



Port Augusta – then and now

Transcript – D4221/1 (L)

Journal of Edward Dowsett

Journal of the government schooner 'Yatala' 6 May 1852 - 31 May 1852 by the master Edward Dowsett - refers to the naming of Port Augusta.

D 4221/1(L)

Transcribed by Helen Davies 2007

Journal of the Government Schooner 'Yatala' Port Adelaide – Captain Edward Dowsett

[Shows a drawing in landscape view of a rough map. This could be the top of the Gulf, with dotted lines showing edges of tidal flats. Within an elongated shape, perhaps a channel through the mudflats, appears something resembling: To Yunta 22 ? 2858° E ? Inland is the faint outline of a horse, and possibly a kangaroo and mountains. See also the last page of book with the word Sands near a channel, which could be a continuation of this page]

Government Schooner Yatala

Thursday
May 6th 1852

This day Reced Flour Potatoes 8 lb ?
for Archdecon Hale Port Lincoln
Shippd all my crew 9 in Number and
Provisions for one month Passengers
Messrs Elder Grainger Gentlemen One
Sapper and One Assistant At 4 PM
Saild from the Buoy, At 7 PM Brough[t]
the Vessel to anchor at the Light Reach
Wind South Light this Ends 24 Hours

Friday
May 7th

At 7 AM Weighd Anchor And
made Sail Wind Light from
NE At Noon Calmn At 7PM Brought
up At Troubridge Shoal Island Bearing
S by E. in 7 fathoms Calmn all Night



Saturday
May 8th

At day Light Weighd Anchors
Wind SE Light With Rain
at 9 AM Brought the Vessel to
Anchor Close the Wreck of the Washington
Went on Board for My Kedge Anchor at
11AM Weighd Anchor And made Sail

At Noon Abreast of Troubridge hill
Weather thick And Raining hard.
At 5 P.M. At Cape Spencer Came through
the inshore Passage with a strong Breeze
from the SE at 10 PM Abreast of the Wedg [e]
Island at Midnight thistle Island Bearng
West hove the Vessel to for day Light
Wind S.E. Blowing Strong with Rain
So this Ends those 24 Hours

Sunday May 9th

At day Light Squared Away
and Made Sail at at 8 AM Rounded
Snapper Rock at 9 AM Brought
up at Port Lincoln Messrs Elder & I ? Grainger
Went on Shore Wind South Blowing
fresh all day at 6 PM Gave the Vessel
more Chain And the Port Anchor and the ?
Cockbill At Midnight Blowing hard Wind South.

Monday May 10

At 9AM went on Shore had
Mr. Bishop Boat to discharge the
Cargo At Noon All discharged at
One PM Came on Board Messrs Elder
and Mr Grainger and three more Passengers

and One Aboriginal Native at 4 PM Weighd
Anchor And made All Possible Sail at
6 PM Passed Point Bolingbroke Blowing
strong with a Heavy Sea on at 10 PM took
in the Square Sail at 11 PM in top Gallt Sail
At Midnight stowd the top Sail And Single
Reefd the Mainsail hove the Lead at
Every half Hour Water Seventeen fathoms.

Tuesday May 11th



At 4 AM hove the Vessel to.at
5 AM Squard Away Soundings
Seven Fathoms Run ? All the boat
down in 2/4 to 4 Fathoms Water at 2 PM
Brought up on account of not being Certain
of the Place for the Weather thick And
Hazy With Light Squalls of Rain Sent the
Whale Boat on Shore with Mr Elder Stuckey
Henderson and the Native to see where
the Place to Land at 3 P.M. Came on
Board And Said the Place \was/ further up
Weighd anchor And Made Sail
At 5 PM Abreast of the Landing Place

And Brought the Vessel to An Anchor in
3/2 Fathoms of Water Midle Bank Mount
North End Bearing WNW Mount Young
Bearing N by E distance Eight Miles
Blowing fresh All Night Wind South
With 45 fathom's of Chains. So this Ends 24 Hours

Wednesday May 12.

