

CHAPTER ONE – Introduction

Not all past events leave physical traces. But where they do, the history we write cannot be sealed until the material record is incorporated (Fox, 1993: 328).

Scattered across Australia's landscape, close to our capital cities and sometimes far off the beaten track, lie memorials of long-forgotten wars. When first built, these memorials were not intended or expected to become what they did: their construction was simply the physical expression of the fear felt by some of the colonial settlers of Australia. Over time, however, the stories attached to these structures have come to play a significant part in Australia's frontier mythology. These structures are the fortified homesteads of the Australian colonial frontier.

This research investigates the adoption of defensive architectural techniques by civilians in colonial South Australia and the Northern Territory of Australia. By focussing specifically on *civilian* use of defensive architecture, this study opens a new approach to the archaeological investigation and interpretation of Australian rural buildings, an approach that identifies defensive architectural techniques as a feature of Australian frontier architecture. The study of civilian use of defensive architecture, as opposed to that which is state built (i.e. military, police, government), is important because it highlights the conditions of the frontier for the civilian settlers, often in regions where there was not yet a government presence, or a reliable one, to protect their interests. This architecture is material evidence of a vanguard of Australian colonisation (or invasion) being carried out, not by the military or police, but by civilian settlers. The iconic

Australian 'squatter' actually represents these kinds of settlers. The squatter was, after all, a civilian settler who occupied land outside the surveyed limits of settlement (Dutton, 1985: 5). The research conducted for this thesis identifies a body of material culture in the form of buildings that are historical 'records' of the conditions faced by these civilian colonists; a body of evidence that has hitherto been overlooked and unacknowledged by Australian historical archaeology.

The architectural historian, J.M. Freeland, realised the significance of buildings as "original historical documents", noting that, "[a] country's architecture is a near-perfect record of its history. Every building records, describes and explains the time and the place in which it was built" (Freeland, 1968: Preface). The buildings investigated represent both real and perceived conflict between the invaders and the invaded. They are significant and unique, in that they are standing testimonials to the hundreds of individual wars of resistance fought by Australia's Aboriginal nations throughout the colonial period. Research into these structures and their past and present social context, contributes new information to the techniques and designs of frontier constructions, and to an understanding of frontier relations.

There is, however, a great deal of controversy, confusion and hearsay surrounding civilian use of defensive architecture in Australia. Where oral histories and local historical stories associated with such sites refer to them as having been built for defence against Aborigines, this goes straight to the heart of the controversy surrounding the history of frontier conflict in Australia. The source of the controversy is the fact that these

stories are often mythical in nature and that these myths imply a history of violent race relations. With the help of progressive historians (such as Coulthard-Clark, 2001 and Connor, 2002), Australians are beginning to become aware of, and come to terms with, the true (often violent) nature of their past, but this is still a sensitive issue to many people, as evidenced in the Reynolds/Windschuttle/Ryan debate (Reynolds, 1981, 1987; Ryan, 1996; Windschuttle 2002). The issue may be all the more sensitive in rural areas where descendants of the pioneer settlers are still associated with the land their forbears wrested from its Aboriginal owners. In this case a culture of silence (Stanner, 1974) may exist, manifesting itself, as Jane Haggis pointed out, in an attempt to deny or cover-up stories of frontier conflict in order to prevent the memory of pioneering ancestors being sullied with charges of racial violence (Haggis, 2001: 92). An example of this may be seen in a case encountered by the author whilst investigating one of the sites in this project. Here, it was found that a member of the youngest generation associated with the site fully believed that the house was designed to be fortified against Aboriginal attack. Members of the previous generation, on the other hand, vehemently denied that the building was designed as such (For more details on this case study see Chapter Four – Results – Mount Benson).

Another factor which may explain why it is in the interests of some people to deny or cover-up stories of frontier conflict associated with physical structures is a fear of land-rights claims by Aboriginal people. To admit that a structure was built defensively because the settlers feared attack by Aborigines is to admit that the settlers did in fact take the land from its original owners by force. The author has actually had the

(unjustified) concern of potential land rights claims expressed to him by the current landowners in relation to carrying out research at one site. This shows that there is still widespread insecurity about land tenure which plays into the stories associated with the frontier and the creation of a 'pioneer past'.

