

In August of 1861, Dent took up Lots 13 and 14 on the western bank of the creek (see Figure 4.3) which like the other blocks on the creek, had never been claimed by their buyers after the auction sale⁴⁴⁹. He very quickly established two sawpits on the waterfront, and before the year was out, had sent 35 logs and 510 slabs of timber to Sydney in October 1861, just two months after first arriving on the creek⁴⁵⁰.

Slabs were flitches of timber obtained by splitting sections of logs cut to length, used in the construction of the settlers' slab and bark huts, as shown in the photo below:

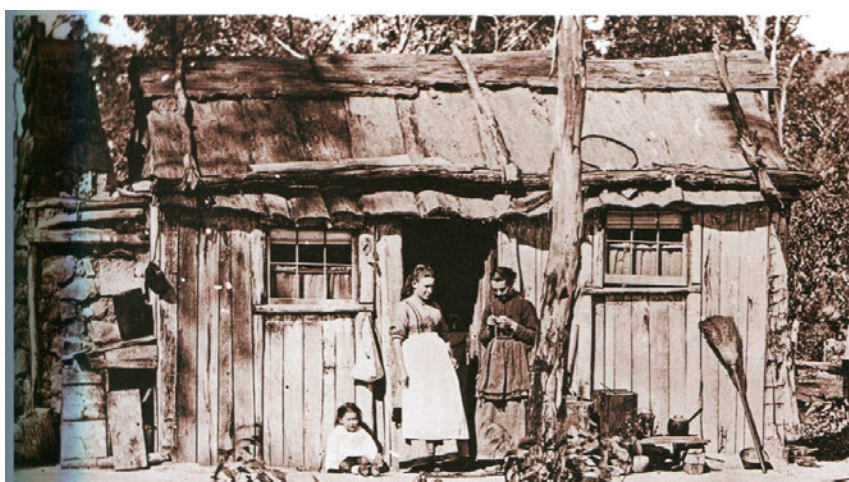


Figure 4.5: Example of a Settler's cottage with slab walls and bark roofing. Source: Gerard Charles Wilson, gerardcharleswilson.com.

The seventeen ton ketch *Sarah Dent*, bought only in 1861, was sold and replaced in 1862 by a fifty ton schooner, the *Sylvanus*⁴⁵¹. By 1864 he and his sons had built another ship, the *Young Australian*, a three masted schooner of 131 tons⁴⁵², under the direction of a shipwright. Dent sent his new ship to Sydney with a load of timber, described as “the finest cargo of hardwood ever seen in this port”⁴⁵³. The hardwood was sold for shipbuilding purposes and was well received: “some of the pieces are 70 feet long and

⁴⁴⁹ New South Wales State Archives, Joseph Alexander Dent Primary Application 19667 Series 17513: statutory declarations by George Thomson, John Wilson and Christopher Joseph Murray.

⁴⁵⁰ See Table 4.1.

⁴⁵¹ Both the *Sarah Dent* and the *Sylvanus* were built by Thomas Davis at Brisbane Water, and George Dent sold the *Sarah Dent* to Thomas Davis's brother, Rock, another shipwright of Brisbane Water. Gwen Dundon, *Shipbuilders of Brisbane Water* (PO Box 202 East Gosford: Gwen Dundon, 1997), 131-132.

⁴⁵² *Argus* (Melbourne); 15 June 1877, 7.

⁴⁵³ *Empire*, 2 April 1864, 5.