This day Still Blowing from the
Southward at 9 AM Mannd the
Boat Mr Elder Mr Grainger Gentlemen
Messrs Peters Stucky And Henderson And
the Black Native Went on Shore at Noon
the Boat Returnd – At Midnight Wind SE
Blowing fresh

Thursday May 13

At Noon the Parties Came down
to the Beach Sent the Boat on
Shore Messrs Elder & Mr Grainger
Mr Harris the Sapper and Mr Peters Came off
Sent the Boat on Shore for Ms Stucky And
Henderson And the Sappers Assistant
And Black Native At 3:30 Weighd Anchor

and Made Sail Wind SE fine Stiff
Breeze: Run Down in ten fathoms Water
At 9 PM Brought up in 3¼ fathoms
under Point Lowly fine Clear Star
Light Night



Friday May 14th.

At 8 AM Made Sail Steering
N 1/2 E. At 10 AM Calmn At Noon
Mannd the Whaleboat With
Mr Elder Mr Grainger Mr Peters Mr Harris
Government Surveyor At 4 PM A Light
Breeze from the Southward At 5:30
Brought the Vessel to Anchor in 3 Fathoms
water at 6 PM Whaleboat Returned from
the Bluff With all the Parties Could
find No Harbour Bluff Bearing NW
Distance from two to three miles –

Saturday May 15

This day fine Weather at 9 AM
Mannd both Boats Mr Elder Mr Grainger
Mr Peters And Myself and 4 Hands
in the Whale Boat, Too ? L Right inshore
Carrying from 2 to 6 fathoms Well
into the Bay Pulld along Shore towards
the Noth Bluff fell in the Channel

Carrying from 2/4 to 4 fathoms
Right up to the Head Caught a fine
fish calld a Snook: And Plenty of Snappr.
Lost all Our Hooks in Coming on Board
Laid a buoy Down on the South Side
of the Channel in 3 fathoms And
Pulld Over on to the North Side of the
Channel in to 3 fathoms And in Crossing
the Mid channel Depth 7 Fathoms.
Distance Across About half of A Mile
At 5 Came on Board With the Whale Boat
At 6 the Skifs ? Came On Board Wind
Shifted Round to North With A fresh Breeze –

Sunday May 16th

This day blowing hard from
the Southward Boat Went On
Shore And brought Some Snappr
fish At 4 PM Came On board A
Smoke Made on the Bluff Sent the
Boat On Shore. A Man from Mr
Pattersons Station Sent Some Meat
On Board At 7 P.M. Gave the Vessel
More Chain Blowing fresh from South



Al Night. So this Ends those 24 Hours

Monday May 17/52 [presumably 1852]

This day Blowing fresh from
South. Slung five Breakers
and Laid them down on the South
Side of the Channel and the Small
boat Keg. \For buoy/ G in three fathoms at Low
Water at One PM Came On Board
Weigd Anchor And Made Sail
Stretch Over to the West Shore And
Put About. Stood in for the Channel
At 3:30 Brought the Vessel to An Anchor
in 2½ Fathoms of Water Weighd Anchor
Made Sail Run Higher up the Harbour
Brought up in 3 fathoms of Water Went
on Shore to Some Natives at Sun
down Came On Board Weather fine
Wind SE So this Ends those 24 Hours

Tuesday May 18 52

At 7 AM Breakfasted At 8:30 AM
Messrs Elder And Grainger Went in
the Skiff And All the Passengers Mr Harris
and Assistant Also to Survey on Shore
Myself Mannd the Whaleboat And Surv\yed/
the Channel took Bearings at Four

Different Possitions from the Buoys on
the South Side of the Channel to the
North Side at 12.30 Past Noon Weighd Anchor
And Came Over the 2 fathoms Bank at
Low Water up to the Narrow Entrance
At Dark Brought up in 3 fathoms in the
Narrow Channel At 7 PM High Water
Weather fine with Light Rain Wind Light
from E. So this End those 24 Hours

Wednesday May 19/52 [the number 5 is unclear, could be 7]

This day Commences With
strong Breezes from the
Westward.. Crew Employd
Variously Repairing Mainsail And
scraping the Vessels binds Mr Elder
Mr Grainger Mr Peters Mr Henderson



