

History SA

Newsletter of the Historical Society of South Australia

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A carnival of colour

Carnival glass is a mass-produced, moulded form of glassware, featuring vivid colours with an iridescent finish. (The process of iridization involves the spraying of a mixture of metallic salts onto the surface of the glass.) The most common forms are bowls, dishes and vases, decorated with fruit, flower and animal motifs. It attracts passionate collectors, one of whom, Gary Workman, will present a talk, "Carnival Glass", at our next meeting in the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, 1st August, at 8.00 p.m.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were very few firms in the world making iridized glass and it was very expensive. Then in 1905 American manufacturers decided to produce a cheaper form using moulds, and within a short time there were hundreds of patterns in a huge range of colours. In 1919 the Crown Crystal Glass Works in Sydney began production.

At the meeting Gary and his wife Margaret will display over thirty pieces of carnival glass from their collection and members are invited to bring their own along for identification. Gary will be able to tell you who made it, what it is called and how old it is.


Gary Workman worked for twenty years as the Spare Parts Manager for a wood-working firm. He is a past President of the Carnival Glass Society of Australia and is currently the Chairman of the Glass Collectors Society. He was the co-author of *Carnival Glass of Australia* (1988) and has written a number of articles on glass collecting for Australian, English and American magazines. For the last twelve years he has been the editor of the Carnival Glass Society Newsletter. 

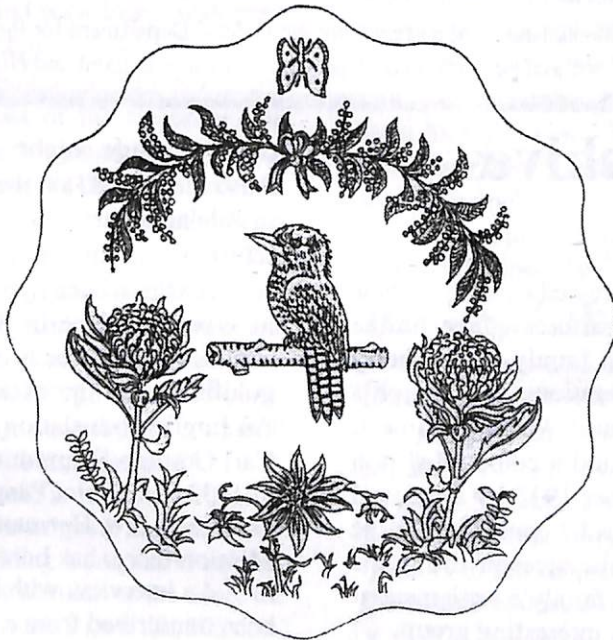
A hard land to live off

The Murray Mallee — the region between the upper South-East and the River Murray — is characterized by low rainfall, an absence of surface water, and light, sandy soils prone to drifting. It has always been a difficult land to live off. In his illustrated lecture, "Marginal Lands, Marginal Land Use: The Historical Geography of the South Australian Murray Mallee", to be given in the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, on Friday, 5th September, at 8.00 p.m., Colin Harris will look at the ways in which the physical environment of the district has influenced human settlement.

The Aboriginal people had a reliable water source in the Murray and only utilized the more precarious Mallee after heavy rainfall, when they could enjoy a change of diet. The area was taken up for pastoral use in the 1860s but for no more than three decades. The necessity for wells (with costly steam-driven pumps) and problems with rabbits and dingoes meant that by the end of the nineteenth century the pastoral leases were finished. They were replaced by agriculture, which massively transformed the landscape with mechanical clearing. Droughts, soil erosion and the Depression

led to widespread restructuring into larger holdings. Despite new varieties of crops being introduced after World War II, it has remained a difficult environment.

Colin Harris has an M.A. in Geography from the University of Adelaide, where he lectured and tutored for four years. He has since spent thirty years working for the State Government in the field of natural resources management. He is currently the Director of Biodiversity Conservation in the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation. 



Carnival glass pattern for Kookaburra Master Bowl, produced by Crown Crystal Glass Works, Sydney, 1924.

The Historical Society of South Australia Inc.

Founded 1974

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Meetings are held on the first Friday of each month at 8 p.m. in the Prince Philip Theatre, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town. All welcome.

THE OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY ARE:

- To arouse interest in and promote the study and discussion of history, especially South Australian and Australian history.
- To promote the collection, preservation and classification of source material of all kinds relating to South Australian and Australian history.
- To publish historical material.
- To promote the interchange of information among members of the Society by readings, lectures, discussions, field trips & exhibitions.
- To co-operate with similar societies throughout Australia.
- To do all such things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of any of the above objects.

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Mortlock Archives

by Neil Thomas

Personal record groups processed recently include those of Lindsay C. Arnold, marine engineer in the merchant navy, and the Terrell family from Cherry Gardens, covering several generations. Leo Terrell's papers include diaries from World War I (his time at Gallipoli and later in France) and a coloured sketch made of Suvla Bay in November 1915 by a medical orderly using only the materials he could find in the medical kit. His father's reminiscences of life in the early twentieth century and the family's settlement at Cherry Gardens are part of this interesting group.


H. Lipson Hancock (1867-1935), the last general manager of the Moonta Mines, was a great Methodist layman and Sunday School reformer. His granddaughter has donated papers relating to his work and church interests. The papers of two nurses, Stella Tamke (dealing with her nursing career from 1938-1974), and Jean Blacker, whose service included Army nursing in World War II on hospital ships and her time as Matron of Ashford Community Hospital, have been processed.

There are family and personal papers of the former Emeritus Professor of Librarianship at Monash University, South Australian-born Jean Primrose Whyte, who died in March 2003. Henry Ashcroft Robinson's

papers include shipboard diaries of his trip to South Australia in 1883 on the *Myrtle Holmes*, his brief time in Adelaide during June and July of that year, and his return trip to England.

A letter written by a J. Phillips to his brother Charles in Worcestershire in September 1853 mentions the fortunes of another brother William on the Bendigo goldfields and the exodus of men across the border. An English translation of the German diary kept by Carl Gottlieb Schmidt (1875-1956) of his trip by car in 1933 from Point Pass to Cooper's Creek to visit his brother-in-law Hermann Vogelsang at the Lutheran Mission there, has been donated.

An interview with Daisy Bates by Bob Smart has been transcribed from a recording made in her old age. Unfortunately the place of the interview or information about the interviewer is unknown, but it may have been made about 1944. A series of video-recorded interviews made by secondary school students for "Come Out 87" with Barbara Hanrahan, Mem Fox, Colin Thiele, Max Fatchen and Christobel Mattingley allows the authors to tell their own stories about how they wrote their books.

An interesting item of regalia is a Peace Medal issued prematurely by the State Government to South Australian school children in May 1900 to celebrate the anticipated end to the Boer War in South Africa, two years before peace was declared. 

Book Review

Peter Monteath (ed.): *Sailing with Flinders: The Journal of Seaman Samuel Smith* (Corkwood Press, North Adelaide, 2003)

I could not put this book down. I read it through in one sitting, engrossed by the immediacy of the narrative and the unvarnished simplicity of its style. We are used to official accounts of early exploration written by highly literate, well-educated men, so it is a pleasure to read an ordinary seaman's version of Matthew Flinders' voyage to Terra Australis, published now for the first time.

Samuel Smith's journal makes us aware of just how laborious much of the work was for the crew on an expedition of discovery. Anchors are hove, dropped and sometimes lost, depths are sounded, boats lowered and squalls weathered. Smith often seems oblivious to the scientific work being done by the "Gentlemen" on board and he remarks several times that "nothing perticulour Occur'd". But amidst all the routine there are perceptive stories of first contact with Aborigines, the matter-of-fact recording of men lost overboard, accounts of the procuring of fresh meat (in the form of porpoises, turtles, kangaroos and mutton birds), and observations on the behaviour of whales, the parlous condition of the *Investigator* and occasional encounters (mostly fleeting) with other ships.

