



THE HISTORY OF PORT AUGUSTA
from Aboriginal times to about 1908

by

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LIST OF CONTENTS

Summary	ii
Introduction	vi
Statement	xiv
Acknowledgment	xv
Abbreviations	xiv
Text of Thesis	
1 Aborigines, Explorers and Conflict, to 1853	1
2 Early Days, 1854-63	58
3 The Port and the Inland, 1864-74	115
4 Bignell & Young and the Rise of Commerce	168
5 The Tide of Rail and Wheat	218
6 Boom in the Port, 1875-84	268
7 End of the Good Old Days, 1885-1908	319
Appendices	
1 Relief provided by the Port Augusta Destitute Board, 1867	366
2 List of Contents of the Records of Bignell & Young	368
3 Inventory of Goods Supplied from Adelaide to Bignell & Young, 1872-3	381
4 Contents of an order to London suppliers placed by Bignell & Young, 1873	385
5 Traders Supplied Wholesale by Bignell & Young, 1869-77	387
6 Rainfall Figures 1859-1908	389
Bibliography	391

SUMMARY

This thesis examines the History of Port Augusta from Aboriginal times up to but not including the coming of the Commonwealth Railways, nominally put at 1908. The aspect of early European exploration has been covered elsewhere.

The first Chapter examines the situation of the Aborigines when confronted by the invaders. Prior to the invasion, the economic life of the Aborigines was enhanced by favorable geographical circumstances. Their beliefs and customs and those of far-distant inland tribes, were powerfully influenced by the phenomenon of the ever-narrowing, serpentine Gulf which penetrated this arid region. Explorers came up the Gulf, overlanders went around the Gulf and soon after, pastoralists came along the relatively well-watered Flinders Range in a northward spreading riband. (The Range runs along the Gulf's eastern shore and passes within 12km of Port Augusta.) As happened in colonial situations elsewhere, the new settlers pre-emptorily cast aside the original native occupants of the land.²

The second Chapter looks at the first era in Port Augusta's township history, by which time "the struggle to gain a foothold in the colony had been overcome", as Williams³ said, and the colonists had "began to take a closer look at the problems of colonising the less

attractive lands". Port Augusta was surveyed at a time when the government was sporadically creating ports, service centres and staging posts to serve the expanding but increasingly arid pastoral frontier.⁴ Instead of being leapfrogged by another new settlement, as Adelaide, Gepps Cross, Gawler, Clare and Gladstone had been, Port Augusta remained virtually the last town before the frontier. Its geographical position as the port at the tip of Spencer Gulf made it the frontier's port, without peer. These influences of the frontier were present to some extent at Port Augusta, with the dependence of the town on the pastoral industry, the seasonal influx of outback pastoral workers, the evidence of the pastoral workers' profligate drinking and references to their independence and love of freedom.

The Third Chapter develops the arguments of the previous pages and examines the bond between the Port and the hinterland and how the fortunes of the hinterland impacted on the town.

Chapter 4 is taken up with the examination of a remarkable collection of Port Augusta business records from the 1860s and 1870s, revealing a surprisingly sophisticated regional commercial network to develop, exploit and service many parts of the inland.

Chapter 4 discusses the great expectations for the

inland. Port Augusta rose on these expectations, until their eventual demise. The chapter argues that, although government influence was somewhat removed by distance and temperament, nevertheless because of the Port's geographically advantageous position two government initiatives for the interior had terrific impacts on the Port. These initiatives were the erection of the Overland Telegraph and the construction of Great Northern Railway.

Optimistic expectations of the inland saw wheat make a spectacular advance to the east and north of Port Augusta, followed by a disastrous retreat. The story of this northward advance and its drought-dogged retreat has been told by Meinig.⁵ It, and other deleterious influences, had a depressing effect on the Port, examined in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5's Tide of Rail and Wheat led to a violent boom, examined and described in Chapter 6.

Constant downward estimations of the supposedly exponential resources of the inland led to an unremitting slide in local expectations and fortunes, the subject of Chapter 7. The Port's geographical position, so valuable when there were great expectations of inland development, and largely accountable for the boom, proved practically worthless.

Seemingly imprisoned in this hopeless fact, Port Augusta made its way into the twentieth century.

NOTES

- 1 Anderson R J, 1984, Early Sea and Land Exploration of the Kangaroo Island - Spencer Gulf Region to 1835-6, unpublished MA Qualifying essay, History Department, Adelaide University.
- 2 Carter H, 1973, An Introduction to Urban Historical Geography, Arnold Pty Ltd, London, p50.
- 3 Williams M, 1974, The Making of the South Australian Landscape, Academic Press, London, p32.
- 4 Op cit, p337.
- 5 Meinig D W, 1972, On the Margins of the Good Earth, Rigby Seal, Adelaide.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to explain and account for the history of Port Augusta from Aboriginal times until 1908, the year the Commonwealth Government opened serious planning for the Commonwealth Railway, the harbinger of the new era in the town's existence. The thesis reveals how the town responded to changing situations and why it and its history developed as it did.

Most previous historical writing on Port Augusta can be traced to Alan A S McLellan's 273 articles written between 1961 and 1967 for the local paper The Transcontinental and some other historical research he undertook (acknowledged in the bibliography). I had McLellan's collected articles published in 1986, along with annotations, a list of contents and a sizable index - see Anderson, Bob (Ed), McLellans "Transcontinental" Articles on the History of Port Augusta, TAFE, Port Augusta. In turn, McLellan's research was drawn upon by others wishing to sketch historical details.¹ McLellan's work was a useful reference but it is often antiquarian, and occasionally dilatory and repetitive. It concentrated on the period 1877-81, with fair surveys of 1800-76, but patchy treatment of the period 1882-93, little after 1895, and negligible coverage of Aboriginal affairs.

Other sources examined were the works of anthropologists McCarthy (1939), Berndt (1945), C J Ellis (1964, 1966, 1970) and Tindale (1974), which raised matters bearing upon Port Augusta's place in the Aboriginal world, illuminated in the thesis. Rodney Cockburn (1925) occasionally wrote descriptively and revealingly about Port Augusta in the course of his biographies of pastoral pioneers. Cockburn's writing tended to place the town within the ambit of Russel Ward's "Australian Legend" and some of these references, as well as useful descriptive information, were used in the thesis. A reasonable number of cameo newspaper articles² were chanced upon, usually written from an Adelaide perspective. They reinforced Cockburn's illustrations of the strength of bush values in Port Augusta, often portraying the place as a wild and rollicking frontier town.

Two anecdotal primary school centenary booklets were examined.³ Added to data located in the South Australian Parliamentary Papers (SAPPs) and the writer's training and interest in education, they allowed a more precise reconstruction of local attitudes to education. This in turn reflected the nature and perspective of the town in particular eras. Finally, Hans Mincham's book on the Flinders Range provided useful background, including a chapter on the town. Otherwise there is little historical writing

about the Port Augusta.

The thesis is far more coherent, methodical and comprehensive than anything previously written. The arguments it presents and the analysis it offers about the fate of the Aborigines, geography and climate, local society and demography, commerce and economics, trade, shipping and transport, and social history have not been previously attempted.

Port Augusta figured prominently in the development plans of the colonists until the mid 1880s and 1890s. This was reflected in the sources, particularly the number of SAPP Commissions and Reports which included examination of the town's needs and the needs of the region it served. Within the SAPPs, the Reports of the local police and Sub-Protector of Aborigines provided a virtual blow-by-blow account of relations with the Aborigines until 1855, when the offices and Protector and Sub-Protector were abolished.

Shipping records were studied forming the basis for a definitive analysis of local shipping fluctuations, important in the development of generalisation about the Port's economic life.

By a lucky chance, the enormous archive of Bignell & Young, one of the oldest existing storekeeping business

in Port Augusta, was located and examined. The records are an extraordinarily comprehensive archive of a country storekeeping business, probably unique in Australia. They are itemised in Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5. The letterpress copies of outward correspondence between 1871-77 was carefully studied and used as the basis for a detailed examination of local economic and commercial history in those years in Chapter 4.

In addition, a good deal of contemporary descriptive social history material was examined, much of which touched upon the spirit and frontier ethos of Port Augusta in the period covered by the thesis.⁴

The thesis makes use of the technique of "urban biography", - including economic history, historical geography, and social history - as described by McCarthy and Schedvin.⁵ The issues of economic history, are described and analysed, particularly in Chapter 4, and the thesis could be described as a town biography with an economic bias, which makes it a relatively unusual local history.⁶ The historical geography is rich in generalisations and impressions, supported by facts and arguments, especially so in Chapter 7's conclusions. And there is colourful and energetic social history, particularly in Chapters 2, 5 and 6.

The rise and demise of Port Augusta was dominated by

the town's symbiotic relationship with its hinterland. This fits nicely within McCarty's definition of a "commercial" township, primarily established to facilitate the opening of new lands. True to Eric Lampard's generalisation, it is only by understanding the changing relationship between Port Augusta and its hinterland that one can explain and even predict its history, in the period under consideration at least. In exploring this relationship, the thesis opens the door on an important but little examined region of South Australia history.

The thesis further embroiders Lampard's position and illustrates McCarty and Merrett's point that the size and rate of a town's growth was determined by its relationship to its hinterland⁷ while its hinterland - the inland - was presumed to hold great promise. The failure of the inland to live up to these expectations largely accounted for the declining fortunes of the town between 1885-1908. Indeed, it is true to say that Port Augusta's fortunes were dominated by its hinterland and not visa versa.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the theoretical perspective of the thesis is the ease with which it fits within Russel Ward's argument that bush values were transmitted to urban areas. The thesis cites numerous reports of the presence of bush values in the

Port, a phenomenon which, from the town's inception, repeatedly impressed newcomers. In the face of this, Ward's views provide a much more feasible explanation than they might in the capital cities.

The alternative to urban biography, the study of the historical pattern of Port Augusta's urbanisation, has not been undertaken because its more detailed methodology does not suit a general historical study of this township, the population of which did not exceed 2610 in the period under examination. Some of the concepts used in studies of the historical pattern of urbanisation could be applied but they lack dynamism in this instance. For example, suburbanisation was still-born in Port Augusta and the place did not grow beyond what has been termed a "walking" town.⁸ Nevertheless, the main example of internal differentiation, the existence of Port Augusta West on the opposite shore of Spencer Gulf meant that transport across the Gulf was an issue of varying significance, and Port Augusta West developed differently to the larger settlement on the eastern shore. But this example of differentiation is painfully simple alongside Stannage's discussion of Melbourne's evolution into "an authentic metropolis", and McCarty's comparisons of Sydney, San Francisco and Buenos Aires when they had populations of between 130 000 and 1 500 000.⁹

Because Port Augusta was a "commercial" town and despite its modest scale, it was in a position of relative primacy in the region, partly reflecting the simplicity of the wool economy upon which it was based, but also reflecting its strategically dominant position at the head of Spencer Gulf combined with the inhospitably arid nature of the region. For a time there was no room for or need of any other town. Nevertheless, in accordance with Professor Berry's model,¹⁰ as nearby Quorn grew it challenged Port Augusta's primate position, although both towns were blighted by the poor prospects the hinterland ultimately presented.

In this unhappy situation, Port Augusta made its way into the twentieth century.

NOTES

- 1 For works that appear to be partly or largely based on McLellan's writings see Mayes R, 1974, Pictorial History of Port Augusta, Rigby, Adelaide; also Branson Y M and Millsteed R, 1977, Port Augusta Sketchbook, Rigby, Adelaide; also Oates T J, 1967, "A History of Methodism in Port Augusta, 1866-1963", Journal of the South Australian Methodist Historical Society, vol 1, October, pp4-16.
- 2 PAD 14.5.1880, 21.5.1880, 28.6.1880, 12.6.1880; Quiz and Lantern 11.8.1893; The Mail, 21.11.1925; Adelaide Chronicle 21.7.1932, 17.11.1932.
- 3 Centenary History of Education at Port Augusta Primary School, 1978, Centenary Sub-Committee, Port Augusta; Port Augusta West Primary School, 1981, Echoes of the Past, Port Augusta.
- 4 Contemporary descriptions include A Trip to Port Augusta and Back by a Citizen of Adelaide, 1881, Adelaide; "Report from Port Augusta", South Australian Presbyterian Magazine, May 1883, no 115, p76 and November 1883, no 149, p121; Memorials of Port Augusta, 1885, Bible Christian Church, Port Augusta; Bruce R, 1902, Reminiscences of an Old Squatter, Adelaide; (Burgoyne T ?), 1902, "Some Early Attempts at Forming an Institute", South Australian Institutes Journal, 24 February; Richardson N A, 1927, The Pioneers of the North-West of South Australia, Adelaide; Hayward J F, 1927, "Reminiscences", PRGSSA, vol 29, pp79-170.
- 5 M^cCarty J W and Schedvin C B, (eds), 1978, "Introduction", Australian Capital Cities, United Press, Sydney, pp 1-8.
- 6 Blainey G, 1954, "Scissors and Paste in Local History", Historical Studies - Australia and New Zealand, vol 6, no 23, November, pp339-344, stresses the importance of describing economic as well as social history when writing local history.
- 7 M^cCarty and Schedvin, op cit, p2-10.
- 8 Ibid
- 9 Stannage C T, 1982, "Australian Urban History" Osborne G and Mandle W F, New History: Studying Australia Today, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp164-174.
- 10 M^cCarty and Schedvin, op cit, p15.

STATEMENT

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University, nor, to the best of my knowledge does it contain material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

R J Anderson

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ABBREVIATIONS

- A = Anderson R J, (Ed), 1986, M^cLellan's
'Transcontinental' Articles on the
History of Port Augusta, T A F E
College, Port Augusta
- AIAS = Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
- B&Y = Bignell & Young (or their records - see
Appendice 2)
- CPP = Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers
- CSO = Colonial Secretary's Office Records held by
the PRO
- GRG = Government Record Group within the PRO
- ha = hectares
- Ibid = in the same place (ibidem)
- km = kilometres
- LBSA = Libraries Board of South Australia
- l = litres
- L = Loads
- m = metres
- ML = Mortlock Library
- mm = millimetres
- MS = Manuscript
- MUP = Melbourne University Press
- nd = no date known
- OLT = Overland Telegraph Line
- op cit = in the work cited (opere citato)
- OUP = Oxford University Press
- nd = no date
- no = number

- p = page
- PAC = Port Augusta Corporation (local government council)
- PAD = Port Augusta Dispatch newspaper
- pp = pages
- PRG = Private Record Group within the ML
- PRGSSA = Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia
- PRO = Public Records Office, previously S A Archives
- t = tonnes
- SAGCR = South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register newspaper
- SAGG = South Australian Government Gazette
- SAPD = South Australian Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)
- SAPP = South Australian Parliamentary Papers
- SAR = South Australian Railways
- SUP = Sydney University Press
- UQP = University of Queensland Press
- Trans = The Transcontinental newspaper
- vol = Volume

Note In 1986 the South Australian Archives were abolished and replaced with the Public Records Office (PRO) and the Mortlock Library (ML) South Australian Government and official records were retained by the former, and business and private records kept in the latter.



Northern Spencer Gulf runs along the side of the Flinders Range, penetrating deep into Australia's arid core. The sea, forever narrowing, tapers to a fine point and stops about 6km north of the site of Port Augusta. It is an impressive geographic phenomenon.

Port Augusta's position has dominated much of its history, and its existence was tied to that of the inland. This was so in Aboriginal times, and the Port Augusta landscape and scenery made a notable impression on the Aborigines. Such was the impact of the Port Augusta area upon those who encountered it, that several stories involving the region were told much further afield than was usual.*

The most important of these was the extraordinary story of the 'armies' or 'mobs' of native cats. This story commenced at Port Augusta and made its way to Central Australia, where it was of particular importance to the Central Australian Southern Aranda Aborigines and the peoples of the Simpson Desert.¹ Within the ancient songs which accompanied the passage of this story north, there are remarkable descriptions of the Port Augusta region.

*The Aborigines viewed stories from the ancient past - the Dreamtime - in much the same way that committed Jews and Christians view the Old or the New Testament. That is, the stories were considered more-or-less true and historically accurate; also holy and indeed sacred and sometimes binding and lawful. The stories were sometimes interpreted to reveal binding rules for Aborigines who wished to live a virtuous life; they suggested ways in which to view problems; and what relationship a person or place should have to various other people and places. See Stanner W E H, 1970, "The Dreamtime", Harding T G and Wallace B J, Cultures of the Pacific, The Free Press, New York, p305.

Briefly, the story is that a young native cat (called tjilpa in Aranda language) was on a plain to the north of the McDonnell Ranges near present-day Alice Springs, in the territory of the Aranda tribe. He saw foam, or tufts, floating in the sky and to locate their source he followed the direction from which they came. This took him south until he reached a huge pole (called by the Aranda, a tnatantja) rising out of Spencer Gulf at Port Augusta. It was so high it touched the sky and reached towards the stars. Like a chimney and smoke, the wind had carried the foam or tufts from this pole to where he had first noticed it in Central Australia. The pole was called amewara tnatantja (Milky Way pole) because it stretched across the sky like a second Milky Way.* The native cat then recruited a large group of Port Augusta tjilpa. They began an epic journey during which they walked, fought, copulated, ate, defaecated and otherwise made their way, north and north-west across the countryside.² Sometimes the wandering bands insulted local tribal ancestors, stole sacred objects, broke down the tnatantja of local tribes, or induced groups of local native cats to join them.³ They left in their wake a trail of newly-created hills and valleys, knobs, crevices and other landmarks. Thus inland Aborigines over a vast area

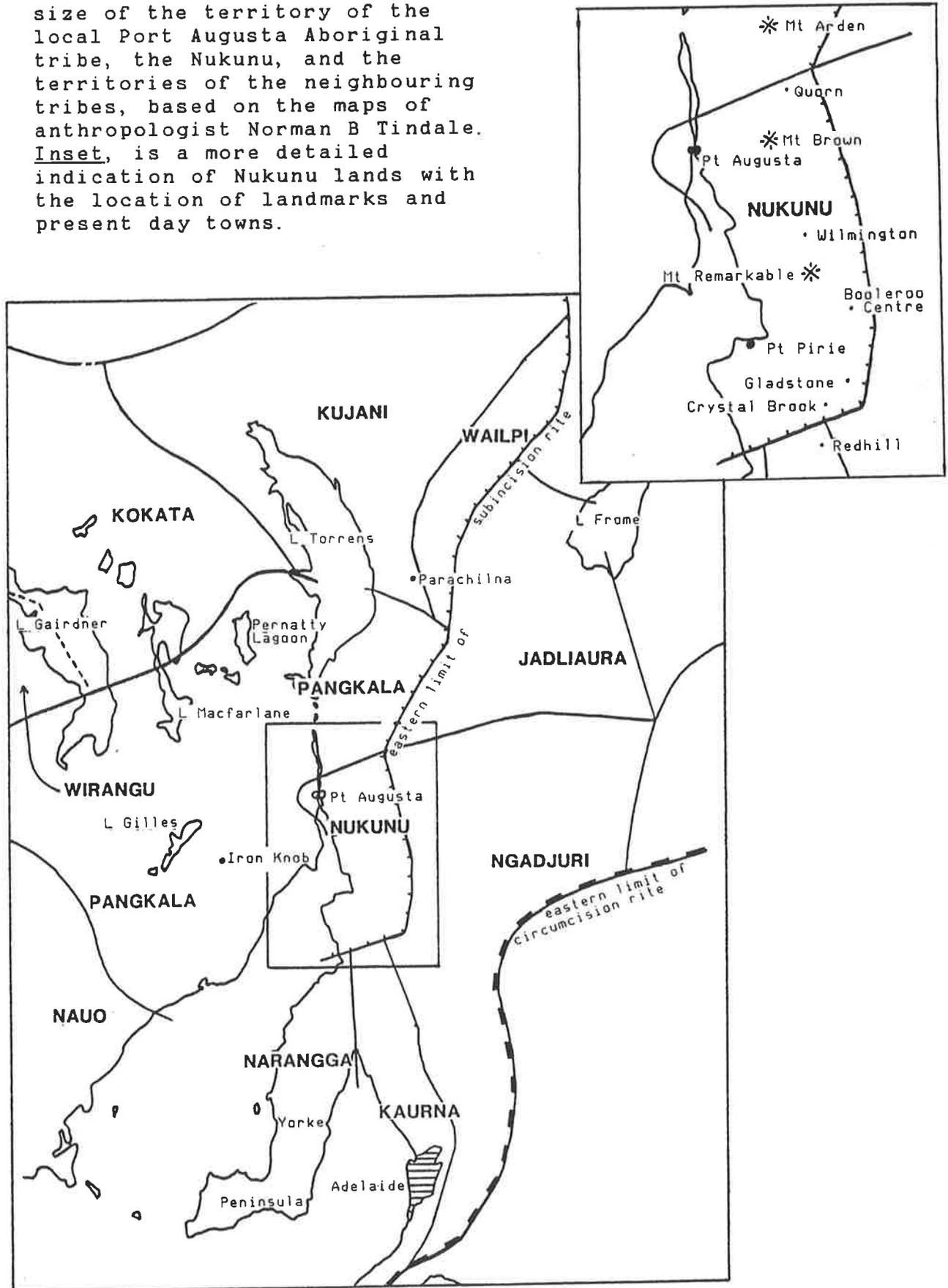
*When a new camp for Aborigines was set up on the outskirts of Port Augusta in December 1939, it was christened "Umeewarra Mission", a name suggested by Jimmy Captain, an ex-police tracker from Oodnadatta. He told the missionaries that "Umeewarra" meant the Mission was "the road of the stars" and "that God has his people [the missionaries] here now to tell us right across our country" that the Mission is "the way to heaven". "Amewara" is probably also the religious hallmark name for Port Augusta referring to the Aborigines' native cat myth. From Umeewarra Minute Book.

Reverberating loudly without a pause,
Sea-flecked with drifts of foam,
Casting a flickering fireglow over the sea forever,
The pole flecked with drifts of foam.⁶

A second and interlocking collection of stories involving the Port Augusta region was known as "The Two Women" series. Of particular importance to Aboriginal women, these stories commenced near Maralinga, from where the Two Women went to Ooldea, then Port Augusta. Important local sites in this story were at Mt Brown, Yorkey Crossing and the cliffs beside the present Port Augusta Hospital.⁷ The cliffs, known locally as Flinders' Redcliffs, were said to have been stained red by the blood of women who came from many parts of the inland to have their babies at that site. For some time, one of the closest buildings to the site was the Maternity Ward of the Port Augusta Hospital. Arising from this myth were methods of healing which in recent times were still practiced by women, including Rosie Kidman at Davenport Aboriginal Reserve, Port Augusta. "The Seven Sisters" story from West Australia and the north-west of South Australia, and a mythological whirlwind from Coober Pedy joined the Two Women story at Kingoonya. Together this horde of Dreamtime people moved off east, across Lake Eyre and Coober Creek. These stories similarly locked Port Augusta into the consciousness of many inland tribes.

A fourth story concerned the adventures of an emu. It travelled down Cooper Creek and through several tribes'

Map indicating the relative size of the territory of the local Port Augusta Aboriginal tribe, the Nukunu, and the territories of the neighbouring tribes, based on the maps of anthropologist Norman B Tindale. Inset, is a more detailed indication of Nukunu lands with the location of landmarks and present day towns.



territories before reaching the lands of the Nukunu and Spencer Gulf. The area around Port Augusta township was long used as a 'meeting place' for local Aboriginal groups. Evidence exists that the Kokata (and probably others) moved through the Port Augusta area prior to settlement. To the north of the town, Yorkey Crossing and Lake Umewarra were important ceremonial sites with much mythological content for other groups.⁸ Through these stories it seems likely that many Aborigines have a Dreamtime relationship - even a familiarity - with the area.

The original inhabitants of the Port Augusta region were the Nukunu Aboriginal tribe. Studies of nearby and related tribes suggest that at the time of contact Aborigines had inhabited the region for 10,000 years.⁹

In 1878, informants from Melrose identified the local tribe as the "Noocoona". This tribe occupied the eastern side of Spencer Gulf from Port Augusta to Bundaleer Station, and east to Coonatto Station. This is a similar region to that which Schurmann said was occupied by the "Nukunnu". It seems safe to infer that both writers meant the same people.¹⁰

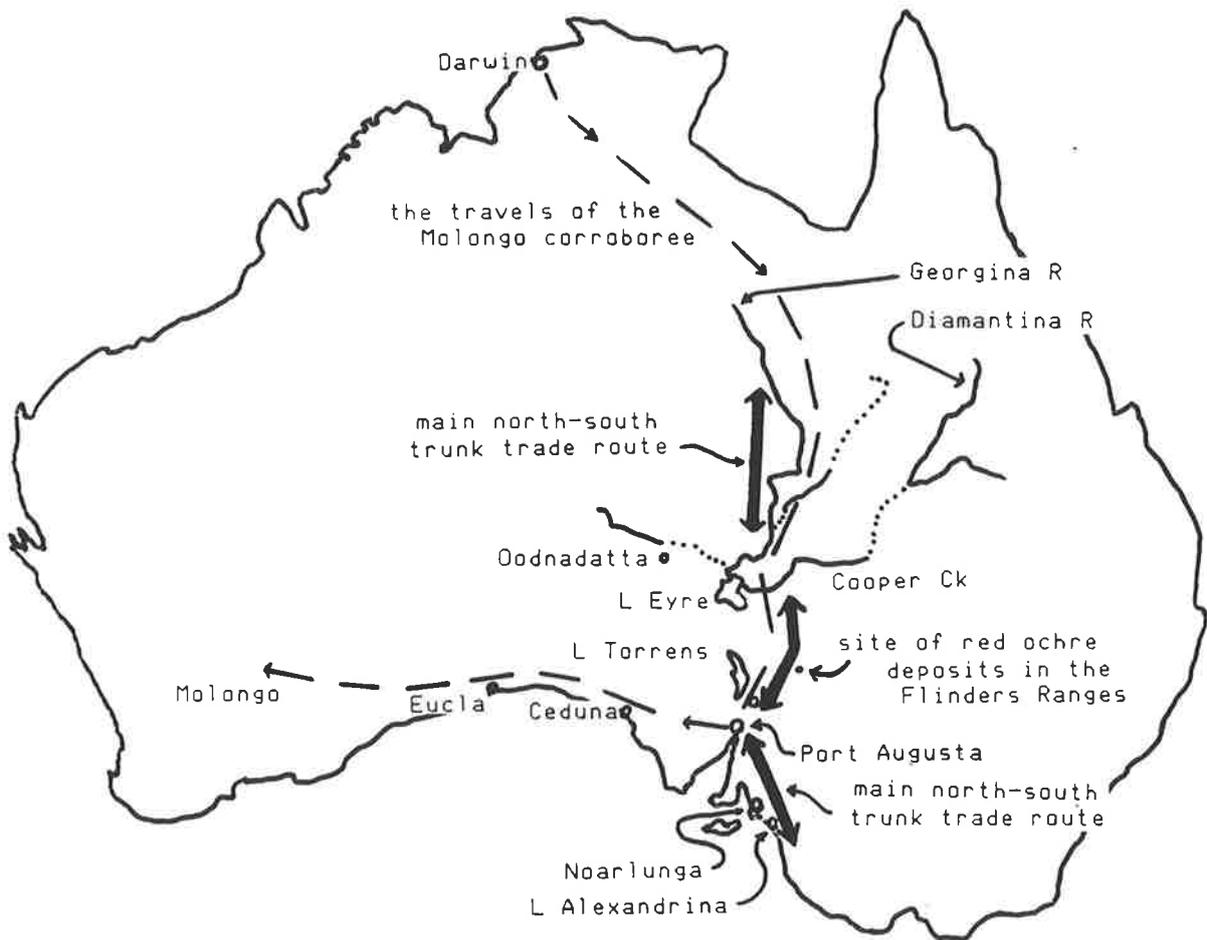
In answer to an inquiry, N B Tindale of the South Australian Museum said

the boundaries of the Nukunu tribal area as I recall were based principally on statements by...Pangkala and several Kokata. It seems quite clear...that the Nukunu did go a little way down on

the western side of Spencer Gulf. The rock paintings which they made in caves east of Lincoln Gap are exactly the same style as the ones in the Flinders Range. Perhaps this would be rather vague support for the statements I received from the living people.¹¹

Although each tribe of Aborigines saw themselves as quite distinct from other tribes, it is not clear that they traditionally thought of boundaries in the same way the colonists or some anthropologists did.¹² Increasing evidence suggests that Aborigines have taken ideas set in their style of thought, and rearranged them so that whites could grasp them using a European style of thought.¹³ This may have been the case with tribal boundaries. Traditionally, "boundaries" represented only approximate linguistic and cultural demarcations, particularly in desert cultures.¹⁴

Throughout Aboriginal Australia a great bartering and trading system, accompanied by a regular flow of news, linked distant tribes. It followed general routes, depending on seasonal conditions.¹⁵ A good example was the "Kopara custom". This was practiced by tribes from the north east corner of the state to Eyre Peninsula and included the Nukunu. Kopara maintained the balance of "exchanges" between the tribes, be they of gifts, ceremonies, brides, injuries, and even lives. It was followed in a widely recognised, standardised way, not as a business deal but as an ancient ritual method of keeping



Port Augusta's position on the Aboriginal trade routes between northern and south eastern Australia, according to anthropologist Fred D M^cCarthy, (1939). The trade routes involving central and northern Australia and the eastern Australian river systems have been left out in order to highlight the Port Augusta region.

friendship, maintaining social cohesion and fulfilling obligations. The lands of the Nukunu were also linked in a chain of trade to the south, north and west.¹⁶

White authorities were unaware of the existence of the Nukunu until 1846.¹⁷ No positive interest was taken in them until the arrival from Poonindie* of the newly appointed Sub-protector of Aborigines for Port Augusta, Henry Paul Minchin, on 1 February, 1853.¹⁸ It is likely that the Nukunu and nearby tribes had suffered considerable disruption by then, due to clashes with whites over land and water, as well as from the ravages of newly introduced diseases.¹⁹ This is discussed further on in this chapter. Later descriptions of the Nukunu may have come from locations by then shared with surrounding tribes, and so they may have been confused with their neighbours when the whites attempted to describe Nukunu customs. This could have been the case with various accounts from the village of Melrose/Mt Remarkable, the shepherds' huts at Mt Brown and Mt Arden, the police post at Port Ferguson, and the missionary's camp at Minchin Wells/Stirling North. Nevertheless, since the Nukunu had a great deal in common with their neighbours, clues about their customs and lifestyle can be pieced together to suggest a picture of them.

No record of the economic life of the Nukunu has been

*Poonindie Mission, 20km north of Port Lincoln. The chapel and other buildings, built by the Aborigines, still stand today.

located. If all things were equal, a position on the seashore seemed to afford a territorial advantage with the availability of food of 300-400% compared to inland areas, and where the inland rainfall was less, there was a still greater advantage.²⁰ It seems likely that the Nukunu enjoyed a good variety of food. The explorers, for example, reported sightings of kangaroos, wallabies, pigeons, various ducks and water fowl including black swans, as well as other game and a variety of birds.²¹ One explorer, Robert Cock, wrote that

in about half an hour caught 4 cwt of stingray and snapper... the snapper averaging 12 lb each.²²

Considering this relative abundance of food and Schurmann's report of the likely smallish Nukunu population, combined with the significance to the inland tribes of mythology from the area, plus the existence of a main trade route that intersected the region, it may well have been that Aborigines from the inland had regular resort to the Port Augusta area. The existence of the well-watered Flinders Range, as well as a chain of waterholes along a north-south route to the west of Lake Torrens ("the gabi route") down to the Port, makes such visits all the more feasible and likely.²³ This could account for the fact that since white occupation, so many different groups of Aborigines have followed the new transport routes to the Port, particularly people from the inland. Such a pattern of movement may not be new, but part of ancient custom.

The Australian Aborigines had systematically exploited their environment, "harvesting the unploughed plains" as Geoffrey Blainey said, and their persistent use of fire was witnessed by most explorers in this region.

In arid parts of Australia the effects of fire would have been mingled with the lottery of rainfall, landform, soil types, the range of plant species, levels of grazing and customary uses of the land by the original inhabitants.²⁴ Deliberately lit fires would have cleared the spinifex and shrubs more often than would have occurred naturally. This allowed other beneficial species, such as the mulga tree, to germinate and get a start.²⁵

The panorama many explorers sought - of "lightly wooded plains with a rich cover of native grasses and herbs"²⁶ - an embryonic grazing land - was an Aboriginal landscape. This was adapted to the Aborigines' use of fire, a product of their land-use techniques.

However, in his definitive book on colonisation The Making of the South Australian Landscape, Williams²⁷ said:

there is little evidence that Aboriginal man altered the landscape.

Williams acknowledged that:

his one effect on the landscape was the burning of the natural vegetation,

but compared with Blainey's view, he clearly under-rated the effect of the Aborigines' actions on the balance of

vegetation, plant regeneration and reproduction, indigenous food supplies and pastures. Being more interested in the impact of European settlement on South Australia, Williams made only passing mention of the Aborigines. In doing so, he reflected the conventional wisdom current when he wrote, stating merely that their-

nomadic life [was] intricately woven with the conditions and rhythms of nature [in an] harmonious relationship.²⁸

When the explorers saw the land they, like Williams, considered it as undeveloped and evaluated it for their ambitious vision of pastoral wealth. They looked upon land which was usually well-balanced for use by the Aborigines and evaluated it as 'promising', or 'adaptable', or 'desolate' for grazing. Explorers evaluated signs of obvious water for stock around Port Augusta, and found it sparse, although they were sometimes impressed by the pastures in what became the Port's hinterland.

In arid areas, original grazing pressure by native animals would have been low compared with later stocking. Rabbits were unknown.²⁹ Once this dry land was stocked, the selective grazing of sheep and cattle disturbed the balance of vegetation, causing the replacement of perennials with annuals, especially on the heavily grazed flood-plains. Some flood-plain vegetation (and stock-carrying) levels then declined by 50% or more.³⁰ If this type of land and vegetation degradation could have been avoided in Port Augusta's hinterland, the town's history might be quite

different.

