

Timeline of Camels and Cameleers in Australia

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- 1840 The Phillips brothers, Henry Weston Phillips (1818–1898); George Phillips (1820–1900); G M Phillips (?–?), bought nine camels at Tenerife in the Canary Islands. Four or six of the beasts were loaded aboard the SS *Apolline* which had been chartered by Henry in London. The *Apolline*, under Captain William Deane, docked at Port Adelaide in South Australia on 12 October 1840 and the sole surviving beast of the sea journey, named “Harry”, became the first camel in Australia.¹
- 1846 John Horrocks purchased “Harry” to explore the west of Lake Torrens in South Australia. The expedition was abandoned when “Harry” caused a fatal injury to Horrocks.

On the 1st September, 1846, having only the camel, loaded with light equipage, and being accompanied by Mr. Gill and one man (Kilroy), after reaching the lake and traversing the northern shore Kilroy, who was walking in advance (the remainder of his party, horses, &c., were camped at ' Depot Creek '), saw a beautiful bird which he asked Mr. Horrocks to shoot Halting the camel Mr. Gill was unstrapping the gun (double-barrel), while Mr. Horrocks inserted the ramrod to draw the charge of shot. He was going to load one barrel with slugs. The camel gave a lurch, and the trigger caught against the equipment. The gun exploded, driving the ramrod through his hand and carrying away the lower part of his jaw. His companions returned with him at once, and on September 20, after painfully retracing the 200 miles, reached Penwortham, where medical aid was procured. He died from the injuries three days afterwards, viz., September 23, 1846, aged 28, and at his funeral the camel was shot over his grave.²

- 1860 9th June. First cameleers came to Melbourne with 24 camels purchased for the Burke and Wills expedition³. Dost Mahomet was the senior cameleer, with Hassam Khan, Belooch⁴ Esau, a Hindu cameleer, resigned from the expedition when he realised he could not eat the meat (beef) provided for the expedition.

¹http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Camels/Introducing_Camels_Into_Australia.htm

²Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (NSW), Saturday 23 March 1895, page 6

³Cigler, 1986, p.7

⁴Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.50

1862 Samuel Stuckey, partner of Thomas Elder, travelled to Karachi to hire cameleers and purchase camels⁵, but was unable to hire a ship to bring the camels to Australia⁶.

1865 Samuel Stuckey returned from a second trip to Pakistan. He arrived on the *Blackwell*, on 31st December at Port Augusta with 31 cameleers and 124 camels⁷. The first camel camp at Port Augusta was established⁸.

His partner, Thomas Elder, established the Beltana Pastoral Company with camel farms at Beltana and Umberatana⁹.

Camels introduced to Marree by Elder¹⁰. Faiz and Tag Mahomet, and camel dealer Sultan Raz Mahomed based in Marree¹¹.

1870 Cameleer strike at Beltana Station¹².

South Australian parliament legislated to build the Overland Telegraph Line. Camels transported materials and supplies for this construction¹³.

1872: Completion of the Overland Telegraph between Darwin and Port Augusta¹⁴.

1872–3 P.E. Warburton purchased camels from Elder for his exploratory expedition from Alice Springs to the West Australian coast¹⁵. Accompanied by cameleers Saleh Mahomed and Halleem¹⁶.

1873 William Gosse explored the Gibson Desert with Kamran, Jemma Khan and Allanah as his cameleers¹⁷. Gosse was the first European to sight Uluru and Kata Juta¹⁸.

1875 Ernest Giles explored from Beltana to Geraldton and Perth with Saleh Mahomed and Halleem¹⁹. Four expeditions from 1875 to 1876; the last one to Perth with 22 camels managed by Saleh Mahomed²⁰.

