

**STATELY HOMES THE MIRROR AND METAPHOR OF
COLONIAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA.**

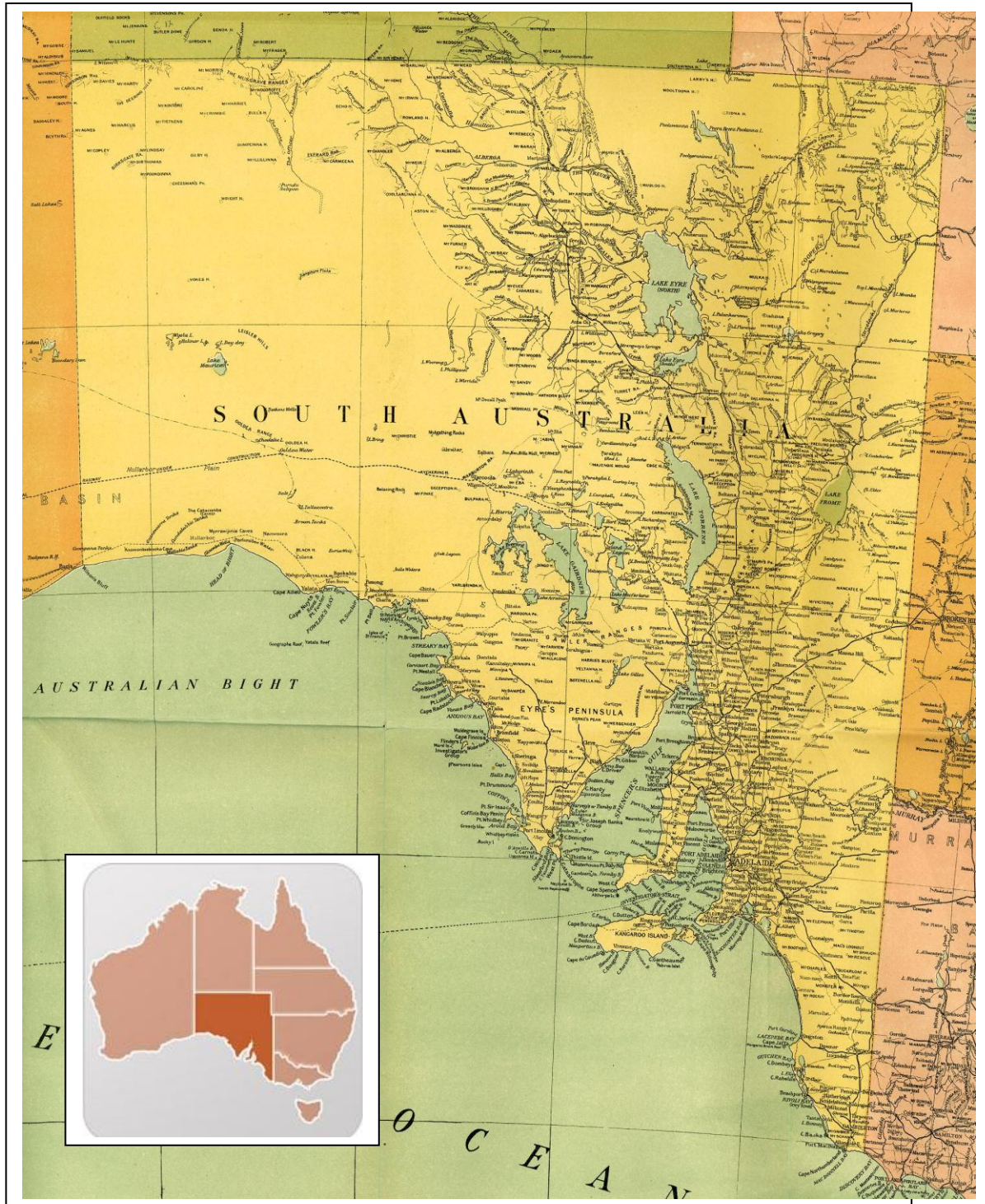
Volume 1



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South Australia, c1916

DECLARATION

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

Robert M. Stone

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ABSTRACT

Established by an Act of the English Parliament in 1834, South Australia was intended to be a model colony. Without convicts, it was to be populated initially by British migrants drawn from the disaffected middle classes – those who were influenced by such factors as religion, politics and self interest – as well as sponsored emigrants ('young marriageable persons') of both sexes who would ease the overcrowding in England. The capital, Adelaide, was a planned city, its population selected according to Edward Gibbon Wakefield's (1796-1862) economic, social and political theory of colonisation.

The proposed colony of South Australia was therefore an attractive proposition for those who professed ideas of civil liberty, social opportunity and equality for all religions. Regardless of the opportunities for social improvement afforded to the middle classes, there was no comparative incentive for the English aristocracy and landed gentry to emigrate, however, which left a vacuum in the social hierarchy of the colony. This vacuum was filled by a distinct class who emerged from within the colony and who are described in this thesis as the 'new gentry'.

The new gentry styled themselves leaders in the community, and built stately homes as a visible manifestation of their wealth and position in society. However, stately homes are more than just physical objects; they also contribute to a wider cultural landscape and the construction of particular perceptions of 'the past', both in terms of human behaviour and social complexity, and the origins of an area or set of ideals. Over the first 80 years of the colony, economic accumulation, social positioning and closely negotiated social interaction resulted in the creation of a densely layered landscape – both in terms of creation and consolidation of the notion of the 'new gentry', but also of the physical expression of this negotiated social class on the landscape of Adelaide. Stately homes were built in prominent positions with display in mind and had architectural finery that would have impressed both the passer-by and the visitor. They made a statement about the nature