The most enthralling passage in the book is the graphic description of the loss of the *Porpoise* and the *Cato* on Wreck Reef. Smith was on the *Porpoise* when she struck and he declares, "There was no other appearance but of Death, there being such heavy Seas striking her Momentary & Flying all over us." The mariners remained on the ship, fearful that she would drift into deep water and instantly sink. "In this mizarable situation we spent the Night, every breast filld with Horror." Eventually they took refuge on a 150-yard-wide sand bank, which Smith describes as "a small Uncertainty 150 miles from the Nearest land".

The editor, Peter Monteath, is to be commended for preserving the spelling of the original. He contributes an excellent introduction, providing background information on the life of an ordinary seaman at the time, the little that is known of Samuel Smith's own life, Flinders' strict but humane treatment of his crew and the complexity of the expedition's contact with Aborigines. There could have been a little more in the footnotes about where the various sites are on the map, and Monteath perpetuates the myth that Flinders created the name "Australia", but otherwise this is a masterly presentation.

The book contains nineteen illustrations, including eleven paintings by expedition artist William Westall. It is published in hardcover at \$35 and in papercover at \$25, and is available from major bookshops, or from the publisher at P.O. Box 237, North Adelaide 5006 (postage free in S.A.).

-- John Healey


On your Council

Alison Brain


Born in Western Australia, Alison moved with her family to Melbourne at the age of three. She attended Mentone Girls Grammar School and the Moorabbin College of T.A.F.E., where she obtained a Certificate of Business Studies. Moving back to Perth when she was 24, she completed a B.A. in Social Studies and a Post-Graduate Diploma in History from Edith Cowan University.

She was employed by the National Trust of Western Australia for seven years, working on assessments of historic buildings for the Built Environment Committee. "What I particularly enjoyed," she says, "was being able to touch and feel the history in the buildings." She returned to South Australia in 2000. She is a member of the Professional Historians Association (W.A.), the Royal W.A. Historical Society, the W.A. Genealogy Society, the S.A. Genealogy & Heraldry Society, and the Australian Society of Genealogists (with whom she is doing a Diploma of Family Historical Studies).


Alison has also been actively involved with the Oral History Association and is at present working on a project interviewing people about their experiences in Australia and Britain in the decade 1937-1947. Her love of history was sparked initially by a conversation with her mother about their ancestry. "I asked one question and the floodgates opened." Her abiding interest is in local history. "My real curiosity is in what the bloke next door was doing. What did the ordinary person do, and why?"

Alison has been a member of the HSSA for three years and joined the Council of the Society in May. 


R.G.S. Library hours

Members who use the excellent facilities of the library of the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia are advised that its hours will change from Monday, 14th July (when the State Library re-opens). The R.G.S. Library will then be open every day from Monday to Friday, from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. Situated upstairs in the Jervois Building, it may be entered via the eastern entrance adjacent to the Museum lawns. 

Univ. of Adelaide reunions

Did you, or someone you know, graduate from the University of Adelaide in 1953, 1972 or 1973? If you have not yet received an invitation to your reunion, please contact Nada Racki at the Alumni, Community Relations and Development Office, on (08) 8303 6356, or e-mail nada.racki@adelaide.edu.au. 

History SA deadline

The deadline for all material for the September 2003 issue of the Newsletter is Friday, August 15th. It should be addressed to John Healey, Editor, *History SA*, 27 Germein St., Semaphore 5019. 

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

John Jenkin writes in the May issue of *History SA* with reference to the review of my book, *A lady at sea: the adventures of Agnes Grant Hay*, in particular commenting on the supposed discovery of the wreck of the *Waratah* in 1999. In fact this wreck was not the *Waratah*, as I outline in my book.

I have been researching and speaking on Agnes Grant Hay, "Mount Breckan" and the *Waratah* for more than twenty years. Agnes Hay was a South Australian writer and *grande dame*. Attendance at her Adelaide parties numbered in the thousands on several occasions during the 1880s and 1890s. She also made eighteen voyages between Adelaide and London, finally perishing, presumably drowned, when the steamer *Waratah* disappeared off the South African coast in July 1909.

Growing up at Victor Harbor, I weekly sat in St. Augustine's Anglican church with the memorials to the Hay family around me, including that memorializing the lost steamer. I knew elderly people who remembered Mrs. Hay, the fire at "Mount Breckan" and the loss of the *Waratah*. Later I met descendants of *Waratah* passengers, including a descendant of Claude Sawyer, the passenger who disembarked at Durban due to frightening dreams suggesting the ship would meet with disaster, and an elderly lady who had been with her parents on board the *Waratah* at Port Adelaide the morning the ship left, when her father cancelled their passage due to his own premonition --- to the outrage of her mother, who was looking forward to her first trip to Britain.

The *Waratah* was a brand new, luxury steamer, built in 1908 for Lunds' Blue Anchor Line. At the time of her second (and final) voyage, she was carrying 211 people, including the crew. South Australians on board included Agnes Hay and her youngest daughter, Helen, as well as Colonel Percival Browne of Moorak and Miss Helen Jones of Blackwood (the fiancée of a nephew of Sir Samuel Way). The ship left Durban in late July, heading into a furious storm, and was not seen again, nor was any wreckage ever discovered. It was due to this disaster that radio communication became compulsory for shipping.

John Jenkin refers to Professor Bragg (who had travelled with the Hays on the *Waratah* the previous year) giving evidence for the Board of Enquiry, which sat in London for fourteen months between early 1910 and early 1911, gathering evidence-pertaining to the disappearance. In fact, many South Australians, including Agnes Hay's son, the novelist William Hay, gave evidence at hearings held locally. (Claude Sawyer in his evidence made reference to a conversation he had with Agnes Hay.) There was pointed comment by the Board when Lunds claimed to have neither sought nor received feedback from the captain of the *Waratah*,

Fleet Commodore Josiah Ilbery, on the handling of the ship during its maiden voyage. It was patently obvious that Lunds were covering up.

For some years I have been in contact with Emlyn Brown, a South African diver who has been searching for the wreck of the *Waratah* for a good part of his life. In 1999 the *London Times*, the *Australian* and many other newspapers carried front page reports stating that the wreck had been discovered. Two years later, however, it was confirmed that the wreck in question was in fact the *Nadsea Meadow*, an allied freighter carrying tanks, which was torpedoed in 1942. This was duly reported in the *Cape Town Dispatch* on 20th January 2001.

All of this is described in my book. As the old people at Victor Harbor said to me years before, the sea does not readily give up its secrets. Tony Arbon, local shipping expert, has his own theories on the disappearance. He believes that the force of water rushing into the ship as the long coal hatch (part of the *Waratah's* particular design) was stove in by a wave of massive force during the storm of 27th July 1909 would have taken the ship straight to the bottom without leaving any wreckage for the search teams to find in the ensuing months. So the mystery of the S.S. *Waratah* remains unsolved.

Yours sincerely,
Anthony Laube
Glenelg North


Dear Sir,

As I am preparing material for a commissioned article on an aspect of artist Hans Heysen (1877-1968), namely, his abiding love for and active conservation of trees, I would be interested to hear from any readers who have relevant memories.

I am also keen to purchase a copy of the 1939 *Balhannah Centenary* book, compiled by my father, Cedric Noon. This small publication had an insert by Heysen appealing for the retention of indigenous vegetation along the roadsides. For many of his years at "The Cedars", Hahndorf, Heysen was not only pleading with the Mount Barker Council to refrain from felling red river gums but, when all else failed, paying them to retain them!

Yours sincerely,
Nancy Robinson Flannery
13 Hallett Rd., Erindale 5066
Phone: (08) 8333 2518
E-mail: ifnf@acslink.aone.net.au

New members

The Historical Society would like to welcome the following new members: Miss Emma Barritt, Mr. Nigel and Mrs. Pru Mitchell, Mrs. Dianne O'Donohue, Mr. Gregory Pauley, Ms. Andrea Roberts, Mr. Donald Skinner, and the Cummins Historical Society. 