For the Australian Aborigines, fire became the emblem of the collapse of their land ownership. By helping to create much that attracted the British and their domestic stock, it indirectly led to the extinction of their essentially pastoral way of life.³¹ The Aborigines' extensive land-use clashed with the pastoralists' resolve to use the same land in a similar dispersed, but far more vigorously exploitive, way. The two land uses were incompatible.

There were a great many seamen with the British colonists who came to South Australia in 1836. Between then and 1839 it is possible that sea-borne parties investigated the top of Spencer Gulf, but the first report of such a trip did not appear until 1839.³²

In that year, Robert Cock and the crew of the vessel Victoria, under Captain Hutchinson and with Surveyor Hughes, explored St Vincent and Spencer Gulf for the Adelaide Survey Association. Between 30 April-5 May, Cock and the crew of the Victoria landed in several places around the present day site of Port Augusta and took depth soundings on both sides of the Gulf. At Yatala Harbour -

We dug for fresh water but at seven feet could find none...we journeyed for six miles through swampy flats. At last we reached the hills which had presented such a promising appearance; but

instead of grass [we found] small yellow withered bushes intermingled with a sort of prickly bush grass... At about Curtain Point* at all times of the tide, the water is from one to two miles broad, but the swamps cut off all communication. On a bold beach above Curtain Point... good landing is to be obtained... we proceeded for the head of the Gulf. Two men were unsuccessful in digging for water on the west side... we pulled up the Gulf about ten miles and found the channel varying from one hundred to four hundred yards in width, and deep. A landing can be had in many places... The country in every direction is exceedingly barren, without water or grass... From the extreme end of Mt Arden range runs a chain of four low hills and seems to connect the hills on both sides, and of course must exclude the admittance of any considerable stream into the Gulf; but from here, I have no doubt, the character of the country changes for the better.

Cock provided no reason for this last optimistic remark.³³

Thirteen days later, possibly unaware of Cock's recent visit, Edward John Eyre and his party camped at Depot Creek, about 25km north of the head of Spencer Gulf. The party included John Baxter and Darke. Depot Creek was the only place they could locate a quantity of reliable drinking water within several days march of their last watered campsite. Over the years, Eyre and others made it a favorite camp.³⁴ They had come overland from Adelaide to investigate the chance of a stock route to the then booming

* Several inquiries have failed to identify "Curtain Point", nor any landmark near Port Augusta that may have been known by this name. Cock was probably referring to Curlew Point.

settlement at Port Lincoln.³⁵ Within a few days, Eyre was in the country Cock had so wishfully commented upon. Eyre found it -

a complete sandy desert, interspersed with scrub...nowhere could we see the least sign of grass or water...the whole was barren and arid looking in the extreme, and as I gazed on the dismal scene before me I felt assured I had approached the vast and dreary desert of the interior...without finding a place where the horses could water [nor] a blade of grass - and the extensive and distant view before us forbade us to hope for either to the northward [but] I am still of the opinion that the lofty masses of ranges I saw so far away to the northward may, in a more favorable season, afford the means...of penetrating far into the interior. [To the south west for 50 miles] was open, level and barren...neither water course nor tree of any kind was to be seen...not a blade of grass anywhere or a drop of water...Before our return [to Depot Creek] I determined to examine the country...immediately to the west...[for] about 35 miles...high and flat-topped, and broken by deep gorges into portions resembling hills...no timber of any kind but patches of scrubby bushes, and a few small pines, but not the least indication of water.³⁶

Later observers agreed that Eyre's first inspection of this country was during a drought.³⁷

This seemingly inhospitable landscape was occupied by Aborigines, probably Nukunu or Pangkala, of whom Eyre wrote -

In our route up the Gulf we had seen very few natives, and those

were timid and alarmed at our presence; but to judge from the many and well-beaten tracks leading up the hills to the water, and the numerous fires we saw among the hills at night, I should imagine there were a considerable number in that neighbourhood. We found [they] cover up the springs and water holes very thickly with the boughs and branches of trees as if to protect it from the rays of the sun - [which] I had never observed elsewhere [suggesting] they suffer from the scarcity of water in the dry seasons. On the western side of the Gulf we could never see the tracks or fires of the natives in any direction.³⁸

Eyre returned to Depot Creek in August of the same year, after leading an expedition from Streaky Bay across the Gawler Range.³⁹

On 3 July 1840 Eyre once more set up his camp at Depot Creek. This time he was on his biggest and most expensive expedition, funded by colonists desiring to find further pastures inland. The journey overland from Adelaide took 14 days. The party included John Houston, Edward Bate Scott, Corporal Coles of the Surveyor-General's Department, a man called M^cRobert (who was later replaced by Thomas Costelow) and at least one Aborigine.⁴⁰ Earlier, Eyre had said that the top of the Gulf was -

the most probable point from which discoveries of importance may be made...and from which it is possible the veil may be lifted from the still unknown and mysterious interior of this vast continent.⁴¹

After the arrival of the party at the top of the Gulf they were supplied by the 37t government cutter, Waterwitch, recently purchased for such surveying and exploratory tasks.⁴² It was keenly awaited. After the stores had been unloaded, Eyre sent the vessel to -

the Eastern Shore of Spencer Gulf from the extreme Northerly point Southward [and] requested the master [Germein] to examine some salt water inlets on the east side of Spencer Gulf... should he have found a good landing place for goods, it would be of much importance to the northern parts of the colony when they become stocked; and nearly all the country as far as the head of the Gulf is adaptable for grazing.⁴³

Thus, from the start it was obvious that a township at the top of the Gulf would dominate both later exploration and the delivery of supplies to the north. In later reports no mention was made of the harbour that became Port Augusta, although Germein found a good roadstead and port, which now bears his name.⁴⁴

Exploration took place while the attitudes of the British colonists towards the Aborigines were developing. These attitudes were shaped by moral, philosophical and legal issues in a period of sporadic frontier conflict.

The glaring moral dilemma facing the newcomers was that the Aborigines owned the land, although the Government unilaterally claimed it as its own to sell to the colonists. An appreciation of how this dilemma was handled

is necessary to understand how the Government viewed colonisation at the top of Spencer Gulf, and the consequent Aboriginal resistance. In 1840, the official view of this dilemma, formed in an atmosphere of British numerical superiority around Adelaide, was that:

the invasion...is justifiable only on the grounds that we should...reserve an ample sufficiency [of land] for their present and future use and comfort under the new state of things into which they are thrown - a state in which we hope they will be led to live in greater comfort on a smaller space than they enjoyed before it occurred on their extensive original possessions.⁴⁵

There were other questions:

was the issue of rations...an act of charity or of justice? Had the settlers any more right to kill kangaroos than the natives to kill sheep?...It was said that the Europeans had an equal but not an exclusive right to the food provided by nature in Australia, so that in banishing the kangaroos they had incurred the responsibility of providing other food for the Aborigines [and about 1840 this became] the official opinion.⁴⁶

Added to this, the Aborigines would not use the small parcels of land allotted to them.⁴⁷ This provided a further difficult dimension to the colonists' floundering attempts to make some restitution in lieu of customary natural justice.

Where the British did not have numerical superiority, conflict arose. Isolated settlers were advised to be well armed and never alone. By 1842, conflict was acute at Port Lincoln.⁴⁸ It was here that the government learnt many hard

lessons, which it put to use in overcoming the Aborigines around Port Augusta. By that year, all the surrounding stations and some of the township houses had been attacked by Aborigines. The attacks had become systematic. They contributed to a population reduction from about 480 to around 130, and it seemed that Port Lincoln would have to be abandoned. Redcoats sent from Adelaide to bolster the situation were generally ineffective. They were inept in the bush and their horses were not up to the work.⁴⁹

The lesson was that to engage the Aborigines in warfare was costly, and unsuccessful where the Aborigines had superior numbers. This was not immediately grasped by the government. By the time Port Augusta was settled, violent confrontations were discouraged. Even when it was clear that the Aborigines could be beaten, the government balked at bloodshed.

For various reasons the situation at Port Lincoln subsided after 1842, but as stations spread onto the Eyre Peninsula another series of conflicts arose. In some of these newer places the Aborigines may have become aware that the invaders linked the giving of rations with the taking of land and consequently viewed rations with contempt. Indeed the rations caused additional disputes.⁵⁰

It was in June 1842 that Charles Christian Dutton decided to abandon the Port Lincoln district. With a party comprising Haldare, Brown, Cox, Graham and several hundred cattle, he headed into the unmapped north. Some of the livestock later

walked back to Port Lincoln but the men were never seen again.⁵¹ A search party of police and volunteers left Bungaree Station near Clare in September. It was led by the colourful Commissioner of Police, Alexander Tolmer, and included Charles and James Hawker, William Peters, James Baker, Corporal Rose, Troopers M^c Mahon, Spencer, Brook, Look, Barber, James M^c Lean, and a Sydney Aborigine named Billy. After journeying along the eastern coastal side of the Range via Crystal Brook run, they reached a creek southwest of Mt Remarkable. Here they disbanded after a disagreement. The volunteers searched on to Port Lincoln. No doubt they took the opportunity to reconnoitre the countryside around Port Augusta and the overland route to Port Lincoln. The police returned to Adelaide. A later official party under the command of E J Eyre, and including Tolmer, Corporal Rose, and Troopers M^c Lean and M^c Cullock and one of Eyre's Aboriginal off-siders, searched from Depot Creek to Port Lincoln. Neither group located Dutton or his men.⁵² Much later, two Pangkala Aborigines told a story of Dutton's party, and how-

two of the five white men came suddenly upon a group of Nukunu women...the white men took hold of two of the natives - probably to elicit information about water; and the women being much alarmed (having never before seen individuals differing in colour from themselves), uttered that shrill and peculiar cry which penetrates so far into their native solitudes; the men of the tribe dispatched the Europeans with their waddies...Mr Dutton's horse and several of the bullocks returned to their accustomed pastures at Port Lincoln.⁵³

However, 20 years later bones and other remains thought to be those of Dutton and his party were found at the south end of Lake Torrens, near Dutton Bluff.⁵⁴ This suggests that they may have been dispatched by the Pangkala.

In 1843, Surveyor-General Edward Frome with a party consisting of G C Hawker, surveyor and artist James Henderson, Police Corporal Prewitt, Sapper Pasmore and men named Rowe and Thomas explored east of Mt Remarkable and Mt Brown as far into the Flinders as Mt Searle.⁵⁵ That year too, William Pinkerton with a mob of sheep, is said to have been near the later site of Quorn.⁵⁶ The following year the explorer J C Darke was fatally speared in the Gawler Range, probably by Pangkala Aborigines.⁵⁷

In 1845, John Tennant decided to establish a station at Louth Bay, near Port Lincoln:

it was most difficult and perilous to travel stock overland in that region...through unsettled desolate black-infested country...He proceeded as far as the site of Quorn where two of his party were murdered and numbers of the sheep were killed by the natives. The squatter was forced to turn back.⁵⁸

A press report of the clash and the death of Tennant's two shepherds, Whitney and Scott, appeared in February 1846.⁵⁹ The police under Alexander Tolmer, again entered the area and conducted punitive investigations which eventually led to two Aborigines being charged.⁶⁰ In August, Tennant tried again with 7000 sheep and arrived in Port Lincoln after a five week trip from Adelaide. He had seen C C Dutton's tracks, and during the southward journey bartered fish for

flour with Aborigines.⁶¹

The arrest of the two suspects by Tolmer, probably Nukunu, and the legal proceedings which ensued, created another legal embarrassment for the Government. It illustrated the moral doubts some officials had when dealing with such cases according to the letter of British law. The Advocate General wrote to the Lieutenant Governor:

the case of the two natives charged with the murder of Mr Tennant's shepherds near Mt Arden in February last...it appeared that they belonged to a tribe, who had previously had no intercourse with Europeans, who were presumed to be altogether ignorant of our Laws and Customs, and whose language was in no degree known by any European...[the judge] stated very strong doubts...whether they should be put on trial at all for an offence arising out of their collision with the first Europeans ever entering their territory...the Protector of Aborigines... will visit the country inhabited by these natives with the view of preventing the recurrence of a similar difficulty.⁶²

Seven weeks later, during which time the accused would have been detained in Adelaide Gaol, the Lieutenant-Governor replied:

...Europeans had passed through the country previously...his Excellency is neither prepared to admit, unless proved in evidence, that [the two natives] came for the first time in contact with Europeans...nor that they are beyond the jurisdiction of our courts, even if their previous non-intercourse with Europeans be found. [Still we have the] jurisdiction over natives outlined by Lord Stanley in his letter

to Governor Grey on 19 January 1842...

From the moment that Governor Hindmarsh hoisted the British Standard on these shores (if not previously) the natives of South Australia were entitled to the protection of our laws, and His Excellency presumes became amenable to them...

According to their own usages, indeed and according to those of all savage tribes, as well as of civilized nations, robbery, and murder are acknowledged to be criminal, and are punishable accordingly...

Were we to adopt the usages of the Aborigines in this case, we would probably be justified in their estimation by pursuing the offending tribe until two individuals had fallen, whether the actual murders of the two shepherds or not...our mode of trial is far more merciful, even though but indifferently understood by the savages.

For these reasons...His Excellency cannot participate in the view of His Honor the Judge...This admission...would (in future such trials) involve inconvenient inquiring into the amount of their acquaintance with our laws, and would lead shepherds in charge of remote flocks to adopt the laws of the savage, namely, that of retaliation.

...You will bring the prisoners again forward for trial.⁶³

A similar perplexity caused the Commissioner of Police, George F Dashwood, to muse in a Quarterly Report of 1849:

To what extent the aborigines can justly be punished by laws to which they are no parties, and which were enacted to protect the lives and properties of persons whose habits and customs are totally distinct from their own appears a subject worthy of much

consideration.⁶⁴

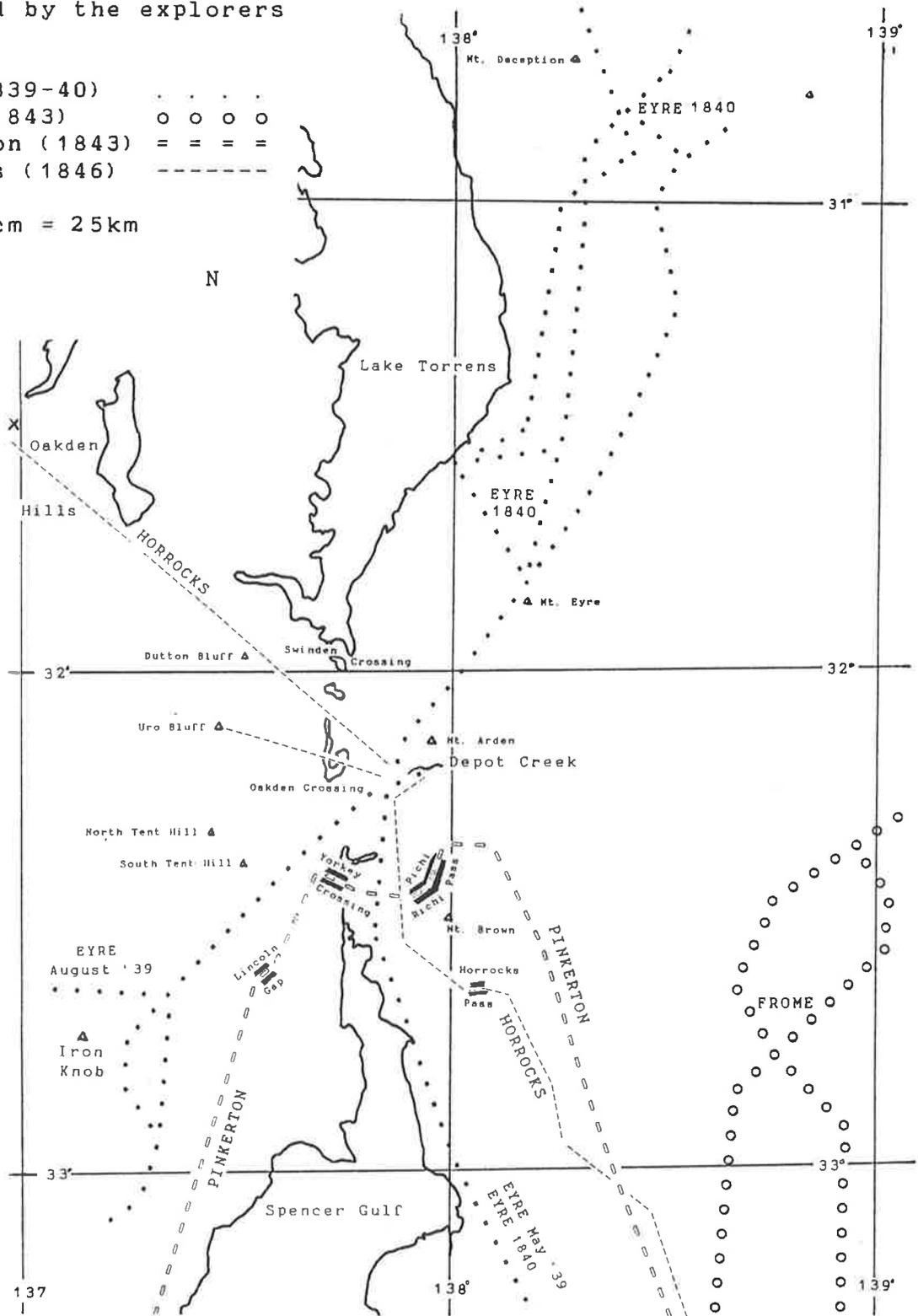
John Ainsworth Horrocks was a tall, handsome, likeable young Lancashire man of 21 when he arrived in the colony, in 1839. When most others were huddled around the coastline at Adelaide, he explored the mid-north, and was the first to take up land on the Hutt River. He wanted to explore Central Australia but could not get backers. He decided instead to explore "to the N N W of Mt Arden", and wrote to his sister that such an adventure "suits my temper as I want a more stirring life". He also chose this because many of the colonists were interested in the outcome of any explorations of the inland.⁶⁵

Consequently, in the winter of 1846 he set out from Penwortham with a heavily armed expeditionary party and headed north. When they reached the most northerly sheep station at Booyoolie, near the site of present-day Gladstone, the party consisted of seven. It included the now well-known colonial artist S T Gill as well as John Theakston, Bernard Kilroy and a tent-keeper, Garlick. There was an Aboriginal guide and interpreter, Jimmy Moorhouse, and a second Aboriginal to tend the goat-herd.⁶⁶ The goats were taken as a source of fresh meat and because they are decidedly preferable to sheep...as they give tongue immediately they are caught, so the natives could not take any without being heard.⁶⁷

Approximate tracks followed by the explorers

- Eyre (1839-40)
- Frome (1843) ○ ○ ○ ○
- Pinkerton (1843) = = = =
- Horrocks (1846) - - - - -

scale 2cm = 25km



There was also a camel, believed to be the first in Australia,⁶⁸ six horses and two carts.

Near the site of Wilmington, Kelly, an Aborigine married to a Nukunu woman, showed the party a pass through the hills to the coast.⁶⁹ This pass is now named after Horrocks. At the foot of the pass they found water. The expedition then moved north parallel to the coast for two days "over a most desolate plain", past the site of Port Augusta to Depot Creek, without finding any water.

On August 20, 1846, while searching for water on this desolate plain, Gill saw five Aborigines:

They appeared dreadfully alarmed... They have been much disturbed by the police whilst they have been hunting for the murderers of two shepherds of Mr Tennant's.⁷⁰

Of Eyre's previous visits, Horrocks recorded:

The traces still visible in places, though above six years old. We did our might to perpetrate his memory in this country by taking our drays on his tracks [to] mark the route to water for future bushmen.

And the next day:

August 22 encounter with numerous natives and fired off gun at one point, later firing again; in neither instance were the natives intimidated. Natives set fire to a scrub. A young man knew the name for knife [and] had on part of red worsted cap.

This cap may have belonged to a shepherd named Southey who had been killed by Aborigines.⁷¹ The Aborigines' tactics seem probably to get the whites to discharge their solitary

musket shots. They could then be safely rushed and overwhelmed. This suggests that after a few clashes with the invaders, the Aborigines understood how to defeat them in isolated combat.

On 1 September the explorers were on a most disheartening landscape, inhabited by "a fierce lot of natives", near the northern tip of Lake Dutton about 100km from Depot Creek. While trying to get a loaded shotgun from the camel's pack, Horrocks was accidentally shot in the face. He was returned to Penwortham and died on 23 September.⁷²

The first fatal shooting of Aborigines, probably Nukunu, by settlers in the Flinders Range was at the hands of Peter Ferguson, manager of William Younghusband's Crystal Brook run.⁷³ It is after him that Port Ferguson (Yatala Harbour) was named by Governor Robe. When the incident occurred, in 1846, four hundred sheep were driven off. In the ensuing punitive investigation three Aborigines were shot dead. No charges were laid against Ferguson, but two surviving sheep-stealers were each sentenced to twelve months gaol. Governor Robe sent the Protector of Aborigines into this Nukunu territory -

to explain to them the nature of British law as affecting property...[It is] desirable in order to impress them with a more favourable impression as to our good intentions towards them than they at present entertain, that a periodical issue of flour with an occasional issue of blankets should be made to them.⁷⁴

As a result, a feeding station was established at Samuel

White's Run, near Mt Remarkable.

The colonial legal system was based upon South Australia being a possession of the British Crown. All persons within the colony - Aboriginal and British - were subjects of the Crown, and subject to British-made laws.⁷⁵

Therefore conflict with the Aborigines was a civil police matter between British subjects. This avoided declaring the Aborigines hostile enemies of war, to be attacked and suppressed by warfare.⁷⁶ The same legal assumptions existed in other Australian colonies but it appears to have been more common there for the police to have disregarded the Aborigines' rights as British subjects.⁷⁷ In her authoritative coverage of the matter in South Australia, Kathleen Hassell said:

The police seem to have consistently carried out the wishes of the Government by approaching the natives as fellow-subjects. The natives, however, did not behave as a civilized policeman might expect most fellow-subjects to behave, [but] made a desperate resistance to those who wanted to capture them. Then the police, scenting danger to themselves, fired on them.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, South Australian colonists beyond police surveillance sometimes took the view that the Aborigines had no rights as British subjects, that it was war, and that to kill them was not murder. These views were expressed in the diaries of Flinders Range pioneers J F Hayward and J B Bull.⁷⁹

Graeme Jenkins in Conquest of the Ngarrindjeri, his

definitive work on the Aboriginal clans of Lake Alexandrina, identified one of the primary roots of these views when he said:

...these early settlers were of an heroic mould...to make the trip [from Britain] 140 years ago required physical, mental and emotional stamina far above the norm...even to embark on such a venture must have required considerable resolution: having survived it [they] would have been even more resolute, and in no mood to place the needs of people who they regarded as "wandering black savages" above their own.⁸⁰

We do not know what the Aborigines thought of the unfolding situation. They seem to have been at a marked political disadvantage. They do not seem to have seen themselves as one nation of indigenous South Australians, but as independent families of relatives. If this was the case, different families or clans within tribes may have made personal assessments of the gradually expanding presence of the British.⁸¹ One can reasonably imagine that they thought of the white man, as J B Bull observed, as their general enemy taking the water and hunting grounds from them and giving them no recompense for it, but shooting them down.⁸²

Some families may have chosen to fight, others to collaborate. This seems to have been the case at Port Lincoln, where one clan was identified as particularly hostile and members of other clans were friendly and helpful.⁸³ It was beyond their experience that others would set out to invade and take over their lands, leaving

them with nothing. Some families may have chosen to wait and see, while getting on with the tasks of daily living.⁸⁴ But in following even this path, the sympathetic, patronising, George French Angas accurately predicted their doom. After only a decade of the invaders' relentless pushing advance to create their own wealth and prosperity, Angas wrote of the Pangkala and similar northern tribes:

[Look at] the young savage in all the unfettered freedom of his aboriginal condition; well-fed - with no care, no anxiety, no hope - he pursues his animal existence from day to day - laughs and wonders at the superiority of the white man; and knows of no higher attainment than the search for roots and gums, and the chase of the emu and the kangaroo through the wild trackless desert. He starts up from his fire when roused by hunger, and free as the timid creatures of his pursuit, goes forth upon the soil that was the hunting ground of his fathers. But ere long, his dark and wandering race shall have passed away, and the waving corn shall smile upon the ground that was once the wild-man's path - when the naked savage stealing through the forest, and the fleet kangaroo of the desert, shall be things known only in tale and story, told by some grey-haired sire to the wondering little ones of a future century.⁸⁵

In 1846, a mountain of "copper accumulated in masses" was said to exist at Mt Remarkable. The development depended upon finding a suitable port nearby. About the time Horrocks was passing that mount, the Adelaide press reported that a good harbour had been discovered north of Port Pirie.⁸⁶ It was probably these two events that excited

Governor Robe to inspect the top of Spencer Gulf. Robe's party sailed in the government vessel Lapwing and included the colonial Harbourmaster, Lipson. Like many before them, they took a rowing boat to the very end of the Gulf and inspected parts of the Range:

The Governor was of the opinion...that the range of mountains, as far as Mt Arden, abounds in minerals

and

The most important result...is the discovery [of] an excellent well-sheltered harbour [which] must give greater additional value to the land and mines in that country.⁸⁷

It is unclear which harbour they were referring to.

In November 1849 the Government's Outports Commission was formed -

to ascertain [the] probable expense [of establishing] a port or shipping place at or near the heads of St Vincent and Spencer Gulf [and other places].⁸⁸

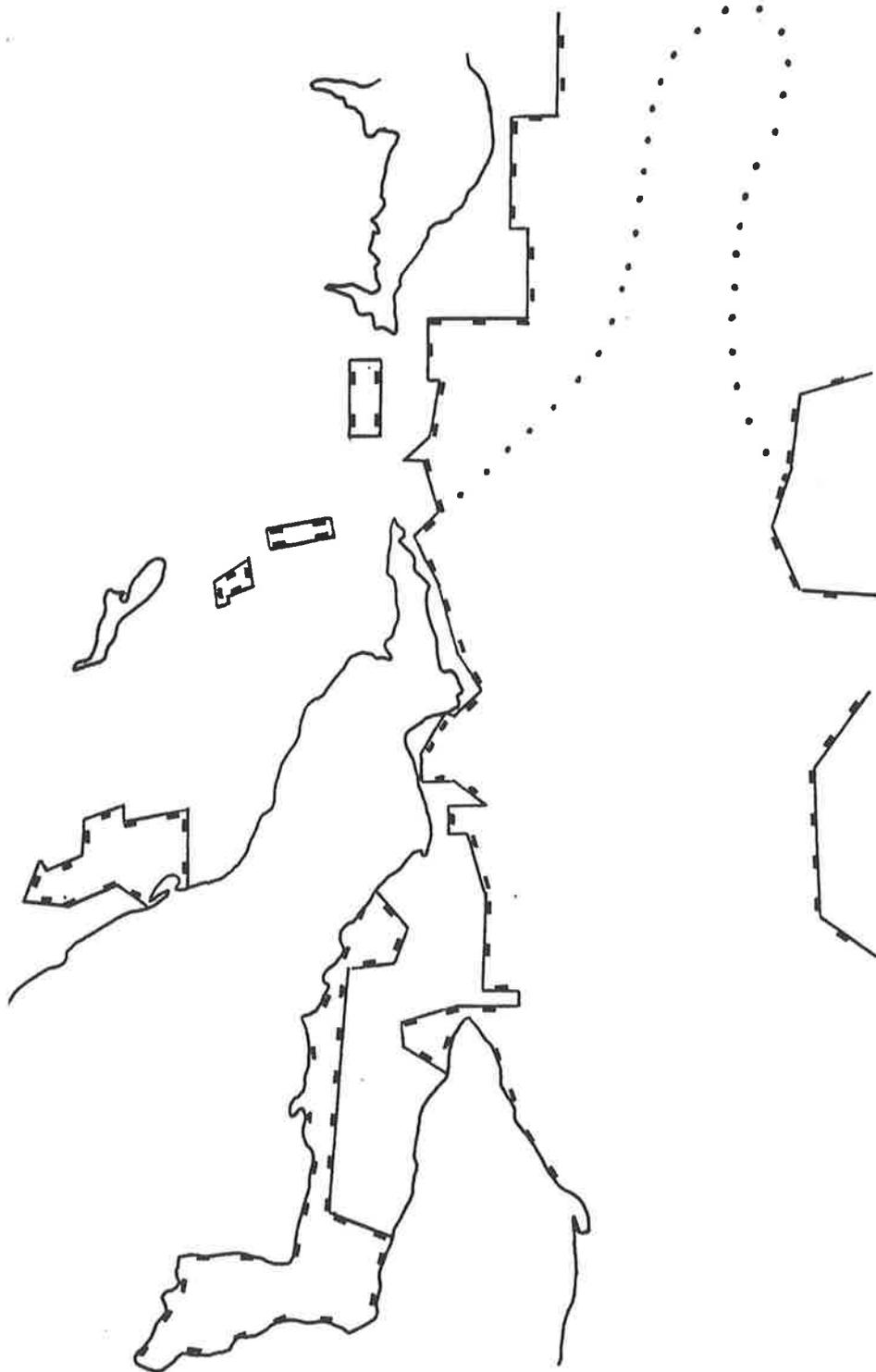
No further mention of the Outports Commission has been found. It appears to have been inconclusive about the site for a port at the head of Spencer Gulf. This is suggested by the movement of Elder and Grainger's party in 1852 in seeking a shipping place at the top of the Gulf. This party included Captain Hall, a member of the 1849 Outports Commission.⁸⁹

Reporting to Governor Young on 8 June 1852 about the successful location of a good site for a port, John Grainger and Alexander Elder wrote:

About three miles above Curlew Point we were fortunate to fall in with a very superior landing place with steep hard banks and solid ground approaching the waters edge. The Gulph here is 5 or 6 fathoms deep and about as wide as Port Adelaide at the North Arm. A jetty could be run out at a very trifling expense at which a vesfel drawing 10 or 12 feet water might go alongside and discharge or take in cargo... Drays from the interior Northward could approach this place of shipment by skirting the Flinders Range at the North end. Those from the east of the Range would arrive at it through Beautiful Valley and a gorge a little to the south of Mt Brown. Mr Harris who accompanied the party [has] prepared a chart of the Port Ferguson and the New Port (which we have taken the liberty of calling Port Augusta).⁹⁰

Exploration and grazing went hand-in-hand at this time. Pastoralists and their employees were constantly looking for new country, encouraged by the 1851 Waste Lands Act to "prosecute their business with renewed vigour".⁹¹ In 1851, John Oakden and a man named Hulkes sought and found grazing country by going overland from Port Augusta to the west of Lake Torrens. However, there were attacks by the Aborigines, soon the surface water dried up and Oakden moved east. He briefly occupied country 60km north of Wilpena, but then went to the Victorian gold fields.⁹² In 1857, local pastoralists Charles Swinden, Murdock Campbell, D Thompson and E Stocks explored from Saltia up the west of Lake Torrens via Swinden Crossing.⁹³ Formal explorations into the north and north west behind Port Augusta were undertaken by Babbage (1856), M^cDouall Stuart (1856),

Pastoral occupation of the Flinders Range. The line of dots marks the extent of grazing by 1851-2 according to the recollection of pastoral pioneer John Lewis (1916). This shows that the Flinders Range was well occupied before the settlement at Port Augusta commenced. The continuous checkered lines show the pastoral leases by 1857-9, based on a map in the Public Record Office by W Pitts.



Warburton (1857), and the Governor, Richard M^cDonnell (1859).⁹⁴

This inland region behind Port Augusta was a source of great expectations, as illustrated by a story recounted in 1880 by ex-Surveyor-General Freeling. He said that in 1857 "a survey officer" reported the startling news that a large inland lake had been discovered 600km north of Port Augusta. The Government sent a party, with a boat and dingy on the Yatala, to Port Augusta; horses, bullocks and drays went overland. They joined and headed north in early August.⁹⁵ When they reached the lake, it was salt water five centimetres deep. Writing about the incident much later, the "survey officer", G W Goyder, reflected on perhaps the most notable error of judgment in his career:

I cannot conceive how I could possibly arrive at the conclusion that the water...were other than flood waters...such an inference arose from erroneous premises and inexperience of the country...I have since paid no heed to first impressions.⁹⁶

Goyder's error indicated a common optimistic misjudgment of the inland. Hope for the inland was the fuel of many expectations. Goyder later declared, as a general rule, that the situation of a run as to a shipping port or town, should be the determining factor of the rate of assessment of pastoral leases.⁹⁷

The settlers' continual seizures of the land deprived the Aborigines of their customary means of subsistence. This

led to acute problems on the Eyre Peninsula during the drought of 1851-52. As a result, a plan of issuing a daily ration during the lean seasons was started in the remote parts of the Port Lincoln district. This soon had the desired result of reducing strife with the settlers, although in outlying areas rations were not issued and strife continued.⁹⁸ This "ration strategy" was soon to be used successfully during the settlement of Port Augusta and its hinterland.