⁵ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.42

⁶ Simpson, 2018, p.37

⁷ Simpson, 2018, pp.56-60

⁸ McKnight, 1969, p.63

⁹ Cigler, 1986, p.11

¹⁰ Litchfield, 1983, p.2

¹¹ Cigler, 1986, p.35

¹² Aird & KLaassen, 1985, pp12-13

¹³ Stevens, 2002, p.71

¹⁴ <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/overland-telegraph>

¹⁵ Collins, 2016, p.51

¹⁶ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

¹⁷ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

¹⁸ Collins, 2016, p.29

- 1878 Construction began on the Port Augusta to Darwin railway line. Again, camels were used to transport materials and supplies²¹.
- 1880s–90s Some cameleers became independent camel dealers and carriers, including Mahmoud Hassan in Port Augusta²², Abdul Wahid in Bourke, brothers Faiz and Tagh Mahomet from Oodnadatta²³, and Syed Goolamdeen from Marree to Broken Hill²⁴.
- 1882 Railway reached Farina and soon after Hergott Springs (renamed Marree)²⁵.
- First Mosque built in Marree (locals originally preferred to call it Hergott Springs) by a camel breeder known as Abdul Kadir who was also the owner of the Wangamanna Station.²⁶The mosque was rebuilt with respect to its original clay-brick style in 2003 by the Afghan descendants who continue to live in Marree²⁷.
- Emergency supplies transported from Port Augusta and Farina to Milparinka²⁸.
- 1883 Charles Rasp thought he had discovered tin but in fact he had discovered silver, zinc, and lead. (Ion Idress)
- 1885 BHP founded.
- 1885–6 David Lindsay travelled from Alice Springs to the Gulf of Carpentaria with Joorak Mahomed²⁹.
- 1887 The first camels to arrive in Western Australia came on ships SS *Abergeldie* and SS *Yeoman*, both coming from Karachi, arriving in Fremantle in October 1887³⁰.
- 1887 West Camel Camp Mosque built at Broken Hill.
- Arbitration Act cameleers declared as aliens and denied citizenship and union membership.
- 1890 Railway reached Oodnadatta³¹.

¹⁹ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.p.48

²⁰ Collins, 2016, p.42

²¹ Stevens, 2002, p.74

²² Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.96

²³ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.96

²⁴ Litchfield, 1983, p.71

²⁵ Stevens, 2002, p.74

²⁶<https://www.halaltrip.com/other/blog/guide-to-marree-mosque-south-australia/>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Gerriston, 1980, p.26

²⁹ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

³⁰<https://history.cockburn.wa.gov.au/Migration/Afghans>

- 1888–91 Mosque built in Adelaide.
- 1891 North Camel Camp Mosque built at Broken Hill³², on a site which had been used for worship since at least 1887³³.
- 1891–2 Lindsay explored Great Victoria and Gibson Deserts with Hadjih Shah Mahomet, Mahyedin, Alumgool, MahmoudAzim, Abdul and Joorak Mahomed handling the camels³⁴. Financed by Thomas Elder.
- 1893 Discovery of gold at Kalgoorlie.
- 1894 Horn Scientific Exploration Expedition to MacDonnell Ranges with Moosha and Guzzie Balooch managing the camels³⁵.
- 1896–7 L.A. Wells led Calvert Expedition through Great Sandy and Gibson Deserts with cameleers Bejah Dervish and Said Ameer³⁶. Funded by Samuel Calvert.
- 1898 Drought at White Cliffs forced residents to get supplies for general store by camel from Broken Hill³⁷.
- 1901 Federal Immigration Restriction Act³⁸.
- Survey for West Australian rabbit proof fence. Hassan and Faizel Deen were cameleers for survey team.
- 1904 Sher Khan shot romantic rival in Marree, returned to Farina where he was arrested, tried, and gaoled³⁹.
- 1907 Afghan hawker, Chumpter Khan , shot five whites and killed a teamster⁴⁰.
- 1912 East West rail link started. Camels used to transport materials, supplies and in construction of railway.

³¹ Stevens, 2002, p.74

³² Stevens, 2002, p.306

³³ Sanderson, R., & Shamroze, "Bobby", 2018.

³⁴ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

³⁵ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

³⁶ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

³⁷ Rowe, 1983, p.?

³⁸ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.135

³⁹ <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/history-culture/2011/07/australias-afghan-cameleers/>

⁴⁰ Stevens, 2002, p.152

- 1915 Gool Mahomed and Mullah Abdullah opened fire on the New Year's Day picnic train Killed four and injured five (seven?) people. Both assailants were killed by police and local militia⁴¹.
- 1916 Edgar Waite led the Strzelecki Expedition from Farina to north-eastern South Australia with cameleer Mahomet Salaam⁴².
- 1924 Gool Mahomet and his sons bought Mulgaria Station⁴³
- 1929 Overland railway reached Alice Springs⁴⁴.
- Sultan Aziz left Broken Hill with the last string of camels from that town bound for south Queensland.
- 1936 1500 camels but only one cameleer at Birdsville.
- 1939 Madigan Simpson Desert Expedition. Jack (Abdul) Bejah and Nur Mahommed Moosha managed 19 camels supplied by Jack's father, Bejah Dervish.
- 1956 Marree's original mosque demolished under instruction by Syed Goolamdeen⁴⁵
- 1965 The Broken Hill Historical Society began renovations on the North Camel Camp Mosque and planted Date Palm trees in the forecourt.
- 1968 The Broken Hill Mosque renovations were completed by the Broken Hill Historical Society and then re-dedicated and opened to the public on 21 September 1968⁴⁶.
- 2008 Islamic Council of NSW planted two olive trees at current Broken Hill Mosque site.

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⁴¹ Kearns, 1975, p.5

⁴² Jones & Kenny, 2007

⁴³ Aird & KLaassen, 1985, p.13

⁴⁴ Stevens, 2002, p.74

⁴⁵ Weidenbach, 2005, p.61& Litchfield, 1983, p.72

⁴⁶ Sanderson, R., & Shamroze, "Bobby", 2018, <https://brokenhillhistoricalsociety.com/all-about-us-2/journal-extracts/museum-reports/museum-annual-reports/>

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