vessels. These ships were more suited to pelagic whaling. The smaller vessels were from Launceston and this thesis suggests that they were the main contenders for shore-based whaling activities.

This confirms that there was an obvious divide between the two forms of whaling. The Hobart whaling fleet after 1830 was mainly concerned with deep-sea or pelagic whaling, whereas the Launceston-based whaling industry concentrated on shore-based whaling activities, particularly in South Australia and Victoria. The whaling activities of the Launceston-based entrepreneurs indicated that they did not pursue pelagic or deep-sea whaling. It would appear that the Launceston whalers preferred to be active in shore-based whaling, particularly in South
Australia. Nash has suggested that the “Launceston-based whalers were the first to work in South Australian waters” (Nash 2003:90). This has been confirmed from the information provided in the database which has been interpreted in the graphs provided in Figures 12 and 13. The Hobart Town whalers did not venture into South Australian oceanic waters until around 1838 (see Figure 12). The Launceston shore-based whaling identities tentatively began their activities around 1828, but did not begin in earnest until 1830 (see Figure 13). The sudden decline in shore-based whaling by the Launceston entrepreneurs coincided with South Australia’s colonisation in 1836, and the beginning of the shore-based whaling activities of the South Australian Company at Encounter Bay.

This study has established a database which intentionally highlights the gaps in the historical documentation. The revisionist approach applied during this research has examined the fragmentary records held in archives and other repositories. This investigation has also addressed some of the problematic issues that have arisen during the research investigations, in an effort to highlight and explain the conflicting and repetitive irregularities. Shipping lists seldom mentioned specific whaling grounds, while masters and owners of whaling vessels kept good fishing locales a closely guarded secret (Casanova 1992:8; Jones 1986:505; Parsons 1981:2; Ruediger 1980:64). According to Learmonth:

Surely no band of seamen in the last hundred years of the world’s history have left fewer records of their work than the men who sought their living in the wild seas. The story is tantalisingly incomplete, and probably little more will ever be known of it, than fragmentary items picked up after many hours search among old colonial records. (Learmonth 1934:26)

What has also been established is that whaling and sealing sometimes went hand-in-hand. Kangaroo Island was often reported as a destination for the supply of salt and skins. For example, the *Spring* arrived at the port of Hobart Town sometime in 1817 from Kangaroo Island with skins. The *Hobart Town Gazette* advertised in April of the same year, that the *Spring* called for “twelve active willing men” to board the vessel for a whaling voyage (*Hobart Town Gazette* 12 April 1817:3). From this it can be determined that *Spring* was active both in the procurement of salt and skins and whaling. However it was not reported where she was whaling in 1817. It has been quoted in this study that whalers often turned to sealing, but it must be emphasised that the reverse did not occur:

Whale ships operating in and out of Australia are by no means complete. It is difficult to sort out the ownership and registration of all vessels from the records. It is not always possible from shipping records to distinguish Australian owners from local agents. (Pearson 1998:93)

Colonial Newspapers were extensively examined and what came to light during this exercise was that owners’, masters’ and captains’ names were often misquoted, and initials of Christian names were seldom recorded (Fysh LMS49 1972 n.p.). Lawson (1949:44) wrote “One of the many difficulties met with the searcher of old records was the duplication and multiplication of names.” Newspaper shipping reports were cross-matched with Nicholson’s *Shipping Arrivals and Departures Tasmania 1803-1883*, and *Shipping Arrivals and Departures Tasmania 1834-1842* (Nicholson 1983; 1985). Broxam’s *Shipping Arrivals and Departures Tasmania 1843-1850* (Broxam 1985) was also cross-referenced with the above articles. Tonnages of vessels were often incorrectly stated with conflicting reports on arrivals and departures. More often than not they did not coincide, or they were simply not recorded. It became somewhat difficult to track when a whaling vessel left the port of Launceston or Hobart, or when it returned. Finally, the secrecy factor and the generalisation of destinations and whale catches demonstrated that the whalers in some instances preferred to keep their activities and whaling grounds to themselves. Added to this the regions from which tonnages of whale oil and bone were processed could not be accurately determined.
This research has identified two distinct periods of Tasmanian entrepreneurs heightened activity in South Australia. The industry commenced slowly in the early 1820s via a combination of sealing and whaling activities. Whaling escalated during the early 1830s with the concentration of vessels hugging the protected waters of Spencers Gulf, Cape Jervis and Kangaroo Island. The Tasmanian entrepreneurs’ coastal whaling activity in South Australia declined slowly over a period of ten years, with the emergence of pelagic or deep-sea whaling based at Hobart after 1830 (Chamberlain 1988).