From the time of the incidents with Tennant and Horrocks in 1846, there were increasing reports of clashes in the lands of the Nukunu. In 1846, the most northerly run was that of John Watt, between Mt Remarkable and Mt Brown.⁹⁹ Because of settlers' complaints about losses to the Aborigines, there was a police station located at Mt Remarkable by 1848.¹⁰⁰ New land tenure rules were introduced in July 1851. Prior to that, many squatters "had been living in a state of pastoral vagrancy wandering to and fro over the land".¹⁰¹ Therefore it is unclear how far they had penetrated into the Flinders Range but they were probably scouting to as far north as Leigh Creek.¹⁰² By 1849, at least one incident had been reported between Aborigines and settlers at Mt Brown.¹⁰³

In that year, H J Richman commenced with 1400 sheep at Mt Brown, and he had neighbours. In Pastoral Pioneers, it says of Richman's station:

It was a very remote locality in those far away days. The high

hills...were infested with natives...When not observed by the shepherds the niggers would cut off quite a number of sheep...and "collar their mutton"...Mr Richman had scarcely got going when...he followed his employees to the El Dorado [of the Victorian goldfields].¹⁰⁴

At this time the Aboriginal population of the Mt Remarkable to Mt Brown district was put at 150.¹⁰⁵

The desertion of many whites to the goldfields, especially policemen and shepherds, left the white population north of the River Broughton increasingly depleted, feeling insecure and apprehensive. J B Hughes of Bundaleer feared that if police are permanently withdrawn the consequences will be disastrous...north of the Broughton. The gradual migration... has impressed the Aborigines with the truth of a prophecy... that the white men would leave the country as suddenly and unexpectedly as they entered it...and they are boasting...that the time would come when they would retake possession of their country and drive away the last of the white fellows. This idea and this conduct prevail throughout the country from the Burra Mine to Mt Arden.¹⁰⁶

In February 1852 a shepherd was killed at Mt Arden. In March, Robert Richardson was killed in the Mount Brown district and two Aborigines were committed for trial.¹⁰⁷

On the 19 September 1852 the mutilated body of James Brown, a 17 year old shepherd, was found near Mt Brown.¹⁰⁸

His 500 sheep were missing. A policeman, 14 settlers and an Aboriginal guide tracked the sheep for three days, to west of Lake Torrens. The Protector of Aborigines' report stated:

a few hundred yards distant from the sheep they saw four natives running away from them and in endeavouring to make prisoners of the natives were attacked...the four natives were shot...no charge was preferred against the police constable or those who assisted him.¹⁰⁹

The Aboriginal guide said they were "Port Lincoln blacks".¹¹⁰

By this time, the Police had a defacto policy to avoid violence, while still overcoming the Aborigines. It was to

cultivate the acquaintance of the Northern Tribes by issuing them flour and blankets at stated periods, and thus obtaining a knowledge of their persons generally, and through the interpreters of their own tribes, becoming aware of their haunts, habit and movements. We see no reason why these measures should not result in taming the natives.¹¹¹

As a result of this most recent Mt Brown affray, the Commissioner of Police recommended in his Report of 4 November 1852:

with a view to preventing aggressions [I suggest] that the flour which is issued periodically to them [near Mt Remarkable] should, for the future be distributed higher up the country.¹¹²

Relationships between the Aborigines and settlers on the 100

or so stations north of Mt Remarkable greatly deteriorated following the death of this young shepherd.¹¹³ Also there were increasing complaints from the settlers about "natives taking away their sheep".¹¹⁴

It was in this foreboding atmosphere that the authorities drew upon the bloody lessons of Port Lincoln and the Eyre Peninsula in their plans to establish a port at the top of Spencer Gulf. Consequently

On 1st February [1853] a feeding station was commenced near Mt Brown [by] H P Minchin and two police constables; with instructions to supply every adult native with 1/2 lb flour and 1/2 lb meat per diem and half these quantities for children under twelve years of age. His aim will be to induce the wild natives from the hills to live at his station and by keeping them in some sort of contact with himself and the police, so far civilise them, as to render them not only harmless but useful to the settlers.¹¹⁵

Minchin was charged with the following duties:

1. Your district shall embrace all of the settled country to the north of Mt Remarkable and you are requested to become personally acquainted with the natives inhabiting it; to visit them...ascertain their number and keep a Registry of the births and deaths and [understand] their language.
2. ...personally inquire into all disputes [with] Europeans and report...upon cases of importance...and use every exertion to promote and maintain good understanding between them and the settlers.
3. ...report...on the last day of February, May, August, and

November upon the natives in your district, giving as much statistical information as you are able including the numbers of natives living with Europeans, services rendered to Europeans etc.

4. Keep a detailed journal of all your proceedings.¹¹⁶

Henry Paul Minchin arrived in the colony in 1851. He was unusually tall - 2 metres (6'6"). He commenced work almost immediately at the Native Training Institution, Poonindie, where he was for a time farm supervisor. He led morning and evening prayers. On the Lord's Day, in the absence of Archdeacon Hale, he conducted the services.¹¹⁷ After three years at Poonindie he was appointed Sub-Protector of Aborigines, and also Inspector of Native Police at Port Ferguson, soon after referred to as Port Augusta. He was later made Magistrate at Mount Remarkable, where he apparently lived and owned land after he left Port Augusta.¹¹⁸ A man who met him in 1854 said that he found him courteous, sociable and educated.¹¹⁹

Upon arrival at the new port, Minchin's pressing task was to find water. With the assistance of Aborigines, he sank two wells near the Saltia Creek. It was there that he set up his camp. It became the main reliable source of water in the area for some years. There was only salt water at Port Augusta. The camp was known as Minchin Wells, and was on a Government Reserve in the vicinity of the old pound, to the right of the 1960s main road through Stirling North, towards the middle of the town from Port Augusta.¹²⁰

To ensure the spread of the British colony northwards, with an outlet for produce through the Port, it was essential that strife with the Aborigines was kept to a minimum. As illustrated by recent killings, the potential for strife was there. The settlers were vulnerable, as J B Hughes' letter of 1852 showed. A slow-down or retreat, as happened at Port Lincoln and on the Eyre Peninsula, would jeopardise land sales, immigration, and therefore the growth and prosperity of the colony.

Consequently the government was committed to certain activities with the establishment of the new port. They wanted the power and threat of the Aborigines neutered. Once done, a small detachment of police could economically keep the Queen's Peace between her subjects, black and white, and restrain provocations that could escalate into expensive warfare. There was the acute local difficulty with water, which the government had to make a special effort to overcome. Once there was a town, the government accepted the need to provide basic postal communications, and to survey and define roads. Most other things were left to individuals and their enterprise. Then, once a settlement had taken root, other demands, for example, to improve and maintain the roads, might attract some government attention.

The Sub-Protector of Aborigines was successful in luring the seemingly unwitting Aborigines away from their lands, by

the occasional free issue of food at Minchin Wells. However this technique still created problems:

having the number of natives I have here constantly [130] and their being obliged in great measure to support themselves... the game in the immediate neighbourhood is fast driven away... the natives are tempted to wander about and look for food and the great object of keeping them... under my eye is frustrated...¹²¹

He then proposed the issue of rations each three days instead of once a week.

Unbeknown to Minchin, this request caused troubled consideration in Adelaide. The settlers had petitioned that full rations be given, but they believed that stations (which employed about 14 Aborigines), would be immediately deserted, unless Minchin demanded work in return for government rations. As summed up by Kathleen Hassell in her study of race relations in this period, the government's dilemma was "Are we to feed the natives and prevent work?" or, "Are we to drive them away and encourage plunder?" After 1854, it was decided to limit the rations, and issue presents instead. The presents were as rewards and incentives, but not to enable the Aborigines to live without industry, and not to take the place of recompense which the settlers should be compelled to give for work done. The Sub-Protector was to keep a list of those occasionally or necessarily supplied with food, but if those Aborigines refused work, they were to be struck off the list.¹²² Minchin stated that he had discontinued feeding

the Aborigines, that many could not get employment, were thus compelled to hunt, and were occasionally tempted to take a sheep.¹²³

Towards the end of 1853, Minchin distributed a gift of blankets:

the natives [are] exceedingly pleased to receive them...being the first present in the form of clothing ever received by them from the Government...[the blankets] had a very excellent effect as it has brought natives within my reach that continually avoided me, and over whom, by means of a blanket, I was able to gain a little influence, and to caution and advise them, as they required.¹²⁴

On at least one other occasion he distributed clothing, knives, tobacco, pipes, pannicans etc as rewards "for steadiness and good conduct".¹²⁵

Minchin was quite successful in encouraging Aborigines to seek employment. At one stage during 1853, he employed a large number at a dairy station at Mt Remarkable.¹²⁶ There were times when Aborigines were in great demand with the settlers, being preferred to Europeans.¹²⁷ Many were not only willing to work, but showed "an advanced skill":

such blacks as are employed are not only invaluable for their services, but indispensable at present: the work of many stations being chiefly carried on by the natives, and to a great extent amongst the sheep farmers¹²⁸

Later he reported:

The sheep stations are principally carried on through the agency of the natives, who are considered first-class shepherds.¹²⁹

Of course, the seasonal nature of much pastoral industry employment was a great shortcoming. Consequently, there were times when Aborigines could not get any work.¹³⁰ On one occasion Minchin reported that

most of the settlers having cattle, unless a native can ride well...[he] is never welcome.¹³¹

This was not a satisfactory situation in which to train the Aborigines for employment.

It was doubtless of benefit to the settlers to have access to a pool of cheap, skilled, willing labour. The settlers exploited the situation. This caused Minchin to lament that the Aborigines-

are so ill repaid for their services...every man is worthy of his hire...I would suggest compelling sheepowners to pay a fair equivalent for work performed.¹³²

The settlers' probably viewed their Aboriginal employees with distrust. At one time or another during 1853-55, Aborigines assaulted local white employees of Gillies, Craig, Haines and Angus.¹³³ However it was not uncommon for such "assaults" to be provoked. For example, Haines' shepherd, Hopgood, was "continually interfering with female natives".¹³⁴ During 1853-55, the local settlers also intermittently lost sheep and stores to the Aborigines. Cudmore, Pohhill & White, Paterson, Swinden and Days, and Brown were amongst these.¹³⁵ Robert Henry Stacy Brown recounted that:

The mountainous nature of the country made control and pursuit of

the Aborigines a very difficult task. Sometimes they would roll down boulders among the sheep and men, and brandish their spears at a safe distance. "I have often seen them all day long sitting on the rocks of the Flinders Range and watching my every movement... During the time we had the Mt Arden property they took altogether 3,000 sheep from us".¹³⁶

On the other hand, sheep were taken while unattended,¹³⁷ or, in one case, when a shepherd left "a wild Aborigine in charge of them".¹³⁸ Many sheep losses were-

through the culpable neglect of the shepherds and hut keepers... [and there are] many instances of whole flocks of sheep being recovered by the police, which were alleged to have been driven away by the natives.¹³⁹

To restrain provocations and minimise strife, Minchin assumed police powers. (He was appointed an Inspector of Native Police in 1855).¹⁴⁰ Mid-way through 1853 he requested a pack-horse, so he could see those Aborigines not visited by the mounted police.¹⁴¹ This was despite Police records indicating that there were two mounted constables at "Port Ferguson" between June 1853 and the end of 1854.¹⁴² The absence of police and the distance from a court created a potentially explosive situation at the frontier. Settlers preferred not to take alleged offenders to the police because of-

the time they would lose, the chances of a conviction, and the probability of their [property] again being attacked in their absence.¹⁴³

Therefore, when there was a clash, settlers were inclined

to form vigilante groups. When police were available to intervene Minchin noted:

the action of police in conveying native witnesses great distances has caused natives great hardship and inconvenience, and has been more severe than that occasion required; for example, in irons and in a lock-up.¹⁴⁴

Sometimes because of necessity and perhaps in an effort to take a middle path, Minchin occasionally took summary action to punish (Aboriginal) offenders.¹⁴⁵ Although it is unclear whether he had authority to do so, he was usually the only government official in the area. Doubtless settlers and probably Aborigines, accepted and expected him to act. Near the end of his time at the Port Augusta Native Location, he reflected that he had not once seen Aboriginal offenders punished "according as the law would direct".¹⁴⁶

By 1860, the Aborigines were in an appalling situation. They had been deprived of their lands for paltry recompense, as Minchin reported in 1853:

most of the northern settlers are as kind as possible to the natives when deserving. It is nothing uncommon to see a large pot of rice put down for them...you may find that an old bullock has been shot for their use, but all this has not the desired effect...I must confess that I feel some little difficulty in explaining to them why the white man should take possession of the best parts of their country.¹⁴⁷

One of the earliest reports of Port Augusta was of Aborigines seeking alcohol:

now and then [they] would prowl about the beach and manage to secure a bottle of the strong water which was to them such a

novelty and delight [and] they would incontestably prove that they were "men and brothers" by indulging in the whitefellows' recreation of hammering their wives and each other.¹⁴⁸

Minchin does not, however, mention problems with alcohol in any of his writing at the time, but it is likely that alcohol abuse was behind some of the incidents he reported.

While the Aborigines were seen to pose a threat, they had political power and they were treated as a political entity. However, once their threat was emasculated they became a mere administrative problem. Consequently, by the time of the Parliamentary Select Committee hearings on the Estimates for 1855, the threat was seen to exist in the Lake Torrens-Lake Frome area. The Committee considered that:

this new country which is not now occupied would be more readily taken up if a Sub-Protector were quartered in the neighbourhood.¹⁴⁹

Although the Aboriginal station at Port Augusta was "important", the following year the offices of Protector and Sub-Protectors were abolished. Supposedly to save money, Aborigines became the responsibility of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. This was despite much of the 10% Land Fund allocation for Aborigines being unspent at the time.¹⁵⁰ A police station was established the following year between Lakes Torrens and Frome, at Angepena/Mt Searle.¹⁵¹ Aboriginal affairs at Port Augusta largely became the realm of the Police.¹⁵²

In the region that had been Minchin's responsibility and where he still resided (at Melrose), virtually all the elderly Aborigines were entirely dependent on the government.¹⁵³ This was because the younger members of the tribe, who traditionally supported them, "were led into much dissipation" and there were problems with alcohol. Alternatively, young men had been "taken away by the settlers". Minchin, giving evidence to a Select Committee Upon the Aborigines in 1860, said:

[there was] a decrease in the number of Port Augusta natives due to venereal disease [from] frequent sexual intercourse with Europeans by the females...[it is] prevalent amongst the natives at Mt Remarkable; no medical regulations have been adopted to abolish the disease...and it is allowed to take its course... diseases from which the natives are suffering are of the lung, skin, and pulmonary complaints. They are very much weakened from the venereal disease, and are more exposed to colds and so on...Providing for a medical man with magisterial powers to travel about the country might perhaps provide advantage to the Aborigines, but they are a peculiar people so medical men would have great difficulty in treating them...Perhaps a different diet may have some effect, and also dissipated habits...the supply of blankets [for clothing] is not being kept up in the districts of Port Augusta and Mt Remarkable...

(What is your opinion of the attempt made by the settlers to civilize and Christianize the natives?) - I cannot think that it has been to their advantage. Their condition has not been at all improved; If the natives are taken before the age of 12 or 14, they are capable of grasping the plain truths of

Christianity, but after that age, it is not possible...

(Is the mental capacity of the native capable of such instruction?) - The subject is a most difficult one on which to form an opinion. I do not know of any native in the North who can read and write...

(Do you think that if a large tract of country was purchased for the natives it would be of any special advantage to them?) - I do not; the natives are not disposed to unite into one body, they will quarrel when they meet together...if they are taken from their own districts they soon pine and die away - they are very much attached to their own localities...the Government should be more liberal towards the sick and infirm, and to those who are really in such a position that they cannot help themselves...One native woman at Mt Remarkable, whom I refused rations as I did not have them at the time, died of starvation...I cannot consider that I did my duty in that case.¹⁵⁴

NOTES

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- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Strehlow, op cit, p255.
- 4 Ellis, 1964, op cit, p53.
- 5 Ellis, 1966, "Aboriginal Songs of South Australia", Miscellanea Musicologica, vol 1, pp138, 143-7. See also Ellis, C J, 1970, "The Role of the Ethnomusicologist in the Study of Andagarinja Women's Ceremonies", Miscellanea Musicologica, vol5, pp124-127.
- 6 Ellis, 1964, op cit, pp51-64.
- 7 Jacobs Jane, personal communication.
- 8 Jacobs J, 1984, Land Rights in Port Augusta, M A Thesis, University of Adelaide, pp118, 161.
- 9 Kinhill-Stearns Roger, Joint Venture, 1982, Olympic Dam Project - Draft Environment Impact Statement, Roxby Management Services Pty Ltd, Adelaide, 5.12; Ellis R W, 1978, Aboriginal Culture in South Australia, Government Printer, Adelaide, p10
- 10 Taplin G, 1879, The Folklore, Manners, Customs and Languages of the South Australian Aborigines, Government Printer, Adelaide, pp64-66; Mathews, ibid.
- 11 Norman A Tindale, personal correspondence, 6 May 1986. Tindale elsewhere affirmed that Port Augusta Harbour was Nukunu territory. For example see Hart A M, 1970, A History of Education of Full-Blood Aborigines in South Australia, MEd Thesis, University of Adelaide, p110.
- 12 Kinhill-Stearns Roger, op cit, 5.30. For an example of how the Pangkala Aborigines described how widely they differed from the Nukunu see Angas G F, 1847, Savage Life and Scenes in Australia and New Zealand, Smith, Elder & Co, London, p198.
- 13 Stanner W E H, 1970, "The Dreaming", Harding T G and Wallace B J, Cultures of the Pacific, The Free Press, New York, p305; Brock, 1985(A), ibid. See also Berndt, R&C, 1945, A Preliminary Report of Field Work in the Ooldea Region, Western South Australia, Australasian Medical Publishers Co, Sydney, p327; in 1978, in a conversation with a well-informed Adnamathana man, he said his tribe's southern boundary had

- always been near Hawker. Three years later he included Port Augusta within traditional Adnyamathana country. See also Brock P, 1985(A), "A History of the Adnyamathana of the North Flinders Ranges - Methodological Considerations", Oral History Association of Australia Journal, No 7, pp68-77 for discussion of latter-day boundary changes and affiliations.
- 14 Kinhill-Stearns Roger, *ibid.* Ellis, 1978, *op cit.*
 - 15 M^cCarthy F D, 1939(A), "'Trade' in Aboriginal Australia, and 'Trade' Relationships with Torres Strait, New Guinea and Malaya", Oceania, vol 9, no 4, pp405, 424-9. See also M^cCarthy F D, 1939(B), Oceania, vol 10, no 1, pp84-98.
 - 16 M^cCarthy (A), *op cit*, pp424-9.
 - 17 CSO outward correspondence, A(1846)1276, M(1846)186: GRG 24/4, PRO.
 - 18 Report upon the Aborigines, 1860, no 165, SAPP for Minchin's Poonidie background; Report of the Protector of Aborigines, 2 June 1853, p362 SAGG, for the date of his arrival.
 - 19 Kinhill-Stearns Roger, *op cit*, 5.34.
 - 20 Tindale N B, 1974, Aboriginal Tribes of Australia, University of California Press, Los Angeles, p112.
 - 21 For example Flinders M, 1814, A Voyage to Terra Australis, London, pp158-159, and extracts from the logbook of the Dart which visited in 1830 in Gill, T, 1906, "Who Discovered Lake Alexandrina?" PRGSSA, vol 8, p52; Eyre, E J, 1845, Journal of 1840-41, London, vol 1, p48.
 - 22 Journal of Robert Cock (April-May 1839), 15.6.1839, p2, SAGCR; for a report of an Aboriginal fish trap at the mouth of Cudmore Creek see A:9:3b.
 - 23 Kinhill-Stearns Roger, *op cit*, 5.36.
 - 24 Blainey, G, 1976, Triumph of the Nomads, Sun Books, Melbourne, Chapter 9 and see also pp71, 80. See Hindmarsh K, 1980, "Studying the Impact of Cattle in Central Australia", Rural Research - CSIRO Quarterly, vol 107, June, pp4-9.
 - 25 Blainey, *op cit*, p80.
 - 26 This was Major Thomas Mitchell's description of part of the Darling River region, referred to by Ralph, W, 1980, "Fire in Arid Rangelands", Rural Research - CSIRO Quarterly, vol 109, December, pp9-15.
 - 27 Williams, 1974, *op cit*, p5.

- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ralph, op cit.
- 30 "Understanding Sheep Behaviour", Rural Research - CSIRO Quarterly, vol 93, December, 1976, pp4-10; Blainey, op cit, pp80-81; Hindmarsh, op cit.
- 31 Blainey, op cit, p83
- 32 James T H, 1838, Six Months in South Australia, London, p107 appears to include a first hand description of the top of Spencer Gulf.
- 33 Journal of Robert Cock, op cit. Cock's Journal indicates that Hughes accompanied him.
- 34 For the date of their arrival, Eyre, E J, 1840(A), "Country from Adelaide to the Head of Spencer Gulf" Royal South Australian Almanack and General Directory, Adelaide, p116; for reference to Baxter, see Mincham H, 1977, The Story of the Flinders Ranges, Rigby, Adelaide, p24; for reference to Darke, see letter from J A Horrocks written from Depot Flat, to E Platt, Honorary Secretary of the Northern Expedition, 8 September, 1846: A86/A1, ML. A description of the position of the campsite is in A:146-1a.
- 35 Mincham, op cit, p23.
- 36 Eyre, 1840(A), op cit, pp116-118.
- 37 Lewi J, 1916, "President's Annual Address", PRGSSA, vol 17, p42.
- 38 Eyre, 1840(A), Ibid.
- 39 Eyre E J, 1840(B), "Country to the West of Port Lincoln and from Streaky Bay to the Head of Spencer Gulf", Royal South Australian Almanack and General Directory, Adelaide, pp105-107.
- 40 Eyre, 1845, op cit, vol 1, pp4-13; Williams, G, 1919, South Australian Exploration to 1856, LBSA, Adelaide pp61-63; Mincham, op cit, pp27-29.
- 41 23.5.1840, SAGCR.
- 42 Gawler Despatches to the Colonial Commissioners, 28 October 1839, no 45: GRG 48/4, PRO Local historian Alan McLellan said the Waterwitch weighed 25 tons - see A:145-2a.
- 43 Eyre, 1845, op cit, vol I, pp76 and 80. See also "Report of E J Eyre", 8 August 1840, p4, SAGCR.
- 44 Gawler Despatches, op cit, 13 August 1840.

- 45 Hassell K, 1966, The Relations Between the Settlers and the Aborigines in South Australia, 1836-1860, LBSA, Adelaide, p50.
- 46 Ibid, p48.
- 47 Ibid, p50.
- 48 Ibid, pp73-97.
- 49 Cockburn R, 1925, Pastoral Pioneers of South Australis, (2 volumes), Adelaide, vol I, p207ab.
- 50 Hassell, op cit, pp110,130.
- 51 Cockburn, Ibid.
- 52 Faull J, (Ed), 1979, Melrose, Child of the Mountain, Book Committee, Melrose P17; Mincham, op cit, pp40-41; M^cLellan, A A S, 1966, The Police in Port Augusta From Earliest Days - handwritten script, p2, PRG D5145(T), ML; Cockburn, Ibid, says that Eyre's party came upon Dutton's tracks and recovered some of their belongings, including a diary of the ill-fated journey.
- 53 Angas, op cit, pp197-199. This story is similar to that of the diary report mentioned in note 77.
- 54 Cockburn, Ibid, states Dutton's intention was to travel overland to Adelaide. But elsewhere Cockburn says Dutton intended to find new country to the north-west of the termination of Spencer Gulf, see 1:133b. This latter story ties in with the location of Dutton's remains. However it seems unlikely that Dutton would have left besieged Port Lincoln to start a run where he may have been eventually both besieged and without any neighbours. This argument may well apply in other similar cases, too. For example, it has been suggested that Pinkerton or Tennant (mentioned below), sought to establish runs in dangerous country, far beyond the pastoral frontier of the time, near Quorn. In the case of Dutton, his intentions remain something of a mystery. As for Pinkerton and Tennant, they were probably taking livestock to Port Lincoln.
- 55 Hawker G C, 1843, "Journal of an Expedition with Captain Frome", Education Gazette, 1.4.1965, pp103-108.
- 56 Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 2:261b; also Cockburn, R, 1984, What's in a Name: Nomenclature of South Australia, Ferguson Publications, Adelaide, p176.
- 57 Williams, op cit, p80.
- 58 Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:140.
- 59 14.2.1846, SAGCR.

- 60 Tolmer A, 1882, Reminiscences, (2 vols) London, 2: 34-7; CSO, Outward Correspondence, A(1846)1276 of 16.10.1846; M(1846)186 of 10.12.1846: GRG 24/4, PRO.
- 61 26.8.1846, p2e, SAGCR.
- 62 CSO, Outward Correspondence, op cit, 16.10.1846.
- 63 Op cit, 10.12.1846.
- 64 10.5.1849, p217, SAGG.
- 65 Horrocks J A, "Journal", PRGSSA, vol 8, d 1905-06, pp38-43; Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 2:14-15; Mincham, op cit, p45.
- 66 Horrocks, Ibid.
- 67 Mincham, Ibid.
- 68 Letter from G H Pitt, S A Archivist, to G C Morphett, 29.9.1939: Research Note 202, PRO.
- 69 Horrocks, Ibid.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Williams, op cit, p82-83.
- 72 Letter by Horrocks to Platt, op cit, ML; Mincham, op cit, p48.
- 73 Mincham, op cit, p80-1; Cockburn, 1984, p73; A: 229; Mincham, Ibid.
- 74 Mincham, Ibid.
- 75 Letter from the Lieutenant Governor to the Advocate General, 10.12.1846: CSO Outward Correspondence, op cit.
- 76 Hassell, op cit, p149.
- 77 Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action, 1979, Beyond the Act, Brisbane.
- 78 Hassell, op cit, p149.
- 79 Hassell, op cit, p110 where she quotes the Commissioner of Police; see also Brock, P, 1985(B), Yura and Udynu: A History of the Adnyamathanha of the North Flinders Ranges, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, pp20-21.
- 80 Jenkins G, 1979, Conquest of the Ngarrindjeri, Rigby, Adelaide, p32.
- 81 Gerritson R, 1981, Thoughts on Camelot: From Herodians and Zealots to the Contemporary Politics of Remote

Aboriginal Settlements in the Northern Territory.
Paper given at the 23rd Annual Conference of the
Australasian Political Studies Association, University
House, ANU, 28-30 August.

- 82 Brock, 1985(B), *ibid.*
- 83 Hassell, *op cit*, pp73-80.
- 84 Gerritson, *op cit*, described contemporary Aboriginal political responses to the overpowering presence of the whites. He identified two key responses. These were typified by the two opposite responses of the Jews to Roman occupation. The Herodites embraced and collaborated with the conquerors; the Zealots opposed them, and finally fought to the last ditch at Masada. The majority of people, however, assumed the passive response of observers. This pattern has been anecdotally remarked on to the writer by many contemporary field workers in Aboriginal affairs. It appears to describe such a typically human response to overwhelming force and defeat that it deserves greater consideration in historical explanations of Aboriginal responses to white conquest.
- 85 Angas G F, 1846, South Australia Illustrated, London on the page opposite plate 59.
- 86 Faull, *op cit*, p25; 12.8.1846, p3e, SAGCR.
- 87 9.12.1846, p2e, SAGCR.
- 88 1.11.1849, p2f, Adelaide Times.
- 89 Captain Hall was named as a member of the Outports Commission. Later, when Elder and Grainger surveyed the area in 1852, they were accompanied by a Captain Hall, possibly the same person. See letter from Governor Young to Elder and Grainger, 5.5.1852: CSO Outward Correspondence, GRG 24/4, PRO.
- 90 Elder and Grainger to Governor Young, 8.6.1852: CSO Inward Correspondence, 1700-1/2, GRG 24/4, PRO. The ship's log for this voyage was located by A A S M^cLellan and is now in the Mortlock Library. For details of the log see A:68-70.
- 91 Lewis, *op cit*, p79. For numerous accounts of explorations by pastoralists in the Flinders Ranges see Mincham, 1977, *op cit*.
- 92 Davenport S, 1885, "Inaugural Address", PRGSSA, vol 1, p84; Hayward, *op cit*, pp134,137.
- 93 A:208-1; Mincham, 1977, *op cit*, p68.
- 94 13.9.1912, p5, PAD; Mincham, 1977, *op cit*, pp69-73; 31.12.1859, Adelaide Observer.

- 95 13.9.1912, p5, PAD.
- 96 Williams M, 1978, "George Woodroofe Goyder - a Practical Geographer", PRGSSA, vol 79, p4.
- 97 Lewis, op cit, p38.
- 98 Hassell, op cit, p127-130; see also Hart, op cit, pp29-41.
- 99 Mincham, op cit, p82.
- 100 Faull, op cit, p27; Mincham, *ibid*.
- 101 Lewis, op cit, p75.
- 102 Mincham, op cit, pp50-51.
- 103 Reports of the Commissioner of Police, 19.7.1849, p313 and 16.8.1849, p372, SAGG.
- 104 Cockburn, 1925, op cit, pp64-65.
- 105 Return of Native Population for 1849, 10.1.1850, p34, SAGG.
- 106 Mincham, op cit, p210.
- 107 Report of the Protector of Aborigines, 17.6.1852, p366; 26.8.1852, p525, SAGG.
- 108 Faull, op cit, p28.
- 109 Report of the Commissioner of Police, 22.12.1852, p772, SAGG.
- 110 *Ibid*, 4.11.1852, p667,
- 111 *Ibid*, 3.1.1851, p77,
- 112 *Ibid*, 4.11.1852.
- 113 A:10-2a; Faull, op cit, p29.
- 114 Report of the Protector of Aborigines, 24.3.1853, p192, SAGG.
- 115 *Ibid*, 2.6.1853, p362.
- 116 Mincham, op cit, p214.
- 117 Report Upon the Aborigines - Minutes of Evidence, op cit; and Report of the Native Training Institution at Port Lincoln, 24.6.1851, p513, SAGG.
- 118 M^cLellan, 1966, op cit. See also Faull, op cit, p75, 102 and Figure 4.

- 119 14.5.1880, p8b, PAD.
- 120 A: 150.
- 121 Report of the Sub-Protector of Aborigines, 28.7.1853, p498, SAGG.
- 122 CSO 2987 of 1853, PRO, contains the memos sent between the four officials concerned, and discussed in Hassell op cit, pp131-3.
- 123 Report of the Sub-Protector, 25.5.1854, pp412-3, SAGG.
- 124 Ibid, 23.2.1854, p149.
- 125 Ibid, 8.3.1855, p204.
- 126 Ibid, 28.7.1853, p498.
- 127 Ibid, 10.11.1853, p744.
- 128 Ibid, 25.5.1854, p412-3 and 24.8.1854, p619.
- 129 Ibid, 27.12.1855, p979.
- 130 Ibid, 25.5.1854, p412-3 and 27.12.1855, p979.
- 131 Ibid, 28.7.1853, p498.
- 132 Ibid, 10.11.1853, p744.
- 133 Ibid, 25.5.1854, p412-3 and 23.2.1854, p149; Report of the Commissioner of Police, 10.11.1853, p744, SAGG.
- 134 Ibid, 23.2.1854, p149.
- 135 Ibid, 2.6.1853, p359; 28.7.1853, p498; 25.5.1854, p412-3.
- 136 Cockburn, 1925, 2: 81.
- 137 Report of the Sub-Protector, 28.7.1854, p498, SAGG.
- 138 Ibid, 25.5.1854, pp412-3.
- 139 Report of the Commissioner of Police, 10.11.1853, p744; Report of the Sub-Protector, 24.8.1854, p619, SAGG.
- 140 M^cLellan, 1966, op cit, p1.
- 141 Report of the Sub-Protector, 28.7.1853, p498, SAGG.
- 142 Ibid, Report of the Commissioner of Police, 2.6.1853, p359; 11.8.1853, p526; 10.11.1853, p744; 23.2.1854,

- p152; 22.2.1855, p157.
- 143 Ibid, 28.7.1853, p498.
- 144 Report upon the Aborigines, Minutes of Evidence, op cit.
- 145 Report of the Sub-Protector, 15.12.1853, p816, SAGG.
- 146 Ibid, 27.12.1855, p979.
- 147 Ibid, 15.12.1853, p816,
- 148 14.5.1880, p8b, PAD.
- 149 Final Report on the Estimates - Minutes of Evidence, 1856, no 158, SAPP.
- 150 Hassell, op cit, 156-7.
- 151 Report of the Commissioner of Police, 2.2.1860, p93, SAGG.
- 152 Final Report on the Estimates (1856), op cit.
- 153 Report Upon the Aborigines, op cit.
- 154 Ibid.

The earliest travellers on horseback had to pick their way carefully through Horrocks Pass, down the stony creek to the plain. One "Old Settler"¹ coming down that uncertain track in 1854, was quite taken in by the spectacular scene. He vividly remembered looking up:

...a splendid view burst upon our eyes. Before us was a verdant plain, covered with green grass, and greener shrubs;* in the distance was a noble sheet of water, which looked like an immense river, winding up to the interior, and this was backed by a peculiar range of flat-topped hills, all aglow with sunshine.

Of Port Augusta, he wrote:

The place itself was naturally rather a pretty one. The sandhills gradually sloped towards the water, and were covered with a dense undergrowth of evergreen shrubs, with here and there a stately pine rearing its head above its neighbours; while in some places these trees grew close together in clumps, which were useful for shade, as well as beautiful to the eye... seaward the stream was hedged in by a wide belt of mangroves, growing so thickly together that in order to make a landing place... it was necessary to use the axe.

Another very early visitor wrote-

Port Augusta, as we found it, was mostly sand, and hills of sand, for a couple of miles, that had been drifted so by the winds. The scrub extended as far as the sand, mostly black oak, about eight or ten feet high. [The place had a] sandy beach and... mosquitoes, which swarmed there.²

* In the summer of 1857, when Governor and Lady MacDonnell traversed the same plain, it was described as "a dreary waste". No doubt winter rains could account for this difference.

