

Transcript of letter written by Richard Daly to Sergeant Conley from Camden Harbour, March 15 1865, by Myra Stanbury, Curator, Maritime Archaeology. Acc. Nos W1 1897 & WA 1898.

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Camden Harbour
March 15 1865

My Dear Sergt Conley

In compliance with my promise I send you a letter from here in order to let you know how we all are etc. etc. etc.

We arrived on board the Friends as you know well and soon after my friend Patt Hogan brought me down a suit of new blues into which I changed myself and proceeded on a very pleasant voyage to Freemantle (sic). I joined the Freemantle party at Captain Finnerty's Quarters and went with them on board the Tein Tsing and I sailed away the same evening with a good breeze. My wife & the Perth party were onboard about 2 hours before us, I did not get a chance of curing my head until I was on board the ship about 3 hours when I had (Two in a tin pot). I felt a little shook for 2 or 3 days but soon became all right again all were Sea Sick for a few days, and our voyage was a very pleasant one as we had no unnecessary parades nor roll calls but only an inspection of rifles every 2 or 3 days to keep them all right. Johnny Smith commenced shaking after 3 or 4 days and we feared he would get Delirium Tremens but Sergt Ahern gave him some of what is considered most efficient in all such cases and Smith became steadier each day until he got all right and of course all thoughts of drink is out of our ideas long ago.

We called into Champion Bay which is built upon the only patch of sand which I could see up on the coast, it is a most miserable place to look at yet I am told that a person could get work there if he felt inclined to work. There was a large ship called the Hastings loading there

We took in some hay, posts and nails etc. & 2 horses in here & Mrs Sholl sent us in some Water Melons and after 3 or 4 days we sailed for Camden Harbour. There being light winds our voyage was a long one. We disembarked upon a point of land in the bay and commenced unloading. When the tide was in we got goods unloaded from the boats at the foot of the hill but when it was out we had to roll casks of Beef & Pork nearly half a mile of wet sand before we came to the foot of the hill and some of the cases were so large that they were almost unmanageable (sic) and had to be packed and their contents brought in by hand, as we had only a certain number of days to unload and should pay 10 £ a day after the expiration of these days for the use of the ship all hands were employed at unloading Mr Sholl himself taking part. It was very difficult to get anything of a large package up the side of the hill. The Ship Calliance which came in here before us, struck on a reef about 70 miles from here and her Captain enabled by constant pumping to keep his ship afloat until she came here beached her and thought to heave her down and repair her but the Spring tide threw her up on the rocks where she became a total wreck and was sold for a mere trifle. There is an island called Timor about 400 miles from here & a schooner was coming from there for the crew of the Calliance's boat and the boat was also upset but one of the men dived down and unstepped the boat's mast when she turned the boat right again, baled her out, got into her again and arrived here in safety.

I believe this Colony will not answer pastoral purposes as all the sheep are dropping off by degrees so that out of 15000 sheep brought here by the Melboun (sic) association only 1100 remains alive now and they are not here 4 months yet. On approaching the entrance no opening can be seen and islands are so scattered about that you can scarcely tell which is the main land but when you get inside the harbour is 5 or 6 miles across and studded all over with islands and numerous creeks runs into the shores some of these creeks the tide leaves when out but others are always deep. The Mangrove trees grow in those creeks from which the tide recedes and the roots of this tree sprouts out from its stem and are as numerous as its branches. Sharks & Alligators are often seen in the harbour which contains good holding anchorage & deep water. Some of the Melbourne Association are going away with this ship and all the crew of the Calliance are also going away in it.

We had a very hard gale here ere we were here long and a more terrific one I had not seen even in India. Thunder rolled and cracked for hours without ever ceasing and the lightning resembled the blaze of a stack of straw sometimes more brilliant than others but never ceasing altogether for several hours. The flies are numerous and as bold as the devil (y) our hands are always busy striving to keep the flies out

of our eyes whilst if we have any scratch at all on (you) us heaps of flies collect on it and fester it if (you) we do not keep it covered.

We mount picquet with 2 nights in bed and we worked 8 days at 2s 6d per day since we came here there are not any persons here on this point but ourselves & 2 more men & I don't think we will remain here as the place don't answer sheep nor is there any agriculture. This country is hilly & stony but earthy & no sand and grass at this season is high and green but I believe it is like India and that all the green grass will burn up as soon as the hot weather comes in. Shew this letter to Patk Hogan giving himself and family and all hands our best respects. Dullard is sick but I hope he will mend. M Wife was very sick in the ship but is quite well now. Dunlop left the commissary at his own request and Swift is appointed. We are living in tents and cook under the sun and I don't think we will erect the huts at all as it is thought we will leave here which none of us will regret. Tell me how Peter Lynch got on and all Perth news and with my compliments to yourself and family I am etc Richard Daly.

Transcript of note on reverse of sketch plan of Camden Harbour
Registration number: WI 1898

I hereby send you such a rough sketch of Camden Harbour as I can take at random and tho the place is good to look at it is the devil to live in on account of the flies they are the common house fl(y)ies with an occasional Blood sucking fly and a few mosquitoes. Violent gales are quite common and stones superabundant here.

Oysters and Fish are plenty and there is a description of Rock Cod here which is all over as green as young corn not one spot nor fin of any other colour on it. The monsters which I took for Alligators & which I was told was such by men who were in India and who followed them in a boat and when about 20 yards from them fired at them I find are a description of Brutes Called Gorgons. This I was told by one of the Melbourn Party I never saw an alligator in the sea.

Tell Hogan that I have nothing to say more than I had said in my letter to you until I write again. RD

Note: We thank Jeannette Lee for the submission of this interesting letter from the past.