



THE MENTALITIES OF EARLY SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PASTORALISTS:  
The Angas, Keynes, McBean and Melrose families in central  
South Australia.

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of a degree or diploma in any other university, or to the best of my knowledge and belief contains no material previously published by another person except when due reference is made in the text.

Signed ...

Date *.19 October 1963*

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

<u>AFP</u>	Angas Family Papers
<u>KFP</u>	Keynes Family Papers
<u>McBFP</u>	McBean Family Papers
<u>MFP</u>	Melrose Family Papers
<u>SAA</u>	South Australian Archives
<u>Register</u>	<u>The South Australian Register</u>

SUMMARY

This thesis discusses the mentalities of the first generation of South Australian pastoralists in the Angas, Keynes, McBean and Melrose families of central South Australia.

The discussion starts by outlining the backgrounds of George Fife Angas, Joseph Keynes, Lachlan McBean and George Melrose in Great Britain. The influences on their minds were identified as the lower-middle class ideals of self-improvement and the religion and love of nature imparted to them by their teachers and family. It was also discovered that these men, despite their relatively lowly position in society were aware of how a gentry functioned.

Attracted to South Australia by Wakefield's scheme of systematic colonisation, which promised a hierarchically ordered society on the British model but with room at the top, these men set about the task of earning a colonial fortune. The thesis next investigates how one of the pastoralists' number, Joseph Keynes, coped with an early setback to his dreams, and how George Fife Angas one of the colony's progenitors and the other pastoralists fared amidst the speculative environment of early South Australia.

Eventually Keynes, Melrose and McBean began to make substantial achievements in their quest for wealth and position. In 1851 Angas arrived in South Australia to collect his ready-made fortune. The thesis then focuses on how these individuals reacted to their wealth. It shows how they attempted to set themselves up with grand estates and retainers, modelling their public facade on the English landed gentry. However, these pretensions towards gentry living were not



met sympathetically by the rest of the South Australian population. The discussion moves to explore how Angas, Keynes, McBean and Melrose responded to these criticisms on a public and private level.

The thesis continues to look at the developing mentalities of this self-styled pastoral elite through their response to some of the great problems in their lives after they had obtained their wealth. When their reactions to death and dishonour are discussed it is found that they respond privately to those dilemmas by reaching back to the teachings of their British youth. They never satisfactorily reconciled their pose as a landed gentry with their private resolves to keep old ways.

Seeing that they lacked the necessary attributes and power to create an Australian landed gentry, they attempted to give their children the education of wealth. Their children were imbued with a mixture of their old lower-middle class ideals and the social accomplishments of an elite. Their children were gradually assimilated into the rest of the colonial elite.

The thesis concludes by noting that the attempt of the pastoralists to create a gentry could not be successful for a number of reasons. Not only was the external opposition formidable, but the pastoralists lacked both the numbers and the intellectual certainty required to give permanence to their dreams.