New at the Mortlock

Selected by Brian Samuels from recent issues of *Mortlock Miscellany*, the listing of Mortlock Library accessions, which is available on the State Library's web-site www.slsa.sa.gov.au. The list does not include archival material, which is covered in the "Mortlock Archives" column on page 2.

P. Adamson: **Clement Lindley Wragge (1852-1922): Meteorologist, Astronomer, Ethnologist, Naturalist and Collector** (Adamson, Walkerville, 2002)

T. Bott: **Flinders Index No. 2, Containing Historical Information about the Flinders Ranges and Northern South Australia in General** (Bott, Sth. Plympton, 2003)

P. Brinckerhoff (comp.): **Proposed Myponga/Sellicks Hill Wind Farm: Public Environmental Report** (Brinckerhoff, Adelaide, 2003)

J. Callen: **Then and Before: Glimpses of the Belair Line in the Age of Steam, 1883-1969** (Callen, Eden Hills, c. 2002)

A.L. Cobiac (ed.): **South Australian Marriages, Index of Registrations 1917-1937** (S.A. Genealogy and Heraldry Society, Adelaide, 2002) [Book & Microform]

J. Couper-Smartt: **Port Adelaide: Tales from a "Commodious Harbour"** (Friends of the South Australian Maritime Museum, 2003)

G.Z. Cusano: **South Australian History for Emigrants and Non-Emigrants** (Peacock Publications, Norwood, 2002)

P.F. Donovan: **Co-Operation: A History of Murray River Wholesale Co-Operative Ltd., 1921-1997** (2002)

G.L. Fischer: **A Faint Litigious Echo in Late 19th Century Adelaide of an Early 16th Century Venetian Printer: W. Frederic Morrison and his Aldine History of South Australia, 1890** (Pump Press, Brighton, 2002)

I.L.D. Forbes: **To Succour and to Teach: A Recent History of Royal Adelaide Hospital** (R.A.H., Adelaide, 2003)

A.J. Greenfield: **Two Good Men: The Greenfield Brothers: Northern Pioneers of South Australia, 1856-1926** (Greenfield, Nangwarry, 2003)

W. Haseloff (ed.): **Memories: Making Sense of Life** (Seaview Press, Henley Beach, 2002)

History Goes Public: Papers Given at the State History Conference, Adelaide, 25-26 May 2002 (History Trust of South Australia, Adelaide, 2002)

The Horse, Cattle and Sheep Brands Directory of South Australia (Stock and Brands Office, Adelaide, 1880)

D. Jaensch: **Community Access to the Parliamentary Electoral Processes in South Australia since 1850** (State Electoral Office, Rose Park, 2003)

G. Jaunay (ed.): **1841 Census South Australia** (Gould Genealogy, Modbury, 2002) [Electronic Resource]

G. Jaunay (ed.): **Lonely Graves in South Australia** (Gould Genealogy, Modbury, 2002) [Electronic Resource]

John McDouall Stuart's Explorations, 1858-1862: South Australian Parliamentary Papers 1858-1863 Introduction by Valmai Hankel (Friends of the State Library of South Australia, Adelaide, 2001)

D. Kilner: **From Dream to Reality: A History of the Northern Suburbs Housing Co-Operative Inc. 1981-2002** (N.S.H.C., Prospect, c. 2002)

R. Martin (ed.): **Views from the Hills: Essays in the History of the Adelaide Hills** (Mount Lofty Districts Historical Society, Stirling, 2002)


C. Murphy: **The Market: Stories, History and Recipes from the Adelaide Central Market** (Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2003)

R. Parsons: **Paddle Steamers of Australia and New Zealand: Harbours, Coastal Rivers and Ocean-Going** (Parsons, Goolwa, 2002)

P. Payne: **Helping Hand Aged Care: Developing a Service, 1953-2002** (Uniting Church Historical Society, Malvern, c. 2002)

S. Scheiffers: **Inside: A Brief History of the Adelaide Gaol** (Scheiffers, Strathalbyn, 2002)

R. Smith: **Ghosts of the Garden: Yesteryear in the Adelaide Botanic Garden** (Smithbooks, Norwood, 2002)

J. McD. Stuart: **The Journal of John McDouall Stuart's Second Journey of Exploration, April-July 1859** Edited by Valmai Hankel and Mark Gilbert (Friends of the State Library of South Australia, Adelaide, 2002) 



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Roasted in Fiji

Isaac Pendleton's last voyage

by Anthony Brown

Part I

That great America on the other side of the sphere, Australia, was given to the enlightened world by the whaleman. After its first blunder-born discovery by a Dutchman, all other ships long shunned those shores as pestiferously barbarous; but the whale-ship touched there. The whale-ship is the true mother of that now mighty colony.

--- Herman Melville: *Moby Dick, or The Whale*, 1851 (Chapter 24)

Before the Yankee whaleman came the sealer, and one of the earliest sealers to touch Australia's coasts was Isaac Pendleton, master of the New York brig *Union* (99 tons) in 1803.

New England sealers and whalers were active in the southern oceans during the 1790s. As early as 1785 American fur-sealers were established at the Falkland Islands, and at South Georgia in 1790. Within a few years they had rounded Cape Horn and begun exploiting the huge fur-seal rookeries on the Juan Fernandez Islands, four hundred miles off the coast of Chile.

Meanwhile other sealers had doubled the Cape of Good Hope to chance their luck in Indian Ocean waters. Two Nantucket vessels touched at Shark Bay in 1792, though apparently they took no seals. A year or two later sealing gangs were working on Amsterdam Island, midway between Africa and New Holland. "It would be strange and out of keeping with the Yankee sealers' audacity," write Nigel Wace and Bessie Lovett in their study of American maritime activities in Australia up to 1850,¹ "if they had not investigated the southern coasts of Australia before their first recorded sealing activities there in 1803" --- the date of Pendleton's arrival at King George Sound.

He had sailed from New York in October 1802 with instructions from the brig's owners, Fanning & Co., "to prosecute this fishery and commercial trade" on the southern coasts of New Holland. The *Union* "was well fitted out, and amply supplied with the

requirements for one of those expeditions. . . . Never, perhaps, was a voyage entered upon with brighter, and never did a vessel sail with more encouraging, prospects."

The celebrated voyages of Vancouver² had just been obtained; in these mention was made that seals were numerous on the south-west coast of New Holland, but particularly of great numbers resorting to Seal Island, in King George the Third's Sound; in addition to these voyages, the manuscript of the discoverer of Crozett Island was received. On the information contained in all these, Captain Pendleton was directed, in his instructions, to proceed by the way of, and to double, the Cape of Good Hope for New Holland; it was farther recommended to Captain Pendleton to attain the situation the Crozett Islands were placed in by their

discoverer, and, in the event of his rediscovering, to give them a careful examination; being nevertheless left unrestricted, and at perfect liberty to act on all occasions as his judgment should direct, to make the most profitable voyage he could of it for his owners; taking care, however, to leave buried on Seal Island a bottle, containing a letter, giving an account of his success, and observations relative to this coast, for the guidance and information of the commander of such



A French seal hunt in the early 1800s, by Louis de Sainson. From Jules Dumont d'Urville's *Voyage Pittoresque autour du Monde* (1834-35). [Collection of Anthony Brown.]

*vessel as the same company contemplated sending out, the following season.*³

After failing to locate Crozet Island at the given latitude and longitude, Pendleton made for the south-west cape of New Holland. Following the coast eastward, he entered King George Sound in February 1803 and found there:

*. . . . a good harbour, wooding and watering. At Vancouver's Seal Island, although it was the period in the season to expect the seals would be up in great numbers, there was nevertheless not above thirty on the island.*⁴

Pendleton was in today's Two People Bay, east of Cape Vancouver, when he encountered a boat's crew from Nicolas Baudin's flagship *Le Géographe* surveying this part of the coast. At once moving the *Union* to the Sound, the American found the French captain ashore, visiting his observatory. Baudin wrote of their meeting on the 23rd February: ⇒

The American captain came to see me in the afternoon. He informed me that he had set out from New York towards the end of last September and that he had been sent sealing. So far he had not been lucky, for in the various places that he had visited he had obtained only three or four hundred skins. He had to have twenty thousand before thinking of heading for China [to trade them], and had decided to come to this port on the strength of the information given by Vancouver, who . . . had seen plenty of seals here. . . . I invited the captain to dinner on board the following day.⁵

Next day Pendleton asked Baudin if he possessed a map of the southern coast of New Holland, "for he had no information that could guide him in his search for the places frequented by seals, nor any as to the direction of the coast or the dangers along it".

