

CHAPTER FOUR – The Sites

The blacks are continually prowling about our stations, for the purpose of plundering and assassinating our shepherds, and our hut-keepers are never safe. (John E. Hobbs, letter to *The South Australian*, June 8, 1849).

Throughout this chapter the words ‘aperture’ and ‘embrasure’ are frequently used. An ‘aperture’ can be simply defined as a small opening or gap in a wall (Johnston, 1976:30). An ‘embrasure’ is an aperture which has been specifically designed for discharging a firearm through. Therefore, ‘aperture’ is herein used as an adjective, describing an architectural feature, whereas ‘embrasure’ is used to describe the function of such a feature. They can, of course, be one and the same. That is, an aperture can be an embrasure and an embrasure will always be an aperture. Embrasures are more commonly referred to as ‘loopholes’, and sometimes incorrectly as ‘gun slots’ or ‘portholes’.

Mount Benson (South East South Australia)



Figure 4.1.0. 'Mount Benson', now 'Wangolina' homestead as it appears today, view of north side.

The Site

The structures investigated here formed part of the head station of John Gifford's Mount Benson station. It is possible that this homestead was known as 'Tarlaemoor' (Sutton, 2004: 21), though the evidence is too scanty to confidently refer to it as such. Gifford is believed to have established Mount Benson station between 1846 and 1847 (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585), remaining there until 1854 (Old Systems, SA Lands Dept, Memorial No. 246, Bk 68). Gifford's run was known as the Mount Benson Run, since this eminence was located roughly in the centre of his property. Today the dwelling is known as 'Wangolina'. The main feature of the site is the dwelling itself, and it is to this that a

fortified homestead myth is attached. There are also the remains of two other 19th century outbuildings close to the dwelling.

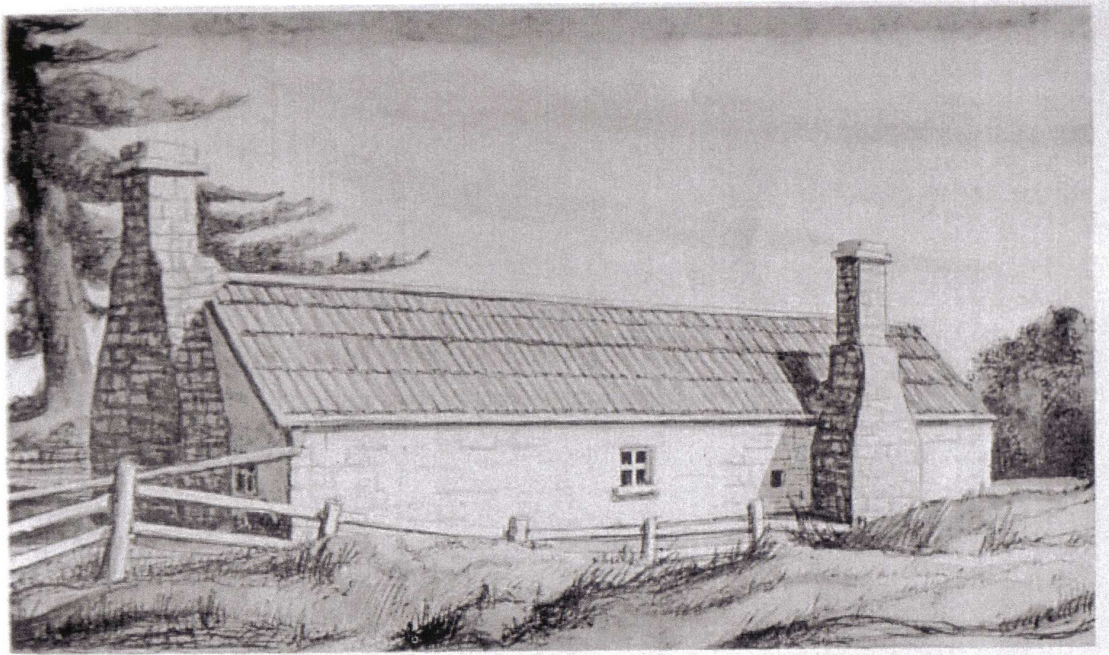
The Myth

The myth that Mount Benson was defensively built first appears in written form in Barrowman's local history book, *Old Days and Old Ways*, published in 1971. The reference occurs in a chapter of the book principally about James Brown's alleged massacre of Aborigines. After describing a door with an embrasure built into it from a different station (more of which will be said later), Barrowman writes:

This is not the only building in the area showing provisions for shooting blacks in the early days. A rifle port-hole is to be found built into the stonework of the earlier portion of another house in the Kingston district. The building was once the homestead for "Wangolina" Station established during the early days by a squatter named Gifford (Barrowman, 1971: 52).

It is not known where Barrowman obtained this information. There are three possible ways this interpretation of the building's design may have originated. The first is that someone passed the myth on to him in the form of local oral history. The second is that Barrowman interpreted the small aperture as an embrasure himself, based upon his own knowledge of defensive architectural techniques. The third possibility is that someone else told Barrowman of the aperture's function, based on their own interpretation. The myth was repeated in Sutton's 2004 book, *Full Circle* (Sutton, 2004: 25). This was in the form of the inclusion of an illustration of the building, along with a caption mentioning

the 'rifle port-hole', which originally appeared in Barrowman (1971: 56) (See Figure 4.1.1).



Sketch showing artist's impression of Gifford's Old Wangolina homestead. The small rifle port-hole is close to the left-hand side of the right-hand chimney.

Figure 4.1.1. Sketch of Mount Benson dwelling with original caption. From Barrowman, 1971: 56.

Location

The site is located in South Australia's south east, approximately 257 kilometres south east of Adelaide and 15.5 kilometres south of the town of Kingston S.E. The dwelling is still occupied and the property is accessed via a private driveway running easterly off the main road between Kingston and Robe. The site's structures stand atop a small hill, providing a long view over the flat, low plains to the north and south of the site. The

building of the homestead on a rise such as this appears to have been common in this area, as Dunn mentions that the site of the homestead block was usually chosen on the best land, well supplied with water, but high and dry (Dunn, 1969: 22).

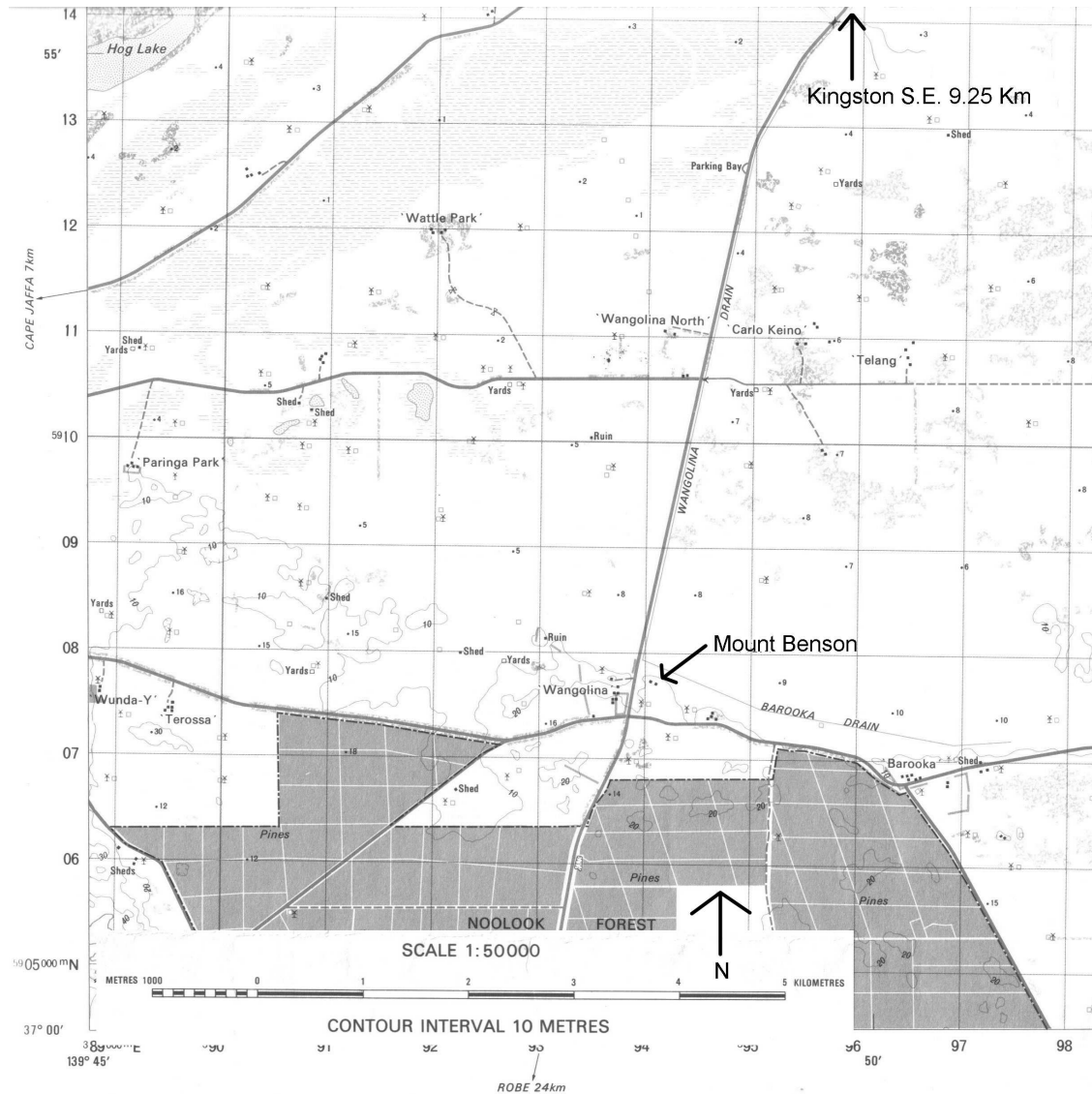


Figure 4.1.2. Map showing location of the Mount Benson site. Adapted from topographic map Kingston 6824-11.

The Dwelling

The main feature of this site is the limestone-walled dwelling. Limestone was prevalent in the area and many settlers built with it (Dunn, 1969: 22). Although this structure has

been found to have undergone extensive alterations over time, the original configuration of the building is ascertainable, thanks to archival information, and some of the subsequent alterations are visible in the use of different construction techniques and materials.

In its current configuration, the dwelling has five rooms: three in the main section, arranged in a linear plan and two small extensions on the north east and north west corners. The one on the north-west corner is a laundry/bathroom made of limestone and the one on the north east corner is made of weatherboard and is currently being used as storage space (visible in Figure 4.1.0). The two archival documentary sources for the appearance of this structure are an 1864-66 valuation of the property (SRSA, GRG 35/654) and a hand drawn plan of the head station, including a description, also dated to 1864 (SRSA, GRG 35/653).

Oral history from a current occupant indicates that in the later 20th century the roof level was raised approximately 30cm by heightening the walls (Mrs Hayes, pers. comm., 19/04/2005). However, this cannot be confidently confirmed through visual examination. There is a dividing wall with a doorway in the eastern side of the dwelling, creating a small room which is currently being used as a kitchen. There is a verandah along the dwelling's northern side. It is unknown when this was first built, though the corrugated iron sheeting and gutters are modern. The gabled roof has also been replaced in the later 20th century (Mrs Hayes, pers. comm. 20/4/2005). The building is currently roofed with corrugated iron.

The building as it stands today is an elongated, three roomed one. The interior space is divided into two main sections by a wall which does not have a communicating door. This wall divides the building into a large (west) room (room 1) and a smaller (east) room (room 2). Both have an open fireplace, although that in the west room is larger. In addition, there is another dividing wall with a door on the eastern side of the building, creating a third small room here (room 3). The northern side of the dwelling was evidently the front, as it is here that all of the doors and most of the windows are located (Figure 4.1.0 & Figure 4.1.9). The dwelling is built partly into the slope of the hill on which it stands. This can be clearly seen on the southern side where the ground level is only approximately 70cm below the window (Figure 4.1.3).



Figure 4.1.3. View of southern side of dwelling, showing the height of the ground at this point. The ‘embrasure’ can also be seen just to the left of the chimney at right. Photograph taken from atop the mound which is immediately to the rear of the building.

According to the myth, what is an embrasure for firing through can be seen at the rear (i.e. southern side) of the dwelling. This comes in the form of a small square aperture built into the stonework, between the chimney and the interior dividing wall in the east room (room 2). This feature measures approximately 25cm by 25cm. A small glass window has been fitted on the interior, which may or may not be original (Figure 4.1.4). There is also a relatively small casement window on this side which is part of the west room (room 1).



Figure 4.1.4. Close-up of the exterior of the ‘embrasure’ in the Mount Benson dwelling.

Other Structures

There are the remains of two other 19th century structures just west of the dwelling (Figure 4.1.5). Both are constructed of random rubble limestone, which is plentiful in the region. They are built close together, standing approximately three metres apart.

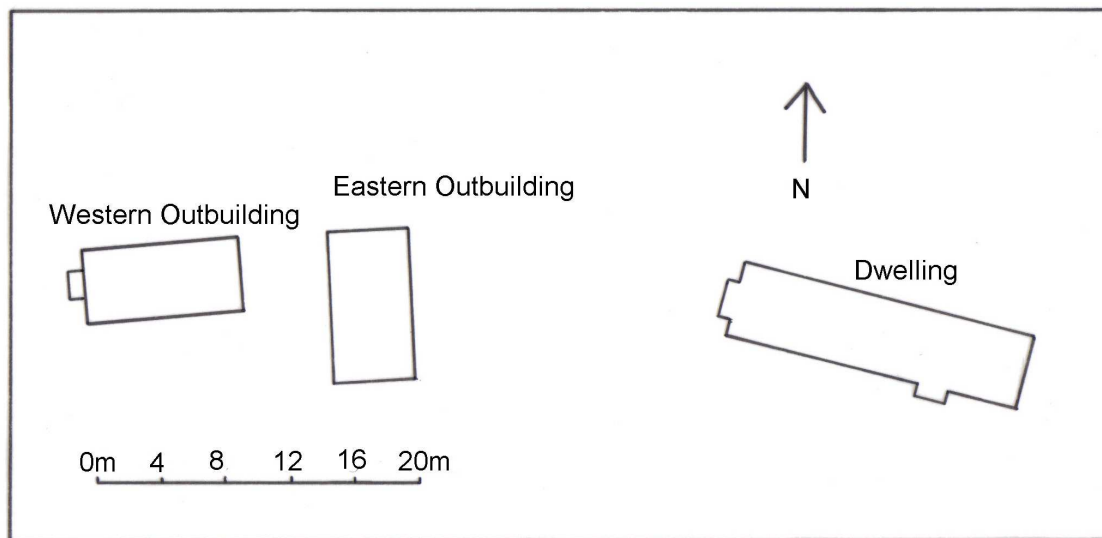


Figure 4.1.5. Site plan showing the layout of the remaining 19th century structures at Mount Benson.

The easternmost of these buildings is rectangular in plan, orientated north/south, and measures 9.5m by 5.2m (Figure 4.1.6). It has a central wall running east/west, which divides the interior into two approximately square rooms. This structure is in a very bad state of preservation. Most of the western wall is still standing to roof height, but of the rest of the walls, only the bases remain. As a result, there is no visible evidence of the position of any doors or windows in this structure. There is very little rubble where the walls once stood. A possible explanation for this may be that the stones from this building were recycled when the walls of the dwelling were heightened.



Figure 4.1.6. View of the remains of the eastern outbuilding at Mount Benson. The remains of the western outbuilding can be seen to the left. Facing north-west.

The westernmost outbuilding is rectangular and orientated approximately north/south (Figure 4.1.7). It measures 10m by 4.2m. There is no evidence that this structure ever had any interior dividing walls. Most of the southern wall still stands to roof height, and in the centre of this wall, rather high up, is a window. At a later time, this window was blocked up on the interior with a combination of planks, rubble and mortar, although, the original wooden window frame and shutters were left in position. The remains of the other walls stand to an average height of approximately 40cm, high enough to indicate the position of a doorway in the centre of the northern wall, opposite the window, though not high enough to indicate the position of any other windows. The remains of a fireplace, and the mound created by the collapsed rubble of the chimney, can be clearly seen on the western side of the building.



Figure 4.1.7. View of the western outbuilding at Mount Benson. The blocked up window can be seen in the upper centre of the wall, as can the rubble pile, evidently from the chimney, at right. The two large trees in the background are part of the avenue of trees believed to have marked the line of the old road. Facing south-east.

Other Cultural Modifications of the Landscape

Just to the south of the homestead site, at the foot of the hill on which it stands, there is an avenue of large trees. These are orientated north/south, pointing towards Mount Benson. In a personal communication with one of the current occupants of the dwelling, the latter pointed out that this avenue marked the line of the old track leading to the station (Mrs Hayes, pers. comm., 20/4/2005). This is supported by the run map of 1851 (Figure 4.1.8), which clearly shows a track leading from the head station southwards past Mount Benson and probably leading to Robe.

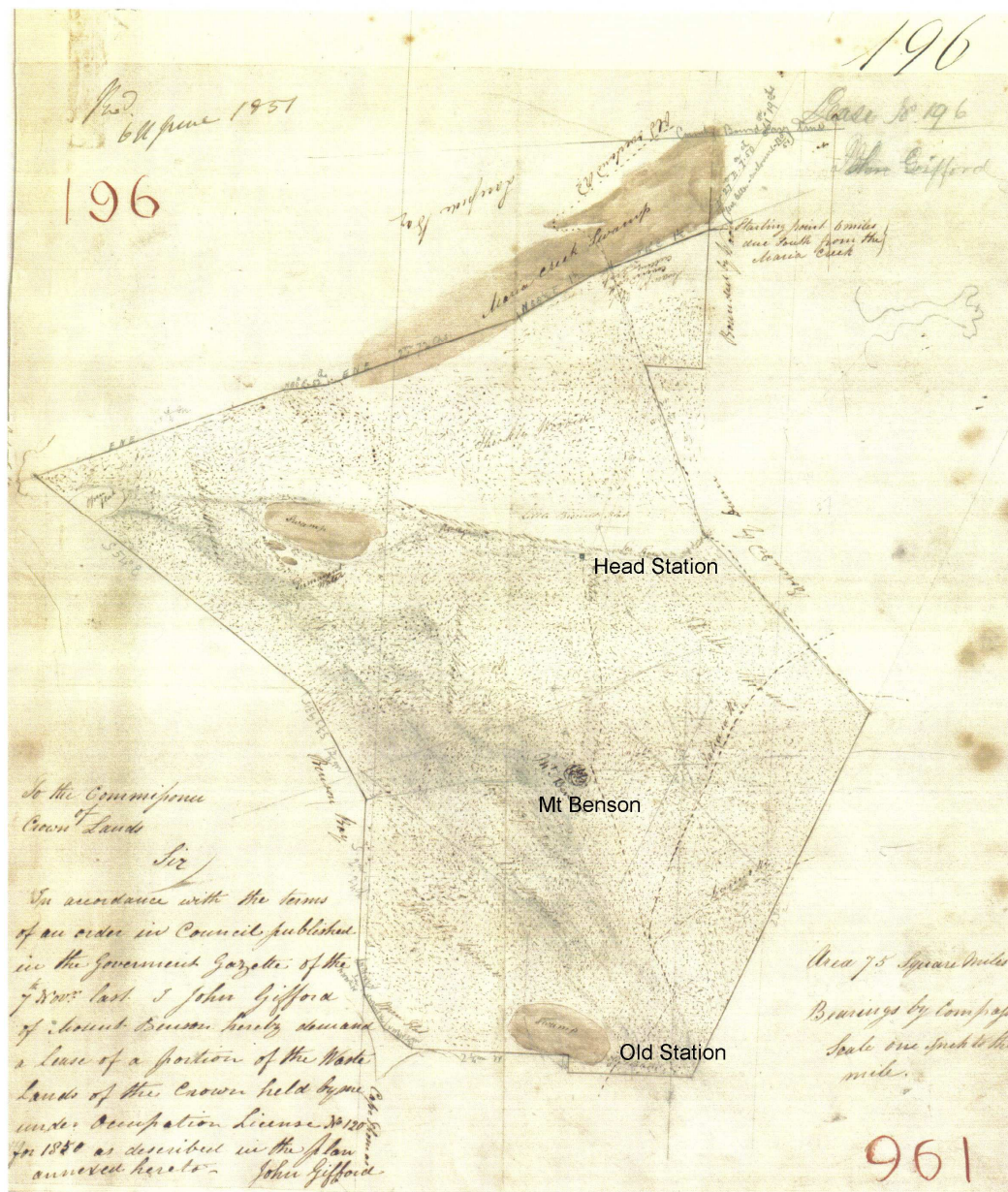


Figure 4.1.8. Map of the Mount Benson Run, dated 1851. The text in bold has been added for clarity. Courtesy of the South Australian Lands Department.

Site History

In April, 1844, an exploratory party including Governor Grey, Charles Bonney, Thomas Burr and George French Angus visited the area which would later become the Mount Benson run. The aim of this expedition was to assess the quality of the land with a view of opening it up to leaseholders (Sutton, 2004: 19). On the 29th April, 1844, Burr wrote:

We entered into a wood the character of which was quite distinct from that which we had previously seen; the wattle, gum trees, black wood etc., grew luxuriantly and there was a watercourse having a drainage from the eastward (PRGS, Vol. XV Chap.3 para 3 line 7 – T. Burr).

The explorers then came across a deposit of Tufa, commonly known as “biscuit” because of its resemblance to ship’s biscuit. At this point, the party were probably just to the north of the later site of the homestead, as the run map of 1851 shows such an area labelled, “Little Biscuit Flat” (Figure 4.1.8).

Returning to Burr’s account:

Beyond the biscuit plain we came to a fresh water teatree swamp with a drainage towards the coast and from this to Mount Benson the country was gently undulating and grassy, thickly wooded with casuarinas, banksias and stringy bark. From Mount Benson we had an extensive view over an undulating, grassy and

thickly wooded country and had a good prospect of Guichen Bay (PRGS, Vol. XV Chap.3 para 3 line 7 – T. Burr).

George French Angus also recorded what he observed during this expedition. Of the area in which the site is located he wrote:

We steered south by compass through another wood to reach Mount Benson, - a round-topped eminence, about seven hundred feet above the sea, and the highest of a range of limestone-hills, visible from the sandhills at Lacepede Bay. We ascended the ridges, which were thickly clothed with banksia and she-oak, but had some difficulty in finding Mount Benson, owing to the density of the foliage. The view from the summit was most extensive, and of a peculiar character. It appeared as though we were looking over a sea of wood, with the blue plains melting away into the invisible distance. To the westward, we traced the shores of Guichen bay, with Baudin's Rocks and a reef beyond the bay, against which a heavy surf was breaking (Angas, 1969[1847]: 150).

These early accounts are relevant because they describe the terrain as it was at the time of European settlement. At the time Gifford came to Mount Benson (1846-7), the run would have been mainly covered in trees and other vegetation. Even in 1851 this was still the case, as shown on the Run map of that date (Figure 4.1.8).

Prior to Gifford, the first occupational leaseholders, Francis Grote and Edward Stirling, arrived in the Mount Benson area in 1845. Close to the southern border of the 1851 run map, next to a swamp, are the words, “old station” (Figure 4.1.8). This seems most likely to denote the position of Grote and Stirling’s station. These pioneers were obviously not happy with conditions, since by 1847 they had left. It is likely that one of the main reasons they decided to leave was because of the Coastal Disease that plagued stock in this area (Sutton, 2004: 19). Coastal Disease was caused by a deficiency of cobalt and copper in the herbage. Livestock could only be kept in a healthy condition along the coast for four months of the year. After this time they had to be disposed of or moved to better pastures inland. Stirling’s obituary tells us that a great number of their sheep died on the Mount Benson run, the remainder having to be brought to Lake Alexandrina, where healthier pasture was available (Vaughan, 1986: 7). The evidence suggests that Grote and Stirling stayed on this run for no more than two years, probably leaving in 1846 or early 1847. By early 1847, the run was evidently occupied by John Gifford, as it was at this time that Gifford was described as being “of Mount Benson” by the Colonial Secretary in one of his quarterly reports (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585).

Comparatively little is known of John Gifford. No photographs of him are known to exist, and historical references to him are scant. However, this paucity of information was redressed considerably by the publication in 2004 of *Full Circle: A Story of South Australia’s Unknown Pioneer*, by Enid Sutton (Sutton, 2004). This book made use of 15 letters written by Gifford to his sister in England, a body of documentary evidence which had not been drawn upon previously.

John Gifford was born in the hamlet of Blackford in Somerset, UK, in the early 19th century (Sutton, 2004: 6). He was well educated by the standards of the day, as his ability to express himself in his letters home testifies (Sutton, 2004: 6). He left England for South Australia in September 1839, arriving in February 1840. Gifford was just 20 years old when he arrived in the Colony. Soon after arriving, Gifford began working for a Mr Philcox, whom he had met on the voyage over. Gifford worked on Philcox's cattle station, which was at Mount Barker (Sutton, 2004: 8). It appears that he used this time to learn about the pastoral industry in the Colony, as well as to save some money.

By September 1844, Gifford had struck out on his own, running a cattle station on the Murray River (Sutton, 2004: 14), although he may have moved here as early as 1842 (Sutton, 2004: 14). The exact location of this station is unknown, however Gifford wrote that it was 60 miles (96.5 kilometres) from Adelaide, and it has also been described as 3 miles (4.8 kilometres) north of the Wellington survey (Sutton, 2004: 14-15). This would place it somewhere between Wellington and Tailem Bend. The River Murray evidently ran through Gifford's property, since he kept cattle on both sides of it (Sutton, 2004: 15).

It was while working on this run that we first hear of Gifford employing an Aboriginal person. This appears to have been common practice for pastoralists throughout South Australia's colonial period (e.g. Giles, 1879-94: 21/1/1884). In this example, Gifford mentions that he took a, "...[n]ative from the river" (Sutton, 2004: 15) with him when he went exploring on the eastern side of the river. Mention is made of Gifford's 'black boys' in relation to both of his later pastoral properties, Mount Benson and Blackford (SA

Register, December 6th, 1852 & December 1st, 1852). The fact that Gifford went exploring in the immediate vicinity of his run also shows that at this time he was well and truly on the frontier of colonial settlement. It would be interesting to know what his relations with the local Aboriginal people were like at this place, though unfortunately no information on this subject appears to have survived.

By early 1847, Gifford had moved to the Mount Benson area, the site under investigation here. While it is not known what prompted him to leave his run on the Murray, a possible clue might be found in an 1846 letter from Gifford to the Colonial Secretary, regarding his run on the Murray. He wrote:

Sir,

Having understood that Mr Castles has applied to the Land Office for a Section of Land to be Surveyed on which my head Station is situated I should feel extremely obliged if you would not allow it to be Surveyed, or at all events not at the present time as it would put me to considerable inconvenience and a great loss not knowing where to go at present (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1846/139).

A comment, by an unknown official, attached to Gifford's request reads:

Mr Castles' application is at present before the Lt. Governor. I know nothing of Mr Gifford's statement and can find therefore no opinion upon his request.

[Signature illegible] (Reproduced in Sutton, 2004: 15)

Gifford was an Occupational License holder. This meant that he was issued with a certificate by the Lands Office which had to be renewed on a yearly basis. This made the position of Occupational License holders quite insecure, since they could not be sure from one year to the next whether they would be allowed to stay on the land, or if it would be given to someone else (Sutton, 2004: 14). Gifford's letter above tells us that the land on which his station stood was under threat of being surveyed, and if this happened, Gifford would be forced off the land. Considering the rather dismissive tone of the comment attached to the letter, and the fact that by the next year he was at Mount Benson, it would appear that Mr Castles' survey was indeed allowed and Gifford decided, or was compelled, to go elsewhere. Where he went was very far from Adelaide, 257 kilometres to be precise. Perhaps Gifford felt more secure from the surveyors and bureaucracy out there, well beyond the relatively closely settled areas. As mentioned previously, Gifford was definitely located at Mount Benson by early 1847, since it was at this time that he was mentioned in a letter to the Colonial Secretary (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585), so it may be inferred that he arrived there in late 1846.

Unfortunately, no letters sent by Gifford to England are known to have survived dating from his period at Mount Benson. Sutton (2004) has suggested that this may be due to one of Gifford's younger cousins coming over from England to 'try his luck' in the Colony, and to work with Gifford (Sutton, 2004: 24), thereby allaying Gifford's loneliness and need to write home. Gifford's letters reveal a sense of homesickness and a yearning for communication with his relatives in England. For example, in one letter,

dated 1st September, 1844, he wrote, “I long to hear from some of you again” (Sutton, 2004: 13).

In order to make an assessment as to the defensive functionality of the dwelling, it is necessary to have an idea as to the layout of the site as it was at the time of the dwelling’s construction. Here, we are fortunate to have a detailed description and plan of the layout of the head station dated to 1864 (SRSA, GRG 35/653) (Figure 4.1.9). In addition to this we have an 1864-66 valuation of the property which includes a description of the buildings on site, as well as a general indication of their relative ages (SRSA, GRG 35/654). John Gifford’s period of occupation at Mount Benson was from at least June 1847 (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585) until about April 1854, when he transferred the run to Benjamin Rochfort and Thomas Seymour (SA Lands Department, Memorial No. 246 Bk 68).

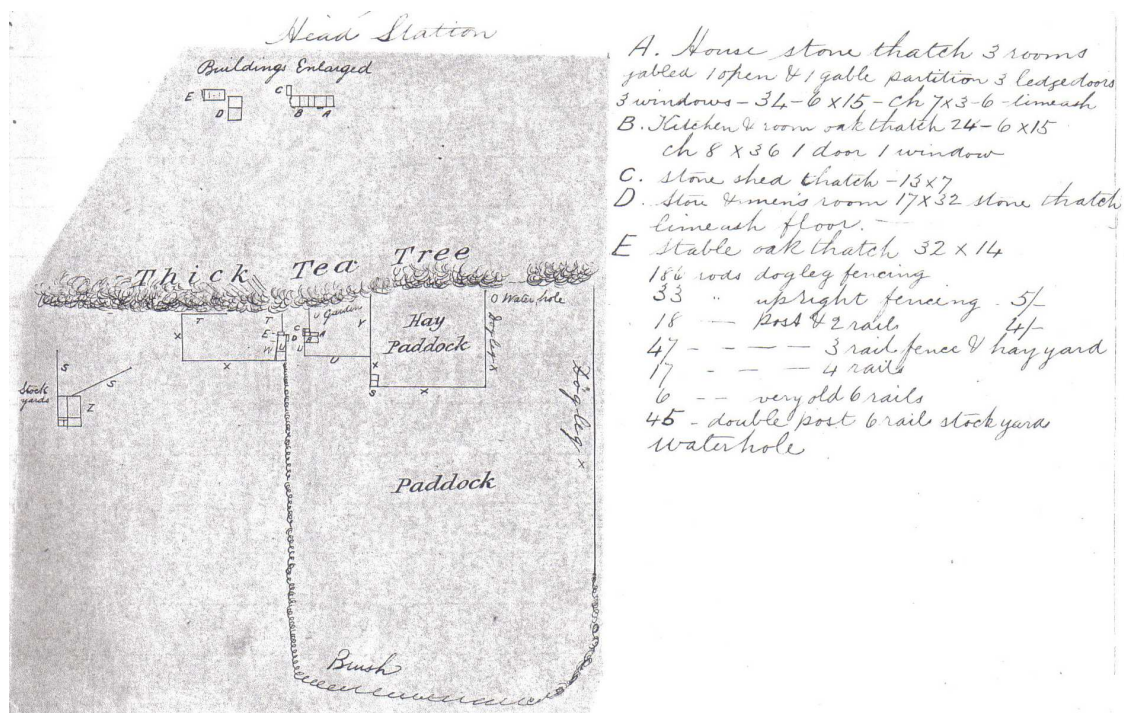


Figure 4.1.9. 1864 hand-drawn plan of the layout of the Mount Benson head station with accompanying description.

