

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA Inc.

NEWSLETTER

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Institute Building, 122 Kintore Avenue, Adelaide 5000

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REMINDER - SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

Members are reminded that annual subscriptions are now due. If you have not already forwarded your renewal, please do so to ensure continued membership and receipt of newsletters and the journal.

This will be the final newsletter forwarded to unfinancial members.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS - INCLUDING NEXT MEETINGS

FRIDAY, JULY 6 (8.00 p.m.)

PROFESSOR ERIC RICHARDS
H.S.S.A TENTH ANNIVERSARY LECTURE
Venue: State Library Lecture Theatre

"SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRANTS 1836 - 1986"

Professor Richards gave the first lecture to the society when he spoke on "History from Below" in 1974, and we are delighted to have secured his services for our tenth birthday meeting. He is Professor of History at Flinders University and General Editor of a "New History of South Australia" which will be published in 1986. Leaving aside the writings about the Germans and the material to be found in family histories, very little has been published about the patterns and processes of immigration to South Australia. This promises to be a most enlightening evening.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 3 (8.00 p.m.)

H.S.S.A. LECTURE

MR. STEWART COCKBURN
"NOMENCLATURE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA"
Venue: State Library Lecture Theatre

Stewart Cockburn needs no introduction as a former journalist, and industrious writer, but he may need introducing as the son of Rodney Cockburn, whose 'Nomenclature' and 'Pastoral Pioneers' have long been essential reference works for anyone interested in our history. A new edition of the former work was launched on 12 June under the title "What's in a Name?" (see notice elsewhere) and will be the principal theme of this lecture.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY AFFAIRS

APRIL MEETING

Members whose appetites for the history of the S.A. Archives were stimulated by Gerald Fischer's lecture at our April meeting might like to hunt out the following articles and papers.

- M. Casson: "George Cockburn Henderson: a memoir" in
South Australiana vol 3 (1964) p.5
- G.C. Henderson: "Report on European Archives" SAPP 46/1915
The Archives Department of S.A.
(Adelaide 1920)
- G.H. Pitt: "An Archivist looks back" in

In addition private papers of the three subjects of Mr. Fischer's talk are deposited in the Archives as follows:

G.C. Henderson PRG 6
John Mc Lellan PRG 195
G.H. Pitt PRG 171

Brian Samuels

REPORT ON MAY MEETING

Alex Castles, Professor of Law in the University of Adelaide, spoke on 'The Place of Law in Australian History'. He pointed out that Australian historians have mostly neglected the serious study of legal history: they have shown an interest in certain personalities on the bench - mad judges and the like - and in those moments of high drama which the law offers - the Boothby case, for example; but that is about as far as their interest has gone. They have tended to assume (wrongly, as Professor Castles thinks) that Australian law and legal practices were a pale imitation of the English; and they have made very little use of legal records as a rich source of social history.

From the first years of the colony of New South Wales courts in fact intervened in many aspects of colonial life, and legal news (not all of it scandal) figured prominently in the news-papers. The Assize of Bread, for instance, set the price of breadstuffs according to a complex formula based on the price of grain in the Sydney marketplace. Professor Castles recalled how his own research into court records in Sydney and Hobart had revealed a wealth of information not only about the price of bread but also about shipping costs and movements, weights and measures, the pastoral industry, even taxi fares in Sydney in the 1930s!

In Sydney and Hobart a determined effort is being made to ensure the preservation of court records. The discussion following on Professor Castles' paper centred on the importance of preserving the judicial records of South Australia, and in particular those papers deposited in the Supreme Court building in Victoria Square. A suggestion that the Council of the Historical Society interest itself in the preservation of these papers, and their transferral to the State Archives, was warmly received. Clearly the Society has an important role to play in this and related conservation matters as 1986 draws closer, and that may be the most important point to emerge out of Professor Castles' interesting talk and the discussion which followed.

