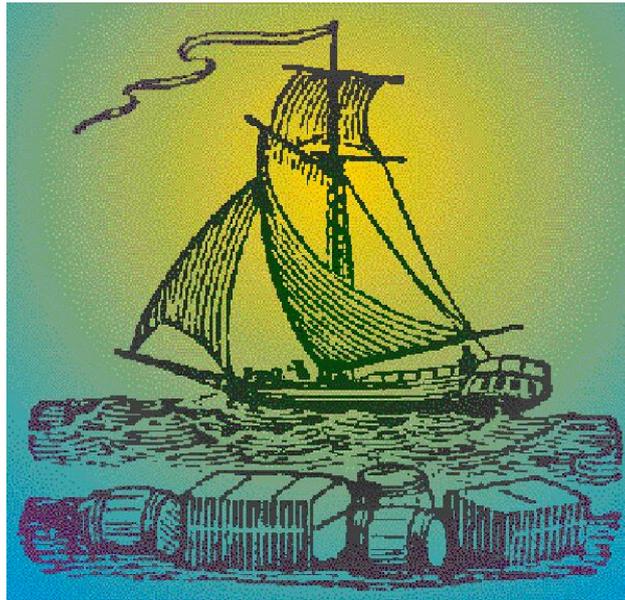


Captain John TAPLEY (1809 – 1869)



CAPE WILLOUGHBY LIGHTHOUSE
Kangaroo Island



Cape Willoughby Lighthouse area



155C JOHN TAPLEY (1809 - 1869)

John TAPLEY was born in 1809, at Folkestone, being baptized there on 11 October 1809. He was the twelfth child of Richard TAPLEY (1770 - 1824), and Elizabeth TAPLEY, nee STEVENSON. (1)

John grew up in Folkestone, and eventually took up a sea-faring career, becoming a sea Captain, eventually settling in South Australia.

In the Census returns of 1841, he was shown as (along with his brother William) as living in the Port Adelaide District, and aged between 20 and 35 years. He would actually have been 32 years of age at this time. (2)

In 1842, and possibly earlier, John TAPLEY was in command of Captain DUFF's schooner "CHALLENGER", later becoming owner of the "ALBATROSS", a cutter of about 13 tons. (3)

A Captain TAPLEY (probably John) was associated with the "ALBATROSS" over the years from 1843 to 1847. (4)

The vessel was wrecked on 10 August 1848, while taking on a cargo of flour from the Onkaparinga. (5)

In 1844 he was the Captain of the vessel "ELIZABETH", when the vessel was lost due to beaching in Portland Bay, Victoria, in November of 1844, which was described in the "Portland Guardian" Newspaper of 2 December 1844. (6)

Soon after this he was recorded as a passenger from Portland Bay, on the Cutter "GOVERNOR GAWLER". (7)

As a result of the loss of this vessel it appears that he commenced service with the Trinity (Marine) Board. (8)

" In 1849, a move was made to build a lighthouse at Cape Willoughby, on Kangaroo Island, and Messrs THOMAS, COOK, BATES, BRISTOW, JOHNSON, PERKY, TAPLY (sic), CHEESEMAN, SEYMORE and SIMPSON got together, some with bullock teams, while others burned lime and cut wood, and hewed stone, all under the oversight of a few professional men, with the result that in 1852 the light was flashing over miles of sea, warning and directing clumsy sailing ships in the way they should go. The first lighthouse keeper was Mr CAWTHORNE, followed later by SEYMORE, McARTHUR, CARTER, TAYLOR, FRANKS, and so on." (9)

John TAPLEY was later to also serve as a Light keeper at this Lighthouse.

In 1855, John TAPLEY was mentioned in the S.A. Almanac as at Port Adelaide, on the Light Ship. (10)

By 1868, John TAPLEY was a Light House Keeper at the Cape Willoughby Lighthouse on Kangaroo Island.

"CAPE WILLOUGHBY, the easternmost tip of the Island, is a bold granite headland with cliffs from 50 to 150 feet high; the granite is very similar to that found at Victor Harbor, 33 miles to the north east. On the easternmost extremity of the cape is located the Sturt Light, together with the houses of the Light Keepers. This, the first lighthouse in South Australia, is housed in a native limestone tower 90 feet high and was first shown in 1852.... from the catwalk of the tower (about 240 feet above sea-level) an excellent view is obtained." (11)

On 23 January 1869, John TAPLEY, male, aged 56 (according to certificate), a Light House Keeper, Cape Willoughby Lighthouse, died suddenly at the Lighthouse. The cause of death is described as Sudden Death only. The Death was notified by Stephen HADDY of Port Adelaide, on 26 January 1869, to the Registrar at Adelaide, John CLELAND. (12)

His actual age would have been 59 years. He was not married, as no record of any marriage, or family in South Australia is known.

