

1.2 Busy at Port Albert...Mr.McMillan and Ben Boyd.....Captain Fermaner and Port Albert.

... Busy at Port Albert.

I had left Mr. McMillan's Bushy Park property as a drover sometime ago, and here I was up to my bum in a deep tidal channel at Port Albert, way south of inland Rosedale.

Squelch! suuuuuck, squelch!

Squelch! suuuuuck, squelch! and so on. I was in my shirt only. No shoes or pants. Standing in the muddy sandy shallows on the very edge of a deep channel, with a swift flowing tide. Every step or movement caused me to sink a little deeper into the shallows

"Come on hurry up Mackenz," shouted Captain Davy Fermaner, who was sitting in the bows of the dinghy."Keep pulling the pole back and forwards, so it gets deeper into the sand bank. And hurry up, there is an off shore wind coming, and I don't want to be here in the open. Billy! keep the stern pointing towards Mackenz, so that he can grab it if he looks like falling over or getting completely bogged. Use your oars more vigorously."

"Yes Boss!" My aborigine mate Billy sang out. He was looking at me and grinning, his white teeth stuck out in his black face, framed with his long black hair..

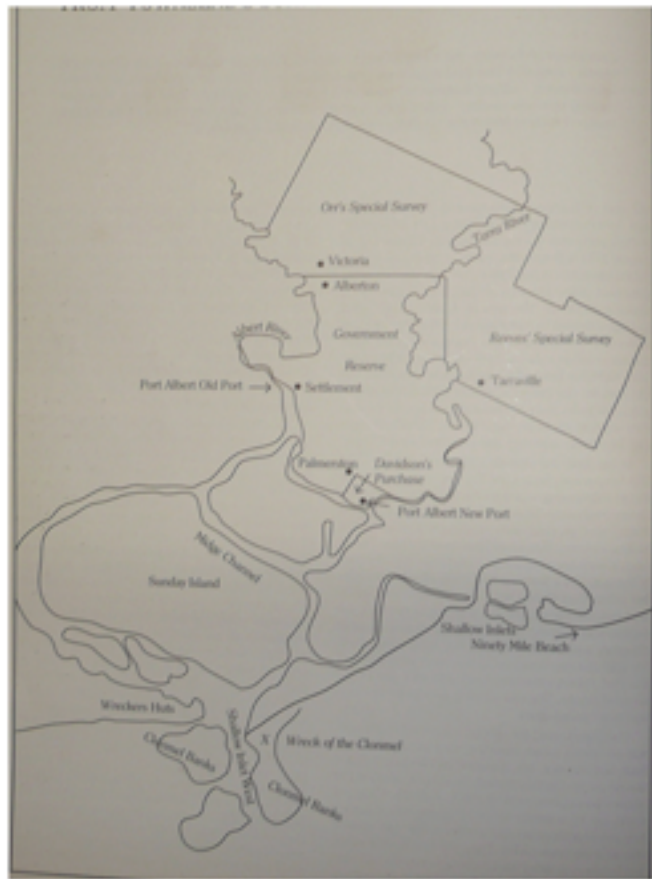
I knew what he was doing, he was trying to get me to overreach and fall in the channel, by moving the dinghy just a bit too far away from me. So I just grinned back, and kept working. Mind you Capn Davey was no fool, he also knew what Billy was doing, but chose to ignore it as young fella's fun.

Part of my job was to re settle or sink new marker poles in the channels so that Captain Fermaner was happy incoming or outgoing ships Captains knew where the channel edges were. I had to go into the bush and cut the poles about 20 feet long, clean them up and paint or nail red or black bunting to the top. Billy and I also pulled out floating trees logs and bushes and other debris, that could impede ships entry or departure from the Port. We towed them to a small creek where we burnt them..

Another part of my job was to get to the top of "The Lookout Tree" and report any sightings of incoming ships.

However my most important job was to help load the cattle onto the ships whenever they arrived.

The Captain would also talk with Mr. Townsend the Government Surveyor and between themselves they would draw maps of the Port for the Government.



Map of the entrance to Port Albert.

"Row for home Billy!" Sang out Capn Davy.

We had carried 4 poles about 20 feet long, that Billy and I had cut and trimmed, sitting across the dinghy, and with the Capn had successfully placed them in positions in the estuary, on the Clonmel bank. We could still see the remains of the rusting wreck of the steamer Clonmel.

... Mr McMillan and Ben Boyd.

How did I get to Port Albert, and started working for the Harbor Master.

Well, initially it was Mr. Angus McMillan's fascinating story of hard work and dogged determination.

He regularly repeated exclamation, in his very unusual gaelic accent, of " that blasted Strasslucky the Polish Count! Pinching my travails and hard work, and unlucky Willie Broadribb".

The same evening that I arrived at Bushy Park, the overseer found me and told me to report to Mr. MacMillan immediately.

"Boy, tell us all about your journey here." The youngish tough looking Scotsman said.

I knew him to be Angus McMillan, the owner of Bushy Park. He was a famous explorer and cattle drover, who originally worked for Lachlan Macalister who had a cattle run in the Goulburn area of the Monaro

Mr. McMillan and two other gentlemen were on chairs in his sitting room.