![Number of Voyages from Hobart to South Australia compared with the number of confirmed whaling voyages](image1)

**Figure 12.** The total number of all voyages from Hobart to South Australia compared with the number of confirmed whaling voyages

![Number of Voyages from Launceston to South Australia compared with the number of confirmed whaling voyages](image2)

**Figure 13.** The total number of all voyages from Launceston to South Australia compared with the number of confirmed whaling voyages
Personalities

This research has identified that the whalers from Launceston during the winter seasons plied their vessels along the coastline of South Australia in search of suitable land to establish shore-based whaling stations and possibly for longer settlement. Edward Henty spent six months in the waters of eastern Eyre Peninsula where it was stated that he had more than a passing interest in the coastal areas around Port Lincoln (Anderson 1998:34; Bassett 1962:252; Nicholson 1983:20; Ruediger 1980:65-66). Henry Reed also had an interest in the region as he had sent Mr. Trimlett to Port Lincoln to establish a whaling station. Reed’s whaling vessels the Henry and Socrates were recorded to be in the vicinity for two consecutive seasons, one in 1831 and the other in 1832 respectively.

Frederick Hamborg had stated that he had been at Spalding Cove in May 1832, and that whaling parties had been there on three separate whaling seasons before 1832 (South Australian Association 1834:70-71). Hamborg was aboard the vessel Socrates owned by Henry Reed when he was at Spalding Cove. It should also be highlighted that Henry Reed, John Griffiths and the Hentys had landholdings or shore-based whaling stations at Portland Bay and Port Fairy in Victoria, and on Kangaroo Island in South Australia. The Henty’s and the Griffiths maintained family, financial and economic interests in Launceston. Kangaroo Island held a particularly strong attraction for John Griffiths who owned a whaling station at Hog Bay at least between 1829 and 1833 (Cumpston 1974:120; Nicholson 1983:204). John Hart and John Jones were recorded as having “delivered stores” to whaling stations owned by John Griffiths and Henry Reed at Kangaroo Island from 1829-1833. The Morning Star reported of Kangaroo Island:

> We are informed that some families have already left the Tamar to form a settlement on this island. The proverb says, “you may go farther a field and a fate worse”, and so say we- from what we have hear of the properties and resources of that extensive spot. We fear it will be a long time before it is fit for the reception of emigrants. We shall shortly afford our readers some interesting particulars from a person who was on the island for some weeks. (Morning Star, 2 December 1834:2)

The latest confirmed date that the vessel travelled to Kangaroo Island from Launceston was in June 1833 (Peel 1996:73-75). This coincides with the time that John Griffiths started his shore-based whaling establishment at Portland Bay in 1833 (see Figure 13). Jonathon and John Griffiths continued to maintain their ship-building industry in Launceston, whilst the Henrys continued to trade from the Port of Launceston. Henry Reed also had an interest in Kangaroo Island owning a whaling station as early as 1831 (Norman 1838:69, Nunn 1989:45; Parkinson 1997:37; Savill 1980:68). Fysh (LMS49 1972:n.p.) stated that Socrates visited Kangaroo Island, Mr Trimlett of Reed’s establishment being aboard to attend to the organisation of his whaling interests there’. It is unfortunate that once again the newspapers of the day saw fit to describe events, but omitted to add any vital information as to exactly where on Kangaroo Island these events were occurring.

The historical record implies that Henry Reed employed Captain John Jones as an explorer. Reed was determined to find suitable land in his pursuit of forming a settlement in South Australia:

> It was in June 1833 that the Henry commanded by John Jones visited Kangaroo Island and then proceeded up St Vincent’s Gulf and put exploration parties ashore at various points… and returned to Launceston making a report on the suitability of the country for settlements. He recommended Cape Jervis and the eastern shores of the gulf as the most suitable for settlement. (Fysh LMS49:1972 n.p.)

