

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

NAME OF COLLECTION: MELBOURNE FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE COMPANY

ACCESSION NO: 63/6

CATEGORY: Business, organisations
ACTIVITY: Fire and marine insurance

DATE RANGE: 1839 - 1862

SIZE OF COLLECTION: 0.19 m

DATE OF TRANSFER: Apr 1963

ACCESS CONDITIONS: Open

**HISTORICAL
NOTE:**

The company was founded by deed of settlement dated 29 Jun 1839, which stated the intention of *affecting insurance loss and damage by fire and assurance of vessels in harbour and at sea, and of the cargoes and property in and aboard the same, and other risks which might have been productive of great advantage, as well as to the Mercantile and Shipping Interests of the Colony of new South Wales as to the inhabitants thereof generally*. Capital to be £50,000 in 1,000 shares of £5, these funds to be employed in the *discounting of bills of exchange and Promissory Notes other than mortgage upon real estate, except as collateral security for money due to the Company*.

Bankers: Union Bank of Australia This is apparently the first insurance company in Victoria - then the Port Phillip District of New South Wales. Its original shareholders included men of note in affairs of the District - John Gardiner, William Highett, W F Rucker, John Pascoe Fawkner, George Arden and Thomas Strode. Rucker, Gardiner, George Ward Cole, James A Smith and James Graham were among those who were to have places on the Board of Directors.

With James Smith as secretary the company commenced business 1 Jul 1839 but had a short life. A meeting of directors of 18 Jan 1844 resolved to make an immediate return of £3 per share of paid up capital and to take steps for dissolution. The company can be said to have ceased its real operations from this date although ledger balances at the Union Bank show consistent entries to 1846, then entries for Sep 1848, and Feb and Mar 1854 to finally wind up the accounts and distribute a final dividend on assets to the shareholders. The records include lists of shareholders with their signatures for the receipt of capital returned in 1844 and 1854. The deed of dissolution is dated 22 Dec 1854.

The company lost heavily from two extensive fires in Collins Street in 1842. That it never recovered from these losses would in large part be due to the contemporary acute depression in Port Phillip and the rash of insolvencies to the mid 1840s

DESCRIPTION: Minutes 1841-1845, legal documents 1839-1862, outward correspondence 1839-1844, account books 1839-1844, 1848, 1854

FORM:

**NOTE ON
COLLECTIONS:**

**NOTE ON
LISTINGS:**

**RELATED
COLLECTIONS:** Graham Bros & Co
Graham, James

LISTED BY: F Strahan Relisted T J Hart

DATE: 22 Apr 1963 10 Apr 2001

Box No	Series No	Description	Dates
	1	Legal Documents	
1	1/1	Deed of Settlement	29 Jun 1839
	1/1a	Deed of Settlement Microfilm Master copy	
	1/1b	Deed of Settlement Microfilm Silver Master duplicate	
	1/2	Deed of Dissolution	2 Dec 1844
	2	Proprietorship	
	2/1	Certificate of Shareholdings Nos 52-91 (lacks 89 & 90)	? - 22 Sep 1842
	2/2	Share transfers No 1-50	26 Feb 1840 - 11 May 1844
	2/3	Receipts for Capital Returned	2 Dec 1844 - 13 Mar 1855
	3	Minutes	
	3/1	Minutes of Meetings of Directors (First pages are blank. Two draft letters of 1 Aug & 14 Oct 1846 re debt of R M Robertson are interleaved.)	6 Jan 1841 - 3 Mar 1845
	4	Correspondence	
	4/1	Letters Outwards	6 Apr 1839 - 9 Feb 1844
	5	Accounting Records	
	5/1	Cash Book	1 Jun 1839 - 15 Sep 1841
Unit 2 (vol)	5/2	Bills presented for Discount	11 Sep 1839 - 26 Jul 1843
	5/3	Bills Discounted	7 Aug 1839 - 5 Jul 1843
	5/4	Bills Receivable Discounted	7 Aug 1839 - 26 Jul 1842
	5/5	Ledger - Account balances with Union Bank	1 Jun 1839 - Mar 1854