There is sufficient evidence to confidently attribute the construction of the dwelling at this site to John Gifford. However, it is rather less clear as to whether the two stone outbuildings nearby also date to his period of occupation. As stated previously, the first colonists to occupy the run were Grote and Stirling (Vaughan, 1986: 25). Gifford was noted as being at Mount Benson by 1847 (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585), and the 1851 run map shows the location of the "Old Station", in addition to "Head Station" (Figure 4.1.8). The location of the head station is the same as that of the site under investigation. Therefore, it can be deduced that "Old Station" referred to Grote and Stirling's station and the "Head Station" was the new site occupied by Gifford. Furthermore, in a valuation of the Mount Benson run in 1864-66, the dwelling, kitchen and shed are described as being, "...very old" (by 1860s standards) (SRSA, GRG 35/654). This also suggests that

these three structures were built by Gifford. The dwelling under investigation here is popularly known as ‘Gifford’s’ by many of the older residents of the area (Vaughan, 1986: 31), likely representing the continued association of the site with Gifford through oral history.

The plan and accompanying description (Figure 4.1.9) describe the dwelling as being of stone, gabled, with three rooms, three doors and three windows. There were two interior dividing partitions, one gabled and one open. There was also a chimney. The roof was thatch. Adjoining the dwelling was an oak kitchen and room with one door and one window, also with a chimney and a thatch roof. The plan shows these oak structures standing on exactly the same sites as the later stone ones (SRSA, GRG 35/653). Evidently the oak structures were demolished and replaced with stone ones, thereby extending the dwelling, sometime after 1864-66.

As for the two stone outbuildings on the site (Figures 5.1.6 & 5.1.7), there is evidence that they do not date to Gifford’s period of occupation. Again, this comes in the form of the 1864-66 evaluation of the run (SRSA, GRG 35/654) and the hand-drawn plan and description (SRSA, GRG 35/653) (Figure 4.1.9). Unlike the dwelling, these structures are not described in the evaluation as being “very old” (SRSA, GRG 35/654). Assuming the valuer was correct in his interpretation of the relative age of the structures he saw, this suggests that the two outbuildings were *not* very old, and therefore may date to after Gifford’s period of occupation. The plan and accompanying description identify the westernmost structure as being a stable and the easternmost one as a store and men’s

room. As described above, the current remains of the westernmost outbuilding show that it was made of stone. However, the description accompanying the hand-drawn plan describes this structure as made of oak with a thatch roof. This indicates that, like the kitchen and shed described above, the oak structure was demolished after 1864 and replaced by a stone one. Curiously, although a chimney appears to be shown on the plan, it is not mentioned in the description. The easternmost structure is evidently the same one as described in 1864, as its form as shown on the plan is identical to its extant plan today. It too had a thatch roof (SRSA, GRG 35/653).

Going by the evidence, it can be confidently argued that, at the time of the dwelling's construction, structures present at the head station consisted of the stone dwelling itself, an oak kitchen and a stone shed, the latter two structures having been replaced with stone ones after 1864-66, on the same sites. It is possible that there were additional structures at the site at this time, though no evidence was found at the time of fieldwork, and none were still standing in 1864-66. The fact that the kitchen and shed were constructed of oak may suggest that the current stone dwelling was not the original one, but was built later during Gifford's period (1847-1854) to replace an earlier dwelling, also of oak, though separate to Stirling and Grote's "Old Station". Taking into account the available information regarding the early appearance of the homestead, its suggested appearance at the time of the stone dwelling's construction is shown in the plan below (Figure 4.1.10).

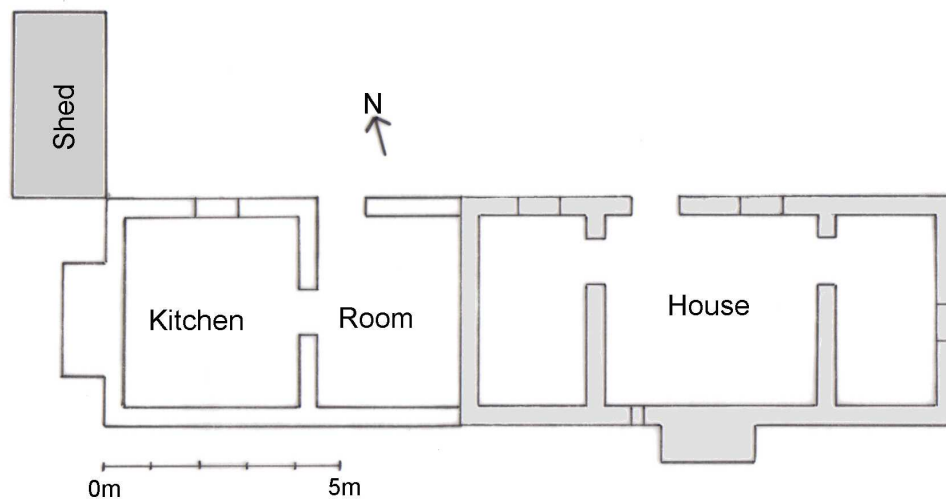


Figure 4.1.10. Suggested reconstructed plan of Mount Benson homestead at the time of the dwelling's construction. The grey-shaded portions indicate stone construction, non-shaded portions indicate oak construction.

The Indigenous Inhabitants

Gifford's Mount Benson Run occupied land which was, according to Horton's map, a border zone between two general Aboriginal language groups (Horton, 2000). The term 'border' is applied loosely here, as there would have been an overlap of land use by both language groups. According to Horton's map, the majority of Gifford's run was located in the land of the Ngarrindjeri people, with the land of the Buandig people on its southern border (Horton, 2000). Within these general language groups there is evidence that there were further divisions such as clans, dialects and smaller language groups. For example, Mrs J. Smith, who studied the Aborigines of the south east, mentions that there were three 'tribes' who lived in an area close to Mount Benson: the Polinjunga; the

Witchintunga: and the Mootatunga (Vaughan, 1986: 7). There is, however, conflicting information regarding the name of the Indigenous people who lived in this area, since Norman Tindale identified this as the land of the Meintangk people (Vaughan, 1986: 7). Unfortunately, the main incident of frontier conflict which occurred on Gifford's run (a cattle raid) and which was documented at the time makes no specific mention of the name of the Aboriginal people who were involved (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585, GRG 24/6/1847/1153).

Estimating the size of Aboriginal populations in a particular area at the time of European colonisation is always problematic, and is usually little more than an educated guess. This is also the case for the Mount Benson district. One estimate is that the Aboriginal population of the whole south east district of South Australia consisted of some 2000 individuals (Vaughan, 1986: 8). Therefore, the number of individuals who regularly occupied the Mount Benson district may have numbered between 100-200. We do, however, have early documentary evidence that there was a considerable Aboriginal population living around Mount Benson at the time of British colonisation. This comes in the form of the George French Angas' reminiscences (Angas, 1969[1847]). Angas was part of an expedition to the south east of South Australia in 1844 to determine the quality of the land prior to opening it up for settlement. The date of this expedition is significant because it was launched only a year prior to Grote and Stirling's first settlement of the Mount Benson run in mid-1845 (Vaughan, 1986: 25). Angas' party ascended Mount Benson itself (merely a round-topped eminence), and lit a large signal fire. Angas goes on to write:

It was soon responded to by the natives towards the south and east, many columns of smoke rising in that direction; and before we descended the hill, the natives were signaling [sic] all around, giving indications of a larger population amongst these banksias [sic] woods than we had anticipated (Angas, 1969[1847]: 150-1).

Dunn, possibly repeating local oral history, mentions that large camps of Aborigines lived on the Mount Benson run in the late 1840s and 50s (Dunn, 1969: 23).

To the average settler of the 1840s, the Coorong (the name given to the whole coastal region of which this site is part) would have represented the place of the Maria massacre. This event was the massacre of some two dozen European shipwreck survivors by members of the Milmenrura clan, a group of the Ngarrindjeri people, in 1840 (Foster, Hosking & Nettelbeck, 2001: 13). The reason for the massacre is unclear, but the end result was the summary execution of at least two members of the clan by a punitive expedition led by Major T.S. O'Halloran (SRSA, 5/83). Dunn writes that the Aborigines of the Coorong were "thoroughly subdued" by the government action (1969: 21), but a look at the archival evidence suggests that this was not the case. The locality of the massacre, Maria Creek, lies just north of Gifford's run. Dunn may be correct in claiming that the Aborigines of the south east were subdued by the Europeans, but it is more likely that they were subdued by the violence described below than O'Halloran's punitive expedition.

The south east of South Australia in the 1840s was regarded as a particularly violent frontier (Foster, 1998: 220). A police report in 1843 noted that the Aborigines to the south east had been “most troublesome” recently (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1843/1269½). By 1844, at least two years before Gifford arrived, the government had grown so concerned about reports of frontier conflict in the south east that a police Sergeant-Major was dispatched to the district to investigate (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1844/116), followed by another in 1845, after the killing by Aborigines of a sheep proprietor named Brown (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1845/1267½). In 1846, the violence was still rife, since local pastoralist and magistrate Evelyn Sturt listed a number of atrocities that he believed had occurred in the district. He also wrote, “I believe a wholesale system of murder has been carried on which it is most difficult to obtain any evidence of” (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1846/116). In one incident, eight Aborigines were believed to have been massacred in the area (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1846/116). In late 1847 Aboriginal resistance in the south eastern districts was still flaring when the rest of the province of South Australia was calm (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/1462). In fact the police reports for 1847 are rich with accounts of Aboriginal livestock raids, followed by punitive expeditions composed of a combination of police and local settlers (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/278, 1153, 1462). In four reported instances during 1847, these “affrays” led to the killing and wounding of no less than nine Aborigines with “several” more wounded, but with no settler casualties (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/1153, 1462). One Aborigine was actually “run through” with a policeman’s sword (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/1462). The Aborigines of the south east district evidently gained a reputation for being, in the words of the Commissioner of Police, particularly “treacherous and predatory” (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/278½).

Angas also provided some early evidence of the Aboriginal people of the south east resisting colonial incursions by 1844. Several kilometres south of Mount Benson, Angas' party met some overlanders who had brought several thousand sheep in search of fresh runs for the next season. Angas mentioned that they were all well armed, as they had, "...experienced some annoyance from the natives" (Angas, 1969[1847]: 151). Although obtuse, this is likely to have been a typically English way of saying that the overlanders had had a violent confrontation with the Aborigines.

The properties of this region were primarily sheep stations, though cattle were also stocked. In common with many other frontier regions in South Australia, the Aborigines expressed their resistance to European colonisation by attacking the settler's main source of capital: their livestock. The most significant event to take place at Mount Benson during Gifford's period was the wholesale driving away and slaughtering of a large number of Gifford's cattle by Aborigines. This occurred in early 1847, very soon after Gifford settled on the run. We know of this incident because it was reported by the Commissioner of Police (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/1153), and referred on to the Colonial Secretary, who wrote to the Governor, "Police have brought under my notice two outrages on property committed by Aboriginal natives" (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585). In it, the report of the local policeman stationed at Robe is included:

The second case was the slaughter of a number of cattle belonging to Mr. Gifford of Mount Benson. The cattle were driven on a small island near Lake Eliza and when Mr. Gifford discovered the fact, a great many beasts had been killed,

nothing but the carcasses [skeletons?] remaining. Others were dead, with the spears affixed in their bodies. The police went out on information being given, but were not successful in apprehending any one, although the natives were seen running away on the other side of the water. Since my return I caused one man who appeared, rather a leading person in the tribe in this vicinity, to be apprehended but, as he could not be identified he was, after a remand of a few days, dismissed. I am in great hopes that even the circumstances of him being taken up by me be productive of good. It gives me great pleasure to close this report by adding that no violence against person of either European or Aboriginal has occurred and everything at the present moment is perfectly quiet (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585).

The incident also came to the notice of Matthew Moorehouse, the Protector of Aborigines for South Australia at the time. His comments are interesting because they attempt to explain the reason for the raid and express a sense of optimism about the results of the (failed) police investigation. He writes:

I have heard of no serious losses except in the Guichen Bay district and there Mr. Gifford has had 40 head of cattle speared. This is but a newly settled district and the natives have seen little of the Europeans, but in the above instance a diligent search was made by the police to detect the guilty parties and, although unsuccessful, yet it will have convinced the natives that such aggressions are not overlooked and not unlikely to go unpunished (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585).

There are two possible reasons why Aboriginal people in this region stole and killed settler's livestock. The first may have been out of a combination of survival and convenience. The Europeans had invaded the Aborigine's hunting grounds and taken the best water. With the encroachment of sheep and cattle onto their land, the Commissioner of Police recognised that the Aborigines were finding that native food sources were dwindling and that it was far easier to catch livestock (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/278½). Proof that the Aborigines were finding it very difficult to procure food can be found in the fact that as early as 1847 flour rations were being issued in the region (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/278½). Furthermore, the Commissioner of Police blamed the careless tending of large flocks of sheep as creating a temptation to the Aborigines, leading to most of the conflicts (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/278½).

The second possible reason for the constant stealing and spearing of stock in this area was as a form of resistance (as discussed in Armstrong, 1980: 116-20). Although used to their traditional laws of reciprocity, the punishments the Aborigines received when they sought repayment through stock spearing would have impressed upon them the Europeans' very different attitude. However, the fact that the Aborigines continued to take the settlers' stock, often in much larger numbers than could possibly be eaten, is evidence that they were motivated by more than hunger. In this sense their actions were those of defiance towards the invaders. The spearing of Gifford's cattle is a good example of these deliberate acts of resistance, where many more cattle were driven away and killed than would have been necessary to simply meet the Aboriginal group's food needs. As the Robe policeman's report states, although some of the cattle had evidently

been butchered, others were simply speared and left for dead (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585).

Fear of Aboriginal aggression in the late 1840s to early 1850s was evidently quite prevalent in this region. For example, Thomas Morris of Bowaka station, located approximately 22 kilometres east of Mount Benson, would not allow Aborigines around the homestead, and women on isolated homesteads were in fear of attack while their men were out working (Dunn, 1969: 28). Gifford himself would no doubt have been significantly affected by what happened to him with regards to the cattle raid.

It was during the period of Gifford's occupation of the Mount Benson run that another settler in the region, James Brown, was accused of the shooting massacre of a number of Aborigines. Much has already been written concerning this incident, the most recent and in-depth analysis being found in Foster, Hosking and Nettelbeck (2001: 74-93). There are several primary documentary sources which describe what was alleged to have happened. These consist of two letters from the Colonial Secretary (one to the Protector of Aborigines and the other to the Commissioner of Police [SRSA, GRG 24/4/1847/176, 177]), two documents from the Protector of Aborigines (one a letter to the Colonial Secretary [SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/451] and the other a report on his activities [SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/643]), and a letter from the Advocate General describing the case (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/1388).

The date of the massacre is uncertain, but the Protector of Aborigines believed that it occurred about September 1848 (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/643), whereas the Advocate General believed it occurred around November (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/1388). The allegation against James Brown was that he and his stock keeper, angered by Aborigines driving away a number of Brown's sheep, decided to launch a punitive raid. When they caught up with the Aborigines who had the sheep, the Aborigines fled. However, a blind old man, five women and three children who could not escape in time were slaughtered on the spot. Their bodies appeared to have been initially buried and later exhumed and burnt (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/1388).

The Protector of Aborigines and a police constable were dispatched to the scene of the massacre to investigate. They were shown the location of the massacre by an Aboriginal witness. Here, the Protector of Aborigines found:

...five graves in the vicinity of which were human bones; the bodies had been exhumed and burnt about 80 paces to the north of the graves; I saw the remains of the fire amongst which were calcined human bones (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/643).

Although the local magistrate who committed Brown for trial, Captain Butler, believed there was, "...little question of the butchery or of the butcher" (Mortlock Library, D. 3746/3 [L]), the Advocate General had to concede that it was impossible to obtain sufficient evidence for a conviction (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/1388). This was mainly due to the 'silence of the frontier', manifesting itself in the fact that:

From the examination of such of the witnesses as could be got to attend the sittings, and who were all more or less connected with the prisoner, it was apparent that they were determined to give no evidence to impeach him (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/1388).

In the opinions of the Advocate General and Captain Butler, the case of James Brown didn't appear to be as much about determining Brown's guilt as about proving it. A motive can even be found in one of the Commissioner of Police's reports, prior to the alleged massacre which states that, "The police are looking after some natives who are accused of attacking a flock of a Mr Browne near Guichen Bay, having broken the legs of several, were disturbed and decamped without the intended sport" (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/1153). No official action appears to have been taken upon this matter, which may well have led to Brown seeking revenge himself.

Gifford would certainly have been aware of the allegations and the ensuing investigations concerning Brown. He may well have known Brown personally. The case became a sensation, even in Adelaide, where an account appeared in the *South Australian Register* on 20th March 1849:

Whole sale murder. The Thompsons arrived on Saturday last, bringing a settler named James Brown, a prisoner in charge of P.C. Farrell, from Guichen Bay. Brown was fully committed by Captain G.V. Butler on a charge of murdering five blacks. The evidence was chiefly aboriginal, but is said to be fearfully conclusive.

In the museum of the Kingston South East branch of the National Trust, there is a very interesting, and possibly unique, artefact. This is a wooden door, recorded as having been removed from one of the buildings of James Brown's 'Avenue Range' (later, 'Keilira' or 'Kalyra') station. What makes this door so significant is that it has a small aperture built into it which is fitted with a horizontally sliding wooden slide, allowing the aperture to be opened or closed (Figure 4.1.11). The purpose of this aperture, according to the label attached to the door, is believed to have been as an embrasure for firing at Aborigines through. The staff at the Museum had no further information about the source of this information, suggesting that it was passed down via oral history.



Figure 4.1.11. Door taken from James Brown's 'Avenue Range' ('Keilira') station, near Kingston South East. Brown's station was established in the late 1840s. The label attached to the door reads, "Door from old 'Keilira', opening specially made by James Brown for the use in many raids on the Aborigines of his day." View of interior side of door. Courtesy of the Kingston South East branch of the National Trust.

Visual inspection of the door gave no grounds to suggest that it was not of the period claimed (i.e. late 1840s – early 1850s). The aperture can also be said with confidence to be original, showing that the door was purpose-built with the aperture included. There has been minor repair work done in modern times, consisting of the fitting of a new upper slide housing, but this is easily discernable from the rest of the fabric. Unfortunately, there is little information regarding what particular building at the homestead the door

was taken from, nor when it was removed. The current curator of the museum believes it was donated to the National Trust some time in the 1960s or 70s (Kathleen White, pers. comm., 20/4/2005). Nor is there any clue as to whether there were more such doors fitted to the buildings at Avenue Range. Therefore, as so often happens with artefacts donated to museums, it is impossible to study the functionality of the door in its original context.

However, the presence of the aperture makes this door highly unusual. This was not a feature usually found in non-defensively designed doors of this period, rural or urban. There is, however, supporting documentary evidence of the use of such doors in frontier Australia. Hudson Fysh, in his 1933 book about the Queensland frontier, described homestead doors loopholed to accommodate rifles in case of Aboriginal raids (Fysh, 1933:126). The closest comparison with such an aperture are those fitted to the doors of 19th century gaol cells. The significant difference between the two, however, is that those in cell doors are opened and closed from the outside, and the doors themselves are generally much more strongly built, for obvious reasons. The aperture from the Avenue Range door, on the other hand, is clearly designed to be opened and closed from the inside.

Taking into account James Brown's obviously violent and hateful attitude towards the Aborigines, as evinced by his likely massacre of them, the fact that there is corroborating historical evidence of the use of such doors (such as Fysh, 1933: 126), and the perfectly functional design of the aperture, it is most likely that this door was indeed what it is

believed to have been, an example of civilian use of defensive architecture on the Australian frontier.

Because this door came from a station contemporaneous with, and located relatively close to Gifford's Mount Benson station, it can be taken as physical evidence of an acute feeling of being under threat from hostile Aborigines on the part of at least some settlers in this region. Thus, it constitutes supporting evidence of the myth that Mount Benson was also built with provisions for defence.

Results and Interpretation

Fieldwork on the Mount Benson site was carried out over a period of three days, from the 19th to the 21st April, 2005. The fieldwork team consisted of the author and two assistants. As with all of the structures investigated within this project, the fieldwork was focussed on creating an accurate record of the appearance of the site. Most of the fieldwork involved taking measurements of the remaining 19th century structures on the site, enabling accurate measured drawings of them to be made. Photographic records were also made of the structures and some of their features, such as the aperture in the dwelling.

On the southern side of the dwelling the earth rises in a mound, beginning approximately two metres from the southern wall and gently rising before falling away to the low, flat plain south of the homestead site. This was immediately noted as being of possible significance to the assessment of the dwelling's defensive functionality, since it appeared

to drastically shorten the line of sight and fire from the possible embrasure. Therefore, it was necessary to record this feature in relation to the dwelling. A cross-section of the mound was therefore drawn, showing the line of sight possible from the dwelling's aperture (Figure 4.1.14)



Figure 4.1.12. View of southern side of dwelling, from the reverse slope of the mound. This view shows the point at which the dwelling's defender would be able to see, and therefore, fire upon an attacker through the aperture (i.e. approximately 29 metres from dwelling). Facing north.



Figure 4.1.13. View showing the southern wall of the dwelling in relation to the mound. Facing east.

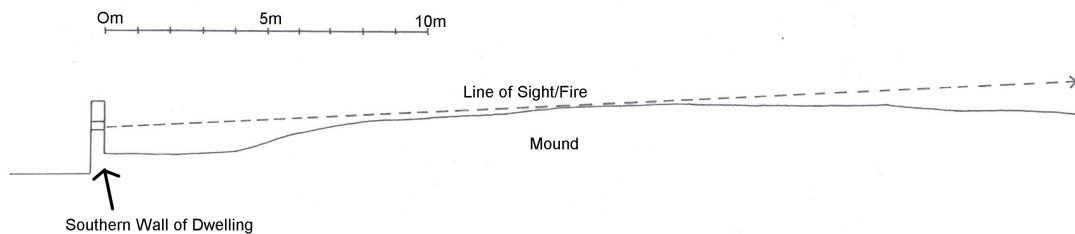


Figure 4.1.14. Diagram showing the line of sight and fire offered by the aperture, in relation to the mound on the southern side of the dwelling.

It was unclear whether or not this mound was artificial. However, in some places near the dwelling's southern wall, where the earth had been excavated away in recent times (Mrs Hayes, pers. comm. 20/4/2005), limestone bedrock was visible. This suggests that the mound is natural.

In order to assess the practicality of the aperture for use as an embrasure, it was necessary to determine the arc of fire available to a defender using it. Here, again, the mound was significant. This was because it was the main feature of the site that affected the arc of fire through the aperture. The protruding chimney base next to the aperture on its eastern side was also found marginally to narrow the arc of fire.

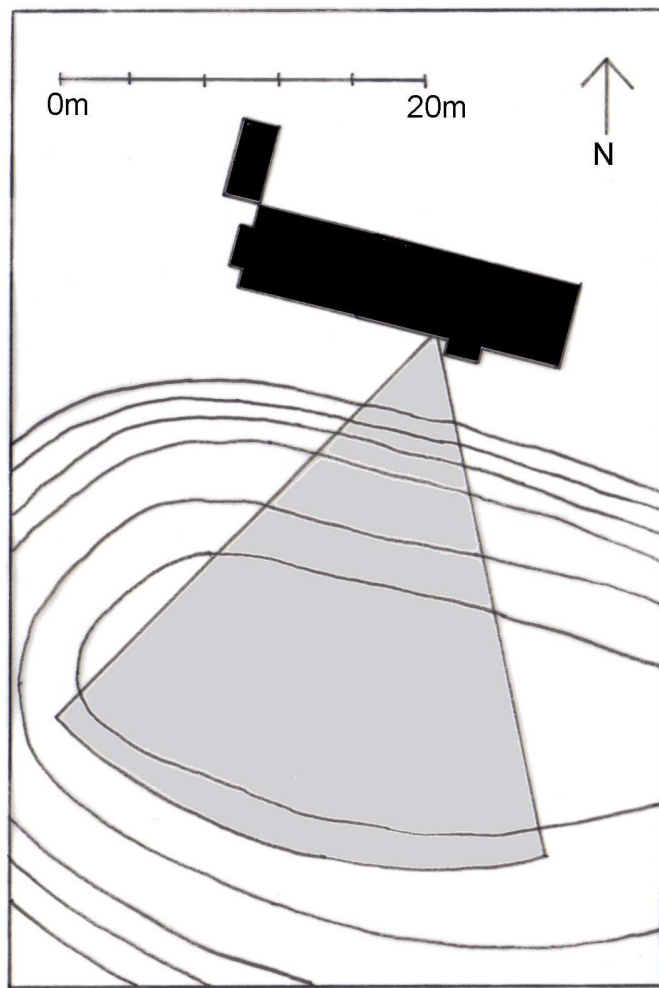


Figure 4.1.15. Diagram showing arc of fire available to defenders on the southern side of the dwelling as well as the mound. The length of the aperture's arc shows the maximum distance one can observe and fire on an attacker approaching from the south. Contour intervals: .25m.

Finally, the accessibility of the aperture had to be tested. Although located very close to the exterior ground level, the diagram below shows that the interior floor level of the

room with the aperture is much lower than the exterior level (Figure 4.1.16). At 130cm from the floor, the aperture is located at a convenient height for firing through in the standing position.

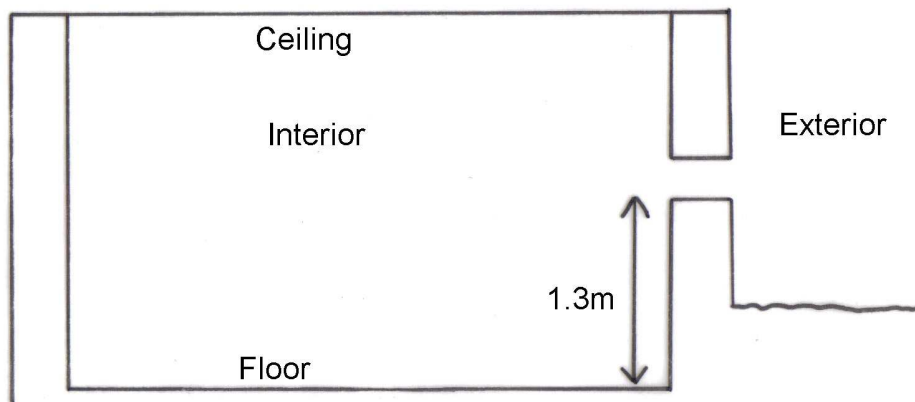


Figure 4.1.16. Elevation showing height of aperture above interior floor of dwelling.

Evidence Supporting the Myth's Veracity

The driving away and spearing of a large number his cattle by Aborigines (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585) provided Gifford with a strong motive for feeling threatened and, hence, building defensively. It has been argued above that this raid was an act of hostility directed against Gifford by the local Aborigines, not merely an attempt to obtain food. That Gifford experienced this personally makes it highly significant to the investigation of the veracity of the myth. It is easy to see how such a hostile action, occurring soon

after Gifford settled in the region, would have caused him to be extra cautious about his safety and to fear the Aborigines.

Added to Gifford's own experience of Aboriginal hostility was the history of frontier conflict in the region in general. Most of this occurred prior to Gifford's arrival in the district, so would have formed the background conditions in which he established his station. By the time Gifford arrived in the district there had already been a massacre of Europeans from the Maria ship wreck in 1840 (Foster, Hosking & Nettelbeck, 2001: 13), a policeman had been dispatched to the area to investigate the high level of frontier conflict (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1845/116), and in 1846, less than a year prior to Gifford's arrival, another settler was complaining of a wholesale system of murder having been carried out on the Aborigines (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1845/116). It is easy to appreciate how such a history would have caused a newcomer to the region like Gifford to be worried about Aboriginal hostility, causing him to build his dwelling with defensive provisions.

Although limited in its field of vision and range to approximately 29 metres by the mound, the dwelling's aperture still represents a great addition to its defensibility compared to having no apertures or a conventional window in this position. In fact, the very presence of the mound, with its limiting effect upon the field of vision from this side of the dwelling, would make it *more* important to have a small aperture here. This is because the location of the mound would have allowed attackers to approach very close to the rear of the dwelling before they could be seen by the dwelling's occupants. By having a small aperture here, a defender could look and fire out of it, thus covering this

vulnerable side of the building, yet it would be too small for a person to enter through (unlike a window) and would provide far greater cover for the defender than a conventional window.

The position of the aperture is entirely functional. It is located 1.3 metres from the interior floor of the dwelling (Figure 4.1.16). This is a very convenient height for firing through in the standing position, even more so for the generally shorter man of the 1840s. Its horizontal position is also entirely functional, being between the hearth and the interior dividing wall of the dwelling, yet not too close to cramp the defender (Figure 4.1.10).

Although embrasures found in military buildings are typically angled outwards on the interior, allowing a small exterior opening and a larger interior one, Mount Benson homestead's aperture, on the other hand, is simply square in shape, with parallel sides. However, the size of the aperture (approx. 25cm x 25cm) actually compensates for its amateur-like design. Its dimensions are such that it allows a very reasonable arc of fire and vision (Figure 4.1.15), yet is still small enough to give the defender a great amount of protection from Aboriginal missile weapons. It would have taken an extremely lucky throw for a spear to pass clean through the 25cm square hole and strike the defender.

The final point which supports the interpretation of the aperture as an embrasure is the fact that one cannot see any other purpose for it. If the builder wished to have a source of light or ventilation in this wall he could have built a conventional window, such as that

included in the rear wall of the later stone room. Therefore the builder must have has a specific reason for incorporating this feature into the building in this position. The only reason for which there is any evidence is that it was an embrasure for defence.

Evidence Opposing the Myth's Veracity

There are only two pieces of evidence which could be used to oppose the myth's veracity. First, one could argue that the positioning of the dwelling with its rear field of vision drastically impaired by the mound is evidence that the builder was not concerned about Aboriginal attacks. If he was, one could assume that he would have taken such things as field of vision into account when selecting a position for his dwelling.

The second piece of evidence opposing the myth is the fact that there is no evidence that Gifford or his employee's lives were ever in danger from the Aborigines. Thus, it can be argued that there is no direct evidence that Gifford felt physically threatened by the Aborigines and therefore would have felt no need to incorporate special defensive architectural features into the design of his dwelling.

Mount Benson – Conclusions

The bulk of the evidence, obtained through a physical evaluation of the site and the historical documents, leads one to the conclusion that what the myth interprets as a "rifle port-hole" (Barrowman, 1971: 56) was indeed that (more correctly termed an 'embrasure'). The evidence supporting this conclusion far outweighs that opposing it.

It is suggested here that the stone dwelling investigated was most likely the *second* dwelling lived in by Gifford when he arrived at Mount Benson. When Gifford first arrived at Mount Benson he probably lodged in either Grote and Stirling's old station dwelling on a site further south (Figure 4.1.8), or an oak hut on or near the current homestead site. There is a possible clue that there was once an oak hut here in the fact that there was definitely once an oak kitchen here in the mid 1860s which was at the time described as "very old" (SRSA, GRG 35/654). The significance of this is that if Gifford was living in an earlier dwelling at the time his cattle was raided by Aborigines in early 1847 (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1847/585), then it would explain one of the main reasons why Gifford built his new, stone dwelling with extra defensive features. Furthermore, Gifford can only have been at Mount Benson for a short time (perhaps only a few weeks) when his cattle were raided. It is unlikely that he would have had the time to finish building the stone dwelling this early in his occupation of the run. Nor was it usual for the first dwelling to be erected on a new run to be stone. Such more permanent structures were generally built some time after the pastoralist had established himself and his stock on the run (Roxburgh & Baglin, 1978: 10). Often stone buildings were only erected once the squatter had his document proving ownership of measured land (Roxburgh & Baglin, 1978: 10).

The imperfect positioning of the dwelling (near the mound) can be explained by either the total inexperience of the builder in military architecture or there may have been some other, more practical reason why the current position was preferred. The defensive

feature on this side (namely the embrasure) may even have been built because the builder did in fact recognise the vulnerability of the dwelling's rear caused by the mound.

Although there is no direct documentary evidence that Gifford or his employees were in physical danger from the Aborigines, or that Gifford *felt* he was, the material evidence tells a different story. It suggests that he obviously felt he was under threat enough to warrant the building of a defensive feature into this dwelling. His fortified dwelling shows that he believed that the Aborigines might attempt to raid his dwelling and/or harm him. The historical evidence corresponds with this, showing some of the factors which may have caused him to feel this way, such as the cattle raid and the history of frontier conflict in the region.

Central Outstation (Eyre Peninsula, South Australia)



Figure 4.2.0. Western side of the 'Men's Hut' at Central Outstation. This photograph, taken in 1970, shows the appearance of this side of the building before the collapse of a large portion of the wall. Three rectangular apertures are clearly visible, evenly spaced along the wall. From Baillie, 1978: 134.