The confusion that surrounds examples of civilian use of defensive architecture probably stems from the peculiar nature of these sites. They are not usually purely defensive structures as a fort is (although one notable exception in Australia are the civilian-built 'shielans' of Queensland [Figure 1.0]), but instead they served multiple roles. Often even the non-defensive functions of these structures are unclear or unknown. Therefore, what would usually be a diagnostic element of use as a fortification, such as a narrow slit in a wall, may not necessarily have functioned that way and may have served an entirely different purpose. This issue is not, however, only prevalent within the Australian context; other studies of civilian defensive architecture in different contexts have had to grapple with the same problem. For example, Blair St. George, in his investigation of the Whitfield House, a 17th century house in Connecticut, U.S.A., found that there was disagreement over the existence and function of what he argues was a cannon embrasure located in an upper wall of the house (Blair St.George, 1990: 265). An embrasure is an opening in a wall designed for discharging firearms through. Blair St.George convincingly argued that it was in fact a cannon embrasure. One of the ways he supported his interpretation was by comparing it to several surviving 17th Century houses in England and France which have cannon and pistol embrasures (Blair St.George, 1990: 265-6, 276-7). This confusion about what constitutes defensive architecture is not limited

to European colonial sites. For example, Susan Kenzle tackled the problem of the function of enclosing walls in the northern San Juan region of the American southwest, dating between 1150-1300 C.E. Once again, there was confusion and differences of interpretation between archaeologists regarding whether these walls constituted defensive fortifications or merely boundaries denoting social spaces (Kenzle, 1997: 195-210). Although there is no debate as to whether military-built forts (e.g. Crosby, 1978) and civilian-built blockhouses (e.g. Roos, 1953: 4) are what they are (that is, functionally-built defensive structures), this is not the case with Australian civilian built sites. Some versions of history believe a site to be built for defence, whereas others do not.

All of the structures investigated within this research are associated with a myth, drawn from literary sources, concerning their having been designed for defence against Aboriginal attack. As well as providing a starting point for archaeological investigation, the myths associated with these sites are worthy of study in themselves in order to understand their role in the construction of Australia's identity, and our collective and individual 'memories' of the frontier. The analysis of Australian frontier conflict myths in South Australia was covered in depth by Robert Foster, Risk Hosking and Amanda Nettelbeck's *Frontier Collisions* (2001), based on the idea that the 'memory' of Australia's frontier period is formed by the convergence of historical literature, education and oral histories. The viewpoint adopted by these sources can be shaped by a variety of factors such as:

- The ideological viewpoint of the author.

- The ideological system or values of the society which records the history.
- The political motivation of the person relating the history.
- The ideological system or values of the society within which the history is interpreted.

Factors such as these affect the way history is presented. During the process of constructing social identity, elements of myths can be forgotten, excluded, altered or added (see Shackel, 2001). In the context of this project, this translates into the creation of myths about a site's defensive use. Some may believe the myth that a particular site was built for defence, while others may not. For example, concerning some narrow, angled apertures built into the walls of the coach-house at Lizard Lodge, near Adelaide, local historian Alison Dolling believed that the building was "loop-holed as a precaution against Aborigines [sic]" (Dolling, 1981: 323). Architectural historian, Peter Bell, on the other hand, wrote, "...the openings are actually the traditional ventilating apertures used in English granary buildings" (Bell, 1997: 10. For more details see Chapter Four). It is important to investigate why such opposing views of history exist, as they may tell us something about the ways in which contemporary Australians remember the past, and why some memories are privileged, while others are forgotten, or even hidden. In a sense, the structures analysed in this research tell of a hidden history that was part of the European colonisation of Australia.

This aspect of the research has considerable political relevance because of what it can tell us about race relations on the Australian frontier, and modern relationships between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians today that rest on these foundations. For example, structures which were built defensively out of fear of Aboriginal attack could stand as physical monuments to the fact that the local Aboriginal people's resistance was strong enough in that area to cause the invading colonists to take such precautions, and that the settlers feared what they could not understand. Moreover, the fact that colonial settlers found it necessary to fortify their structures could illustrate the fact that the land was taken by force from its traditional Aboriginal owners. As Lydon and Ireland argue, "heritage" [as with written history, as demonstrated by the 'history wars' (see Macintyre, 2003)] is actually "an active process of identity formation and so has become the arena for contesting the form and content of national identity" (Lydon & Ireland, 2005: 3). Therefore, by playing a role in "making alternative histories" (Schmidt & Paterson, 1995, quoted in Bender, 2001: 258), the results of this archaeological investigation of this particular type of heritage (civilian fortified structures) has the potential to influence the identity construction process at local, regional and national levels. Archaeology also has the ability to address the nature of Indigenous resistance to colonisation and subsequent dispossession in a way that can complement the work of historians who are addressing the same issues from different starting points (Winer, 2001: 259) (see, for example, Reynolds, 1981, 1987, 2001; Ryan, 1996).