A.J. Stimson

REPORT ON MEMBERS NIGHT

Although left somewhat to chance, the June 1 meeting was most interesting. Called 'Members Night' - and I hope any visitors were not under the impression that the crowd gathered was the entire Society - it was an opportunity for people to bring along something of interest or curiosity value for the benefit of others, and after Jim Faull's talk on school inspectors of 1910, perhaps the evening could have been named "Show and Tell".

Following an introductory address by Robert Nicol, Dick Kearns began the evening by producing some bullock cues, used for shoeing bullocks - unlike horseshoes they are in two separate parts. A miner's spider, despite the name, turned out to be a device used to hold candles to the wall as the only source of illumination in the early mines. Finally, there was a letter of interest, written on 30 January 1854 by Henry Ayers, and the tale of how it was found by Dick as a youngster at Burra.

Jim Faull produced a splendid hat worn by his grandfather, Christopher Faull, in his duties as Captain of the Mines. Jim also gave an entertaining talk on school records of earlier years and their fascination and frustration for today's readers. This was punctuated by extracts from an inspector's report for Parkside School of February 1910 - hilarious now, but somewhat devastating for the teachers of the day.

Jim Samuels had brought along an early blacksmith's wheel used in the measuring of steel for wheel rims, a "motorist's companion" containing spare bulbs for car lights circa 1917, and a headlight mask used in dimming headlights during the war years. One remark by Jim is worth mentioning: on holding up the headlight cover, he said that he felt sure all present would know the purpose of this object. It shows how many common objects become complete puzzles to future generations as neither your President or Secretary had any idea what it was for. (My first thoughts were part of an early cake mixer ...)

Indeed two items brought along that evening were most interesting, but their uses unknown. Nancy Webb had a small casket with an ornate figure inside, and Brian Samuels brought a "silver thing with brushes". (I can't really think of a better name, as we didn't know what it was for.) It can be fun inventing uses for such items.

Ila Hollands showed how much can be gained through something as simple as a receipt; in this case detailing the furnishings purchased by her parents following their wedding in November 1922. The total cost was £80/2/6. It is interesting to compare the costs of individual items and to note that most of the furniture is still in the house.

Tess Donnellan brought along a medal presented to her mother as a university pass dated March 1900, and also a book, "Rutledge's Manual of Etiquette", from which Tess read some interesting wedding customs and a strange remedy for worms in children.

Two interesting paintings turned up, the first belonging to Edna Magor and called "Uncle David" - a portrait of her great-grandmother's uncle in 1854. The second belonged to Miss Ahrens and was a painting in a handsome carved wooden frame - a joint effort of two aunts who as young ladies went to "classes" - one to painting and the other to wood-carving.

Tony Stimson provided a passport of 1911 belonging to his grandfather. Interestingly, the only form of identification was the gentleman's signature. His second item was his grandfather's Proclamation of Appointment as Trades Commissioner in London, a beautiful document on parchment.

Robert Nicol brought a host of fascinating items - many dealing with the subject of death in the Victorian era. Included was a daybook from Taylor & Forgie, Undertakers of Gawler, a box of mourning stationery to be used according to strict rules after the death of family members, many funeral cards of different designs, and a glass dome with porcelain and tin decorations that had been kept on a man's deathbed by his widow through many years until she died.

Robert also read extracts from two books: "The English Gentlewoman, or, Hints to Young Ladies on Entering Society", and "Domestic Cookery for the Use of Private Families, by a Lady". He displayed a family photo album of the 1860s which included a photo of Victoria and Albert at the front and the Prince and Princess of Wales at the back. Next came a land transaction of 1770 by the Earl of Shannon handwritten on vellum.

The evening concluded to the music of a polyphon or disc music-box belonging to Robert - a fine example of Victorian entertainment.

Many thanks from the Council to all those who contributed to an interesting evening.