REFERENCES:

1. Information from Stuart E. TAPLEY
2. Information from Dr. Ronald SAWERS.
3. Ibid.
4. The HODGE Index of Coastal and Intercolonial arrivals (various references to the ALBATROSS).
5. Port Lincoln Shipping, By Ronald Parsons.
6. Information from D. R. SAWERS.
7. Hodge Index.
8. From Dr. R.SAWERS.
9. Kangaroo Island Past and Present, Kingscote CWA, p 24.
10. From Dr. R. SAWERS.
11. Kangaroo Island, By F.H. BAUER, page 33
12. Death Certificate of John TAPLEY.

References for JOHN TAPLEY

DEATH CERTIFICATE INFORMATION

No.....of 1869District of Adelaide
When Died.....23 January 1869
Name.....John TAPLEY
Sex and Age.....Male 56 years
Trade or Calling.....Light House Keeper
Usual Residence.....Cape Willoughby Lighthouse
Cause of Death.....Sudden Death
Place of Death.....Cape Willoughby Lighthouse.
Informant.....Stephen HADDY of Port Adelaide.
Registrar.....John F. CLELAND, 26 January 1869

INFORMATION FROM DR. RONALD SAWERS (June/July 1986)

John TAPLEY b. Folkestone 1809 - shown in Census returns 1841, p 100 (along with William) as living at Port Adelaide district, and between age 20 and 35 years.

In 1842 (and ? earlier) in command of Capt. Duff's schooner "Challenger" (Ref. Little ships of Pioneer yrs 1836-1845, L.J. EWEN) and he became the owner of "Albatross" (ibid). it appears he commence service with the Trinity (Marine) Board after losing "Elizabeth".

First record I could find of him was 1855, SA Almanac- under Port Adelaide- "John-Light Ship".

NOTES: (a) Mary HODGE refers to "Capt Tapley" in 1847 as master of "Empress" from King George Sound and Swan River, and in 1849 as master of "Breeze" and again 1852-1854 as master of the "Yatala", but this would have been brother William.

(b) Re. John's arrival in Adelaide as passenger on Governor Gawler; due to loss by beaching of his vessel "Elizabeth" in Portland Bay in November 1844- This beaching is described in "Portland Guardian" Monday 2 December 1844. Abstracted in "Australian Felix"- Craftsman Press, Hawthorn, Vic, 1982, p39.

HODGE INDEX of Intercolonial Arrivals 1839-50

24 Feb 1843 - Captain TAPLEY, Master of the cutter 'ALBATROSS'
Travelling between Adelaide and Port Lincoln.
14 March 1843- as above
15 April 1843- As above
29 May 1843 - Capt TAPLEY, Master of ALBATROSS travelling between Adelaide, Rapid Bay and Port Lincoln.
20 June 1843 - Travelling between Adelaide and Rapid Bay. ALBATROSS
16 July 1843 - Travelling between Adelaide and Pt Lincoln ALBATROSS
14 November 1843 - Adelaide and Port Lincoln ALBATROSS
5 December 1843 - Travelling between Adelaide and Port Lincoln. ALBATROSS
14 March 1844- Adelaide to Port Lincoln ALBATROSS
30 March 1844 - Adelaide to Port Lincoln ALBATROSS
5 May 1844- Adelaide and Port Lincoln, had as a passenger a Master R. TAPLEY.
23 Jan 1845 - Captain J. TAPLEY arrived SA on the cutter 'GOVERNOR GAWLER', as a passenger from Portland Bay.
19 April 1845 - Captain TAPLEY, Master of ALBATROSS between Adelaide and Port Lincoln.
13 May 1845 - Captain TAPLEY and ALBATROSS between Adelaide, Port Lincoln and Salt Lagoon.
17 August 1845- Travelling between Adelaide and Port Lincoln - ALBATROSS
26 February 1847 - Captain TAPLEY and ALBATROSS from Spencers Gulf, with passenger E BOWMAN.