In July of that year, R R Torrens appraised the scene from the hills at Saltia. The 27km wide plain between there and the Gulf was, he said, "adaptable only for pasture". He found a shoal and narrow lagoon (now known locally as Lake Knockout) interrupting the direct line of road into the Port. This necessitated a detour of five kilometres. The harbour was:

a perfect cove or natural dock...[and] at a distance of apparently 25 miles [there are] two remarkable flat topped hills...it is asserted by the natives that a dry channel may be traced from the [Gulf's] headwaters to Lake Torrens, through which, in some seasons a considerable rush of water finds its way to the sea.³

Records from the earliest ships to visit this area often reveal that they sounded and charted the waters. Others which came after were either unaware of this, or with the exception of Flinders' charts, may not have found previous charts dependable.⁴ To remedy this, Harbourmaster Lipson prepared charts of Spencer Gulf in 1852, P A Nation surveyed Port Augusta harbour in 1853, and Captain Matson described the channel and its approaches in 1854.⁵ Matson said the channel was "navigable for vessels of 300 tons" - that is, all likely shipping. In 1857, official Sailing Instructions for Spencer Gulf were published. They said, in part:

From above Point Lowly the channel becomes narrow and as the head of the gulf is approached, the difficulties of navigation increase. Strangers will require a pilot until the intricate channel is beacons. Coasters having experience...will have

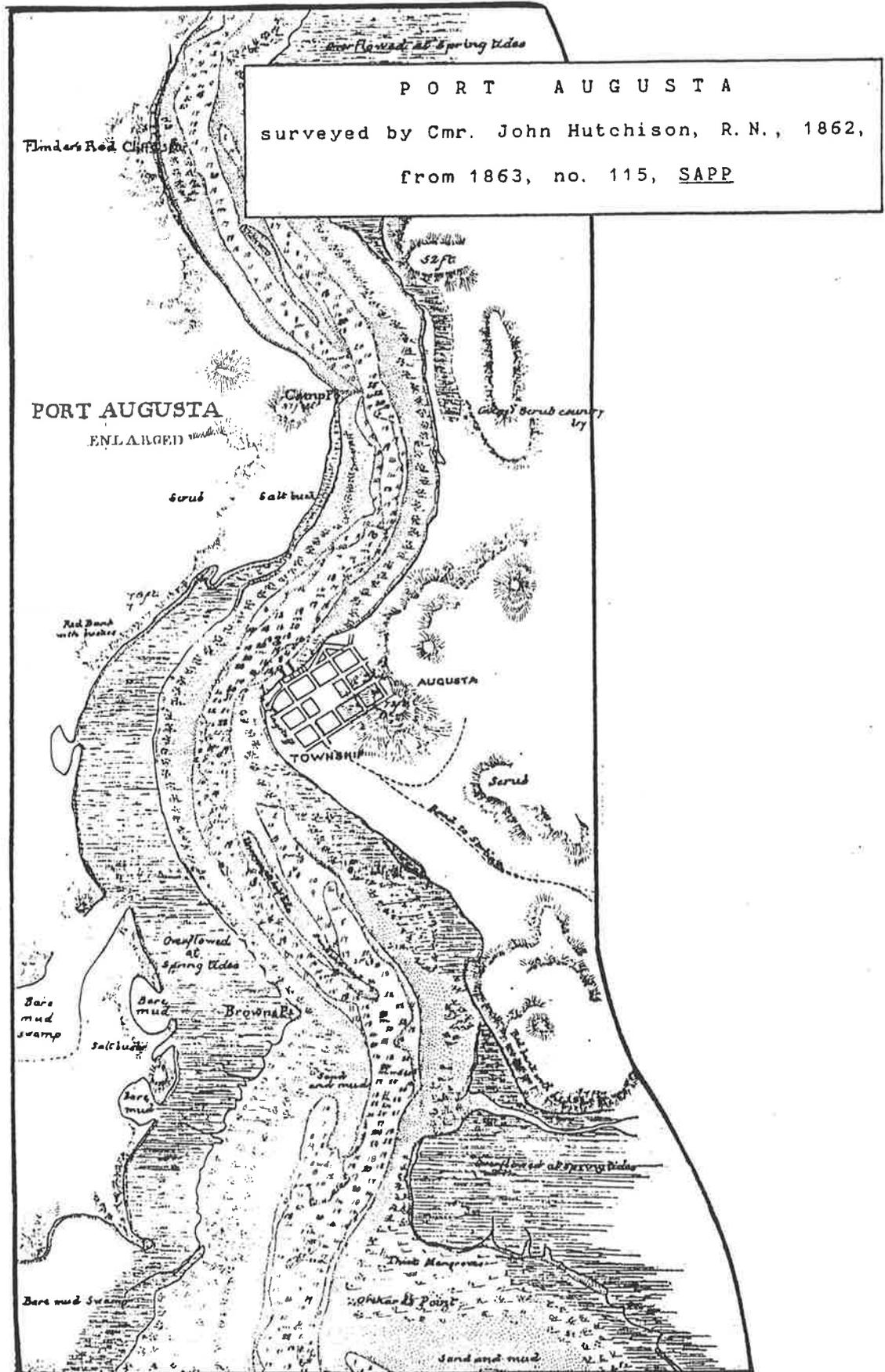
little difficulty threading their way up the stream...should they ground, no serious consequence will ensue, as the banks are soft and tolerable flat...The anchorage at Port Augusta is in the middle of the stream, in 3-1/4 fathoms at low water.⁶

The British Admiralty Marine Survey done in 1863 added that- The Port reach is nearly half a mile long at low water. There is plenty of room for eight or ten large vessels to swing at moorings, in from 18 to 20 feet of water at low water.⁷

The Admiralty Marine Survey made a special note of the peculiar tides in the estuary. At Port Augusta the tides rose from 2.7 to 3.6 metres, but 50km down the Gulf at Point Lowly the rise was from only 1.8 to 2.4 metres. After a hot wind, when the wind veered round to the west and south and blew strongly, the tide at Port Augusta could rise as far as 5.3 metres. On other occasions, the tide could ebb and flow for 12 hours and not range more than five to ten centimetres. Coincidentally, J F Hayward commented that when he came down in 1853 with the first wool to be shipped from the place, he would have had his wool inundated by an unusually high tide, if they had not loaded it immediately onto the Daphne when it arrived.⁸

The Admiralty Marine Survey described the serpentine, narrowing main channel as it approached the Port, with numerous false channels and deceptive banks. It included the comment that-

It has been the custom...for vessels to proceed to Port Adelaide and there pick up a pilot...The steamer trading to Port Augusta



frequently tows vessels up or down through the estuary on her trips backwards and forwards.⁹

Elder & Co were anxious to erect a woolstore. Quite rightly, they would have expected the inland spread of pastoralism to bring a great deal of business to Port Augusta. Elders intended it to have a hydraulic press, with a shipping facility, and general store to sell provisions to stations and runs.¹⁰ Twenty-two years old Alexander Drysdale Tassie, a Scot, was to be their manager. Tassie and A L Elder visited the site and met representatives of the pastoralists in the region including Harry Bacon from Melrose, J F Hayward from Aroona near Wilpena, James Loudon Snr from Narcoona on the Western Plain and James Patterson from Woolundunga near Mt Brown.¹¹ Permission was sought from the Governor to set up this business on Crown Land, and indeed Governor Young was anxious to have occupation of the colony's north hastened. But first he wanted the township surveyed and auctioned in the normal way, reflecting the comfortable sense of order the officials in Adelaide strived to impose on the frontier.¹² Elder & Co could then bid on a site.¹³

The planners and regulators were a long way from Port Augusta and the north, physically and emotionally. In October 1853, prior to any survey or land sales, J F Hayward from Aroona and his neighbour, James Craig from Warcovie, reached Port Augusta.¹⁴ Each had a dray loaded with wool and there were probably drivers with another two loads.

They "found a few bales of wool had been laid there before us from some station a few miles down the coast". They dumped their bales beside them on the sandy beach to await the 55t schooner, Daphne, under Captain Matson.¹⁵ By this time it was Hayward's third wool season in the Flinders Ranges. He had over 10,000 sheep at Aroona and this, added to the needs of others, suggests there must have been great demand for a port facility.

Three months later Hayward returned to Port Augusta with his neighbour Craig and drays loaded with wool for the Daphne. Eleven employees to work for Hayward arrived with the Daphne, plus stores, and it departed with the wool. It returned eight days later with further settlers' stores.¹⁶

Survey Department selection of sites for towns was sometimes criticised.¹⁷ The site chosen for Port Augusta had two outstanding features - an unusually deep harbour and a relatively firm, steep embankment to the Gulf. In the south west corner was a raised knob which became the Flagstaff Point, also known as Mildred Point, and the site was generally well elevated above the mangroves.

However, the site had two serious disadvantages - the nearest fresh water was eight kilometres away, and a direct route to the fresh water and to the two passes through which the wool would come, Horrocks and Pichi Richi, was cut by a lagoon around which vehicles would have to make a lengthy detour. There were other problems: Tassie Street and

Commercial Road, the two main streets, were subject to inundation during periodic very high tides; Commercial Road had problems for the drainage of storm water; the site was quite sandy and in places low lying.

Weighing the advantages against the disadvantages, it was probably the best site for a port at the top of Spencer Gulf.

Many South Australian country towns were surveyed on sites of 500-1000ha with enormous suburban areas which became weed-infested wastelands.¹⁸ However Port Augusta was sited on about 20ha with suburbs added later, in the boom of the late 1870s.

The survey was supervised by the Surveyor-General, probably because of the special interest in proceedings by A L Elder and John Grainger, two members of the Legislative Council. Freeling was assisted by Surveyors Thomas Nott and James Elder.

The survey took place in July 1854. Waterfront allotments and Government Reserves were marked. There was provision for owners of water-frontages to have jetties running out from their lots. Freeling reported they:

laid out eight water-frontage blocks...and that they extended from about 66 feet inland from high water mark tides to about 12 feet below low water mark, and contain each half an acre. The extreme rise and fall of tide is 8'6" and at the Government

Reserve there is a distance of 132 feet from high to low water mark, 290 feet beyond the latter there is two fathoms of depth at low water. This is generally the case in front of all allotments.¹⁹

Several small areas of parkland were set aside. Apart from the Flagstaff Reserve another government reserve was marked and is nowadays bounded by Commercial, Mackay, Jervois Streets and Beauchamps Lane and contains state and local government premises. Roads leading to the Port were examined, as was the country around Minchin Wells.²⁰ It was a typical South Australian country township survey of the time, with an ancestry going at least as far back as Colonel Light. The streets and squares were in geometric patterns and there were government reserves and some parkland. Williams described Port Augusta as "a partial parkland town".²¹

The detailed completion of the survey awaited the arrival of the Bandicoot-

which vessel takes up rations to be supplied to the Survey labourers, without which the Surveyor reports he is unable to hire assistance.²²

The surveyors' gang marked the site of the town by erecting a Union Jack on a post tied to a large mangrove tree. Soon after-

A proud black had wrapped himself in the symbol of the might of the British Empire and other simple children of the bush had walked off with the flagstaff.²³

When the Bandicoot came up the Gulf-

the flag had disappeared. The ship's entire company made visits inland in search of the pegs for 3 days but found nothing. Captain Hay eventually dumped his cargo above the high water mark and covered it with a tarpaulin firmly weighted and pegged down.²⁴

About 9 August 1854, a party of 26 workmen arrived to make a road through Horrocks Pass, under the supervision of Thomas Nott.²⁵

Eight days later in Adelaide, the sale of allotments in Port Augusta township "excited much competition".²⁶ Reserve prices of £15 for waterfront allotments were surpassed by £126, in one case. These prime commercial water-frontages went to prominent Adelaide businessmen - George Elder for Elder & Co; Adelaide land dealer and speculator Peter D Prankerd, acting for the Registrar-General, R R Torrens and probably others; King William Street land agent F Duval, acting for H J Charnock; Edward M^cEllister, a "gentleman of Adelaide" and one-time Member of Parliament. Town blocks were purchased by John Hallett, an Adelaide merchant and substantial flockmaster;²⁷ Joseph Stilling, merchant and agent of Adelaide;²⁸ Philip Levi, an Adelaide merchant and at one time the colony's biggest owner of sheep; Alfred Watts, businessman and later the Parliamentary Member for the local seat of Flinders; Henry Noltenius, an Adelaide liquor merchant; as well as Lance T Beck, L R Hall, E M^cCabe, C G Baldock, and members of the Elder family.²⁹ In 1855 Watts & Levi sold their lots to Abraham Scott, banker

and pastoralist.

From the beginning, Adelaide was the centre for men with South Australian land and sheep interests. In Adelaide and the Country, Hirst made the point:

Adelaide land agents and speculators were [often] the purchasers of large portions of government townships...particularly...in the large outports.³⁰

Port Augusta was seen as the key to open lands of unknown pastoral and mineral wealth, probably great wealth, and these men put down their stakes at Port Augusta early.

In his discussion of the colonising process, Harold Carter identified the pattern by which Europe and later, the Americas, were colonised. Many early American towns had three functions: as military posts; as centres from which religious orders could convert the natives; and as civil settlements for trade, commerce, supply, communication and as the market and focus for exploitation. Carter traced the ancestry of these functions to the early European castles, monasteries and burgs.³¹

The establishment of Port Augusta conformed to this pattern with Minchin and the police having a military function, their briefs being to restrain provocations and "induce the wild natives from the hills and render them harmless". Minchin was also a religious missionary to the Aborigines. In final conformity with the colonising pattern identified by Carter, the driving forces to establish a town at the top of the Gulf were commercial. Williams succinctly summed up

the role of towns such as Port Augusta in the colonisation of South Australia:

Towns were the focal point of economic exploitation and the spearheads of colonisation.³²

According to Carter, one of the predictable consequences was that the native peoples were all but eliminated in the course of exploitative colonisation, as happened at Port Augusta.

Tassie was put ashore at Port Augusta in 1854. For the first three months he "led a life of solitude, his only companions being blackfellows, who once robbed him of his clothes".³³ He slept in a shepherd's watchbox-

a large box, or small house, long enough to lie down in, and wide enough to turn in...and a roof like a small house.³⁴

Tassie's watchbox was on wheels, with a padlocked cask of water attached to its side.³⁵ Soon he was joined by Mackay, a carpenter, and Kearney, a blacksmith. In 1854 there was no publichouse for 70km, but bottled spirits and beer could be found in the corner of the blacksmith's shed.³⁶

At that time, the track between Port Augusta and Minchin Wells was a difficult one, because of the expanse of tidal marshes, the detour around them through sandhills, and the temptation to take a short cut and get bogged in the marsh-lagoon. Bullock drivers had stirring experiences even in that short stretch of country.³⁷ It is understandable that to reach the Port, the only vestige of settlement north of Melrose, trade water for grog, and sit

KNOWN ARRIVALS OF SHIPS AT PORT AUGUSTA 1853-4

Vessel	date(s) in Port	comment
Yatala	January 1853	Minchin and Moorhouse seek water; Minchin stays.
	? about April 1853	(Minchin would have been
	? about August 1853	(periodically supplied (unconfirmed)
Daphne	? October or November 1853	chartered to deliver Hayward's wool to Port Adelaide
Bandicoot	December 1853	stores and blankets for Minchin
Bernard	about 6-16 January 1854	ran aground 3 miles north of Port Augusta
Daphne	10-14 January 1854	delivered 11 men and stores for Hayward and took away his 100 bales of wool
Daphne	21 January 1854	sundry stores for settlers
Daphne	20 February 1854	sundry stores for settlers
Yatala	July 1854	brought Surveyor-General and staff for preliminary survey of township
Bandicoot	August 1854	stores for Nott's survey party
Yatala	8 August 1854	26 workmen to clear a track through Horrocks Pass
Bandicoot	? about October 1854	A L Elder and Tassie to meet with local pastoralists; possibly Tassie remained.
Robert Clive	November 1854	delivered passengers and took Hayward's wool
Alice Brooks	November 1854	advertised by Elder & Co to take wool to England

around in what was probably the all-male sanctum of the camp-fire, was often cause for celebration.

In November 1854, Elder & Co announced the intended departure of the Alice Brooks from Port Augusta. It would carry the wool, the fruit of their privations and dogged enterprise, from this frontier settlement direct to England for sale.³⁸

By November 1854 Hayward had again made his way through the Pichi Richi Pass to the Port. His route had by then become a beaten track, though still terribly rough, capsizing drays on several occasions. He came down this time with another neighbour, Septimus Boord of Ooraparinna. Hayward reminisced later that:

When we reached Port Augusta there was a wooden hut and a wooden pub, and a blacksmith's forge. A D Tassie was the agent for shipping wool, and proved a very painstaking and agreeable young fellow. He went about without shoes and stockings, it being all sand.

The small vessel, Robert Clive, that came for our wool brought up several men engaged as shepherds, and a mason to build huts at Nonoka.³⁹

In early 1855 Alexander Mackay, a carpenter hired by Elder & Co to build a wooden woolstore at the Port, finished the job.⁴⁰ At that time, the resident population was A D Tassie, Alexander Mackay, Kearney, a blacksmith, and probably Captain Charles Hacket, wool and shipping agent.⁴¹

But of the likely fifth person there is conjecture. It may have been Chris Provis, the first policeman,⁴² or James Bryant who arrived on the Bandicoot in 1854 but probably went to a station.⁴³ Perhaps it was Alexander Cowan who was Mackay's off-sider by 1856.⁴⁴

For half a dozen decades, Port Augusta was the scene of frontier incidents, for although the land frontier was usually far into the hinterland, Augusta remained that frontier's port. "An Old Settler" recalled that-

when I arrived in Port Augusta [late 1854 or early 1855], I found an addition - a smith's shop of pine logs which had been erected not far from where [The Vault] now stands. I wanted my horse shod, and went there, where I saw the brawny smith all aglow with the heat of the summers' day and the firey forge. At the back of the hut were sundry casks of bottled beer... and ever and anon the clang of the busy hammer would be varied by the pop of the long-imprisoned cork, leaping forth into freedom. In one corner were a heap of dead marines, as the empty bottles were called, doing duty as a pillow for the head of a bullock driver.⁴⁵

In June 1855, John Bowyer Bull bogged his drays to the floorboards while attempting to cross the water-logged ground at the tip of the Gulf, near Yorkey Crossing. At night he rode 24km down the west side of the Gulf to Port Augusta. He attracted the attention of the people across the water by firing his revolver. A boat came over rowed by two drunken sailors. Bull described Port Augusta as:

two very ruff built stores... one belonging to Mr Tassie, the

other to Captain Hackett. There was also a public house being finished, [the workmen] doing the lining inside by candle light. There was plenty of grog to be got here.⁴⁶

The publichouse, called the Port Augusta Hotel, was finished that year. It was a weatherboard shanty measuring 12'6" x 10' with an open window onto the street, instead of a bar. Mackay built it for George & Thomas Elder, rented it from them and became the publican. On occasions, 30 or 40 teamsters would stand in line, waiting their turn at the window for a beer.⁴⁷ A second hotel, the Dover Castle Inn, was licensed in December 1856 by Ebenezer Roberts.⁴⁸ It was also a corrugated iron and weatherboard shanty. Pastoral pioneer Robert Bruce recalled his first visit to it, and came to "the solemn and deliberate conclusion" that

if the balance of the inhabitants of Port Augusta were on a par with my said friends, then a large brewery... would prove a going concern... to brew "the right good stingo".⁴⁹

Then and for decades to follow, the town was the venue for determined drunken sprees:

Many of the men who had been banished beyond the bounds of civilisation for several years would occasionally visit it, and the hard earnings of a long period would be disposed of... The publican would become the custodian of the cheque, and the station hand would be the custodian of the liquor, and after a few days... would obtain the "key of the street", and be enforced to commence his journey back to the station... A man came to the Port possessed of a horse, swag, dog, and a cheque for £115... After fourteen or fifteen days all his money had vanished, and he had

sold his horse and swag... An offer of ten shillings was made for the dog... he looked at the dog and addressed him thus - "Well, old man, we've done lots of tramps together, but I am going to sell you. We're going to part. I don't like to sell you, but I want a drink, and go you must"... the next day the man was found a little way from the township with delirium tremens.⁵⁰

Remembering the Port of those days, one old-timer, wrote:

It must be admitted that Port Augusta in its early days was a drouthy place; and in this case, the sins of the fathers have been visited upon the children... the love of liquor having prevailed to a considerable extent in our infant town... (In the late 1850s and early 1860s) there were no publichouses in the north except at Port Augusta, and to bushmen who had been... on the far outstations for months or even years, without a glass of beer, the temptation to imbibe was almost irresistible when they found themselves, cheque in hand, in the front of the bar.⁵¹

Reports like those above reached Britain from the Australian colonies prior to 1830, long before the establishment of Port Augusta. It was in response to them that E G Wakefield devised a plan for colonisation which was used in South Australia. It was designed, as Williams wrote:

to discourage pastoralism and encourage more intensive forms of land use (and to) regulate the volume and pace of colonisation. [It] aimed at producing a soberly industrious middle-class society of agriculturalists (and) large capitalist landowners... These principles were aimed primarily against the transportation of convicts and bonded servants, and against the problems of squatter occupation, both of which had bedevilled the

early years of settlement in all other parts of Australia.⁵²

One of the effects of this plan, discussed by Russel Ward in The Australian Legend, was that it produced a colony which was dismissed as the least 'Australian'... 'the Holy Land'. [It] gave working men a much better chance of becoming their own masters by exercise of the thoroughly 'un-Australian' qualities of sobriety and thrift.⁵³

In contrast, according to Ward:

the dry pastoral interior of [South Australia] is separated from the station country of New South Wales and Queensland by nothing but a line on a map. Since occupation of the interior began... almost every observer of outback life had been forcibly struck by the extreme mobility of the pastoral population [which] had naturally resulted in the diffusing of attitudes and values throughout the interior regardless of state boundaries. The social attitudes emanating from 'Botany Bay' [and] the manners and mores [of] the convicts and pastoral workers... rapidly gained strength among the lower orders [in South Australia].⁵⁴

They were attitudes forged by a common Australian pastoral experience of isolation, distance, harsh conditions and ideas of social collectivism developed in response to an industry in which most bosses were big men. This gave rise to circumstances in which people laboured to transform and exploit the countryside, and in so doing were themselves transformed by the conditions under which they worked and the process in which they were involved. The outcomes of these forces of men and nature emerged as a peculiarly Australian outlook. The pastoral frontier was the forcing ground for the growth of distinctive national habits and

sentiments.⁵⁵

The typical products of this process were single, employed men, as Ward said:

wage-earners who did not usually expect to become anything else. The loneliness and hardships of outback life...taught them the virtues of co-operation, but economic interests...reinforced their tendency towards a social, collectivist outlook...[They considered themselves among] the most democratic people on earth...while being anything but individualistic within their own social group, they display...'dislike of authority', 'antipathy to control, and particularly any direct control'.⁵⁶

Anthony Trollope described them as:

a nomad tribe of pastoral labourers - of men who profess to be shepherds, boundary-riders, sheep-washers, shearers and the like - forming one of the strangest institutions ever known [and] common to all Australian colonies...who wander in their quest for work and are hired only for a time...They come and go and are known by queer nicknames or...by no names at all...rough to look at, dirty in appearance, shaggy with long hair, men who, when they are in the bush, live in huts, and hardly know what a bed is. But they work hard and are honest and civil...without any character but that which they give themselves...able to do that which they declare themselves capable of performing. Their one great fault is drunkenness...they will work for months without touching spirits, but their very abstinence creates a craving desire which, when it is satisfied, will satisfy itself with nothing short of brutal excess.⁵⁷

One Port Augusta commentator wrote about the after-effects

of these alcoholic binges:

In most cases the effect was but temporary...In some cases however, the results were more serious...Situated on the edge of a wide plain, where no water was obtainable, it sometimes happened that the poor idiot who started back to his work before he had properly recovered from his debauch, left his bones on the western plain...[as in] a very sad case in January 1860...of Williamson and Chipperfield...who dropped down and perished [before reaching] Depot Creek.⁵⁸

Indeed, the first burial at the cemetery was of a drunken bullock driver who was on his way back to the hills. He fell from his wagon which ran over him and the body was found lying on the road, guarded by his dog.⁵⁹

In 1857, Mr R Russell and his teenage daughter Eliza Ann, Russell Wellby arrived on the Marion. Mr Russell had been one of the 26 workmen who made the road through Horrocks Pass in 1854.⁶⁰ Eliza Ann Russell was the first female resident of Port Augusta although A D Tassie is said to have brought an unmarried sister with him to Port Augusta.⁶¹ It is also possible that another woman, Jane Thompson, who held one of the Mt Arden station leases from July 1853 until 1859, was resident in the district prior to A D Tassie's arrival.⁶² For six months after her arrival, Miss Russell did housekeeping chores for A D and John Tassie. By that time R & T Elder had erected several cottages in the Port, one of which Tassie substantially extended in the second half of 1857. Tassie lived in a wooden house where the Exchange/Fourways Hotel now stand, but it is not known

precisely during what period.⁶³ Miss Russell recalled that fresh water was only used for drinking. When the rain fell, even in the middle of the night, she would run out from the tent and catch the precious drops in pannicans and saucepans. The dwelling houses numbered less than ten. The following year she married Joseph Wellby at Minchin Wells and was living there when their first child was born in 1859.⁶⁴ Perhaps it was after her marriage that the Tassies' unmarried sister joined them.

When the Protector of Aborigines, Matthew Moorhouse, arrived at the site of the Port with his new Sub-Protector, H P Minchin, the absence of fresh water came immediately to the fore. Around Port Augusta, aridity was mainly indicated by the shortage of drinking water, a problem still not solved to the full satisfaction of local people. Soon after they arrived during January 1853, on the Government Schooner Yatala commanded by P A Nation, Moorhouse reported that-

Port Augusta was temporarily abandoned because we could find no water within 15 miles of the landing place... We did not leave Port Augusta without trying for water... but found salt water only. It was arranged that in winter Mr Minchin should visit the spot with the natives and try for water, and at the same time ascertain whether there be a road for drays or not. We all consider the landing place an excellent one but it cannot be available unless water and a good road be found.⁶⁵

The absence of water was so acute that Moorhouse directed the vessel to move to Yatala Harbour in the vain hope of

finding water there.

They knew there was water in the hills, 24km away at Paterson's Woolundunga Run and they left Minchin to investigate further. He found "excellent water" by digging wells near Saltia Creek.⁶⁶ This solved his immediate problems. However 20 months later, with considerable demands on his wells from bullockies, and when it had become clear that more settlers would soon arrive at the new Port, his reports show he suddenly started sinking further wells.⁶⁷ In December 1854, he moved to the Port to dig four wells in the places most likely to find water, but to no avail.

In March of the following year, Minchin wrote:

I have prepared troughs for watering the animals at Port Augusta. I have also been engaged in well-sinking, both at my station near Port Augusta and at the Port itself...fresh water has not been procured.⁶⁸

Governor MacDonnell and party visited at the end of January 1857, coming up the Gulf by sea from Port Lincoln. They spent their first full day fishing at "the schnapper ground, four and a half miles South of the port". Most of the 70 fine schnapper they caught were divided among the residents. The next day the Governor and his entourage landed. In addressing the local citizens he said-

it was scarcely possible for...Port Augusta to be fully developed [because] of an almost absolute dearth of water...which the inhabitants were then suffering. He trusted that every exertion

would be made by the parties most interested in the Port to discover water...the Government would be happy to extend them assistance [but] they who use the Port were those who should first contribute to supplying its wants. He had no doubt that [those] concerned in having a harbor and port for export in the north [would see] present difficulties surmounted and Port Augusta would realise the natural anticipations formed from its felicitous position, by which cost of transport...was so very materially diminished to the northern settlers...

The Port is at present supplied with water from a creek on Patterson's Station, under Mount Brown, brought in casks on drays...sixteen miles...8/- per cask. Owing to accidents in the conveyance of water occasionally the inhabitants had been without water for two days...At present there is only one well in which water remains, and that only a few inches.⁶⁹

Water was still in serious shortage in June 1860 when Captain Charles Hacket, the Port's second shipping agent and general storekeeper, wrote:

It is advisable the vessel should clear out from this port if loaded and should bring sufficient water to last them not only here but for the voyage home.^{70*}

By 1863 there were plans to pipe water from Woolundunga, but Teamster Reed with a large cask,⁷¹ plus occasional drays loaded with barrels of water, were still the main sources of supply for the population of 64. Consequently

* This letter went on to suggest that ships took on board wharf labourers at Port Adelaide who then loaded and unloaded the ship at Port Augusta.

Minchin Wells, by then called Stirling North, had the greater population, numbering about 70.⁷²

The foundation of today's system of roads was in place quite early. By 1851 there was "a road overland from Adelaide" to Port Lincoln. Presumably it crossed the Gulf very close to, if not at, Yorkey Crossing (in those days known as Port Lincoln Crossing).⁷³ The track from Horrocks Pass to Stirling North may have been defined even before Minchin established his camp, in which case it would not have led to Stirling North but directly to Yorkey Crossing. The road overland between Port Lincoln and Adelaide went via Clare and Mt Remarkable to Horrocks Pass, because there were better watering spots southward along the eastern side of the Range. During 1861, this road's Horrocks Pass approaches were improved and a bridge was built in the Horrocks Pass.⁷⁴

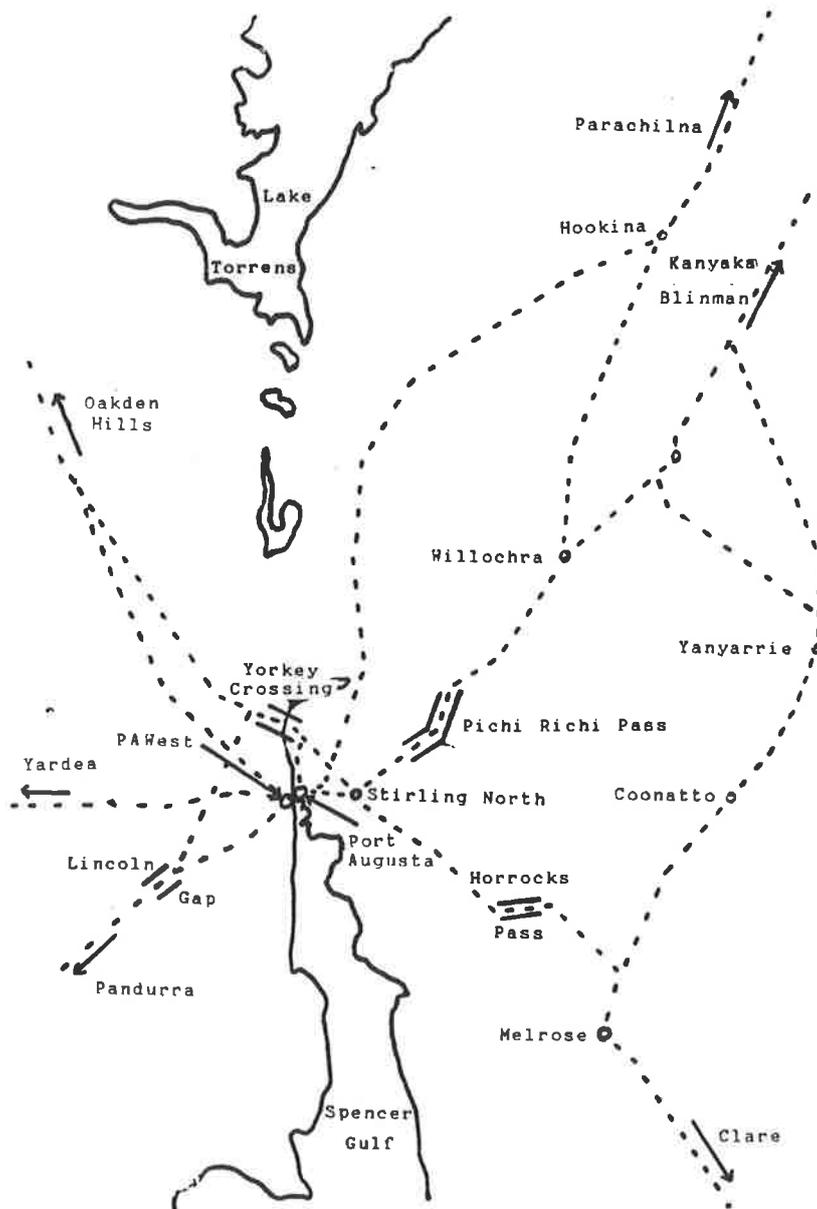
The way through Pichi Richi Pass was discovered by William Pinkerton in 1843, en route to Port Lincoln with a flock of sheep.⁷⁵ It was used by Tennant in 1846, and does not appear to have been used again until J F Hayward and James Craig struggled down it to get to the coast ten years later. That route intersected the road from Horrocks Pass at Stirling North. The Pichi Richi Pass road was surveyed between Saltia Creek and Pichi Richi in May 1857 by Assistant Surveyor-General G W Goyder.⁷⁶ Work was done to maintain it during 1861-62.⁷⁷

Probably about this time, the road north across the Western Plain, came into regular use. By 1862, this road ran (still runs) along the foothills of the Ranges for about 50km before cutting north-north-east, into the station and mining country of the hills. This country had been long occupied by 1857, and people would have scouted short-cuts to Port Augusta, although records of its first use have not been found. Certainly by 1862 it was a well-used route to the Port.⁷⁸

On the West Side of the Gulf, there was only one clear route to travel stock, once past Yorkey Crossing, until the north west was taken up. That route was through Lincoln Gap, the way of the present and the old road.

By 20 January 1862, work had commenced to build a "road through the lagoon".⁷⁹ This shortened the trek from Stirling North to the Port by four to five kilometres. The original road, (now known as the Causeway across Lake Knockout) was 24 feet wide. It cost about £2,700, equivalent to employing 27 labourers for a year, quite a significant outlay.⁸⁰ However, within 18 months it was in a "bad state", testament to its constant heavy use.⁸¹ The network of roads converged of necessity on Port Augusta and reflected the Port's domination of transport, communication and supply of the inland.

In 1855 a pre-fabricated police barracks hut was sent in sections to the Port. After some delay, Alexander Mackay



ROADS and MAIN TRACKS TO PORT AUGUSTA BY ABOUT 1870.

finally assembled it. By November it stood on the south-west corner of what is known as El Alamein and Commercial Roads. The allotment was fenced, and horses were yarded and stabled there. Later a cell was built with a post, to which prisoners were chained.⁸² During 1855, a hut was built for three Native Police stationed at Minchin Wells.⁸³ Eliza Ann Russell Wellby recalled that there were three policemen stationed at Port Augusta when she arrived in 1857. She remembered the name of one was Blake. Another was probably Christopher Provis. It is not known who the third was.⁸⁴

The planners of South Australia wished to create a colony of farmers and merchants. But instead of the waste lands being sold to industrious, civilized farmers, they were rented to pastoralists, men who in the eastern colonies were viewed as plundering barbarians, who would turn the frontier into kingdoms for sheep and cattle - or so it appeared to the men in Adelaide.⁸⁵ At this time, most that went on in Port Augusta was quite unregulated by the Government. Minchin, as the only Government civilian officer in the district until 1858, acted as Harbourmaster and Customs Officer. From April 1858 to September 1860 he was Magistrate for Mt Remarkable-Port Augusta.⁸⁶ One wonders how Minchin performed the additional, periodically rigorous and time-consuming duties, from his distant base at Minchin Wells. He was principally identified as the Sub-Protector, and his other official duties have been little known or acknowledged.