Geoff Haines

NOTICES

Household Customs and the Folklore of Domestic Architecture

This study, which is well established, concentrates on the folklore that surrounds the structural elements of domestic architecture and the domestic customs, activities, and superstitions connected with the house, both internal and

external. The four broad areas encompassed are:

Building, Builders' Rites, and Construction Customs
The New House
The Established House
Feasts and Festivals

My research is confined to the culture of northern Europe and includes the countries of Iceland, Scandinavia (incl. western Finland), United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany (and territories pre 1945), Netherlands, northern Belgium, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Austria, Switzerland, France (Brittany), and the Prussians in Lithuania and Latvia. Also included are those countries largely influenced by these cultures such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, of America.

I would appreciate being contacted by people who remember, know of, or still practise, household customs and superstitions originating in northern Europe.

Michael Murphy

P.O. Box 313
Chatswood NSW 2067

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"Looking for a Teacher" made easier

- Brian Condon

It will not console Dr. Bishop, I know,* but anyone looking for teachers will soon be able to consult my computer-assisted listing of S.A. State School Teachers 1851 - 1909.

It contains:

- (1) Teachers licensed under the Central Board of Education
1852 - 1875 (Entered from Annual Reports)
- (2) Education Department Teachers 1884 - 1909
" " Provisional Teachers 1884 - 1909
" " Pupil Teachers 1884 - 1909
(Entered from official service records)
- (3) Education Department Teachers 1876 - 1883
(Entered from Annual Reports)

It will probably be issued in a series of alphabetical indexes (by teacher name, by school name), and perhaps an index by year. Because of the bulk, they will almost certainly have to be issued in microfiche, though individual searches will come as printouts.

When will they be available? Probably about August. I am currently preoccupied with getting out the 1984 edition of SASS, my 25,000 item computerized Bibliography of South Australian Materials for Social Science, but I hope to be able to do the final editing of "Teachers" within two months.

* The details of his tribulations are in Newsletter 53, April 1984.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA - INAUGURAL MEETING

This was held on 19 July 1974, and with the Society's tenth anniversary imminent, it seems appropriate to recall something of that meeting:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this meeting, called to form the Historical Society of South Australia. First let me apologize to you for any last-minute confusion over the decision to have this meeting here within the Gallery, rather than the announced venue in the Historical Museum. I assure you that the decision was made with the best of motives - to provide for your comfort. The Historical Museum is not the largest of places, and perhaps not the warmest. It is, however, a very appropriate venue for a meeting such as this, and at the end of this meeting it will be open to you. Coffee and biscuits will be served in the Sculpture Court downstairs at the same time. If you were attracted to this meeting at least partly by the desire to see the inside of that Museum, you will not be disappointed. And the coffee and biscuits will be free. I hope that last point is not too bad a start for a new Society when everyone seems to be reeling under the body blows of inflation.

Before making any further remarks, I should say that this meeting has inevitably clashed with other meetings being held tonight, and a number of people have been unable to attend. The list of those who have sent apologies is rather long, and I won't read them all, but should mention that apologies have been received from

the Premier, Mr. Dunstan
the Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Eastick
the Minister of Education, Mr. Hudson
the Minister of Environment and Conservation,
Mr. Broomhill
the Minister of Development and Mines, Mr. Hopgood
and the Federal Member for Wakefield, Mr. Kelly

I should also mention the apology tendered by Sir Archibald Grenfell Price, and his good wishes for tonight's meeting. A number of others, including the President and members of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, have also sent good wishes for this meeting.

We are most pleased, however, to welcome Mr. John Coumbe, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, a number of members of Councils and representatives of other Societies and departments. To those who have travelled considerable distances to attend this meeting, may I extend a special welcome.

I don't want to speak for long at this stage, but certain things should be explained to you. This is not the meeting of a fully fledged society but a meeting called by a Steering Committee to form a society. My name is Ron Gibbs; with me are Brian Samuels and John Tolley. The three of us constitute a Steering Committee elected by a small group of people who met first in February of this year to discuss the formation of a state Historical Society. Brian Samuels convened that meeting, and it was he who took the initiative in bringing the group together. From the discussions came the decision to form a Steering Committee to launch a Society. The intended aims of the Society? The Committee saw these as:

- (a) to arouse interest in and to promote the study and discussion of South Australian and Australian history
- (b) to promote the collection, preservation and classification of source material of all kinds relating to South Australian and Australian history
- (c) to publish historical records and articles
- (d) to promote interchange of information among members of the Society by lectures, readings, discussions and exhibitions
- (e) to co-operate with similar societies throughout Australia
- (f) to do all such other things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of the above objects or any of them

You will find these aims printed on the back of the sheet giving you information of further meetings. I hope these statements explain what kind of Society this one will be.