Definition of terms

Frontier

According to *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (Johnston [ed.], 1976: 330), the 'frontier' is the "...boundary between states; [a] border of settled or inhabited part of

country”. However, within the context of this research, the above definition is unsuitable for several reasons. To begin with, the Australian frontier cannot be defined as the boundary between states, because it is generally accepted that Aboriginal society was not organised into ‘states’ in a sense that was understood by Europeans. It also could not adequately be defined as the border of the settled part of the country because, although the colonial governments did delineate the limits of surveyed land, the practice of ‘squatting’ – the occupation of land outside of these surveyed areas – meant that there were often Europeans living and working on land well outside of this. Furthermore, many instances of frontier conflict between colonial settlers and Aboriginal people occurred *within* the settled areas (e.g. those recorded in Sutton, [2004: 20-21] and Banks, [1970: 8], referring to the south east of South Australia). Lastly, to describe the frontier as the border between the inhabited and uninhabited part of the country (Johnston [ed.], 1976: 330) is completely unsuitable, because the entire country was inhabited by Aboriginal people at the time of British colonisation.

Fred Alexander, in an analysis of the application of Turner’s (1920) interpretation of the American frontier, provided a slightly different definition of a ‘frontier’ as “not a political boundary between neighbouring states but the outer edge of settlement within a larger geographical area” (Alexander, 1969: 1). Alexander argued that this definition could be applied to Australia (Alexander, 1969: 1). Within the scope of this research, Alexander’s definition is only partly suitable, however, because the definition of ‘the outer edge of settlement’ is itself open to various interpretations.

Geographer Ladis Kristoff published a paper in the late 1950s on the definition of frontiers. His paper was concerned with the problem of disentangling the physical and the political elements which combine in the concept. After outlining the historical definition of the frontier as “that which is ‘in front’”, although not an abstract term or line but an area which was part of a whole (Kristoff, 1959: 269), he went on to describe some of the political (as opposed to physical) aspects of frontiers. These are significant for the ways in which they can be applied to the Australian frontier. For example, Kristoff wrote of the frontier as an “integrating factor”, a “zone of transition from the sphere of one way of life to another, and representing forces which are neither fully assimilated to nor satisfied with either, it provides an excellent opportunity for mutual interpenetration and sway” (Kristoff, 1959: 273). However, Kristoff cautioned, it is difficult to pinpoint universally valid essential features of a frontier, such as the degree to which assimilation takes place (Kristoff, 1959: 273). One can identify with the Aboriginal frontier experience when Kristoff explained that one “way of life usually seems attractive if the adoption of it promises better chances of survival” (Kristoff, 1959: 273). In conclusion, Kristoff characterised frontiers as being of “rudimentary socio-political relations; relations marked by rebelliousness, lawlessness, and/or absence of laws” (Kristoff, 1959:281), all of which can be applied in general terms to the Australian frontier.

The definition adopted here is that **the frontier is any area where colonial settlers were using the land for agricultural, mining and/or pastoral pursuits, whilst Aboriginal people were still maintaining their traditional life-ways in the area.** Such a definition is apt within the Australian pastoral context, because not only were whole regions

'frontier', but each pastoral run within them was often its own small frontier. Settlers usually had local Aborigines living either on or close by their runs. As explained by Critchett, the frontier as we think of it was:

...the Aboriginal woman who lived nearby and was shared by her Aboriginal partner with European men; it was the group living down beside the creek or river, as they did on many properties; it was the 'boy' used as a guide for exploring parties or for doing jobs now and then; and it was the 'civilised' Aborigine employed as a stockman. The 'other side of the frontier' was just down the yard or as close as the bed shared with an Aboriginal woman (Critchett, 2003: 53-4).

By and large, therefore, Australian frontier conflict occurred in response to local conditions and must be analysed as such.

Civilian

Since this research specifically focuses on the civilian use of defensive architectural techniques, it is important to clarify what exactly is meant by the term civilian and what constitutes civilian use of such architectural techniques within the context of this research. By strict definition, civilian refers to a person who is not in the armed forces (Johnston, 1976: 143), although it could also be applied to goods and services that are outside military control. However, this definition does not preclude government infrastructure, such as police stations and telegraph stations, and the employees of such

places, which are civilian. What is meant *here* by ‘civilian’ is ‘non-state’ or ‘private’ in terms of the structures use and who constructed it.