The Site

Central Outstation was established as an outstation of a run taken up by Price Maurice in early 1856 (SAGG, vol.1-2, 1857: 150). This was one of several connected runs owned by Price Maurice in the Sheringa area. The site has only one standing structure, a rectangular stone dwelling of three rooms, set in a generally flat and featureless landscape. It is this structure to which the defensive architecture myth is attached.

The Myth

The 'defensive architecture' myth associated with this site was recorded by prominent Eyre Peninsula local historian, P.J. Baillie, in his 1978 book, *Port Lincoln and District: A*

Pictorial History. The myth appears in the form of the caption to a photograph of the building investigated here (Figure 4.2.0). The caption reads:

A settler's home near Sheringa. Note the tiny windows built as a precaution against Aboriginal attack. Such homes were numerous, scattered over the West Coast, but today they are a rarity (Baillie, 1978: 134).

Baillie's is the earliest identified recording of this interpretation of the design of the "tiny windows" or apertures. It is not known upon what evidence or authority Baillie made this interpretation. Baillie himself evidently had no doubts as to the use of defensive architecture by colonial civilians, since he described its use in at least two other instances in his writings. One of these was in regards to a building at Warrow Station where a photo's caption describes:

A specially built-in rifle loop-hole in buildings near Port Lincoln. They were designed to allow the shoulders to enter. The one pictured here is in the men's hut at Warrow Station. Natives were boldly attacking against the intrusion of the white settlers (Baillie, 1978: 134).

The above quote does, however, betray Baillie's unfamiliarity with the finer details of the design and function of embrasures. Embrasures were never designed to "allow the shoulders to enter" as this would have been incredibly restrictive and impractical. Here, Baillie misinterpreted the purpose of outward-angled sides to the embrasure, which were

actually designed to allow the firer to traverse his firearm through a greater arc than would have been possible with a straight-sided slot. However, this does demonstrate how local historians can and do interpret objects based on how they think they functioned, rather than how they actually did.

Baillie's third reference to this kind of architecture concerns 'Tiatucka' (or Tiatuckia) house, near Port Lincoln. Of it, he writes:

There is an attic retreat, fashioned with long narrow apertures, from which rifle fire could be directed against any attack by Aborigines. In these formative years aggression was real and impending, a condition thoroughly understood by the early settlers (Baillie, 1972: 20).

Location

Central Outstation is located approximately 100km NNW of Port Lincoln, South Australia. The site itself is accessed via a dirt road which runs between Tooligie and Sheringa, and lies approximately half-way between the two localities, set back a short distance from the southern side of the road.

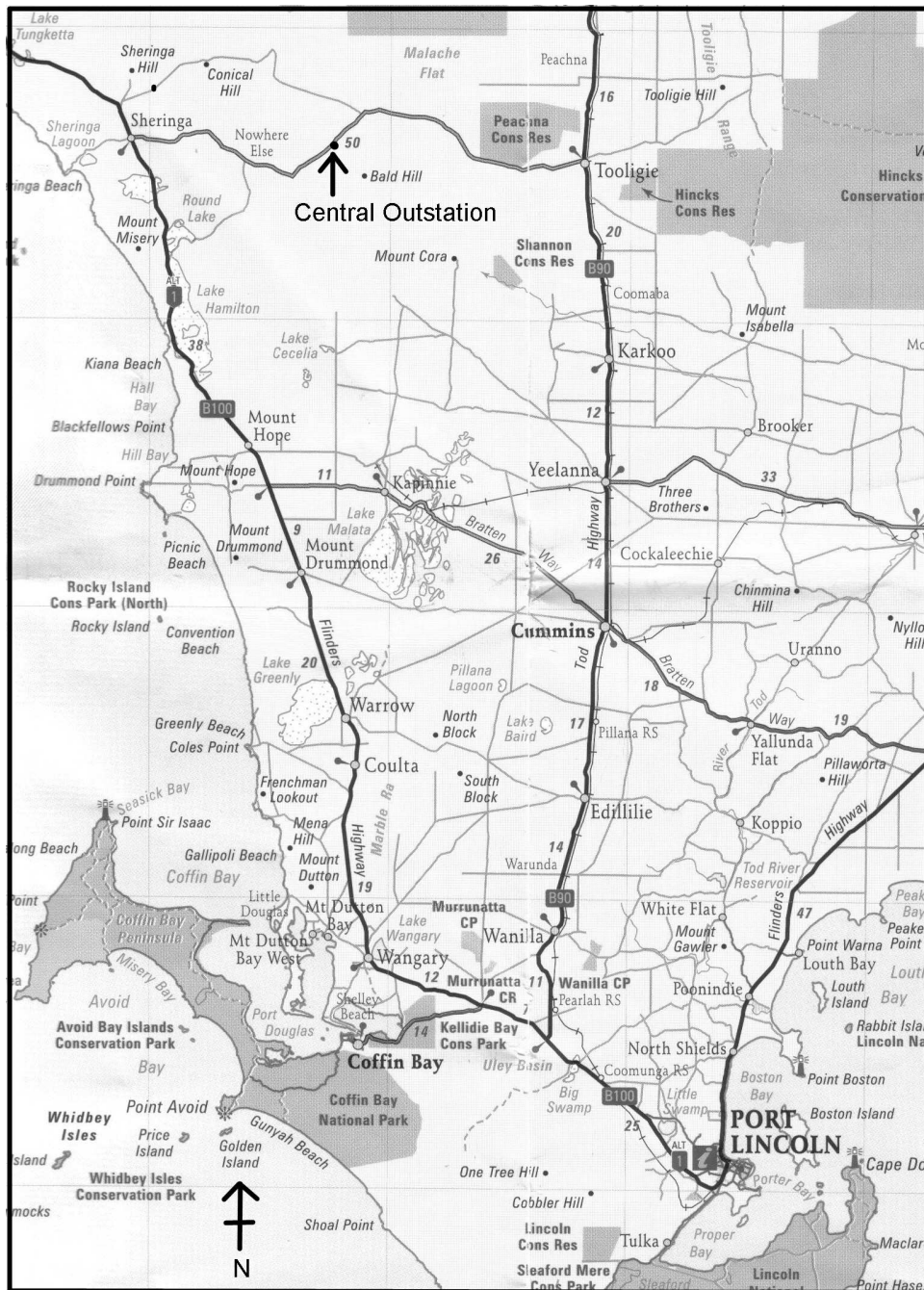


Figure 4.2.1. Map showing the general location of the site in relation to Port Lincoln, South Australia. The numbers along roads show the distance in kilometres between points. Adapted from *Carto Graphics* map of Eyre Peninsula, 2002.

The Men's Hut



Figure 4.2.2. Eastern (front) side of the Men's Hut at Central Outstation, 2005.

This is the only 19th century structure still standing at the site (Figure 4.2.2). The building is gable roofed and made of limestone random rubble. The front (eastern) side of the building has been plastered and whitewashed, evidently a very long time ago, judging by its condition and appearance. All of the interior wall surfaces have been similarly plastered and whitewashed. The building has wooden floorboards and underneath the corrugated iron roof can be seen an evidently much older shingle roof.

The interior space of the building is divided into three rooms (Figure 4.2.3). The northern and southern rooms each have an open fireplace with chimney, the fireplace in the

northern room being noticeably larger than that in the southern room. Between these two rooms is a small central room. The northern and southern rooms each have a doorway on the eastern side and all rooms also have a window on this side. The central room, however, can only be accessed from within the northern room, where there is a doorway, and possibly from a similar doorway in the southern room, however, due to the fact that the southern interior wall has completely collapsed it is unclear whether there was originally a doorway here.

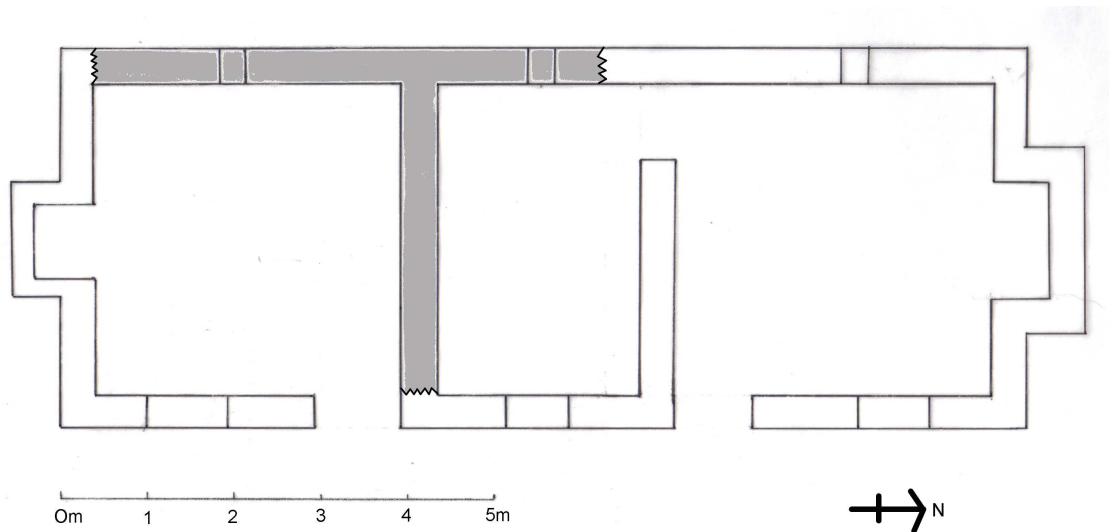


Figure 4.2.3. Plan of the Men's Hut. Grey-shaded portions are reconstructions of collapsed wall sections.



Figure 4.2.4. Recent (2005) photograph of the Men's Hut, showing the collapsed portion of wall on the western side.

As can be seen from the plan and photograph above (Figure 4.2.3 & 4.2.4), a large portion of the western wall of this building has collapsed, evidently some time between 1970, when the picture showing it intact was taken (see Figure 4.2.0), and the time of investigation (2005). However, using the 1970 photograph as a guide, it was a simple task to reconstruct how it appeared before its collapse. This wall has no doorways or windows as such, but has three small square apertures built into it (Figures 5.2.0 & 5.2.3). These were placed so that each interior room contained one of these apertures. The surviving aperture measures approximately 31cm by 31cm, and is straight sided throughout the width of the wall (Figure 4.2.5). It is located 1.43 metres above the ground on the outside of the building and 1.18 metres above the interior floor. The measurements

of this surviving aperture can be confidently taken to approximate those of the collapsed ones, based on the 1970 photograph.



Figure 4.2.5. Exterior (left) and interior (right) views of the surviving aperture in the northern room of the Men's Hut.

At some later stage, the apertures in the northern and southern rooms were blocked up with stones and covered on the exterior with cement. The material used (modern looking cement, due to its clean, pure appearance) suggests that this was done in the late 19th-early 20th century. That the now collapsed southern aperture *was* treated this way was confirmed by the discovery of a cement –covered stone plug in the rubble on this side. A close look at the 1970 photograph (Figure 4.2.0) shows that the aperture on this side was much more rectangular than square, matching the shape of the plug perfectly. The central aperture, on the other hand, was evidently fitted with a wooden frame and a hinged

shutter. The remains of this frame, along with cut-outs for the hinges, was found amongst the rubble in the vicinity of the aperture's former position. Its smaller, square dimensions also correspond with this aperture's appearance in the 1970 (Figure 4.2.0) photograph.

Other Structures

There are no other 19th century structures still standing at this site. The only other structures present are a 1930s house (Nosworthy, 1988: 88) and three small associated outbuildings. There was, however, at least one other 19th century building on the site, which has since been completely demolished. This building can be seen in an undated photograph, giving a good indication of its appearance and location (Figure 4.2.6). It is also visible on an 1884 survey diagram (Figure 4.2.8). It is this diagram which identifies this building as a 'Bachelor's Hall'



Figure 4.2.6. Undated photograph of Central Outstation. The Men's Hut is at right. The building at left has been demolished. The original caption reads "Original living quarters at Central Station". From Nosworthy, 1988: 87.



Figure 4.2.7. Kappawanta Station, ca 1896. Note the similarities between it and Central Outstation in figure 4.2.6, above. From Nosworthy, 1988: 75.

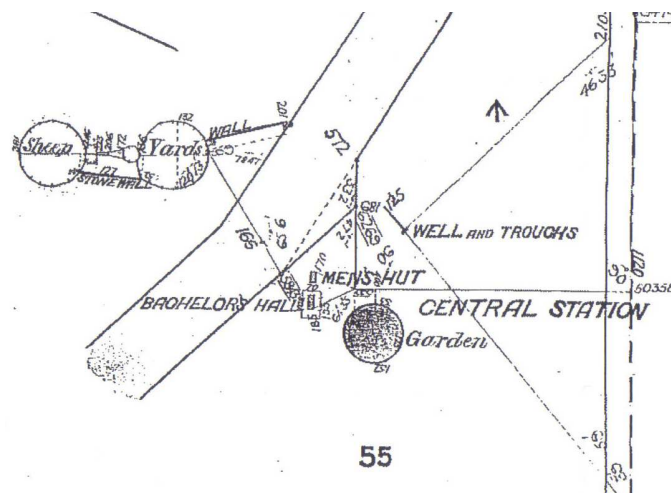


Figure 4.2.8. Survey diagram, dated 6/8/1884, showing the 'Men's Hut' and the now-demolished 'Bachelor's Hall'. Courtesy of the Land Services Group, S.A.

This building was considerably smaller than the Men's Hut. A striking parallel to this kind of station layout can be found in the ca 1896 photograph of Kappawanta Station (Figure 4.2.7), established in 1858 (Nosworthy, 1988: 72). Both stations consist of a three-windowed, two-doored, long building next to a smaller one-doored building. Kappawanta, although not established by Price Maurice, was located only approximately 30km north-west of Central Outstation. Thomas Horne and Edward Kent, its owners,

were, however, closely associated with Maurice, as they initially stocked the station with two flocks of Maurice's sheep (Nosworthy, 1988: 72).

Site History

The region in which the site is located was explored by Edward John Eyre in 1841. Eyre described the country prior to pastoral settlement as consisting of "...low grassy hills but most dreadfully stony...", consisting of "...barren scrubby land..." (Eyre, 1964[1845]: 188-9). There were also lightly wooded areas of *casuarinae* (sheoak) (Eyre, 1964[1845]: 189). Nosworthy has noted that the decline of the sheoak woodlands commenced soon after colonial settlement and was substantially complete by the 1930s (Nosworthy, 1988: 3).

As mentioned above, the earliest documentary evidence for pastoral use of this run shows that it was leased by the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Immigration to Price Maurice on January 1st, 1856 (SAGG, vol.1-2, 1857: 150). The run consisted of 137 square miles (220.5 square kilometres), which was quite large compared to most surrounding runs (SAGG, vol.1-2, 1857: 150). No documentary evidence could be found to provide a definite date for the construction of the building under investigation here. However, one of the first requirements in using the run would have been the construction of shelter and living quarters for the staff at the run's head station. Thus, it is likely that the Men's Hut, one of the two known dwellings at the head station, was built the year the run was leased (1856). Considering the lease was executed at the beginning of the year (SAGG, vol.1-2, 1857: 150), it is likely that the building was completed within that year. After this was completed, the several shepherd's huts around the run would have been

constructed. Although no 19th century plans could be located showing any other buildings on this run, Nosworthy contains a map showing the location of several huts and wells (Nosworthy, 1988: 28) (Figure 4.2.9).

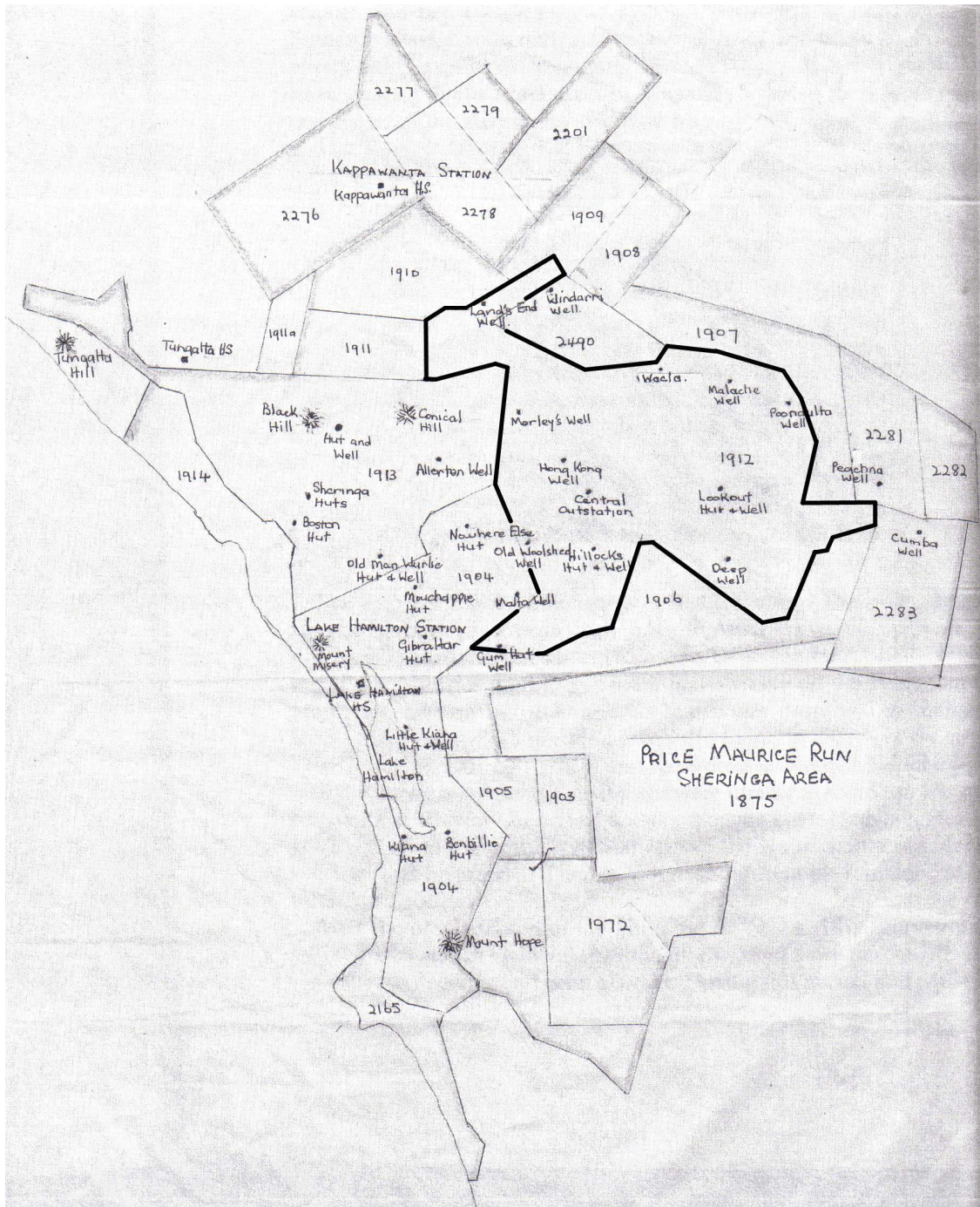


Figure 4.2.9. Price Maurice Run, Sheringa area, 1875. The 'Central' run is outlined. This map shows several huts and wells on the run, as well as Central Outstation. After Nosworthy, 1988: 28.

The Indigenous Inhabitants

Central Outstation is located on the land of the Nawu (or Nauo) Aboriginal language group (Horton, 2000). The Reverend C.W. Schurmann, a German missionary, has left us with a valuable contemporary anthropological study of the Aboriginal tribes of the Eyre Peninsula (Schurmann, 1846). Schurmann wrote that the two “tribes” with which the European settlers were in daily contact were the Nauo and the Parnkalla (or Banggarla or Battara) (Schurmann, 1846: 28). Horton’s map also shows a language group called the Wirangu whose land extends from the eastern side of the Great Australian Bight to the north western edge of Eyre Peninsula (Horton, 2000) (Figure 4.2.10). Although Schurmann stated that “Any attempt at computing the number of the natives [on the peninsula ca 1846] must be futile”, he suggested that it was unlikely there would have been more than 200 individuals in each tribe (Schurmann, 1846: 28).

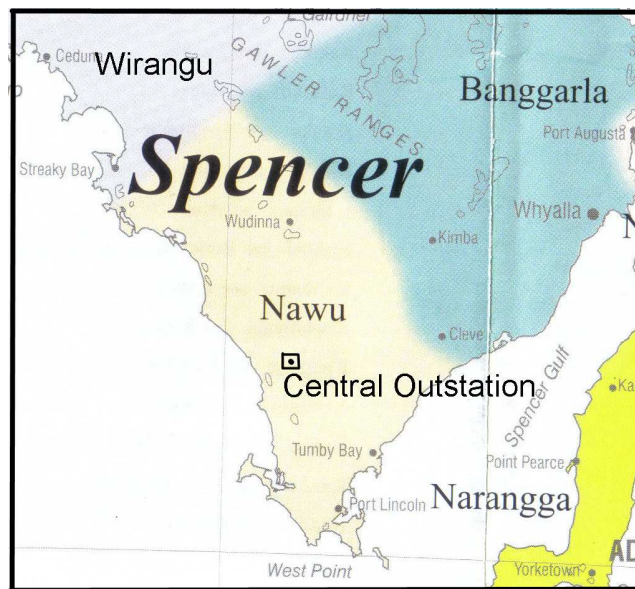


Figure 4.2.10. Map showing location of site in relation to approximate tribal/language group lands. After Horton, 2000.

With regards to frontier conflict and the threat to settlers at this site, there is a wealth of primary evidence available in the form of personal letters, official reports and newspaper articles. The documentary evidence, presented below, paints a picture of this region as a major trouble-spot for frontier conflict for many years, starting from the time of colonial settlement. The first pastoral settlers in the region arrived in the late 1840s and conflict erupted virtually immediately. Prior to settlement of the west coast of the Eyre Peninsula, there was already a strong history of frontier conflict dating back to 1841, when ten year old Francis Hawson was mortally speared by Aborigines less than five kilometres from Port Lincoln (Eyre, 1845/1964: 163-5). This conflict reached its first peak in 1842 when five settlers were killed by the Aborigines and a military punitive expedition was launched to crush the resistance (SRSA, GRG 24/4/1841/111, GRG 24/6/1842/91, GRG 24/6/1842/354). After this there was a marked reduction in frontier conflict between the period 1844-1848 (Charter, 1989: 25). Perhaps cowed by the violence of the colonial reprisals, the Aborigines mainly restricted their resistance to sheep theft and hut plundering during this time (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1846/90/424).

However, with the settlement of the west coast of the Eyre Peninsula came a new wave of frontier conflict. Pastoral settlement of this region began in late 1847-1848 with several runs being taken up under occupational licenses. The first reported clash in this region actually occurred on a run that Price Maurice would take over less than two and a half years later (i.e. in late 1851 [Cockburn, 1927: 231]), and that lay adjacent to Central Outstation. This was William Ranson Mortlock's run at Sheringa. In June 1848, two of Mortlock's employees, a shepherd and a hut keeper, were speared by an Aboriginal

sheep-stealing party (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1848/1156). Soon after this, the head station itself was attacked. The Aborigines surprised it and set fire to one of the huts while the overseer and two other men were inside. The employees, however, managed to extinguish the fire and drive away the attackers (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1848/424).

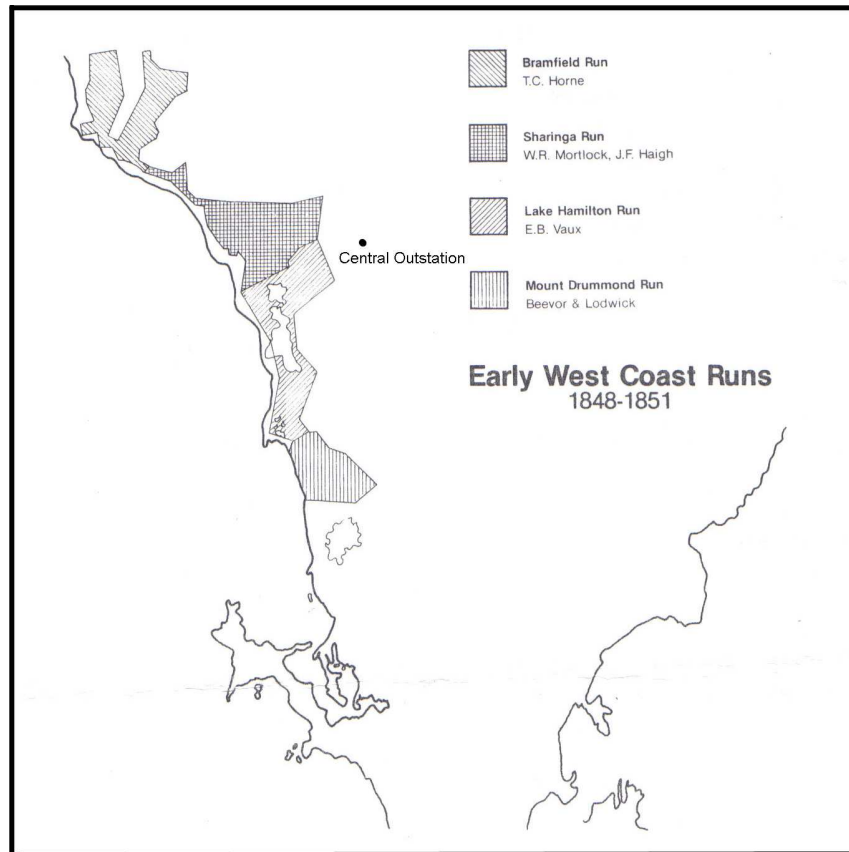


Figure 4.2.11. Map showing location of early west coast runs, 1848-1851, as well as the approximate location of the site under investigation. After Nosworthy, 1988: 14.

The first European to die at the hands of the Aborigines during the period of frontier conflict on the west coast was a hut keeper, John Hamp. Hamp's body was discovered with his head sawn into two pieces, by a hand saw found in the hut. This occurred in June 1848 (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1848/1156). This event was reported in the *South Australian*, which recorded that, "The inhabitants of that part of the district have already asked for a

police station in their neighbourhood, which has been refused. And it is to be feared they will be driven to take the law into their own hands, as native aggression is frequent” (*South Australian*, Jul 21, 1848: 3A). The following month an employee of Pinkerton’s Lake Newland run shot and killed an Aborigine, allegedly in self defence, while seeking the return of a stolen shirt (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1848/1692).

The attacks on Mortlock’s run continued and in July 1848, Elias Lee, another of Mortlock’s shepherds narrowly escaped being speared while guarding his flock. The *Adelaide Times* reported that, “Kumbulta, a most Ourang-Outang looking aboriginal...[threw] a spear at Lee, which glided by his side and killed an ewe which stood close to him. The same black had killed some of the flock on the previous day” (June 18, 1849: 3D). In November 1848 there was another attack on Mortlock’s run. This time a shepherd was ambushed outside his hut, receiving a spear in his back. However, the shepherd managed to seize his firearm, at which point the Aborigines “decamped at speed” (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/238).

The year 1849 saw further killings on both sides. In April 1849 the *Adelaide Times* reported that a shepherd named Symms, fed up with constant Aboriginal pilfering from his hut, lay in wait for the next attempt. When an Aborigine next entered the hut, a struggle ensued. Symms “seized a gun that stood in a convenient corner, and shot his sable adversary, just as the latter was in the act of raising the axe over his head, to inflict a ‘finishing blow’. The wounded black scampered off some thirty yards before he fell” (*Adelaide Times*, April 9, 1849: 3D). The following month saw two more killings of

settlers on the west coast. James Beevor of the Mount Drummond run was killed in his hut by Aborigines in May, followed shortly by the killing of shepherd's wife Anne Eastone (or Easton), in her hut on the Lake Hamilton run (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/1404). These killings were reported in the *South Australian* (May 25, 1849: 2E) and featured in a highly indignant letter to the same paper attacking the incompetence of the authorities and stating that, "...the present system [of policing the Aborigines] will not do now, and it never will until the race of blacks, I mean the Australian blacks, are exterminated" (*South Australian*, June 8, 1849: 2F). The author, one John E. Hobbs, writing from Lake Hamilton station (later taken over by Price Maurice), called for settlers to punish the Aborigines themselves and claimed that the Aborigines are, "...continually prowling about our stations, for the purpose of plundering and assassinating our shepherds, and our hut-keepers are never safe" (*South Australian*, June 8, 1849: 2F). The sentiments expressed in this letter show that the settlers in this region certainly felt as if they were under siege from the local Aboriginal population at this time. It is significant that Lake Hamilton would later be the head station from which the Central Outstation run was administered.

Alexander Tolmer, the policeman who led the search for the murderers of Beevor and Eastone, wrote that "Captain Beevor and Mrs Eastone were killed in a spirit of retaliation for the death of natives" (Tolmer, 1972[1882]: 92-3). It was believed by Tolmer that poisoned flour was placed in one of Mortlock's huts by Patrick Dwyer, as bait for the Aborigines who were frequently robbing it (Tolmer, 1972[1882]: 94-5). Although Dwyer "denied that he ever had any arsenic in the hut...[Tolmer] searched the hut which he had

formerly occupied, and found about a pound of arsenic in it, which the present hut keeper (W. Light) informed me had been left there by Dwyer” (Tolmer, 1972[1882]: 94). The ensuing trial of Dwyer was reported in the *Adelaide Times*, where it was described as a “farce” and claimed that there was “not one tittle of anything in the shape of evidence against the prisoner” (*Adelaide Times*, July 2, 1849: 3E). However, the fact that the accused soon afterwards fled from Port Adelaide in a vessel bound for California leads one to suspect that Tolmer may have been right in his belief of Dwyer’s guilt (Tolmer, 1972[1882]: 98).

Around the same time as the murders of Beevor and Eastone, Aborigines attacked one of T.C. Horne’s huts on his run which bordered part of Mortlock’s run on the latter’s north western tip. However, the hut’s two occupants were unable/unwilling to defend the property, allowing the Aboriginal force to rob it (SRSA, GRG 26/6/1849/1404). Horne, evidently enraged by this embarrassing defeat, immediately launched a punitive party. On finding the Aborigines, “...a fight took place, said to have been commenced by the natives, which resulted in the death of one native woman and two men, the capture of two and the flight of the rest” (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/1404).

Most of 1850 was relatively uneventful in regards to conflict in this region until early November, when a pastoralist named Baird was killed by Aborigines, receiving ten spears in his body (*Adelaide Observer*, Jan 1, 1851: 3C). A combined police/settler punitive party found a “large body of natives” in possession of about 700 sheep and in their attack killed one man and wounded another (*Adelaide Observer*, Jan 1, 1851: 3C).

The following year (1851) saw the killing of two hut keepers, Jinks and Crocker, at the hands of the Aborigines (*South Australian Register*, April 29, 1851: 2E), as well as the wounding of hut keeper, William Light (*South Australian Register*, May 27, 1851: 3A-B). These attacks occurred on the east coast of the Peninsula, possibly showing a shift in conflict areas at this time. Another possibility is that opportunities did not present themselves for similar attacks on the west coast during this time. Indeed, large scale sheep stealing and hut robbing continued on the west coast, with flour and pistols and 130 sheep being stolen on Pinkerton's Lake Newland run in separate attacks (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1851/2278, GRG 24/6/1851/3144). The year 1851 also saw the north eastern Salt Lake police station robbed, the *South Australian Register* reporting that an Aborigine called Coomba was charged with "robbing the Police-station at Salt Creek, and for a desperate attack upon Police constable Kennings" (May 27, 1851: 3A).

Late 1851 marks a significant time in the future history of the site under investigation, as it was the year Price Maurice took an interest in this region, buying Mortlock's Sheringa run (Cockburn, 1927: 231) and Vaux's Lake Hamilton run (Office of Roads and Crown Support, Lease 134, July 1, 1851). It was from these runs that Maurice would later expand to take up the 'Central' run. The Aboriginal resistance was a strong contributing factor to the disposal of Mortlock's run, sold with all livestock and improvements included, for a paltry sum (Cockburn, 1927: 231).

Even during periods when no settlers were killed (such as most of 1850 and 1852), Aboriginal sheep stealing, hut robbing and intimidation of station employees continued

unabated (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1852/296 ¾). On September 1st, the Government resident of the Eyre Peninsula reported that the Aborigines were, “committing thefts continually at the huts of out-stations” (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1852/2822). Later that month two more west coast shepherds were killed by Aborigines, one near Mount Misery on Maurice’s Lake Hamilton run and the other on Pinkerton’s Lake Newland run (*Adelaide Observer*, November 2, 1852: 6A).

