

The Occupation of Baker's Flat: A Study of
Irishness and Power in Nineteenth Century South Australia

by

Susan Arthure

B. Social Science (Hons)

Grad. Dip. Library & Information
Management (with Distinction)

A thesis submitted in partial requirements for the degree of Master
of Archaeology, Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Education,
Humanities and Law, Flinders University, October 2014

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Name: Susan Arthure

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Table of contents

List of figures	iv
List of tables	vii
Glossary and abbreviations	vii
Abstract	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
1 Introduction	1
The research questions and their significance	1
Limitations.....	5
Chapter outline	6
2 The literature of identity.....	7
Identity.....	7
Class	10
Ethnicity	13
Irishness: a culturally distinct identity?.....	16
The materiality of Irishness	21
Land and settlement patterns	21
Religion, folk beliefs and traditions	26
Could the Irish be respectable?	27
Conclusion.....	28
3 Historical background	29
The new colony of South Australia	29
How the Irish fitted into South Australia	31
The development of Kapunda and the Irish connection.....	33

The Irish of Baker’s Flat	35
Narratives of Baker’s Flat	40
Conclusion.....	47
4 Methods	49
Site survey	49
Artefact collection	53
Background	53
Artefact cataloguing	55
5 Results.....	58
Site survey	58
Artefact collection	62
Architecture	63
Domestic.....	64
Personal	69
Recreation.....	85
Societal/religious	86
Tools and equipment	95
6 Analysis: The artefacts of Irishness	97
Respectable lives	98
The practice of religion and folk beliefs	100
Social activities.....	105
Conclusion.....	107
7 A wider perspective on the Baker’s Flat Irish	109
Conclusion.....	112

Future research directions	114
8 References	117
9 Appendices	140
Appendix A Family names associated with Baker’s Flat.....	141
Appendix B The O’Callahans, last family on Baker’s Flat?.....	142
Appendix C Kapunda Survey Recording Form	143
Appendix D Cataloguing guidelines	145
Appendix E Trouser and uniform button manufacturers.....	165
Appendix F Ratepayers of Baker’s Flat	168
Appendix G Landowners of Baker’s Flat.....	170
Appendix H Catalogue and photographs of metal artefacts.....	172

List of figures

Figure 1.1 Location map showing the Baker's Flat study area outlined in red, and locations of Kapunda and Adelaide. Image from Google Earth, 27 July 2014.....	2
Figure 2.1 Identity is a complex mix of elements.....	10
Figure 2.2 Irish symbols used in a circular brooch, sugar bowl and tongs, and casket, dating from the 1850s to 1890s (Sheehy 1977:230-231).....	18
Figure 2.3 Typical examples of Irish vernacular architecture (Danaher 1978:18, 30, 31). ...	23
Figure 3.1 Extract from exercise book belonging to Mary Teresa Neilan, St Joseph's School, Baker's Flat dated 4 September 1878. Photo courtesy of P. Swann, Kapunda.....	37
Figure 3.2 1893 survey plan of section 7598, Baker's Flat.	38
Figure 3.3 Miss O'Calaghan [O'Callahan], one of the last residents of Baker's Flat. Photo courtesy of the Kapunda Museum.	39
Figure 3.4 Nineteenth century cottage on Baker's Flat, date unknown. Photo courtesy of P. Swann, Kapunda.	44
Figure 3.5 The Lonely Cottage. Photo by John Kauffmann of a cottage at Baker's Flat, exhibited at the 1907 Annual Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain (Art Gallery of South Australia n.d.).	44
Figure 3.6 An old time village, Baker's Flat, near Kapunda. Photos by John Kauffmann, published in the Christmas Observer of 13 December 1906. Photo courtesy of the Kapunda Museum.	45
Figure 3.7 The Brow of the Hill. Photo by John Kauffmann of a cottage at Baker's Flat, exhibited at the 1907 Annual Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain (Exhibitions of the Royal Photographic Society 1870-1915 2008).	46
Figure 4.1 Sketch map, not to scale, showing the locations of dwellings on Baker's Flat.....	51
Figure 4.2 Transects completed during the field survey, site boundary outlined in red. Image from Google Earth 27 April 2014.	52
Figure 4.3 General locations of metal artefacts.	54
Figure 5.1 Baker's Flat site survey results, overlaid on Google Earth image.	59
Figure 5.2 Baker's Flat site survey results, overlaid on 1893 survey plan.	60
Figure 5.3 Location of building remains mapped against locations of metal detected artefacts.....	61
Figure 5.4 'Dance floor', an area of compacted ground, looking south-east.	62
Figure 5.5 Artefacts (n=1,099) listed by activity category.	62
Figure 5.6 Architecture artefacts (n=16) by type.	63
Figure 5.7 L to R: #0918 possible door knocker; #0927 cupboard door plate.....	63
Figure 5.8 Domestic artefacts (n=91) by type.	64
Figure 5.9 L to R: #0118, pepper cellar lid; #0191, sugar caster lid with stylised leaf pattern; #0911, lion's paw, possibly serving tray leg.....	64
Figure 5.10 #0213, knife handle, symmetrical design.	65
Figure 5.11 Flatware (n=62) by type.	65