Defensive Architecture

‘Defensive’ structures are those that, in one of their roles, have been intentionally built to protect people from attack. In order to accomplish this, defensive structures use techniques of fortification. ‘Fortification’ can be defined as “all dispositions made which allow a defending force to defend a position to its advantage” (Lafferty, 1973, quoted in Kenzle, 1997: 201). This can include structures, such as dwellings, stables or storehouses, whose primary role was something other than defensive, as well as structures which were built specifically for defence, such as ‘shielans’. Shielans were small mud brick forts with embrasures for firearms, supposedly built predominantly by Scottish squatters in Queensland in the mid-19th Century (Waterson & French, 1987: 313) (Figure 1.0).

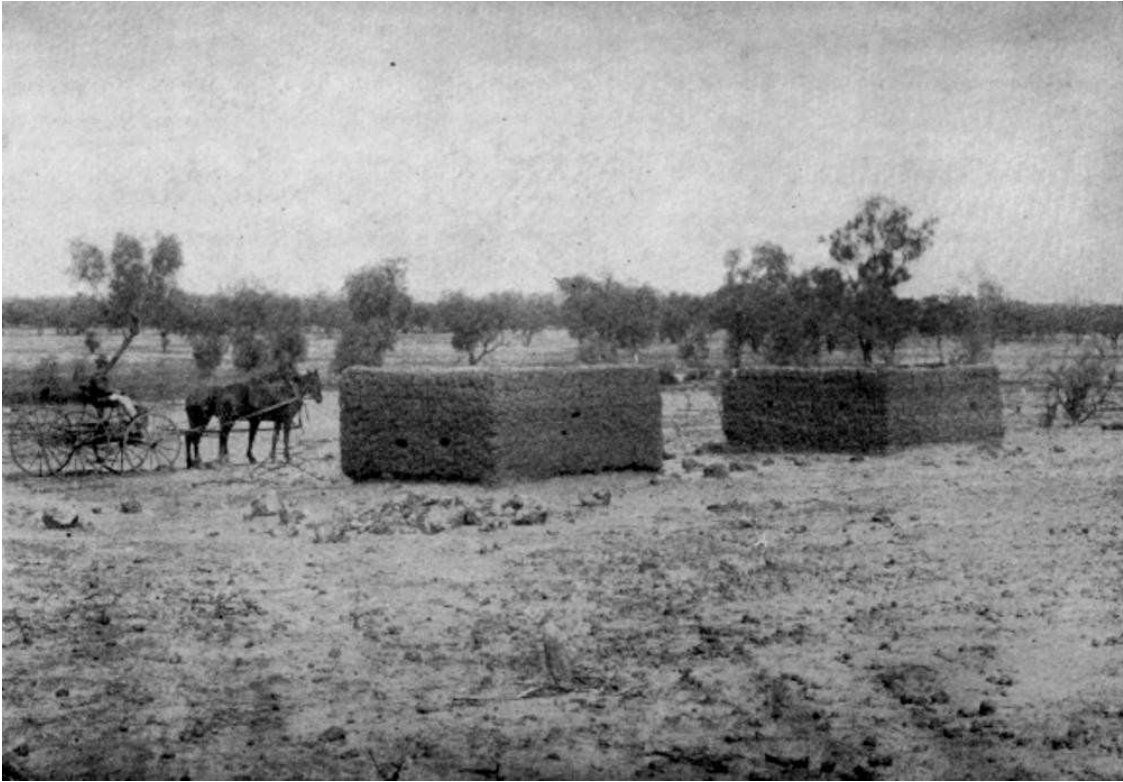


Figure 1.0. Mud blockhouses ('shielans') at Tin Tin Chilla station, in the Adavale district, Queensland. Photograph taken ca 1905. Courtesy of the John Oxley Library.

It must be borne in mind that, although only one structure out of several at a particular site may display clear defensive architectural elements in its design, other features and structures may have a bearing on the defensive use of the structure. For example, other structures may be positioned so as not to impair the fields of vision and/or fire from the fortified one. Other features can also affect the use of defensive structures, such as the surrounding terrain and approaches.