In April 1853 the Government Resident wrote with relief of how quiet the district was at present (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1853/1066). However, he still had to report the committal of six Aborigines for trial for sheep stealing. The next month an incident occurred on the actual site which would later become the Central run. The fact that a surveyor was present may indicate that Maurice was already showing interest in this land. One of Maurice’s overseers, having heard of the recent theft of some sheep, rode towards the first party of four Aborigines he met, forcing them to flee. He captured three, tying one’s hands and beating the others “by way of frightening them” (SRSA GRG 24/6/1853/1268). The fourth tried to hide, in a bush but when the overseer dismounted and approached, the former threw a spear at him, wounding him (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1853/1268). Maurice may have looked upon the aggressive actions of his employee as possibly creating more animosity between the Aboriginal people who lived on the land he was having surveyed. The overseer was fined one Pound for his aggressive actions (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1853/1268). The fact that he was punished at all was probably only because of the surveyor’s testimony.

The many Aboriginal raids reported in the year prior to the construction of the site (late 1854-1855) show that Aboriginal resistance was still active, even though their population numbers must have been significantly lowered by this time, due to disease, hunger and violence. In December 1854 an east coast pastoralist called Symes, of Cheroroo run, reported that the Aborigines had been “very troublesome” in his neighbourhood, having had his sheep and even one of his Aboriginal shepherds speared (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1855/1579). This period also saw other sheep raids mounted against Maurice, Symes and settler Peter Brown, as well as hut raids against Bothwick and Symes (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1855/1579 & GRG 24/6/1855/2547). In 1855 one of Maurice’s Chinese shepherds was assaulted by a sheep raiding party and Peter Brown was killed during a raid (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1855/2547). Four Aborigines were convicted of the murder of Brown and executed at the deceased’s run at Frankin Harbour on the east coast in January 1856 (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1856/217), thus bringing the catalogue of frontier conflict in this region up to the point when the site was constructed.

As mentioned in passing above, during the period of European settlement of this region some Aborigines were gradually employed by the pastoralists as hut keepers and shepherds on the stations. A table prepared in 1853 tells us that at the end of that year there were eight pastoralists who employed 44 Aborigines between them (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1854/393). Price Maurice actually employed the greatest number of them, 16, presumably divided across his many runs in the district (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1854/393).

Results and Interpretation

Fieldwork at this site took place on the 18 -19th July 2005, the work was carried out by the author and an assistant. As with all of the other sites, the structure was photographed and scale plans made of it. It was not anticipated that a large portion of the western wall would have collapsed as it was, although it was already known what it had previously looked like thanks to the 1970 photograph (Figure 4.2.0). A search was made of the rubble of this collapsed section, which resulted in the discovery of the cement-covered plug from the southernmost embrasure and pieces of the shutter frame which, it is believed, came from the central aperture, due to their location in this section and their shape. These pieces were reassembled on-site, providing a substantially complete indication of the frame's appearance and function (Figure 4.2.12). It appears to have been hinged, and most probably included a pane of glass, although no remains of this glass were found. No other evidence of the remaining embrasures having shutters like this was found.



Figure 4.2.12. Reconstructed shutter frame from central aperture. The cut-outs of the inner frame for the shutter's hinges can be seen on the right inside the frame.

The finding of the aperture shutter in the rubble of the small, central room is interesting, as it would tie in with that room's possible use as a bedroom. One can appreciate how a shutable embrasure would have been beneficial in a bedroom to prevent cold breezes, as well as providing an added sense of security and privacy for the sleeping occupants. The apertures in the other rooms evidently did not require the extra effort of installing shutters. Suggesting that they were, perhaps, not bedrooms.

As it was known from an undated photograph that there once stood another stone building to the south (Figure 4.2.6), the ground was inspected in this area. Unfortunately no evidence of this building was visible on the surface. Due to the fact that the surface here was almost entirely limestone, the demolished building may have been built directly

on top of it, making foundations unnecessary. Therefore, when the building was demolished all traces of its walls were removed also.

Once plans were made of the Men's Hut, it was possible to extrapolate the arcs of fire offered by the apertures. The results of this are shown below in Figure 4.2.13.

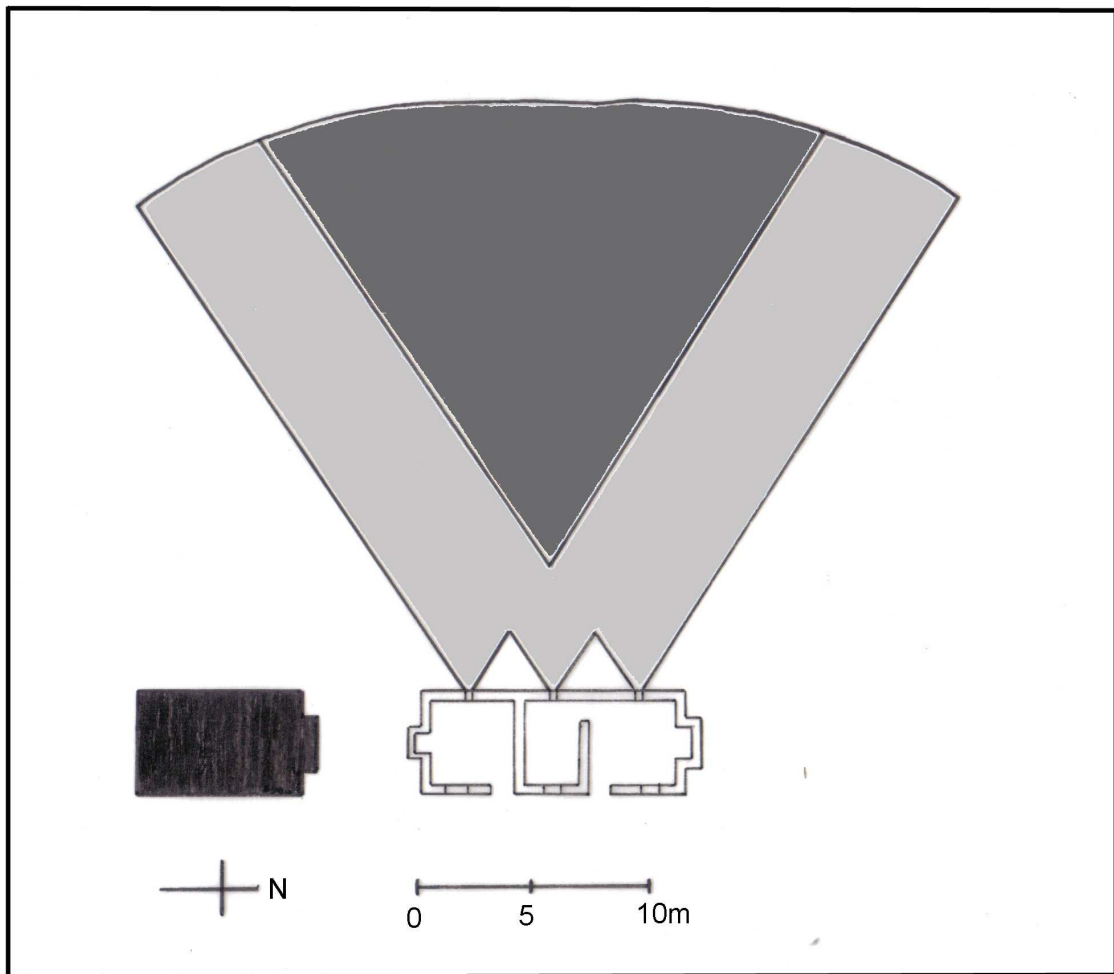


Figure 4.2.13. Plan showing arcs of fire provided by the three apertures in the Men's Hut, shown extending out to an arbitrary distance of 25m. Dark grey portion shows terrain able to be covered by all three apertures simultaneously. Shown to the left is an approximate reconstruction of the position and dimensions of the other structure which once stood on the site.

Evidence Supporting the Myth's Veracity

The archival sources referred to above show that Aborigine-versus-settler conflict was long-running and intense in the western Eyre Peninsula. Moreover, the fact that all of the incidents described above occurred *prior* to the construction of the Men's Hut would have given the region a (deserved) reputation for being particularly dangerous. Thus, it follows that a later settler, such as Maurice, may well have come to the region with a belief that it was necessary to take extra measures to protect his employees and property.

Apart from the reports which illustrate the presence and magnitude of frontier conflict in the region, as shown in the police and newspaper reports, there is also a significant amount of primary documentary evidence which shows that the settlers did indeed feel very threatened. These settler's feelings with regards to the Aboriginal threat in the region are also expressed in the police and newspaper reports of the time, the fear and insecurity of the settlers beginning as soon as they arrived. A police report of 1848 contains an application from the settlers on the western side of the Peninsula for the establishment of a police post there, required due to the "...unprotected state of their flocks and the depredations committed by the natives" (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1848/659). The men on the stations in the northwest of the Peninsula were at this time "...in the greatest state of alarm, afraid to tend their flocks alone, or without firearms, and frequent attacks by the natives have been made on their sheep and huts" (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1848/1692). If there was any doubt as to the reality of the settler's fear, an article in the *South Australian Register* stated that, "We are convinced the grounds of alarm are most serious; the dangers imminent..." (Aug 15, 1849: 2B). Not only had the previous owners of

Maurice's runs experienced severe Aboriginal resistance, but Maurice himself also had significant experience of it, both before arriving in this region and after. Prior to taking an interest in the Eyre Peninsula, Maurice had a run called Pekina, located about 273 kilometres north of Adelaide. Here, in two separate raids in late 1848, 460 sheep were stolen by Aborigines (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1849/238).

The apertures of the structure under investigation are eminently functional as embrasures for firing through, and notwithstanding their straight sides, provide a very ample arc of fire. As can be seen in Figure 4.2.13, they even have the very advantageous ability of being able to cross-fire a significant area of ground simultaneously. Their positions in the centre of each of the three room's western walls, evenly spaced along the exterior of the building and easily accessible, demonstrate a well-thought out defensive architectural plan for the structure. The positioning of an embrasure in each room meant that an occupant could keep an eye out to the rear of the building, as well as fire upon an attacker regardless of whichever room he/she was in at the time. There are also no intervening terrain features blocking the line of sight and fire from the embrasures, the terrain surrounding the site being generally flat and open grassland. The only major difference likely between the appearance of the terrain now and in the 1850s is that there were probably sheoaks and bushes scattered around, as described by Eyre (1964[1845]: 189).

Evidence Opposing the Myth's Veracity

There is really no strong evidence against the interpretation of this structure having been built with defensive provisions in the form of embrasures. The fact that this structure is

believed to have been built ca 1856, at the tail end of the Aboriginal resistance could, however, be taken as evidence that it was not necessary to build defensively at this stage. However, resistance *was* still continuing, albeit on a smaller scale, at this time. Furthermore, the builder could not have known that more violent raids wouldn't be launched upon the station by the Aborigines at any time.

The second possible point that could be made against the interpretation of the apertures as embrasures for firing through is the fact that they are not angled, as the ideal embrasure should be. However, as suggested previously (in the section on Mount Benson above), this may have been simply due to the inexperience of the builder or the fact that it was more expedient to build them straight-sided whilst still making them quite functional.

Central Outstation – Conclusions

The myth states that the Men's Hut was built with defensive architectural elements "as a precaution against Aboriginal attack" (Baillie, 1978: 134). Therefore, in order for the myth to be interpreted as true, the structure would have to be functional to fulfil its intended defensive role, and there would have to be at least a demonstrable *perception* of significant Aboriginal threat at the time of its construction.

The results of the archival research have shown that not only was there a very strong *perception* of an Aboriginal threat to colonial settler's lives and property in this region at the time, but that the threat was very real and the settler's fears were quite justified. The archaeology has also shown the Men's Hut to have been very suitable to fulfil its role of

protecting the structure's occupants from surprise attack and allowing them to react to such an attack with gunfire from a protective position.

The fact that only the rear (western) side of the dwelling was fortified still requires some discussion. It may be significant that the survey diagram of 1884 shows that sheep yards were located just west of the fortified dwelling (Figure 4.2.8). It is likely that the location of these sheep yards dates from the same time that Central Outstation was established. Given that the main target for Aboriginal raiders was sheep, as shown in the archival records, this would explain the positioning of embrasures on the side of the building facing the sheep yards, and thus the most likely direction from which an attack or sheep raid was expected to come.

Lizard Lodge (Adelaide, South Australia)



Figure 4.3.0 Lizard Lodge ca 1865. The coach-house can be seen in the centre of the photograph. Courtesy of the Mortlock Library of South Australiana.

The Site

Lizard Lodge was the name of Major Thomas Shuldham O'Halloran's country property in the colony of South Australia (Bell, 1997: 4). Major O'Halloran was the first European to settle at this site, which he did in 1839 - only three years after the colony's foundation (Bell, 1997: 4). The structure which forms the focus of investigation at this site is a building known as 'the coach-house'. The myth attached to this structure is that it was embrasured as a precaution against Aboriginal attack (as recorded in Dolling, 1981: 323).

The Myth

The myth of the coach-house having been built for defence against Aboriginal attack appears in Alison Dolling's local history *The History of Marion on the Sturt* (1981). The myth appears in the form of a quote by Mrs Dora Campbell, who was the wife of the first commandant of the Remount Depot (a later incarnation of the Lizard Lodge property) and lived at the site from 1913. According to Mrs Campbell:

A well-stocked veterinary building was built beside what was a coach-house, where Major O'Halloran's wife and children sometimes took refuge. It was loop-holed as a precaution against Aborigines... (Dolling, 1981: 323)

Unfortunately Mrs Campbell did not go on to say where she had obtained this information. Also, the myth does not provide any motives for O'Halloran feeling the need to build a defensive structure at his homestead. Rather, it appears to either take for granted, or imply, that Aborigines were enough of a threat in the area for O'Halloran to take such measures. In fact, the wording of Mrs Campbell's rendition of the myth implies not only that Major O'Halloran's wife and children *could* have taken refuge in the coach-house, but that they "sometimes" *did*. Furthermore, by using the word 'sometimes', the myth implies that O'Halloran's wife and children took refuge in the coach-house on more than one occasion.

Location

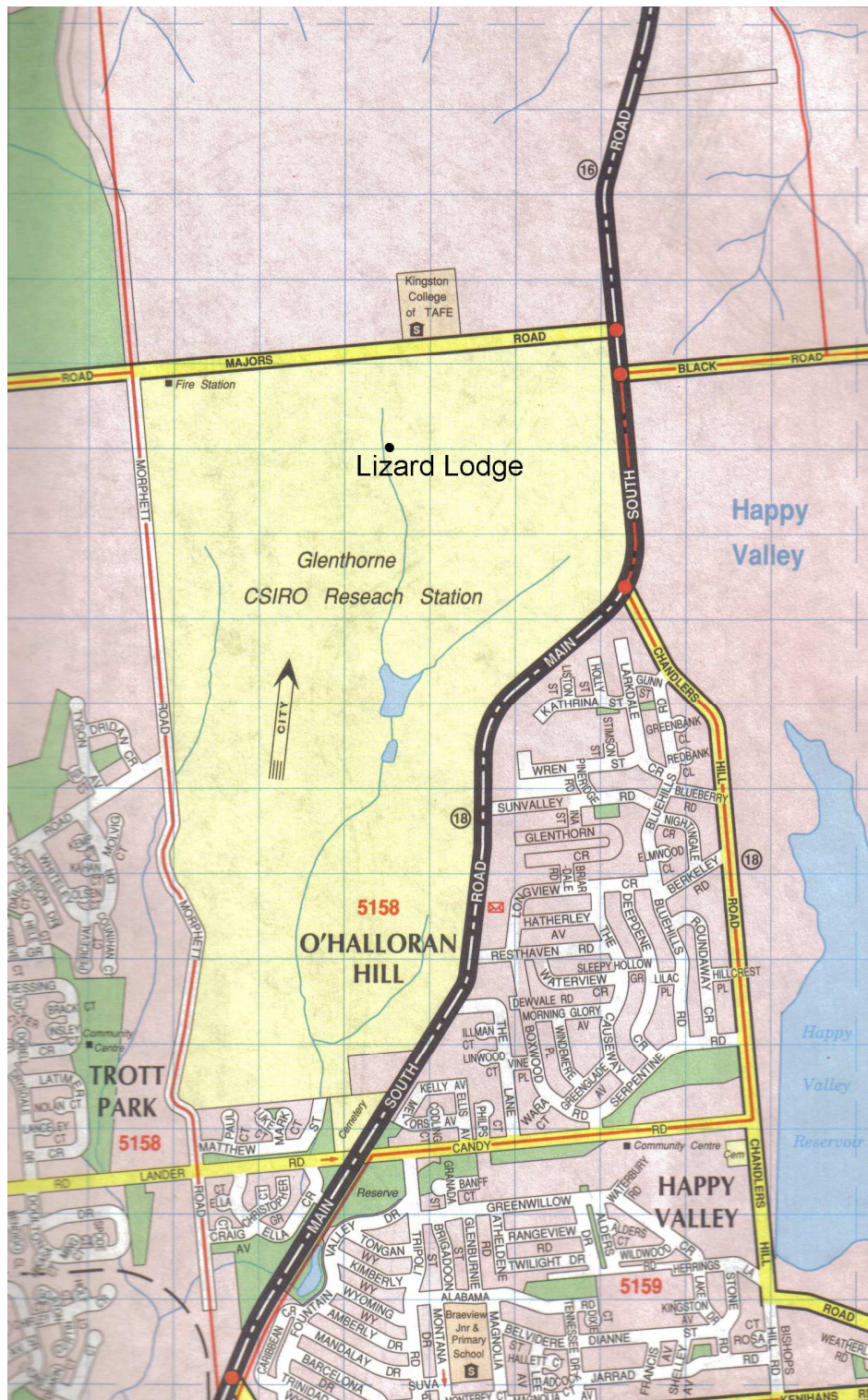


Figure 4.3.1. Map showing location of Lizard Lodge site.

The site of Lizard Lodge lies approximately 17 kilometres south of Adelaide, in the suburb of O'Halloran Hill. The greater geographical region in which the site lies is called the Fleurieu Peninsula. The site lies within the bounds of an ex-CSIRO property, currently owned by the University of Adelaide and leased out to a tenant farmer. In 1877, the property was taken over from the O'Halloran family by Thomas Saunders Porter and became known as 'Glenthorne'. The other architectural features of the site which date from the 19th century are the remains of a cold store, a cistern and a structure whose function is unclear but is known as 'the smokehouse' (e.g. Bell, 1997: 1). Some features of the cultural landscape of the site also appear to date from the period under investigation here and are of significance (Figure 4.3.2). The dating of these features was determined by locating them in dated depictions and documentary sources, as well as on the basis of their construction techniques, the details of which will be described in more detail below.

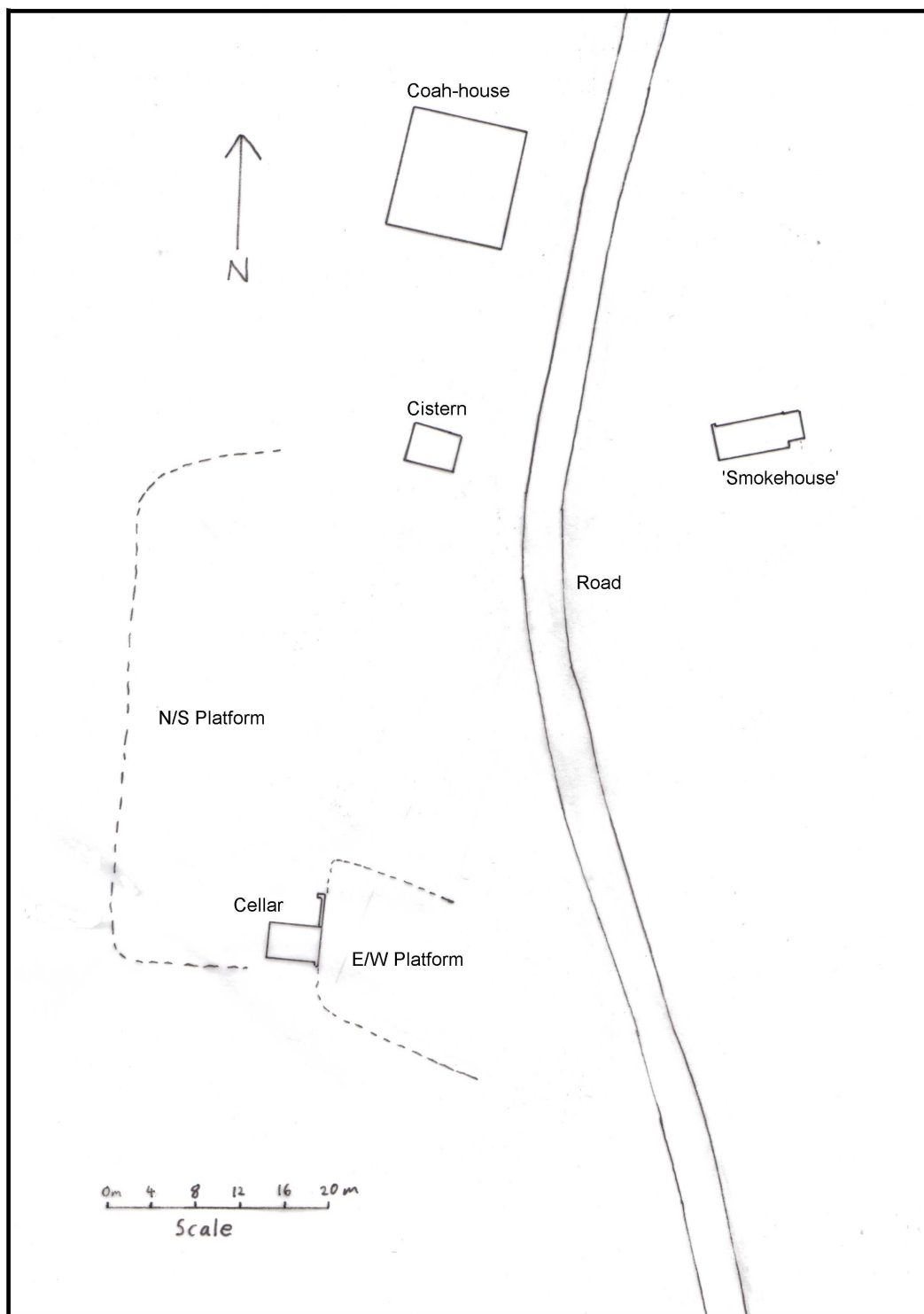


Figure 4.3.2. Site plan of 19th century features present at the site of Lizard Lodge homestead, April 2005.

As mentioned above, the land on which the site is located was once owned by the CSIRO who used it for pastoral and agricultural research from 1946 (Bell, 1997: 8-9). As a result there are many 20th century buildings near the 19th century site features. However, considering that the site lies in the suburbs, it is very fortunate that the land in which it is located has not yet been used for residential development, thus preserving a sense of its rural origins.

The Coach-house



Figure 4.3.3. The western side of the coach-house. The apertures are visible on either side of the window, nearly half way between the window and the sides of the building, as narrow vertical slots.

The coach-house is a building nearly 11m square in plan, built of stone rubble. It stands on a slope, and has entrances on two storeys, with a loft in the roof space. The building has actually been built into the side of the hill, the hillside having been cut-out in the

process. The roof has been replaced and other minor modifications made since CSIRO ownership (Bell, 1997: 10). These modifications consist of the interior walls of the upper ground level having been covered with cladding, the doors, which are probably 20th century replacements, and the addition of cladding on the lower ground level doors. This was determined on the basis of visual inspection, taking into account the construction techniques and materials used, such as the asbestos cladding. The lower ground floor contains a cellar which is accessed via a set of stairs. On either side of the stairwell is a skillion which extends out approximately 3.5 metres. The floor of the cellar is stone and is probably the original floor, judging by the materials and construction techniques used, as well as the fact that it appears quite worn with use.



Figure 4.3.4. Northern side of coach-house, showing the single door on this side providing access to the upper ground level.

The upper ground level has a single door on the northern side (Figure 4.3.4) and a double door on the southern side (Figure 4.3.20). In the western wall (Figure 4.3.3) is a central

window, flanked on either side by a long, narrow slit built into the masonry. These apertures widen on the interior. The eastern wall (Figure 4.3.19) also has a pair of these apertures opposite those in the western wall. These apertures measure between 57cm and 66cm long. The exterior width of the apertures is approximately 3.5cm, widening out to approximately 23cm on the interior. The apertures are positioned approximately 1.2m from the floor. In the centre of the eastern wall is an open fireplace and a chimney. In relatively modern times (i.e. the 20th century), the apertures were bricked-up on the interior and plastered over. In addition to this, the interior of the eastern wall on the upper ground level was covered with cladding, including the fireplace. The upper ground level floor is composed of floorboards, as is the floor of the loft which, owing to the absence of evidence of a staircase, was probably accessed via a ladder.

Other Structures

The other architectural evidence of Major O'Halloran's period of occupation comes in the form of the 'smokehouse', the cistern and the cold store. The 'smokehouse' is a long, narrow building, 10m by 5m, and divided into two internal spaces, one long and narrow, the other small and square, like a privy. Its function is not known. The most remarkable feature is its two false chimneys. On both gables of the smaller chamber are red brick chimneys, which have probably given it the name 'smokehouse'. However, they are purely decorative, as they have no flues and there is no evidence of a fireplace in the building (Bell, 1997: 10). It is not known what inspired this structure's odd design. There is also no keying-in of the stonework between the larger room and the smaller room. This may be evidence that the two sections were constructed at different times. One theory is

that the larger section was actually a coach-house, and its interior dimensions (2.2m by 6.2m) certainly appear to have been able to accommodate a coach or carriage (Smith, et al., 2005, Vol.4: 28). By extension, it has also been suggested that the small adjoining space was a livery or similar for storing equipment and tools (Smith, et al., 2005, Vol.4: 28). A light may have hung from the ornate 'chimney stacks' and the broad shelf at the rear of the larger chamber may have been for storing coaching/equestrian equipment (Smith, et al., 2005, Vol.4: 28). This interpretation of the above structure's function is quite plausible. As the 1851 dated illustration (Figure 4.3.9) shows, this structure was built before the building commonly known as 'the coach-house' today (that which forms the focus of this investigation), as the latter building is not depicted. Therefore it is possible that the later coach-house was built as an improvement on the earlier one.

Excavations carried out by Smith, Walshe, Bonell and Piddock in 2004 (Smith et al., 2005, Vol.4) discovered a slate slab floor to the south of the above structure. Smith, Walshe, Bonell and Piddock interpreted this as a paved area for standing coaches or horses ready to be shackled (Smith, et al., 2005, Vol.4: 28). However, the two pencil drawings of Lizard Lodge dated to 1851 and 1855 respectively (Figures 5.3.9 & 5.3.10) show that another small structure once stood on this site. It therefore seems more likely that the slate slab area is the remains of the floor of this building. The function of this latter building is unknown. However, its close proximity to the so-called 'smokehouse' suggests that its function may have been associated with this building.

South of the coach-house there is a rectangular underground cistern about 5m by 4m in plan. Its corrugated iron roof may be of 19th century date, judging by its heavily rusted appearance. Overall, this structure is in quite reasonable condition. It has been fitted with relatively modern iron water pipes, and is mentioned by both 1912 and 1946 valuers as a functioning tank (Bell, 1997: 10). It has an arched opening on its eastern gable, and ornamental barge boards on its western gable. It also has the remains of a decorative painted colour scheme (Bell, 1997: 10).

The only other standing 19th century structure is the cold store. This is a small, rectangular stone structure of almost exactly the same dimensions as the cistern. It is dug into the slope of the land so that it is possible to walk into it from the west side, but only the gable is visible from the east. The cold store is in very bad condition; its walls are leaning, a very large olive tree has crushed the roof, and the wooden lintel above the doorway is in poor shape (Bell, 1997: 10). Although certainly of 19th century date, on the basis of its construction techniques and materials, it is possible that this structure was built for the later Glenthorne house rather than the earlier Lizard Lodge. It is not visible in any of the depictions of Lizard Lodge, and the early homestead had other areas which could have served as a cold store, such as the coach-house's cellar and a similar-looking building attached to the worker's cottages via a covered way (Smith, et al., 2005, Vol.4: 28).

Other Cultural Modifications of the Landscape

There are two artificially created level areas on the site. These form an 'L' shape. One runs east-west and measures approximately 35m long by 20m wide. The other runs north-south and is approximately 45m by 15m. There is evidence that these were the site of the original dwelling and servant's quarters respectively. Other indications of the homestead layout which survive in the cultural landscape are tree plantings, fencelines, a dam and the position of the road.

Site History



Figure 4.3.5. Major Thomas Shuldham O'Halloran. From Dolling, 1981: 51.

The land on which the site is located was occupied very early in the process of European settlement in South Australia. The first two sections of land were granted to Major Thomas Shuldham O'Halloran in December 1839 and all the remaining land was taken up by 1847 (Bell, 1997: 4). This process spanned a total of fourteen years. After the initial purchase in 1839, two more sections were taken up in 1840, one each in 1845 and 1847, and in 1853 he bought another from Vice-Admiral Edward Hawker, an absentee landlord living in Hampshire, who had taken up an adjacent section in 1840 (he was probably a family friend of the O'Hallorans [Bell, 1997: 4]). By 1853 O'Halloran had consolidated all the land of the present Glenthorne Field Station under his ownership (Bell, 1997: 4). O'Halloran had 327 acres under crop between 1840-1843, rising to 2,063 between 1844-1858 (Walshe, 1996: 3).

O'Halloran was developing the land only a month after arriving in the colony, and was actually living on it four months later, long before he had legal title to it. O'Halloran kept a journal, and on 17 April 1839 he recorded: "Dined in large house for the first time, Govr Gawler, Sturt &c being present" (Mortlock Library PRG 206/1). This was eight months before he was officially granted the land on which the dwelling stood, but someone who could entertain the Governor and Assistant Commissioner of Lands at dinner probably had little fear of having his application refused (Bell, 1997: 4).

O'Halloran called his homestead Lizard Lodge. The name was probably in use from the time the house was built, for when a son was born in 1840, O'Halloran recorded in his journal: "Henry born at Lizard Lodge" (Mortlock Library PRG 206/1). At the time of

residing at Lizard Lodge (1839-1870), the O'Halloran family consisted of Thomas Shuldham O'Halloran, his wife, Jane, and their three sons.

Little is known about the developments on the property. The "large house" was probably two prefabricated Manning timber houses which O'Halloran, like many early colonists, had shipped out with him from London. His journal also referred to a "cottage" which the family had occupied earlier (Mortlock Library PRG 206/1). By January 1839 a well had been dug, and a kiln was firing lime for mortar. In February 1839 there was half an acre ploughed, and by June 1839, an acre had been fenced. Lady Franklin visited Lizard Lodge at the end of 1840 and saw "fine-looking wheat" growing and 300 acres fenced (Lady Franklin's Diary, 1952[1840]: 44). It may have been during O'Halloran's period of occupation that the first of two dams on the property was created (Walshe, 1996: 3).

O'Halloran was one of the first farmers to use the Ridley stripper for wheat harvesting. He also experimented with Mediterranean crops: he planted grape vines and sent bottles of wine to London by 1852, and there are very early olive trees near the homestead site. In 1844 he made the journal entry: "Flour Mill first used" (Mortlock Library PRG 206/1). It is unknown where this mill was located or what it looked like. It is possible that O'Halloran may have been referring to the newly opened flour mill in the township of Noarlunga, some nine miles to the south of Lizard Lodge (Smith, et al., 2005, Vol.4: 18).

O'Halloran Hill was originally part of the District Council of Brighton. This was one of the earliest councils to be formed in South Australia, which is fortunate, since it means

that we have access to one of the earliest rate assessment books in the state, covering Lizard Lodge. The District Council of Brighton was formed in September 1853, T.S. O'Halloran being one of the first councillors (Dolling, 1981: 68). The first rate assessment took place in February of the following year (1854). Unfortunately, the description of O'Halloran's property in this first assessment is too brief to provide much information as to the infrastructure present at Lizard Lodge at this time. It simply lists:

Dwelling house, offices and homestead (MRG36/4/00000).