Mr Harris Went On Shore in the Whale Boat
At Low Water Run the Kedge Out the
Whole Length of the Warp. At 6 P.M
the Whale Boat Came on board the Report
Was No Landing Place At the Head of the
Creek the Only Place for Landing At

Flagstaff Hill Wind West blowing
hard High Water At 8 P.M. This ends 24 Hours

Thursday May 20/52

Those 24 Commences With Strong
Gales from SW at 7 A.M.
Run My Large Kedge out to the South
With My full Length of the Warp this
Blowing Very hard With heavy Rains
the Boat Went up the Creek A Snappering
At 5:30 PM Came On Board With Seven
Large Snappers at 9PM Weather Modera\ted/
At 8/30 High Water Windy Still Blowing
fresh this Ends those 24 Hours

Friday May 21,, 52

This day still Blowing Strong
from the Southward At 9 AM
Went On Shore to form A Township
Also A Place to Build a Wool Shed
At 2 PM. Came on board took up all
buoys and flags, Discoverd A Creek –
Running inland from 3 to four
Miles – At 8 PM let Go the Port Anchor
under her fore foot Squalls Very Heavy
So this Ends those 24 Hours
High Water 8:30 PM tide Rises 6 feet

Saturday May 22/52

At day Light Commenced
to Unmoor the Vessel hove
the Starboard Anchor home
from the buoy Rope hove the Kedge up
And Made Sail down to the Buoy
Brought up in two Fathoms Mistook
the Buoys On Account of being Drifting
Men Went to Breakfast At 10 AM Weighd



Anchor And Made Sail beat down to the
Buoys \and Brought up to her Anchor in 3 fathoms/. x Mannd the Boat and weighd all
the Buoys. I found All the Buoys drifted
into one fathom Water And one
Buoy Lost At 3 PM Weighd Anchor
And Sailed up the Gulf under the
topsail and Outer Jib At 4.30 PM
Brought up at Pelican [Curlew is written above] Point in Rounding
too the Vessel Stuck on the East Bank
Run the Kedge out on the Starboard Quarter
At 5PM Came off, A Strong flood tide
Setting up Depth of Water in Channel
5 fathoms the Vessel Completely Land Lock
At 9.30 PM Vessel tending tide

Wind South afresh Breeze fine Night
So this Ends those 24 Hours. x

Sunday May 23,, 52

This day fine Weather Wind
South At 9 AM Mannd the
Whale Boat And Went On
Shore to the first high Land through
a Distance of Mangrove Swamp
At 3 PM Came On Board Mr Elder Mr Harris ?
Mr Stucky found a fine Beach Whith
And Deep Water hard Ground Appear
ing by from the Range to form a Road
Down to the Beach fine Clear Night Wind
South Light. At 9:30 High Water Ends those 24 Hours.

Monday May 24/52 + 1

At day Break Breakfasted. At 7/30
AM Mannd the Whale Boat Myself
Mr Elder Mr Grainger Mr Harris Mr Peters
Sailed up to Port Augusta And Sounded
the Channel Right to the Landing Place
Carrying Soundings from 3/2 to 5/2 Fathoms
of Water Abreast of the Landing Place 5
fathoms, Within 70 feet of the Beach 2
Fathoms Went on Shore to Look at A
Lake to See Whether it Was Salt or fresh

We found it Salt Came Direct to
the Boat,. Erected On the Beach a
flagstaff. Gave three Cheers. 3 times three
And Named it Port Augusta Came down



on Board At Noon Made Sail And beat
down the Gulf abreast of Where We Wanted
to Go on Shore at 5 PM Brought up in
3/2 Fathoms of Water Wind South fine
Night High Water 10 PM this Ends those 24 Hours

Tuesday May 25. 1852

At day light: Breakfaasted. Mannd
the Whale Boat Whith 4 Hands
Mr Elder Mr Grainger Mr Peters Mr Harris
And Myself Went on the East Shore to
Search the Bay And to find A Landing
place Pull all Round the North End of the
Bay Went On Shore And Walk Round to head
the Creek found it to be All Mangroves Came
down to the Boat And Pulld Up a Creek About
2 Miles from the Entrance up to 4 feet Water
Carrying from four fathoms to 2 fathoms
but Could find No Landing Place Came
on board at 1.30 P.M Crew Went to dinner