The man best remembered in this role was Hiram Telemachus Mildred. He took up his position at Port Augusta as Sub-Collector of Customs in 1858, becoming the Port's first formal representative of the Adelaide Government, apart from the police. He also assumed the role of Harbourmaster, Superintendent of Mercantile Marine, and keeper of the Gunpowder Magazine.⁸⁷ Mildred was appointed a Justice of the Peace, and assisted Minchin as his Clerk of Local Courts at Port Augusta.⁸⁸ In these early days, Mildred also filled the positions of District Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Chairman of the Destitute Board, Secretary, Cashier and Accountant of the Northern Roads Board, and Supervisor of Public Works.⁸⁹ Prior to the arrival of a resident medical practitioner, he treated emergencies and accidents. He drafted legal documents, was lay reader for the Church of England, ranked highly as a Freemason, and later supported funds to build many public buildings (including St Augustine's Church of England and the Institute). He was a public spirited man, devoted to the good of his fellows. He was referred to as the Government general factotum, and more affectionately as "The Pope" and "The Pooh-Bah".⁹⁰ An "Old Settler" recalled:

In fact, if anyone got into a fix it became quite a matter of course to go to Mr Mildred for advice, and no one was ever readier to give it, or in the absence of a medical man, to alleviate the sufferings of the sick, than Mr Mildred, who was of great service to the town and district in this and many other ways.⁹¹

Mrs Mildred seems to have had a parallel importance with the women, and did much to help them during her 14 years in Port Augusta. After her death in 1879, a memorial window was installed in St Augustine's Church of England, as a tribute to her kindly spirit and charitable works.⁹²

During the year after Hiram Mildred arrived, a multi-purpose Customs-Harbor Master's Office, Court House, Post Office and residence was built. It was sited on the Flagstaff Reserve at a spot known locally as Mildred Point. He occupied the residence with his wife and three daughters until his departure to Adelaide in 1877.⁹³ A female contractor built a stone wall around the building in 1861.⁹⁴ Prior to the erection of this building and the arrival of his family, Mildred-

had his tent in the police office yard, near the beach, which was fenced in, and on one occasion when our weekly budget of news had arrived (for we had only a mail once a week) there happened to be a very high tide, which cut off the post office - a noble edifice of weatherboards, 8' x 10' - from the surrounding dry land. In this predicament the post-master had to walk the top rail of the fence in order to get to the post office and stamp the letters, after which the applicants for letters ranged themselves on the rail, like a row of fowls roosting on a fence, and the letters were handed out and passed from one to the other, till they had all been served, when they scrambled away, and the P M repeated his acrobatic feat.⁹⁵

The first mail delivered to the Port was said to have come on the steamer Lubra.⁹⁶ A D Tassie was Postmaster until Mildred's arrival.⁹⁷ Until October 1857, mail was carried overland via Melrose and Charlton Mine, departing Port Augusta at 6am Mondays to arrive in Adelaide by 7pm Wednesdays. It was also carried by sea as opportunity offered.⁹⁸ The Adelaide Observer of 3 October 1857 reported that the 124t steamer-rigged-for-sail, Marion, was about to take up the mail and passenger run between Ports Adelaide, Lincoln, Augusta and Wallaroo. Glasgow-built and capable of ten knots without canvas, her Master was Captain Ward.⁹⁹ He part-owned it with Elder, Stilley, Captain M^cCoy and Joseph Darwent.¹⁰⁰ The Marion became the first regular coastal steamer to Port Augusta - the "tea and sugar". A stipulation in the official contract which included a £1000 pa government subsidy, was that the vessel should remain at the Port for 24 hours if required.¹⁰¹ The British Admiralty Marine Survey left a description of the Port on an occasion when the Marion was in:

At Port Augusta the bank is pretty steep...and two wooden jetties run out to low water mark. Off the end of one, the coasting steamer which runs to and from Port Adelaide twice a month, lies aground at low water.¹⁰²

Port Augusta's first "jetty" was a tentative affair, consisting of a few planks poking across the water.¹⁰³ By mid-1855 Elders had replaced it with a more substantial structure which was improved in 1856, and again in 1857.¹⁰⁴ This ran out behind Tassies' store, and a second, built by

architect Thomas Burgoyne in 1856, jugged into the Gulf from Captain Hacket's store on the next allotment.¹⁰⁵ In 1863, the Yudnamutana Jetty was built for the mining company of that name. It stood about where the Swimming Jetty now stands. A store was built on the shore nearby.¹⁰⁶ The rise and fall of the tides was so unexpectedly extreme that the three jetty proprietors placed a joint notice in the Adelaide press. They warned against leaving goods on their jetties without notice and refused to take responsibility for damage done.¹⁰⁷

Loading from the jetties was sometimes fairly slow. Some vessels could not or did not wish to lie alongside the jetties. Instead they moored in the harbour. They discharged and loaded using pontoons and barges, which unloaded at a jetty or onto the beach.¹⁰⁸ Consequently vessels were often loading for months. For example, the Raphael, 390t, from Aberdeen, arrived at the Port on 9 October 1861 but did not depart for London until 18 December. On 23 September 1862, the 502t Ormelie arrived. It departed two days before Christmas.¹⁰⁹ By the time some vessels departed, firm friendships had developed or been renewed. The shore people were invited on board, and the seamen might have been invited ashore and on occasional trips inland.¹¹⁰

The business name best remembered for its associations with the Port's earliest days was that of Elder. Elder's company had various partners during that time.¹¹¹ One of the

partners, Robert Barr Smith, acquired the financial records of the Port Augusta business. These records reveal outlays for land, buildings, fittings and a jetty in 1855 and 1856 of £766, and they had gross receipts of £1685 and £1738 respectively. By 1861, their capital outlay (not including wages, insurance and other charges) was £163 and gross receipts were £8167. Thus, just as they had imagined it would be, they reaped good profits as the pastoral industry expanded in the Port's hinterland. Tassie is said to have started on his own account as a merchant in 1860, and Elder, Stirling & Co ceased their trading interest in 1863 or 1864, although they still owned land and buildings.¹¹² Thus Tassie took over Elder's lucrative business.

In January 1856 the pastoral pioneers and doctors of medicine, J H & W J Browne, leased buildings from R & T Elder.¹¹³ A few months later they purchased waterfront allotment no 6 from R R Torrens,¹¹⁴ and Hacket established his shipping agency, woolstore and general storekeepers' business on it.¹¹⁶ By 1858, his store was

a very extensive building of one storey, the guttered roof of which was supported by strong posts. The Captain, being a wholesale as well as a retail merchant, and a forwarding agent for a number of station owners, the premises were crowded with everything from the proverbial "pin to a sheet anchor", and had the usual appearance as well as aroma of such places...I found the ruddy-faced Captain in his office, a den partitioned off by matchboard walls from the retail grocery and drapery department, and piles of pastoral produce and miscellaneous merchandise; and

TASSIES' EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR PREMISES
AT PORT AUGUSTA¹¹³

1 February 1856 - 28 February 1857

	£
Additions to store 50ft x 20ft with counter	182
Flooring to store additions and main store	38
Jetty 200ft, T-head 30ft, including track and tramway	382
Improving allotment no 5	9
2 pine cottages 20ft x 12ft each f72	144
1 pine cottage 25ft x 13ft with weatherboards	98
1 pine cottage 25ft x 13ft with weatherboards	72
Additions to own cottage	18
Painting store	28
Additions to blacksmith's premises	36
Roofing for Mackay's stables	15

a warm shop it was, as the perspiring clerks in their shirt sleeves might well testify.¹¹⁷

It is unclear what business arrangements Hacket had with the Brownes, but he appears to have been their tenant, not their employee.¹¹⁸ Charles Hacket was probably a bachelor all his life. His sister, Harriet Amelia, married A D Tassie in 1860.¹¹⁹ Until a branch of the National Bank was started in 1863, Captain Hacket ran their agency.¹²⁰

Port Augusta had two hinterlands - one on the east shore and mainly then north, the other on the west, and to the north west. North of the Gulf, north of Lake Torrens, the two hinterlands touched. The hinterland to the west began to be taken up 15 years after the east, and the Gulf forced the development of the town to be physically separate at the site of the Port. The two town sites grew and developed separately, like twins, going their own way in some regards, particularly in their minds, but sharing a common gulf and a dependence on the pastoral industry and the inland, limited by the seasons.

The first pastoral lease on the western side of the Gulf was taken up by Charles Swinden, in 1857. He called it Lincoln Gap after the track to Port Lincoln that goes through the gap in the hills, almost in the middle of his lease.¹²¹ Swinden died at the age of 35, but in that short time, thanks to a hefty inheritance, he owned 92km² west of Port Augusta, 266km² north, 23km² south and 110km² north-east of the Port, as well as hundreds of square kilometres of grazing land elsewhere. His local properties included

Woolundunga, Willochra Creek and Saltia. In the 'fifties and early 'sixties Swinden explored much of the north west, and was the first to take stock across Lake Torrens.

From 1857-8, others also took up country on the West Side of the Gulf. In 1862, a run of 384km² was taken up 22km from Hummock Hill (Whyalla), and there was another run established in 1864, south of this towards Franklin Harbour, but that was the furthest south down Eyre Peninsula until some time later.¹²² As stated in the next chapter when discussing the pastoral expansion which took place despite the Great Drought, country to the north west of Port Augusta was occupied during the 'sixties. These settlers delivered their wool to and collected their stores from the township of Port Augusta, by going around the top of the Gulf at Yorkey Crossing, or one of the more northerly crossings.

It is not clear precisely when a settlement occurred on the West Side. The Admiralty Marine Survey of 1862, which was both particular and precise in its description of the environs of Port Augusta, made no mention of habitation or facilities on the West Side. Prior to 1864 it may have been a stopping place in the wool season for traffic from the north west, providing grog, stores, precious water and stockfeed, and possibly smithy services, and accommodation.¹²³

It was in April 1864 that Alexander Mackay took the first contract for a mail run to Lincoln Gap, Pandurra, Caroon

(Iron Knob), Miccolo, and Coralbignie, a distance of 160km.¹²⁴ The establishment of such a long mail run indicated the extent of occupation. The mail was rowed across the Gulf and a boy, Frank Dempsey, was employed and provided with a packhorse to deliver it. Mackay kept the contract until 1867, when he was succeeded by Garrett O'More (1867-72), James Western Fitts (1872-6), and then Norman A Richardson, who held it until he was displaced by the Commonwealth Railway in 1916.

The township of Port Augusta West was surveyed for the government by W Crocker in October 1865, and additions were made by S W Hubert in 1883.¹²⁵ Unlike the survey of Port Augusta, the West Side survey did not include specific government reserves for a school or cemetery, or for recreational purposes, although general parklands were set aside. Perhaps it was presumed that these facilities on the other side of the Gulf would suffice.

Until about 1871 the population of the West Side* was probably no more than 10-20, and no more than 50 until 1877. If it was not a town in its own right, then it was at least a depot for goods from the east to send onto the north west.¹²⁶ The following year there were between 25-50 school-aged children on the West Side and by 1880, the

* The settlement on the eastern shore of the Gulf was always referred to as "Port Augusta" and that on the western shore as either "Port Augusta West" or the "West Side". Official documents usually refer to it as Port Augusta West. Nevertheless, the term the "West Side" has long assumed the local status of a proper name, and that is how it has been used here.

village consisted of 210 people in 36 houses and an unknown number of tents and humpies.¹²⁷

One of the first storekeepers on the West Side, if not the first, was Thomas Sharpe Tassie, youngest brother of A D Tassie. Probably about 1867-8, he erected a light jetty on or near the site of the present one.¹²⁸ The jetty could not have lasted long, because in 1868 a petition signed by 78 people, mainly pastoralists, requested the government to erect a jetty.¹²⁹ This suggests that the jetty business was not profitable, otherwise private individuals would have erected jetties of their own, as on the eastern shore. The west had few pastoralists and runs, a smaller outback population than the east and the country was more marginal than the Flinders Range. There was no mining. Ships went to the jetties on the eastern shore, with transshipment by boat, barge and punt to the west. The petitioners complained that they would be shipping their wool, 1200 bales, from the beach, and having their stores landed upon the beach. The inland trade via the West Side would have been quite markedly seasonal, with most wool drays arriving during a few months of the year only, collecting stores and not returning until another year had passed. About 1871, the government came to their assistance and built a jetty along which a tramway ran, and it ran on up the main street to serve the stores there.¹³⁰

Tassie & Co had a small weatherboard store in that street, and from an early time it was managed by a man named Stuart.

A boarding-house called "The Shamrock" was erected and managed by Joseph Holmes, probably preceeding the first pub. John Tortoise, a mason and builder, arrived in Port Augusta in 1857 and became the publican of the first hotel on the West Side, called the Western Hotel. It is not known precisely when he commenced that business, probably 1867, but he was succeeded by C Johnstone (1869-71), J W Fitts (1872-7) and others. It was during Fitts' time that a second storey was added.¹³¹

John M^cCarthy was the first regular ferryman across the Gulf, commencing in 1864. He lived in Port Augusta and when his services were required on the West Side, a flag was hoisted up a pole erected for the purpose. He would row across and take the passengers to the eastern shore for one shilling, or one shilling and six pence return. He was also the pilot for visiting ships, and he had a first-rate knowledge of Spencer Gulf. Two years later, Charles Ogilvy, a brusque ex-seafarer, commenced as a ferryman.¹³²

The children attended school on the east side of the Gulf, which was inconvenient and sometimes dangerous. Winds, rapid currents, peculiar tides, sea-chop, and the need to control the children, all had to be contended with. Some people had to hire boats or pay the ferryman, and this could amount to four or five times the school fee.¹³³ It was not until 1881 that the school population was sufficient to have a school erected on the West Side. Great inconvenience and expense was also incurred taking the dead across the Gulf,

where they had to be buried in the Port Augusta cemetery.¹³⁴

All water for stock and most for people had to come across the Gulf in tanks on a barge.¹³⁵ In a letter of 1936 to A A S McLellan, J G Moseley mentioned these problems of the 1860s:

Water on the West Side was sold at sixpence per bucket - and the bucket was not large. My thirsty and much travelled horse once drank six bucketsful, I well remember.¹³⁶

That was more than half a day's pay for most workers.¹³⁷

This price for water would have meant that nobody would have remained on the West Side unless they had a good domestic supply, and few stock would have been watered. In 1871, a five centimetre diameter lead submarine pipe was laid across the Gulf from the east, which got its water from Woolundunga near Mt Brown, in the Flinders. The submarine pipe emerged from the sea on the West Side at the Reserve near the jetty across the road from where the Wharf (Augusta) Hotel stands. A standpipe was erected there to water stock, and from which domestic supplies were drawn. This would have caused a lift in activity at Port Augusta West, at least in the wool season. Water charges were the same as those on the other side.¹³⁸

In 1881, to end the nuisance of stock moving in and near the main street to get to the watering point, the standpipe was relocated a kilometre away, to the western outskirts of the township. Within 18 months, the Standpipe Hotel had sprung up near the site, to provide refreshment to those whose

stock was being watered outside. In 1882, a 100,000 litre high level water tank was erected on a tower at the highest part of Port Augusta West. This was a precaution for fire fighting, and if the Woolundunga submarine pipe failed. This 24m high structure is today used as a lookout tower.¹³⁹

During the Port's first 30 years, religious congregations met, sometimes with a visiting clergyman. Early reports indicate that church services were held in the Post Office, Customs House, Court House, private residences, and later, in the Institute. The foundations of Port Augusta's first church, that of the Bible Christians, were laid in 1866.¹⁴⁰

The unknown author of the Bible Christians' 1885 publication, Memorials of Port Augusta, reminisced about the social life of the infant Port. He recalled

it has a history peculiarly its own. It would be difficult to point to another town which for such a number of years had the experiences of tragedy and comedy so grotesquely blended...in its early days almost every shade of variety of character was found; and those who were never intended...to become companions were compelled, owing to the extreme isolation, and the paucity of spirits congenial, to sink any traits that were not popular and tacitly admit that when in Port Augusta it was imperative to conform to the usages and customs of the place. In many instances the effect was ludicrous [with many] in some instances actors and...victims in the most painful episodes.¹⁴¹

Prior to the arrival of Hiram Mildred in 1858, Church services were conducted by "two amateur parsons, who were both bachelors". These services were held in the 8' x 10' wooden Post Office, referred to (for Sundays) as "the Kirk". On one occasion the "two amateur parsons"

happened to meet some jolly visitors on Saturday evening, when they kept up the conversation and the accompaniments to... an early hour, and being festive... they were struck with a new idea, and exclaimed, "Here's a good bit of fun; let's capsize the Kirk." The wooden post-office... was soon lying on the ground... and when morning came, the proposer of the mischief, whose turn it was to officiate, sallied forth with his prayer-book and Bible (utterly oblivious of the feat of the previous night) to do his customary duty, but when he arrived at the scene... recollection returned, and so did he to his own room, which he left no more that day.¹⁴²

The culprits remain anonymous, although it is noted that Tassie's brother-in-law, Captain Charles Hacket, was a Lay Reader for the Church of England.¹⁴³

Members of the Tassie family sent a Memorial to the Session of the Gouger Street Presbyterian Church in Adelaide asking for a Minister, and the foundations of a Presbyterian Church were laid at Stirling North in 1859. In 1862, Reverend Alexander Law and his wife Janet, who was pregnant, arrived and their child was born soon after.¹⁴⁴ They lived in a cottage at Stirling built by Robert Stewart Tassie. It was named "Roseneath" after the place in Scotland from which the Tassies had emigrated. The Laws encountered fleas in the house, and the shingle roof leaked

dust. They returned to Adelaide in 1863.¹⁴⁵ The church was so frail that one stormy day it was destroyed.¹⁴⁶ The sites of the Church and the cottage are not known.

The Central Board of Education controlled the licensing of schools, determined what should be taught, and set the payment of teachers. Parents paid fees of a shilling a week per child, but school was not compulsory. The Board paid the teacher six pence a week for those children unable to pay the school fees.¹⁴⁷ Inspectors visited schools, but Port Augusta's first school was usually, to quote one Inspector, "beyond the reach of the Government."¹⁴⁸ The school began in 1859 or 1860, and one also commenced at Stirling. Magistrates Minchin and later Smith, were charged with overseeing them. The return of 2 May 1861 showed that there were 11 boys and 13 girls on the Roll, with an average daily attendance of 21. Robert Brown was the teacher. He taught writing (10 pupils), arithmetic (8), grammar (2), geography (2), history (3), and singing (11). The Inspector remarked:

This school though small, is necessary, and the teaching is of an unpretending character; but the teacher is well reported of by a number of persons... who seem to set much value on his services.¹⁴⁹

The next report showed the attendance had averaged 15, with six boys and 14 girls on the Roll. It noted:

This school, though conducted by a worthy teacher, was closed near the end of the year for want of support of the parents in the locality, who seem generally to be very indifferent about the

education of their children; and there appears but little prospect of the school being re-opened.¹⁵⁰

At this time, Port Augusta had no hall, church or official building where a day school could have been held. Pupils probably crowded into a small cottage.¹⁵¹

The few sources that exist suggest that male residents of the Port outnumbered female by two or three to one in the earliest days between 1855 and the early 1860s. This was typical of the frontier, particularly in the first stages of development as Russel Ward illustrated in The Australian Legend. It also explains much of the rough and ready nature of the Port. Birth records indicate that at least one male resident of the Port prior to 1856-59, Alexander Mackay, left his family in Adelaide. The Melrose Birth Register gives the residence of Alexander and Ellen Stewart Mackay as Port Adelaide for the birth of daughter Grace Burgess in 1854 and Augustus Donald in 1856. The records for their two later children born in 1859 and 1861, John Pringle and Fanny Rodney, indicate the parents' residence as Port Augusta. A few other couples who had babies prior to 1860 gave their residence as Port Augusta. These included John and Catherine Ryan Taylor (1858), and Alexander and Grace B Stewart Cowan (1859). School enrolments of 15-21 children might suggest perhaps five or ten families were sending children to Robert Brown's school.

Mining led to the founding of the first town in the Flinders Range, at Mt Remarkable. That mining company,

formed in November 1846, secured one of the last of the Special Surveys. Its directors were Alexander Elder, Philip Levi, George Hall, Francis Dutton, John Bristow Hughes, John Neales and E L Montefiore.¹⁵² Development depended upon shipping ore via Spencer Gulf. To do this the company bought land in Germein Bay, at Mount Ferguson (Weeroona Island). However, by June 1847 it must have been clear that the Mt Remarkable mine was of little value, because application was made to change the site of the Special Survey to Emu Plains near Clare. Six months later, Neales sold his shares for half what he had paid for them. The company was wound up on 31 July 1851.¹⁵³ Therefore the establishment of Port Augusta and the operations at Mt Remarkable were not directly linked, as has been sometimes implied.¹⁵⁴

Often a lucky mineral strike focused public attention on the Port and its hinterland. William J & John H Browne found minerals in the North Flinders in 1852, but nothing came of it.¹⁵⁵ In 1856-57 applications for mineral leases were lodged for sites around Beltana.* The first paying proposition was the Oratunga Mine, east of Parachilna, started in 1857. In that year, 425t of Oratunga ore was shipped out through Port Augusta.¹⁵⁶ Right from the start these mines were handicapped by the high cost of cartage to the Port.¹⁵⁷ However, by 1859 the mines of the Flinders had excited much interest and expectation.

* Beltana is about 275km north of Port Augusta; Parachilna, Oratunga and Blinman are about 200km north, and Yudnamutana about 380km by road.



The Great Northern Copper Mining Company began business with a flourishing operation at Nuccaleena in 1860.¹⁵⁸ The Yudnamutana Mining Company began its operations at Yudnamutana and Blinman in 1862. In February the following year, public attention was again focused when the Yudnamutana Company paraded a four tonne monster block of copper ore down King William Street, with a string of drays led by a circus band. Smelters were built at Blinman to refine the copper and a company jetty was erected at Port Augusta in 1863.¹⁵⁹ There is no reliable way of gauging the effect of mining operations upon the Port. One must conclude that there was not much impact, because Port Augusta's population did not rise above 70 in these years, and there is little evidence of activity in the Port especially related to minerals, apart from the erection of the Yudnamutana Jetty.

Cartage to the Port was by bullock dray, each lugging two or three tons, covering about 20km a day. The bullocks largely depended for fodder on native grasses growing along the track, and on the availability of water at regular intervals.¹⁶⁰ Cartage from Blinman cost about £5 per ton.¹⁶¹ This was a powerful incentive to look for alternative means of cartage. In 1860, the Great Northern Copper Mining Company had a railway surveyed from Port Augusta, through Parachilna Gap "to the mining districts". The government agreed to grant the railway backers two square miles of land on the Western Plain for each mile of

railway constructed. Nothing came of it.¹⁶² In 1863, the GNCM Company made a revolutionary attempt to slash cartage costs to something like £1 per ton, by introducing three steam traction-engines, with road trains of six wagons each but they proved an utter failure.¹⁶³

The government dug a line of wells along a proposed Western Plains road route to Port Augusta. At each well a township was surveyed - Yarra, Mt Eyre, Hookina, Mern Merna, Edeowie and Parachilna. It was hoped that a string of provision and refreshment points would be provided at these towns by enterprising individuals. Previously the government surveyed towns in a piece-meal fashion but the creation of these towns was deliberately done, says Williams, to assist the development of the pastoral north. Yet Goyder questioned the wisdom of establishing them because:

The first erection will undoubtedly be an inn which would be the resort of shepherds and stockmen... whose wages would go in the purchase of... rum and beer... and the interests of the squatter [would be] seriously affected.¹⁶⁴

Townships were also surveyed near some of the mines.¹⁶⁵

The heat, flies, aridity and defoliation, and the Port's dust and sand, caused discomfort and unfavorable comment from the start. Many presumed these inconveniences arose from the white man's environmental destruction after 1854. The white man was the likely culprit, but the destruction was probably fairly extensive when Tassie waded ashore for the first time. People were overlanding stock between

Adelaide and Port Lincoln, via the head of the Gulf, before Port Augusta was established. Pinkerton went through in 1843; Tennant passed by with 5000 sheep in 1846; Oakden and Hulkes took an unknown number of stock to the north-west in 1851; Peters arrived at the head of the Gulf with 12000 sheep in the care of 42 Port Lincoln Aboriginal shepherds in August 1853, and remained four months before departing for Adelaide.¹⁶⁶ J B Bull took 7000 sheep past in 1855; W R Swann took 10,000 sheep to Pekina the same year, via the head of the Gulf.¹⁶⁷ Doubtless during this time there were others with stock in the tens of thousands, each with four hard, cutting pads, making dust of the once firm surfaces. The Aborigines referred to Port Augusta as Curdnatta - sandy place.¹⁶⁸ It must have become much sandier. Stock had to drink every day when on the move, perhaps several times a day for sheep in hot weather. There were precious few water sources for so many animals. And they had to eat. They must have cut a swathe across the landscape, with unaccustomed impact on the vegetations, water and surface of the land.

When the Port was settled the concentrated effect of defoliation escalated:

It has been said that the first impulse of the savage man is to destroy...it does not speak well for our civilisation in those early days, for almost the first step taken by the old settlers was to cut down and burn the trees and shrubs, so that before many years had passed the slopes...which had been things of beauty became treeless, monotonous, and uninteresting...somebody

who pined for milk introduced goats [and] the shrubs quickly followed the trees, while the "everlastings" proved to be but transient toys, and vanished from our sight... the gentle slopes, which had been so beautiful, became changed to barren shifting sand heaps, which the wind in its changing course carried in all directions, and drifted by thousands of tons into the Gulf.¹⁶⁹

In fairness to the overlanders and the Port's first residents, we do not know how bad sand movement and dust was prior to settlement. There were certainly severe dust storms by 1855. Twenty-three years later, Councillor James Western Fitts recalled

One visit from a Governor, who came in late one Saturday night, in the middle of a dust storm, which made him invisible, and went away the next day, without taking any notice of the place.¹⁷⁰

In 1862, the Admiralty Marine Survey dispassionately described the situation:

During the summer months strong south and south-south-east winds prevail, and in January, February and March they are often interrupted by hot winds which blow fiercely from the northward, sometimes for seven or eight days, raising the temperature to 120° in the shade... The hot winds frequently terminate in a squall or thunderstorm, they blow under a cloudless sky and a thick red haze prevails. Whirlwinds are common in the summer... raising a pillar of dust to a great height.¹⁷¹

What did the town look like in 1863?

It extended along the beach northward for about half a

kilometre. The mangroves had been cleared away from the front of the town.¹⁷² Buildings, and various tents and shelters were scattered along the waterfront track, which is today known as El Alamein Road and Tassie Street. This was the main street. At its most southerly end, Mildred Point, was the weatherboard Customs House-cum-Court House-cum-Post Office. One hundred metres north was the Dover Castle Inn, next door to the Police barracks. On the other corner, Tassies' store and woolstore and next door was Hacket's store and brick woolstore. These two were the most substantial buildings. Down the beach, 150m away, was the Yudnamutana Store. Opposite Hacket's store, on the other side of the track, was the recently built Northern Hotel; and next to it, southwards, was the blacksmith's shed and stables; and next to that, on the present site of the Exchange/Fourways Hotel, directly opposite Tassies' store, was A D Tassies' small wooden house. Across the sandy way, 200m to the south-east, was the new National Bank and residence, a weatherboard place on what is now the corner of Gibson and Chapel Streets. There were some other structures scattered around. Robert Bottomley, the first baker, had his ovens somewhere along present-day Commercial Road. Three jetties extended into the Gulf. The most southerly was behind Tassies' store, then another from the neighbouring allotment on which Captain Hacket had his store. The most northerly jetty belonged to the Yudnamutana Copper Mining Company. A sandy dirt track led straight out to the road over the lagoon, and from there eastward into Stirling North.¹⁷³ All sorts of dry goods could be obtained

at the stores and fresh meat from Stirling North, but vegetables could not be had. Firewood was available in small quantities. Fish, mainly schnapper, could be easily caught with hook and line.¹⁷⁴

Of that year, J G Moseley said:

I arrived in Port Augusta in November, 1863. In those years the town, though small in the number of houses, was important in business, being the capital of the great northern pastoral district, and the commercial depot of the vast extent of pastoral areas from Beltana and further north, to Coonatto and districts eastward, to Mt Remarkable and Baroota southward... A continuous line of wool-laden teams could be seen extending from Tassies' store to the vicinity of the present Pastoral Hotel... During the droughty seasons Port Augusta was occasionally short of drinking water, though a plentiful supply of beer was on tap.¹⁷⁵

NOTES

- 1 14.5.1880, p8e, PAD.
- 2 Hayward J F, 1927, "Reminiscences", PRGSSA, v29, pp153-4.
- 3 8.7.1854, p2g, SAGCR.
- 4 A: 16-2.
- 5 For reference to Lipson's charts see message No 3 from Governor to Legislative Council, 12.11.1852, folio 13, 1853, SAPP; for Nation, see CSO, Outward Correspondence, A(1853)771:GRG24/4, PRO; and Matson, 28.1.1854, p2e, SAGCR.
- 6 19.3.1857, pp248-9, SAGG.
- 7 Ibid, Nautical Description of Port Augusta, 30.1.1863.
- 8 Hayward, op cit, p115.
- 9 Nautical Description of Port Augusta, op cit.
- 10 CSO, Inward Correspondence, 7.7.1854, op cit.
- 11 Cockburn R, 1925, 1:192b and 204c.
- 12 Horne D, 1977, Money Made Us, Penguin, Melbourne, pp88-9.
- 13 CSO, Inward Correspondence, 7.7.1854, op cit; Mincham 1977, p146.
- 14 Hayward, op cit, p153; for location of Craig's property see Mincham, 1977, p91.
- 15 28.1.1854, Adelaide Observer.
- 16 25.2.1854, Adelaide Observer.
- 17 Meinig, op cit, pp181-4.
- 18 Williams, 1974, op cit, pp353-7.
- 19 CSO, Inward Correspondence, 13.6.1854, op cit; A: 245-2.
- 20 Ibid; A: 83-4.
- 21 Williams, op cit.
- 22 A: 83-4 and 245-2.
- 23 28.6.1935, p3d, Trans.
- 24 21.11.1925, p17 The Mail.

- 25 12.8.1854, Adelaide Observer.
- 26 Ibid, 19.8.1854.
- 27 For a list of the purchasers see 28.10.1892, PAD; re Prankerd see Biographical Index of South Australians 1836-1885, 1986, publ S A Genealogy & Heraldry Society, Adelaide. Prankerd bought a quarter of Noarlunga for himself and clients, as well as land in the Port and elsewhere. See also Hirst J B, 1973, Adelaide and the Country 1870-1917, MUP, Melbourne, p28. Prankerd received commissions from the Elders on 2 and 9.8.1855 for his purchase of three Port Augusta allotments. On 1.2.1857 he was also paid a further fee for Port Augusta land conveyance. See Barr Smith Papers: PRG354/1-3 and 33A, ML; re Duval and Charnock see A:245-3b; re M^cEllister see Faull p72, Biographical Index, op cit, for description of Hallet, see Cockburn, 1925, 1:36.
- 28 Joseph Stirling is listed as a purchaser of a town allotment in Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, 1936, Corporation of Port Augusta, p10. However, M^cLellan (A:248-3) says the firm of Joseph Stilling & Co purchased one of the original town allotments. In this article, M^cLellan says that Captain Hacket was an agent for Stilling. No trace of Joseph Stirling has been found. It therefore seems that the 1936 reference to Stirling should be to Stilling. See also A:249-1.
- 29 Re Levi, see Cockburn, 1925, 1:28; Re Watts, see Biographical Index, and Loyau G E, 1885, Notable South Australians, Adelaide; Re Noltenius, see 19.8.1854, Adelaide Observer; and about Beck, Hall, M^cCabe and Baldock, see Barr Smith Papers, PRG354/1-3, op cit; re Elders, see A:119-2b.
- 30 Hirst, op cit, p28.
- 31 Carter, op cit, p50.
- 32 Williams, 1974, op cit, p334.
- 33 A:144; Cockburn, 1925, 1:205c.
- 34 Research Note 256, PRO.
- 35 Cockburn, 1925, 2:110b.
- 36 Memorials of Port Augusta, Bible Christian Church, Port Augusta, 1885, p12.
- 37 Ibid, 13.9.1912, p3.
- 38 7.10.1854, Adelaide Observer.
- 39 Hayward, op cit, p161.

- 40 M^cLellan, 1966, p1, op cit, p3.
- 41 Ibid, 13.9.1912, p3e.
- 42 A:158-3.
- 43 13.9.1912, p4, PAD.
- 44 A:246-2.
- 45 21.5.1881, p7b, PAD.
- 46 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p105. See also Kerr M G, 1980, Colonial Dynasty - the Chambers Family of South Australia, Rigby, Adelaide, p116.
- 47 Barr Smith Papers, ibid, refer to Mackay's rental details. See also A:121-1, 273-1.
- 48 M^cLellan, 1966, op cit, p1; A:95-2.
- 49 Bruce R, 1902, Reminiscences of an Old Squatter, Adelaide pp2-4.
- 50 Memorials of Port Augusta, op cit, p14.
- 51 16.6.1880, p7bc, PAD.
- 52 Williams, 1974, op cit, p24.
- 53 Ward, op cit, pp197-8.
- 54 Ibid, pp7-8.
- 55 Ibid, p238-45.
- 56 Ibid, p244.
- 57 Ibid, p9-10.
- 58 16.6.1880, p76c, PAD.
- 59 Memorials of Port Augusta, op cit.
- 60 13.9.1912, p3a, op cit.
- 61 Cockburn, 1925, 1:205c; A:172-2b,
- 62 Jane Thompson also held an associated Mt Arden lease from 1.7.1854 until 1859. She may have previously occupied both tracts of land under Waste Land Applications no 45 of 1853 and no 59 of 1854: GRG35/584/234, PRO.
- 63 A:13-2.
- 64 13.9.1912, p3a, PAD. See also the Melrose Birth

Register, hand written extracts of which M^cLellan deposited at Corporation of Port Augusta Library.