of basic social relationships, such that the architectural symbolism of wealth, taste and authority was both intentional and obvious; they also conveyed a message of exclusion based on social status and class. Between the years 1850 and 1880 the new gentry formed themselves into a tight social network and built their homes in exclusive residential enclaves with symbolic barriers which has a significant impact on the cultural landscape.

The stately homes of the new gentry were not mere copies of the homes of the English landed gentry. The new gentry aimed to create their own version of the landed gentry based on an independent image of colonial Australia, yet at the same time remaining conscious of those characteristics which were essential to separate them from the rest of society. The highly independent nature of the new gentry was also reflected in the architectural designs of their houses; there was no one dominant style, yet there were sets of common architectural features.

On the critical question of their use, these houses were not merely objects of bricks and mortar, but could be compared to a theatre in which the real life dramas and social interactions of the occupiers and visitors were played out. The internal configurations and spatial dynamics of these houses played as important a role as the exteriors in reinforcing the much sought-after image. The internal design of stately

homes in part communicated social roles by presenting barriers to procession through the house. Again, there was no one dominant internal configuration, yet a consistent pattern of specialist rooms and, through processional pathways, common social barriers, is evident. It can be concluded from a study of the floor plans of their stately homes that the new gentry not only had a common understanding of the external architectural features which reflected their status in society but also the division and use of internal space in order to separate and control the movement of people according to their class and social status.

Towards the end of the 19th century events took place that had a profound impact on this exclusive world of the new gentry and, in turn, on the role and status of their stately homes. Many large pastoral leases were resumed by the government and sold for farming. Being designed to accommodate an earlier cultural and social scene, the economic base which supported these stately homes was now diminished, resulting in many becoming redundant and either demolished or sold for alternative uses.