Figure 5.12 Flatware patterns. Those classed as unidentifiable either have an unnamed pattern or are too fragmentary to identify.	66
Figure 5.13 Flatware dated by maker.	66
Figure 5.14 Top row: Bent spoons, L to R: #0133; #0142; #0143. Bottom row: Bent and folded spoons, L to R: #0145, spoon, bowl crushed and folded three times; #0187, partial spoon, bowl broken across midpoint and folded double, handle bent.	67
Figure 5.15 Ornaments (n=12) by type.	68
Figure 5.16 #0122, partial bust of gentleman, 61mm high; #0900, fragment of possible picture frame embossed with nineteenth century male and female figures.	68
Figure 5.17 Personal artefacts (n=700) by type.	69
Figure 5.18 Buckles (n=40) by type.	69
Figure 5.19 Decorative buckles. L to R: #0565, three interlaced shamrocks; #0561, botonee cross and vines.	70
Figure 5.20 Snake buckles. L to R: #0332; #0335.	71
Figure 5.21 Cricket buckles. L to R: #0337, two cricketers; #0340, cricket team and the words WE ARE READY OUR CLUB.	71
Figure 5.22 Front and back of #0336, belt buckle plate showing male lacrosse player. Reverse has British registration diamond.	72
Figure 5.23 Buttons (n=548) by style.	72
Figure 5.24 Decorative buttons. L to R: #0790, central stylised leaf; #0789, circle of flowers and leaves; #0738, hand painted stylised flower on lime green background.	73
Figure 5.25 Art Nouveau buttons. L to R: #0782, dragonfly with cut-out wings; #0787, three flowers with cut-outs.	74
Figure 5.26 Buttons resembling cut steel. L to R: #0785, stylised flower; #0786, stylised sunburst.	74
Figure 5.27 #0443, four trouser buttons made by C.H. Shakeshaft of Kapunda.	75
Figure 5.28 Uniform buttons. L to R: #0734, Gaols & Prisons SA; #0763, South Australian Railways; #0724, South Australian Volunteers.	76
Figure 5.29 Uniform buttons matched against their earliest period of use.	76
Figure 5.30 Jewellery items (n=93) by type.	77
Figure 5.31 Copper alloy brooches. L to R: #0584, lily of the valley; #0570, butterfly; #0867, snake coiled around egg.	78
Figure 5.32 Copper alloy brooches. L to R: #0571, triple horseshoe; #0588, two horseshoes entwined with a belt; #0863, horseshoe and riding crop.	78
Figure 5.33 Lead and copper alloy brooches. L to R: #0864, centre raised circle; #0865, centre circle surrounded by curved fronds and oak leaves.	79
Figure 5.34 #0912, copper alloy partial brooch, flower shape.	79
Figure 5.35 L to R: #0576, copper alloy MIZPAH brooch; #0572, silver bar brooch with floral motif; #0879, silver bar brooch with floral and anchor motifs.	80
Figure 5.36 #0913, large diamond-shaped chain, with flower pattern, 260mm in length.	81
Figure 5.37 Cufflinks. L to R: #0901, copper alloy West's solitaire cufflink; #0893 silver cufflink; #0894 rolled gold cufflink; all with naturalistic designs of flowers and fern fronds.	81

Figure 5.38 L to R: #0197, hat pin in the shape of a golf club; #0872, copper alloy stick-pin with rose motif.	82
Figure 5.39 Locketts. L to R: #0855, letters EM; #0859, raised shield; #0582, young Queen Victoria encircled by the words VICTORIA QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN 1863.	82
Figure 5.40 Rings. L to R: #0886, copper alloy and paste engagement-style ring; #0885, silver belt-shaped band; #0881, gold wedding band.	83
Figure 5.41 Other costume items (n=19) by type.	84
Figure 5.42 L to R: #0566, money clip with floral design; #0898, trouser braces clip with penny farthing design.	84
Figure 5.43 Toy horses. L to R: #0907, tin alloy horse on stand; #0193, lead alloy racehorse.	85
Figure 5.44 #0216, front and back of copper alloy gaming token.	86
Figure 5.45 Societal/religious items (n=275) by type.	86
Figure 5.46 #0847, front and back of medallion commemorating the 50 th jubilee in 1887 of Queen Victoria and South Australia, pierced during manufacture.	87
Figure 5.47 Money (n=130) by denomination and type.	88
Figure 5.48 Pierced coins. L to R: #0326, 1828 George IV farthing, pierced with 5mm hole; #0814, 1860 Victorian half penny, pierced unevenly in centre with 4mm hole; #0325, 1885 Victorian farthing pierced with 1mm hole; #0328, Chinese coin, ?1850 to 1900, pierced with 2.5mm hole.	89
Figure 5.49 Part pierced coin: #0276, 1879 Victorian half penny, partly pierced at top.	90
Figure 5.50 Modified coins. L to R: #0322, George III sixpence, possible date 1816 to 1820, design mostly obliterated with silver deposits; #0324, Victorian half penny, possible date 1838 to 1895, rim removed; #0840, possible post-1860 penny, flattened to irregular shape.	90
Figure 5.51 Dog tag examples, all from district 78. L to R: 1885-1886; 1887-1888; 1891-1892.	91
Figure 5.52 Number of dog tags from specific councils.	92
Figure 5.53 Religious objects (n=29) by type.	93
Figure 5.54 Religious objects. L to R: #0226, rosary crucifix; #0241, Seven Sorrows rosary medal; #0232, rosary miniature case.	94
Figure 5.55 Tools and equipment (n=11) by type.	95
Figure 5.56 #0890, possible cockatoo chain, made of nickel alloy.	95
Figure 5.57 #0109, two views of unknown object associated with G. May of Kapunda.	96