The Steering Committee has also arranged further meetings - two general meetings (one in September, one in November) and a special business meeting on Wednesday, September 4th (not on September 3rd, as originally notified) to consider a constitution for the Society and the election of a committee. There will be no such business at tonight's meeting, but the September 4th meeting will be devoted solely to these matters. I invite you to attend that meeting, but realize that the remaining two general meetings, on the Depression of the 1920s and 1930s in South Australia, and on the History of

Hindmarsh, both with a minimum of business, should be much more attractive. I urge you to come to them. Details of all meetings will be found on the leaflets available to you. And could you please mention these meetings to others? We have made every effort to advertise this meeting and future meetings as widely as possible, and feel sorry that there must still be some who would have come tonight had they known about the meeting. Perhaps you can help us reach those people, and assure them of our apologies and of our anxiety to include all people who support the aims already outlined in the activities of the Society. This last point must be emphasized. It has been felt strongly that the Society should be as much for amateur historians as for professional historians, as much perhaps for a person who has limited time and a beginning interest for historical things as for a person who is writing his second doctoral dissertation. It should be a Society, too, for those who accept the proposition that thorough understanding of any aspect of history, however local, aids the understanding of every other, however "grand".

Let me conclude by stating the following conviction. It is surely time that this state had a strong central Historical Society, as found in every other Australian state. Such a Society could provide an avenue of expression for all the historical interests of this community. Such a Society could support others engaged in similar work. Such a Society could be a valuable watch dog over the historical estate, barking strongly when unthinking people seek to destroy it before our eyes. And such a Society could help every person interested in history add richness to his own life and that of others.

* * * * *

JUBILEE 150 - HISTORY AND CONSERVATION

South Australia will stage its 150th Anniversary of colonisation in 1986 with a year-long celebration that will be the biggest and most spectacular event in the State's history

Blending fun and excitement with dignity, pomp and circumstance, the year, called Jubilee 150, will make South Australia a national and international focus from New Year's Eve 1985 through to Proclamation Day, December 28, 1986.

Jubilee 150 will involve all South Australians and tens of thousands of visitors who will share in the historic celebrations.

Planning for Jubilee 150 began in mid 1980 with the establishment of the South Australian Jubilee 150 Board chaired by Adelaide entrepreneur and businessman Mr. Kym Bonython. The Board now, with less than two years to go, has plans for Jubilee 150 well advanced.

The Board divided the community into 19 areas, each with its own Executive Committee. A History and Conservation Committee was formed. The present composition of this Committee is as follows:

Dr. John Radcliffe (Chairman)
Judith Brine
Denis Cumming
Dr. Brian Dickey
Murray Evans (Executive Officer)
Gordon Gardener
Valmai Hankel
Colin Harris
Elizabeth Ho
Graham Jenkin
Maude McBriar
Susan Marsden
Helen Pearce
Dr. John Tregenza, and
Jon Wommersley

The Committee has been meeting regularly for the past three years and has already considered over 220 proposals. Those for which approval has been given are summarised below:

South Australian Maritime Museum

This project will create a major maritime park and museum at Port Adelaide as a significant tourist asset and educational centre for all South Australians wishing to learn about the State's fascinating and colourful maritime history. It will incorporate the National Trust's Maritime Park site at Birkenhead and heritage-listed buildings in Port Adelaide's State Heritage Area.

Burra Heritage Town

Burra, one of South Australia's most historic and unspoiled towns, will be transformed into a museum of living history through this imaginative and challenging project, which has as its focus the town's copper mining heyday.

This project will assist the conservation of Burra's heritage.