I gave him two of Citizen Beautemps-Beaupré's charts⁶ and one of Bass and Banks Straits drawn up by Mr. Flinders, as well as some private observations on the entrances to Port Phillip and Western Port and on the position of King Island. I recommended him very strongly, should he rest at Ile Borda [Kangaroo Is.], to prevent his men from killing the pigs and poultry that I had left there for the use of future navigators. . . . I indicated the best anchorage to him, telling him as well of the place where he would find a reasonable number of seals.⁷

The American returned to his ship to prepare for departure; his boats were away fishing, and it was the 27th before he sailed to continue his eastward voyage. In the meantime it is likely that Baudin took advantage of their chance meeting to rid himself of three convict stowaways from Port Jackson by transferring them to the *Union*. They had been put ashore during his stay at King Island in late December, but his crew had smuggled them on board again before he left.⁸

After following the coast for some distance, the *Union* was overtaken by a heavy gale and driven out to sea before it moderated. On the 11th March she made landfall at the New Year's Islands, two small islets off the north-west coast of King Island, and remained there sealing for almost six weeks before continuing on to Waterhouse Island, at the western entrance to Banks Strait. Here she met the Port Jackson sealer *Good Intent*, J. Chace master⁹, who duly reported the meeting on his return to Sydney.



A scene on Kangaroo Island in the early 1800s.
From Dumont d'Urville's *Voyage autour du Monde* (1848).

Captain Pemberton [sic] informed me that he had fallen in with the French Commodore off the Western coast of New Holland, Longitude unknown; that he had afterwards touched at and cleared the New Year's Islands. . . . Of the four prisoners who effected their escape from the Colony in the *Géographe*, three now remain upon the New Year's Island.¹⁰

Another Sydney sealer, the *Governor King*, W. Moody master, on her return from King Island in August, brought with her one of the escapees, John Coleman, who had surrendered himself to a sealing party in May.

The account this rash adventurer gives of his distresses when left on shore at King's Island is such as would deter others from making so precipitate an experiment. During a space of five whole days he had not a morsel of provision, nor did any means of subsistence then present itself but what the Sea Elephants or Seals afforded, which famine could alone have induced him to use. . . . His appearance when given up to Mr. Moody was truly ghastly and deplorable.¹¹

These reports of Pendleton's presence in Bass Strait in March and April of 1803 contradict the account given by Edmund Fanning,

the generally accepted source for information on the *Union's* voyage. According to Fanning (Pendleton's brother-in-law and part-owner of the ship), she sailed directly from King George Sound to Border's Island (Kangaroo Island), where "were found both the hair and fur seals, extensive forests, good water, and much game; fowls and birds of various kinds in abundance; and also excellent fish and oysters in great plenty".¹²

Given Captain Chace's report, it is probable that Pendleton sailed first to the New Year's Islands (prime sealing grounds), then continued on to Waterhouse Island (off the north-east coast of Van Diemen's Land) before turning back and making for Kangaroo Island. At their meeting in February Baudin had provided information on these three locations. If correct, the dates given in the *Sydney Gazette*¹³ for the *Union's* stay at the New Year's Islands --- from 11th March to 20th April 1803 --- make her the first Yankee ship known to have hunted seals in Bass Strait.

The brig wintered at Kangaroo Island, snugly moored in "Union Harbor", named by Pendleton for his ship. (This is now the inner part of Nepean Bay.) Taking full advantage of the situation, Pendleton decided

to build a small vessel to serve as a tender to the *Union* as she continued her voyage. Named *Independence*, the ship was built on a point at the entrance to Pelican Lagoon, on the western shore of the American River inlet. She was the first ship built in South Australian waters. According to Fanning,

... the forests afforded plenty of very excellent timber; this, by the ingenuity of the first officer, assisted by the carpenter and armorer, was hewn and sawed into planks, as needed; so that with these, and such materials as were had from the brig, a substantial schooner of forty tons burthen was very shortly launched into her element, sails and rigging being on board the *Union* in sufficient quantity.¹⁴

The *Independence* was despatched to King George Sound, where the first officer, Daniel Wright, "deposited an account of proceedings, according to understanding", for the company's next captain to visit the coast. Pendleton himself sailed east for Port Jackson, arriving in the colony from Bass Strait with between 5,000 and 6,000 skins on the 6th January 1804.¹⁵

Governor Philip Gidley King then chartered the *Union* to take Lieutenant-Governor Foveaux to Norfolk Island, together with "an extensive supply of goods . . . for the accommodation of the Island, on Mr. [Simeon] Lord's account", and to bring back a cargo of pork for the settlement at Port Jackson.¹⁶ Returning to Sydney in early March, Pendleton sailed on the 1st April to rejoin the *Independence*.

The schooner's movements during this period are uncertain. Fanning records that her trip to King George Sound provided "no farther encouragement respecting its being good sealing ground . . . than on the first visit", and that after their reunion the two vessels "sailed from Border's Island . . . bound for the western mouth of Basis [sic] Straits".¹⁷ The *Union* reached Sydney on the 27th June with upwards of 12,000 skins on board, followed three days later by the *Independence*, also with a cargo of skins;¹⁸ both were reported as "last from Bass's Straits". Twenty-two men were on board the brig, and sixteen on her tender. Whether the skins were taken at Kangaroo Island or from the Bass Strait islands (or both) is not known, but clearly the *Independence* had been sealing while the *Union* was under government charter.

Next issue: The horrible fate suffered by Captain Pendleton and his crew at the hands (and in the stomachs!) of cannibals in Tonga and Fiji.

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³ Fanning, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-231

⁴ Fanning, *op. cit.*, p. 231

⁵ Baudin, *op. cit.*, p. 488

⁶ G.F. Beautemps-Beaupré was the hydrographer on d'Entrecasteaux's voyage in search of La Pérouse, 1791-1794.

⁷ Baudin, *op. cit.*, p. 489

⁸ Baudin, *op. cit.*, p. 456

⁹ J. Chace may be a mistake for S.R. Chace (or Chase)

¹⁰ *Sydney Gazette*, 15 May 1803

¹¹ *Sydney Gazette*, 28 August 1803

¹² Fanning, *op. cit.*, p. 232

¹³ *Sydney Gazette*, *loc. cit.*

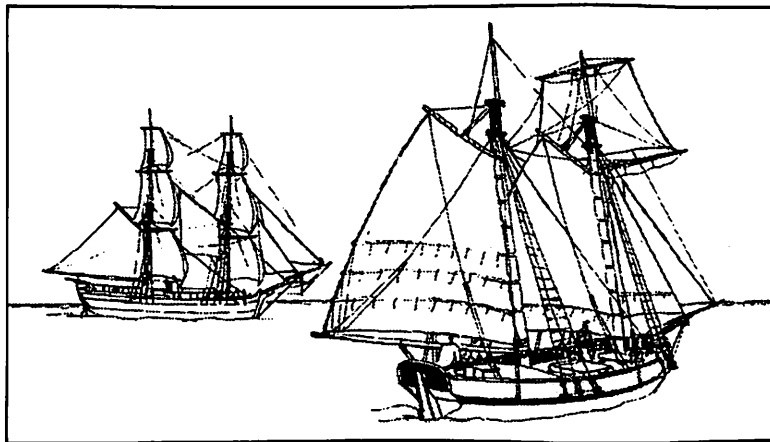
¹⁴ Fanning, *loc. cit.*

¹⁵ *Sydney Gazette*, 8 January 1804

¹⁶ *Sydney Gazette*, 22 January 1804

¹⁷ Fanning, *op. cit.*, p. 233

¹⁸ *Sydney Gazette*, 1 July 1804



The brig *Union* (left) and the schooner *Independence*.
 Drawing by Robert Sexton.