- 65 A: 149-1.
- 66 8.7.1854, p2g, SAGCR.
- 67 A: 149-3; Report of the Sub-Protector, 24.8.1854, p619, SAGG.
- 68 Ibid, 27.12.1855, p979.
- 69 11.2.1857, Adelaide Times.
- 70 Charnock W H, Notebook: BRG26, ML.
- 71 A: 151-2B.
- 72 The towns of Stirling North and Stirling South were privately surveyed by Gavin D Young in May 1859 for Robert Barr Smith, who bought the land in June 1858. See A: 150(note). For details of the population at this time, see Nautical Description of Port Augusta, op cit.
- 73 Report of the Protector, 17.4.1851, p264, SAGG; A: 31-5b.
- 74 Engineer and Architect's Office, Inward Correspondence nos 164,167,170,174(1861) [from Hiram Mildred]: GRG53/23, PRO.
- 75 A: 31-4, 113-2, 203-2.
- 76 Report of G W Goyder on Exploration of Country between Mt Searle and Lake Torrens, 9.7.1857, p529-32, SAGG.
- 77 Engineer and Architect's Office, op cit, no 217 (1861), 5(1863).
- 78 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p192.
- 79 Engineer and Architect's Office, op cit, no 16(1862).
- 80 A: 150-1; Statistical Register, 1869-70, no 2 SAPP.
- 81 10.10.1863, Adelaide Observer.
- 82 M^cLellan, 1966, op cit, pp2-3.
- 83 Reports of the Sub-Protector, 22.2.1855, p157, 26.4.1855, p331, 24.5.1855, p408, 2.8.1855, p577, 8.11.1855, p847, SAGG.
- 84 M^cLellan, 1966, op cit, p3.
- 85 Horne, op cit, p88.

- 86 M^cLellan, 1966, op cit, p1.
- 87 A: 12-1, 250-1.
- 88 A: 159-2.
- 89 A: 12-1; 21. 5. 1880, p7b, PAD.
- 90 A: 204-2, 12-1; 13. 9. 1912, p5, 21. 5. 1880, p7b, PAD;
A: 12-3, 228-2.
- 91 21. 5. 1880, p7b, PAD.
- 92 A: 12-2.
- 93 A: 12-3, 64-1b.
- 94 A: 1-2.
- 95 18. 6. 1880, p7a, PAD.
- 96 A: 37-4.
- 97 29. 1. 1857, p113, 17. 12. 1857, p973, 8. 1. 1858, p25,
SAGG.
- 98 Ibid, 17. 12. 1857, p973.
- 99 A: 133, 134; 13. 9. 1912, p3, PAD.
- 100 A: 133-2; 13. 9. 1912, p3, PAD.
- 101 Soon after commencing the service, Joseph Darwent petitioned the Government complaining that the subsidy was insufficient. Nothing seems to have come of it, though. See SAPP 170 of 1858.
- 102 Nautical Description of Port Augusta, op cit.
- 103 A: 13-2.
- 104 Barr Smith Papers: PRG354/1-3, op cit.
- 105 A: 13-2, 248-1.
- 106 A: 247-3a, 89-2.
- 107 3. 10. 1863, Adelaide Observer.
- 108 A: 268-4a,
- 109 Port Augusta Shipping Register: GRG51/68, PRO.
- 110 18. 6. 1880, p7b, PAD.
- 111 Alexander Lang Elder arrived at Port Adelaide in 1839 aboard the family's 89t. schooner. He sold the cargo and set up a general merchants and agents business,

trading as A L Elder & Co of Hindley Street. When he returned to the UK in 1853, brother Thomas emigrated and the firm became Elder & Co. Brother George returned to Scotland in 1854, Edward Stirling joined Thomas as a partner in 1856, and the company became Elder, Stirling & Co. Robert Barr Smith joined them in 1863 and the company name again changed, to Elder, Smith & Co. See Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:26; A:144,245.

- 112 Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:205a; Barr Smith Papers: PRG354/33A, op cit.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 A: 246-1.
- 115 Barr Smith Papers, PRG345/1-3, ML.
- 116 28. 3. 1861, SAGG; A: 247, 248.
- 117 Bruce, op cit, p6.
- 118 M^cLellan made contradictory statements about this and never did clear it up - see A: 93-2a, 246-2, 247-2b.
- 119 A: 247-1.
- 120 A: 247-2.
- 121 Richardson N A, 1925, Pioneers of North and North-West South Australia, Adelaide, p1.
- 122 Richardson, op cit, pp2-4.
- 123 A: 22-2, 99-1.
- 124 Richardson, op cit, pp111-3.
- 125 Vol 16, folio 3, SA Lands Department.
- 126 4. 5. 1878, PAD.
- 127 Ibid, 26. 11. 1880.
- 128 A: 13-3.
- 129 No 50, 1869-70, SAPP.
- 130 A: 13-3.
- 131 A: 99-1, 124-4.
- 132 Richardson, op cit.
- 133 4. 5. 1878, PAD.
- 134 Port Augusta West Primary School Centenary Book, 1981,

- Publins Committee, Port Augusta p6; 21.11.1879, PAD.
- 135 A: 99-3a.
- 136 Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, op cit, p18.
- 137 Statistical Register of South Australia, 1869-70, SAPP.
- 138 A: 152-2.
- 139 A: 154-1; 27.9.1882, PAD.
- 140 Memorials of Port Augusta, op cit, pp5-13.
- 141 Ibid.
- 142 21.5.1880, p7c, PAD.
- 143 A: 247-1.
- 144 A: 175-2; Melrose Birth Register, op cit.
- 145 A: 175-2.
- 146 Memorials of Port Augusta, op cit, p15.
- 147 "Sketch History of the Education Department",
Education Gazette, 15.8.1956, pp231-5.
- 148 Inspector's Report, 2.5.1861, SAGG.
- 149 Ibid.
- 150 Ibid, 1.5.1862.
- 151 A: 188-4.
- 152 Faull, op cit, p18-24.
- 153 Ibid, pp24-26.
- 154 Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, op cit, p8;
Story of Port Augusta, 1951, Corporation of Port
Augusta, p5; A: 1-1b.
- 155 Papers of the Legislative Council - Schedule of
Documents no 63, 16.1.1852, SAPP; Mincham, 1977, op
cit, p178-9.
- 156 Ibid, p181; 13.9.1912, p4e, PAD.
- 157 Sinnett F, 1862, An Account of the Colony of South
Australia, Adelaide, p73.
- 158 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p186.
- 159 For the commencement of operations, see Mincham H, 1980,
Hawker - Hub of the Flinders, Centenary Committee,

- Hawker, p27; Mincham, 1977, op cit, p201-2 for reference to the parade, and regarding the smelters and jetty, pp192-3.
- 160 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p181.
- 161 Mincham, 1980, op cit, p30.
- 162 Babbage J and Barrington R, 1980, The First 100 Years of the Pichi Richi Railway, Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society, Port Augusta, p7; Mincham, 1977, op cit, pp185-6.
- 163 Mincham, 1977, op cit, pp193-4.
- 164 Williams, 1974, op cit, p342.
- 165 Mincham, 1980, op cit, p30.
- 166 Report of the Sub-Protector, 23.2.1854, p149.
- 167 Kerr, op cit, pp115-6.
- 168 Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, op cit, p9; A:1-1.
- 169 21.5.1880, p7a, PAD.
- 170 Ibid, 12.1.1878.
- 171 Nautical Description of Port Augusta, op cit.
- 172 Ibid.
- 173 M^cLellan, 1966, op cit.
- 174 Nautical Description of Port Augusta, op cit.
- 175 Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, op cit, p18.

Much was expected of the inland and the Port's fortunes rose on this expectation. With the increased stocking of the frontier, worrying signs of aridity appeared. This chapter examines how Port Augusta's geographical domination of the inland's transport, communication and supply routes made it susceptible to the Great Drought of 1864-6, which blighted most of the Port's hinterland. Responses to this calamity focused on the handicap to inland transport posed, in the short term, by the acute Drought, and in the longer term by intermittent aridity. These responses shored up the Port's sagging hopes for the future. This chapter then examines the implications of the Great Drought and how they were misunderstood, both in themselves and in the light of renewed optimism brought on by the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line (OLT). The Port reaped the benefit of this inland construction project solely because of its geographical position. Finally, throughout the chapter the Port's social developments during this period are examined. They reflected the crisis caused by the Drought, the Port's frontier lifestyle, frontier optimism, and good luck.

The optimism of Port Augusta was halted by the Great Drought of 1864-6. The men of capital in Adelaide had their plans halted too. In retrospect, it can be seen there were signs things might go wrong in the northern pastoral country.

In the first 12 years that Port Augusta and the north were occupied by the British there were seven years of drought. The newcomers, overwhelmingly people from the British Isles,

had little or no experience in these arid regions. What did the word "drought" mean to them? For most South Australian pastoralists, the industry did not become part of their way of life, as Hirst rightly pointed out in his book Adelaide and the Country. Many lived in Adelaide, from where they could more easily control their scattered interests, and left their holdings to managers. Pastoralism was merely a way of making money.¹ It has been said that "every expansion of settlement has to be accompanied by, if not preceded by, a change in attitude to the land."² Many pastoralists and their managers lacked the relevant experience to do this, and so were not able to see cautionary signs that if they were not careful, they would lose stock and money.

It was very dry during 1858-9.* There was no rain for 18 months.³ On the Mt Brown and Woolundunga runs which were neighbouring runs to Port Augusta, W D Kingsmill reported that the cattle were eating twigs to sustain them.

Landholders paid a rent for each square mile, as well as two pence for each sheep it was assessed that the land could carry. This was an attempt by the government to force squatters to stock their runs or surrender them to somebody who would. In 1858-9, the Chief Inspector of sheep said of Mt Brown, that if the pastoralist was to remain it was imperative to reduce the assessment of 100 sheep per square mile. But such assessments were not reduced.⁴ It was later obvious that the government, by seeking to optimise its

* N A Richardson (p27) cites evidence that 1857 and 1858 were probably exceptionally good years in the north west.

revenue from the leased pastoral lands, had forced runs to be destructively overstocked.

In 1860, John Taylor of the neighbouring Mt Arden run, 10-15km north of the Port reflected on the dry of 1858-9, and said:

There is a district which is comparatively rainless...from Mt Remarkable [northward]. This country has no regular winter rains...Many runs in the north have not had a heavy rain for three years...there is almost no vegetation remaining, except salt bush and to a great extent that is dead from the effects of drought.⁵

At Mt Arden in the drought of 1858, Taylor had 14,000 lambs of which 10,000 died along with 4,000 older sheep, in a flock of 26,000. The following year he had 24,000 sheep of which 4,000 died.⁶ However, other pastoralists do not appear to have suffered to the same extent.⁷

In his evidence to the 1867 Commission of Runs Suffering from Drought, hereafter referred to as the Drought Commission,* Tassie said that "previous to the drought [of 1864-6] there was a kind of rush" to take up land to the north and north west of the Port. West of the Flinders Range to around the Gawler Range, there were few natural watering places to be found.⁸ Before the Great Drought,

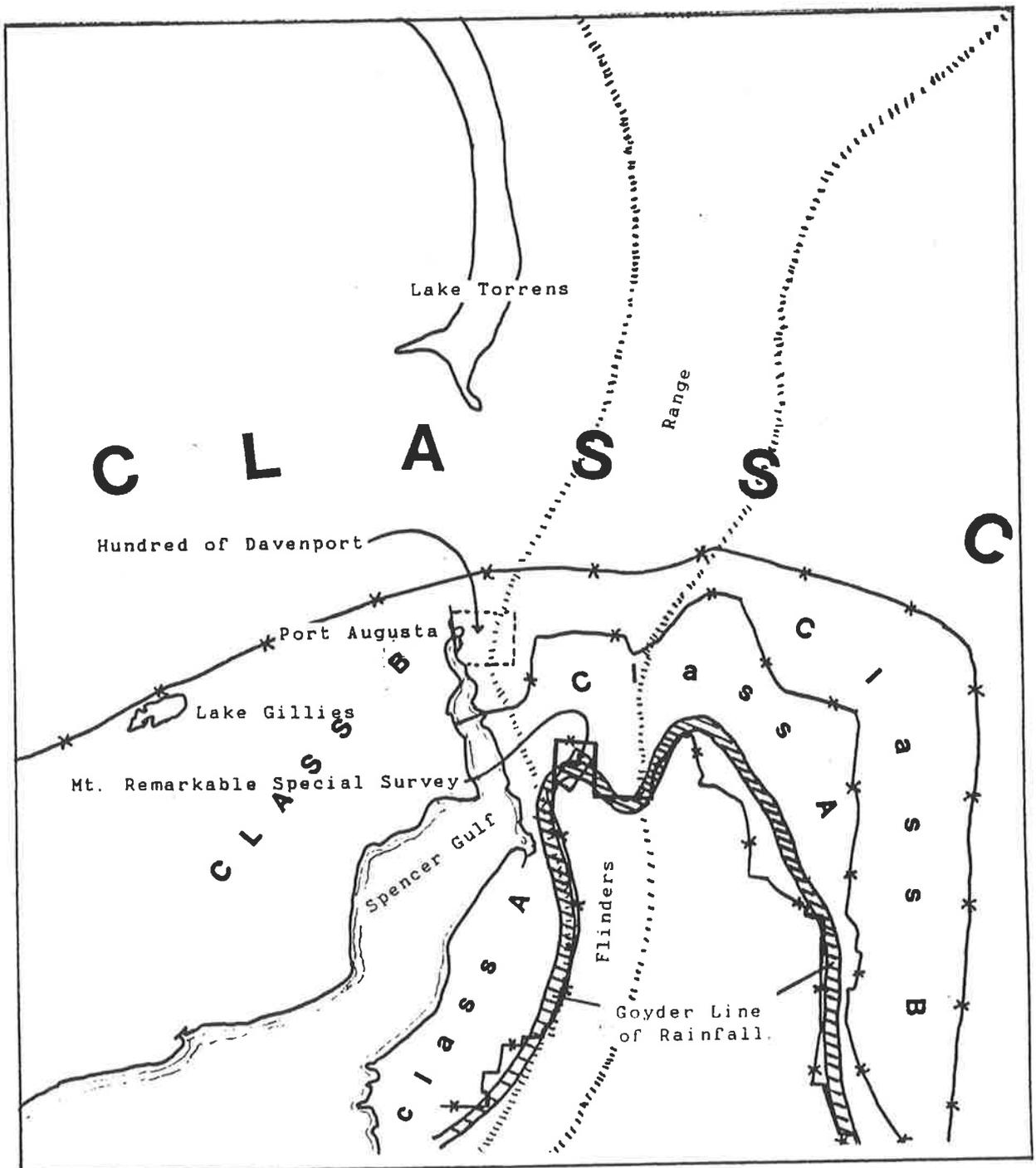
* The Drought Commission was made up of politicians and public servants. It did not include anybody from Port Augusta. Commissioners made a physical inspection of the affected area, touring from Port Augusta as far north as Mt Deception east of the mid-point of Lake Torrens, as far north east as Yudnamutana and south to Melrose.

Christian Ogilvie took up a deceptively well-grassed run on the south shore of Lake Gairdner, but it had no natural surface water. Around the same time, Yadlamalka run south of Lake Torrens, was taken up by James Loudon, and it too had no surface water. Ogilvie and Loudon watered their stock from wells which were often quite saline. Cockburn relates that the wife of a later owner of Yadlamalka insisted on using salt in her tea when visiting Adelaide. Without salt, the tea was so insipid she could not drink it.⁹

The Great Drought began in January 1864 and no rain fell for two to three years.¹⁰ In 1865 Surveyor-General Goyder was sent to identify the limits of the Drought.¹¹ The area effected was Port Augusta's entire north-east hinterland, from Mt Remarkable north to Blanchewater, and from Lake Torrens east to the Barrier Range. Goyder identified the margin beyond which the usual rains failed to fall during 1864-5. In February and March 1866, rains broke the drought from Blinman north, but generally the country south of Blinman remained parched.¹² Some rain must have fallen south of Blinman in 1866 because, after drought-breaking rains that year, the Holowiliena Station Diary recorded, "Mother is gardening".¹³ Holowiliena is more than 80km south of Blinman. Rain fell at the Port in May and June 1866, but the Drought endured from Blinman south to Pekina until November 1866.¹⁴

Although there had been dry spells before, the Great Drought

GOYDER'S DIVISION OF THE PASTORAL AREAS FOR VARYING LEASE PAYMENTS, from the Commission on Runs Suffering from Drought, 1867, no 14, SAPP the most southerly line, between Class A and land to the south, marked the drought-stricken northern area from that not suffering from the Great Drought. It was drawn squared and angular because it tended to follow property boundaries. The line later took on quite a different meaning as it became the famous Goyder Line of Rainfall. It was then drawn smooth and rounded like a weather chart line.



was a catastrophe. There was no escape. The price of cartage from the Port escalated because there was no feed for the bullocks to eat along the tracks. The bullocks were replaced with horse teams which had to carry sufficient feed for the trip there and back.¹⁵ For each kilogram of goods carried 250km, a horse ate six kilograms of feed.¹⁶ By August 1865, all the working bullocks in the north had starved to death. The pre-Drought rate for cartage had been around five and a half pence per tonne kilometre.¹⁷ This increased to as high as 50 pence and sometimes a full load for the return trip had to be guaranteed. At times, there was no cartage at any price.¹⁸

With the massive escalation in cartage costs, Mining stopped at Yudnamutana, Nuccaleena, Oratunga, and most places except Blinman. In June 1864, stores from Port Augusta for Yudnamutana were abandoned on the track. At one stage the weekly Port Augusta-Kanyaka mail service stopped.¹⁹ The pastoral runs discharged men because stores from the Port could not be transported inland and it was feared there would be a famine.²⁰ There were reports of hungry people eating starch and any wild animals they could catch.²¹ Dust storms increased in intensity. On one occasion at Stirling North, people sitting at a table for dinner could not see each other because of the dust in the room.²²

Losses were staggering. Many lost in two years everything previously accumulated. Henry Scott gave evidence to the Drought Commission about the losses sustained by himself,

his brother Abraham and various partners, when they purchased Mt Brown run in October 1863, it carried 20,324 sheep. The following figures reveal the decline:

January	1864	19 063	sheep
August	1864	14 716	sheep
December	1864	16 517	sheep including lambs
August	1865	14 229	sheep
December	1865	13 051	sheep
December	1866	11 800	sheep and 50 cattle

All told, the Scott's estimated their Drought losses at £60 000-70 000.²³

In 1864, just before the Great Drought became apparent, Tassie joined the "kind of rush" to take up land on the western side of the Gulf. In partnership with Robert Barr Smith, he took up one of the Port's neighbouring properties, the 680km² Point Lowly Station, on the West Side of Spencer Gulf.²⁴ Not only did it have little surface water, but four years previously Edward Stirling had liberated a few pairs of rabbits to breed for sporting purposes. By 1864 they were a great menace.²⁵ Tassie soon found himself up against the water problem. He sunk many wells without much success. One well went down 70m without yielding a drop. He introduced a costly desalination plant without success. Although he lost 1000 sheep and £6000, he limited his loss by selling many of his sheep before it was too late.²⁶

Complete figures for stock losses during the Great Drought are not available. By the end of September 1865, 235 000 of the estimated 828 000 sheep (28%) and 29 000 of the 53 000 cattle (55%) had died in the area of Drought defined by Goyder in 1865.²⁷ Tassie estimated that by 1867, overall,

they were shearing one million sheep less than 1863. Henry Scott said that, by 1867 -

I believe that every sheep alive...must have cost over £2 to keep it alive during the drought in excess of return.²⁸

All told, perhaps losses totaled £1 000 000.²⁹

The effect of the Drought was echoed in the Port, and is graphically illustrated by examining the figures for Port Augusta Wool Exports 1853-1875. Between 1855 and 1856 exports increased five fold from a negligible base; in 1857 they doubled again; the next year's figure shows a 57% increase followed by no increase (or decrease) at all while development was halted by the drought of 1858-9. After that bad period there was another jump in exports of 58% between 1860 and 1861, followed by an unexplained 30% downturn before the peak of 1863. The Great Drought then cut back wool exports from the Port by 400% from a total of 10 896. Had it not been for the Great Drought, Tassie said in his evidence to the Drought Commission, that he expected a doubling of the clip every three years or so, until all the pastoral lands had been occupied. This very optimistic outlook for the settlers was dealt a solid blow, or so it would seem.

Consequently, business in the Port was depressed. Tassie testified:

The trade at Port Augusta has just decreased one half since the beginning of the drought. We used to have two steamers on the

PORT AUGUSTA WOOL EXPORTS 1853-75³⁰

<u>Year</u>	<u>bales</u>
1853	106
1854	n/a
1855	264
1856	1 351
1857	2 745
1858	N/A
1859	4 803
1860	4 832
1861	8 252
1862	5 706
1863	10 896
1864	9 941
1865	2 929
1866	2 209
1867	5 877
1868	13 500
1869	12 322
1870	12 132
1871	10 498
1872	19 000
1873	23 130
1874	24 568
1875	27 567

line once a week, beside a good many sailing vessels at intermediate times but now we have only one steamer once a fortnight; and their is not quite enough for her to do.³¹

In 1862, the population in the mining and pastoral country north of Port Augusta was reliably put at more than 6000.³² By 1871 the figure was 2610.³³ The drought was responsible for this exodus. The population at Port Augusta in 1862 was 64 and there were 70 people resident at Stirling North. The greater availability of water at Stirling North would have been an attraction, although the Port probably offered more employment, then and later. The SA Gazette of 1867 put Port Augusta's population at 450, but this may have included Stirling North. The population increase apparent by 1867 was made up of refugees from the Drought.

The number of unemployed in Port Augusta would have been worse, if not for government works. Between 1864-6, £20 000 was spent on pipes, machinery and labour to connect the Port with water from Woolundunga Springs.³⁴ Heavy machinery and materials had to be carted and positioned along the route. Ironically, because of the extraordinary drought and problems with pleuro-pneumonia, the contractor lost about 50 working bullocks, which slowed completion of the job.³⁵ Before that job was completed, work commenced building a Telegraph Station on the corner of Commercial and Mackay Streets. Designed by Thomas Burgoyne, it was opened in August 1866. By February 1866, plans were being approved to erect a Court House with Police Residence, on the corner of

present-day Jervois and Commercial Roads. That job was completed in July 1867 and the Court House was used for social functions and meetings for 18 months before it came into official use. In 1865, 107 people had petitioned the government to replace the primitive and inadequate weatherboard gaol on the beach with something more substantial.³⁶ This was done at the tail-end of the Drought providing another financial lift to the hard pressed post-drought local economy. The Gaol was built at Greenbush, 6km south-east of Port Augusta. Between 1869 and 1874, the Gaol held from seven to 12 prisoners at any one time.³⁷ Also during the Great Drought there was fairly constant roadwork going on, and a Local Board of Main Roads was established in May 1867.³⁸

These government works were not planned or even intended as unemployment relief. Their fortunate timing was coincidental. Although the authorities in Adelaide may have wished to intrude their grand plans for civilisation onto the Port and the north, their efforts often went unnoticed. Port Augusta and the north was in the hands of the pastoralists with their unsettled, uncivil, essentially "Australian" influences. Nevertheless, the direct influence of government began to be increasingly and beneficially felt. Although there was some evidence of people in Port Augusta looking to the government for services, facilities, and aid, at this time government merely provided oil to lubricate the wheels of private enterprise.

South Australia was established as a planned colony, with some onus to look after the interests of immigrants. An early promise by the Colonisation Commissioners led the government into the novel responsibility of caring for the sick and destitute.³⁹ Regardless of government works, there was still visible suffering in Port Augusta in 1865:

No one who has not witnessed it can any proper conception of the amount of poverty and actual destitution which prevails among [those] who have been thrown out of employment. Several cases have been temporarily relieved by the charitable contributions of some of the residents in Port Augusta, but the distress has become so widely spread that it is absolutely necessary that the Government or the authorities at the Destitute Board should authorize some person here to grant relief to persons who are absolutely in want.⁴⁰

In May 1866, the privations among the Port Augusta unemployed were acute:

...some of the inhabitants have got up a memorial [asking the Government] to grant such relief as may be required. In order in the meantime to provide for the urgency of the case they have each contributed a sum weekly...until something is done by the proper authorities to relieve the destitution now prevailing. The committee who have to administer the relief fund have ascertained that at Port Augusta alone there are seventeen families comprising nearly one hundred people who are destitute of the necessaries of life.⁴¹

Within a month an Auxiliary Destitute Poor Board was set up under the chairmanship of the Stipendiary Magistrate Stephen

King, with Tassie and Hacket. They had authority to supply the destitute with rations such as flour, sugar, meat, rice, salt, tea and soap. They provided a small amount of relief work cracking Point Lowly ironstone at 3/6 a yard.⁴² The stone was probably used for road-making.* This work provided a wage of about £1 per week, which was equivalent to about 2/3 the usual labourer's wage, or equal to the cash-in-hand payment to a station worker whose employer provided full board as well.⁴³

A family man who was breaking these extremely hard stones applied to the Destitute Board for additional rations. He could not feed his family on the income. Another was faced with the same quandry, and stated to the Destitute Board:

My eldest boy helps me to break stones. Can't afford to send my children to school at 1/6 pw...we live in a tent on Government land.⁴⁴

School fees were a problem for others too. A widow applied to the Destitute Board for assistance to send her eldest girl to "Miss Smith's school". Emily Smith was listed as the only Education Board teacher at Port Augusta in 1866. She had 22 male and 19 female pupils, with an average daily attendance of 35. A mother applied for rations and stated, "Children attending Miss Bailey's school".⁴⁵ The Education Board Report for 1868 indicates that Harriet Bailey taught 12 male and 23 female scholars, with an average daily attendance of 22. Eight were listed as "destitute

* Members of the Roads Board at this time were Tassie, Hacket, Fiveash, Mathew Moorhouse, who lived at Melrose, and J Nicholls - see A:148-2a.

scholars". At that time the other teacher, Robert Brown, had 20 male and 14 female pupils, average daily attendance 25, none listed as destitute.⁴⁶ But few parents must have been paying the fees, which made up a vital part of the teacher's wage. Robert Brown's wage must have suffered and the records of the Destitute Board indicate:

R Brown, schoolmaster, applied for assistance to take his family to Adelaide on the Thursday previous, but the Board could do nothing for him.⁴⁷

Not only had the Great Drought impoverished the Port's first teacher, but one of the first local tradesmen and Stirling North's first publican, Ishmael Virrender, approached the local Destitute Board. Ill and destitute, he applied for medical assistance.⁴⁸

The 1867 Report of the local Destitute Board provides further insight into the causes and nature of suffering by those who found themselves out of work in Port Augusta during the Great Drought.⁴⁹ Extracts from this Report are in the Appendices. Of the 29 residents of the Port and five Stirling North residents detailed in the report, almost half were sick or infirm. Nine of those who applied for relief were women without spouses, having been deserted by their husband, or widowed; one was a spinster and two had husbands in Gaol. The Report suggested that there was some work available, because those who seem able to work drew smaller amounts of relief and for shorter period. Presumably they found work. It appears that those unable to work due to illness or child-rearing responsibilities were in the most

difficult circumstances. These people tended to draw the most relief for the longest periods and accounted for seventy percent of those gaining assistance from the local Destitute Board. Over half of them were women and probably all but one had children to support. One wonders how such people gained relief in that period before the government established a local Destitute Board. Certainly most such people would have gravitated to centres of population and industry, of which Port Augusta was one of the few in the north. This would have been because, at the Port, there was medical attention and some hope of gaining employment.

One industry that developed out of the Drought was a boiling down works. This was on the northerly block of land now scissored by the railway track after it passes diagonally across Tassie Street.⁵⁰ It came into existence towards the end of the Drought and probably consumed worthless sick and old stock, survivors of the Drought. These animals would have been herded from the drought-afflicted zone to the works. The beasts too weak from starvation to reach the Port would have been abandoned along the track, to die where they fell. The fortunes of the boiling down works are illustrated in the chart below.

The export of bones, a by-product of the works, was also higher during the Drought.⁵¹ Presumably, when the supply of drought-affected stock unsuited for butchering declined, the boiling down works also declined.

VALUE OF TALLOW SHIPPED FROM PORT AUGUSTA, 1866-75^{1 2}

<u>Year</u>	<u>£</u>
1866	nil
1867	6 038
1868	23 236
1869	12 986
1870	9 025
1871	15 576
1872	1 220
1873	1 137
1874	1 485
1875	40

The Drought Commission stated that when Eyre first visited the country it was probably under a similar drought. Eyre expressed a very unfavorable opinion of it. Subsequent explorers gave more optimistic reports, leading to the country being taken up and stocked, and giving rise to the port of Augusta. Eyre was right. It appeared that droughts of great severity recurred at intervals of five or six years.⁵³ This country required a changed attitude -

good seasons are the exception and dry seasons the rule concluded the Commission.

The government's system of leasing the land enforced overstocking. A consequence of this was that the Port's likely importance was similarly over-estimated. Before the Drought, the large amount spent on tanks, troughs, waterholes, wells and bores allowed the watering of larger numbers of stock than the arid countryside could carry. This had been going on without a halt in those years during which the country was being first stocked. There had been constant droughts but no calamity because, as a visitor observed -

a squatter may drive sheep...over land which is leased by others [but must] move them along at 6 miles a day. It has not been an uncommon thing...for small squatters, when short of grass, to have their sheep driven about over hundreds of miles - say in a wide spread circle so that at last they should be brought home again - in order that they might be fed.⁵⁴

However, as Barr Smith testified:

Yes - but the country was not so much stocked. There was plenty

of room and we could shift...I should not trust the north again except by making provision for bad seasons.⁵⁵

As a result of the Great Drought, popular expectations of the northern pastoral lands declined. The value of the Port, sitting astride the key transport, communication, and supply line to the inland, was likewise devalued. Expected inland stocking levels were generally reduced from around 63-80 to 16-32 sheep per square kilometre, represented an expected 50% drop in Port Augusta wool exports.⁵⁶ The north, always the landholding preserve of the big men, became even more so. While the Drought felled most smaller squatters along with others who were in heavy debt, the men with larger interests and money behind them won their way through to survive their losses.⁵⁷

The colonists' reaction to the Great Drought suggests they misread the signs. To some extent they looked at ways to relieve the pressure on the country. To some extent they always had. They planned reductions in stocking levels, and they had already occasionally adopted for their stock, the Aboriginal style of nomadic movement. But instead of responding to the country, its arid fragility, the flora and herbage, ways to support and enhance it, they tended to respond to the Drought. In the north, and at Port Augusta, they were determined to succeed. The Drought was merely an obstacle. The most extreme example of this attitude was held by the miners. They were not primarily concerned with the Great Drought as a drought; their problem was cartage.

But their attitude was shared by the others, and the Drought Commission concluded -

The Government should...consider the best mode...to enable settlers to bring down their produce and carry up stores, as the charge for cartage has hitherto been one of the greatest drawbacks to the successful occupation of the country.

With this general, single-minded concentration on cartage, the settlers continued to overlook the unforgivingly arid environment. This led them to persist with their over-estimation of the value of the hinterland, to which Port Augusta's future was shackled.