Fort Glanville

Fort Glanville, although its garrison never fired a shot in anger, is arguably Australia's most well preserved fort. A Visitor Centre will be constructed to allow the fort's history to be interpreted outside the fort and the fort itself to be restored to its 1880s appearance.

Moonta Mines

This area, which played a major role in the State's economy

and early development, is being preserved and interpreted. The Museum is being professionally upgraded, thus assisting visitors to understand the significance to this State of the Moonta Mines.

Naracoorte Park

Native scrubland is being developed into a botanical park with walking and jogging paths, adventure and playground equipment, and barbecue areas enhanced by tree planting for public enjoyment.

Lock Flora Park

A block of parklands is being fenced, trees are being planted and walking paths are being established so that the public may enjoy what will become a flora park. Adjacent to the School, the park will provide an opportunity for biological studies.

Penola Park

Jubilee funding is being used to assist with the further development of the park, including the restoration of "Ulya Cottage", which was the home of the first resident doctor in Penola.

The area is being landscaped and fencing erected.

Kensington - Norwood Plaquing

The Kensington - Norwood Historical Society has been allocated funding to copy historic photographs of the area and to mount plaques and various displays in 1986.

Mt. Schank

Funding has been provided to assist with the revegetation of the cone of Mt. Schank, a volcano. This project is enabling the reintroduction of native species to this area.

Greening of Adelaide

The objective of the Greening of Adelaide is to achieve, by 1986, a permanent and substantial greening of the metropolitan area through the use of trees and other plant materials. Jubilee funding was used for publicity purposes.

Measured Drawing Competition

A measured drawing competition will be held in 1986 and confined to buildings on the Register of State Heritage Items. Jubilee funding is being used to provide prize money for the competition.

Munno Para History Collection

The Munno Para Library has been allocated financial assistance to conduct a travelling pictorial history display throughout its area.

"Waterwitch" Maritime Archaeological Project

Jubilee funding has been provided to assist with the recovery, recording, cataloguing, conservation and display of artefacts from the historic shipwreck "Waterwitch", which lies in the River Murray near Blanchetown. Some 400 artefacts were recently recovered from this wreck.

"City of Adelaide" Model

Funding has been allocated to enable a small model of this vessel to be made for display at the Beachport Branch of the National Trust.

Millicent History Collection

The Millicent Public Library is receiving funding to establish a collection of the area's historical records, which will be made available to the public, including school children.

S.A. Genealogy and Heraldry Society

The Society has been funded to purchase two desk computers to assist with the compilation of a biographical index of early South Australians.

"Geltwood" Display

Funding has been allocated to the Millicent Branch of the National Trust to recover, and display, artefacts from the wreck of the "Geltwood".

Clayton Farm Agricultural Museum

Funding has been allocated to enable the purchase of a display shed to house museum agricultural machinery and artefacts at Clayton Farm near Bordertown.

Riverton Institute

Funding has been allocated to assist with the restoration of the balcony on the Riverton Institute building, which has been recommended for inclusion on the Register of State Heritage Items.

Rushton Proctor Steam Tractor

The tractor is a prominent feature of the Franklin Harbour

Branch of the National Trust's Static Machinery display. The Trust will restore this machine to working order. There is considerable community support for this project, and Jubilee 150 support is already being provided.

Coromandel Valley Photographic Display

The Coromandel Valley Branch of the National Trust has received Jubilee funding to assist with mobile historical photographic displays of the Coromandel Valley and surrounding hills areas for 1986. Displays will be conducted at Blackwood, Aberfoyle Park, Mitcham, Flinders University, and in various schools and by community groups. When not in use the display will be housed at the Ivor Symons Library, Blackwood.

South Australiana Library

Books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, photographs, films, tape recordings, diaries, and personal papers on people, places, industries, societies, clubs, churches, and schools, relating to South Australia will be housed in a special library to be called the Mortlock Library of South Australiana.

The Jubilee Fund is assisting with the Mortlock Library which will ensure that historical material will be housed permanently in South Australia as a resource for future generations.