At 2 P.M. weighd anchor And Made
Sail Wind SSW And beat down to
the dry Spit Carrying Water from Eight
fathoms in Midchannel to three & Half
on both Sides of the Channel At 5/30 P.M.
Brought up in five fathoms With twenty
two fathoms of Chain Out, Wind SW Light
So this Ends those twenty four Hours

Wednesday May 26/52

At 7:30 AM Went On Shore
in the Whaleboat Mr Elder
Mr Grainger Mr Peters And Mr Harris
Self Mr Elder Mr Peters Walked up to the
Hills to See What there Was to be found
Nothing of Any Importance At Noon
Came on Board Calmn Weighd Anchor
and Dropd down With the tide At
5 P.M. Brought up under A Sandspit ?
Wind South Little Wind fine Night

Thursday May 27 52

At 8 AM Weighd Anchor Light Air
from the Eastward Strong flood
tide Loosing Ground Brought up under
the Spit Mr Elder Mr Grainger Mr Peters



And Myself Mr Anderson [Henderson ?] Went On Shore
And found a Quantity of Iron Ore
And Quartz At Noon Came On board
At 1.30 PM Weighd Anchor Wind South
And beat down towards Point Lowly
bearing S by E Dist 8 Miles brought up at
6PM in five fathoms Water At 9 PM
a Light Air from NE Weighd Anchor Made
All Possible Sail At Midnight Rounded
Point Lowly breeze freshening Wind NW

Friday May 28/52

At 2 AM A Stiff breeze Mount Youn\g/
bearing West Soundings 8 Fathoms
At 8AM Off Franklings Harbour With a Eight
Knot Breeze top Mast And Lower Studding
Sail Set at 10 AM took in Studding
Sails And [Square ?] Sail Wind Scant
At 6.30PM Made the Islands Put About
And Stood in for the Main at 10:30
Brought up in 4 Fathoms Tumbay Bay
Weather Squally Wind West Ends 24 Hours.

Saturday 29 May 52

At day Light Weighd Anchor
Made Sail Wind West at 8
AM Rounded Point Bolinbroke
At One PM Brought up in Port Lincoln
At 2 PM Mr Elder Mr Grainger [written above Stuckey, which has been crossed out] Mr
Stuckey
Mr Peters Mr Henderson And the Aborigine
Went on Shore Wrote a Note to Messrs
Stucky And Henderson On Account of
them Going up to Adelaide As Passengers
At 11.30 PM Came on board Wind NNW
fine Clear Night this Ends those 24 Hours

Sunday 30th May 52

At 7 AM Weighd Anchor Wind
NW At 8 AM At Snapper Rock at
Noon Abreast of Wedge Island At 6 PM
Came through between the Main And
Althorps Island At Midnight Troubri\dge/
Island Bearing NW Wind Nrth ? fine
Moon Light Night this Ends those 24 Hours



Monday 31st May 52

At 4 A.M. Put About Close in
to Holdfast Bay Wind NE
At Noon Passed the Light Ship And Came
Over the Bar At 4 PM Brought up at

the Yatala Moorings Weather fine
Mr Elder Mr Grainger Sappers And Miners
Mr Harris, And Assistant Mr Stuckey Mr
Henderson All Left in A Watermans
Boat. So thus Ends those 24 Hours.

[In a different heavy ink handwriting:
Messrs Elder & Granger
Sappers & Miners
Harris
Henderson]

[In smaller print]

This is a limited edition facsimile of Captain Edward Dowsett's
log of his historic journey in the discovery of Port Augusta,
South Australia, 1839, whilst skipper of the government
schooner 'Yatala'.

This reprint is for the sole intention for distribution to family members of the Dowsett
Family.

This numbered, bound copy of only twenty, is not for commercial
resale. One copy of which has been returned to the archives of the
Mortlock Library In South Australia as a record and for the library's
use. This ensures the life and preservation of Captain Dowsett's
original log, as part of South Australia's history is kept in its
original condition.

My personal thanks to the State Library of South Australia and
their staff.

[Shows an Indistinct map, possibly of channel, with the word Sand above, possibly a
continuation of Page 2.]