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Chittleborough's Adelaide

A companion to his article "Primitive Adelaide"

(Printed in *History SA*, May 2003)

by James Potter

Part I

Reminiscences

At the turn of the twentieth century a list was made of the surviving South Australian Old Colonists. With the youngest of them approaching an age of 70, it could not have been a long list. The Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (S.A. Branch), realizing that a primary source of information on life in the early days of white settlement was about to disappear, contacted as many on this list as they could, with the request that they "put the more notable of their early experiences into writing". At the Society's Annual Meeting in 1902 it was reported that several hundred copies of this circular had been sent, and the response had been most gratifying. "Old diaries, papers, recollections, as well as pictures and objects of historical interest, have been received from many sources."

The Society published some of this material in its *Proceedings*, Vols. 5-7 (1902-1904). Volume 6 (1903) contained a brief piece from James Chittleborough and three years later, shortly after the death of his wife of 51 years, he found the time to reflect and expand on this. His article "Primitive Adelaide" was published by the *Register* over two days to coincide with the annual Proclamation Day ceremonies. During the latter half of the nineteenth century it had not been uncommon for the daily papers to include colonists' reminiscences, particularly on or about December 28th, but few could match Chittleborough's vivid reflections.

Holdfast Bay

James Chittleborough was born in 1832, some time between March and the end of December. He may, therefore, have turned four years of age on the voyage of the *Buffalo* to South Australia, on which he accompanied his parents and four older siblings. It is hard to imagine how, with some 50 other children (and more than 200 adults) James occupied himself at sea for almost 160 days.

In his journal, George Stevenson (Private Secretary to the Governor and Clerk of the Executive Council) gives us some idea of the conditions on board. There was no education for children apart from "an hour's reading at Sunday School after running wild all the week". Cats and dogs, especially the former, were in abundance, leaving the emigrants' deck in "a most

offensive state, so much so that it was impossible to pass along without fingers to the nostrils". Pigs, mules and assorted poultry were kept in pens "generally in a horrid state of dirt and uncleanness. The emigrants [could] only walk alongside these animals and inhale the stench from them." Not a savoury place for children to play! More exciting for



James Chittleborough,
at the age of 60

a child might have been the occasional sighting of whales and the often present albatross. The lathering, shaving and dunking associated with "crossing the line" would have provided entertainment for a few days, and equally humorous may have been the emigrants' being put through exercise routines by the marines.

Imagine then to arrive at Holdfast Bay, early on the morning of December 28th, and be one of the many unable to go ashore. The *Buffalo* anchored at the entrance to a creek (the Patawalonga) on the gulf side of an extensive sand bar, and in the afternoon of that day three row-boats took the Governor, other officers and about twenty marines ashore. A long range of sandhills would have hidden any view of the Proclamation ceremony from the emigrants on board. Young James may not have heard the royal salute fired by the marines on shore, but he would have been well aware of the answering fifteen-gun salute from the *Buffalo*. Sounds of merriment lasting long into the warm night may have reached the vessel, but no landing of a four-year-old would have been possible until the next day, or perhaps days later, when a rowboat or a willing adult became available to carry a child the twenty metres to dry land.

Stevenson noted that three weeks after arrival some emigrants still remained on the *Buffalo*. How did they spend their time? An Aborigine was brought on board for entertainment purposes on 1st January and an Old Colonist who remained there until early February 1837 wrote of frequently "wandering about the neighbourhood until sundown when we returned to the *Buffalo*". Day trips ashore would have revealed a coastal settlement of about 300 people (from three vessels -- *Rapid*, *Africaine* and *Cygnets* -- that had arrived in late October and early November) residing in a disorganized collection of about 40 tents and huts. Helen Mantegani's reminiscences reveal the beauty of the country:

The plains round the Bay were covered with beautiful green grass at least 4 or 5 ft. high. There were then tall and stately gum-trees on all sides, lifting their giant heads, and giving a grateful shade. Every one pitched his tent under them for shelter from the burning sun,

and there was plenty of choice. . . . A little way inland were several large lagoons, formed probably from the overflow of the Sturt River, which was not far off. They were covered with tall reeds, and splendid flooded gums grew on their margins, which were very swampy for a considerable distance. One of them was very lovely, just like a miniature lake, bordered by trees and reeds, and in its centre the bright water was the resort of wild-fowl, making a beautiful picture. My sister and I made an exploring expedition, and walked round it as soon as the margin was sufficiently dry to venture, when we only got our feet wet. It was subsequently known as Hack's Lagoon, as Mr. J.B. Hack had his camp there. . . .

Beautiful flowers and shrubs grew on the small sandy hills not far from the shore. The "Everlasting" was very plentiful; it was the yellow kind that smells like new-mown hay. We gathered great quantities, and strewed the earthen floor of the tent with it, making a fragrant carpet. [The] ground fig . . . grew in abundance, which, when ripe, was very nice, and allayed our thirst. . . . On the sandhills close to the shore we found little cranberries, and gathered quantities of them and made them into pies.

The beautiful yellow-crested cockatoo was abundant, and I have seen a great gum-tree white with them. . . . We also saw the handsome black macaw occasionally, the one with yellow under the wings and tail; but the handsomest of all was the black one with vivid scarlet under wings and a broad band across the tail. . . . There were also pretty little robins, which used to hop about quite tame, and a little useful black-and-white bird with a long tail, which we called a fly-catcher, as it lived upon flies.

A tour of the area might also have included a remarkable tree named "Temple Bar" in the form of an arch (where the Proclamation may or may not have been read).

An idea of the speed of change of some of this environment after the arrival of the Europeans can be seen in Nathaniel Hailes' writings. Before he set out for Australia he gained advice from Robert Gouger, who had by then returned to England. The latter recommended that he take a "plentiful supply of double sole and double upper-leather boots" to help combat the tough spear-grass that grew two or three feet high. When he reached Adelaide in the summer of 1838 Hailes found just "the hard, smooth, dark-brown surface of the land" and no need for these expensive boots.

The Road from the Bay

By 29th December 1836, the Surveyor-General, Colonel Light, had more or less decided on the position of the city of Adelaide. Governor Hindmarsh suggested that the area around what is now Underdale, being closer to Port Adelaide, would be more suitable. But on the 31st December Light explored this latter site further and noted in his diary:

I saw evident marks of the river overflowing its banks, and this made me resolve on the first site I had chosen, my instructions from the Commissioners being peremptory as to the responsibility of this choice devolving upon myself.

He added that:

From this time to 11 January I was employed in looking repeatedly over the ground, and devising in my own mind the best method of laying out the town according to the course of the river, and the nature of the ground.

It is therefore possible that some time after 31st December the *Buffalo* emigrants might have made their way across the plains towards Light's survey camp, which was set up on what is now the corner of North and West Terraces. The Chittleborough family had certainly made this move by 9th February, but more likely by early January.

Initially there was no one particular route to the city site. Nathaniel Hailes noted that "the road was whatever serpentine line the pedestrian, equestrian or Jehu might select for the purpose of wandering along, amid an apparently boundless maze of strongly scented shrubs and magnificent gum-trees".

Stevenson and his wife returned on 21st January 1837

"from Adelaide by easy stages, that is, by resting every half-hour, and finally losing each other owing to the tracks resembling [each other] so much". The tall kangaroo or spear grass and thick cover of high trees around the Sturt Creek lagoons would have made it difficult to use any point on the distant hills as a landmark. Stevenson recommended to his wife that she follow the direction of the lean of the trees --- the prevailing winds slanting them in a north-easterly direction.