In addition to the projects listed above, consideration is being given to funding a major oral history project entitled "South Australia Speaks", covering life in this State in the first three decades of this century.

* * * * *

THE MORTLOCK LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIANA

PUBLIC APPEAL

This appeal was launched by the Premier on 30 April, and is indeed a cause worth supporting. The following messages from the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition and the background information on the library and appeal are taken from the well-produced appeal booklet. Members wishing to contribute should either collect a leaflet at the State Library's South Australiana Bookshop or phone 223 8726. Donations are tax deductible.

MESSAGES FROM THE PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
AND THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

With South Australia's Jubilee 150 celebrations so close, community interest in our history is growing enormously. Significantly, enquiries about South Australian research and other material held by the State Library have more than doubled in the last two years.

There is a tremendous amount of information available about South Australian personalities, communities, industries, churches, schools and clubs. Unfortunately, much of this material is relatively untapped because people have never been able to go to one location for "South Australia".

To meet this need we are establishing the Mortlock Library of South Australiana. This library will bring together the largest and most comprehensive collection on all aspects of life in our State.

To house this collection, the Jervois Wing of the State Library will be restored to its former Victorian splendour.

\$1.5 million will be needed to fund this project. \$1 million of this has already been raised from donations by the South Australian Government and the Libraries Board of South Australia.

A public appeal is being launched to raise the extra \$500,000 needed for this worthwhile project.

I urge you to support the Mortlock Library of South Australiana Appeal.

Yours sincerely,

J.C. Bannon
PREMIER

The establishment of the Mortlock Library of South Australia is a major step towards providing a centrally located resource of vital historical information for this and future generations.

Pride in our community requires that comprehensive records of all aspects of our life from the very beginnings of South Australia be adequately housed and preserved. It is essential that these records also be easily accessible to the people of the State.

To achieve these ends I commend the establishment of the Mortlock Library to all South Australians.

The commitment of \$500,000 each by the State Government

and the Libraries Board of South Australia offers a healthy start to achieving the target of \$1.5 million. The extra \$500,000 being sought from the public of South Australia through this appeal will ensure that the Mortlock Library of South Australiana is quickly established.

I am delighted to add my support to the Mortlock Library of South Australiana Appeal.

Yours sincerely,

J. Olsen
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

THE MORTLOCK LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIANA APPEAL

The Appeal for the Mortlock Library of South Australiana has been instigated to raise funds for the establishment of a permanently housed collection of material illustrating the history of our state. It has been launched as a special project to mark the centenary of the State Library in 1984. This \$1.5 million project has already received the generous support of the State Government with a \$500,000 donation. The Libraries Board has committed a further \$500,000 from income generated from the late J.A.T. Mortlock's bequest to the State Library leaving a balance to be raised by public appeal.

The Mortlock Library will offer a wide range of subjects from a large cross section of organisations and individuals, all with relevance to South Australia. It will include books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, photographs, films, tape recordings, diaries and personal papers on people, places, industries, societies, clubs, churches, schools - all aspects of life in South Australia.

The need for such a collection is reinforced by the rapidly growing demand for South Australiana information. The use of the South Australiana materials held in the library is escalating at a rate much greater than any other section of the library. The number of users in 1981/2 was 21,686, 1982/3 33,533 and already in the 1983/4 period, the numbers have reached 29,796 to the end of February 1984. It is anticipated that with the continuing growth of interest in South Australian history, particularly with the approach of the State's sesquicentenary in 1986, the demand will continue to increase.

To effectively cater for this rapid growth, the establishment of the Mortlock Library of South Australiana will ensure that historical material is easily accessible and will be permanently housed in its home state for future generations.

DONORS TO THE MORTLOCK LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIANA

All donors' names will be entered in a commemorative book for the Mortlock Library of South Australiana unless the donor prefers to remain anonymous. This book will become a permanent item in the new library. Donors' names will also appear in "The Advertiser". Special commemorative book-marks will be produced for presentation to all donors as a personal memento of their contribution.