When the Drought Commission concluded that "confidence in squatting in a large part of the colony has been completely lost", it was probably an overstatement. Paney and adjoining runs 200km west of Port Augusta were taken up in 1864. Land to the north of Paney was taken up between 1864 and 1868. Although some of these runs were much closer to Streaky Bay than Port Augusta, they were cut off by a barrier of mallee scrub and heavy sandhills. Thus most of the traffic was to Port Augusta, 260km away. The first 1000 bales from this new country reached Port Augusta in 1867.³⁸

In the early 'seventies, unfenced country west of the Gawler Ranges was grazed in winter by sheep from the West Coast and other land was taken up 100km west of present day Woomera, just above Lake Gairdner, and named Coondambo. Sheep and cattle spread further north and west expanding Port Augusta's hinterland, but the country was subject to long

spells of dry weather which kept stock numbers down and cartage costs up. By the 1880s some leases had fallen into a pattern of being taken up, abandoned, and taken up again.⁵⁹

In the north, The Peake (also called Mt Margaret Station) was stocked in 1863 by Philip Levi. This was about 450km from Port Augusta and only 120km off the Northern Territory line. Runs this far from the shipping point had tremendous difficulties with transport even without drought. After the Great Drought, there appears to have been hesitancy to go much further and it was not until 1875 that Francis Treloar took stock to occupy the Dalhousie Springs country.⁶⁰

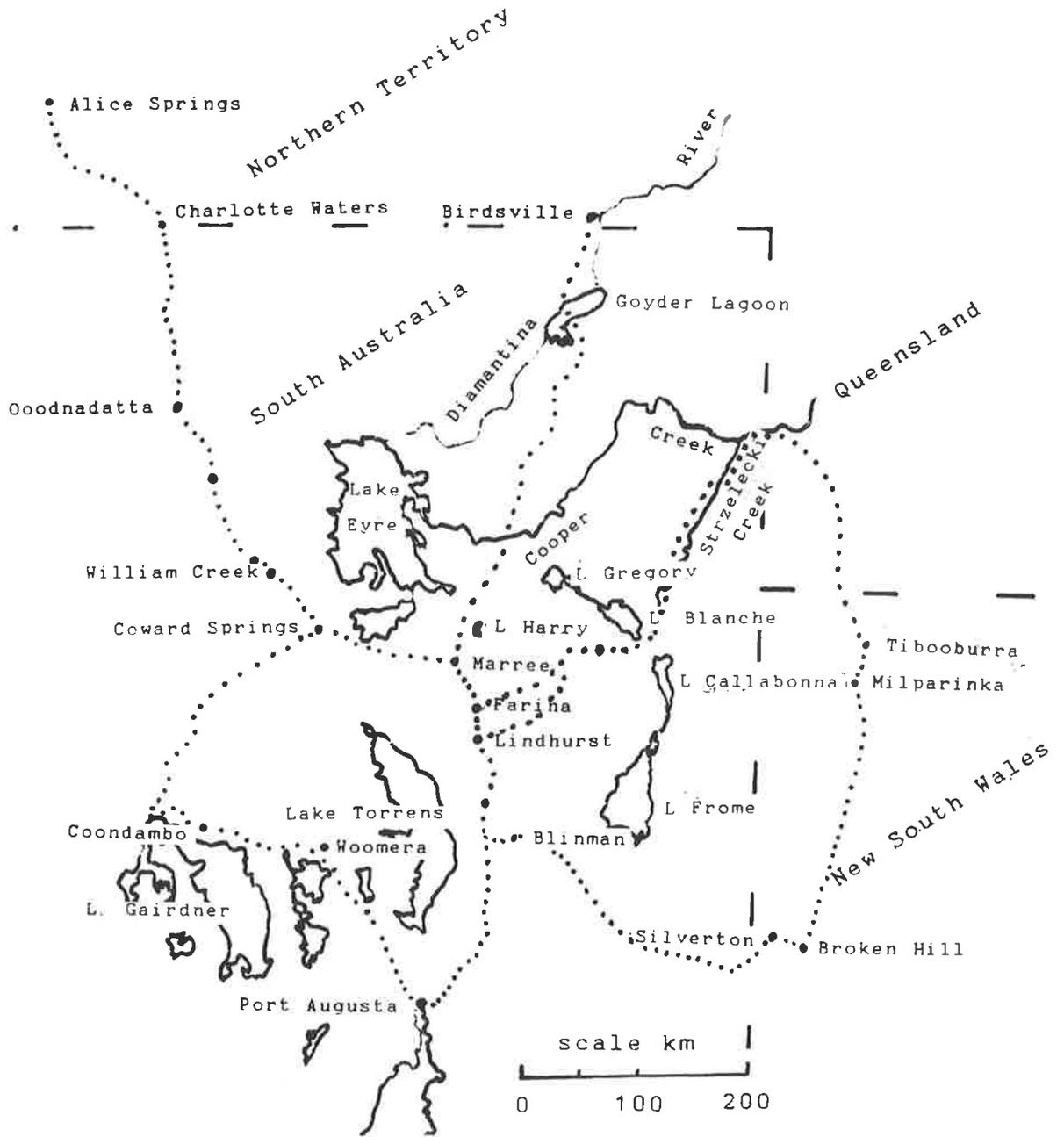
Camels were well-known as reliable beasts of burden in arid conditions. If they could get green feed each evening, they did not need water at all. They thrived on salt water and saline herbage too salty for other animals. They would carry 200-300kg each, for eight hours a day, covering 25km a day, in a working life of 20-25 years. Where horses and bullocks cut a good road to pieces, the camels' immense feet consolidated it, and they did not have to be shod or cued.⁶¹ Some were imported into Victoria in the 1850s and used in the exploration of dry country.

Thomas Elder, and Robert and Samuel Stuckey first saw the working abilities of camels in 1860. The party sent to relieve Burke & Wills had camels, and the three men met them. Elder and the Stuckeys formed a partnership to import camels, with Elder having a one half interest. The Great

Drought spurred them into action. On the last day of 1865, Samuel Stuckey supervised the unloading of 121 camels, 28 donkeys, 80 sheep, two deer, two Brahma cattle, a cow, a quagga and a number of grey partridges at Port Augusta. They were accompanied by 31 attendants, whom Stuckey described as "afghans".⁶² Stuckey soon had the camels packed with stores and headed for Umberatana, walking through the drought-stricken countryside, a scene of great natural disaster. To his amazement, they gained condition as they traveled.

Camels became familiar sights around the Port and the Afghan cameleers became legend. Afghan women do not seem to have accompanied the men to Australia, nor to have been brought out once the men were established. The Afghans married European and Aboriginal women. They tended to live in colonies which they established at Port Augusta West, Beltana, Farina, Marree, Oodnadatta, Lindhurst and Broken Hill.⁶³

The camels were used by Elder and the Stuckeys' Camel Carrying Co and by the South Australian Camel Carrying Co, both of which operated from Port Augusta.⁶⁴ There were many complaints that camels unnerved horses, which "took longer to get used to them than any other object". By 1878, they were a nuisance around the town. They were not allowed on the streets after 7pm and were banished to the far outskirts, to the place which became known as Camel Flat.⁶⁵ That site would be about where the Drive-in Theatre now is.



NETWORK OF ROUTES USED BY CAMEL TRANSPORT AND PORT AUGUSTA'S PLACE ON THEM, derived from Montgomery, and Richardson.

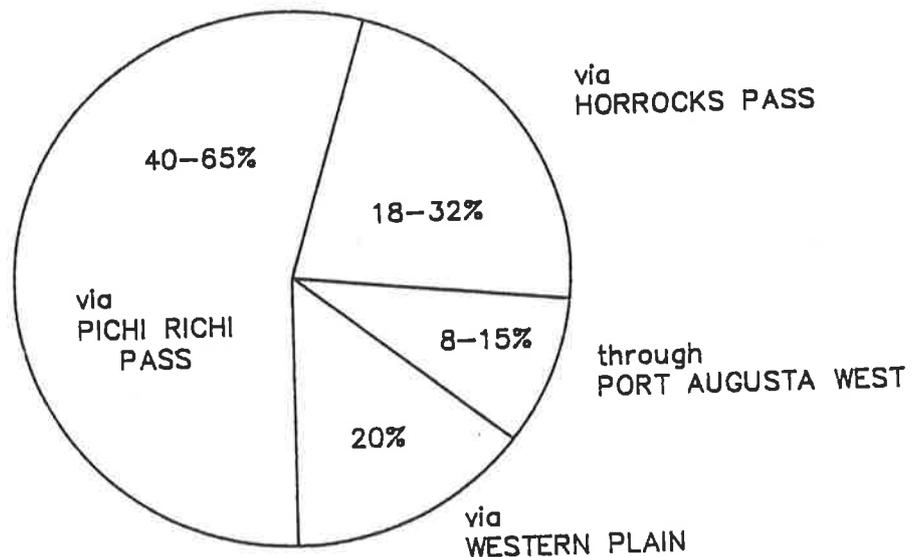
During 1878, a particularly dry year, the first goods to be carted on the West Side by camels were taken to Coondambo and Mt Eba. They were carted by Elder's Beltana firm which established an agency on the West Side. J W Kingsmill was the agent and Faiz Mahomet was jemidah, or camel foreman. In a later dry spell, a camel wagon was introduced between Port Augusta West and Mt Eba, and camels were hitched to the West Side mail coaches.⁶⁶

Samuel Stuckey had hopes of breeding mules, but he did not succeed. However, between 1876-1916 Norman A Richardson made good use of mules to pull the West Side mail coaches. His mules came first from the mines at Burra, but then he bred his own. Eventually he had the finest mules in the state.⁶⁷

It is not known what share of the cartage business the camels had, compared with bullocks and horse teams. By 1874-5, wool and other produce to be shipped out of Port Augusta, and all stores bound inland, followed one of four routes. Depending on the season, 18-32% of exports came to the Port via Horrocks Pass. This included the wool from Pekina, Booleroo, Coonatto, Willowie and Wirrabara. By 1874, the wool clip from these sources was declining due to the increasing use of the land for agriculture. Only about 16-20% of stores, about 2000-2500t left Port Augusta to the country to the east via Horrocks Pass. From 40-65% of exports came to the Port through Pichi Richi Pass, and half of all stores leaving Port Augusta went by this route. By

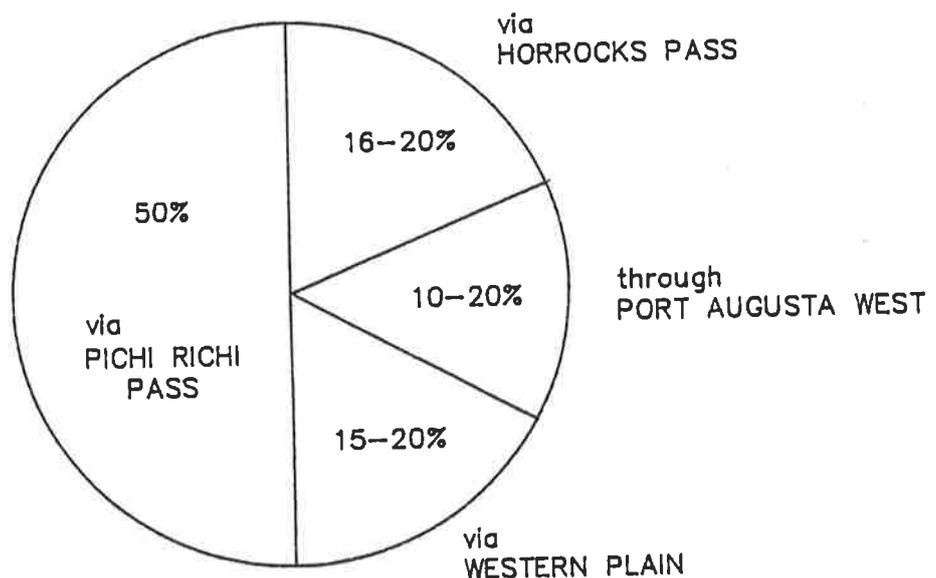
1874, this represented about 6000t of merchandise annually, although periodically fluctuating with activity in the Flinders and beyond.⁶⁸ For example, at one stage during 1874, A D Tassie & Co was sending 10-12t of stores to Sliding Rock Mine each day, the annual equivalent of more than 3000t. Sliding Rock's hey-day was 1871-7, after which it was populated by only a fraction of the 500 people there at its peak in 1874.⁶⁹ Around 20% of exports reached the Port by the track over the Western Plain along the western fringe of the Flinders Range. Nowadays the local end of this road is called Carlton Parade, but at that time it was known as the Main North Road. About 15-20% of inland stores went out along this route. Port Augusta West received 8-15% of the produce originating from the Eyre Peninsula and the north west in 1874, and 10-20% of stores and supplies went out via the West Side, mainly through Lincoln Gap, but also by way of Euro Bluff.⁷⁰

The general direction of origin of produce exported through Port Augusta in 1874-5.



Two graphs reflecting the relative importance to Port Augusta of its various hinterlands. The graph above indicates that in 1874-5, as much as 65% of produce came down to the Port via Pichi Richi Pass and another 20% via the Western Plain, making the Flinders Range the point of origin of 60-85% of exports. The balance of exports came from the east through Horrocks Pass or the west.

The graph below indicates a similar but slightly different picture, suggesting that some stores for the southern and northern Flinders Range regions may have been supplied via the Melrose-Clare overland route from Adelaide.



The general direction in which stores imported into Port Augusta were despatched, 1874-5.

It became obvious that Port Augusta would soon need a better water supply. The regular supply was brackish water, coming in barrels from Minchin Wells. By 1860 that supply may have been adequate for the permanent population of 25-50, but the increasing seasonal influx of beasts and people from the inland was probably causing problems. With the help of Hiram Mildred, plans were drafted to upgrade the water supply.⁷¹ And just as the pastoralists clung to the relatively well-watered Flinders Range, so the Port went to the hills at nearby Woolundunga for its improved supply of water. It was expected that when the Woolundunga Springs were opened up and cleared, they would yield 55 000-110 000 litres per day.⁷²

Pipes and pumping machinery were imported from Britain. It was probably during 1864-5 that the first locally-fired bricks were made, for mounting tanks on along the route of the main.⁷³ The 10cm pipes were jointed by August 1865 and the water flowed soon after.

The main concern was to see that bullocks and other stock had adequate water. Water was connected to standpipes at the junction of the roads from Pichi Richi and Horrocks Pass at Stirling North; at the junction of the Stirling Road and the Main North Road on the reserve opposite the present Pastoral Hotel and Gahan Crescent; outside the new Waterworks office located behind the latter day Town Hall; and to the Waterworks office itself. A drinking fountain was placed at the Stirling North standpipe. As they were

AVERAGE MONTHLY RECEIPTS FROM SALE OF WATER

1865-6 to 1869 (£) ⁷⁴

	<u>1865-6</u>	<u>1867</u>	<u>1868</u>	<u>1869</u>
Stirling North	43	14	7	6
Port Augusta	nil	50	54	70

constructed, water was laid on to the Telegraph Station, the Court House/Police Residence, and Gaol.⁷⁵

Statistics for the average monthly receipts from the sale of water between 1865-9 are revealing. They suggest that people living at Stirling North may have moved into Port Augusta once the water was connected. It seems likely that the shortage of water at the Port had forced people to live close to the supply. People probably even commuted to Port each day to work, returning each night to Stirling North.

Water allowed for the development of local gardens at Stirling North which became the established fruit and market garden area for Port Augusta. In Port Augusta, the first home gardener of note was probably Thomas Young (senior) whose residence and garden was in Gibson Street.⁷⁶

Even before work on the water pipeline had commenced, the Adelaide authorities set the prices of water from the standpipes. It was 20/- per 4500 litres (1000 gallons) which was probably about half the ruling price for brackish barrelled water carted from Minchin Wells.⁷⁷ Each time cattle were watered the new charge was two pence, and sheep were 15/- per 1000 each time they were watered.⁷⁸ It remained 20/- per 4500 litres until being reduced to 15/- in 1880, and then between 1881-5 it was progressively reduced to 3/-. Most people did not get their water from the standpipes, but had it delivered to their household storage tank. Deliveries were available every second morning.⁷⁹

The importance of water for a town in an arid area cannot be exaggerated. During 1878-9 there were several protest meetings complaining that water cost closer to 40/- by the time it was carted to people's houses. One protester noted that if the water service was improved and cheapened -

the people would probably indulge in the luxury of washing themselves, which the greater part of the people here did not do at present...as freely as was required to keep their bodies in a state of perfect health.⁸⁰

The waterworks were a constant expense on the government for repair, upgrading and expansion as recurring droughts lowered the supply of water, or the town increased its demand. Along with the police and maintenance of the roads, the waterworks was the main contribution of Government to the life of the Port.

In 1878, a 170 000 litre storage tank was constructed at Woolundunga and in 1880, public drinking fountains were placed at several town locations. By that year the town's population had mushroomed and the area behind Commercial Road and around Gladstone Square had become quite residential. Stock were still brought into the Waterworks office standpipe there, and the area, because of the water, was more or less infested with goats.⁸¹ This was quite a nuisance and it was stopped by shutting the standpipe for animal use. The nearest stock watering point became the standpipe near the Pastoral Hotel site. In 1881, the 10cm Woolundunga main was replaced and enlarged, and various

other works were undertaken over the years.⁸²

Although 1866 was the final ruinious year for many, it was also a year that marked an important break-through in telegraphy. Previously, 50% of submarine telegraph cables had failed, but that year the first successful transatlantic cable was laid. This re-focused discussion on a submarine telegraph link to Australia.⁸³ The logical place to land a cable was Normanton in Queensland. But the South Australians had recently acquired a northern territory, and they wanted to use the international telegraph to establish a settlement at Port Darwin, and open their enormous northern tract.⁸⁴

The nearest link in the South Australian's intercolonial system was almost 2000km away, at Port Augusta.

Negotiations about the possible routes were carried on amidst enormous public interest, trumpeted through the newspapers. The South Australian Government decided to make an all-out effort to have the proposed Overland Telegraph Line run across their territory to Port Augusta. The government wanted to secure the Overland Telegraph Line and only worry later that they had promised

to build a line over a route which had been crossed only once, at a cost that could be little more than a guess and a guarantee that [it] would be completed in less than two years... What they did know was that the country was dry with long stoney deserts and sandhills... that there were no tracks, that most of it

contained little timber for poles, and that every item of equipment, food, building material and other stores would have to be carted most of the way.⁸⁵

All supplies would have to be delivered through Ports Darwin and Augusta. It was the fortuitious existence of Spencer Gulf, a good, navigable waterway, that led the construction parties to Port Augusta. From the Port, it was 300km less on the journey to Beltana, Charlotte Waters, Tennant Creek. Once again Port Augusta derived tremendous benefit from its geographical position. The Overland Telegraph opened a new and expansive chapter for a Port commonly seen as the unchallengable capital of the, by then, somewhat devalued pastoral land.

The Telegraph was built by three parties working simultaneously on different sections. The Southern Section, from Port Augusta to The Peake, was contracted to Edward Meade Bagot and John Rounsevell*; the Northern Section, from Port Darwin to Tennant Creek was built by Darwent and Dalwood. The Central Section, fiercely hot, dry and totally unsettled, was built by government parties under the control of the Lands Office.⁸⁶

The first party for the Central Section left Adelaide on 19 August 1870, to go overland to Port Augusta, and there

* Rounsevell & Co were the mail contractors and coach operators between Burra and Nucealeena. In 1864, they arranged for the first mail coach to reach Port Augusta. Prior to that the coaches, owned by Cobb & Co, terminated at Melrose and the mail was carried on horseback to the Port. See Mincham, 1977:187 and A:77-2a.

collect bullock teams and drays. Charles Todd, the Postmaster General and Superintendent of Telegraphs, bid them well at the Survey Yards, and the Governor's wife and a crowd cheered them down King William Street. A week later, more of the Central parties left for Port Augusta after being addressed by the Governor, the Premier and Todd.⁸⁷ By the end of September 1870, five Government parties had provisioned at Port Augusta and gone north. After half a dozen years of depression and doubt, the Port was again getting a lift because of inland activity.

Bagot and Rounsevell's men on the Southern Section established a camp at Stirling North, planting their first pole on Saturday 1 October. They celebrated with one (only) glass of beer and continued. The Southern Route ran along the Main North Road parallel to the Ranges, across the Western Plain to Mt Eyre, through the Hookina Creek Pass, northwards to Beltana, Leigh Creek, Hergott Springs, west around Lake Eyre to Mt Margaret and The Peake. By December they had poled 160km.⁸⁸

Once The Peake base was established for the government workers, laden wagons immediately began to arrive. On 7 November 1870, a caravan of 100 Beltana camels under jemidahs Faiz and Taig Mahomet plodded in with equipment and provisions hauled up from Port Augusta.⁸⁹ Abdul 'Jack' Beejah, son of Beejah Dervish, said that the most unusual load in his father's time were the thousands of poles for the OLT.⁹⁰

Material and supplies for the Southern and Central Sections poured across Port Augusta's jetties providing an enormous stimulus, as the accompanying charts of imports indicate. It took the heavier drays carrying about four tonnes, two months or more to reach The Peake, and thousands of tonnes* had to go up.⁹¹ All the businesses along the route received a boost, and they too had to be replenished from the Port.

An indication of the jump in the Port's activity is provided by examining the value of Imports into Port Augusta between 1867-74 (measured in £), and the parallel chart of selected volumes of imported goods. The depressed years 1867-9 have been included to allow a realistic comparison with the years of Overland Telegraph construction activity, 1870-3, and to a lesser extent 1874. Iron wire, copper metal, books and those grouped items were first recorded by Customs as entering Port Augusta during the years of peak construction activity, and presumably refer to pole wire, electrical gear, insulators and building material. The leap in imports of sawn and hewn wood probably refers to telegraph poles, and the high figure for 1874 could indicate repoling, which was an ongoing replacement problem, along with works that continued such as straightening bends in sections of the route. Eventually all wooden poles were replaced with metal Oppenheimer poles.⁹² The high figure for the item "Unenumerated" in 1870, could be accounted for by the rush

* It is difficult to provide reliable and precise figures for shipping imports. The reasons for this are discussed elsewhere.

VALUE OF IMPORTS (£) INTO PORT AUGUSTA 1867-74
as recorded by the Customs Department^{9 3}

Items	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874
potatoes	52	60	-	41	171	399	176	2
groceries	14	34	-	3	35	20	-	-
other foodstuffs	-	124	5	33	90	95	-	-
sawn and hewn wood	61	221	355	-	774	661	436	623
books, glassware earthenware, bricks, cement, mineral oils	-	-	-	-	-	182	-	-
unenumerated	-	18	-	254	10	3	13	62
iron wire	-	-	-	-	-	3260	-	-
copper metal	-	-	-	-	-	-	15300	-
(A) Sub Total (£)	127	457	360	331	1080	4620	15925	687
(B) Total Value of all imports recorded for the year (£)	495	1454	1217	835	1906	5852	16576	1986
% of A/B	26%	31%	30%	40%	57%	79%	96%	34%

TONNAGES & VOLUMES OF SELECTED IMPORTS INTO PORT

AUGUSTA 1867-74^{9 4}
as recorded by the Customs Department

Volume	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874
potatoes (tonnes)	21t	21 ¹ / ₂ t	-	9t	78t	96t	27t	¹ / ₂ t
sawn and hewn wood (loads)	58L	157L	-	165L	474L	324L	198L	261L
copper metal and iron wire (tonnes)	-	-	-	-	-	195t	170t	-

to get materials off the jetties from August-October, so the construction could commence. The chart of tonnages and volumes indicates more than a 250% leap in the imported staple food potatoes in 1871, compared to 1867-8, and a further increase in 1872, with continued high levels of imported potatoes in 1873-4. Likewise imports of sawn and hewn wood were up at a high level in 1868, perhaps an indication of local construction activity caused by the Waterworks Department and building the Gaol. From this high base, (overlooking the lack of imports in 1869), there was a fractional increase in the first year of construction activity, which in fact all occurred in the last statistical measuring quarter of that year. The figures for sawn and hewn wood were then up 138% in 1871, 106% in 1872, 26% in 1873 and 66% in 1874. The weight in a "load" of wood is not known. However it can be presumed that most imported timber came from Tasmania and West Australia, in ships of 75-200t and their jibs probably would not have been able to handle more than a couple of tonnes at a time, if that. So perhaps a "load" was a bound and stacked bundle of timber capable of being easily loaded onto most drays, which would put it at about 1¹/₂ tonnes, with two larger such loads for a heavy dray. Imports of copper metal and iron wire account for an additional 100-150 dray loads of material. Study of the Port Augusta Shipping Register confirms visits by small Tasmanian and West Australia vessels, but otherwise gives no indication of any unusual activity. For a variety of reasons, a great deal of imports did not attract the interest of the Customs Department, and they made no record

of them. Therefore the charts almost definitely understate the increase quantity of stores and materials imported into Port Augusta.

During the building of the Overland Telegraph Line, the influx of people into the Port overwhelmed what little accommodation there was. Eliza Ann Russell Welby said that a settlement of "sardine boxes" sprung up on the foreshore north of the jetties, around the present site of the Roundhouse. There was also a sudden increase in use of an occasional camping area located to the south-west of the main road to Stirling, between Flinders Terrace and the site of the first railway station. It became the scene of people constantly scurrying hither and thither through the sand, and the locals christened this new suburb "Skurrytown".⁹⁵ The area is now occupied by Commonwealth Government Offices, the Railway Institute "Cooinda" Club, the School of the Air, and railway yards.

Between 1870-2, the South Australian Parliament approved loans of £345 000 to build the OLT⁹⁶ and in 1883 Postmaster-General Charles Todd put the overall cost of its construction at £479 174/18/3.⁹⁷ By the 'eighties, the annual maintenance bill was £26 000 annually,⁹⁸ on top of which the operating staff and their working animals had to be provisioned. A D Tassie & Co handled much of this business for the Government.⁹⁹

In 1865, the telegraph had been connected between Adelaide

and Port Augusta, probably in the Customs House on Mildred Point, but moved into the new Telegraph Office when it was completed in August 1866. James Fabian Phillips was the first Telegraph Station Master, appointed when Postal and Telegraph were separate departments. In the early years, five telegraph messages a day, in or out, was "busy", but later 100 was not unusual.¹⁰⁰ In 1875, the first pole in the Port Augusta-Port Lincoln-Fowlers Bay-Eucla West Australia Telegraph was planted, and the work completed two years later.¹⁰¹ Again, Port Augusta would have derived benefit from this construction, but details are not known. This linked the Australian colonies coast to coast - east to west, south to north - through Port Augusta.

This enormous upsurge in the business of the Port due to the construction of the Overland Telegraph led to optimism displacing the Great Drought's gloom. At the same time there was ever increasing interest in wheat growing. The OLT construction provided a continuous injection of prosperity, from October 1870 until 1874. After 1874, construction tailed off but was replaced with the regular need to provision the telegraph stations and maintain the line.

Building the Overland Telegraph Line provided a sort of anaesthetic for the Port, to escape from the arid reality of the hinterland, and of what must happen to the pastoral industry and the Port each time a protracted drought developed. The OLT also led to the likelihood that perhaps

this arid reality could be side-stepped. Meinig commented that the construction of a railway usually brought along a telegraph line as a facility necessary to its own operation. In the case of the Overland Telegraph, it appears that the existence of the line suggested to many that the previously debated notion of a railway into the northern pastoral country should be revived.¹⁰² For no sooner was the Telegraph Line up than there was renewed - but this time very serious - talk of bulding a transcontinental rail link to follow the Telegraph to Port Darwin. This raised the prospect of the Port having several hinterlands, penetrated by thousands of kilometres of railway, so that drought in one hinterland could be offset by bumper seasons in another. Added to this was the prospect of the rail and the Telegraph both needing to be maintained regardless of seasons. This would set a good floor to how low the Port could be pushed down, even in the worst drought or depression in trade. Also, by 1874, it looked as though wheat would soon be exported from Port Augusta. Optimism returned. Great expectations for what the inland would ultimately bring, returned too.

The first doctor to live permanently in the frontier Port was German-trained Frederick William Augustus Reck, appointed the Government medical officer from December 1861.¹⁰³ Prior to that, Hiram Mildred had a medical kit which he used, and there were probably women including Aboriginal women, who acted as midwives, as Mildred's wife may have done. Ship's doctors also rendered occasional aid,

as was the case when Joseph Wellby was seriously injured once.¹⁰⁴ The name "Joseph M E Myers, Surgeon" was signed on an 1860 Saltia death certificate. Myers may also have been from a ship. Another doctor, Samuel Kitching Ellison, commenced a practice in Port Augusta in January 1864.¹⁰⁵ He was partly attracted by a guarantee of a minimum annual income of £300, made by several prominent citizens. He never had to call the guarantee up.¹⁰⁶ This suggest that Dr Ellison had more patients between 1864-71 than the population of the Port. Ellison entered into certain other local business arrangements, and in 1865 he was a bank signatory for the Kanyaka Mining Company, with Hacket, Mildred and Burgoyne.¹⁰⁷ He was a Trustee of the Anglican Church building Committee from which he resigned in 1871, when he probably left town.¹⁰⁸

The Nuccaleena Copper Mining Company was stopped by the Great Drought, and in April 1866 the company secretary and resident Medical Officer, Thomas Young Cotter and his large family, came to Port Augusta. Cotter was in Port Augusta for about 18 months, and at one time practiced from a small weatherboard house about where the Exchange/Fourways Hotel is now located.¹⁰⁹ (This could have been the house that Tassie lived in during the 1850s). Again it is hard to imagine that two doctors could earn a living for 18 months in a town of less than 500 people. Alas, no details of their practices are known. Cotter left the Port around October 1867, but returned in 1870 and remained until his death in 1882.

Dr William Markham commenced practice in the town in 1873 and continued until 1897. In 1874 he was appointed Medical Superintendent of the new hospital. For some time prior to him a Dr Mudie was in the town, possibly between 1871-5.¹¹⁰

In 1874, with the steadily increasing population, a two-bed four room cottage or casualty hospital was erected. Nurse M^cDonald was in charge.¹¹¹ The hospital was located on a hilltop site, afforded good views to Lincoln Gap in the west, Little and Big Tent Hills to the north, with the Flinders Range running north to south on the east side, and the Gulf running likewise along the west. It was known as Cudmore Hill after a Melrose pastoralist, Daniel Cudmore, who built a seaside cottage there on the sandhills, east of the embryonic township in about 1854.¹¹² One got to the hospital by going about a kilometre along the well-beaten track to Stirling North and then branching off to the right and up the gentle rise into the scrub. There was very little habitation between the hospital and the eastern parklands until the late 'seventies, and there was nought between the hospital and the Gaol along the Stirling Road. No proper road connected the hospital to the Stirling Road until 1887.¹¹³

The Bible Christians were the first to appoint a minister to Port Augusta, although the Presbyterians, Wesleyans, and Church of England ("Episcopals"), had been active in one form or another.¹¹⁴ The minister was Reverend W Richards,

and in January 1866 he saw the place and later recalled the rough and ready pioneering conditions:

My impressions were anything but favorable. The magnificent Flinders Range, enshrouded in silence and majesty, on the one side, and the Gulf on the other, gave a charm to what would otherwise have been a most monotonous landscape...the houses with very few exceptions were very small and built principally of wood [and] several wretched looking tents, in some of which were large families huddled together in the most indecent manner...no minister of the Gospel nearer than Burra, Clare or Wallaroo. A Church of England service and a Sabbath school were being held when I arrived. There were many who rallied together and unitedly assisted the cause of Christ.¹¹⁵

The first Sunday was ecumenical, with Reverend Richards officiating in the morning and Hiram Mildred in the evening. This set the tone for the Bible Christians' spiritual work in the Port.

The teaching was on broad principles without reference to sectarian creeds and on that basis they were always accepted.¹¹⁶ This was probably a good plain people's creed and a good frontier religion, a point that was well illustrated by 'Banjo' Paterson (quoted in The Australian Legend) in a poem against organised religion:

...With my doctrine, perhaps, you'll agree,
To be upright and downright and act like a man,
That's the religion for me...
For parsons and preachers are all a mere joke,
Their hands must be greased for a fee...
But let man unto man like brethren act,

My doctrine that suits like a T,
The heart that can feel for the woes of another,
Oh, that's the religion for me.¹¹⁷

The Customs House, where the first services were held, was only available on Sunday mornings, so Thomas Burgoyne offered a makeshift carpenters' shop in which to hold makeshift religious services:

the roof was fairly watertight, but the means of ventilation were too abundant. From above and below and along the sides, the balmy breezes entered... The building stood on piles at the edge of the Gulf and when the tide came in the water rose up under the building, and sometimes with the surging of the sea and the rattling of the shingles overhead, the competition for mastery was severe... Under these circumstances, for 12 months the Gospel was preached and the congregations continued good.¹¹⁸

Reverend Richards immediately began to encourage the building of a church, and 15 months later it was opened.

At a material level, the Bible Christians fared reasonably well, although with the advent of Roman Catholic and "Episcopalian" ministers, some of their pews were inevitably deserted. They always had sufficient money to pay their debts, although their debts grew. One of their clergymen recalled "the delightful spirit of co-operation that existed between the churches" between 1881-3. Perhaps he had forgotten that the Wesleyans squeezed them out of Stirling North around April 1878, after which the Bible Christians developed an interest in the West Side.¹¹⁹

Spiritually, Port Augusta's pragmatic frontier humanism was more than a match for the Bible Christians:

Our spiritual success is far from what we had fondly hoped... We have to grapple with very strong opposing influences; some of them much stronger than we had ever met with or calculated on - such as bigotry, deism [the philosophical belief in a natural, logical religion], socinianism [belief that Christ was just a man, not God], profanity [irreverence and contempt] and utter indifference. This, I suppose, is accounted for partly by the people being so far from the centre of influence... numbers [of whom] have been in the bush for eight and ten years. [R N Richards, 1866-8].

drunkenness and scepticism prevail on the one side, and prejudice and indifference on the other. [Rev R Kelley, 1876]¹²⁰

Reverend C Tresise, in the Port from 1881-3, was so tormented at his impotence while "the forces of evil were strong" that he began preaching in the streets, probably on Saturday nights. This innovative trend quite startled the locals, although "through these open air efforts crowds of people heard the word". After 14 years, the Port had five times the population of 1866, but the Bible Christian congregation remained at about 60, and they still had not paid off their church building.¹²¹

Adherents of the Church of England commenced fund-raising to build a church prior to 1867. This was halted, possibly due to a falling away in interest, or possibly due to concentrating efforts for the Bible Christians. In 1868,

they renewed their plans. There was bickering and political moves amongst the controlling groups, and Augustus Short, the Bishop of Adelaide, had to intervene.¹²² A service in the unfinished St Augustine's Church was conducted in mid 1870, but they had no minister or curate until 1879. Bishop Short periodically visited, offering support and encouragement. Plans to erect an Anglican Church on the West Side were taken up in 1881, but lapsed.¹²³

The Bible Christian Minister, Reverend W Richards, periodically visited the hinterland as did most of his successors. However, ever since 1860 Roman Catholic Jesuit priests based at Sevenhill had been visiting the faithful as far north as Mt Remarkable. The Tyrolese, Fr John E Pallhuber, was assigned to that horseback ministry which he probably attended to twice each year. By 1865, he was visiting Port Augusta and even Blinman, doing round trips of about 1600km.¹²⁴ Four years later he was looking for a suitable church site at Port Augusta. In 1872, a priest from Port Lincoln occasionally visited, and in 1874 Fr Bernard Nevin was appointed "resident priest", although he lived at Pekina until 1878.¹²⁵ The Catholics used a two-storey building on the corner of Flinders Terrace and Commercial Road as a church and school. This they purchased from one of Tassies' clerks, John Symons, in 1874.

Two years previously two Roman Catholic nuns, possibly Sr Immaculata and Sr Laurentia Mary Honner, arrived to start a school. They were members of the recently formed South

Australia Order of St Joseph. They commenced teaching children in a shed on the foreshore, close to Tassies' store and the Police Barracks, and they probably boarded with local people. Later, they moved to the premises purchased from Symons. In March 1878, they were both injured in a fire. The founder of their order, Mary M^cKillop, visited them and remained for a short time, during which Laurentia died of burns.¹²⁶

A Presbyterian minister had come and gone from Stirling North within one year (1862) and was not replaced for 20 years; the Bible Christian clergymen never remained more than a year or two; the Anglicans offered good money, an increasingly well-appointed church and a manse, yet after years of trying they only attracted an unordained curate and he soon wanted to leave; the ordained Catholic men usually lived 80-200km away; and the other denominations received only occasional visits from itinerant clergymen. Port Augusta seemed to hold few of the rewards these men sought.