By February, however, a definite track had appeared. It would not be correct to imagine that these emigrants followed the route of the present Anzac Highway. To do so would have taken them into what became known as the Black Forest, a densely wooded area with dark and rough-barked ⇒



Nathaniel Hailes (1802-1879), auctioneer and journalist, who, a year before he died, recorded his recollections of early Adelaide.

Drawing by S.T. Gill, 1849.

grey box trees growing up to fifteen metres high, where it was easy to become lost (*see photo below*). John Adams observed: "To tell newcomers . . . that a black forest existed about four miles from Adelaide to the Bay and towards the Sturt they could scarcely be made to believe it." Today's route probably did not become regular until a roadway into the southern districts (Noarlunga and beyond) was established and the Forest Inn opened in 1843. Situated on the corner of Anzac Highway and South Road, this soon became "the haunt of low and debased characters" in an area that "people passing to and fro from Adelaide and Glenelg were always glad to get out of". (James Young)

John Adams noted that "when leaving Glenelg we turned to the left through the sandhills near the Reedbeds". The more direct route to the city site lay through what is now Netley. Travellers had to cross Brownhill Creek in this area and later Keswick Creek (called Glen Osmond Creek in the eastern suburbs), possibly in the vicinity of the present Torrensville Council Chambers.

Pike's Lagoon, which was substantial enough for Chittleborough to remember after many years, may have been here — one of the waterholes frequented by the Aborigines of the area now known as Cowandilla.

The absence of any vehicle to assist in carrying luggage resulted in many return journeys and often heartbreak. John Adams remembered these trips:

We went down in the cool of the evening, and about a dozen at a time pulled a load with ropes attached from the Bay to Adelaide, and assisted each other until we got it all up in that way; occasionally we would go down and carry as much as we could on our backs. On dark nights the party at camp would keep fires to guide the party up.

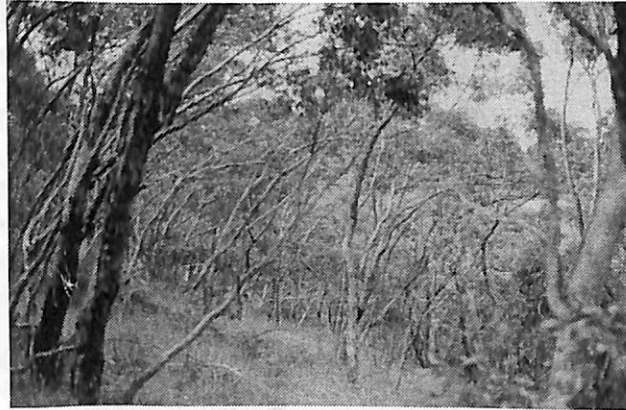
Pastor Finlayson related how he filled a cask with articles and rolled it over the plains. Unfortunately a smoothing iron amongst the contents did considerable damage to other goods inside the cask. The survey party had a few handcarts and wheelbarrows, but these were otherwise engaged until late March 1837, when, Light noted, "as the increase of settlers took place . . . the demand for every kind of carriage became greater, and even our small survey trucks were often used for transporting luggage from Holdfast Bay."

As the emigrants approached the River Torrens (in the vicinity of the future Adelaide Gaol) the course of the stream was easily distinguished by "a continuous belt of luxurious foliage which bordered its banks". (E.R. Nixon). This was to be the site of Buffalo Row.

The Forgotten Site: Newmarket Corner

31st December, 1836, the day Light made his final decision about the site for the city, might well be recognized as Adelaide's birthdate. Its actual birth-site could be considered to be the corner of North and West Terraces, where the survey party was camped. For most of 1837 this area was the centre of settlement, with Buffalo and Coromandel Rows to the west, Emigration Square to the south-west and the first permanent buildings appearing at the western ends of North Terrace and Hindley Street.

In his 1903 article Chittleborough describes Buffalo Row as being between the gaol and the slaughterhouse. At the beginning of the twentieth century this slaughterhouse was sited at the bend in the River Torrens just downstream from the Railway Bridge --- that is, in what we now call Bonython Park. It had replaced a livestock market which had in turn taken the place of a short-lived Aboriginal Location. We can be fairly sure therefore that Buffalo Row was situated on high ground to the west of the Gaol. In this position the huts were near the river but safe from flooding, and near Light's camp but not close enough to interfere with the survey.



Grey box gums in the Waite Conservation Reserve give an idea of the density of growth in the Black Forest in the early days of settlement.

Buffalo Row, according to John Adams, consisted of between twelve and sixteen huts, each hut having two compartments, both sixteen feet (five metres) square, and built with saplings. The sides and roof were thatched and filled in with reeds from six to eight feet long. A variety of coloured cloths used to patch the sides gave the picturesque appearance of a gypsy camp. As Chittleborough mentions, when the *Coromandel* arrived on 12th January, the newly-landed emigrants built their huts in a continuation of Buffalo Row.

Food was sometimes a problem. While some emigrants were prepared to experiment with freshly killed animals and birds, others continued to rely on the diet they had come to expect on the *Buffalo*. A woman pioneer reported:

Our first breakfast on shore was taken by the riverside, laid on a barrel, end up; no cloth, tea in tin pannikins, ship's biscuits, ship's pork, and mahogany-coloured sugar. However, plenty of laughter, and the strange contrast afforded to the last breakfast taken on shore by us in the old country, aided digestion.

Another emigrant, Jane Dobney, said:

Meat . . . was a very scarce article of diet and consisted of beef and pork, so salt that it had to be soaked in water and then parboiled in more water to take some of the salt out, and the water was also very scarce, for

we often had to soak and parboil this salt junk in sea water. Our bill-of-fare was . . . bandicoot, dried mutton bird, and mutton bird's eggs, with an occasional iguana.

Relief came when the *Africaine* returned from Van Diemen's Land on 21st January 1837 with a cargo of sheep. Nathaniel Hailes describes how this trip was repeated several times in the early years. Fortunately, the credit of the ship's captain was considered good in Hobart Town, even though the South Australian Government's pledge to pay was not considered sound enough for Tasmanian merchants.

On washing days clothes were taken to the nearby River Torrens (downstream, one hopes, from the Rows) and after being washed were spread out on grass and rushes. As is still the case, a good lather was difficult to obtain. The water was "as hard ever as London water". The description of the Torrens given by Chittleborough was confirmed by numerous other colonists. Its beauty, however, was not praised in the *Register* article to which he makes reference. This was a sarcastic piece penned by Stevenson, the editor, who strongly disagreed with Light's choice for the position of Adelaide.

What the "river Torrens" may be capable of performing for a week or two in the depth of the rainy season, beyond sweeping down to the swamp the summer filth of Adelaide, we cannot guess; but the "river Torrens" at other times, as we have said before, is not a river at all but merely a chain of fresh water pools. At the present moment, its running water may be spanned with the hand and sounded with the forefinger. It has ceased to flow immediately below the town, and is from thence downwards a very formidable dry ditch. [Register, 17/2/1838]

The Chittleborough family provided the emigrants with their first store. On 9th February 1837 John Barton Hack arrived in the colony from Van Diemen's Land with a variety of stores and merchandise. While building his substantial store in Hindley Street, he provided goods for the Chittleborough enterprise. Towards the end of March this was all destroyed by fire, but immediately replenished by Hack. In later years Hack became a highly successful stock dealer and agent, a wealthy pastoralist and a Director of the South Australian Railway Company. On 25th September 1837 the Chittleborough premises on Buffalo Row, presumably supplied with South African wine, commenced trading as the Buffalo's Head.

The desire to reproduce a European landscape and experiment with the cultivation of traditional vegetables and fruit trees was very strong among the settlers.

So much so that by 1841 no fewer than three Botanic Gardens had been planned and abandoned. A map of Adelaide drawn by William Light in 1837 (*see next page*) shows a proposed Botanic Garden on an island in the River Torrens just downstream from Buffalo Row. This never eventuated and a second Garden site was proposed for the area of Light's survey camp. A garden was developed here by Mr. Thomas Allen, who, in June 1836, had advertised in the first issue of the *Register*, published in London.