The following year's assessment is, however, more significant as it lists all of the improvements present at the time. According to the assessment for April 1855, Lizard Lodge was comprised of:

411 acres of land fenced. Part arable and part pasture with dwelling house, detached offices, outbuildings, barn, stables, granaries, labourer's cottages, vineyard, orchards and garden (MRG36/4/00000).

There is some very good pictorial documentation of the appearance of Lizard Lodge in its early decades. In the O'Halloran papers in the Mortlock Library there are two small pencil drawings from the 1850s (Figures 5.3.9 & 5.3.10). One, dated 1851, shows four buildings and some fenced paddocks. The homestead, servant's quarters and another building have all been demolished since, but an outbuilding in the drawing still stands as a ruin (the 'smokehouse'). Another drawing, dated 1855, clearly shows the coach-house,

which is still intact today. From this evidence it can be deduced that the coach-house must have been built sometime between 1851 and 1855. Furthermore, there appears to be evidence in the earlier (1851) drawing that the coach-house was built closer to the early side of this date range. This comes in the form of a fenced-off area located in the very position where the coach-house was later to stand, and of slightly larger dimensions than the later coach-house. Inside this area is an irregularly-shaped black area. This black area, therefore, may represent the cutting-away of that part of the hillside in order to build the coach-house. The fence around it probably served to demarcate it as a construction site and as a safety barrier to prevent people and animals from falling into the excavation. Therefore, since there is evidence that construction of the coach-house had commenced by 1851, it is likely that the building was completed within a year or so of the sketch, which would date it to 1851-1852. A third pencil sketch of Lizard Lodge is held by the South Australian Art Gallery. This sketch was made by Edward Frome and is dated to ca 1840s. This sketch clearly shows that the Lizard Lodge dwelling was built upon a walled embankment (Figure 4.3.6).



Figure 4.3.7. Lizard Lodge dwelling. This photograph, dated to ca 1880, was taken from the south facing north. The caption that comes with the photograph states that the interior was imported in sections from England, and remained in a good state of preservation for nearly 100 years, until destroyed by fire. Courtesy of the Morlock Library of South Australiana.



Figure 4.3.8. The earthwork platform on which the original dwelling may have stood, facing north. Although originally probably much higher, today it still stands ca 150cm high at its western end.

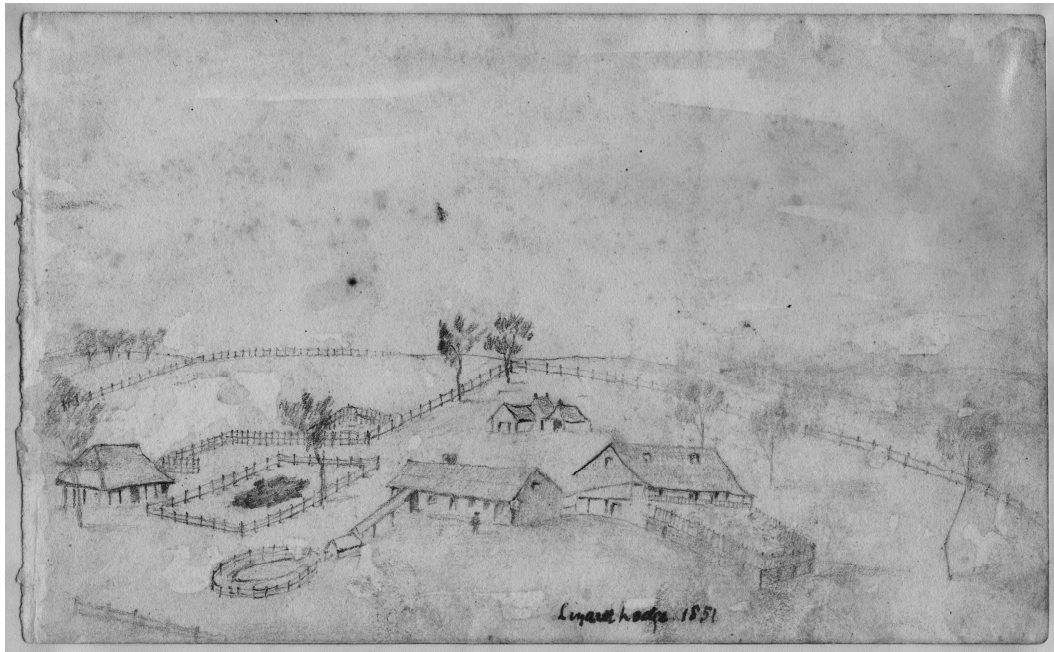


Figure 4.3.9. Pencil drawing of Lizard Lodge. This illustration is dated 1851 and shows the homestead prior to the construction of the coach-house. It also shows other contemporary structures and landscape. Courtesy of the Mortlock Library of South Australiana.



Figure 4.3.10. Another pencil drawing of Lizard Lodge, this one dated 1855. This illustration shows the newly-built coach-house, as well as many of the other structures that stood on the site. Courtesy of the Mortlock Library of South Australiana.

It appears that many of the Lizard Lodge-era buildings were still standing when the army took over the property in 1913 (Bell, 1997: 33). Evidence for this can be seen in the plans of the Remount Depot made by the army during the time they had the land and the list of improvements made in 1946 when it was being sold to the CSIR (later the CSIRO). The latter list of improvements is particularly helpful in that it appears to indicate the pre-army (and thus probably Lizard Lodge-era) infrastructure present on the property by designating it as 'old'. These structures also differ from the rest of those on the site in that they are made of stone, whereas the army seems to have built most of its structures out of wood and iron. The improvements listed by the army as 'old' consisted of an:

Old stone stable with loft, galvanised iron gabled roof.

Old stone lean-to, attached horse boxes.

Old stone barn, galvanised iron gabled roof.

Old stone lean-to attached.

Old stone lean-to attached.

Old stone coach house, one loft and one cellar, gabled and lean-to galvanised iron roof (National Archives. Series A877, Item CL23893/21).

Aside from the coach-house which still stands, the above tells us that in 1946 there still stood an early stone stable with gabled roof, loft and lean-to with horse boxes attached, and an early stone barn with gabled roof and two lean-to's attached. By comparing the early depictions of Lizard Lodge (Figures 4.3.0, 4.3.6, 4.3.7, 4.3.9, 4.3.10) and the photograph of a stone stable being demolished (Figure 4.3.13), with the plans of the site

made by the army (Figure 4.3.11), it is possible to confidently identify the precise position and dimensions of the stable and barn referred to above.

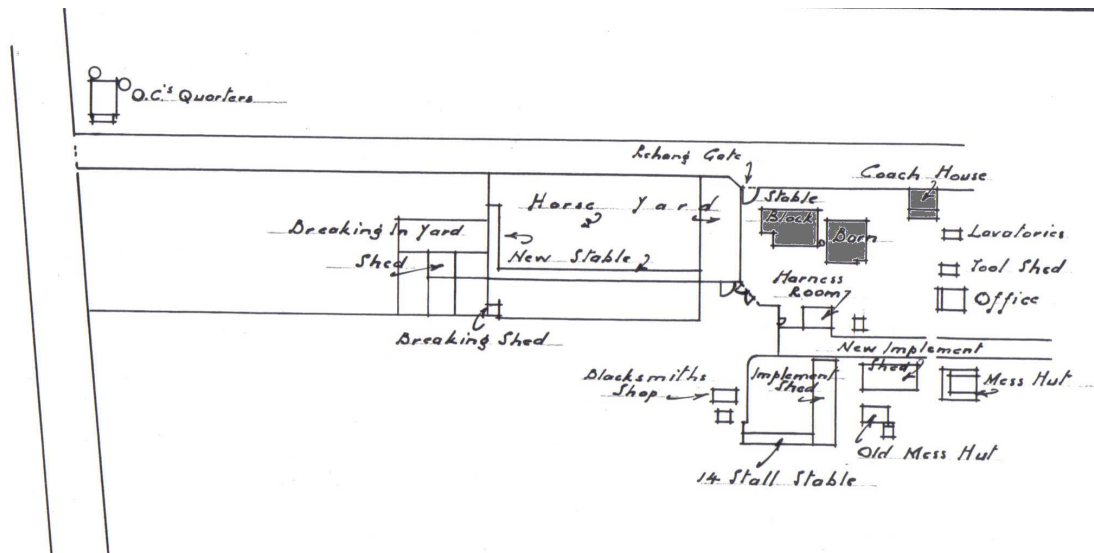


Figure 4.3.11. Plan of part of the Army Remount Depot at Glenthorne, 1925. The position and dimensions of the Lizard-Lodge stables and barn can be seen just to the left (north) of the coach-house, shaded grey. The remainder of the structures shown are of a later date. Scale: 200ft to 1 inch. National Archives, Adelaide.

In 2004, an archaeological excavation was carried out at the site of Lizard Lodge by Dr Keryn Walshe and Dr Pam Smith of the Flinders University Archaeology Department, as part of the Hills Face Zone Project. The principal aim of the project was:

...to locate the site of Glenthorne House. Subsidiary aims were to locate the site of Lizard Lodge and to record other unpredicted archaeological features (Smith, et al. 2005, Vol.4: 25).

The excavation located traces of the 1879 Glenthorne House and the earlier Lizard Lodge dwelling. This made it possible to accurately and reliably reconstruct most of the layout of O'Halloran's homestead (Figure 4.3.17).

When O'Halloran died in 1870, the property was inherited by his eldest son, Thomas Joseph Shuldham O'Halloran. He retained it for seven years, and then sold the land to Thomas Saunders Porter, who renamed it Glenthorne Estate. Little is known of Porter's occupancy. He apparently carried on the O'Halloran wheat and mixed farming practice, and also continued in the role of local squire, for the family donated a stained glass memorial window to Christ Church nearby (Bell, 1997: 5). Porter's notable contribution to the history of the Lizard Lodge site was the construction of a large, three-storeyed house built in 1879 (Figure 4.3.12) (Dolling, 1981: 321, 324). It was once believed that this house was built next to O'Halloran's original Lizard Lodge dwelling, which could apparently be seen in a photograph dated to 1930 (E.g. in Dolling, 1981: 324) (Figure 4.3.12). In 1932 Porter's house was destroyed by fire, but O'Halloran's Lizard Lodge was said to have been left untouched (Dolling, 1981: 324). However, the subsequent excavation at the site by Smith, et al. (2005) has shown that the single storeyed, corrugated iron-roofed building shown in this photograph (Figure 4.3.12) was not the Lizard Lodge dwelling, but part of O'Halloran's workers' cottages (Smith, et al. 2005, Vol.4: 28). Glenthorne House was therefore found to have been built over the site of Lizard Lodge.

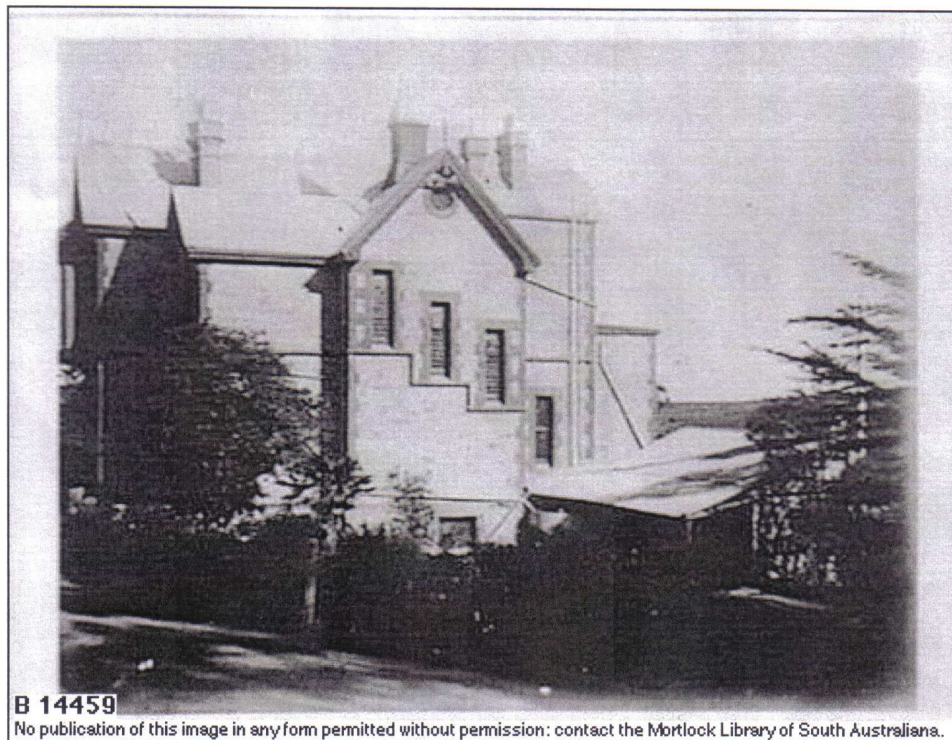


Figure 4.3.12. ‘Glenthorne House’, built by Thomas Porter over the site of the Lizard Lodge Dwelling in 1879. The low building at lower right was once thought to have been O’Halloran’s dwelling but was in fact part of his worker’s cottages. Photograph taken in 1930 (From Dolling, 1981: 324).

In 1913, Glenthorne was acquired by the Commonwealth of Australia for use as a Remount Depot for the Department of Defence. During the First World War the depot trained horses which were sent to replace losses overseas (Walshe, 1996: 3). At this time a second dam was constructed on the property (Walshe, 1996: 3).

In November 1946 Glenthorne was sold to the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, later known as the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) for use as a field station. It seems that most of the remaining structures of Lizard Lodge were demolished at this time (Walshe, 1996: 3). There is a

photograph from the CSIRO which shows what appears to be a large stable with a loft being demolished to make way for a laboratory (Figure 4.3.13). This stable was most likely from O'Halloran's period, as it appears that later farmers did not construct any substantial outbuildings but simply continued to use the facilities that were already available (Bell, 1997: 20).

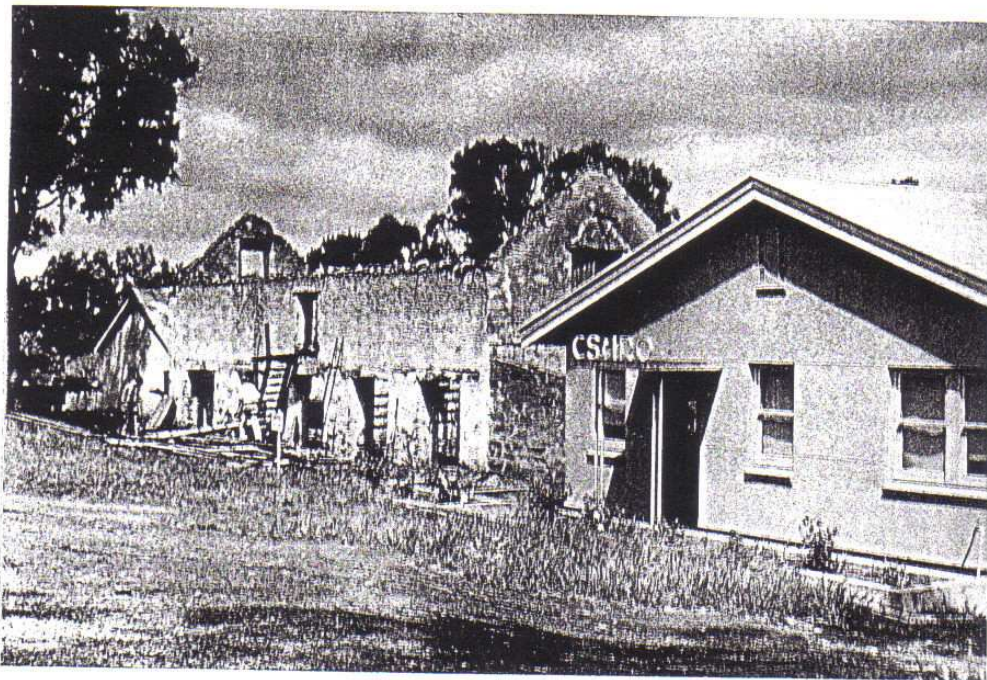


Figure 4.3.13. Lizard Lodge-era stables being demolished around 1946. From Bell (1997: 26).

Today there is a substantial complex of modern buildings near the site of the original homestead. These mostly date from the CSIR and CSIRO period. There is a metalled private road running through the property from Major's Road to past the coach-house where it becomes a dirt road. This road may follow the line of the original road dating from O'Halloran's time (Walshe, Smith, Bonell & Piddock, 2005: 32).

The Indigenous Inhabitants

The land on which T.S. O'Halloran's property 'Lizard Lodge' was located traditionally belonged to the Kaurna language group (Horton, 2000), known to the early Europeans as the 'Adelaide tribe.' There were several places of significance to the Kaurna people around the site. For example, some kilometres to the south west of the site is Ochre Cove, to the west is Hallett Cove and to the north of the site is an area traditionally known as Warreparinga. These places still hold significant heritage value to the Kaurna community (Walshe, 1996: 2). In Hallett Cove, a few kilometres to the west of Lizard Lodge, is the site of a very large and significant Aboriginal camping ground (Walshe, 1996: 2). Furthermore, the numerous springs that can be found along the Fleurieu Peninsula represent events in the Tjirbruke Dreaming Trail which is of significant cultural importance to the Kaurna community (Walshe, 1996: 2).

Warreparinga is an area of great cultural significance to the local Aboriginal people. Warreparinga refers to the area around the Sturt River. This was an important fishing and hunting area for the Aborigines, as well as a burial ground (Wood, 1998: 8). With its seasonal patterns in the animal, bird and plant world, it helped determine the Aboriginal people's seasonal movements (Wood, 1998: 4-5). The area around Warreparinga was the source of shelter, clothing and materials for tool making (Wood, 1998: 20). As part of their hunter-gatherer way of life, the Kaurna moved along accustomed routes from their main camp, the area on which Adelaide now stands., Three camping sites along the Sturt River have been identified as well as the large one at Hallett Cove (Dolling, 1981: 3). Warreparinga was described by William Everard in 1838 as a chain of freshwater lagoons

overgrown with flags and bulrushes about eight feet high and abounding in wild ducks (Mortlock Library, PRG 208/1). Here the Aborigines trapped swans, pelicans, teal, pigeons, quail and parakeets, as well as numerous fish (Dolling, 1981: 3). However, in summer the Sturt silted over and the lagoons dried up. According to an early settler, Mary Thomas, there was sometimes scarcely enough water even for drinking (Mortlock Library, 1160/3: 49). At the end of summer the Aborigines practiced 'fire-stick farming', whereby scrub fires were lit. These fires were designed to encourage the growth of tender plant life and thus entice game into the area (Jones, 1969: 224-228). More importantly in terms of the focus of this thesis, these fires also gave the settlers great cause for alarm as they endangered their property (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1851/1758). Groups of Aborigines were evidently still frequenting the traditional camp site at Warreparinga in the late 19th century and early 20th century (Wood, 1998: 6), as one long-time resident of the area recorded in the 1950s:

As a child I remember the blacks (as we called them) coming for their issue of blankets from the government. They camped on the Sturt River until they received their supply. At the time when my grandfather came out, the Aborigines roamed the hills and plains surrounding the district. I myself on my property on the Sturt River, unearthed skeletons of the natives about the year 1905 (Quoted in Dolling, 1981: 5).

The area's use as an Aboriginal burial ground was also demonstrated in 1925, when one local farmer uncovered Aboriginal bones while ploughing, as well as in the 1940s when

more bones were found (Edwards, 1964: 184-188). Furthermore, there is early colonial documentary evidence of this area's use as a burial ground. Dr Handasyde Duncan, in his diary for 1839-1842, refers to a certain mound which produced vigorous crops of vegetables. Duncan discovered that after it had been turned up a few times the mound proved to be an Aboriginal burial ground (Mortlock Library, PRG 532/3: Entry for 19 April, 1841 and PRG 532/5: 2). Further Aboriginal burials were found at this site in 1964 and 1972 (Wood, 1998: 8). One can only imagine the distress it would have caused the local Aboriginal people, having the remains of their relatives dug up by the settlers and desecrating their burial grounds.

Scores of artefacts and flakes have been collected from the Sturt River camp site, all of them from land disturbed by cultivation over a period of nearly 35 years (Dolling, 1981: 5). Archaeological surveys and small scale excavations in 1964, 1972, 1994, 1995 and 1998 also found many stone artefacts (Wood, 1998: 8-10). This area of the Sturt River is believed to have been only one of many which have since been destroyed by suburban development, making it too late to identify any other sites (Edwards, 1964: 184-188). A minor tributary of the Sturt River flows through the Lizard Lodge property. This would have provided a sufficient variety and quantity of food and water for small groups travelling through (Walshe, 1996: 2).

Dolling claims that Aboriginal corroborees were performed on the Lizard Lodge property during O'Halloran's occupancy. These corroborees were said to have been held when South Coast Aborigines were on their way home from Adelaide after collecting a fresh

supply of blankets and rations (Dolling, 1981:16-17). Unfortunately, is it impossible to know whether the corroborees were held on O'Halloran's property because this was the traditional site for them, or because other landowners would not tolerate it on their properties. Admittedly, it has been impossible to substantiate Dolling's claims about the corroborees with independent supporting evidence. Dolling also claims that the Aboriginal track used by Aborigines travelling between Encounter Bay and Adelaide lay just west of the O'Halloran property (Figure 4.3.14) (Dolling, 1981: 17 [footnote], 105 [caption to photograph]).

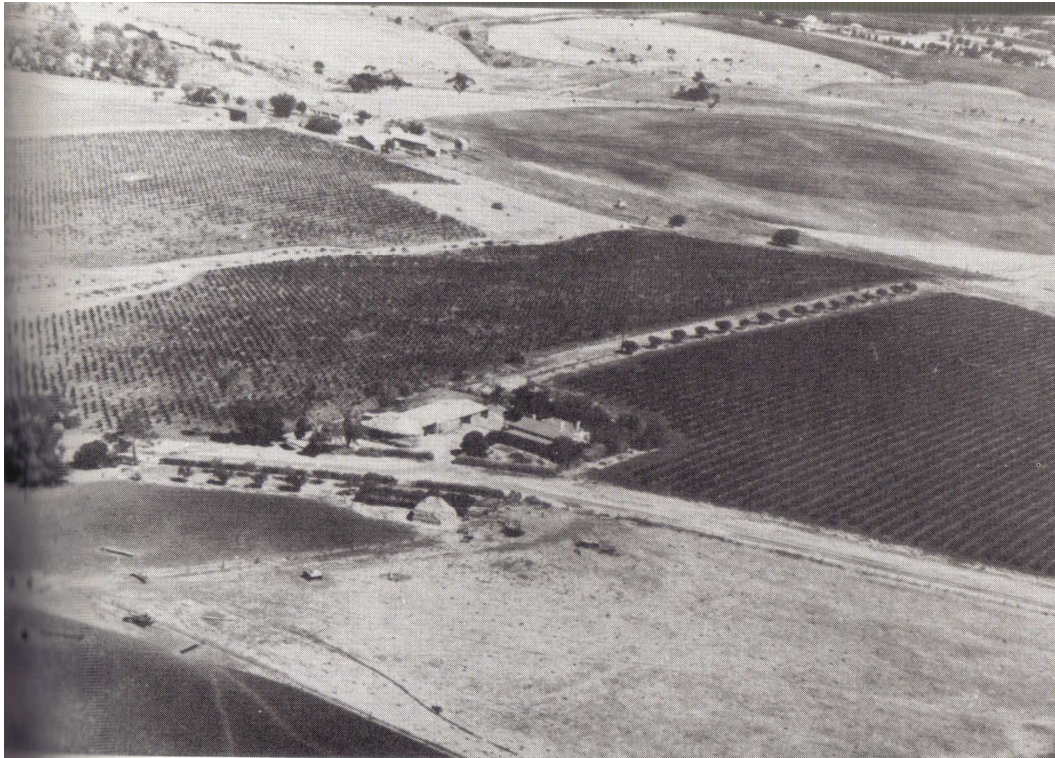


Figure 4.3.14. O'Halloran Hill farmland about 1945. The photograph was taken from the north west looking south east. The row of almond trees on the right is said to mark part of the track once used by Aborigines between Encounter Bay and Adelaide. From Dolling, 1981: 105.

There is oral history evidence of another Aboriginal campsite being located very close to O'Halloran's property. This information comes from the reminiscences of a Mr Richard Candy, who lived and worked in O'Halloran Hill from the 1920s to the 1980s (Candy, 2005: pers. comm.). As a youth, he worked in partnership with a much older local farmer named Wickham, who told him that the Aborigines used to camp in a particular part of a valley adjacent to O'Halloran's property on the eastern side (Candy, pers. comm. 2005). According to Mr Candy, Mr Wickham did not explicitly state that he *personally* recalled Aborigines camping there, but the former got the impression from Wickham that he had. Interestingly, Mr Candy believes that the 1865 photograph (Figure 4.3.0) was donated to the Mortlock Library of South Australiana by Mr Wickham's family. Mr Candy also believes that Mr Wickham himself was at one time an employee of O'Halloran's at Lizard Lodge, which explains how he came into possession of the photograph (Candy, pers. comm. 2005).

In September 1996 the CSIRO commissioned an Aboriginal Heritage Survey of Glenthorne to determine what, if any, Aboriginal sites of archaeological interest were present (Walshe, 1996). No Aboriginal heritage sites were identified during the ground survey, the methodology of which consisted of field walking. However, the reasons for the lack of sites identified was in part due to the fact that the ground has been highly disturbed from long historic use of the property and that the ground was covered in dense vegetation, making visual identification impossible (Walshe, 1996: Abstract).

Although there is no evidence of any direct Aboriginal threat to Lizard Lodge, there *is* primary evidence of Aboriginal threats against Europeans in the vicinity. O'Halloran himself, as Police Commissioner at the time, wrote in one of his quarterly reports in 1843 that, "...cases also have been reported of [the Aborigines] using violence towards unprotected females living in the outskirts of the town, from whose fears they have extracted provisions on several occasions" (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1843/474). Dolling also records that the house of farmer Thomas Dyke, located about seven kilometres north of Lizard Lodge was 'besieged' by Aborigines demanding flour and other rations, and that in 1844, a party of 30 to 40 Aborigines, en route to Encounter Bay, threatened women in a farmhouse if they refused to hand over flour (Dolling, 1981: 5 [footnote], 133).

Since these Aboriginal groups were travelling between Encounter Bay and Adelaide, they would have been the same people who passed by O'Halloran's property. O'Halloran would no doubt have realised that these Aborigines could carry out just such a raid, if not one more violent, on his own homestead if they wished. These actions on the part of the Aborigines appear to indicate that they were short of food, a situation which was to grow ever more desperate as time progressed, and which may have led O'Halloran to fear that they would adopt even more aggressive measures to procure it. As Commissioner of Police until 1843, O'Halloran was almost constantly hearing about Aboriginal attacks against settlers. For example, O'Halloran began one report on the Aborigines in 1842 by writing, "In most directions during the last three months frequent reports have been received by the Commissioner relative to the murders and outrages committed by the

Aborigines” (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1842/471). This continued in 1843, when he reported further Aboriginal attacks upon huts and station staff (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1843/474).

More significantly, an analysis of T.S. O’Halloran’s character and history shows that he was just the sort of man who could be expected to build a fortified structure on his homestead. Major O’Halloran was a military man. The impression one gets from his writings and history show that he applied a military sense of discipline and planning to all aspects of his life. O’Halloran was born into a family with a long history of military service (his father was Major-General Sir Joseph O’Halloran [Bell, 1997: 4]). His entire life had been spent either in military service, or growing up in a military household (Bell, 1997: 4). He entered a military college at age eleven, joined the army at sixteen, and spent the next twenty years as a military officer in Colonial India, as well as three years as an officer in England (Bell, 1997: 4). When he arrived in South Australia there was no army for him to serve, so he did the next best thing and became the Commissioner of Police in 1839 (Bell, 1997: 5). One can therefore imagine his excitement when, in 1840, the Colony decided to form a militia. Of course, O’Halloran became the Major Commandant (Bell, 1997: 5).

Although many colonists of the time believed that the Indigenous people were fellow citizens of the Colony and should be treated as such, it appears that O’Halloran did not accept this concept. In matters relating to the Aborigines, he frequently displayed an inability to appreciate the civil function of the police department (Clyne, 1981: 92), or to

separate police procedures from military procedures. In the words of Robert Clyne (1981):

It would appear from his subsequent actions as Commissioner of Police that he was a frustrated soldier. The expeditions which he either led, organised or proposed, were military campaigns against a known enemy. Martial belligerency during his administration of the police force was often tempered or disguised, but was nevertheless apparent in his dealings with troublesome natives (Clyne, 1981: 92).

O'Halloran had a great deal of first- and second-hand experience of frontier conflict in South Australia. He is most infamous for his punitive expedition against the Milmenrura clan of the Coorong in 1840, following the *Maria* massacre. This expedition was launched in response to the killing of some two dozen European shipwreck survivors by members of the aforementioned clan. O'Halloran was ordered to identify, if possible, an arbitrary number of the murderers (in the event, two) and hang them on the spot (SRSA, 5/83). These events caused a great deal of controversy, as many felt it an abuse of the law to enact summary punishment on people who were technically subjects of Her Majesty.

The next major 'campaign' (a word O'Halloran may have approved of) carried out against the Aborigines by O'Halloran took place in April 1841. This time the 'enemy' were the Maraura people of the upper Murray district, near Lake Victoria (Foster, et al. 2001: 29). O'Halloran and his combined volunteer and police contingent were sent to

recover 5000 sheep and 800 head of cattle dispersed by an Aboriginal attack on an overlanding party. One European had also been killed and another wounded in the attack. Although the official function of the expedition was primarily peace-keeping, O'Halloran's journal reveals his expectation and anticipation of a punitive expedition (Foster, et al. 2001: 30):

I think it possible that [the Natives] may dispute our passage...should this prove the case I consider that I should be fully justified by every law human & divine in forcing my way through...I shall be careful not to be the aggressor in any way...tho' the punishment ought to be severe to prove to them our power...I think that a severe lesson to this fierce tribe would greatly conduce to the preservation of life hereafter (SRSA, GRG 5/81).

However, due to Governor Gawler's recall to London, and much to O'Halloran's dismay, the expedition was ordered to return to Adelaide before any action had taken place. O'Halloran remarked, "It is with extreme pain and regret that I have been forced to return back to Adelaide when within 50 miles of the place where Inman's Party were attacked but I have no other alternative as an old soldier than to obey His Excy's orders" (SRSA, GRG 5/81). O'Halloran's mindset as a military man can clearly be seen.

O'Halloran's next expedition against the Murray Aborigines took place at the end of May 1841. The new Governor, Grey, authorised O'Halloran to mount an expedition to recover sheep that had been scattered during another Aboriginal attack on an overlanding party,

as well as to apprehend Aboriginal suspects and bring them to Adelaide (Clyne, 1981: 101). The party numbered 68, being composed of volunteers and police. Grey, being aware of O'Halloran's tendency to turn such expeditions into military campaigns, gave clear orders that firearms would only be sanctioned in self defence and sent along Moorehouse, the Protector of Aborigines, to further constrain him (Clyne, 1981: 101). However, the objectives of the expedition were not met. The Murray Aborigines fled before the party so no prisoners or hostages could be taken. During this expedition O'Halloran's party did, however, meet with another overland party who had been attacked near the Rufus River and had four of their sixteen members killed (Clyne, 1981: 102). O'Halloran therefore knew full well the Aborigines' capability for violence if they wished to use it. He would have carried this knowledge with him back to Lizard Lodge where traditional-living Aborigines were also present.

O'Halloran's tendency to turn every expedition against the Aborigines into a military operation ironically caused him to miss out on being part of the expedition that actually crushed the Murray Aborigines' resistance. In July 1841, Governor Grey ordered another expedition to the territory of the Maraura. This time the objective was to meet up with another overlanding party on its way to the colony and ensure its safe passage through the troubled region (Clyne, 1981: 104). O'Halloran envisaged a well planned military-style campaign against a known enemy (Clyne, 1981: 104). He wrote to Grey that:

To ensure with certainty the success of an Expedition sent to punish or capture the Blacks, it will be absolutely necessary to send not a couple of Whale Boats, but

likewise two strong mounted parties on either side of the river...preparation ought to be made for a Campaign of several months; for though both sides of the River can then be scoured; the natives have still innumerable creeks, lagoons, and scrub to hide in, and where it will require much time and patience to find them, unless they are willing to be seen (Clyne, 1981: 104).