List of tables

Table 4.1 Transect coordinates completed during Baker’s Flat field survey.....	52
Table 4.2 Numbers of uncatalogued artefact types.....	55
Table 5.1 Modified coins as a subset of total coins.	89
Table 5.2 Dog registration tags per year from 1885 to 1936.	91
Table 6.1 Instances of pierced coins or tokens in Australian archaeological reports.	103

Glossary and abbreviations

Anglo-Irish	Born or resident in Ireland of English descent, a privileged social class that was part of the so-called Protestant Ascendancy which made up the ruling class in Ireland from the seventeenth to the twentieth century
Britain	The island that includes England, Scotland and Wales. It excludes Ireland
Co.	County
Great Famine	Period in Ireland when the potato crop failed in successive years between 1845 and 1850, causing mass starvation, disease and emigration. Also known as <i>An Gorta Mór</i> (The Great Hunger) and the Irish Famine
GRG	Government Record Group. Used by State Records of South Australia to denote any records created by a South Australian government agency
Ireland	The entire island of Ireland

Abstract

This research investigates Irish social identity ('Irishness') in the nineteenth century, centring on a substantial and long-lived Irish settlement known as Baker's Flat, in the mid-north of South Australia. The research questions focus on the concepts of identity and power, specifically, how these Irish expressed their identity through material culture, and what this tells us about the community and its power relations.

The occupation of Baker's Flat began in 1854, when many Irish families came to labour at the nearby Kapunda copper mine, and squatted rent-free on the Baker's Flat land. The settlement persisted until at least the 1920s, set apart from the broader community. Although hundreds of Irish people lived there, the written histories document little about the community, and if mentioned at all, the narrative tends to be a stereotypical one based on the widespread perception of the Irish as dirty, wild, drunken and lawless. In large part this negative narrative was probably stimulated by the refusal of the residents to pay rent or allow outsiders into the community, and their resistance to the landowners' attempts to remove them.

Analysis of a metal artefact collection and site survey have enabled a more complex interpretation of Baker's Flat, with Irishness evident through several material realms. Many of the artefacts conform to general Victorian trends, and align with a people endeavouring to conform to the ideal of respectability. Catholicism, a key marker of Irishness, is evident through artefactual and historical evidence, and appears as both a cultural way of life and a spiritual belief system. The Catholic Church's tolerance for folk practices may have allowed a folk tradition practice to continue here alongside traditional religious practice, as it did elsewhere. At a site-wide scale, the Irishness of this community is expressed through the spatial layout of the settlement, and historical evidence of the lack of fencing and unrestrained stock, all of which indicate the continuation of a traditional Irish 'clachan' and 'rundale' settlement pattern constructed around clustered kin-linked housing and communal farming methods. This resulted in a close-knit community based around mutual obligation which enabled this group to stand united against the dominant power of the landowners through an extended court case.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I owe an enormous thank you to my supervisor Dr Heather Burke for her wise guidance and comments, infinite knowledge, and unfailing support.

Thank you to Dr Alice Gorman and Dr Dymphna Lonergan for their support, Dr Mick Morrison for bringing a field school to Baker's Flat, and Rob Koch for invaluable assistance with maps. Cherrie de Leiuen—thank you for sharing ideas, knowledge, fieldwork and artefact cataloguing. Thanks also to the students on the Flinders University Archaeology Field Methods School in February 2013, to Chantal Wight, Janine McEgan and Dave Ross, and the library staff at Flinders University, especially Dr Aliese Millington.

In Kapunda, this research was vastly enriched by the knowledge and expertise of Simon O'Reilley. Peter Swann shared his extensive knowledge of the Kapunda Catholic archives. David Pumpa kindly allowed me access to the artefact collection. Dale Hampel generously gave access to the Baker's Flat site. Thanks also to Fr Mark Sexton, the staff of Kapunda Library, and the volunteers at Kapunda Museum.

Thank you to my friends for their support in many ways, and a big thanks to Rosie Packer who spent many hours looking for Baker's Flat stories on Trove.

And my family. My husband Hugh Kearns for reading everything more than once and offering brutal comments as I requested, and for providing hundreds of cups of tea and glasses of wine, often at the same time. And my sons, Brendan and Darragh Kearns, for respecting my work and being proud of me.