

BECOMING SOUTH AUSTRALIANS? THE IMPACT
OF THE IRISH ON THE COUNTY OF STANLEY,
1841-1871

By

M. Stephanie James

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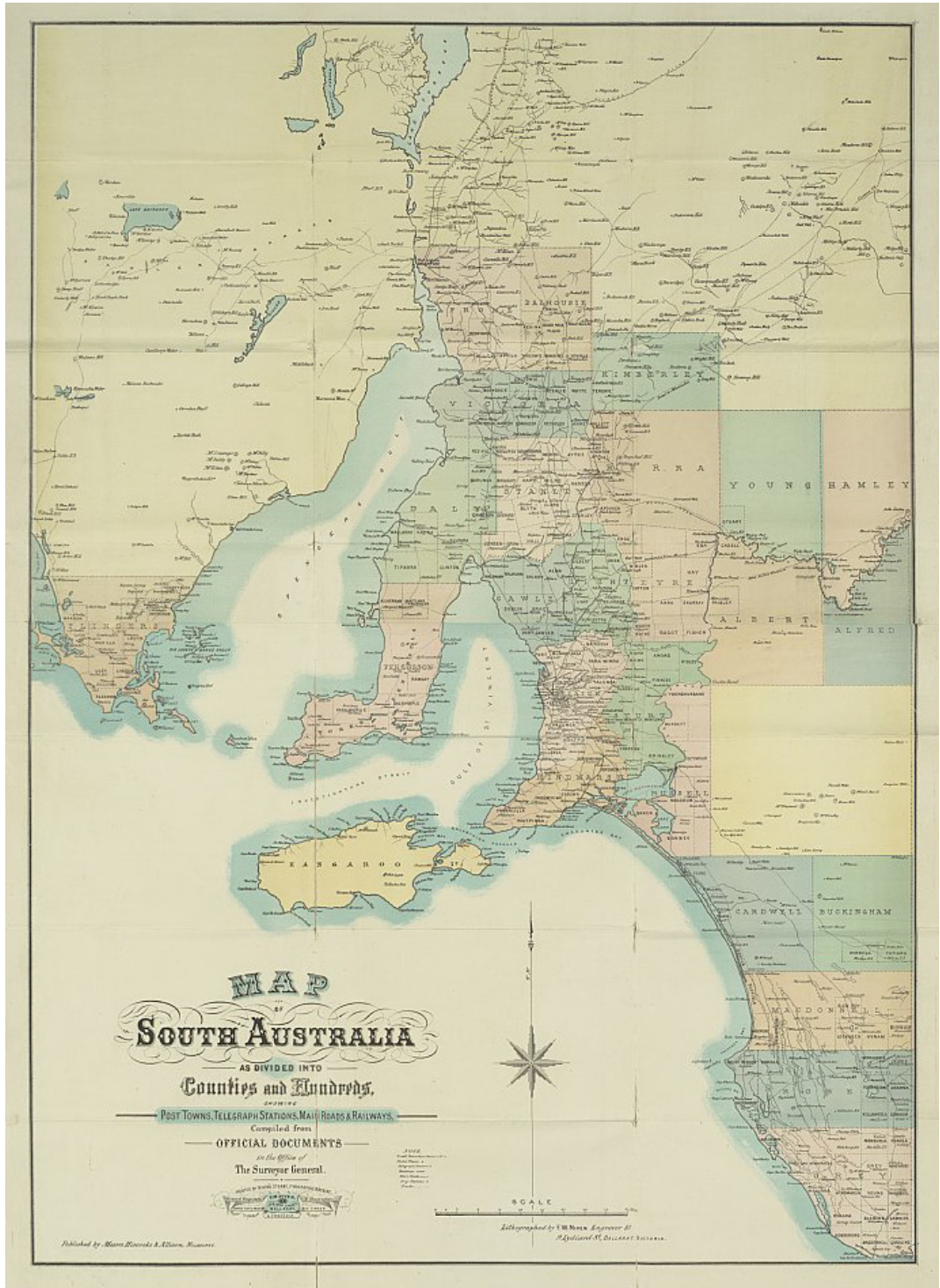
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Portion of Map of South Australia 1876 –
County of Stanley.



Map of South Australia 1876 – Counties and Hundreds.

SUMMARY

This thesis traces the processes by which Irish residents in the County of Stanley made the transition into becoming South Australians, and the ways in which they made an impact on the community between 1841 and 1871. Stanley, proclaimed in 1842, was the colony's most Irish area by 1861. Additional features differentiating this county included the founding role of Irishman Edward Burton Gleeson, the early and distinctive presence of the Catholic Church (linked particularly to the 1848 arrival of Austrian Jesuits), and the benefits derived from Stanley's proximity to the Burra copper mine. The research has examined the nature of the Irish imprint by the early 1870s.

The evidence presented here shows that Stanley's Irish population did not replicate the colonial pattern in terms of county of origin. There were small pockets of Protestant Irish among the visible clustering of the Irish Catholic majority, there was strong Irish involvement at all levels of politics and there was clear commitment to education. Churches, schools and one Loyal Orange Lodge were constructed in the county. There was evidence of networking amongst Irishmen alongside staunch disagreements, status was ascribed to a few Irish individuals as Justices of the Peace, and to more, as spokesmen for the community, success was visible in the lives of many. This was paralleled by economic failure – ordinariness does sum up the lives of many in these decades.

The thesis sets out to uncover and document the process of Irish immigrants becoming South Australians and concludes that by the early 1870s the Stanley Irish cohort were indeed becoming South Australians, but that they also maintained a powerful hold on being Irish. The task of fully becoming South Australian awaited

future generations. The Irish generation which contributed to Stanley's shaping and development in its first three decades died or dispersed, and this region (despite the fame of the Irish-named Clare Valley for wine-growing), is no longer noted for its Irish heritage. Did the strong Irish imprint dissipate after 1870 because the early Irish had indeed become South Australians and journeyed further?

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.

M Stephanie James

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