Allen; Botanist, Fruit, and Kitchen Gardener; Fellow of the Horticultural Society of London, late Chief Gardener to His Majesty William the Fourth, Landscape Gardener and Ground-workman to the Honourable Commissioners of His Majesty's Woods and Forests, in laying out and planting St. James's and Regent's Parks; Botanist and Cultivator to the Australian Agricultural Company, New South Wales; appointed Gardener and Ground-workman to His Excellency the Governor Captain Hindmarsh, R.N.

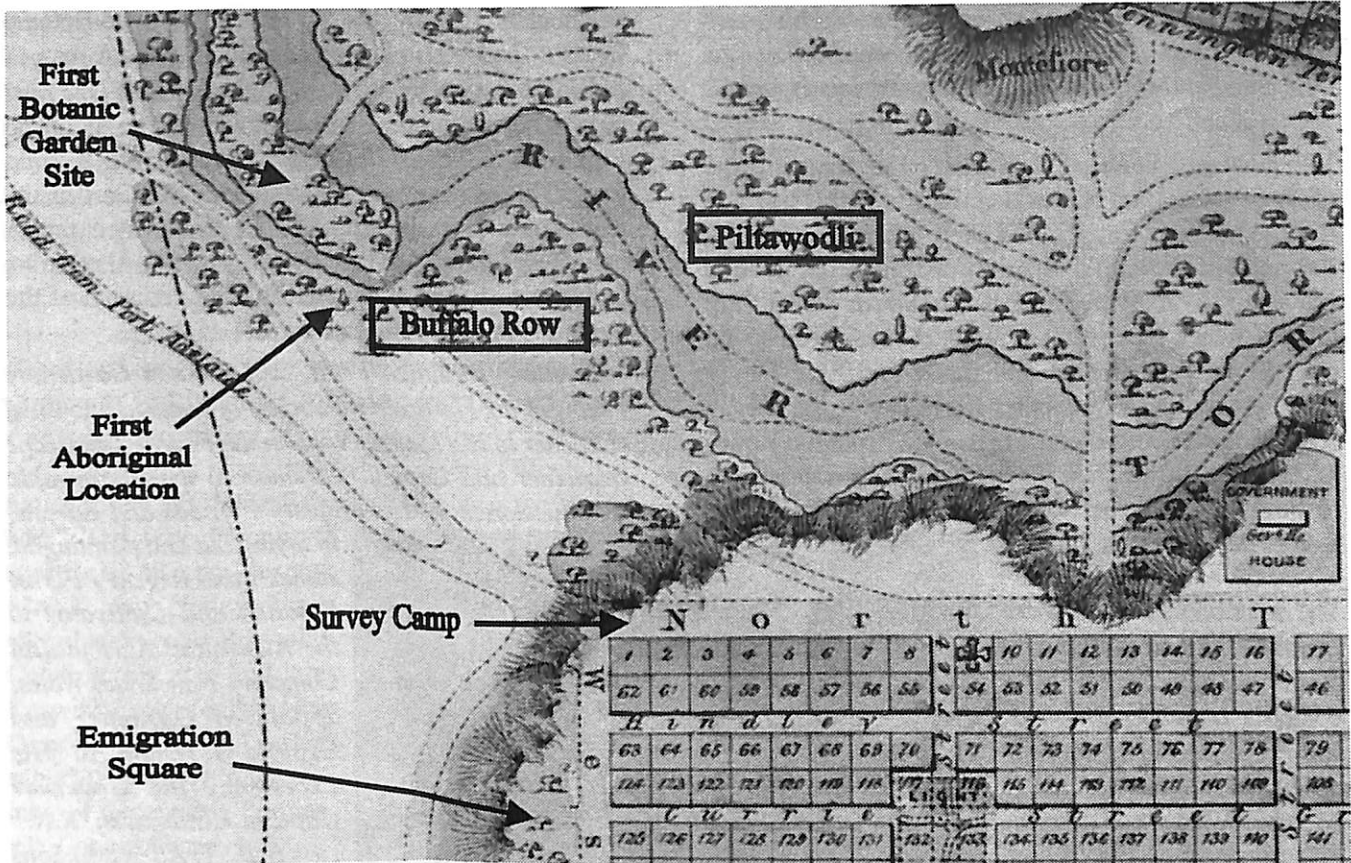
N.B. T. Allen and Sons respectfully beg leave to offer their services to the Gentleman Capitalists to select, enclose, lay-out, and plant their Gardens in the best manner, both for utility and ornament, on the most reasonable terms, and with the utmost despatch.



The probable site of Buffalo Row, near the south-west corner of Adelaide Gaol. As now, it was an olive grove at the time Chittleborough wrote his article.

By 1839 when space limitations on this second site were becoming obvious, a third Botanic Garden was proposed and begun. A large area was proclaimed for botanic use on the site now currently occupied by the Zoo but extending to an equal area on the north side of the River Torrens. John Bailey was appointed Colonial Botanist. However, 1841 was a very poor year financially for the colony and by the end of this year the new site had been abandoned. It was reported that the gardens served only to exhibit "Mr. Bailey's cabbages and melons", although an impressive *Acacia lophante* flourished for a time, and the remnants of peach, almond and cherry trees remained for a few years. In 1855 the present Botanic Garden site was chosen.

Before the first community clock could be erected (in Holy Trinity Church in 1838), the bell described by James Chittleborough, positioned at the intersection of North Terrace and Gray Street (the highest point at the western end of North Terrace), was rung every day at one o'clock. This may have been the same bell that in 1839 was rung every Sunday by John Adams to welcome worshippers to Holy Trinity Church. ⇒



Detail from the Plan of the City of Adelaide, drawn by Colonel Light. (This version published in London, c. 1839.)
The superimpositions, by James Potter, show the locations of various features of north-western Adelaide in the late 1830s. [From the author's collection.]

By 1838 a dozen or so rough wooden buildings brought from England had been erected in what became known as Emigration Square. If Kingston's map of 1842 can be believed, this was situated in the parklands at the end of Currie Street in an area measuring about 500 feet (150 metres) square. The number of huts later increased to about forty, but were anything but welcoming. In his *History of South Australia* Rev. John Blacket quoted an emigrant as saying:

How very inferior to what was promised at Home are the comforts and attentions bestowed upon the newly-landed immigrant. Brought from the discomforts of shipboard, he is lodged in a square of not exceeding 10 ft., exposed to wind, heat, cold, in all their dangerous changes. And often into the same small square are crammed two families, destroying morality and causing misery and death.

John Illman, who experienced Emigration Square first-hand, commented:

We took up our abode in Adelaide, in Emigration-square, and for our first bed we had the sand floor of a small house, where a host of fleas and mosquitoes greeted us as new arrivals with very great earnestness.

In June 1839, the *South Australian News* wrote:

Emigration Square, Buffalo Row, Coromandel Row --- as good as the colony in its infancy could possible provide --- should not remain in this present state. They

freely admit in dry weather the extreme heat of day and the cold winds of night, and in rainy weather like the present are just preferable to the open air.

Subsequently some repairs were carried out. Huts were rendered waterproof and some conveniences were attached. However, the *London Times*, during one of its 1840 tirades against the new colony, claimed that Emigration Square was remarkable for its mortality, with seven or eight persons commonly dying in the course of a week.

By 1849 the site had been closed for emigrants and for about three years was used as a women's destitute asylum. The huts by then were in a deplorable state. It is recorded that in the summer of 1849, 25 women used the huts while 114 preferred to camp in the open central area. In 1851 there were about 250 destitute women in grossly overcrowded conditions and they were moved to a new site in Kintore Avenue, now the Migration Museum.

By 1839 the centre of Adelaide had shifted eastward down North Terrace as Adelaide began to boast more substantial buildings and businesses both in this street and in Hindley Street. In later years the Old Colonists must have looked back nostalgically at the north-west corner of the city to when life, although harsh, was remembered as a time of friendship, simple pleasures and an almost picnic-like atmosphere. Blacket quotes a lady pioneer: "The few people here were like a happy family out for a lengthened picnic."

