

ALMA DOEPEL
The History of An Australian Schooner
1903 – 1975
Captain Ralph McDonell

With a longer history of trading in the waters of Bass Strait and the Tasman Sea than perhaps any vessel in the two centuries of modern Australia, it was appropriate that the *Alma Doepel's* story was published in time for Australia's Bicentenary celebrations.

Built of timber hewn from the forests of the Bellinger valley, in northern N.S.W., she was the climax of the shipwright's art. Her design was sketched by Frederick Doepel on his kitchen table. He had no formal qualifications, and had jumped ship as a seaman. But he understood the basics of construction that would survive all the tests that Nature could impose. Her back bone, of keel and keelson, has been her reason for survival. In the pages of this book, there is a mention of just about every hazard of the sea that has claimed a flotilla of vessels down the years and within the very waters that she has sailed.

Probably no vessel has, in Australian history, received more mention in the shipping columns than did *Alma Doepel* in the *Hobart Mercury*, in almost four decades. That, too, was after twelve years of trading to the Bellinger, before Henry Jones & Co. bought her in 1916 for the "Jam Fleet". From December 1903 until early 1959 she traded in S.E. Australia, with the exception of her Army days, from 1943 until 1947, and a few timber runs to New Zealand in 1904.

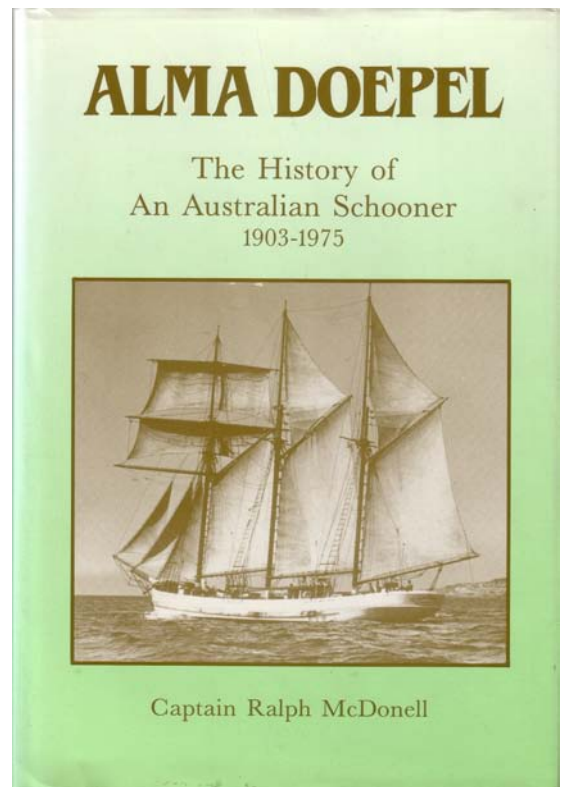
Rescued as a floating hulk in 1976, following her final, degrading use as a limestone carrier for a further fourteen years (in southern Tasmania), *Alma Doepel* was restored to fullest seaworthiness, for use as a training vessel for Australian youth. Some two million dollars and countless hours of labour saved from disintegration this proud Topsail Schooner.

Today with more than twelve years of training Australian youth under her belt and a further ten years laid up, *Alma Doepel* is currently undergoing an extensive refit. This will return her to the waters of Port Phillip and again provide the opportunity for more young people of all ages to experience training and sailing on a Tall Ship. To mark this next step in *Alma Doepel's* life this wonderful book of her trading history has been reprinted.

Proceeds from the sales of this book go towards the refit of the *Alma Doepel*, so by purchasing a copy of this book you are assisting to preserve a piece of Australia's history and provide further opportunities for Australian youth.

The book is available in hardback (as shown above) and also as a Special Edition of 100 numbered copies with a leather –style binding and the title and an image of *Alma Doepel* embossed on the cover in silver.

A special discounted price is available for members of the Alma Doepel Supporters Club so if you aren't already a member and would like to make most of this offer, please join the club ([Click here](#)) and further support the ship.



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