Myth

The foundation upon which the investigations of the sites in this project is based is the existence of a 'myth' concerning their defensive construction. The word 'myth' can

sometimes be seen to imply that the information contained therein is purely fictional, or at best, based upon a morsel of truth (Kammen, 1991: 25). However, this is not the way this word is used here. The role of myth and history in the study of Australian frontier architecture is one which has been largely overlooked in academic studies of these types of buildings. Carter explains the issue thus:

We may feel uncomfortable talking about both myth and history in the same breath. The two, however, are not that far apart. Myth is often misinterpreted as simple falsehood – people misunderstanding what really happened, and something to be debunked by “the facts of real history.” We come further toward the truth, however, by defining myth in the anthropological sense as a kind of validating story, a cultural narrative that, in writer Carolyn Heilbrun’s words, provides people with a “model for behaviour” (Carter, 2006).

This way of viewing myth is significant to this project, since it reflects the ways in which the stories surrounding civilian defensive sites continue to hold powerful meanings for people today. Such myths naturally shape people’s view of the past and impart a particular meaning to the sites with which they are associated. Another definition of ‘myth’ which can be applied here is that of myths as, “...stories drawn from a society’s history that have acquired through persistent usage the power of symbolising that society’s ideology and of dramatising its moral consciousness” (Slotkin, 1993:5). Both Carter’s and Slotkin’s definitions of ‘myth’ are used within this research.

A Brief Chronology of the Settlement of South Australia and the Northern Territory

South Australia and the Northern Territory roughly occupy the central ‘third’ of the continent. The amount of land within this area is vast, composing well over two million square kilometres (Geoscience Australia, 15/8/2007). The climate in the north of the Northern Territory is tropical, however most of the Territory is dry, sandy and rocky, as is the northern portion of South Australia. The southern portion of South Australia is more temperate and verdant, though it also becomes very dry and hot during the summer months.

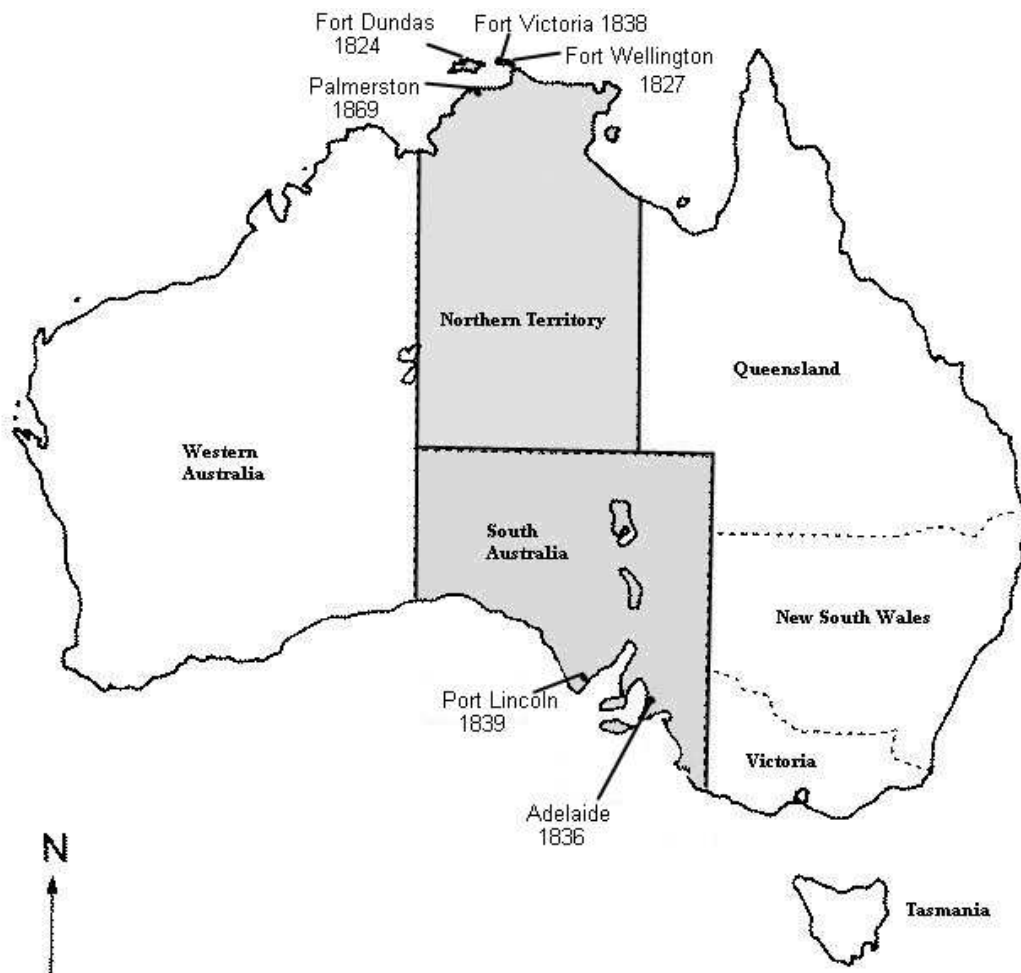


Figure 2.1. Map showing the approximate locations of the settlements referred to above, with their dates of establishment.