Governor Grey would not agree to O'Halloran's plan. The expedition, consisting of Sub-Inspector Shaw, one sergeant and ten foot police who were made redundant by the police force, departed without the Major. The result of this 'rescue' expedition was a battle between the colonists and the Aborigines in which at least thirty Aborigines were killed and only one colonist wounded (Clyne, 1981: 106). After this, there were no more concerted Aboriginal attacks upon overlanding parties.

The next major 'front' in the South Australian frontier wars occurred in the Port Lincoln district. O'Halloran was again at the forefront of operations against the Indigenous people. In November 1842 a party of mounted police, under the command of O'Halloran, were despatched to Port Lincoln. They relieved 16 men from the British 96th Infantry Regiment, under Lieutenant Hugonin, who had been sent to crush the Aboriginal resistance that had been occurring in the area. O'Halloran wrote that he had been instructed to:

...treat the blacks if armed and likely to resist as I would any hostile party that was resisting the law, and that I should be fully justified in becoming the aggressor in such a case (Bull, 1972[1884]: 269).

O'Halloran's party met with limited success, making only two arrests (Charter, 1989: 20). He was denied the battle he obviously hoped for. The mounted police expedition was essentially involved in a 'mopping up' exercise, the main 'pacifying' of the Aborigines having been accomplished by the 96th Regiment (Charter, 1989: 20).

The previous accounts of Major O'Halloran's frontier operations against the Aborigines serve to illustrate the amount of conflict O'Halloran experienced during his early years in the colony. It is only natural to suppose that such first-hand experiences would have influenced his opinion of the South Australian Aborigines, and not in a positive way. Rather, such experiences may well have made him distrustful of them. As a result of these experiences, O'Halloran would have been a great believer in the 'treacherous natives', an attitude common amongst settlers who had experienced Aboriginal resistance, even though they may not have been able to interpret it as resistance. O'Halloran's writings and actions also show that he had a very military mindset. Such a mindset, coupled with a healthy distrust of the Aborigines, makes him the ideal type of character who would wish to build a fortified structure on his property. After all, when a military man feels his position is at risk, he fortifies it.

Results and Interpretation

Fieldwork at the site of Lizard Lodge was carried out over a period of four days, from the 29th to the 31st March 2005, and on the 5th April 2005. The myth associated with this site is that the angled apertures in the eastern and western walls of the coach-house were in fact embrasures (i.e. as described in Dolling [1981: 323]). Therefore, the aim of the fieldwork was to record as much physical information as possible which would allow this myth to be tested.

The actual fieldwork mainly comprised photographing the remaining Lizard Lodge-era features of the site, as well as making measured drawings of the remaining Lizard Lodge-era structures. Special attention was paid to the coach-house, since it was the focus of the investigation. These structures consisted of the coach-house, 'smokehouse', cistern and cold store. A site survey was also undertaken. This survey took in the position of the remaining Lizard Lodge-era structures, as well as the position and dimensions of the two earthwork platforms which exist at the site. This was necessary in order to reconstruct a plan of the layout of the homestead at the time the coach-house was built.

As mentioned previously, at some later time in its history the apertures were blocked up from the interior. This was done by bricking them up and then plastering over the area. Since the apertures were the most important feature of the structure being investigated, it was necessary to determine exactly what their original dimensions were prior to this. This was accomplished by the following means: The north-eastern embrasure was chosen to represent the others for the purposes of determining the original dimensions, as on visual

inspection they all appear to be alike. A ruler was placed horizontally into the exterior opening of the aperture in order to determine the depth to the bricks which blocked it off. Since the thickness of the walls was known from the plan, it was possible to extrapolate the thickness of the blocking brickwork and thus the original depth of the aperture. The angle of the apertures' sides was then simply continued to where they would have opened out on the interior wall (Figure 4.3.15).

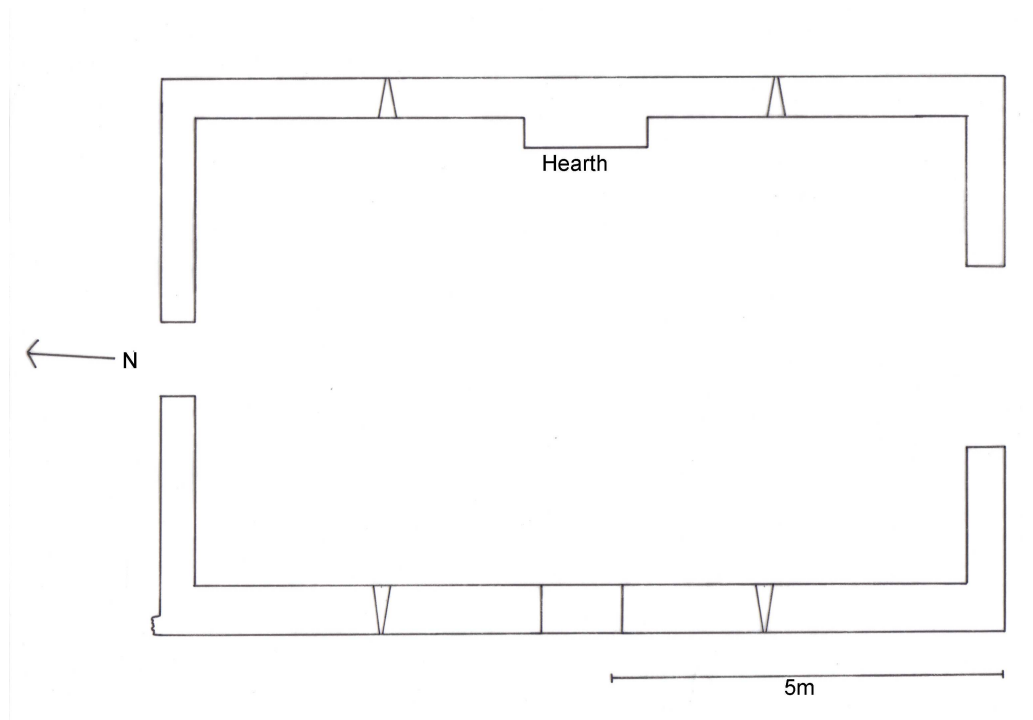


Figure 4.3.15. Plan of the upper ground floor of the coach-house, showing the two entrances, window, and position and dimensions of apertures.

In order for embrasures to be functional, they must fulfil several criteria. They need to be easily accessible to the defender, they need to be located at a height above ground which permits a relatively comfortable shooting position to be adopted, and they need to be wide enough at their narrowest to allow the muzzle of a firearm to be placed through. The apertures in the Lizard Lodge coach-house are located about 1.25m from the interior

floor. This places them as a very convenient height through which to fire a weapon. They are also easily accessible to the defender, the room they are located in being open and without dividing walls. At first sight the apertures in the coach-house appear to be extremely narrow on the exterior. The width of the apertures at their narrowest actually averages about 3.5cm, making them capable of accommodating a wide range of firearms including both longarms and pistols.

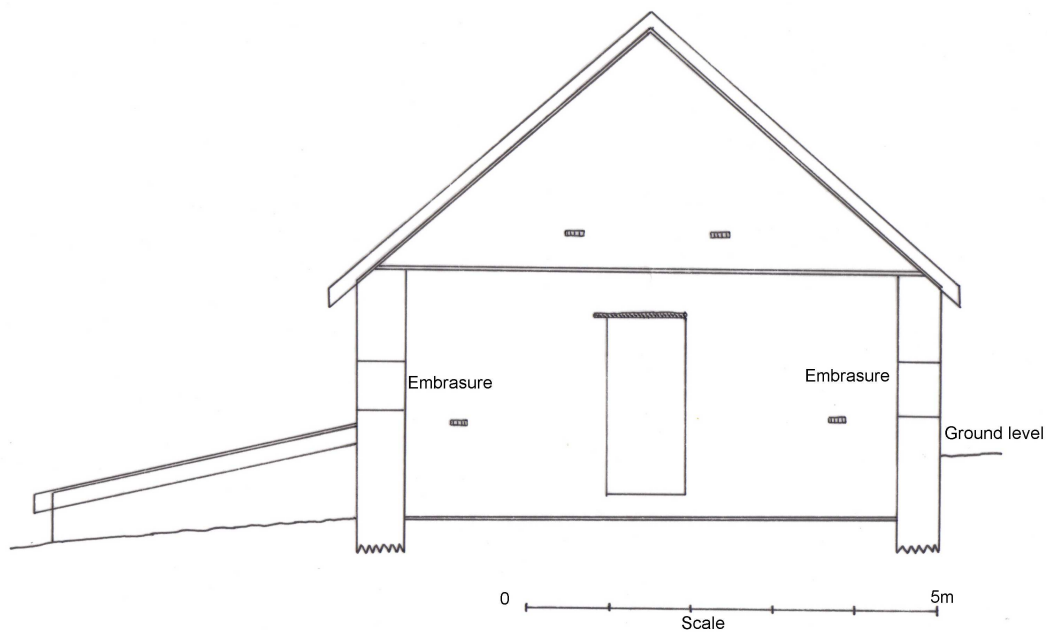


Figure 4.3.16. Sectional elevation of the coach-house showing the interior of the upper-ground level room and loft, facing north.

Another crucial factor in determining the functionality of the coach-house as a defensive structure is the fields of fire offered by its apertures. Since terrain and other structures can affect fields of fire by obstructing them, it is necessary to analyse the structure in question in the context of its original environment (i.e. as it was at the time of its construction).

Figure 4.3.17 shows the fields of fire offered by the Lizard Lodge coach-house in relation to the reconstruction of the homestead site ca 1852.

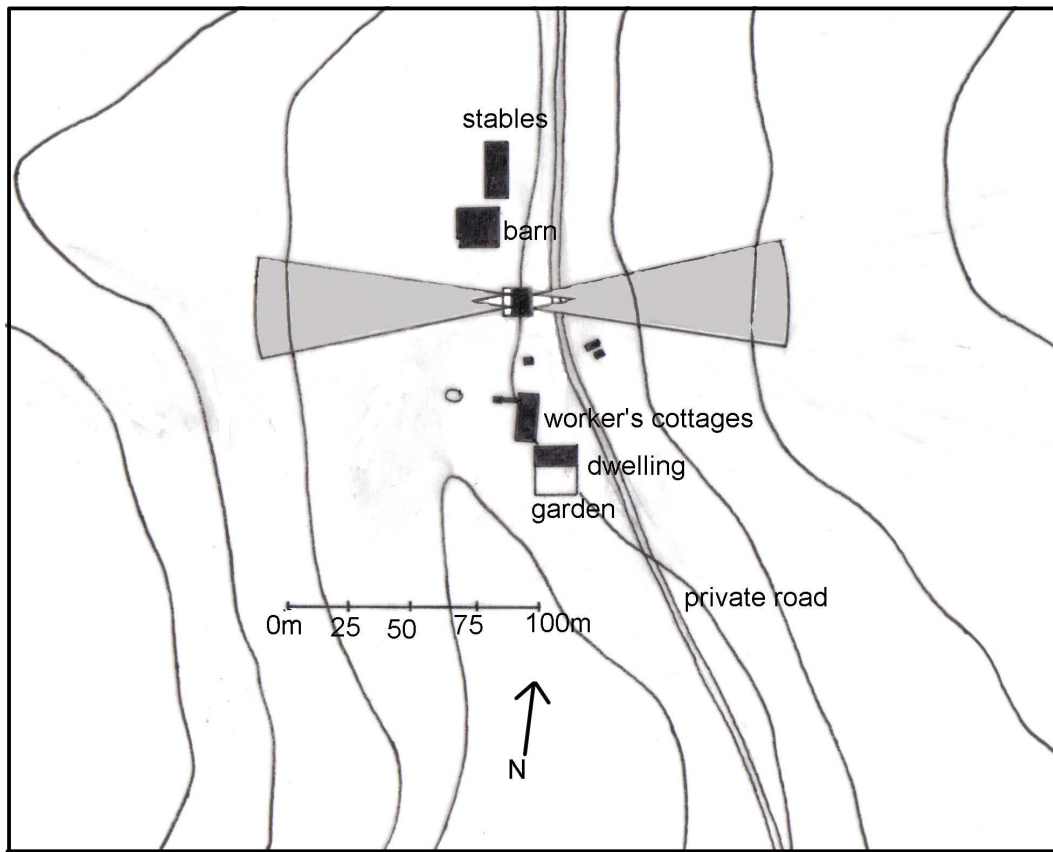


Figure 4.3.17. Reconstruction of Lizard Lodge homestead at the time of the completion of the coach-house (ca 1852). The arcs of fire offered by the coach-house's apertures are shown shaded grey. The arcs have been extended out to 100m, this being the maximum effective range of the type of firearms it is believed would have been used at the time (i.e. Smoothbore longarms).

A different interpretation of the Lizard Lodge coach-house myth, one that denies its having been built for defence can be found in Bell (1997). He deals with the issue of the myth thus:

Much has been made of the tall narrow apertures in the granary walls, Dora Campbell believing the building was “loop-holed as a precaution against

Aboriginals”, but the openings are actually the traditional ventilating apertures used in English granary buildings. They are designed so that bulk grain will not run out of them. The coach-house was built by an English builder who simply applied his normal barn-building skills in a new environment (Bell, 1997: 10).

In the above, Bell refers to the coach-house as the ‘granary’. Bell’s interpretation of this structure as a granary supports his argument against the veracity of the defensive myth by providing a different interpretation of the function of the narrow apertures in its walls. In his 1997 report, Bell refers to the structure under investigation here variously as “the coachhouse”, a “granary” and as having been built like a barn, all within the same paragraph (e.g. Bell, 1997: 10). Although confusingly written, it appears that the point Bell is attempting to make in his interpretation of this structure is that the coach-house is actually a typical English bank barn. He refers to Brunskill’s (1982) *Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain*, explaining his interpretation of the coach-house thus:

Its design is pure English; it is a classic “bank barn”, designed in the English climate to have an internal threshing floor, a granary and animal stalls. At Glenthorne, O’Halloran was most likely already using his Ridley stripper to harvest grain at the time it was built, so it would never have been used for hand threshing, and probably never housed animals either. The two spaces for housing coaches were a modification to the standard design, in place of the animal stalls (Bell, 1997: 10).

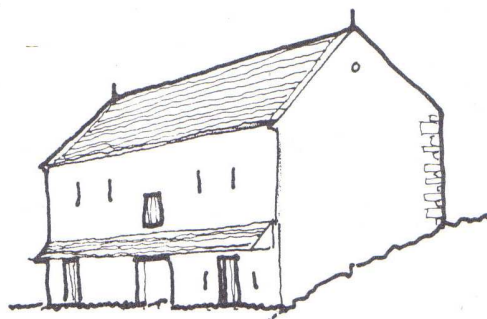


Figure 4.3.19. An English bank barn. From Brunskill (1981: 160).

Perhaps the fact that it has been known as the ‘coach-house’ since the early 20th century refers to only one of its functions. Bell seems to believe that the reason the building is known as the coach-house was because, “the two spaces for housing coaches were a modification to the standard design, in place of the animal stalls” (Bell, 1997: 10). The ‘two spaces’ Bell refers to are those on either side of the basement door, in the skillion (see Figure 4.3.3). Although Bell’s interpretation is plausible, there is actually no evidence for the function of these spaces. They could have housed vehicles, however they could only have housed small vehicles, since they are only about 3.5m long. The upper level, however, would have been very well suited to housing a larger vehicle, such as a carriage or coach. In addition, the double doors on the southern side would have opened out near the road which passed by the coach-house on its eastern side. Once again, however, it must be remembered that there is no actual evidence for where, or if, coaches were actually housed in this building. It is interesting that none of the rate assessments for Lizard Lodge mention a coach-house. A possible explanation for this could be that it was included under ‘out-offices’ or ‘outbuildings’. The latter term only appears in the rate

assessments once, whereas the former appears in all of them (SRSA: MRG36/4/00000). This would mean that at least some parts of the coach-house were actually used as an office.

Bell argues that the coach-house was built to the traditional specifications of an English bank barn. However, prior to the construction of the coach-house, Lizard Lodge already had a large barn. This can be seen in the 1851 drawing of the property which shows the first stages of the construction of the coach-house (Figure 4.3.9). That one of the structures shown in this drawing is the barn can be seen in the fact that this structure was still standing in 1946 when the army recorded it in its list of improvements (National Archives: Series A877, Item CL23893/21). Its position in the drawing also conforms to that of the barn shown on the army plan (Figure 4.3.10). Therefore, there would have been no reason for O'Halloran to build a much smaller bank barn when he already had a large barn.

Although the coach-house *does* appear to be similar in design to a vernacular English bank barn, as illustrated in Brunskill (1981) (Figure 4.3.18), it does display some significant differences which argue against its interpretation as such. As explained above, the function of the apertures in such English granaries is to allow some ventilation, whilst preventing bulk grain from running out (Bell, 1997: 10). The coach-house, on the other hand, has (and always has had) a conventional casement window between the two apertures on its western side (Figures 5.3.3 and 5.3.15). It is argued here that a window in this position would have been highly impractical and would have significantly hampered

the building's function as a granary. This is because if the window was open, grain would fall, or blow, out of it. Also, there are actual ventilation holes built into the northern and southern walls. These are in the form of iron ventilator bricks, with oval holes in them. There are two each in the northern and southern upper ground floor walls and a further two in the northern wall of the loft.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that the coach-house was not designed to function as a granary is the fact that there was an open fireplace in the so-called 'granary' part of the building. This is still in existence, although it has been covered with cladding along with the rest of the wall against which it is built. The chimney for this can be seen in Figure 4.3.19. It can be appreciated that it would have been inviting disaster to have an open fire burning in a room full of dry grain. Furthermore, like the position of the window in the opposite wall, the fireplace is in the middle of what would have been a grain storage bay. This would render both the bay and the fireplace non-functional. However, such a feature *would* be consistent with its use as an office. In fact, the earliest rate assessment for this site, dated to February 1854 (after the coach-house's construction) mentions offices at Lizard Lodge (SRSA, MRG36/4/00000).



Figure 4.3.19. The eastern side of the coach-house, showing the apertures and the chimney.

The coach-house also has a spacious loft. On the southern wall of the loft, above the double doors, is a relatively large casement window (Figure 4.3.20). Today, it is fitted with two three-pane shutters which may or may not be original. Because of its glass-panels and shutters, this window is more like the type normally found in dwellings, not barns or granaries. Access to the loft was through a rectangular hole in the south-east corner of the loft floor. Since there is no evidence of a stairway, it is likely that the loft was accessed via a ladder. Once again, the location of the ladder and loft hole is above what according to Bell would have been one of the grain storage bays. This would have been impractical since, if used to store grain, access to the ladder would have been cut off.



Figure 4.3.20. The south side of the coach-house, showing the double doors and loft window.

All of these factors (the existence and position of the upper ground floor window and fireplace, the loft window and the position of the ladder) constitute strong evidence against the coach-house having been built as a granary. Instead, they impart definite dwelling-like qualities to the building. The open fireplace is perhaps the most compelling piece of evidence for this, since it cannot have served any other function besides

providing warmth for people and/or for cooking. This is not to say that the coach-house was primarily a dwelling. The double doors are evidence that this was not the case. The logical conclusion is that, like the structure in general, the upper ground level was designed to serve a combination of functions. What does seem clear is that the upper ground level of the coach-house was never designed to function as a granary. Thus, the question remains as to what the function of the angled apertures in its walls was. It has been suggested that at some time the coach-house may have provided overnight refuge for travellers between Victor Harbour and Adelaide, although there are no historical sources to support this (Smith, et al, 2005, Vol.4: 22).

From the lower ground level one can descend a flight of stone stairs into what appears to be a cellar. There is evidence that O'Halloran used this as a wine cellar. For example, a journalist for the *The Observer* in 1907 wrote of the place:

I went down to the old wine cellar built by this worthy pioneer (O'Halloran) and found marked chalk vintages as far back as 1856...Major O'Halloran, chalk in hand, placed those hieroglyphics on the main support... (*The Observer*, November 30, 1907).

Remarkably, these markings are still in existence. They take the form of a year followed by a number in hundreds. It is believed that they record grape yields from O'Halloran's vineyard (Smith et al, 2005, Vol.4: 18).

Evidence Supporting the Myth's Veracity

The following are arguments which support the interpretation that the Lizard Lodge coach-house was designed to function, in one of its roles at least, as a defensive structure:

The actual design of the apertures is quite good. They are as narrow as possible on the exterior and substantially wider on the interior. Their exterior narrowness would make the chance of an Aboriginal missile (such as a spear, boomerang or throwing stick) passing through them and striking a defender very remote. In addition, as Figure 4.3.17 shows, their interior width offers a very reasonable field of fire. Their height above the interior floor level (ca 1.2m) is also well suited to firing through. Additionally, they are easily accessible, being located in an open room.

Strategically, the coach-house is well-placed. As Figure 4.3.17 shows, the coach-house is centrally located in relation to the layout of the homestead's other buildings. The benefit of this to the defenders is that no matter where around the homestead complex one is when danger approaches, the coach-house is never far away. For example, it would allow defenders an equal chance of gaining the cover of the coach-house whether they were in the dwelling or the stables. This would be an important factor were an attack to come by surprise, since the defenders would have to race to reach the cover of the coach-house before being caught in the open.

The placing of the coach-house in its central position, and the placing of the apertures, ensured that the fields of fire offered by the apertures were uninterrupted by other

structures (see Figure 4.3.17). This is an important point, since, had the apertures faced onto a structure, their functionality would have been somewhat compromised.

It may be significant that the apertures face the east and west. This is because there is evidence to suspect that these were the most likely directions from which an Aboriginal attack might come. As has been explained above (see 'The Indigenous Inhabitants'), the main Aboriginal track between Adelaide and Encounter Bay ran just west of the property, and there is evidence that there was an Aboriginal campsite in a valley just to the east of the property.

It is significant that there is a conventional window on the western side of the coach-house, between the two apertures, but no window on the eastern side. On the eastern side the only openings are the two apertures. This design may be associated with the structure's defensive role. The exterior ground level on the eastern side of the coach-house is very high, coming up to about half a metre from the base of the apertures on this side (Figures 5.3.16 & 5.3.19). This would allow an attacker to approach right up to the wall. A conventional window in this side would be dangerous for the defenders, since attackers could relatively easily approach it and either throw missiles or enter the building through it. The western wall of the upper ground level, on the other hand, is high above ground level (Figure 4.3.3), owing to the structure having been built into the hillside. On this side it would be far more difficult for an attacker to approach close to the wall, making it safe enough to have a conventional window here which would have been required for light, especially if this room functioned as an office.

The fact that there are apertures on the western side, in addition to the conventional window, could be interpreted as evidence that the apertures were not designed for ventilation. If the building needed ventilation, one could have simply opened the window. A more persuasive piece of evidence against the interpretation of the apertures as ventilation devices is that there are ventilation bricks built into the walls of the building. That fact that the builder had access to these, and used them, would have made it unnecessary for him to employ a much more technically difficult technique to ventilate the room, namely the construction of angled apertures in the walls. In effect, the presence of ventilation bricks would have rendered the ‘ventilation apertures’ superfluous.

The myth associated with this site suggests that the coach-house was designed as a place of refuge for O’Halloran’s wife and children in the event of an Aboriginal attack (as in Dolling, 1981: 323) as one of its functions. The presence of a hearth in the room with the apertures, as well as a loft, would make this section of the coach-house well-adapted for those taking refuge from an attack. The hearth could have been used for warmth and for cooking, and the loft, only accessible via a ladder and trap-door, would provide a good ‘fall-back position’ or safer area for the women and children.

Very close to O’Halloran’s property another building once stood which was also believed to have been fortified against Aboriginal attack. This myth is documented in the same publication as the story of the Lizard Lodge coach-house, namely Dolling’s (1981) *The History of Marion on the Sturt*. In it she writes:

This...was the site known as No. 2 Sheep Station, owned by the South Australian Company. Here for many years, well into the 1930s, stood one of their buildings, its two-storeyed walls complete with gun-slot loop-holes against Aboriginal attack (Dolling, 1981: 213).

This site abutted the southern boundary of O'Halloran's property. This myth is highly significant, because the presence of another fortified building near the coach-house would indicate that there was a higher than average fear of Aboriginal attack in the area. Unfortunately no depictions of this building have been located. Even the exact location of the above-mentioned building is unknown. It is very likely that all visible trace of it was destroyed when Main South Road was widened, the road being six lanes wide in this place. These factors make it impossible to actually investigate the veracity of the particular myth that this building was fortified. However, the significant fact remains that here we have two separate fortified-structure myths based in the same immediate area.

Evidence Opposing the Myth's Veracity

The following is a series of points which could be made as evidence against the interpretation of the Lizard Lodge coach-house as having been designed for defence:

For a structure supposedly designed for the protection of O'Halloran's family from Aboriginal attacks, the coach-house was built quite late. In fact, appears to have been the last major structure built at the homestead in O'Halloran's period of occupation. One

would have thought that the need for protection against Aboriginal resistance would have been greatest in the earliest phase of settlement, when the traditional owners were forced off of their land. Indeed, the two recorded incidences of Aboriginal aggression towards settlers in the area both occurred in the early to mid 1840s (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1843/474; Dolling, 1981: 5 [footnote], 133). The evidence suggests that the coach-house was built around 1851-2, some 12 years after O'Halloran first settled at the site.

In terms of the structure itself, there are no apertures on the northern or southern sides of the building. Assuming that the original doors were not fitted with apertures, this would have reduced the structure's defensive effectiveness in two ways. First, it means that attackers who happened to approach the structure from the north or south could have done so unobserved by the defenders. The second disadvantage is that, although the defender could have partially opened one of the doors on either the north or south sides to look and/or fire through, such an action would have posed a much greater threat to the defender than firing or looking through one of the apertures. The defender could more easily be speared and placed himself/herself at risk of the door being forced open, if the attackers were close by.

There is no record of Aboriginal hostility at Lizard Lodge. There is not even evidence that the Aborigines tried to take sheep or any other property, these being the most common 'offences' committed against settlers at the time. If Aborigines *had* been troublesome on O'Halloran's property, one would expect him to have left some documentary evidence of it in the form of letters, journal entries, etc. Of course, it is also

possible that such evidence once existed but has not survived, but this is merely speculation. Therefore, the lack of evidence of any direct threat to O'Halloran and his family can be seen to obviate against the need for the construction of a defensive structure on the property.

Despite its differences, the coach-house does bear some similarities in design to a traditional English bank barn, as noted by Bell (1997: 10). The Lizard Lodge coach-house is similar to the English bank barn illustrated in Figure 4.3.18, in that it is built into the hillside, has apertures on either side of the upper level window and has a sloping roof extending out over small rooms below.

One further piece of evidence to take into consideration is the fear of attacks by gangs of escaped criminals from Van Diemens Land (Tasmania). These were known at the time as 'Van Demonians', highwaymen or bush rangers. The ruthless and violent reputation of these gangs was well known. At around the time of the construction of the coach-house, or just prior to it, in 1850, the police commissioner reported the arrival in the colony of one such gang. The commissioner was informed that, "[i]mmmediately upon landing, one of them was heard to say with an oath that the colony would soon ring with their doings" (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1850/2261). He went on to write that "[t]he greatest vigilance on the part of the police is ever required to keep such desperadoes in check" (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1850/2261). Assuming O'Halloran was aware of this threat, it would also be reasonable to suggest that this was an alternative motive for the fortification of the coach-

house. Indeed, the ‘Van Demonian fear’ seems to fit in better with the time of the coach-house’s construction than the threat of Aboriginal attack.

Lizard Lodge - Conclusions

After looking at the evidence for, and against, the interpretation of Lizard Lodge coach-house as having been built for defence, it is necessary to come to a conclusion. With this particular structure, the associated myth is quite specific as to the role the structure was to play in the event of a threat. The coach-house was, according to the myth, a place where, “Major O’Halloran’s wife and children sometimes took refuge” (Dolling, 1981: 323). Therefore, in order for the structure to be deemed functional in its defensive role, it must be able to provide a place of refuge for a family to protect them from harm in the event of an Aboriginal attack. As such, to be worthwhile it would need to be a safer, more secure place than any other on the homestead. What it would *not* have to be is a perfectly-designed fort. The fact that the myth specifies that the building was designed to function as a place of refuge for a family is significant because it makes it easier to assess its functionality in a definite context. Bearing this in mind, it appears that the evidence, both archaeological and historical, suggests that the coach-house at Lizard Lodge was indeed designed to be able to function as a place of refuge against the threat of Aboriginal attack. It is not argued that defence was its only intended function, but merely that it was one of its functions.

The dwelling-like features of this so-called ‘granary’ building are not so strange when the structure is interpreted in this manner. The structure’s function as a place of refuge for a

family would explain the presence of a hearth, which would serve to provide warmth or for cooking in the event of a siege. Also, the loft, with its dwelling-like window, would provide a very safe fall-back position.

It has been noted above that due to the lack of embrasures on the coach-house's northern and southern side, it would be vulnerable and 'blind' on these sides. This may not have always been the case, though the reason for it is pure speculation. The doors to the room with the embrasures are later replacements, possibly from the Remount Depot period. It may never be known, but it is conceivable that the original doors may have been fitted with embrasures. There is contemporary evidence that this practice was known and used in South Australia in the form of an original door taken from James Brown's 'Avenue Range' station in the state's South East (Figure 4.1.11).

Whether or not there were ever embrasures on the northern and southern sides of the coach-house is not crucial to the structure's ability to function as a refuge. The building's primary function in the event of a threat would have been to keep the occupants safe from the weapons of the attackers, until the latter left, were driven away, or help arrived. In this, the coach-house, and specifically the upper level, would have been far more suitable than the dwelling or any of the homestead's other structures.

The embrasures in the structure's eastern and western walls have been shown to be eminently functional. They would have afforded the defenders an opportunity to have

some limited (but safe) visibility, as well as allow them to fire upon attackers on those sides of the structure without risk of themselves being hit.

As for the fact that the coach-house was built relatively late in the construction phase of the homestead, there is an explanation for a heightened sense of settler fear in this period, which may have led to its defensive construction. By the time of the coach-house's construction in the 1850s, the situation for the Aborigines was becoming more desperate. Vastly more land had been taken up and fenced off by the settlers than in the early 1840s, causing the Aborigines to lose most of their traditional hunting and gathering grounds. As Figure 4.3.21 shows, by 1850 (just prior to the construction of the coach-house), all of the Kurna people's land had been occupied for pastoral use. Water sources had been commandeered by the settlers for use by their livestock and much of the local fauna had been killed. O'Halloran might have feared that in their desperation the Aborigines who periodically passed by his property might attempt to raid it for food and supplies.

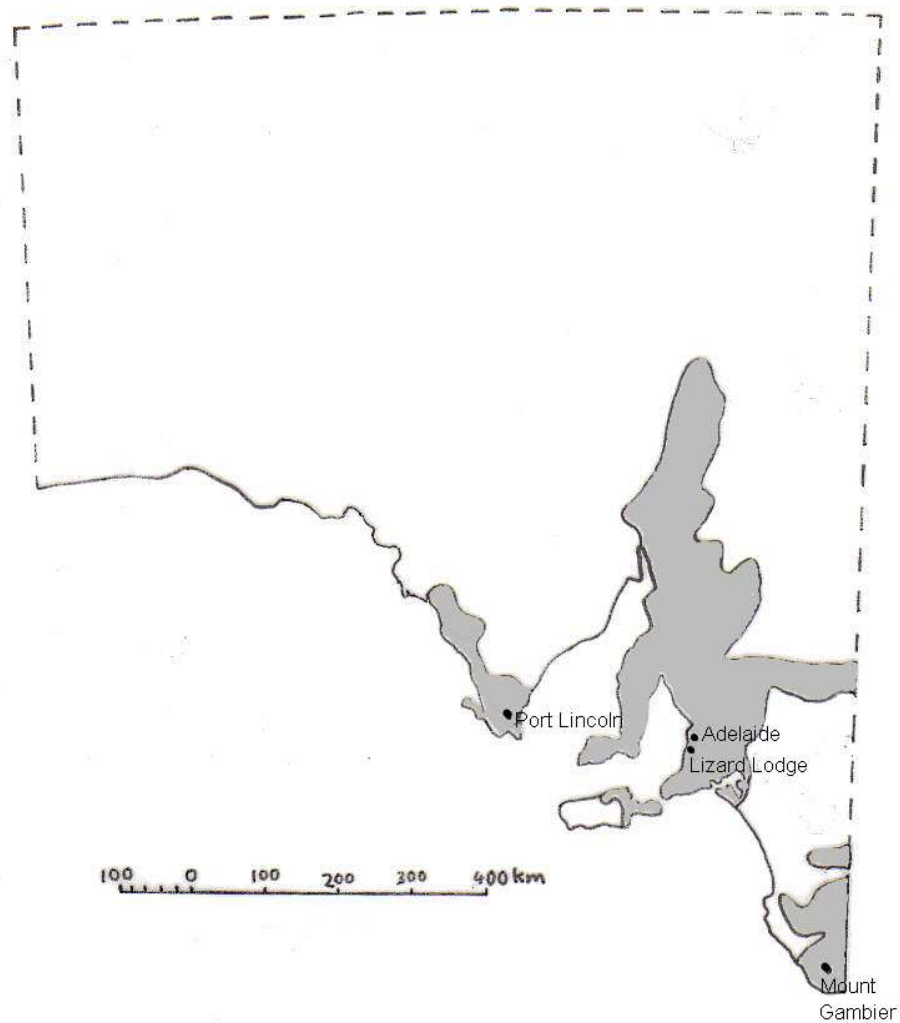


Figure 4.3.21. Land in South Australia occupied for pastoral use by 1850. After Camm, et al.