The historical accounts do not indicate if Henry Reed was ever a passenger during these voyages. John Jones showed a strong interest in the area around Cape Jervis. It was reported that in July 1833 he discovered a small bay “eight miles from the western point” of Cape Jervis. Jones recorded that this bay had not been “laid down in any chart.” He described the bay as
having a fresh stream of water running into it, the vegetation was abundant and the soil was rich. Jones suggested that the anchorage in this bay was deep close into shore (*Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 1920 Vol 21:73-75). During the years 1842-1851, a shore-based whaling station site existed at Fishery Beach south of Cape Jervis (Bell 1991:56; Kostoglou and McCarthy 1991:39-40; Staniforth et al., 2001:15). The Fishery Beach site may well have been used as a shore-based whaling station some ten years earlier, however this could not be confirmed from any documentary sources.

The logbook of the *Fortitude* recorded the latitudes and the longitudes of the voyage undertaken during August and September 1848 (see Maps 3 and 4) (CRO MSS Log Box 17). The vessel was pelagic whaling in the south-western deep-sea waters off Kangaroo Island. On 12 and 17 August the *Fortitude* sailed close inshore at Kangaroo Island at a location recorded to outlet of Stun’ sail Boom River (see Map 8.2). Sutherland during his exploration of Kangaroo Island in 1819 wrote:

> There are no harbours on the south side of the island, but in fine weather a ship may anchor for a few hours in any place along the coast but must always be ready to slip in case of the appearance of bad weather. (State Records Research Notes 706-739 Vol 19. RN 717:1-6)

The South Australian Association’s publication in 1834 illustrated a map of Kangaroo Island and from this it can be determined that sealers’ huts were established at the northern most tip of “Salt Water Creek”; which is now named Stun’ sail Boom River (see Map 6) (South Australian Association 1834:n.p). This sheltered bay would appear to have been the safest region for the supply of fresh water for the *Fortitude* during its whaling season off the southwest coast of Kangaroo Island. The dangers of the southern coastline of Kangaroo Island due to the steep cliff faces and the probability of strong prevailing southerly winds meant it would not be an ideal location for a shore-based whaling station site. However, brief anchorages may have been possible in this protected bay. This study suggests that the *Fortitude* came within close proximity of the estuary of Salt Water Creek, and this may well have been a location for replenishing supplies of fresh water (Map 4).

Map 6. Map of Kangaroo Island – Sealers’ Huts at Salt Water Creek. (South Australian Association 1834:n.p.)
Spalding Cove

The 1997 survey conducted by the Department of Archaeology at Flinders University of South Australia at Spalding Cove, and in particular Fisherman’s Point uncovered fragmentary artefact material remains. The field work for this thesis conducted at the same site in 2003 was less successful as no artefact remains apart from the three red bricks located at the base of the limestone cliffs were found. The plateau area above the limestone cliffs had been cleared to some extent, a rainwater tank and amenities being built there. Campers were in the immediate vicinity during the survey work, as were two sailing vessels. Spalding Cove is a popular tourist attraction. Lincoln National Park encompasses the whole of Spalding Cove, and four wheel driving tracks criss-cross much of the landscape. The site has for many years been the subject of recreation and therefore whatever artefact material may have been in the location has either been souvenired or been redeposited elsewhere. Kostoglou stated that “pilfering” of artefact materials, such as bricks, ceramics and any other identifiable objects such as whalebone from whaling station sites diminishes the possibility of interpreting surviving cultural material remains (Kostoglou 1995, Vol 1:54). Redman suggested that any form of “systematic disturbance makes surface collecting less effective” (Redman 1987:251).

The following paragraphs will address some of the factors for why the site lacked artefactual evidence, apart from those documented above. Hypothetical suggestions as to the types of cultural material items the whalers may have taken to such an isolated outpost, several days and hundreds miles from Launceston, will be presented below.

The Launceston shore-based whalers who frequented the bays and coves along the South Australian coastline spent up to six months on these sites. Evans and Francis suggested that the whalers simply established crude temporary huts (Evans 1993, Vol 2:37; Francis 1991:75). Fisherman’s Point, as previously mentioned, and was a well-wooded area. Hamborg in his statement wrote that there was “plenty of wood” on the shores of Spalding Cove (South Australian Association 1834:70-71). The whalers at this site more than likely would have used this ready resource to build some kind of temporary accommodation. The plateau region directly above the shore-line was covered in dense vegetation, narrow pathways meandered across this region, and limestone mounds were scattered in amongst this undergrowth. These stone piles could not be discounted as some form of foundation, building construction or hearth. If indeed the area had been an accommodation site there were minimal traces of past human occupation. The plateau could have by its very nature served as an appropriate lookout. The view from this area was expansive; most of Spalding Cove was visible from this vantage point. The area was well sheltered, the dense upper storey of eucalypts and wattle providing a canopy of shelter from wind and rain.

