Law and settler colonialism is not a self-evident, contained, or straightforward field of inquiry. Rather, it uneasily straddles two overlapping bodies of scholarship: legal histories of colonialism and settler colonial studies. In part one, I place these literatures into conversation to trace their contributions, overlaps, and incommensurabilities. In part two, I turn to maritime worlds as a method of speaking across their analytic divides. Here, I consider the Torrens as a system of land registry inaugurated in the colony of South Australia (1858) and as the last clipper ship to be built in Britain (1875). In its recurring and double-life, the Torrens offers an illuminating nineteenth century example of the interconnection and interdependence of land and sea that serves as a useful lesson today. The global exigencies that arise from the past, organize the present, and impinge on the future demand a shift from terrestrial thinking toward the aqueous and amphibian legalities of settler colonial power.

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