

Deptford Shipyard

In 1830 William Lowe took up ten acres (4 ha) on west bank of the Williams River, south of Erringhi (which was renamed Clarence Town in 1832), near to the head of navigation on the river where good hardwood and cedar were abundant. This land was adjacent to, and south of, an eleven-acre allotment (4.4 ha) owned by Sydney merchant, Joseph Hickey Grose. The location of Lowe's shipyard appears on a map (dated 1857) and falls within a later grant of 640 acres made to Allman.

An original watercolour painting by (Sir) Oswald Brierly (1817-1894) titled 'The "Williams" River at Clarence Town N.S.W.' is held by the Mitchell Library and it depicts Lowe's house, store and a vessel being built. The painting probably dates to late 1842 as Brierly had arrived in Sydney on 18 July 1842 with Benjamin Boyd in the yacht *Wanderer* and he managed Boyd's pastoral and whaling business based at Twofold Bay near Eden in southern NSW from 1842 to 1848.

Lowe, who was joined by James Marshall, built a wet dock, and by February 1831 they had built some small craft and were building a steam vessel for Grose, (*William the Fourth*, 54 tons) launched October 1831, which traded on the Australian coast for more than thirty years, and on the China coast for many years after that. *William the Fourth* was the first coastal steamer wholly built in Australia, was eighty feet (24 m) long and usually travelled at eight knots (15 kph).

Shipbuilding plaque

At the southern end of Clarence Town is a picnic spot at the end of a gravel road that runs off Queen Street. There is a plaque there that 'commemorates the 150th anniversary of the launching of the paddle-wheel steamer William IV from the Deptford Shipyards, Clarence Town, 500 meters downstream on the western bank of the Williams River on 14th November 1831'.

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