I was introduced. "This is Mr. Benjamin Boyd, a fellow Scott. This is Captain Davy Fermaner the Port Master at Port Albert."

They heard me out then dismissed me.

The next morning there was a great hubbub in the horse yards. One of the men who I had seen last night was Mr. Benjamin Boyd. He was a tall impressive figure particularly on horseback.

"We have agreed then Angus, ye ken you will support me to fight the Government? Just because there is a drought, and sheep are being boiled down for tallow, everyone is finding living hard. But the Government here and in England in looking for ways to pay for the Government costs, should not expect us Squatters to pay more for our land. After all we registered them officially, and its our own money that has developed the Runs."

"Aye Ben I will!. But I will not support your Port at Eden. Port Albert is the closest and easiest for us."

" Ben, you must forcefully represent all of us Squatters at the public meeting in Melbourne. The Government in Sydney is too far away to look after us. We must have our own Government in this Port Phillip area."

Mr. Boyd and his small party of horsemen quickly bunched up and, with salutes and calling out disappeared down the track.

...Captain Fermaner and Port Albert.

"Boy", sang out Mr. McMillan, "Gather your horses, and leave with Captain Fermaner. He will show you how to get to the Rosedale Run where you will meet Mr. Day. If you push the horses you should get there today."

Captain Fermaner was no horseman, as he said he only rode horses so he didn't have to walk. However he towed the boss mare and I was able to chivvy the others along. He told me a great deal about Mr. Boyd and Mr. McMillan.

"You know Mackenz, that Mr. Benjamin Boyd, is one of the very richest, and most influential men we have in Australia. The English Government have given him the right to set up a Bank and Stockholders association, and select a Port where he thinks he can develop trade to use the new coal driven steam ships, and also continue in his whaling interests.



Ben Boyd's Eden on the South Coast of N.S.W. Difficult mountainous stock route.

"He also owns several Squatters Runs all over the place, where he where he grows sheep and cattle."

"He is pushing very hard for everyone to use Twofold Bay as a Port, but I, as Harbor Master of Port Albert don't want competition, and certainly most Squatters in the high plains and in this area think it is too faraway from the live stock markets."

"He also wants people like Mr. Crooke and Angus McMillan to elect him as their representative to fight the Government here and in England, now that they want to make the Squatters pay for their land, to reduce Government costs. Even Angus tried to register his land in a Government office at Tumut, but was told it was too far away for them to be in charge. Great confusion exists in officialdom."

It is impossible to relate all of Mr. McMillan's exploits, except that he had made 6 attempts to reach the sea from his employers Run in the Monaro.

Both McMillan and his employer were aware of the inhospitable country side along the beach from Wilsons Promontory to Point Hicks. Further north at Twofold Bay where a village called Eden was formed, was used by Monaro Squatters..

Mr. Macalister, his employer wanted to acquire more land to run his cattle on because of the 10 year drought conditions, that affected everyone. Even the very early settlers in this area, McFarlane, Charles Ebdon at Bonegilla, George Mackillop, and Edward Buckley.

Everyone wanted a sea Port closer to their runs so they could ship their cattle to markets without them having to walk a very long way and lose condition.

Well Mr. McMillan found a spot in Corner Inlet part of Wilsons Prom. at what is now called Old Port Albert. At the time he found the spot, a party of investors and settlers had just arrived by boat from Melbourne. Led by a Mr. Broadribb, because 2 things had happened.

First a brand new paddle wheel steam ship, the Clonmel, on its way from Melbourne to Sydney had got wrecked Jan. 2nd 1841, on what is now called the Clonmel bank. Some of the survivors rowed a ships boat back to Melbourne, and said that apart from the unfortunate disaster, it was a good place for a Port.



The CLONMEL.

Secondly Count Paul Strezlecki, and James Macarthur, had also left the Monaro to find a route to Melbourne. They appeared to pinch some of Mr. McMillan's explorations and claimed to be the best explorers. They got lost but found their way to the established properties of Mr. Anderson at Bass River and Dr. Jameisons at Tooradin.

However in Melbourne, whilst they did not get to the sea, they suggested the idea that the Corner Inlet area of Wilsons Promontory, could be a good Port.



Two men with different aims, and aspirations. However acrimony prevailed.

Mr. Broadribb formed a company of investors and settlers and set sail for the Clonmel wreck area. After several years, Mr. McMillan started his own Run at Bushy Park. His previous employer Lachlan Macalister owned the run at Ensay and one here at Boisedale as well as on the Monaro plains.

We were finally getting close to Rosedale when Captain Fermaner, who looked like he was getting saddle sore, surprised me.

"Listen young Mackenz, you look like a strong fellow not afraid of work and pretty intelligent, why don't you see your overseer, when you arrive at Rosedale and tell him that I have offered you employment as my assistant at Port Albert. The Port will become very big and active and will give you a good future."

"My wife and I have a small outhouse you can live in. I will keep you in food and clothes, and give you a few "bob" a week to save up. You might have to become friends with, and help my handicapped young boy as well. What do you think?"