A new sheep and cattle market was built over the site of the survey camp (hence the Newmarket Hotel and its story of the "butcher" glass --- shaped to ensure that the slippery hands of the slaughtermen did not lose grip of their beer). For years after, however, it remained a natural gathering place. In 1871, for example, Adelaide's first balloon ascent took place there amidst all the fun of a fairground, when Thomas Gale launched "The Young Australian" twice into the prevailing south-west wind.

Chittleborough describes the nearby Emigration Square as a centre of communication --- new arrivals meeting established settlers with news from abroad. Ironically it had probably been of similar significance to the Kaurna people who used the area as a meeting place for tribal visits and contests. They had called it Tambawodli --- a title that was recently adopted by the City Council for Park 24. The Europeans had overridden the significance of the area for the Kaurna. But we too have lost all sense of meaning for the Newmarket Corner. A forgettable monument currently resides there amidst a heavy traffic flow, offering no appeal to the passer-by.

As the settlement of Adelaide was finding a new centre, the Kaurna were beginning their drift to marginalization.

The Kaurna

Blacket offers the following insight (from Pastor Finlayson) into the fears of the newly arrived colonist:

We were truly glad to get to the termination of our voyage, but after dark a grand and (to us) mysterious fire began to kindle on the hills, which alarmed us not a little. It spread with amazing rapidity from one hill to another until the whole range before us seemed one mass of flame. We looked at each other, and the knowing ones shook their heads and declared that it was a signal for the native clans to gather for the purpose of destroying the white intruders. They even pointed to what they in their terror took to be native forms adding to and spreading the flame. It was, indeed, a grand and a fearful sight, and many sat on deck watching all night long, expecting to see bands of naked savages coming down upon us.

Events such as these may have led the new arrivals to believe that they were under imminent attack from Aborigines. In fact, evidence suggests that the indigenous tribes were indifferent to the settlers. Robert Gouger, for example, saw no sign of them "for some time",

despite a group of natives supposedly being sent overland from Rapid Bay, where his ship, the *Africaine*, first landed on the mainland, to Holdfast Bay to prepare the tribes in the vicinity for the approach of the peaceful white settlers.

The first Aboriginal Location in Adelaide was on the south bank of the River Torrens just west of Buffalo and Coromandel Rows. In April 1837 Captain William Bromley was appointed the first Protector of Aborigines. Some four months later the position passed to William Wyatt, whose official instructions were to:

Enclose a piece of land in a convenient position and provide there shelter and food for each as choose to apply for admittance and who are willing to work.



Eugene von Guérard's sketch of the winter encampment of Aborigines from Lake Bonney and Lake Victoria in the parklands near Adelaide in July 1855.

Perfect liberty of ingress and egress should be allowed the natives. In this location carry on gardening, preparation of wood for building purposes, and other works, the object of which will be, by exciting interest in their minds, interest in your proceedings and to induce them to contribute. But there will be no compulsion to perform even the slightest labour.

Some huts were erected for the Kaurna, but with little success --- a fact that irritated a correspondent to the *Register* in June 1838, who blamed them for the destruction of the landscape:

Their aversion to a permanent resting place and preference of the lee side of a bush to the huts which have been benevolently built for them for a night's rest, except in very wet weather, is well known. In consequence of this, they are not only stripping the trees in the same manner, but are burning down others, and peeling the bark off the finest to make roofs for their temporary huts. If this go on much longer, the lovely spot reserved for the park will be deprived of its greatest ornaments, and we shall look in vain for a shady walk during the summer months.

During 1838 Bromley's health deteriorated and there were no suspicions raised when, in May of that year, he went missing for some days and his body was found in one of the rockpools of the Torrens.

On Monday week last the body of Mr. Walter Bromley, who had for some time occupied the situation of Protector of the Aborigines, was found in a pool in the river near his house, into which it is conjectured he had fallen while drawing water, a tin kettle belonging to him having been found floating near the spot. ⇨

An inquest was held on the same evening, when it was stated that Mr. Bromley had been missing several days; and it appeared from the evidence that he must have fallen into the pond on the Friday previous. He had been lately in a poor state of health, but on that day he had said . . . that "he was a great deal better, though weak; that he was more happy in his mind, and expected he should soon recover". There were no marks of violence on the body except a slight mark under the most prominent part of the chin, which could not have produced death, and which was accounted for by the medical men present as likely to happen either in falling on a piece of wood in the water or in the struggle.

[Register, 19/5/1838]

In December 1839 Wyatt had the Aboriginal Location moved across the river, and therefore a little further from the growing town, to Piltawodli --- now the location of the Par 3 Golf Course. Nine cottages were erected and by January 1842 the indigenous people had cultivated three acres of potatoes, carrots, maize and melons. However, no more than 160 could be induced to live there at any one time. A school for native children was opened in 1839.

In June 1841 the average attendance was 19; the progress made was such as to show that there is no deficiency in mental capacity. The girls have received instruction in sewing from a number of ladies, chiefly connected with the Wesleyan Methodist congregation. The adults are still more inattentive to religious instruction than the children, and can scarcely be induced to attend on the Lord's day. [South Australia in 1842]

A dormitory system was introduced in 1843, after which the pupils lived at the school. Blacket reported:

Two or three weeks after Governor Gawler's arrival [October 1838] the aborigines had a festive day --- such a day as they never before or perhaps afterwards experienced. The Governor gave them a feast. The settlers as well as the natives turned out en masse. The picnic ground was a picturesque spot to the east of Government Hut. Rounds of roast beef as well as rice, biscuits, and sugar and tea were provided. The natives prepared themselves for the occasion and came adorned with tassels and ribbons.

During May of each year thereafter, to celebrate Queen Victoria's birthday, blankets, sugar and other provisions were distributed to the Kurna. Other tribes were attracted to Adelaide in the weeks before this annual event, and this led to friction and fighting, particularly between the Kurna and their traditional rivals, the Moorundie from the Blanchetown area. Consequently contests between tribes were not always as friendly as that described by Chittleborough in his *Register* articles. In a piece written for *Quiz* in October 1897, he described a far more serious affair:

I saw one big fight near where Hilton now is. I suppose there must have been 400 or 500 blacks engaged.

They threw their spears, and occasionally got to close quarters with their waddies. One or two were killed. The whites did not interfere because the fight was a tribal one, and indeed we found it very exciting viewing the encounter from a safe distance.

Settlers watching from a safe distance must have wondered whether they were watching a friendly contest or a fierce battle.

A separate school for Moorundie children was set up in Walkerville in April 1844 but early the next year the schools merged and moved to Kintore Avenue (at the present Migration Museum site), where there was now a mixture of tribes and all instruction was given in English. In 1850 the school was moved to Poonindie (near Port Lincoln) and during the next decade the Kurna tended to drift away from Adelaide to the Balaklava, Clare and Rapid Bay areas, although, thanks to other tribes, an Aboriginal presence remained.

In truth, there had never been many indigenous people on the Adelaide plains.

In an area of 2,800 square miles, including Adelaide, there are only 650 - 280 males, 182 females and 188 children. The number is on the decrease --- polygamy, infanticide and other causes. [South Australia in 1842]

Adelaide lost the attraction it had to the nearby tribes in 1861, when the food and blanket distribution was abandoned. By 1878 Nathaniel Hailes could write:

It is now a rare occurrence to see a group of natives, or even an isolated individual, in the more settled districts. I doubt if a single member of the Adelaide tribe, or of any tribe in the immediate neighbourhood, could now be produced. Where are the tribes and families that thirty-eight years ago were distributed over the whole of our now settled districts? They have not been absorbed by the white population either as servants or otherwise. They have not amalgamated with tribes beyond the settled districts, that is certain. Where are they?

Did Chittleborough ever again see the playmates of his youth? Perhaps so, since he obviously retained a good memory of some of the Kurna language.

[To be concluded in the next issue of *History SA*]

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