The temporary nature of shore-based whaling suggests that whatever personal items the whalers brought with them were perhaps minimal. The expectations of returning with a large cargo of oil and whalebone limited the whalers to bare essentials. Trypots, whaleboats, and whaling equipment, and necessary food stores would have taken precedence over anything else. “Gangs were poorly paid. It is therefore unlikely that they would have had many possessions and what possessions they did have were probably precious to them”, and therefore it is unlikely that many personal items were discarded at whaling sites (Townrow 1997:31). The lack of ceramic or glass artefact remains on shore-based whaling sites located many thousands of miles from settlements could also be attributed to the fact that the whaling crew members may well have been supplied with a basic eating and drinking requirements of tin cups and plates from their “slops.” Lawrence stated, “It is reasonable to conclude that tin dishes were included in this kit” (Lawrence 1998:13). Tin is highly corrosive, and if discarded, it certainly would not remain intact in a coastal environment.
Tobacco and alcohol were considered to be a small part of the reward the whalers received for the type of work they did. There are several reasons why it would have been impractical to have supplied spirits contained in bottles; more than likely alcohol was stored in wooden casks. Staniforth (1987:21) stated, “Casks were the most common containers for the shipment of bulk commodities during the nineteenth century.” Wooden casks or barrels and the iron hoops that held them together would also be subjected to the same damaging maritime conditions. The proposition is that spirits were supplied and stored in casks, further suggesting that food items such as flour, sugar, ships biscuits and salted meats were similarly contained. Hardesty and Little suggested that we cannot study consumer behaviour on whaling station sites, we can only suggest the type of food or alcohol whalers may have been supplied with (Hardesty and Little 2000:62). Whalers were known to have lived hard and drank hard, and alcohol would have played a comforting social event after a long hard day’s work. The most likely containers for storing alcohol and food for a period of six months for some 30 or so whaling crew most certainly would have been casks or barrels. These casks may well have been recycled to contain whale oil once the contents had been consumed. It has been contended that “Tasmania suffered a shortage of barrels and casks” (Evans 1993, Vol 1:32; Kostoglou 1995, Vol 2:27), therefore the recycling of barrels and casks would suggest why no barrel remains were located.

This then leaves the only identifiable artefact material to be the three bricks wedged in rocks, sand and seaweed at the base of the limestone cliffs. The location of the bricks was at the southern end of the sandy beach within close proximity of the granite outcrops (see Figure 5). “There appears to be a clear demarcation on most sites between dwelling and processing areas although these are generally no further than 50 metres apart” (Nash 2003:27). The plateau area which has been suggested by the author to have been an accommodation site, plus a lookout is approximately 30 metres where the three red bricks were located at the base of the limestone cliff.

The geological features of the granite outcrops provided an obvious gentle sloping smooth platform area of approximately 15 metres in length, and 8 metres in width. This platform met the waters edge at a depth of approximately one metre, an ideal location upon which a whale could be dragged to shore and ‘cut-in’. The curvature of the bay and the height of the limestone cliffs provided substantial shelter from winds and rain. Fisherman’s Point in Spalding Cove meets all the geographical criteria both maritime and terrestrial to suggest that this was the shore-based whaling station site. This thesis has determined that Henry Reed sent both his vessels the Henry and Socrates to Spalding Cove during at least two whaling season in 1831 and 1832 respectively.

**Discussion**

The very temporary nature of the seasonal shore-based whaling station sites in South Australia has suggested that little material cultural remains have been left behind by the Launceston based whalers. The ephemeral outposts of these shore-based whaling stations provided a striking imbalance compared to the artefact and structural remains located at the Adventure Bay and Bruny Island shore-based whaling sites on the eastern side of Tasmania (Benbow 2004; Buttrose 1998; Evans 1993, Vols 1 and 2; Kostoglou 1995 Vols 1 and Vol 2; Lawrence 2001a, 2001b). The Tasmanian based whaling stations were within proximity of Hobart and were closer to colonial settlements; therefore, the availability of building materials and supplies was within their reach. The shore-based whaling stations, particularly Adventure Bay and Bruny Island, were used season after season for many years. Permanent structures were located on both sites and substantial amounts of artefact materials were located, identified and analysed (Buttrose 1998; Lawrence 2001a, 2001b). This study has determined that the Launceston-based whalers preferred to set up temporary shore-based whaling stations along the southern coast of mainland
Australia, leaving little artefact material which could be compared or analysed compared to those located in Tasmania.

