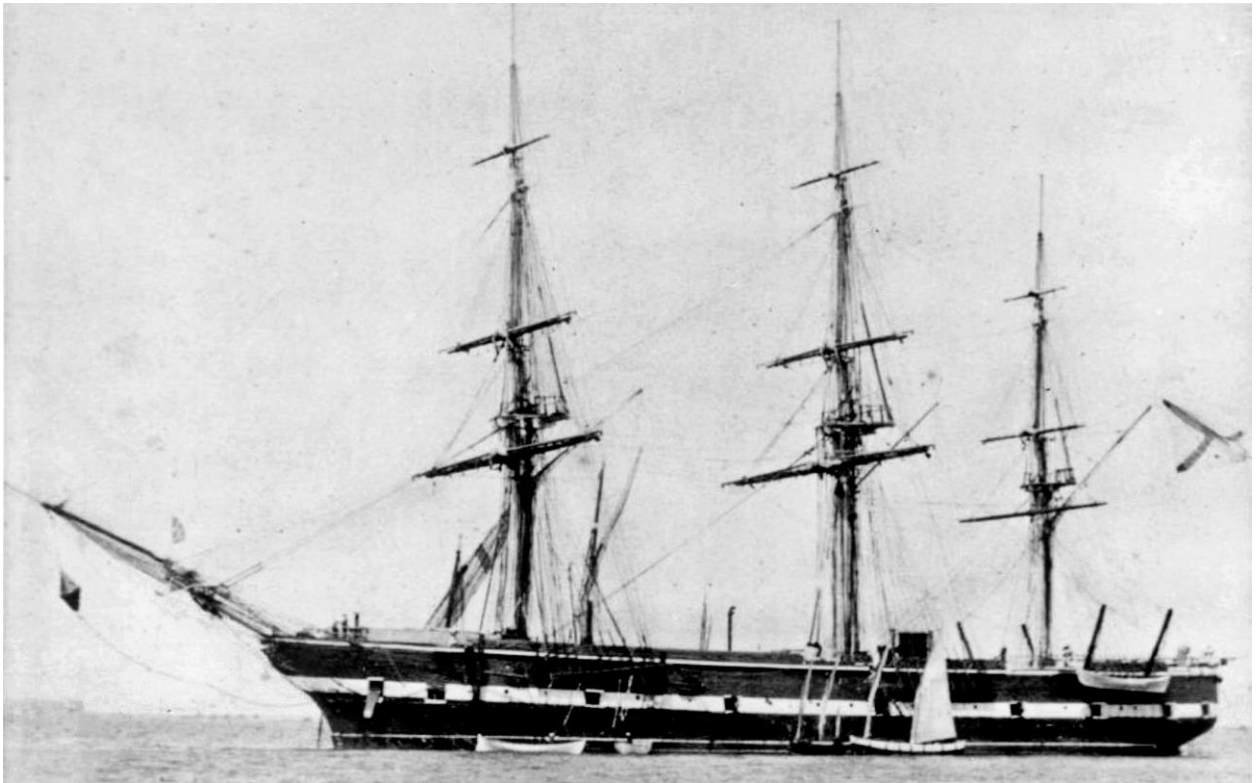


THE FRIGATE SVETLANA IN AUSTRALIA IN 1862

The Russian frigate *Svetlana* (2000 tones displacement, mounting 40 guns, manned by 25 officers and 73 crew) entered the waters of Hobson's Bay and remained unremarked and unrecognized for twelve hours. She was the first Russian man-o-war to have visited Melbourne and, in the best traditions of Victorian spectatorism, she became, a focus of great interest to local citizenry. Crowds followed her sailors, her captain, Boutakov, threw his ship open to visitors and all classes thronged aboard her. Some young ladies even invaded Boutakov's cabin and sang sweet airs to their own accompaniment on his piano! They later astounded their hosts by disporting themselves in the ship's rigging. It was an amiable visit and comment in the press, although somewhat muted, was generally praiseworthy. The *Svetlana* was, however, unfavorably compared with the flagship of the Australian Station, HMS *Pelorus* with whom she exchanged salutes when the latter entered harbor on the completion of a cruise.



Frigate Svetlana

Svetlana's arrival caused some measure of concern to Mr. Loader of the Victorian House of Assembly, who, a week after the Russians' departure, popped up in the House and directed a question at the Chief Secretary in the absence of the Minister of War:

in respect to the arrival of the Russian frigate "Svetlana" in Hobson's Bay it was currently reported that the Russian had been permitted to arrive in this bay without receiving a salute from the batteries and the answer was returned that if such a salute were given it could not be answered as there was no ammunition on the batteries. [Laughter]

Mr Loader, although admitting to some amusement in the first instance, now considered it no laughing matter and asked what would have happened if *Svetlana* had come as a foe instead of friend?...

A. Evans. A Navy for Australia. Sydney, 2001