

SHIPWRECKS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Alba

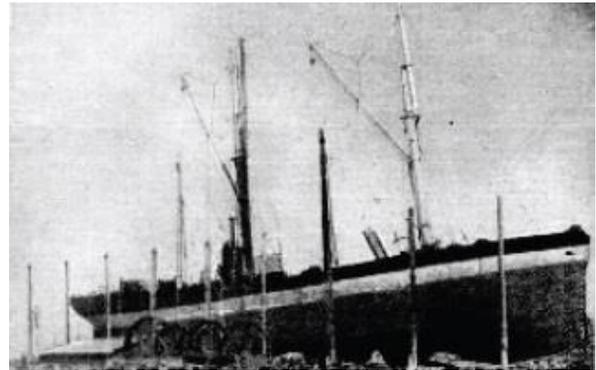
Brown and Simpson and Co. built the three-masted barque *Alba* at Dundee, Scotland, in 1867 for W.O. Taylor and Co., of Dundee. The iron-hulled vessel measured 155.5 feet (47.4 m) in length, 26.7 feet (8.1 m) breadth and 17.3 feet (5.2 m) depth and was 499 gross tons.

Originally named *Albany*, *Alba* operated between northern European ports under the flags of several British and European owners. Later the barque traded to South Africa.

As the numbers of steamships increased, the demand for coal supply increased and many of the old barques and windjammers suffered the inglorious fate of conversion to coal hulks and lighters. With their bowsprits and figureheads removed, and only the stumps of their masts remaining and the occasional boom, their tarpainted hulls were towed by tugs to lighter coal into steamers in and around the wharves at Port Adelaide and Outer Harbor.

In 1901, *Alba* joined their ranks when the vessel was brought to Port Adelaide by the Adelaide Steam Ship Company Ltd., renamed *Alba*, and converted to a coal hulk.

By 1954, with the decline in demand for coal resulting from the increasing number of oil-burning ships, the era of coal hulks was coming to an end. Only three coal hulks were still operating in Port Adelaide: *Loch Tay*, *Cumbrian* and *Alba*.



Coal hulk *Alba* on the slips for painting (*Mail*, 9 November 1937)

The final location of *Alba*'s remains, if any still exist, is unknown. There is some suggestion that the remains may be either in the North Arm (Garden Island Ships' Graveyard) or at the Ethelton Log Pool (Jervis Basin Ships' Graveyard).

In a letter to the Secretary in November 1956 the Harbour Master reported that Hines Metal Company had purchased *Alba*. The company was prolific ship-breaker, responsible for the scrapping of many vessels at Port Adelaide during the 1950s and 60s. At that time, the vessel was berthed at the south end of the Walter and Morris Wharf, opposite the Ethelton Log Pool. The Harbour Master stated that he "did not consider the present berth suitable for breaking up the *Alba*, and I suggest the owners be advised to discuss the matter of a suitable berth with me." There is no further record.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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