Melbourne ~ a trading city

IT WAS IN A 'VILLAGE' BUILT ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SPECULATION THAT WAREHOUSES LIKE 573 LONSDALE ST FLOURISHED. FROM THE 1850S, MERCHANTS AND THEIR WAREHOUSES WERE THE CRUCIBLES OF TRADE AND ALL MANNER OF GOODS PASSED THROUGH THEIR DOORS. WINE, SPIRITS, SUGAR, WOOL, TEA, COFFEE, RICE AND TEXTILES WERE STORED BEFORE HEADING TO LOCAL AND GLOBAL DESTINATIONS. PRECIOUS IMPORTED ITEMS WERE ALSO HOUSED SAFELY.

In 1855 ships moored along the Yarra, in fast growing Melbourne, were trading around the globe. STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA
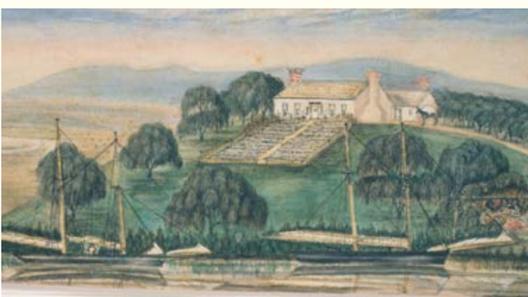
Originally 573 was numbered as 114-116 Lonsdale St. In 1890 Melbourne streets were renumbered and it became 573-577. We have called it -573-

European Settlement

In 1835 this Melbourne 'village' was settled by Europeans in a commercial arrangement with investors from Tasmania, on the lands of the Kulin Nation with their Wurundjeri, Bunurong and Wathaurong Tribes. This arrangement was enabled by means of a 'treaty' between the new Settlers and Kulin Elders. Much has been left unanswered about the nature and content of this 'treaty'. At the time that John Batman and William Faulkner organised investors from Tasmania, ('The Port Philip Association') to establish a settlement on Port Philip Bay, both the settlement and the 'treaty' were outside the boundaries of British law. They were deemed illegal, but the settlement went ahead and British Law was changed to accommodate it. It was significant for European occupation of the whole Australian continent.
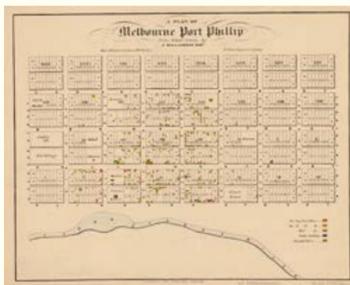

Signing of the 'treaty' between John Batman and Kulin Elders for European Settlement on Port Phillip. STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA

John Batman's Farm (1830s) on Batman's Hill was along what is now Spencer St. The Hill has since been demolished. STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA

Hoddle Grid

On 4 March 1837, Robert Hoddle, the senior surveyor from Sydney, and NSW Governor Bourke traced the general outline of the township on horseback as there had been little progress with the initial land survey. Bourke directed that the town be laid out, and a few days later the Governor named the settlement Melbourne after the British Prime Minister of the day. Hoddle's plan of Melbourne was lodged at the government survey office in Sydney. Not all have agreed that the plan of Melbourne is actually the work of Robert Hoddle. Governor Bourke (who added its much loved laneways) and William Lonsdale, Melbourne's first police magistrate, have also been credited with Melbourne's grid design. Whatever the verdict, the 1837 grid of wide and narrow streets and lanes remains Melbourne's dominating historic memento of European settlement

The 1837 Hoddle Grid set out the streets of early Melbourne. 573 was built near the NW corner. STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA

Robert Hoddle STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA

Captain William Lonsdale STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA

Governor Richard Bourke STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA

John Batman STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA

Gold Fever

Gold fever was running high after the first discoveries in 1851. 'One day a child named Williams picked up a small piece of gold specimen in Lonsdale St opposite the Wesley Church. There was a rush to the 'Lonsdale Diggings'..... It didn't last long. Alas there were no more finds there.' THE CHRONICLES OF EARLY MELBOURNE, GARRYOWEN.

The lure of the goldfields drew people from around the world to what had been a quiet British colony in the Antipodes. It changed Victoria forever. The Eureka Stockade uprising in December 1854 signified early protests against colonial authorities over what were seen as unfair laws, charges and the policing of Ballarat miners. The influx of newcomers was overwhelming. The streets of Melbourne became rough places. The men wandering them were often armed. Accommodation was hard to find. At the same time the British feared attacks from the Russians, the French and the Germans so armed volunteer soldiers were also roaming the streets, mingling with the unsuccessful, ragged miners straggling back into town.

The 1854 uprising of miners at the Eureka Stockade was a protest against Colonial authorities about unfair conditions and charges. STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA

Marvellous Melbourne

By the 1890s Melbourne had transformed from a small illegal settlement, to a frontier gold town, and then to an internationally recognised metropolis. It had held several exhibitions and Victorian wine was receiving much acclaim. Its early prosperity from settlement, trade and gold was replaced by massive land and share speculation, wool and agriculture exports. The population soared from 20,500 in 1850 to 494,000 in 1900. Lonsdale St changed too. By the turn of the century it was becoming respectable - more or less!