By the 1850s there was also a very real feeling of alarm amongst settlers at the growing numbers of firearms in Aboriginal possession. This feeling was clearly expressed in a report from a member of the Southern Division of the police which was received by the Colonial Secretary in early 1854 reading:

...in visiting the encampments of the natives he [the reporting police officer] invariably sees firearms in their possession. In some circumstances...there is reason to fear they have been stolen, but whether procured in one way or the other, there is not a tribe without some firearms and the fact of their being generally in possession of them is of so much importance that I would especially bring it to the notice of His Excellency (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1854, letter no. 59/54).

The police man then goes on to explain the threat this poses to the settlers:

So long as the settlers only have firearms they may be able to protect their scattered property and defend their isolated homes, but it in addition to an immense superiority the natives who may be disposed to molest them can bring up an equal if not greater number of firearms, then the chances of the settlers will be small and the temptation to the natives to be mischievous much increased (SRSA, GRG 24/6/1854, letter no. 59/54).

Clearly, then, if O'Halloran either knew about this situation, or observed it first hand, it provides a very reasonable explanation for the construction of his defensive structure at the same time as the above report was made.

Although it is fairly certain that the coach-house's embrasures were never used to fire through (since if O'Halloran had to resort to such measures, such an incident would no doubt have been recorded), there may well have been occasions on which his family felt

the need to take refuge there. For example, O'Halloran may have ordered his family into the coach-house when large groups of Aborigines passed by the property. Unfortunately, it will never be known whether O'Halloran's family ever did seek refuge in this building, as the myth implies. After all, if such a fact was recorded in primary sources there would be no controversy surrounding the defensive role of the coach-house.

Springvale (Katherine, Northern Territory)



Figure 4.4.0. Extant structures of Springvale Station. The store is at left, the dwelling at right. At far right is one of the large raintrees. The dense trees behind the store mark the sloping bank of the Katherine River. Facing north east. 2004.

The Site

Springvale was the site of one of Dr William Brown's pastoral stations in the Northern Territory's 'Top End', established in 1879 and managed by Alfred Giles from 1879-1894 (*Northern Territory Times*, August 2nd, 1879: 3E). The Springvale site contains two surviving 19th century structures and their surrounding landscape. These two structures, a dwelling and a store, both date to Giles' period of occupation and both have myths associated with them relating to their defensive construction.

The Myth

Springvale is unique amongst the sites investigated within this project in that it actually has *two* structures to which a myth of defensive use has been attached: the dwelling and the store.

The earliest reference to the myth that the dwelling was fortified comes in the form of the memoirs of Harold Giles, Alfred Giles' son (Giles, H., nd.: 10). These memoirs were written some time before 1960, which is the year he died (*The Age Newspaper*, Monday 1st January, 1981). Of the dwelling, Harold wrote:

Two port holes one on each side of the back door of the main building near the kitchen were built in case of danger from blacks attacking (NT Archives, Giles, H., nd.: 10).

Harold was raised at Springvale. Having been born in 1890, as a boy he knew the station while it was still functioning in its original capacity. In general, Harold's memoirs appear very reliable. There are no apparent errors regarding dates or happenings and Harold's personal descriptions of Springvale when it was a working pastoral station are quite detailed, showing first-hand knowledge (Giles, H., nd.: 12). This is highly significant, as it constitutes the closest piece of primary evidence for civilian use of defensive architecture yet found in relation to any of the sites studied.

The myth of the fortified dwelling was re-published in *The Age* Newspaper in 1981 (*The Age*, Monday 1st January, 1981). The context in which the myths appeared was an article about Harold Giles' memoirs and the fact that his son was planning to donate them to the Northern Territory Archives Service (*The Age*, Monday 1st January, 1981). According to *The Age*:

Harold Giles...grew up in an era when outright guerrilla warfare between blacks and white settlers who came to take their land had only just died down. His birthplace, Springvale Homestead, was built with two portholes "in case of danger from blacks attacking". Giles wrote that travellers would put up a mosquito net at night, but sleep somewhere else. Next morning, the net would often be found pierced by spears (*The Age* Newspaper, Monday 1st January, 1981).

The belief that the dwelling contains defensive architectural elements was most recently continued in a conservation plan, which quoted Harold's memoirs regarding the purpose of the dwelling's "port holes" (The Architects Studio, 2000: 5).

An interpretation of the store as a defensive structure first appears in Norris' *Australia's Heritage Sketchbook*, published in 1976 (Norris, 1976). This book comprises a collection of drawings of 19th century Australian buildings. Each illustration is accompanied by a brief history of the site. The sites selected for inclusion in the book are from all over Australia and appear to have been chosen purely for their aesthetic qualities. The

following is an excerpt from the section on Springvale. In it, the store is mistakenly referred to as a barn:

Behind the building [i.e. the dwelling]...stands an unusual barn overlooking the steep river bank. Old-timers recall that bush surrounding the building was kept well cleared, right down to the water, and closer inspection of the building suggests why. The second floor has a series of slit windows right around the walls, facing in all directions; the apertures widen on the inside. Holes on the inside walls indicate that beams once supported a floor just the right height to allow rifles to be fired through the apertures. The height and position of the barn command excellent views of all approaches. The logical conclusion is that this was a fortified barn, stocked ready against possible Aboriginal attacks (Norris, 1976: 78).

The above does not at first glance appear to be a repetition of a local story about the store's defensive function. Rather, it appears that the author is putting forth *her* interpretation of the function of the angled apertures in its upper walls. However, there is a hint that she had heard a local story about it having been fortified when she writes that, "Old-timers recall that the bush surrounding the building was kept well cleared, right down to the water" (Norris, 1976: 78). The myth above takes this to mean that the bush was cleared to keep a clear field of fire from the store's embrasures. It is not recorded which particular 'old-timers' recalled this practice, however. It is possible that someone who was ten years old in 1890 would be able personally to recall such a fact (though

whether the practice of clearing the vegetation would have been continued this late is open to question), although it is more likely that said ‘old-timers’ knew of it as a result of oral history, perhaps related to them by the previous generation/s, had they lived in the area in the period. The other possibility is that the ‘old timers’ had seen the photograph showing this practice of clearing vegetation (Figure 4.4.9).

What *is* known, however, is that by 1980 the store was popularly known as the ‘Old Fort’ (e.g. Allom, 1980). This can be seen in a report to the National Trust of Australia (N.T. branch) on the building’s potential for restoration. Here it is exclusively referred to as the ‘Old Fort’ or ‘The Fort’ (e.g. Allom, 1980: 1.0). This can either mean that it was actually believed to have been designed as a fort, or that it was so-named purely on account of its fort-like qualities.

Location

The site of Springvale station lies some 360km south of Darwin, on the north bank of the Katherine River and west of the town of Katherine. The two remaining structures of the late 19th century pastoral station currently stand on land which is part of a caravan park owned by Katherine tourist operator Travel North.

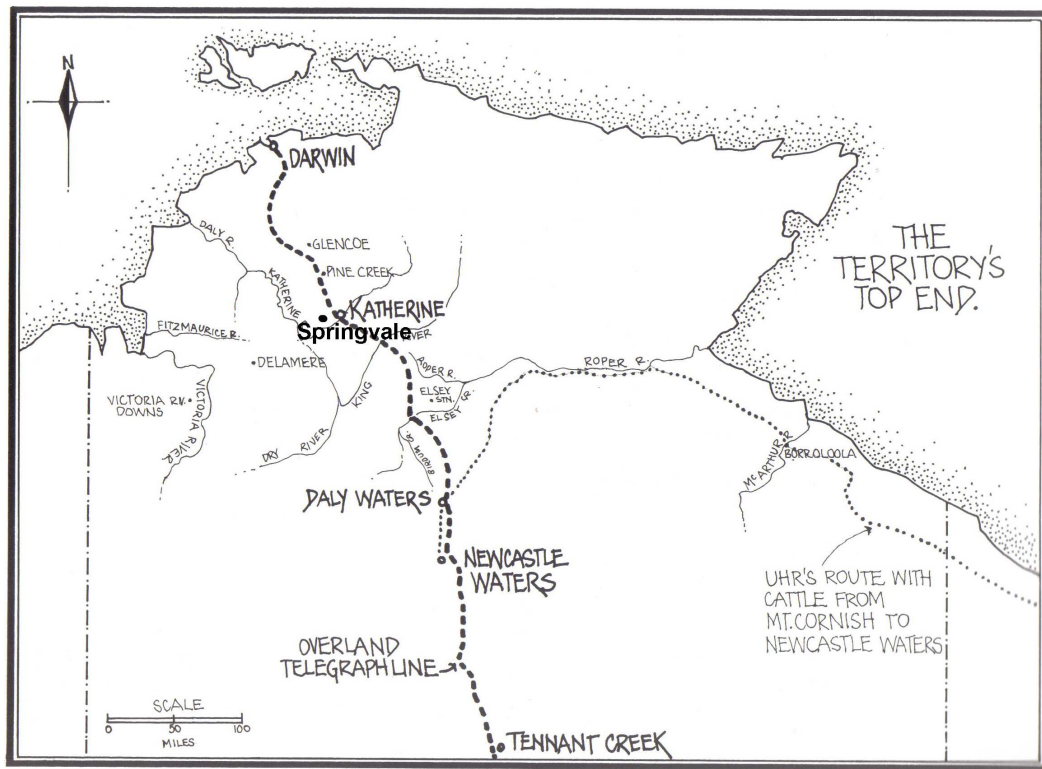


Figure 4.4.1. Map of the Northern Territory's 'Top End' showing the location of Springvale. After Forrest, 1981: 40.

The Dwelling



Figure 4.4.3. The northern side of the dwelling, 2005.

The dwelling is a low-set, single storey building of two linked sections. The larger section is to the east and consists of a kitchen and two larger rooms. It faces the river, and has an open verandah on its eastern side, and an enclosed verandah to its west. The smaller section contains two rooms and is attached to the enclosed western verandah. Each section of the building has a steeply pitched gable roof. The walls are made of coarse, squared stone finished with lime plaster on the interior. The floors are concrete slabs laid on the ground, with a variety of applied finishes. The roof is sheeted with corrugated asbestos-cement, and corrugated galvanized steel with machine-sawn hardwood framing, indicating that the roof is a later replacement. The ceilings are sheeted with asbestos-cement, including the western verandah roof soffit (Allom, 1984: 11).

On either side of the door that was the back of the dwelling (i.e. the northern side), is a round aperture, lined with metal and built into the stonework, with a diameter of 25cm. In recent times the exterior of these two holes has been covered with flywire. There is also a square aperture built into the stonework above and to the western side of this door, with a width of approximately 25cm. These features are original to the dwelling since they can be seen in early depictions (e.g. Figures 5.4.7 & 5.4.11). These features, particularly the two round apertures, will be described and discussed in detail below, since they are directly associated with the site's fortification myth.



Figure 4.4.4. Interior (left) and exterior (right) of the northern door of the dwelling, showing the apertures built into the stonework.

The stone walls are in a generally intact and complete condition, including evidence of construction technique and early finishes now covered by recently applied paint. Hewn

timber plates are visible along the top of the eastern wall, which show evidence of the position and form of original hewn ceiling joists in the housings and other joints cut into them. The kitchen fireplace retains evidence of its use as an open cooking fireplace, before the installation of the present enamelled iron woodstove. Other similar elements of original fabric, not seen during the present inspection, may well survive in the house (Allom, 1984: 11).

However, substantial alterations have been made to the following elements of the fabric of the house. Therefore, it is important to separate these from the original fabric. The sawn hardwood roof framing and modern roof sheeting are recent replacements. The asbestos-cement ceilings with their cover battens and trim are modern replacements. The timber lintels over door and window openings have been replaced with machine-sawn timber, and the cracked masonry above them repaired with cement mortar. All window and door frames, doors and window sashes are modern. All concrete slab floors appear to be modern. The eastern verandah roof, on sawn framing and steel pipe columns, is modern. The western verandah, with sawn framing, corrugated galvanized steel roof sheeting, tongue and groove boarded cladding and flywire enclosure is modern. The stone flagged verandah floors, laid in cement mortar, may also be modern, although this could not be determined with certainty from the information available (Allom, 1984: 12).

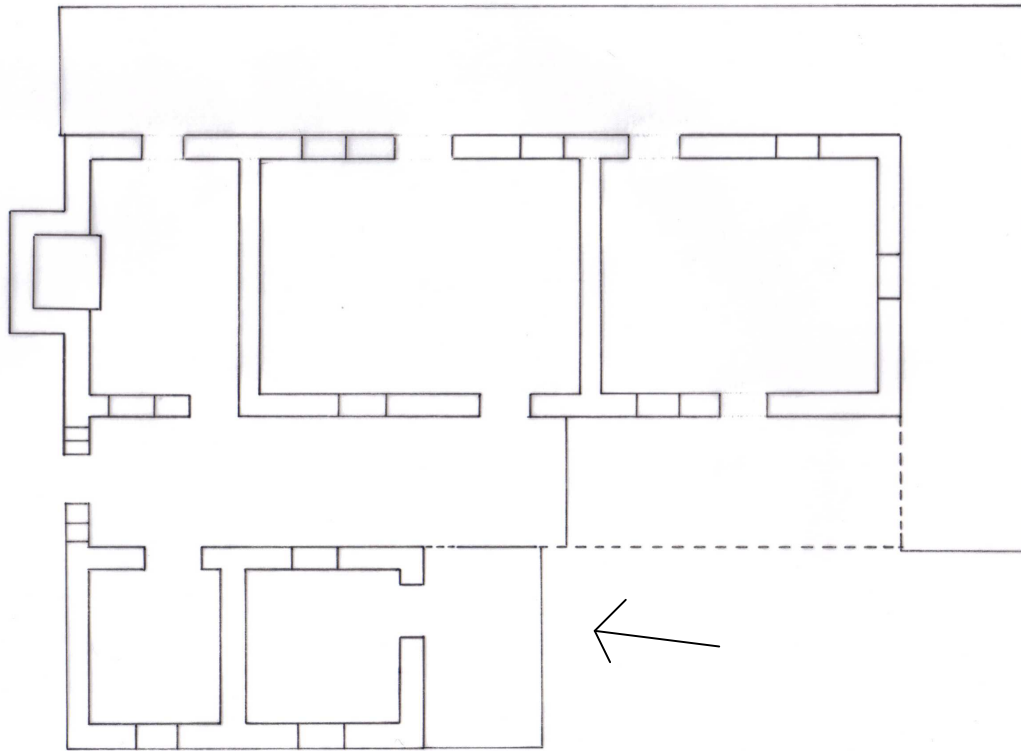


Figure 4.4.5. Plan of the dwelling showing original layout. Scale 1:100.

The Store



Figure 4.4.6. Photograph of the western side of the store building.

The store is located to the rear of the dwelling, which was the standard location for a store in Australian homestead layouts (Cox and Stacey, 1972: 11). Although the current stone store was a later construction, it was located immediately beside the original store. The original store (made of wood) was probably built very early on, perhaps even before construction of the dwelling was completed.

The store is a small stone walled structure without partitions or dividing walls, now [in 1984] unroofed and without timber roof or floor framing. The raking tops of the end walls show that the roof was of gable form. There are signs that a fire in the building may have been the cause of its dereliction, but this cannot be stated

with certainty. A horizontal line of housings apparently built to receive timber joists in the inside surfaces of the masonry walls at a height of about 2.5m, and the existence of lime plaster on the walls below this line, suggests the store was built with an upper floor attic level (The Architects Studio, 2000: 12).

In addition to this, a narrow ledge built into the northern side of the wall on the interior, level with the top of the housings was probably designed for the floorboards to rest on. There is also a doorway in the southern side at the same level with the remains of a pulley system above it. Documentary evidence in the form of photographs and entries in the station diaries confirms that the store was gable roofed and had a loft (e.g. Giles, 1879-1894: Entries for 28/5/1885, 18/7/1885).

The Architects Studio's conservation plan (2000), in line with the Allom report (1980) only *suggest* that it was designed as a store (The Architects Studio, 2000: 12). They also give no credence to the belief that its angled apertures were designed to function as embrasures, as the following excerpt shows:

The general form and construction of the building, to the extent that it survives, including the ventilation slots in the walls and the projecting timber housing beam and opening in the upper gable at the southern end, appears consistent with its having been designed as a store. Evidence remains of a timber-framed lean-to extension having been attached to the northern end of the building (The Architects Studio, 2000: 12).

In the above, the apertures are interpreted as ventilation slots. The ‘projecting timber housing beam’ mentioned in the above excerpt is actually for a pulley. Such a feature was commonly found in stores and warehouses, since they were used to haul large and heavy loads up to the upper level. That this building *was* designed as a store is confirmed in the documentary evidence:

Tuesday 16th December, 1884: ...self & Blacks clearing up thatch hut ready for building new store (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 16/12/1884).

Wednesday 31st December, 1884: Ewart and Winn carting stone for new store (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 31/12/1884).

Thursday 28th May, 1885: Gilmore getting iron ready for roof of store. Mason finished one gable end (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 28/5/1885).

In a report made to the National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory) in 1980 the ‘Old Fort’ was described thus:

The Old Fort building is in fair condition. It has suffered the effects of a fire some years ago and little evidence of timber roof and [loft?] floor remains. Stonework is generally straight and true, although some collapse about the gable ends and over openings has taken place. Some cracking due to minor structural movement is evident. Mortar is soft and lime based, and has little inherent strength. This

strength may indeed have been further reduced following the above-mentioned fire (Allom, 1980: 3.0).

Close inspection of the different mortar types and finish to the stone work at the building, reveals that the Old Fort had been modified over the years, or perhaps even been extended by the addition of an extra level (Allom, 1980: 5.1).

Actually, documentary evidence in the form of photographs and the station diaries show that the building has always been two-storey. For example, the station diary entry for Saturday 20th June, 1885 read:

Gilmore at flooring loft (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 20/6/1885).

When Allom inspected the structure in 1980, he noted that some evidence of the original timber loft floor and roof framing existed in the form of charred stubs set into the stone walls (Allom, 1980: 5.1). However, when fieldwork was carried out at this site as part of this research in 2004, no charred stubs remained in the loft floor housings. Such stubs *were*, however, found in the smaller housings which extend around the walls at about 1m from the ground. These appear to be evidence of a shelf which ran around the walls of the store's ground level at this height. Local historian Marion Townsend remarked that such shelves would have been at just the right height for a person carrying a heavy load over his/her shoulder to heave it onto the shelf without having to lift it (Townsend, pers. comm., 2004). This ties in with the building's use as a store.

Allom (1980: 5.1) suggested that clues as to the original roof construction might reasonably be found at the dwelling building. However, it would appear that the roof of this building has been reconstructed relatively recently and little evidence of the original framing remains. Other obvious physical evidence at the site indicates that a timber structure (probably a roof) was attached to the building along the northern wall. Some further evidence of the original structure may be found below present ground level as footings or paving. Allom also believed that the total remaining physical evidence was insufficient to enable a full restoration of missing elements in the Old Fort building (Allom, 1980:5.1).

On the contrary, by studying the material remains of the building, as well as the documentary evidence, it *is* possible to reconstruct nearly all of the missing elements in outline. The upper timber joist housings and ledge show the height and construction method of the loft floor, just as the smaller housings around the ground floor give clues as to the height and construction method of the shelves. As for the ground floor the station diary entry for Saturday 20th June 1885 read:

Gash came in having finished raising sufficient flags for paving floor of new store... (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 28/5/1885).

This tells us that the store was originally floored with flagstones. If any of these remain they were not visible at the time of investigation, however excavation of the floor area may uncover the remains of this floor. The building's gable roof was originally roofed

with iron (most probably corrugated) as the station diary entry for Thursday 28th May 1885 read:

Gilmore getting iron ready for roof of store. Mason finished one gable end (Giles, 1879-1894).

It is also known that the three doors of the store (the two ground floor ones and the loft one) were single doors. This can also be seen in the station diaries, for example:

Friday 3rd April 1885 – Self finished making door frame for loft of store (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 3/4/1885).

Thursday 9th July 1885 - ...Gilmore hung one door (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 9/7/1885).

Tuesday 14th July 1885 – Gilmore hung the front door (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 14/7/1885).

The four housings visible on the exterior of the northern wall did in fact support a skillion-roofed lean-to made of wood. This can be seen in early depictions, although its construction is not recorded in the station diaries.



Figure 4.4.7. Alfred Giles and family in front of Springvale Homestead ca 1894. Note the lean-to attached to the store. Courtesy of the Northern Territory Library.

Other Cultural Modifications of the Landscape

There are four large rain trees which form a rough square near the dwelling, an old boob tree, and a clearing into which the dwelling and store face. The rain trees are said to have been planted by Giles' wife after the birth of their four children in 1885, 1888, 1890 and 1893 respectively (Townsend, nd.: The Homestead: Part 1). These trees marked the corners of the homestead's garden which grew all manner of fruit and vegetables (Forrest, 1985: 45). This garden was renowned for supplying many travellers with fresh fruit and vegetables and represented a lush oasis to weary travellers (Forrest, 1985: 45). The garden was irrigated by one of the three freshwater mound springs in the vicinity. These springs provided an excellent water source for the settlers and no doubt for the Indigenous people before them. It was after these springs that the station was named. The

old boab tree which grows near the structures is also believed to date from the 19th century and a billabong just south of the homestead was also there in Giles' time.

The clearing is another feature of the landscape which is associated with Springvale in the 19th century. This area, on the north side of the dwelling, appears to have always been kept as a flat open area. This can be seen in the 1883 photograph (Figure 4.4.9), the 1894 photograph (Figure 4.4.7) and an 1886-1889 sketch of the homestead viewed from the north (Figure 4.4.11). This area does not appear to have been cultivated but rather was kept clear for some other reason.

Site History

Springvale station was established in mid 1879 by South Australian investor, Dr William Browne (Giles, nd.:136; Forrest, 1985:3). The large party that travelled up through the centre of Australia, from Adelaide to the banks of the Katherine River, was led by Alfred Giles, appointed by Dr Browne as the manager of the Station. Alfred Giles was already somewhat of a veteran of the Northern Territory frontier. He was a member of the party who surveyed the route of the Adelaide to Darwin telegraph line in 1870-71 (Giles, 1995 [1926]), as well as having been employed driving livestock along the route to supply the telegraph stations with fresh meat and other supplies (Giles, nd).

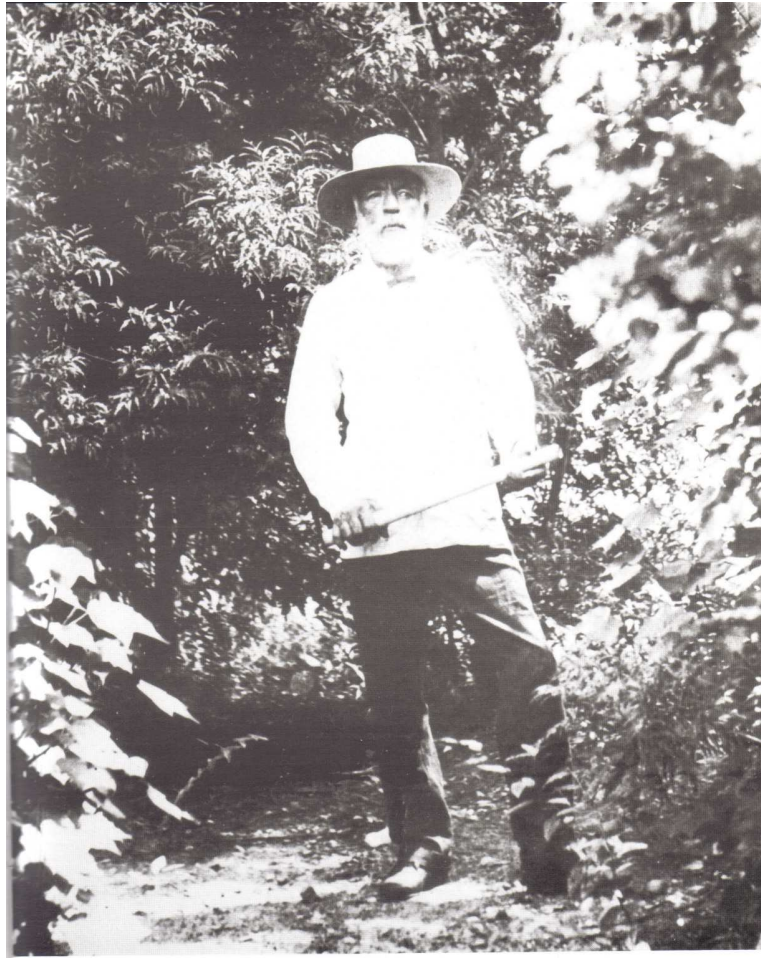


Figure 4.4.8. Alfred Giles. From Forrest, 1985: 51.

The story of the expedition to establish Springvale station as recorded by Giles is regularly presented as an epic of Australian pioneering (e.g. as in Forrest, 1985, and Townsend, nd.). However, this journey will be discussed in more detail later, as it is most useful for an insight into the character and background of Springvale's manager at the time of the construction of the structures under investigation here. Springvale was actually used as a sort of 'springboard' from which Browne established two other stations: Delamere in the Victoria River district and Newcastle Waters, located about mid way between Tennant Creek and Katherine (Forrest, 1985: 39-43).

The first of the two extant buildings at Springvale to be constructed was the dwelling. The mason was a man named Fred Stone, who was a member of the expedition (Giles, nd.). Construction of the dwelling was completed in late 1879 (Giles, nd). However, an entry in the station diary for Thursday 11th December 1884 reads:

...Hughes pulling down the old thatched hut first building erected on Springvale.
Afraid it would fall daily (Giles, 1879-1894).

This appears to be the only textual reference to this earlier dwelling. It is not surprising to find that Giles and his party would have required somewhere to live while they built the stone dwelling and the other necessary infrastructure for the station. However, the reference above tells us little about the form of this building, other than that it was a “thatched hut”. The answer can be found in a close study of the early photographic evidence. There exists a very early photograph of Springvale (dated 1883) which shows the station viewed from across the Katherine River, opposite the homestead (Figure 4.4.9). This photograph is rather unclear, but it does show a structure on the site of the later store. This ties in with another station diary entry dated to Tuesday 16th December 1884 that read:

...Self and Blacks clearing up thatch hut ready for building new store (Giles, 1879-1894).



Figure 4.4.9. The earliest known photograph of Springvale, dated 1883, taken from across the Katherine River. The hut can be seen top centre. Courtesy of the Northern Territory Library.

This suggests that the structure visible in the photograph is the old thatched hut, shortly before its demolition. The structure in the photograph is curious because it appears to have a tall, conical roof, supported by posts, which spread out to serve as a verandah as well – more akin to an Indonesian or African hut than a European one. However, a photograph of the Newcastle Waters homestead clearly shows just such a hut (Figure 4.4.10). This latter photograph shows many details of the construction of what appears to be a definite ‘type’ of pioneer dwelling. Further research into this area may determine whether such huts were common to this region or perhaps other regions in Australia, or whether they were introduced by Giles himself. As Newcastle Waters was established after Springvale, and also under Giles’ supervision (Forrest, 1985: 43), it is possible that

he suggested the design of these huts, though how he was inspired to build them like this is unknown.

Another early building which survived until at least 1894 can be seen in the 1883 photograph (Figure 4.4.9 and Figure 4.4.7). This may be the old store which is referred to regularly in the station diary before and during the construction of the new store. This structure was made out of wood with a gable roof, the eastern side of which is visible in the 1883 photograph. The fact that it appears to have been built early on, and that it was placed close by the hut, is further evidence that it was a store. The construction of a secure place to store the station's provisions would have been a high priority. Also, by placing the store close to the dwelling it would have been easier to guard, as well as convenient.



Figure 4.4.10. The hut at Newcastle Waters homestead. Note the similarities in form between it and the structure visible in Figure 4.4.10. Courtesy of the Northern Territory Library.

Construction of the stone store which stands today commenced in January 1885 and was completed by July of the same year (Giles, 1879-1894: Entries for 26/1/1885, 16/7/1885). The mason was a man named George Gash.

Other structures known to have been at Springvale at the time of the store's construction are a cart shed, blacksmith shop, groom's rooms, stable, shoeing yard and loosebox. We know of these structures because they were destroyed in a fire which swept through the shed-line in September 1885, shortly after the store was completed (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 1/9/1885. The station diary for the day of the fire tells us that these structures were part of a line of sheds, the burnt portion of which was over 120 feet long. The old store and blacksmith's shop were saved and it is likely that it is these buildings that can be seen in the later photograph, next to the new store (Figure 4.4.7). There was also a men's hut and beef house across the flat to the west on a limestone rise (Giles, H., nd: 12). There may have been more structures around the homestead, although no information about them is available.

Springvale was originally established as a sheep and cattle station, however cattle were to prove more successful (*NT Times*, June 1882). Springvale was never a particularly successful station. The goldfields and Asian markets were not as great as expected and the sheep did not produce good wool. Furthermore, Aborigines and dingoes killed the sheep and scattered them and in 1881 Redwater Fever broke out amongst the cattle and hundreds died (The Architects Studio, 2000: 6).



Figure 4.4.11. Pencil and ink sketch of Springvale, 1886-1889. It shows the dwelling and store as well as other outbuildings now demolished and some of the 19th century fence lines. (Courtesy of the National Library of Australia).

Dr Browne advertised Springvale for sale in August 1887. No interest was shown in the property and the station was all but abandoned, however Giles and his family continued to live there until 1896 (The Architects Studio, 2000: 7).

The Indigenous Inhabitants

According to Horton's map of Aboriginal language groups, Springvale is located on the traditional lands of the Jawoyn people (Horton, 2000). The other main language group near Springvale are the Wardaman (Horton, 2000). Aboriginal people were still living traditionally in the Springvale region well into the 20th century. For example, there is a photograph showing what may be a hunting party of Aboriginal people on the road to Springvale ca 1925 (Figure 4.4.12). By 'traditionally', it is meant that they were living in

much the same way as they were prior to the arrival of the Europeans, for example, leading a hunter-gatherer lifestyle and living in traditional social units.



Figure 4.4.12. Aborigines on the road to Springvale ca 1925. Courtesy of the Northern Territory Library.

The station diary shows that groups of local Aborigines were used at Springvale as manual labourers (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 26/1/1884). These workers were evidently paid in flour, tobacco and matches (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 25/12/1886). The kind of jobs they were given included cutting down trees, clearing vegetation, charcoal burning and generally cleaning up (Giles, 1879-1894: Entries for 26/1/1884, 28/3/1884, 2/5/1884, 9/7/1884).

Giles also had in his employ several personal helpers ('blackboys' or 'working boys', as they were commonly known at the time). Sometimes these people are named, although only by acquired European names and they are most often simply referred to as

‘blackboy’ (e.g. Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 6/3/1884). These were usually not ‘boys’ as such at all, but young men. By referring to them as ‘boys’, however, the Europeans reinforced their perceived superiority over them. The activities of the Aboriginal workers at Springvale can also be seen in the station diary. In exchange for giving up their traditional ways, they were entrusted with a horse and probably paid better than the casual Aboriginal labourers. However their payment was still probably in the form of goods rather than cash, as it was unusual for such Aboriginal workers to be paid in cash at this time (Rowse, 1998: 170-2). The Springvale Aboriginal workers were engaged as guides, couriers, and stockmen. One of their most common jobs seems to have been finding and bringing in stray beasts, such as horses and cattle (Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 21/1/1884).