In addition to this memento each donor of \$1,000 or more will receive a numbered, hand bound copy in leather of William Light's Brief Journal and Australian Diaries including coloured plates and edited by David Elder to be published through the Wakefield Press.

Donors of over \$5,000 but less than \$10,000 will have their names placed on a plaque on the balcony peninsular shelving (16 available).

Donors of over \$10,000 but less than \$25,000 will have their names placed on a plaque on one of the ground floor reading bays (16 available); or a donation of \$25,000 or more will ensure that a special reading room will be named in honour of the donor.

All commemorative plaques will remain in the library in perpetuity.

Donors who are already subscribers to the Friends of the State Library are urged to continue that membership, and it is suggested that other donors might give consideration to joining this invaluable adjunct to the Library. Discounts on items available through the South Australiana Bookshop are available to all donors, members and benefactors.

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ARTICLE

FEDER SCHLEISSEN AND OTHER OLD-TIME WISDOM

- Jean Schmaal

The early German pioneers, wise in their generation, had a way to beat the cold, which is very much the "in" thing again today. This was the wide-spread use of feather quilts and underbeds.

In the early days most of the German farmers kept about a dozen geese. Regular hatchings were made to ensure a supply of down and tasty meat. The geese were hardy birds and were

seldom fed as they were good at foraging for themselves once past the gosling stage.

When the goose was setting, the gander was invariably very savage, attacking anything that came near: hissing, thrusting with the spurs on his big webbed feet, and beating with huge wings that were capable of breaking a man's leg. It was not unusual for a goose to lay as many as 20 eggs at a setting.

On most farms geese returned to their homes at the end of a day's foraging, and were locked up for the night in a "goose stable" to prevent foxes making inroads into them. Usually one gander ran with with three or four geese; more than one gander with each little flock meant trouble, as the big birds were quick to fight.

As geese by nature shed their down periodically, it was the practice to pluck the down from the geese about 5 times a year. A small piece of down served as a testing piece: if it came away marked with blood, then the time was not right for stripping and the farmer's wife had to bide her time until the down came away cleanly.

When the birds were killed, came the Feder schleissen (feather-picking) evenings, often just before a wedding. Young and old alike gathered to strip the soft down from the shaft of the feathers.

When the feathers had been stripped and there was a good heap of soft down for the mattress, the pillows, quilts and underbeds, a fiddle or accordion struck up the music and the fun began, usually with the polka-mazurka, which was a great favourite. With few other avenues of entertainment available, evenings like this were looked forward to eagerly by the younger generation, and many a romance started when the feather-picking began.

To make the down into pillows, feather-proof calico was purchased and filled with the fluffy harvest. This was not as much inclined to work through as the "picked" feathers because there was no shaft on the down. The pillows lasted for years and years and could be replenished from time to time if they became a little flattened.

The quilts and underbeds provided a wonderful source of extra warmth (with no extra weight) in winter. The humble goose provided many a warm sleep and many a good meal in his time. It seems that the old-timers were "downy birds" who could show us and our electric blankets a thing or two. Today fashion has come full circle and continental quilts as they now call them, are again a great favourite when Old Man Winter breathes his icy breath across the countryside.

Another item from the German settlers which has gained a great deal of popularity in recent times is that old standby

the Wurst (or German sausage).

Among the many jobs on the farm was that of killing the pig. This was a great occasion and was quite a community effort. First of all the animal was stunned, and then its throat cut by the men. A little salt was put into a basin, and, as the pig bled, its blood was caught and stirred constantly to keep it from congealing. This was often a job allotted to the farm children. From this Blutwurst (blood sausage) was made. A copper of water was kept on the boil so that the pig could be scalded. Fresh straw was laid on the ground and the pig placed on it. Boiling water was then poured over the carcase and the hairs scraped off.

Little squares of fat were cut from the pig's cheek, and this with rice was made into Reismurst. The little squares made a pattern in the sausage when it was cooked for eating.