The 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition highlighted the City's status as a prosperous and progressive international metropolis. STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA

-573- LONSDALE ST A WORKING PLACE COMES TO LIFE

THROUGH BOOM AND BUST -573- HAS BEEN PRODUCTIVE AND VERSATILE. FROM ITS EARLY DAYS AS A BONDED WAREHOUSE AND LATER AS A PLACE WHERE ENGINEERED, ELECTRICAL AND AGRICULTURAL GOODS, CHEMICALS AND TEXTILES WERE STORED AND SOLD. BY THE 1970S IT WAS HOME TO WINE MERCHANTS THEN THE LEGAL FRATERNITY.
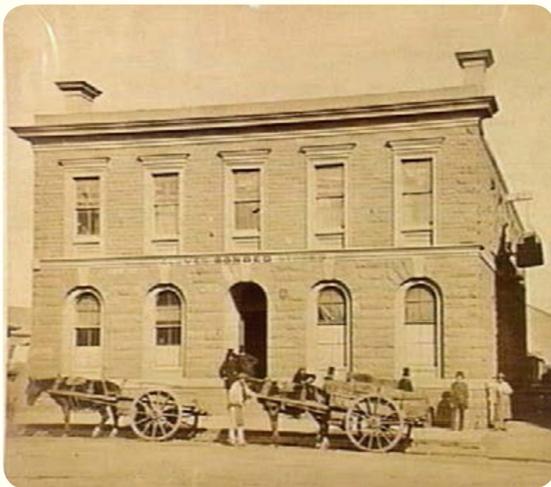

-573- would have depended on many auctions with various goods for sale and trade over much of its life. STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA

Architecture of its time

-573- was designed and built in 1858 by renowned architect Leonard Terry on commission from wealthy merchants, the Cleve Brothers. 'It is one of the oldest and finest bluestone warehouses in the city and forms part of a streetscape of warehouses. An intact example of the palazzo style of the 1840s warehouses of Manchester, inspired by the 14th and 15th century warehouses of Florence, Genoa, Venice, renaissance revival style. It has two storeys, a basement, a hipped roof of corrugated, galvanised iron, two symmetrical chimneys. It is freestanding, rectangular with one chamfered corner. Originally the interior was open with no structural walls'.
HERITAGE COUNCIL OF VICTORIA.

The technology used to support the interior may be a very early version of its kind used in buildings, originally derived from methods used in the construction of sailing ships.

In 1861, -573- had carts out front loading goods being lowered on the windlass on Browns Lane destined for local or overseas markets.
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Cleve Brothers

The land of -573- (then 114-116 Lonsdale St) was bought by DH Cleve in April 1855 from John McKenzie for 1000 pounds. Initially it was a bonded warehouse of the Cleve Brothers, secure and housing dutiable goods stored without charge until the goods were required and duties were paid. By 1860, two more bluestone warehouses were built for the Cleve's next door, later sold to the Blight Brothers. Arrangements varied over the years with the stores a mixture of bonded and free, involving a vast range of goods. All this on a strip of boarding houses, small stores, factories, hotels, churches and much more. Early on Airey's Furniture Showrooms were a few doors along, and next to them (at the then 106 Lonsdale) a local 'Madam', Mrs Delaney. Across the street was a carriage works. After 60 years the Cleve Brothers moved out.

By 1861 the Cleve Bros had built warehouses next to -573- on the corner of King St. For decades they were managed together, bonded and free.
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Leonard Terry, an inspirational legacy

Leonard Terry was born in Scarborough Yorkshire in 1825 and died in Collingwood in 1874. He married twice, was father to nine children. Terry arrived in Melbourne in 1853 first working for a Mr Laing, then becoming a sole practitioner until he went into partnership with Percy Oakden. He left a legacy of buildings all around Melbourne, in numerous Victorian towns, Tasmania, Western Australia and New Zealand. His portfolio and styles were diverse. He designed countless warehouses, banks, churches, the Victoria Sugar Co, the Melbourne Club, residences in the eastern suburbs and the famous Norwood in regional Victoria. He has had a significant and long lasting impact on architecture in Victoria. Apart from numerous tender documents little was published about Terry in the newspapers or in the historical records. It seems he was an unassuming, retiring man. Not one photograph could be found!

Original architectural drawings of plans of 573, north, south and east elevations. Details of front door, ground and first floor windows. D. Bozzonello, M. Englisch, B. Faulkner, Leonard Terry.
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A thoroughly bluestone building

Bluestone was a signature building material of early Melbourne. It is basalt from the vast volcanic plain that runs across the north west of Melbourne. It is a difficult material to use; hard to extract, hard to shape, heavy and expensive to transport, but grand, strong and durable. The bluestone of -573- could have come from many sites, perhaps the quarries of the time at Malmsbury, Lethbridge or Footscray. The ground floor walls are thick, coursed quarry-faced bluestone blocks set in lime mortar. The first floor bluestone blocks are smaller, dressed with rusticated quoins (cornerstones). The 15 metre bluestone façade is richly detailed.

Bluestone for warehouses like -573- was won by hard work from the basalt quarries on the volcanic plains across the north of Melbourne.
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Manufacturers and their agents

Exporters Corbett, Derham Co Pty Ltd worked at -573- alongside organisations with broadcasting licenses, until 1928 when York and Co took over. York and Co were manufacturers and agents of chemicals and dyes, with a variety of partners and tenants. In 1930, British Engineering appeared as a tenant, and in newspapers of the times, textiles, fertiliser products, and a wool processing service were all advertised. Lots of transactions took place, and business thrived through the 1940s and 1950s. The 1960s heralded change. Sun Electrical Pty Ltd took charge with wholesale and household goods stored and sold for a decade. Wine merchants, the Seabrook Family, then came to -573- in 1969.

-573- housed many mixed businesses in the 1920s and 1930s. They advertised in newspapers across Victoria and Tasmania, especially their agricultural and chemical products.
TROVE