This kind of Aboriginal/settler interaction appears on the surface to have been perfectly peaceful, however there is evidence that this was not necessarily the case. For example, the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* (*NT Times*) reported an attack on two European men on the Daly River by a tribe who were “supposed to be civilised” (*NT Times*, June 10, 1882: 2D). The same paper also carried a report of the spearing of a white station worker at another station by “..a blackfellow, well known about the station...” (*NT Times*, November 4, 1882: 4A). Furthermore, it was mentioned in the report that the Aborigines around the station had lately been causing a deal of trouble for the settlers, in the form of thefts and destruction of property (*NT Times*, November 4, 1882: 4A). A further reason for the settlers to distrust apparently friendly Aborigines in this case was provided by the fact that it was presumed that one of the Aboriginal station

workers intentionally led the white man into an ambush (*NT Times*, November 4, 1882: 4A). What this kind of information tells us is that there must have been a constant underlying racial tension and mistrust between settlers and the Aboriginal people who lived and worked on their stations. There is actually primary evidence that Alfred Giles and his wife did not trust the Aborigines around the homestead. This comes in the form of Harold Giles' memoirs, wherein he stated that his "mother and father never allowed the blacks to nurse or carry we children" (Giles, H., nd: 12).

Although not necessarily directed against the Europeans, there is primary evidence of Aborigines using violence around Springvale. For example, Harold Giles recalled the following incidents from the late 1890s:

...there was a police boy named Mahdi from Katherine Police on walk-a-bout. Mahdi used to carry a long sharp butchers knife. A few days after one of the Springvale garden boys was missing, none of the blacks let on as to where he was, then a day or so later my father was driving across the River at the Springvale Crossing on the way to Katherine and he smelt something very strong and he saw something washed up against the drift wood – it was the body of the garden boy – then the blacks told my father it was Mahdi who had killed him. Later there was another black boy killed and finally another named Tommy was badly cut across the upper leg (Giles, H., nd: 16).

With such ruthless characters about it is easy to understand why Giles would have felt concerned about the safety of his family, let alone his property. Furthermore, the fact that Mahdi, was a ‘police boy’ would have been even more disconcerting. One of Giles’ own outstation managers, William Sidney Scott, was ambushed and killed by Aborigines. This incident was related by Harold Giles in his memoirs, though he did not give a date for it (Giles, H., nd: 13).

Alfred Giles himself had a significant history of conflict with Northern Territory Aboriginal people, arising from his expeditions both to survey the overland telegraph line in 1870-71, and during his expeditions to supply these stations and to establish Springvale. His own writings record no less than 14 separate frontier conflict incidences involving the Aborigines (e.g. Giles, 1926[1995]: 59-60, 97-99, 110-112, 144-145, 150, and Giles, nd: 22, 24, 35-36, 39, 106). This is a significant number by any standards and it follows that such experiences would have had a significant influence on the way Giles regarded the Aborigines in general. That he considered them ‘treacherous’ and ‘savage’ can often be seen in his writings (E.g. Giles, 1926[1995]: 98; Giles, nd: 36).

Prior to the construction of the store (as well as afterwards), Aborigines raided Springvale’s stock and horses. In *The First Pastoral Settlement in the Northern Territory*, Giles wrote:

In September 1880 a Heifer was brought in with a barbed spear sticking in her back. This was the first instance of cattle spearing we had noticed but

we had many cases subsequently as well as horse spearing (Giles, nd.: 155).

A study of *The Northern Territory Times and Gazette* (*NT Times*), a newspaper Giles would have read, shows the conflict that was occurring while construction was underway at the homestead, as well as settler's attitudes towards the Aborigines. The first reported attack upon a settler after the establishment of Springvale (mid 1879) appeared in the above newspaper on March 20, 1880. This was the killing of a Mr Holmes, who lived in a remote location at Collett's Creek, and had no neighbours besides a few Chinese who had a market garden nearby. Holmes was struck down in a surprise attack as he stepped out of his house (*NT Times*, March 20, 1880: 2C). No suggestion was made for the motive for the attack, the subsequent inquest returning the verdict of "Murdered by natives, names unknown" (*NT Times*, March 20, 1880: 2C). Significantly, however, the dwelling was described as not having "the appearance of having been ransacked" (*NT Times*, March 20, 1880: 2C). This suggests that the motive for the attack was not plunder, and therefore probably something deeper. It may have been sexually motivated, since for four or five weeks prior to his being killed, Holmes had had a young Aboriginal woman or girl in his house, as well as her mother and a boy (*NT Times*, March 20, 1880: 2C).

In June 1882, the *NT Times* carried three articles on frontier conflict. One was a report of an attack on a dray escorted by four Chinese by Aborigines, on the road between Katherine and Darwin. All four were believed to have been killed (*NT Times*, June 10, 1882: 2E). Beside this was an article entitled "The Late Outrage by Blacks" (*NT Times*,

June 10, 1882: 2C-D). This alarmist article questioned whether it was safe for either Europeans or Chinese to travel over the country roads (*NT Times*, June 10, 1882: 2C). It also decried the current legal system with regards to Aboriginal offenders and called instead for what would in effect be punitive massacres, by “giving them a lesson which they will not be likely to forget” (*NT Times*, June 10, 1882: 2D). The third article reported that a party of Aborigines had surrounded a house occupied by a Mrs Clarke and her little boy at Collett’s Creek. Mrs Clarke, however, managed to drive the Aborigines away by firing at them with a revolver (*NT Times*, June 10, 1882: 2E).

The following month’s paper carried the report of the killing of settler Duncan Campbell and his two Queensland Aboriginal helpers, while they were searching for lost cattle (*NT Times*, July 22, 1882: 3A). Beside the above report, the contents of a telegram was published which came from the station at which Campbell worked, though dating to after the killing. It reported that a drover’s party had “been attacked by a large mob and were compelled to open fire on them” (*NT Times*, July 22, 1882: 3A). The drovers had great difficulty repulsing the Aboriginal attackers, who were described as being “very determined” (*NT Times*, July 22, 1882: 3A). A Queensland Aboriginal named Paddy was later found in possession of Campbell’s rifle and brought before Giles himself at Springvale, since he was the local Justice of the Peace. Giles had Paddy committed for trial for wilful murder (*NT Times*, September 16, 1882: 3D).

In July of the following year an incident occurred which must have made Giles feel particularly insecure. Two Queensland Aborigines in the employ of a waggoner

absconded with two horses not far from Springvale. The tracks of the horses were seen going in the direction of the Katherine River (upon which Springvale is located) before disappearing into an almost impassable gorge (*NT Times*, July 7, 1883: 2E). This would have been Nitmiluk (Katherine) Gorge, east of Springvale. One of the Aborigines was an ex-Queensland trooper and consequently “more dangerous than a hundred ‘myalls’ [‘wild Aborigines’]” (*NT Times*, July 7, 1883: 2E). Both were also well armed (*NT Times*, July 7, 1883: 2E).

Less than two months later, in September 1883 the *NT Times* reported an Aboriginal night attack on a camp of waggoners working for the telegraph department. One European man was killed before the Aborigines were driven away by gunfire (*NT Times*, September 1, 1883: 3C & September 8, 1883: 3E). Once again, the object of the attack was evidently something more than plunder, as the Aborigines did not attempt to interfere with the wagons (*NT Times*, September 8, 1883: 3E).

The above evidence shows that Aboriginal versus settler violence was ever-present in the Northern Territory during Giles’ time there, and would erupt with a spontaneity that must have made settlers feel quite insecure and untrusting of the local Aboriginal people. The news of such events, as reported in the newspapers and presumably passed on via the ‘bush telegraph’ (news passed on by word of mouth), could be seen to have provided evidence for any settler to take extra precautions. With Giles, however, one has the added motive of personal experience of conflict with the Aborigines.

Results and Interpretation

Fieldwork was carried out at Springvale between the 22nd and 27th October 2004. As with all of the sites investigated within this project, this involved recording all of the physical attributes of the site which may have had an influence on the functionality of the store and dwelling as defensive structures. This recording was accomplished by means of photographs, measured drawings consisting of plans, sections and elevations, as well as some surveying in order to construct a site plan. As identified in the myths associated with this site, the main defensive architectural attributes are the angled apertures built into the upper level walls of the store and the two round apertures built into the stonework either side of the rear (northern) door of the dwelling. The myths suggest that these were embrasures for firing at Aboriginal attackers through (E.g. Norris, 1976: 78 and The Architects Studio, 2000: 5). Therefore the aim here is to test the defensive functionality of these features as embrasures. Figure 4.4.13 shows the arcs of fire offered by these architectural features, were they to be used as embrasures.

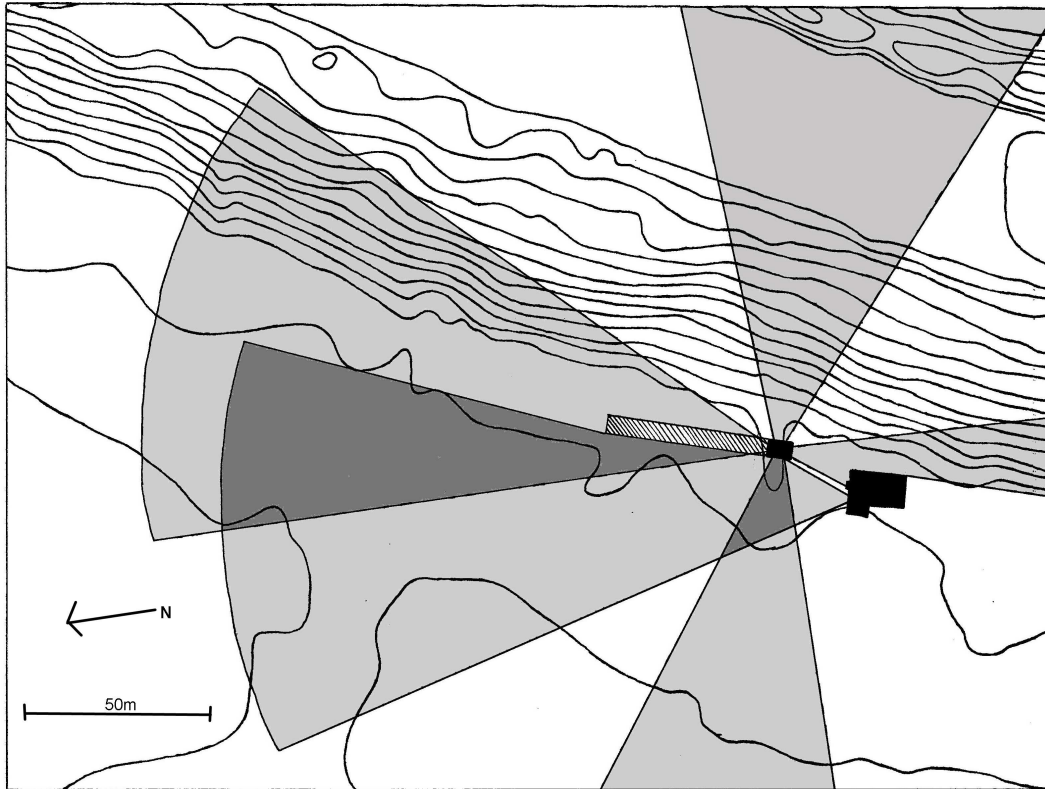


Figure 4.4.13. Diagram showing the arcs of fire offered by the embrasures at Springvale, shaded grey. The darker grey areas indicate ground covered by embrasures of both the store and the dwelling. The approximate area covered by the pre-1885 conflagration shed-line is shown by the diagonally-hatched area. Note that this does not show areas of 'dead ground'.

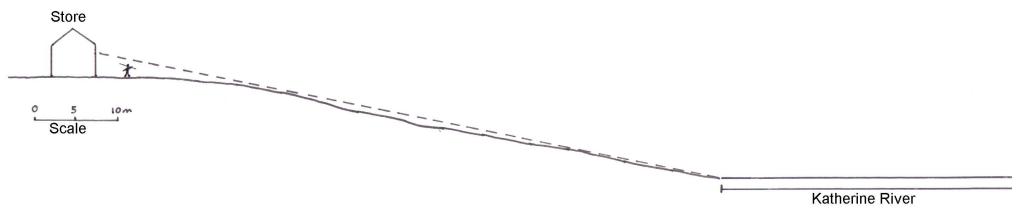


Figure 4.4.14. Diagram showing fire-coverage of river bank from the store's eastern apertures (indicated by the dashed line). The relative height of a person is shown by the figure to the right of the store.

The myth states that the river banks near the homestead were kept well clear of vegetation, the implication of the myth being that this was to provide a clear field of fire (e.g. in Norris, 1976: 78). There is also documentary evidence that this was done, for example this can be clearly seen in Figure 4.4.9. The Springvale Station Diary also

records the practice of clearing the river banks. For example the entry for January 26th 1884 read:

Sent Niggers to the other side of the river to cut down the trees (Giles, 1879-1894:
Entry for 26/1/1884).

It was therefore necessary to determine to what extent the store's apertures were able to command the river bank. Figure 4.4.14 shows the ability of the store's eastern apertures to do this.

Another factor which affects the ability of the angled apertures to function as embrasures is whether they are accessible to the firer. In other words, the defender needs to be able to (relatively) comfortably place the barrel of the firearm through the embrasure and aim at the attacker/s. An analysis of the dimensions of the room inside the loft can determine to what extent this is the case. All but two of the loft's embrasures are located approximately .65 metres from the floor, making them conveniently positioned for firing through in a kneeling position.

Evidence Supporting the Myth's Veracity

Giles' writings show that, although he did not suffer a disproportionate amount of paranoia about Aboriginal attack, he did foster a strong distrust of Aborigines in general and was well aware that they were capable of violence if they decided to attack the settlers. This attitude was evidently borne out of his significant experience of conflict

with Northern Territory Aborigines, both prior to establishing Springvale and during his time there.

Alfred Giles was intimately familiar with the overland telegraph stations and those associated with them. This was a result of his having been part of the expedition which surveyed the route and having spent years supplying them with stock. As a result he would have been aware of the fact that some of the stations were fortified against Aboriginal attack (such as Barrow Creek [*Australian Sketcher*, March 21, 1874: 222] and Alice Springs [Mulvaney, 1989: 119]), as well as the architectural techniques used to accomplish this.

There is documentary evidence that the banks of the river beside the homestead were kept clear of vegetation, possibly to prevent attackers from approaching too close under cover and to provide a clear field of fire (e.g. Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 26/1/1884) as well as photographic evidence (Figure 4.4.9). The store's eastern embrasures, on account of their height, very effectively cover the river bank and allow no 'dead ground' which could afford cover to an attacker. This is an important point because were this not the case the functionality of these embrasures would be seriously compromised.

The store's embrasures, in being angled outwards on the interior (Figure 4.4.15) offer two advantages. Firstly, they allow far greater traversing of the firearm through the embrasure, thereby allowing fire to be brought to bear on a much greater area than had they been right-angled apertures. The second advantage is that in being angled on the

interior it is easier for the firer to guide the barrel of the firearm through the embrasure. This would become important if there were not enough defenders in the store's loft to occupy all of the embrasures and the defenders had to constantly switch to other embrasures to fire upon different targets. This would also become important if a defender was armed with a muzzle loader which would have to be withdrawn from the embrasure after every shot for reloading. In an attack situation where the defender is in a hurry and under duress, this would make firing through the embrasures much easier and more efficient than if they were angled on the exterior or not at all. The store's apertures, facing in all directions and being elevated and angled, would also have represented an improvement over those of the dwelling, which had none of the above qualities. Had the order of construction of the dwelling and store been the other way around, it would not have made as much sense that the embrasures built later were less well-designed than the earlier ones.

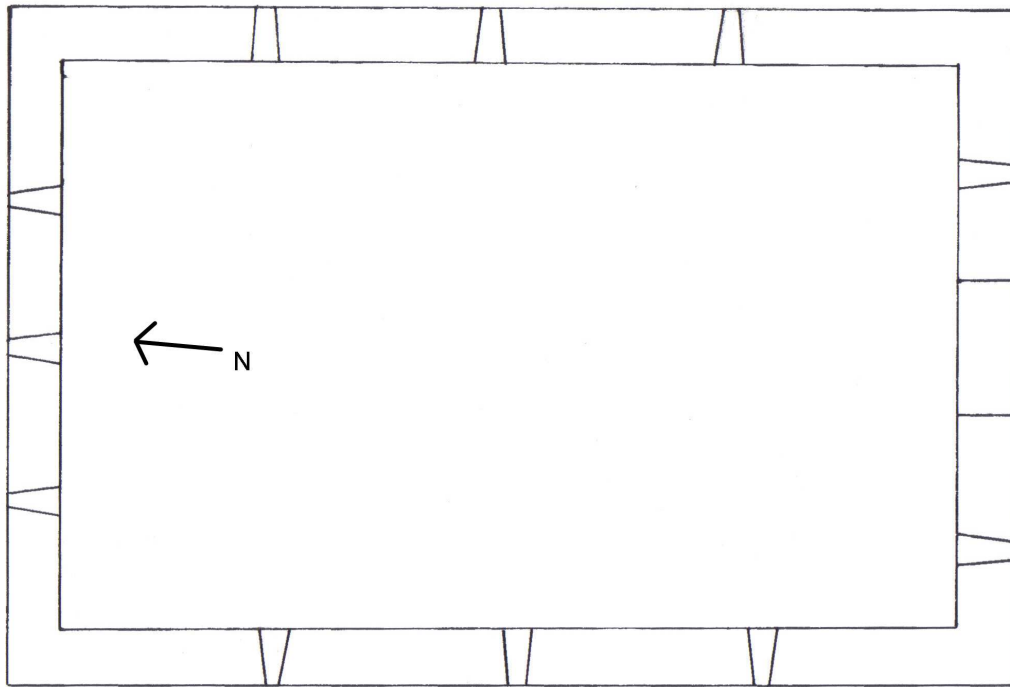


Figure 4.4.15. Plan of upper level of store showing position and shape of apertures.

In an informal discussion between the author and Mrs Townsend, the latter gave her opinion of the site's supposed defensive features. She suggested that the round apertures either side of the dwelling door may have been for placing dairy products in. The breeze, she reasoned, when blowing through them would have helped keep them cool. However, assuming this would work, one would have thought it would have been more practical to make the holes square bottomed so that objects could sit in them better. As for the angled apertures in the store's upper walls, Mrs Townsend believed they were ventilation apertures. These were necessary, she believed, because the intense heat experienced in that part of the country could induce stores of hay to spontaneously combust (Townsend, pers. comm., 2004). There is, however, no evidence that hay was ever stored in the loft.

The elevation of the store's embrasures from the outside ground level also adds to their defensive functionality. They are on average 3.2 metres above the ground. This places them well above the reach of the attackers and would have made it impossible for attackers to stab their spears through. Their elevation also allows them to command more terrain, as it eliminates more 'dead ground' than would have been possible had they been at ground level. It was this feature of their construction which allows them to so effectively cover the river banks on both sides of the river. A third advantage of the embrasures being elevated at this height is that on the northern side they would have been able to fire over the roofs of the several buildings which comprised the shed-line. Furthermore, if attackers were able to make it to the store and succeed in forcing their way in, the defenders would still be in a relatively safe and commanding position because they would be on the floor above. The only way up would have been a ladder or stairway which led through a hole in the loft floor. This may even have had a hatch attached, although there is no evidence for it. Such a position would allow the defenders to maintain the advantage and would have been much easier to defend than had they been on the ground floor.

The main disadvantage of the store's embrasures is the fact that they do not seem to have been angled enough to cover all of the ground surrounding the building. The result of this is that there are 'blindspots' extending out from the corners of the store. These blindspots provide relatively safe avenues of approach for an attacker. However, this would only be a problem for the defender if the attackers had prior knowledge of this or came this way purely by chance. It is, however, highly unlikely that the former would occur within the

context of an Aboriginal raid, as it would not be evident from the attacker's point of view. The main blindspots extend from the north-eastern and south-eastern sides. The other two blindspots would very effectively be covered by fire from the dwelling's embrasures – as long as there was someone using them also. This design flaw can most probably be ascribed to the inexperience of the builder in defensive architectural techniques – it should not be interpreted as evidence that the building was not functional as a defensive structure.

There is actually a precedent for a stone fortified store building in the form of the Old Rainworth Stone Store (built in 1862), near Springsure in Queensland. This store's defensive design and functionality is not disputed, since it is listed in the Queensland Heritage Register and is deemed significant partly because it “[illustrates] the principal characteristics of a fortified store on a remote and early pastoral property” (Queensland Heritage Register, 18/10/2006). Like the Springvale store, this store also has a loft with embrasures. Also like the Springvale store, its primary function was as a defensible storehouse (Queensland Heritage Register, 18/10/2006).

If the apertures in the walls of the store were the only embrasure-like features of the site, the interpretation of them as purely ventilation apertures would hold more weight. However, this interpretation is thrown into question by the fact that the unusual holes on either side of the dwelling's rear door are obviously not for ventilation holes; instead, there is documentary evidence that they were built as embrasures (Giles, H., nd: 10). The existence of these earlier possible embrasures in the dwelling therefore can be seen to add

weight to the interpretation of the apertures in the store as also being embrasures. The dwelling's apertures, like those in the store, are located at a comfortable height to fire through. Here, however, they are positioned at a height which suggests they were intended for the defender to fire through them in the standing position. The dwelling's embrasures appear to be less well-designed than those of the store, because they are not angled, but are instead simply round holes built into the stonework. However, in terms of the amount of ground able to be covered by fire from these embrasures, the fact that they are not angled is partially made up for by the fact that they are wider than those of the store. A possible reason they were designed this way, and not like those of the store, may be that the dwelling was built by a different mason to the store. It may be that it was considered simpler to build around the framework provided by the iron lining of the embrasures than to angle the stonework. It is not known what this iron lining was made from, i.e. whether it was adapted from an existing item or purpose-made.

A third factor which supports the interpretation of the dwelling's embrasures as defensive is the fact that there are no windows on this (the northern) side of the building. Considering that the sun passes from east to west, and the dwelling is orientated north-south, it does not seem likely that the lack of windows on this side were for protection from the sun. The only entrance is the door, which is protected by the embrasures on either side of it. This seems to represent a deliberate attempt, paralleled in the other dwellings investigated above (Mount Benson and Central Outstation), to make the rear of the dwelling secure from attack.

The functionality of the dwelling's embrasures can be better appreciated when they are viewed within the context of their likely tactical role. It can be seen in the 1883 photograph, the 1886-1889 sketch of Springvale and the 1894 photograph, that the northern (i.e. rear) side of the dwelling faced onto a clearing. Judging by what is known of the length of the original shed line and the depictions, the approximate size of this clearing can be reconstructed. It seems to have extended at least 100 metres northwards from the rear of the dwelling and to have been around 60 metres wide, giving a total area of 6000 square metres. The pictorial evidence of this area suggests that it was never used for agriculture or grazing but was reserved as an open space. The 1883 photograph is particularly significant here because it shows that the clearing was there at that time and thus predates the construction of the store. It seems most likely that the clearing was created at the same time as the construction of the dwelling, soon after settlement at Springvale.

The fact that the dwelling's only two embrasures face into this clearing is not likely to be mere coincidence. The siting of the homestead atop a high, steep river bank, and with a clearing to the rear actually ties in remarkably well with the 'ideal' defensive siting of an Australian homestead, as described by Cox and Stacey (1972: 9) and Taylor (1988: 24). The purpose of the clearing appears to have been to provide a clear field of vision and fire from the dwelling's embrasures. This would help to prevent attackers from approaching too closely to the rear of the dwelling under cover. As the results of the Weapons of the Frontier experiment testify, armed with breechloading rifles it would be possible for only a few defenders to put up a withering and deadly accurate fire at 100

metres (the approximate length of the clearing). Although these rifles were accurate well over 100 metres, their increased rate of fire meant that the defenders could afford to allow the attackers to approach this close to the dwelling and still be confident of driving them back. Furthermore, in an 1870 booklet titled *Overland Telegraph – Port Augusta to Port Darwin. Instructions to Overseers of Works* (Anon., 1870), there is a section describing “Mode of Attack by Natives”, which actually advised that camping places be chosen that “[command] the surrounding country, and where, for say 100 yards [91m] around, there is no shelter for a black to creep unseen towards the camp” (Anon, 1870: 43). Giles, having worked for the overland telegraph, would have read this booklet, and perhaps bore its advice in mind when designing his homestead which complies remarkably well with it.

Three early depictions (Figures 5.4.7, 5.4.9 & 5.4.11) of Springvale show a paling fence running in front of the rear of the dwelling. This fence was constructed early in the history of the site, as it can be seen in the 1883 photograph. The fence appears to have bordered the southern side of the clearing. In the 1886-89 sketch of the homestead it can be seen that the fence was not so high as to obscure the field of fire from the dwelling’s embrasures which are clearly higher than the fence. The fence could easily have been built a little higher, thus rendering the embrasures much less functional. However, the fact that it wasn’t can be taken as evidence that the fence was intentionally built at a level which would still permit the defenders to fire over it through the embrasures. Although this fence may have been built mainly to demarcate domestic space from work space, in being paling (unlike all of the other visible fence lines which are post and rail) it may

have also served as a defensive structure, as it would both impede attackers, as well as provide an Aboriginal weapon proof barricade for the defenders.

Finally, there is primary evidence that at least the dwelling was believed to have been built for defence in the form of the memoirs of Giles' son Harold. Harold Giles stated that, "[t]wo port holes one each side of the back door of the main building near the kitchen were built in case of danger from blacks attacking" (Giles, H., nd.: 10). Harold Giles' memoirs were written some time before 1960 and, although not coming from the pen of the builder himself, the fact that it comes from the builder's son, who was brought up on the station, lends great weight to the claim.

Evidence Opposing the Myth's Veracity

The following are arguments *against* the interpretation of the architectural features of the store and dwelling as embrasures:

As mentioned above, the two upper apertures in the store's northern gable are non-functional, as they are too high and there is no evidence that there was ever a way to reach them in the form of a platform, etc. These are of exactly the same form as the lower apertures. Therefore it can be argued that if these features were designed purely as embrasures there would have been no point in building two of them in an impractical position.

The store's apertures, although definitely angled, are not angled enough to cover the entire perimeter of the store. As a consequence, about half of the terrain outside the store is not able to be defended from them. This can be taken as evidence that these features were either poorly designed, or not designed to function as embrasures.

There is supporting evidence for inward-splaying apertures in Australian rural outbuildings in Roxburgh and Baglin (1978). This book shows heavily angled apertures in three Australian barns in New South Wales which are described as ventilation slots (e.g. Roxburgh & Baglin, 1978: 108-109, 110-111, 156-157). The first example is at Browley station in Moss Vale. Roxburgh and Baglin believed this barn to have been built some time between 1830-1860 (1978: 108-109). The second is at Caoura station, near Marulan. This barn was thought to have been built soon after 1836 (Roxburgh & Baglin, 1978: 110-111). The third example, at Segenhoe station, in Sconce, appears to have been built some time between 1825-1838 (Roxburgh & Baglin, 1978: 156-157).

Although the station's stock and horses were speared, there is no evidence that the homestead itself was ever attacked. This could be taken as evidence that there was never a real threat of the homestead being attacked, and thus no need to fortify it.

Springvale - Conclusions

What is immediately noticeable about the above is the fact that the arguments supporting the myth greatly outnumber those against this interpretation. However, although this is important, it is not enough to constitute the sole deciding factor as to whether the myths

are true. This is because some arguments hold more weight than others. Overall, however, it appears most likely that both the store and the dwelling *were* built for defence, the reasoning for which is explained below.

To begin with, the fact that Alfred Giles, the director of all operations at Springvale, had a considerable history of conflict with Aboriginal people throughout his career provides a prime motive for his feeling the need to build defensively. He had experienced Aboriginal attacks first hand on numerous occasions, as well as having known others who had. This may have made him especially aware of the constant possibility that the Aborigines might at any time attempt to attack the homestead.

If Giles believed there was a real possibility that Aborigines might attack the homestead, he must have had an idea as to *why* this might occur. The question of why Giles thought that Aborigines might want to attack the homestead touches on an important issue in our understanding of frontier conflict: the attitudes of the European colonists to Aboriginal resistance. Although Giles regarded the Aborigines as savage and treacherous, some colonists of the time did understand that the Aborigines saw the Europeans as invaders of their land. This can be seen in the words of the Government Resident of the Northern Territory. In 1889 he wrote:

Some blacks are beginning to understand the conditions under which the white man holds the country. A station manager informed me some time ago that an “old man” blackfellow said to him, “I say boss, whitefellow stay here too long

with him bullocky. Now time whitefellow take him bullocky and clear out. This fellow country him blackfellow country (McLaren, nd. : 276).

He then went on to raise the question:

Does the land inalienably belong to the aborigines who have from time immemorial occupied it and exercised tribal rights over it? I have been compelled by my official position and circumstances to give serious attention to this question. I have had long conferences with Inspector Foelsche and Mr E.O. Robinson other than whom there are no two gentlemen on the north coast of Australia who know so much about the blacks, their habits and rules of life. For the most part I think the Malthusian principle on keeping down the population is only practised to a limited extent (McLaren, nd. : 277).

Judging by what is known of Alfred Giles from his writings, he appears to have been quite an intelligent and worldly man and, as such, probably did appreciate that the Aborigines considered the Europeans as intruders and wanted them out. He had known of (as well as experienced) enough instances where the Aborigines had attacked Europeans with no apparent intention other than to kill them. Evidence of this can be seen in his manuscripts, as well as the Springvale Diary (e.g. Giles, nd: 39,50 and Giles, 1879-1894: Entry for 1/10/1889). However, he also experienced numerous Aboriginal raids which were obviously for procuring meat by the spearing of individual beasts, an example being

the heifer that was brought in to Springvale with a spear still lodged in its body (i.e. Giles, nd: 155).

Therefore, on account of his significant history of conflict with Aboriginal people, Alfred Giles appears to have had ample motives for fortifying Springvale. The fact that there is no evidence that the homestead was ever attacked, or that any attempts were ever made on the lives of any of the employees at Springvale does not, it is argued, bear much weight as evidence that the myths are unfounded. That there was a sufficient threat (at least in the builder's mind, if not in reality) of attack is all that would be required for the site to be fortified. The number of spearings of both people and stock that came to Giles' notice during his time at Springvale shows that Aboriginal people were still living traditionally and actively resisting the colonial invaders throughout this time. Furthermore, the large number of documented spearings of people in the northern region of the Northern Territory in general in the late 1870s and 1880s shows that the threat of violence was very real (Appendix 2).

The store was arguably the most important building on the station, as it held most of the food and supplies required to survive in the isolated position Springvale occupied. Therefore it was extremely important that its contents be protected. However the fact that the store held these valuable commodities, especially flour and meat, would also have made it a veritable treasure trove to the Aboriginal people, many of whom may have been finding it increasingly difficult to obtain traditional food due to the European takeover of much of the land and water sources and the subsequent drop in native flora and fauna.

There is evidence for this in the fact that the Aborigines were regularly spearing Springvale's livestock. That Aborigines tended to target storerooms particularly is mentioned by Henry Reynolds in the form of an 1887 description of the typical process of squatter settlement (Reynolds, 1987: 158). By actively defending the store, the Europeans could both defend themselves and protect the contents of the store.

As for the functionality of the structures (i.e. the dwelling and the store), they were actually quite well designed to carry out their defensive roles. Admittedly there are some faults in the design of the structures in terms of their defensive architectural features, but as always when dealing with civilian-built sites, it must be borne in mind that their builders were not trained military architects.

Finally, the possibility that the stores apertures were built to serve a dual purpose must be considered quite likely. That is, that they were built for a non-defensive purpose such as perhaps providing ventilation to the loft, *as well as* for use as embrasures in the event of an attack upon the homestead. This is entirely plausible and would explain why two of the apertures are inaccessible (i.e. a clue that they were designed for ventilation) yet the rest are all angled, placed in all four walls, and accessible.

Discussion

At the sites in this chapter, the historical-archaeological analysis method described in Chapter Three was put to use. From the fieldwork data collected at the sites, their defensive functionality was able to be tested within a set analytical framework which was

applied to all of the sites equally. When combined with an investigation of the documentary material, these two lines of evidence were combined to determine the likelihood that these structures were built for defence as at least one of their intended functions. Furthermore, through validating the myths associated with them, it is possible to view these sites in the greater context of their role within the national identity construction process, and still more widely, in the context of settler societies globally.