

Timeline of Australian Cameleers

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- 1840 First importation of camels from Canary Islands¹. “The governor of South Australia Gawler wrote to the commissioner of the colony suggesting that camels should be introduced in the dry areas of the north of Adelaide. The suggestion of the governor was taken into consideration and in two months, half a dozen camels were loaded onto a steamship of the Appoline line in Tenerife (the biggest of the Canary Islands). Only one camel survived the journey, arriving at the harbour of Adelaide on the 12th of October 1840. Nobody knows what happened to that first Australian camel.²
- 1846 Horrocks Expedition west of Lake Torrens in South Australia. First use of camel in expedition, nicknamed ‘Harry’³.
- 9th June 1860 First cameleers came to Melbourne with 24 camels purchased for the Burke and Wills expedition⁴. Dost Mahomet was the senior cameleer, with Hassam Khan, Belooch⁵.
- Pencil and watercolour sketches by William Strutt made in Melbourne before expedition set out⁶.
- 1861 First mosque built in Marree⁷.
- 1862 Samuel Stuckey, partner of Thomas Elder, travelled to Karachi to hire cameleers and purchase camels⁸, but was unable to hire a ship to bring the camels to Australia⁹.
- 1864 Camels introduced to Marree by Elder¹⁰. Faiz and Tag Mahomet, and camel dealer Sultan Raz Mahomed based in Marree¹¹.

¹<https://www.ritas-outback-guide.com/AustralianCamels.html>

² Iván del Castillo y Benítez de Lugo, 2003, <https://www.camellosafari.com/92-2/history/>

³ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.38

⁴ Cigler, 1986, p.7

⁵ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.50

⁶ sl.nsw.gov.au/collection-items/william-strutt-collection-drawings-watercolour-ink-and-pencil-illustrating-burke-11

⁷ <https://mvslim.com/a-mosque-built-by-19th-century-camel-breeders-the-beauty-of-the-marree-mosque-in-australia-lies-in-its-simplicity/>

⁸ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.42

⁹ Simpson, 2018, p.37

¹⁰ Litchfield, 1983, p.2

¹¹ Cigler, 1986, p.35

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 camels¹². The first camel camp at Port Augusta was established¹³.

His partner, Thomas Elder, established the Beltana Pastoral Company with camel farms at Beltana and Umberatana¹⁴.

1870 Cameleer strike at Beltana Station¹⁵.

South Australian parliament legislated to build the Overland Telegraph Line. Camels transported materials and supplies for this construction¹⁶.

1872-3 P.E. Warburton purchased camels from Elder for his exploratory expedition from Alice Springs to the West Australian coast¹⁷. Accompanied by cameleers Saleh Mahomed and Halleem¹⁸.

1873 William Gosse explored the Gibson Desert with Kamran, Jemma Khan and Allanah as his cameleers¹⁹. Gosse was the first European to sight Uluru and Kata Juta²⁰.

1875 Ernest Giles explored from Beltana to Geraldton and Perth with Saleh Mahomed and Halleem²¹. Four expeditions from 1875 to 1876; the last one to Perth with 22 camels managed by Saleh Mahomed²².

1878 Construction began on the Port Augusta to Darwin railway line. Again, camels were used to transport materials and supplies²³.

1880s-90s Some cameleers became independent camel dealers and carriers, including Mahmoud Hassan in Port Augusta²⁴, Abdul Wahid in Bourke, brothers Faiz and Tagh Mahomet from Oodnadatta²⁵, and Syed Goolamdeen from Marree to Broken Hill²⁶.

¹² Simpson, 2018, pp.56-60

¹³ McKnight, 1969, p.63

¹⁴ Cigler, 1986, p.11

¹⁵ Aird & Klaassen, 1985, pp12-13

¹⁶ Stevens, 2002, p.71

¹⁷ Collins, 2016, p.51

¹⁸ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

¹⁹ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

²⁰ Collins, 2016, p.29

²¹ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.p.48

²² Collins, 2016, p.42

²³ Stevens, 2002, p.74

²⁴ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.96

²⁵ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.96

- 1882 Railway reached Farina and soon after Hergott Springs (renamed Marree)²⁷.
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.
- 1888-91 Mosque built in Adelaide.
- 1891 North Camel Camp Mosque built at Broken Hill³².
- 1891-2 Lindsay explored Great Victoria and Gibson Deserts with Hadjih Shah Mahomet, Mahyedine, Alumgool, Mahmoud Azim, Abdul and Joorak Mahomed handling the camels³³. 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 camels³⁴.

²⁶ Litchfield, 1983, p.71

²⁷ Stevens, 2002, p.74

²⁸ Gerriston, 1980, p.26

²⁹ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

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

³¹ Stevens, 2002, p.74

³² Stevens, 2002, p.306

³³ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

³⁴ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

- 1896-7 L.A. Wells led Calvert Expedition through Great Sandy and Gibson Deserts with cameleers Bejah Dervish and Said Ameer³⁵. Funded by Samuel Calvert.
- 1898 Drought at White Cliffs forced residents to get supplies for general store by camel from Broken Hill³⁶.
- 1901 Federal Immigration Restriction Act³⁷.
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 gaoled³⁸.
- 1907 Afghan hawker, Chumpter Khan , shot five whites and killed a teamster³⁹.
- 1912 East West rail link started. Camels used to transport materials, supplies and in construction of railway.
- 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 also killed by police and local militia⁴⁰.
- 1916 Edgar Waite led the Strzelecki Expedition from Farina to north-eastern South Australia with cameleer Mahomet Salaam⁴¹.
- 1924 Gool Mahomet and his sons bought Mulgaria Station⁴²
- 1929 Overland railway reached Alice Springs⁴³.
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.

³⁵ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.48

³⁶ Rowe, 1983, p.?

³⁷ Jones & Kenny, 2007, p.135

³⁸<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/history-culture/2011/07/australias-afghan-cameleers/>

³⁹ Stevens, 2002, p.152

⁴⁰ Kearns, 1975, p.5

⁴¹ Jones & Kenny, 2007

⁴²Aird & KLaassen, 1985, p.13

⁴³ Stevens, 2002, p.74

- 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 Goolamdeen⁴⁴
- 1965 Date Palm trees planted at Broken Hill Mosque current site by Broken Hill Historical Society.
- 2008 Islamic Council of NSW planted two olive trees at current Broken Hill Mosque site.

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⁴⁴ Weidenbach, 2005, p.61 & Litchfield, 1983, p.72

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