The Hobart whaling industry conducted all three forms of whaling bay, shore-based and pelagic. The Hobart-based industry adapted and changed its activities from coastal whaling to deep-sea whaling as whale stocks began to decline. This investigation has established that the Hobart Town-based whaling industry not only conducted bay-whaling in Encounter Bay in South Australia, but also conducted pelagic whaling activities in the deep-sea waters off Kangaroo Island.

This research has also determined that identifiable ties and links were established by the Launceston entrepreneurs. Captains and masters regularly changed vessels, employers and agents. John Griffiths and the Henty’s saw the advantages of not only shore-based whaling in South Australia, but those of coastal trade and transport. Their investments were terrestrial and maritime-based; both parties had land holdings in Portland Bay and Port Fairy in Victoria. The Hentys and John Griffiths maintained shore-based whaling stations on Kangaroo Island until they had successfully established their farming and whaling interests in Victoria.

The Hobart whaling industry suffered due to the decline in whale stocks during the 1840s. The economic depression in the first few years of the 1840s also saw a decline in whaling activities, and the gold rush in the 1850s also had an impact on the industry as did the falling prices in whale oil (see Figures 12). The Launceston-based whaling industry began in earnest in 1830, yet the industry experienced a rapid decline around the time of colonisation in South Australia in 1836 (see Figure 13). The total number of twenty-three Tasmanian-based whaling vessels identified in this thesis is considered as a significant number. Many of these vessels interchanged their activities in the activities of trade and transport. It should also be considered that these vessels remained in dock for repairs and were not always available to go whaling.
Conclusions

The viewpoint established during this research suggests that the Launceston whalers who plied the southern coastline of Australia in search of new frontiers and shore-based whaling stations were opportunistic and adventurous men. They applied their skills not only to the maritime industry of whaling, but also turned their interests to new settlements and colonisation. Gibbs (1995:25) remarked, “The sites of the whaling stations are examples of European colonisation.” Colwell (1969:103-104) had previously suggested that “collectively the exploits of our whalers were a part of the ‘great reaching out’ which filled in the outline of our coast.” Not only did the Launceston whalers discover new frontiers, they also eventually established trade and transport networks. Coutts (1976:291) had suggested that history books underestimated the contributions that the whaling industry made to the shaping the early economy and colonial settlement.

This investigation has given names to the men who unwittingly played a vital role in Australia’s colonial past. It has attempted to bring them out of the shadows of an industry which more often than not received little recognition or praise. The whalers may have worked hard and drank hard, however, business entrepreneurs such as the Henty’s, the Griffiths, and Henry Reed demonstrated more than a fleeting interest in making a quick and profitable return. These men were explorers, pioneers and business men of early colonial Australia. They provided the colonies with their first export income, provided employment, and notably turned their vessels into transport and trading ships once the colonies began to grow and whaling began to decline. This thesis recognised that secondary source literature in many instances failed to acknowledge the importance of the whaling industry, and that it was interpreted as a romantic page of the past. The research examined previous academic contributions, archaeological reports and primary sources so as to define the areas where significant gaps appeared, these could then be filled, and lead towards a better understanding of the history of whaling.

This research led to the creation of a comprehensive database. The database of information in the Appendix is by no means complete, but it has established a chronology of dates, bibliography of names, and identified vessel types and tonnages. The database confirms vessel ownerships, captains and masters, as well as demonstrating that connections and commonalities existed between the whaling entrepreneurs and their employees. It provides a foundation upon which further research could fill in the gaps in knowledge about whaling activities. The Tasmanian archives hold all manner of original shipping and whaling documentation which has yet to be fully investigated, and it is hoped that the database provided in the Appendix would act as a foundation upon which further research could proceed. Furthermore, this study has not only contributed a sequence of events, it has also suggested that a shore-based whaling site existed at Fisherman’s Point at Spalding Cove.
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*The Archaeology of Whaling in Southern Australia and New Zealand (AWSANZ)*


Genealogy, John Griffiths.