Next day the head and the bits were boiled and a mincer used to chop up the meat for Metwurst. Cloves and allspice were ground and then, with garlic, added to the Wurst mixture. The runners (or intestines) of the pig were kept, cleaned in salt water and filled with the Wurst mixture.

Sometimes it curled naturally around into circles; at other times it went straight. Sometimes the sawn-off horns of a cow were used - on these the runners were placed. The Wurst mixture was pushed through the runners which were tied off at intervals.

Bacon (Speck) and ham (Schinken) were also made. Big stone jars were used to salt down the pieces of pig meant for bacon. The pig was cut into pieces to fit into the jars and the meat had to stay there for 6 weeks. After that it was taken out, drained and then smoked. Smoking took up to a fortnight; Metwurst took a couple of days to smoke.

Blutwurst and Leberwurst (liver) were boiled sausages.

There was a little smoke-house on most farms - perhaps it was not much more than a couple of sheets of iron, but it did the job. Sawdust and chips were used - anything that would make a good smoke. This was dampened down and thrown on hot coals.

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NEW BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Colonists, Copper and Corn
in the Colony of South Australia 1850-51

by

E.M. Yelland

Gillingham Printers Pty Ltd, Adelaide

This book which is listed in the Guidesheet Good Reading in South Australian History has been out of print for the past ten years, but is now republished in a new format. The revised edition has two maps and forty-seven illustrations. *

(Retail Price: \$24.00)

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SPECIAL OFFER

What's in a Name?

by

Rodney Cockburn

"This is a new, revised, well illustrated and greatly expanded edition of the late Rodney Cockburn's well-known and authoritative book, which has been out of print for seventy-five years. ...

The author was an early champion of the use of Aboriginal words as place names. A so far unpublished essay by him on the subject is printed as an appendix. Other appendices include a similarly unpublished summary of the re-naming of German place names during World War I, and a sardonic commentary by the author on the 'vainglorious and vexatious manner in which the early Governors of the Province plastered the map with their own names ... and those of members of their families and staff.'

"What's in a Name?", of 320 pages and approximately 200,000 words is available in a limited printing of 510 numbered copies fully casebound and signed and authenticated by the author's son, Stewart Cockburn, who is publishing this new edition. There is a further printing in a glossy limp covered edition.

The author has generously offered members a 10% discount, with a further 10% going to the Society.

Hard case - rrp \$38 less 10% : \$34.20
(mailing charge \$2 extra if posted)

Glossy limp cover - rrp \$16.95 less 10% : \$15.25
(mailing charge \$2 extra if posted)

Copies can be collected from Brian Samuels in the History Trust offices, weekdays 9 - 5. (Please have the right money!)

Postal orders should be addressed to the Historical Society of South Australia, attention B. Samuels. (Please remember to include your address!)

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THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MARITIME MUSEUM

The South Australian Maritime Museum is one of the major projects planned for 1986, and is intended to be a significant historical and tourist attraction for the State drawing tens of thousands of visitors each year. It is funded by the Jubilee 150 Board via a \$1.1 million Commonwealth grant for construction costs and State Government funding for staff and operating costs.

The Museum is to be established in Port Adelaide and will incorporate historic buildings in the heart of the State's first declared Heritage Area and the National Trust's Maritime Park site on the waterfront at Birkenhead. It will bring together the extensive collections of the Port Adelaide Nautical Museum (Australia's oldest nautical museum) and the Port Adelaide Committee of the National Trust of South Australia, together with other smaller collections such as that of the Port Adelaide Historical Society. Donations from the public will be welcome.

The History Trust of South Australia is overseeing the development of the Museum on behalf of the Jubilee 150 Board and the first staff should be appointed in July or August. A Development Committee comprising representatives from business, governmental and historical organisations will be established soon thereafter to provide an avenue for community involvement in the Museum. In addition, the continued involvement of volunteers will be strongly encouraged, as it has been only through the work of volunteers that the existing collections have been assembled.

Until staff are appointed, enquiries can be directed to the Information Officer, History Trust of South Australia, Institute Building, North Terrace, Adelaide, phone 223 8807.

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