



Engraved chart.

THE FIRST PRINTED CHART TO DEPICT MELBOURNE

Australia South Coast Port Phillip. Surveyed by Lieutenants T. M. Symonds and H. R. Henry, and Mr F. Shortland of H.M.S. Rattlesnake Captain W. Hobson. 1836.

Author

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Publication date

June 18th 1838.

Publisher

Hydrographic Office,

Publication place

London,

Physical description

Engraved chart.

Dimensions

505 by 680mm (20 by 26.75 inches).

Notes

The first printed chart to depict Melbourne and the first Admiralty survey of Port Phillip.

The Foundation of Melbourne

On 6 June 1835 John Batman, as head of the Port Phillip Association – an organisation set up in order to settle land around Port Philip, signed a treaty with the indigenous Wurundjeri. The treaty purported granted them to buy 600,000 acres (2,400 km²) of land around Melbourne and another 100,000 acres (400 km²) around Geelong, on Corio Bay to the south-west. Batman returned to Launceston in Tasmania (then known as Van Diemen's Land) and began plans to mount a large expedition to establish a settlement on the Yarra. But John Pascoe Fawcner, by now a businessman in Launceston, had the same idea. Fawcner bought a ship, the schooner *Enterprize*, which sailed on 4 August, with a party of intending settlers. When Batman's party reached the Yarra on 2 September, they were dismayed and angry to find Fawcner's people already in possession. However, as there was plenty of land for everyone the settlers agreed to parcel out the land between them.

Meanwhile the government of New South Wales, which at the time had authority over all of eastern Australia, became aware of the new settlement, and of Batman's treaty. The treaty was subsequently annulled by Governor Bourke on 26 August 1835. Although the settlers were now technically trespassing on Crown land, they were not only compensated but the settlement was allowed to remain.

In September 1836, Governor Bourke established the Port Phillip District of New South Wales, though the borders had still not been determined, with the settlement as its administrative centre. In order to gain some control over the new settlement Bourke dispatched Captain William Lonsdale as his agent. Lonsdale was accompanied by William Hobson, captain of HMS *Rattlesnake*. They anchored at the south end of the Bay on 27 September 1836, where Hobson despatched a cutter for survey work, and by 29th had proceeded north and anchored off Point Gellibrand, Hobsons Bay, near the mouth of the Yarra River. Lonsdale landed unofficially, distributing the official proclamation of the establishment of the new settlement, and did the same the next day. On 1 October 1836 Lonsdale was formally rowed up the Yarra River and was met by John Batman and Dr Thompson and other assembled settlers.

Bourke also commissioned Robert Hoddle to make the first plan for the town, completed on 25 March 1837, which came to be known as the Hoddle Grid. The surveys were intended to prepare for land sales by public auction. Bourke visited Port Phillip in March 1837, confirmed Lonsdale's choice of a site for the new town and named it Melbourne, after the then British prime minister William Lamb, 2nd Viscount Melbourne.

The Chart

Although the survey was carried out in 1836, during Lonsdale's visit to the settlement, and before the official naming of the town, the present chart was not published until 18 June 1838, therefore allowing for the town's name and rudimentary layout – two large rectangles each containing four rectangular blocks, mimicking Hoddle's Grid – to be depicted. The survey had previously been published in Sydney by Lieutenant Henry, one of the surveyors, in 1837. However, the chart is on a slightly smaller scale and although Melbourne is named, its layout is not depicted.

The present chart shows Melbourne to the north of the Yarra River at a point marked 'Falls' with Batman Hill to the west. Port Phillip is marked with numerous soundings, anchorages, and the sand banks that populate the bay's entrance. Jeelong Harbour is named as is Hobson Bay at the mouth of the Yarra River. Headlands are also depicted including Point Lonsdale, Point Nepean, and Point Gellibrand where Williamstown is marked – now a suburb of Melbourne.

The survey would later be extensively updated by I. C. Wickham commander of HMS *Beagle* in 1842. On the later chart Melbourne is depicted as two plain rectangles, Batman's Hill is no longer named, a race course is marked to the west, and the "Falls" on the Yarra, is now marked "Dam" – the text to

the east reads, "Fresh at Low Water".

The present example of the chart is an early issue before the addition of the chart number (1171) to the lower left.

Bibliography

NLA MAP RM 947.

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 14490