Stately homes had a major impact on the 19th century cultural landscape, but to what extent has this been reduced through changes in the underlying culture that led to the building of these stately homes? Today, decisions must be constantly made as to which stately homes are worth preserving and, for those to be kept, what sort of restoration, renovation or adaptive re-use is appropriate? Demolition of former stately homes can result in the total or partial obliteration of our tangible cultural heritage, whereas demolition of associated buildings and re-use of stately homes can significantly reduce the intangible cultural heritage that is the image of life in the 19th century. Over 50% of the stately homes considered in this thesis have undergone a change in use with a consequential impact on the state's cultural heritage. Preservation of heritage is one form of cultural salvage and a world that is about to be lost is in need of preservation.

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Focussing on a single theme over an extended period of time can in itself be a challenge. Research undertaken by colleagues begins to appear more exciting than one's own and opportunities to undertake field work in unrelated areas a constant distraction. To counter this, many people have assisted me and given freely of their time to ensure I maintained steady progress and remained focused on achieving my goal. Special recognition must go to the lecturing staff of the Department of Archaeology at Flinders University for their support and encouragement and providing opportunities for involvement in the teaching program of the faculty, especially in the areas of historical archaeology and cultural heritage management. To my primary supervisor, Dr Heather Burke, what can one say? What is more difficult, writing the thesis or the having to read the numerous drafts? Without her guidance, encouragement, positive criticism of the many drafts of this thesis, it would not have been completed. To my second supervisor, Dr Claire Smith, I thank her for her encouragement and also to Dr Alice Gorman, who questioned the aims of my field work and assisted me in the design of my building survey pro-formas. To my fellow undergraduate and post graduate students at Flinders University, I owe a special thank you. As with any marathon, pursuing a PhD thesis can be a lonely journey and it was the very presence of my fellow students who, probably unknown to them, encouraged me to succeed.

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Visits to stately homes were the enjoyable part of this research, with many of the owners granting me access to photograph their properties and to record details of the architectural features. The highlight was the opportunity to transport one's self back in time and to enjoy the hospitality offered in stately homes that are now tourist venues. Tourist accommodation was available at *Bungaree*, albeit in the converted Stallion's Box, from where I was able to inspect at my leisure all the other historic buildings, St Michaels Church, and the extensive gardens associated with the house. The owner, Sally Hawker, provided historical records of the property and access to areas of the property which had remained unchanged for over a century. At *Anlaby*, I stayed in the former manager's house, which gave insight into another facet of life on

a historic pastoral property. The owners gave me unrestricted access to their house, associated buildings and the extensive historic rose gardens. Staying at *Padthaway* provided the complete experience of 19th century grandeur, while a tour of restored *Bundaleer* was an example of how heritage properties can be restored to their former glory.

Many of the current owners and occupants of former stately homes now converted to schools, hospitals or commercial premises, acknowledged that it was a privilege to occupy a heritage building and were generous with their time in providing a guided tours of the more public spaces and provide access to historic documents. A special thankyou must go to those who allowed me to inspect and photograph the interior of the buildings, especially where the stately home was their private residence. There are too many to thank individually, but I must acknowledge the special assistance given by Milton and Christine Bowman of *Forest Lodge*, Kirsty Dodd and Julie Kowlessar of *Wairoa*, Malcolm and Marianne Booth of *Bundaleer*, Sally Hawker of *Bungaree*, Bob Rowe of *Mackerode*, Simon Rowe of *Princess Royal*, Bill Hawkin of Bio Farm, formerly *Eden Park*, Annette Barrette-Frankel of *Saint Cecilas*, Ian Bennett of *Koorine*, Glen Clifford of *Yallum Park*, and Drs Peter and Drinda Gauvin of *St Margarets*.

Information on former stately homes occasionally came to light when the properties were advertised for sale. Open inspections were therefore another avenue for access; thank you to the land agents who gave permission to take photographs and complete my survey of the buildings.

Finally, thank you to Janet Stone of Icarus Industrial Design for reformatting the architectural plans and maps and converting my line sketches of processional pathways into their final form. To other family members, friends and colleagues who openly questioned my sanity in pursuing this marathon, but never-the-less supported me, thank you.