The first attempt to establish a permanent British settlement in the central section of Australia was Fort Dundas which was established in 1824. Britain wanted a settlement on the north coast of Australia in order to act as a trade centre and military outpost from which she could guard her possessions and traders in this area, and enforce her sovereignty over the whole continent (Spillett, 1972: 12; Connor, 2002: 69). By the end of 1824 the fort was practically complete and the settlement had a population of over 100 people, including convicts, Royal Marines and soldiers (Spillett, 1972: 13-14). However, the location proved to be unhealthy, traders showed no interest in it, and conflict with the local Aboriginal people reduced the occupants of the settlement to a state of siege in which people were afraid to leave the fort unless in company and well armed (Spillett, 1972: 14). Fort Dundas was abandoned in early 1829, but a second attempt had already been made in the establishment of Fort Wellington in 1827.

Initially, Fort Wellington suffered from similar problems to Fort Dundas, that is, sickness amongst the settlers, conflict with the Aborigines, and lack of trade (Connor, 2002: 74-75; Spillett, 1972: 15). With the arrival of a replacement commandant in 1828, the situation changed greatly, especially in terms of Aboriginal/British relations (Connor, 2002: 75). However, the government decided the settlement was not worth keeping and ordered its abandonment in 1829 (Spillett, 1972: 16). This order turned out to be premature, since before it could be countermanded, the reports of the Fort's commandant had arrived in the government's hands, which described in glowing terms how the settlement was prospering and looked like it was going to become everything that was expected of it (Spillett, 1972: 16).

Thus, in 1838, a third attempt was made to establish a permanent British presence in northern Australia in the form of Fort Victoria on Port Essington (Connor, 2002: 75). It was hoped that this settlement would form a trading station, a refuge for shipwrecks and a military outpost to dissuade the rival powers of the Netherlands or France from laying claim to the north of the continent (Powell, 2000: 60-61). Although relations with the Aborigines were good, this settlement suffered from the old curses, such as disease and insufficient trade. Furthermore, a cyclone devastated the settlement in 1839 (Powell, 2000: 60-61). The settlement struggled along until late 1849 when it was abandoned (Powell, 2000: 64).

In 1836 British colonists arrived at Holdfast Bay and the new colony of South Australia was proclaimed. This was not to be a penal colony like all of the others in Australia, but was intended from the outset to be a free settler colony based upon the ideas of E.G. Wakefield (Casanova, 1992: 14). A site for the town of Adelaide, which would be the capital, was chosen on the plains between the Mount Lofty Ranges and the sea. Pastoral settlement and land tenure was organised according to the 'Wakefield plan'. The premise behind this plan was that agricultural land be sold to settlers at a "sufficient price" to attract settlers of substance and to provide a fund to bring out working men and their families who would work for the landowners until they could afford to buy some land themselves (Dutton, 1985: 8). However, it was the pastoral business that really spurred on the demand for huge tracts of land to be made available.

Pastoral expansion and land occupation in South Australia proceeded rapidly after first settlement by a process of squatting and special surveys (Casanova, 1992: 15). The general rule was that land could not be acquired before it had been surveyed by the government surveyors, however the exception to the rule was that anyone who paid for 4,000 acres (1,618.8 hectares) could demand the government survey 15,000 acres (6,070.5 hectares) outside the surveyed areas and then claim the choicest land within the special survey area (Flinders Ranges Research, 15/8/2007; SA Memory, 15/8/2007). After 1846, special surveys were discontinued because the British government considered that land sales should be available to the general public, not just wealthy individuals or consortia (SA Memory, 15/8/2007).

Three years after the establishment of the main settlement centre around Adelaide, a new springboard for pastoral expansion was established at Port Lincoln on the Eyre Peninsula (Casanova, 1992: 7). Thus, large tracts of Aboriginal land were expropriated in a radiating fashion from the two centres of settlement, spreading in all possible directions. Huge flocks of sheep were also driven overland from the neighbouring eastern colonies of New South Wales and the Port Philip District (Victoria) to stock the stations.