National Archives of Australia

## Appendix: Database Results

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### APPENDIX 83

**continued**

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<tr>
<td>16 Aug 1843</td>
<td>Fowler’s Bay</td>
<td>5 tons oil</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>CRO MSS</td>
<td>Log Box 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 1843</td>
<td>Fowler’s Bay</td>
<td>Log of Fortitude</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>CRO MSS</td>
<td>Log Box 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 1843</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Log of Fortitude</td>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>CRO MSS</td>
<td>Log Box 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Griffiths</td>
<td>Seal skins and salt</td>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>Nicholson 1983:183</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1829</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Griffiths</td>
<td>Seal skins and salt</td>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>Nicholson 1983:183</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1829</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Griffiths</td>
<td>Seal skins and salt</td>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>Nicholson 1983:183</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1829</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Griffiths</td>
<td>Seal skins and salt</td>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>Nicholson 1983:183</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April/May 1831</td>
<td>West Coast</td>
<td>John Griffiths</td>
<td>Seal skins and salt</td>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>Nicholson 1983:183</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Jones Master Whaling est. 13 tons oil; 46 casks oil; 46 Ton bone</td>
<td>Schooner</td>
<td>Sexton 1990:24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1832</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Jones Master Whaling est. 13 tons oil; 46 casks oil; 46 Ton bone</td>
<td>Schooner</td>
<td>Sexton 1990:24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1831</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Jones Master Whaling est. 13 tons oil; 46 casks oil; 46 Ton bone</td>
<td>Schooner</td>
<td>Sexton 1990:24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 1832</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Jones Master Whaling est. 13 tons oil; 46 casks oil; 46 Ton bone</td>
<td>Schooner</td>
<td>Sexton 1990:24</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 1832</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Jones Master Whaling est. 13 tons oil; 46 casks oil; 46 Ton bone</td>
<td>Schooner</td>
<td>Sexton 1990:24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Destination</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Port of Reg</td>
<td>Type of Rig</td>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1833</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Binney/Birney Master 2 tons oil + bone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nicholson 1983:63 and 207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Feb 1833</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Jones Whaling gear and Provisions for Establishment 5 passengers including Mr Sinclair Whaling gear and stores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nicholson 1983:208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1833</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Jones Whaling gear and stores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexton 1990:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1833</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Jones and Dutton Launceston Whaling gear; 20 men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nicholson 1983:210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1833</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Cape Jervis for settlement Launceston</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nicholson 1983:213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 1833</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>John Hart 1 ton oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexton 1990:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Gulf St Vincent</td>
<td>Floor St Vincent</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 1848</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Log of Fortitude                Hobart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>240</td>
<td>Parsons 1980:39 CRO MSS Log Box 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LADY OF THE LAKE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Log of Lady of the Lake Crew 24 men, From Two Fold Bay to Kangaroo Island. 9 Jan 1838 Wilson’s Prom 11 Jan 1838 Portland Bay Ship running along Cape Jarvis[ic] Ki about 3 miles of</td>
<td></td>
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<td>CRO MSS Log Box 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Nov 1838</td>
<td>Encounter Bay</td>
<td>W Chamberlain Master 288 Ship</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Sexton 1990:43 and 64</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARY ANN</td>
<td></td>
<td>Log of Lady of the Lake Crew 24 men, From Two Fold Bay to Kangaroo Island. 9 Jan 1838 Wilson’s Prom 11 Jan 1838 Portland Bay Ship running along Cape Jarvis[ic] Ki about 3 miles of</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Log of Fortitude                Hobart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>347</td>
<td>Broxam 1998:482 CRO MSS Log Box 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRINCE REGENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>Log of Fortitude                Hobart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Henty and Co Agents form South Australia with 80 cases Barque 394</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HTC 15 Nov 1839:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 1848</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Log of Fortitude                Captain Gardiner 100 barrels of sperm oil</td>
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<td>CRO MSS Log Box 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRYDE</td>
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<td>Log of Fortitude                Hobart</td>
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<td>CRO MSS Log Box 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 1848</td>
<td>Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>Log of Fortitude                Hobart</td>
<td></td>
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<td>CRO MSS Log Box 17</td>
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