In the intervening time between the abandonment of all of the north coast settlements of the Northern Territory, and the pastoral occupation of South Australia, the Northern Territory was more or less left alone. However, with the spread of pastoralism towards the northern border of South Australia, and the positive reports of explorers such as J.M. Stuart, who travelled from Adelaide to the north coast of the continent and back in 1862,

interest grew in exploiting the land to the north. In 1863 the whole of the Northern Territory was annexed to South Australia, this remaining the case until 1912. In 1869 the town of Palmerston was established on the north coast of the mainland, which would later become the capital city of Darwin.

The following year, in 1870, construction commenced on a telegraph line from Adelaide running through the heart of the continent to Palmerston, where it would be connected with England via an undersea line. This was completed in 1872, and a series of telegraph relay stations were built along the line (Powell, 2000: 89-91). This was followed by the usual process of survey, exploration, squatting, overlanding, and the establishing of huge pastoral stations which continued throughout the period under investigation.

Aims and Significance

Aims

The research questions for this thesis are:

Was defensive architecture used by civilian settlers on the South Australian and Northern Territory frontiers, and if so, what can it tell us about the nature of frontier conflict in these regions? To what extent can historical archaeology be employed to test the myths about civilian use of defensive architecture on the South Australian and Northern Territory frontiers, and what is the significance of these myths to past and present identity construction?

Frontier contact can lead to the formation of new behaviours sometimes resulting in new or modified types of material culture (e.g. the architectural modifications to Ward's Ranch in Arizona [Carter, 2006]). Those structures in Australia said to have been built by settlers to withstand attacks from Aboriginal people provide an example of such a body of material evidence. It is the myths which interpret these structures as having been built defensively, but it is the aim of the archaeology to determine whether or not these myths have a factual basis.

The research undertaken here revolves around a number of research questions, covering several aspects of civilian use of defensive architecture on Australia's frontier. These skills consisted of archaeological field methods, archival research, cartography, experimental archaeology and historical research. The study of the sites themselves provided information about what methods the builders employed to fortify their structures. The study of the context of the individual sites, that is, the immediate areas they are located in and the history of their occupiers, provided information about frontier relations at both personal and community levels. This type of information was then able to be compared with that from the other sites in order to draw more general conclusions about civilian use of defensive architecture in Australia, as well as how it relates to the study of the frontier itself, and the social construction of the Australian frontier, both in the past and the present.

The following is a list of the research questions pertinent to this project, divided into these two levels of analysis:

a) Questions specific to the particular site under investigation:

- What is the origin of the belief that the site was built for defence as one of its roles?
- How does the site stand up to an assessment of its functionality as a defensive structure?
- If the site *is* found to be functional, what social factors may have influenced its owner to build it as such? This also includes investigating who the structure was designed to defend against.
- If the site is *not* found to be functional, what social factors may have led to the formation of the subsequent myth that it was fortified? In effect this question addresses the issue of the ‘memory’ of the frontier.

b) Questions which apply to the topic in general:

- Can it be demonstrated that functional defensive architecture was employed by any colonial settlers on South Australia’s and the Northern Territory’s frontier?
- If it can be demonstrated that such defensive architecture was employed, what new light can this information shed on the history of colonial settlement in South Australia and the Northern Territory?
- What kind of defensive architectural techniques were employed and how were they designed to function?
- What can the results of these investigations tell us about the mythologizing of the frontier in relation to structures?

- How successfully can a combination of archaeological and historical investigation be used to effectively investigate the possible defensive nature of colonial Australian structures?

A major aspect of this research involved investigation into the background of the builders of each of the sites to identify any historical background information which would, a) add weight to the argument that the structure was built with defence in mind or, b) have influenced the builder to incorporate defensive architecture into the building. Carter also recognised the importance of such an approach when he wrote “[t]he goal of [frontier] architectural historians...is to determine the dynamic processes by which these distant impulses combine with such local factors as environment, ethnicity, occupation, and religion to create the distinctive vernacular architectural subcultures of the American [frontier]” (Carter, 2006). By investigating the history of frontier conflict in selected regions in Australia and the mindsets of the builders, this research will achieve the above goal in the context of the Australian frontier.

Significance

Because the use of defensive architecture by civilians on Australia’s frontier is a topic which has never been methodically investigated by archaeologists or historians, knowledge of the subject at present only exists in the form of local histories, folklore and occasional references in frontier histories (see for example, Baillie [1978: 134]; Dolling [1981: 323]; Reynolds [1987: 13]). One such example, recorded by Reynolds, describes a building in Queensland, into the walls of which 12 square “portholes” were cut, with a gun and ammunition hung by each one (Reynolds, 1987: 15). The use of archaeology to

investigate this topic will therefore benefit historians of frontier conflict in Australia by providing information which cannot be found in the written records.

The use of archaeology to investigate the issues and questions posed here is ideal because it focuses on material evidence. Although historians of frontier conflict have contributed a great deal of information on the topic through archival research (such as Foster, et al. 2001; Reynolds, 1981, 1987, 2001), this type of research has its limits. Information can be left out of documents, or documents which could have provided valuable information may not have survived. Archaeology, on the other hand, can investigate the material culture of a period (such as a building), which is often more durable than the documents, and in doing so, can make it 'speak' of attitudes and situations which have been deliberately left out of the historical record. As Fox observed, "In their unique way, physical remains record bygone activities every bit as much as written descriptions of decisions, events, transactions and the like" (Fox, 1993: 328).

Without scientific research into their veracity, the stories associated with the types of sites under investigation here can only be regarded as myths, and therefore possibly without historical basis. It is very important that such claims are tested, since so long as those myths that are in fact true remain as merely myths, they can be discounted by historians whose agenda is to downplay the level of frontier conflict in this country. Whereas elite accounts of the past are usually documentary, the material evidence investigated here has the potential to challenge this argument. In this particular case, it will not only reveal more about the colonial settlers who built the sites, but through this,

also reveal something about the experience of Aboriginal people at the time (Lydon & Ireland, 2005: 17).

However, the archaeology carried out within this research has the potential to serve a far greater role than simply as an adjunct to historical studies. Although it is true that the sites investigated here were all chosen on the basis of having a written myth associated with them, the results of this study have the potential to provide archaeologists with the methodological 'tools' to identify other examples of the civilian use of defensive architecture at sites with which no such myth is associated. This, in turn, can lead to the formation of a more complete picture of the nature and extent of frontier conflict in Australia, since these fortified sites would provide material evidence of fear where there may be no historical evidence. This was a point also demonstrated by Fox in relation to the Battle of Little Big Horn excavation in Montana, U.S.A. (Fox, 1999). Although archaeology did confirm documentary sources at one level, it also provided information formerly unavailable in, and even directly at odds with, much of the historical data (Fox, 1993: 329).

Unlike state-built architecture, civilian architecture by nature allows a greater degree of individual style, and therefore provides greater potential for variety of form in the use of defensive architectural techniques. It is argued here that the investigation of civilian defensive architecture can be particularly effective because, as Kenzle (1997) pointed out, such architecture is directly created by those who use it and thus is most likely to reflect their immediate needs, ideas and beliefs. This, however, is not necessarily the case with architecture built by specialists, such as most state-built architecture (Kenzle, 1997:

197). For example, state-built infrastructure is often constructed to standardised plans and specifications. In the case of Australia these were often developed from long colonising experience in many parts of the British Empire. Therefore, especially in the case of police stations, for example, such buildings can be expected to incorporate some defensive elements into their architectural design which are not exclusively the product of Australian frontier conditions.

Civilian use of defensive architecture, on the other hand, is interesting because it provides evidence of civilians taking on the role of defenders of the colony and in response to local conditions. This is a task one would normally expect to be the responsibility of the state through the armed forces, and in the case of Australia, the police as well in a paramilitary role. Furthermore, such precautionary measures taken by settlers can tell us something about the extent and intensity of frontier conflict. Even were it to become apparent in the course of this research that many of the examples of defensive architecture were the result more of a perceived threat than a real one, this would still tell us valuable information about fear present in the minds of the colonists. The existence of fear in turn tells us something about race relations on the frontier.

By developing an archaeological methodology with which to investigate the veracity of these myths, this research will contribute to resolving the contentious issue of whether this type of architecture actually was used and how. This research will benefit historians and archaeologists studying the period, as well as the general public, by clarifying an

aspect of Australia's (and more specifically South Australia's and the Northern Territory's) colonial past that has hitherto rested on hearsay and myth.

Discussion

Through descriptions and accounts of fortified civilian structures found in Australian literature, one can identify a body of material evidence in Australia that has hitherto been overlooked by historical archaeologists. This material evidence, in the form of surviving structures to which a myth is attached regarding their defensive construction, needs to be investigated for the information it can tell us about both the frontier period, and the way Australians view their past in the present. Two important themes that underpin this subject area are the role of mythology and the notion of fear. The following chapter investigates mythology as it relates to material culture, and the contribution archaeology had made to the study of fear in societies.