This could have been because in the hard and free frontier, the churches were accepted primarily as social and recreational institutions, even more so on Sundays when the hotels were shut. The serious business of Port Augusta was the earning of money and working, the spending of money and relaxing; avoiding destitution in the bad times, and perhaps acquiring a spouse, children and some security in the good times. A religion which supported this struggle and reinforced these frontier values, would have had a

lasting interest. In that environment, once the serious issues had been surmounted, time then became available for the socially respectable and civilised recreations that religion provided. Several of the Port's relatively affluent folk, primarily the businessmen who had largely solved these serious issues, spent much time trying to establish religious that catered to their tastes. On the otherhand, the Josephite nuns were performing a useful, practical role. This probably gave them a religious edge, although no doubt if they had abandoned their socially useful work they too would have been ignored by all but the well-to-do.

The respectable and well-to-do pursued the secular side of this conundrum with attempts to form an Institute. In 1863, a reading table was set up with the few, mostly ancient, books that Tassie, Thomas Burgoyne, Thomas Young, W C Crane, Hiram Mildred, W Liston, I G Sanders, I Chisholm, I Symons, H Malevoir, C B Jacobs and others could spare.¹²⁷ Up-to-date newspapers would have been quite an attraction but were unobtainable, so week-old editions and a handful of magazines took their place.

In 1866, Frank Bignell the draper and storekeeper, lent the Institute premises to set up a literary room and circulating library to which there were about 40 subscribers. It met weekly for "Reading or Recitation, Debates or Lectures".¹²⁸ By accounts, it was not a very interesting library for the general populace, with no fiction or light reading.

[It] lacked attraction for the young people... who came to read, remained to yawn, and finally went elsewhere, where they could keep each other awake... after the novelty had worn off, the majority evinced but a very small amount of interest in it... and the committee sold the library by auction to pay their liabilities [in 1871].¹²⁹

The Institute was revived in 1872. A building was planned with increased population and renewed interest, £837 was raised locally, the Government made a grant of £750, and the building was completed in 1876. It is situated on the Government Reserve, now the central city block, to the east of the Telegraph Station (now Post Office) which is next door. The building of the Institute received strong public support - a group of ladies raised £400 with one bazaar in 1876 - but the respectable educational aims were jettisoned. It responded to local needs and interests, and consequently enjoyed some success. It became a community centre, and the venue for auctions, the Foresters' Lodge Ball, sermons, the performance of plays, and concerts.¹³⁰

NOTES

- 1 Hirst, op cit, pp15-16.
- 2 Bowes, K R, 1968, Land Settlement in South Australia, LBSA, Adelaide, p21.
- 3 Report of the Commission on Runs Suffering from Drought (Drought Commission) 1867, no 14, SAPP.
- 4 Cockburn, R, "W D Kingsmill", 21.1.1925, p4, Adelaide Stock & Station Journal.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Drought Commission, op cit.
- 8 Lewis, op cit, p43.
- 9 Ibid. See also Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:192.
- 10 Lewis, op cit, p42.
- 11 Report of the Surveyor-General on Demarcation of the Northern Rainfall, 1865-6, no 78, and Map of Northern Runs, 1865-6, no 154, SAPP.
- 12 Drought Commission, op cit.
- 13 Mincham, 1980, op cit, p34.
- 14 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p171.
- 15 Drought Commission, op cit.
- 16 Lewis, op cit, p46.
- 17 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p169.
- 18 Drought Commission, op cit.
- 19 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p195; 12.1.1878, PAD.
- 20 2.9.1864, 6.1.1865, SAGCR.
- 21 Lewis, op cit, p41.
- 22 16.1.1865, 20.1.1865, SAGCR.
- 23 Drought Commission, op cit.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:205, 2:117; Richardson.

- 26 Drought Commission, op cit. See also Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:204.
- 27 Report of the Surveyor-General on Demarcation of the Northern Rainfall, op cit, and Map of Northern Runs, op cit: SAPP.
- 28 Drought Commission, op cit.
- 29 12.1.1878, PAD.
- 30 The figure for 1853 is that of J F Hayward's clip, the first to be exported from Port Augusta and the only figure available for 1853: see Hayward, op cit, pp152, 170. The figures for 1855-7 were the only ones located for these years: see Adelaide Chronicle of 21.7.1932. There are numerous statistics available for the period 1859-75, and they tend to conflict more often than they agree. The figures cited here for that period are from an appendix to the Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, op cit, SAPP. They were chosen because they are the longest unbroken series located, and they seem to accurately reflect the variations in exports trends noted elsewhere. For other figures of Wool Exports from Port Augusta, for 1858-68 see Lewis, op cit, p82
1859-63 see 21.1.1925, Adelaide Stock & Station Journal,
1859-60 see 27.9.1860, PAGG
1860 see Customs Return, 1860, no 14, SAPP
1861 see 26.9.1861, SAGG
1863-7 see the evidence of Robert Barr Smith to the Drought Commission, op cit, SAPP.
1863-7 see the evidence of A D Tassie to the Drought Commission, Ibid,
1863-7 see Mincham, 1977, op cit, p172
1863 see Minutes of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1863 no 13, SAPP
1863 see Cockburn, 1925, op cit 1:205
1869-75 see evidence of T M^cT Gibson and letter from J Symons in the Report of the Railway Construction Commission, op cit, SAPP.
The 'bale' as the unit of measurement of Wool Exports is an imprecise guide. For example, in some series the average weight of a bale is about 148kg, in others, about 196kg.
- 31 Drought Commission, op cit.
- 32 Austin, J B, 1862, The Mines of South Australia, Adelaide, p16.
- 33 Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, op cit.
- 34 Drought Commission, op cit; Loans for Public Works, Statistical Register, 1875, SAPP.
- 35 A: 150-1.

- 36 M^cLellan, 1966, op cit, p5.
- 37 Daily Issue of Rations, Port Augusta Gaol, 1.1.1869-25.12.1884, GRG 54/191/1: PRO.
- 38 Port Augusta Roads Board, Statistical Register, 1875, SAPP. See also A:148.
- 39 Hirst, op cit, p37.
- 40 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p167.
- 41 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p171.
- 42 A:173-3,247-1b,147-3; see also the Report of the Destitute Board, 1868, no 213, SAPP.
- 43 Wages, Statistical Register, 1869-70, SAPP.
- 44 A:173-3; see also the Report of the Education Board, 1867, no 13, SAPP.
- 45 A:173-3
- 46 Report of the Education Board, 1869-70, no 19, SAPP.
- 47 A: 188-2b.
- 48 Eliza Ann Russell Wellby recalled a Mr Vallender in the town when she arrived in 1857. This was probably Virrender. See 12.9.1912, PAD; see A:174-2a for the description of Virrender when he approached the Board.
- 49 1867, no 213, SAPP.
- 50 A:152-2b.
- 51 Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, op cit.
- 52 Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, op cit. The figures, which are a reliable indicator, contradict the account of the Boiling Down Works given in the Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, op cit, p15, and repeated in The Story of Port Augusta, op cit, p11.
- 53 Lewis, op cit, p42.
- 54 Trollope, A, 1873, Australia and New Zealand, London (2 volumes), 1:204.
- 55 Drought Commission, op cit.
- 56 Ibid; also Mincham, 1977, op cit, p163.
- 57 Trollope, op cit, 1:207.

- 58 Richardson, op cit, see particularly pp17-23, 75 and 122. See also Drought Commission, op cit.
- 59 Richardson, op cit, see pp15, 35, 62, 67.
- 60 Cockburn, 1925, 1:29a and 2:35a.
- 61 Phillipson, N E, 1889, "Camels in Australia", PRGSSA, v3, pp86-8.
- 62 Samuel J Stuckey Diary, ML; for the record of importation of this livestock see Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, op cit.
- 63 Montgomery, J, 1966, "Afghan Town", Education Gazette, (Supplement), November, pp1-3.
- 64 13.9.1912, PAD.
- 65 Phillipson, op cit, p90. See also Mincham, 1977, op cit, pp148-9, and 2.1.1878, PAD.
- 66 Richardson, op cit, p59.
- 67 Ibid p136.
- 68 Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, op cit.
- 69 Klaassen, N, 1984, "Sliding Rock", This Australia, vol 3, no 2, pp88-91. See also Mincham, 1977, op cit, pp204-6.
- 70 Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, op cit.
- 71 A:150-2
- 72 13.9.1912, PAD.
- 73 A:150.
- 74 Port Augusta Waterworks, 1869-70, no 98, SAPP.
- 75 M^cLellan, op cit, pp5-8; also A:152-1, 151-3b, 57.
- 76 A:155-2, 152-3.
- 77 13.9.1912, PAD.
- 78 A:153-2b.
- 79 13.9.1912, PAD.
- 80 A:153-2b.
- 81 A:154 refers to the Gladstone Square standpipe, and see 17.11.1932, Adelaide Chronicle for reference to goat

infestation.

82 For details see A:149-155.

83 Taylor, op cit, pp35-42.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid, p47.

87 Ibid, pp38,57.

88 Ibid, p58.

89 Ibid, p63; Phillipson, op cit, p84.

90 Montgomery, op cit, p2.

91 Taylor, ibid.

92 Taylor, op cit, p169.

93 Report of the Commission of Railway Construction, op cit.

94 Ibid.

95 13.9.1912, PAD.

96 Loans for Public Works, Statistical Register, 1875, SAPP.

97 Taylor, op cit, p158.

98 Report of the Transcontinental Railway Commission, 1887, no 34, SAPP.

99 A: 38-3.

100 Ibid.

101 A: 252-2.

102 Meinig, op cit, p197.

103 19.12.1861, p1068, SAGG.

104 13.9.1912, PAD, A: 204-2b.

105 A: 204-2a.

106 A: 53-3a.

107 A: 205-2b.

108 A: 48-2b.

- 109 A: 272.
- 110 A: 272-3, 17-1.
- 111 A: 131-2, 272-3; 17.11.1932, Adelaide Chronicle.
- 112 Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:168; A: 91-2.
- 113 A: 91-3, 92-4.
- 114 Oates, T J, 1967, "A History of Methodism in Port Augusta, 1866-1963", Journal of the South Australian Methodist Historical Society, v1, October, p4; 12.6.1880, PAD.
- 115 Memorials of Port Augusta, op cit, p16.
- 116 Ibid, p21.
- 117 Ward, op cit, pp182-3.
- 118 Memorials of Port Augusta, op cit, p16.
- 119 Ibid, p23.
- 120 Ibid, p17.
- 121 Ibid, pp24 and 28.
- 122 A: 47-2a, 48-2a; The History of the Anglican Parish of Port Augusta, 1982, Centenary Committee, Port Augusta, pp6-9.
- 123 A: 50.
- 124 A: 72-2b, 73-3a; Oates, op cit, p5.
- 125 A: 75-1.
- 126 A: 74.
- 127 Records of the Port Augusta Institute, GRG 19/1: PRO.
- 128 Records of Port Augusta Institute, op cit.
- 129 "Some Early Attempts at Forming an Institute", op cit.
- 130 Palmer, G, 1983, The Port Augusta Institute, unpublished MA course essay, Education Department, Flinders University.

This chapter examines the operation of business and commerce in Port Augusta, focusing on the business of Bignell & Young. In doing so, it gives an inside view of the Port's domination of, and utter dependence upon, the inland. During the period 1871-7, and thus prior to the boom of 1877-84, the Port developed into a strong, perhaps even unassailable, regional commercial centre. At the same time, Bignell & Young developed, and in tracing that in the chapter, we see reflected the business sophistication, commercial enterprise and commercial independence of Port Augusta. Within the limits of the information available, Thomas Young, the main character in this chapter, is briefly discussed in an attempt to account for the existence and success of such a man in such a frontier place.

The early 1870s was a watershed for the two businesses that were important, and the third, that of Bignell & Young, that was to become important in the commercial life of Port Augusta. The most likely cause of this watershed was the sweeping away of the pall of gloom that hung over the place after the Great Drought, in the flood of enthusiasm for the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line. The long-term future of the Port once again looked rosy.

The first of these three businesses was that of A D Tassie & Co. Tassie started on his own account as a merchant in 1860 and about three years later, took Thomas M^cTurk Gibson as a partner. Tassie had his share of luck, good and bad, the former as the master of the biggest shipping and agency

firm in the Port, the latter during the arduous early pastoral era and the Great Drought. Tassie was the Port's first British settler, its first "civic father", loved by many -

a type of man rarely met with - sanguine in business, but with eminent ability and great foresight and of an immeasurably self-denying, noble-minded, generous disposition... held in universal respect and esteem, [with] the blessings of the poor.¹

It came as a tremendous shock in 1874 when, at the age of 40, he died. His death was an occasion of "extraordinary manifestations of public grief", and a monument to his memory still stands in Gladstone Square.

Tassie's departure changed the nature of business and competition, because Gibson, his partner, came to the fore. Gibson was an outspoken man. He had a rough temperament that won him many enemies, despite the knowledge his friends had of his good points, which included a "tender heart and feelings". He was an experienced pastoralist and the first with stock at Streaky Bay. In 1863, he sold up for over £10 000, and came to the Port. He brought with him good connections to some of the larger capitalists of the pastoral industry.² Thus, like Tassie who had beneficial links with Elder, Barr Smith and others, Gibson had good links to similar people. This could have been important for the successful management of the shipping and agency business in Port Augusta, allowing Gibson to take advantage of expansions in trade.

The second was the relatively large and important business of Captain Charles Hacket. In February 1871, Captain Hacket sold out to Charles Henry Gooch and Albertus Lemmers Ricardo Hayward.³ They traded as Gooch & Hayward. Gooch moved into Hacket's large Chapel Street house - the ETSA headquarters are now on the site.⁴ Hayward does not seem to have lived in the Port.⁵ Gooch had excellent financial and pastoral connections. His brother, Walter, worked all his life for the National Bank, serving as a South Australian director from 1881-3; his brothers-in-law, Abraham and Henry Scott, were also directors, with many pastoral interests around the Port.⁶ Hacket's business was prosperous and healthy, even after the Great Drought and the "dry" of 1870. With this and their connections, Gooch & Hayward were well situated to compete and if conditions allowed, expand their share of the business.

The third business of the three mentioned above, the one that was to become important, and the one focused upon in this chapter, was that of Bignell & Young.

Francis Bignell kept a general store at Blinman. In 1863, he opened a small shop in Port Augusta on the corner of Tassies' allotment, cheek and jowl with Tassie's store and Captain Hacket's premises. Here he traded exclusively as a draper.⁷ The following year, Thomas Young arrived in Port Augusta.

Young was 20 years of age. Since 1839, his father had kept

grocery stores at various times at Happy Valley, O'Halloran Hill, Morphett Vale and Reynella. Before coming to the Port, Young worked for the large wholesale and retail grocer, D & J Fowler of Adelaide and London.⁸ In temperament, he was probably not unlike Tassie, both men working primarily as shopkeepers, with the personal skills to make a success of it. This contrasted with Gibson, who was a successful pioneer pastoralist. The differences came to the fore later and were instrumental in strengthening the Port's competitive position which, in turn, probably increased its commercial domination of the inland.

Because of several financial set-backs during the Great Drought, Tassie was heavily in debt to Fowler, and D & W Murray, drapers of Adelaide, and business associates of Fowler. From Adelaide, Fowler & Murray sent Thomas Young to look after their interests while Tassie traded out of difficulties. In 1867, Bignell took over Tassie's drapery business, and Thomas Young became Bignell's "sleeping partner". By 1870 Tassie was out of debt to Fowler and Murray. Thomas Young then left Tassie's, and commenced active partnership with Frank Bignell, trading as Bignell & Young.⁹

From the time of its inception in 1854, Port Augusta constantly but unevenly grew as the centre for trade with the inland. Falls in the price of wool and minerals, and more importantly severe droughts, curtailed the small port's sometimes feverish activity to almost naught. But then good

rains would release the flood of wool and ore from up the country, and the Port again became a hectic outlet from the South Australian frontier to the rest of the world.

From 1871, A D Tassie & Co and Gooch & Hayward competed for the business of the inland. This business was the agency to ship and sell wool, to supply stores and equipment, and to arrange the shipment and cartage of goods supplied by others. They also competed to supply storekeepers, publicans and other business people in the hinterland towns, mines and stations, and in the township of Port Augusta.

However, all-out competition was not desirable or possible, because of the need to co-operate on the many occasions involving third parties. For example, ship's cargo would be left with one agent, who then notified and billed the other for unloading and storage.¹⁰ Similarly when dispatching goods to the inland, drays and wagons regularly loaded from both agents.¹¹ If one sometimes was unable to supply an item, they might go to their neighbour for a chair or hair net to fill a customer's order.¹² Within this "co-operative competition", Bignell & Young specialised in drapery, clothing and fancy goods, and complimented rather than competed with the other two, particularly Tassie's.

Independently of the competition in Port Augusta, Bignell & Young had a branch in Blinman and solid financial connections in Adelaide.¹³ They regularly ordered direct from Adelaide, and periodically from London, instead of

dealing through Tassie, or Gooch & Hayward. This way they saved on the wholesale prices of provisions for both Blinman and Port Augusta, and they built up a grocery and hardware side to their business. In 1873, they branched into general storekeeping at Port Lincoln¹⁴ and in 1874 at Sliding Rock (Cadnia), 22km east of Beltana.¹⁵

The records of Bignell & Young show that by 1872 an absolutely enormous and astonishing variety of British, South Australian and inter-colonial goods poured into the region via Port Augusta. Detailed lists of goods purchased from Adelaide and London are included in the Appendices. The other records reveal a great deal about the week-to-week operations, the development of their business, and the level of competition. An index to these records is included in the Appendices. An examination of a sample period from 25.3.1872 to 27.9.1873, included at the end of this chapter shows that at that time, the majority of orders were placed with about 14 suppliers in Adelaide. There were numerous other small suppliers of specialist lines in grocery, furniture, tobacco, cordials, joinery, stationery and other goods, with whom Bignell & Young occasionally placed orders. At times they wrote to suppliers merely seeking prices or quotes. They constantly sought better value for stockfeed and flour, which they ordered in ton multiples. A study of the sample period shows their heavy reliance on sales of clothing, drapery, haberdashery and soft furnishings, their principal business at this time.

Bignell & Young wrote to their agents and friends in

London, D & J Fowler's, to whom Young was related, and less often to D & W Murray's. These letters show they had access to stocks on the best terms available, certainly cheaper than from Adelaide. To some extent they were able to cut Adelaide out of the competition for inland business, and presumably their local competitors were doing the same. Their letters and orders embraced details of purchase, finance and freight, reports about their businesses and those of others, as well as items of local and personal news. They corresponded with London at least three times in 1872, seven times in 1873, nine in 1874, twice in 1875, three in 1876 and at least twice in the first quarter of 1877.

In 1872-73, Frank Bignell was in Britain. Thomas Young sent him a large order which illustrated the extent of their London orders and included £100 of medicine, eighty-nine trunks of footwear, 300 pairs of blankets and rugs, as well as drapery, haberdashery and much clothing. He wrote with his customary hurried, poorly punctuated scrawl:

...I noticed the arrival of the Suffolk was telegraphed so presume you are now enjoying a pleasant English summer...had some rain and since then we have scarcely had a fine day, the streets at any rate have been sloppy ever since and I do not think you can remember them ever being so for six weeks together before...we got May cash and credit sales up to £1293 and June £1467. This month will be considerably lighter as we are not sending much to Blinman. Still the twelve months should come up to a good average the best we have had I think...I purpose going

to Blinman next week if the weather is at all fine to take stock.

He continued, indicating the powerful advantage of direct trade with Britain -

Ballantyne goods have been very useful to us and on them we get a good profit...If we can manage to import our own bulk stuff I think we can yet extend a good deal at any rate the profits will be better.

The close, small-town relationships in Port Augusta were reflected in Young's mention of the brother of Gooch of Gooch & Haywood, and his (Young's) wife's brother Jno. Louden -

You will be surprised to hear Douglas Gooch has left Yudlamulka and has approached manager of Bungaree, Carriewerloo and Pandurra in place of W L Beare. It will be a good lift for them. Mrs G and family are staying in the port with us just now. Jno Louden has got all under overseership at Kanyaka. Jno Morley has Yudlamulka. No other changes that I know of.

By this time during the construction of the Overland Telegraph, Young, like many other South Australians, was interested in the potential of the Northern Territory:

No further news from the Northern Territory goldfields a few more months will tell them...[illegible]

The strong and friendly links between Bignell & Young and A D Tassie & Co were evident in this letter. They led to tangible benefits for both, as Bignell & Young paid lower prices because of bulk purchases, some of which were for A D Tassie & Co, who then shared in Bignell & Young's financing benefits:

The above [orders] you see represents a very large quantity...Tassie will take half with us...the smaller sizes are most saleable. I think the terms are 25% cash & draw against the balance or I presume dis^c for cash but this you can see.¹⁶

Thomas Young provided accurate details of activity in the inland and elsewhere, which could have been of advantage to their London associates -

We completed our stocktaking at Blinman and here in September and are pleased to advise a very satisfactory years doings, the crisis at Blinman has been staved off and business is going on satisfactorily there again. Port Lincoln so far meets our expectations...

We are getting a continuation of very dry weather and are becoming very anxious. The crops will not nearly reach the expectations of a few weeks since. The weather has been very favorable to getting the wool in and shipped. four vessels have sailed from here already as early as we usually get only two away - three others loading so that our P A Exports will show well this year.

The letter revealed that, in return for Fowler's of London acting as agents for Bignell & Young's orders, Bignell & Young used them to market wool from time to time:

At present we are out of the way of Wool Shipments and cannot influence any to you. Should circumstances however necessitate our going into this we shall be happy to place all we can in your way...

The writer desires kind regards to Mrs Fowler yourself and family in which Mrs Young heartily joins.¹⁷

A 21 page combined letter and order (an inventory of this order is included as Appendix 4) provides a good example of their sharing information with their London associates, in return for Fowler's work as agents to co-ordinate shipment of Bignell & Young's purchases of goods in Britain:

...You will oblige by placing these orders as soon as possible and we shall be glad to hear of their early shipment. The amount will not be very large altho the orders are volumunious. Still they will not involve much trouble to yourselves...

Many of the lines are comparatively small but with our limited outlet we are obliged to order cautiously in the hopes that we may be enabled to work up better orders in future. We will be obliged for any new Trade Lists that may have been lately issued.

We have secured wool from Pt Lincoln...3 (bales) on board the "Pekina"...the balance of some 16 or 17 Bales will follow...by the "Clevedon". We hope it may all reach a favorable market and induce us next year to send you larger shipments. The proceeds of these two shipments you can place against the orders herewith. We have insured that per "Pekina" for f60...

The season continues remarkably dry in the North altho the Agricultural districts have been favored with sufficient rains to materially improve the harvest prospects. Harvest operations have commenced...very good accounts on the whole from there. Our wool season is well nigh over. Business continues the same with us Port Lincoln prospects are improving and we think we get our fair share there.¹⁸

Ordering supplies direct from London, even small orders, avoided the payment of unloading, cartage, storage, interest and agency fees to Port Adelaide. This gave them a price advantage over the Adelaide merchants and possibly the local competition. British goods purchased from Port Adelaide had to be re-loaded into a ship bound for Port Augusta. There were additional costs for short-haul insurance, and the risk of damage caused by added handling. If needed goods did not arrive in Port Augusta, Bignell & Young sometimes complained that they had been forced to purchase at higher prices, in Adelaide.¹⁹

Most of South Australia's imports came into Adelaide, from where they were transhipped. A move to import direct, at once led to greater independence from the capital, and reduced the costs added by double handling and Adelaide profiteering. But shippers would have wanted a return cargo, and exports from the Port were usually seasonal, whereas the demand for imports was more evenly spread through the year. Thus Port Augusta was at a disadvantage importing, compared to Adelaide. By 1877, the previous British freight price advantage over Adelaide, for their smallish orders, had been eroded. Young made that clear in a letter in January. He attempted to reintroduce an advantage by placing a large order and making detailed (if not particularly grammatical) instructions for shipping:

...during the past year or so we have not indented any goods finding we could buy nearly as well in the Adelaide market, and our wool transactions have been done through your Adelaide house.

We are now sending you orders for over 100 tons goods and we want these shipped in the "City of Adelaide" if possible direct for Port Augusta that is provided as good terms can be got by her as any other vessels loading. The Timber, Coals etc we are only ordering providing low freights can be got direct otherwise it may be made available for any low freight to Pt Adelaide and transhipped from [there]... rather than pay high freights we will supply ourselves from the Adelaide Market.

Finance you will do as before through your Adelaide house.

We thank you for the trade circulars you so regularly send us...

Timber, Deals etc we must leave entirely to you... provided you have an opportunity of securing advantageous Freight to Pt Adelaide unless by that time any vessels are loading direct with Railway Plant etc [for Port Augusta] in which case they would probably be glad of it for light weight.

Bottle. Beer is only a small parcel. We leave you to send good quality and on this we depend to make our profit [from] advantages gained by our home correspondents watching freights. Coals omit altogether unless by vessel direct and low freight. Cement also only ordered if can be advantageously shipped.

In securing freights if loading is scarce you should get to Port Augusta at about Adelaide rates... but it should not exceed 3/- to 5/- ton over Adelaide rates as the wool vessels bring goods coastwise at 6/- to 7/6 per ton for dead weight.

You will understand the Coals, Cement, Beer are only ordered to secure low freights and rather than pay high may be omitted.

Timber we hope you may be successful in getting aboard direct ships but if not ship it to Port Adelaide. We will look out and get it transhipped there.

Mr Bignell and writer both desire very kind regards to your Mr David Fowler Mrs Fowler and family.²⁰

Only irregularly did Bignell & Young seek supplies from centres other than Adelaide and London, but even that revealed their commercial independence of Adelaide, as they endeavoured to supply the Port and inland at prices equal to or lower than Adelaide. They arranged several shiploads of sawn timber from Tasmania, with the balance of the cargo being made up of pressed and chaffed hay, oats, dray and wagon parts and potatoes.²¹ Others probably made similar arrangements, as two or three Tasmanian ships, and one or two from Warnambool, Victoria, visited in most years during this period.²² Bignell & Young bought chaff and potatoes from the colony's South-East. In attempts to get flour below the premium Adelaide price, approaches were made to Magarey & Co of Port Pirie, and W Moorhouse of Gladstone.²³ Warren & Co, another Port Pirie miller, was offered a guaranteed 80-90 tons in sales each year, with Bignell & Young selling through their stores at Blinman, Port Lincoln and Port Augusta.²⁴ But neither they nor the other millers would budge with their prices. Consequently the partnership purchased most of their miller's products from J Dunn's of Port Adelaide Mill. They occasionally bought reliable quality chaff from Melrose but it was not cheap.²⁵ They sold Jesse Locke's Port Lincoln lime, but that relationship was sometimes strained. On one occasion they had a dispute with him and referred to him as "a humbug", but continued to sell his lime.²⁶ At least once, George Robertson of

Melbourne supplied medical books.²⁷ In general there were few advantages when Bignell & Young went outside their normal channels of supply, and problems with the quality were more common.

From 1864, Bignell & Young were the only Port Augusta business with a branch in another place. They energetically sought sources of supply to get advantages in price and quality, and carefully expanded the limited range of goods with which they competed in the Port and hinterland, and later Port Lincoln.

Their dealings with London were not a one-way affair. They do not appear to have bought in the London market unless they had, or expected to have, proceeds from the sale of wool to pay for it. They speculated with the resale of wool in London from at least 1872-73, with mixed success and the proceeds of such sales were held in London against future orders from Port Augusta.²⁸

In addition to having funds in London, Bignell & Young may have purchased wool on their own account, or sold it on behalf of others to diversify their business, as a buffer against periodic quiet times. They also seem to have accepted wool as a service and to secure customer's business and seasonal debts to them. They were primarily drapers and clothiers. They did not have their own wharf or wool handling facilities, and used those of Tassie's and Gooch & Hayward until 1876. Handling wool probably created

as many problems for them as it solved. Thomas Young wrote in late 1873 that they would only go into wool if "circumstances necessitate".²⁹

Because of a range of factors, by the middle of the following year circumstances did necessitate. Young mentioned two of the lesser factors in a letter to his friend, George S Fowler -

...it is almost certain we will be shipping wheat from here next year and the quantity of wool increases every season. We therefore fully anticipate there being room for a third agent for a shipping line and as the other lines are represented separately we shall give our best services to the Adelaide Line if we obtain the agency.³⁰

The main factor propelling Bignell & Young into the wool and shipping agency business was the break with A D Tassie & Co. Until June 1874, Bignell & Young had a smooth enough relationship with that firm. Sometime after Tassie's death, Bignell & Young's relationship with Tassie's, by then in the hands of his partner, Thomas M^cTurk Gibson, began to sour.

Tensions could have resulted from day-to-day business affairs. There was certainly strain over Young's handling of the wind-up of a bankrupt business. Young wrote to Gibson about this, even though they worked under the same roof:

...I have heard you apparently blamed me in the matter...I feel sure you are suffering from a wrong impression. When

[they] first got into difficulties I was asked if I could not assist and I can only now say I sincerely wish I had not done so...instead of having done any good for myself out of the estate (which I fancy is the impression you have formed) I am actually very much worse off, the creditors have benefited by me and not I by them.

To convince you...I will gladly transfer my bill of sale to you...and thus make a clear loss of £100.³¹

Very soon after the partners moved out of the premises Bignell had occupied since 1863, in the front northern corner of Tassie's warehouse and store, into larger premises, heralding the introduction of full-blooded competition in the business of agency, shipping, and general storekeeping to service and supply the Port and its hinterland. This was an important step in the development of the Port as a vigorous, independent commercial centre, introducing strength and aggression into commercial life at an absolutely crucial time, a good three years before the demands and opportunities of the Port's boom era. For Bignell & Young, the break with Tassie's was the end of their commercial beginnings, and for their two new major competitors, it was the beginning of the end.

In the following two months, they began soliciting more wholesale business with inland storekeepers, contracted with Gooch & Hayward to use their jetty, woolpress and warehouse, sought alternative arrangements to paying their various insurances instead of through Tassie's, approached shippers

seeking their Port Augusta agency, and directed all consignments for their three stores away from Tassie's to Gooch & Hayward's jetty.³² Tassie's retaliated by going back into drapery, and possibly tailoring.³³

Soon after the breach with Tassie's, Thomas Young wrote to a Port Adelaide shipping and customs agent, saying,

...we will undertake your agency... A week ago we could not have undertaken [it] but circumstances have turned up that will allow us to go in for general goods. Hitherto we have confined ourselves to Drapery and fancy stuff here. Some little time must elapse before we complete our arrangements. We think your idea to put the Lurline on this trade a good one...there is plenty of room for a regular trader Sailing Vessel.³⁴

The sailing vessels generally provided cheaper freight charges than the steamers.

In 1874, they accepted agency for the shipping freelancer Euro, at a commission of 5% of the value of cargoes passing through their hands and in 1875 they took the agency for other individual vessels, such as Waterlily and Cyqnet.³⁵

A ship's freight account for February 1875 indicated that their efforts were yielding fruit. It listed twenty eight names including eight Port Augusta business people, six up-country storekeepers and two big pastoralists.³⁶ That month, Bignell & Young sent one of their Adelaide shippers a list of "names of owners of Stations and their correspondents", probably so that the shipper could solicit freight.³⁷

Aware that they did not have adequate facilities for full wool and shipping agency competition, Thomas Young addressed the problem in a letter to Adelaide shipping agents, Harrold Bros in October 1875-

...we are now making arrangements to construct a good substantial jetty and at some time shall build a good wharf store [both on the Dover Castle allotment] we shall have these completed in good time for the next wool season. They will then place us on an equal footing with our neighbours as to facilities for shipping and entirely independent of them.

In this letter, Young then went on to indicate that the timing may indeed have been part of the reason for the breach with Tassie's:

With the growing trade in this place we believe there is now ample room for a third business and we have no doubt some wool will pass through our hands once we are able to act entirely independent of our neighbours. We have evidence of this during this season when we had to refuse one Stations Clip; and any new trade we have equal chance with the others in securing either in wool or wheat, and we anticipate shipping this latter at any rate next season.

Our business position is equally as good as either of the present Warehouses and our Jetty when erected will be superior to either now here.³⁸

Their position was greatly improved by mid-1875, as they outlined to a Melbourne steamship agency-

...we have at considerable expense just erected a very

substantial and commodious Jetty and Wharf Store; without hesitation we say the best in the Port and can offer you every facility for quick dispatch, as instance a Barque of 296 tons has just discharged a full cargo in two days at our wharf. The jetty offers 42 feet T head and is supplied with two large trucks.³⁹

Freight for the Port was often sent on the next available ship. When it arrived that ship would discharge all cargo onto one jetty. The agent getting such vessels to use their own jetty at once advantaged themselves and disadvantaged their competitors. Using their facilities, the cargo was unloaded and stored, for which their competitor paid them. Their competitor then paid cartage to get the goods into their own warehouse. Thus it was important for Bignell & Young to attract as much as possible of a ship's cargo so that the Captain would choose to unload his entire Port Augusta cargo at their jetty. To this end they sometimes tried to co-ordinate the Adelaide loadings.⁴⁰

Adelaide merchants and shippers sometimes neglected to endorse that cargoes for Bignell & Young should be discharged at the new Bignell & Young jetty. Sometimes the Adelaide businesses used the steamers, and these always unloaded at their opponents jetties, charging 8/- per ton⁴¹ over sailing vessels rates-

...it makes a considerable difference to us as we now have our own wharf at which goods go directly into store whereas by steamer we pay higher freight, [plus] 3/- ton wharfage, 3/- ton cartage. We therefore claim the difference which please

credit.⁴²

They made many such claims which the Adelaide merchants appear to have met, although there was the occasional dispute.⁴³

After the break with A D Tassie & Co, there was bad feeling and some hostility, certainly on the part of the Tassie principal, Gibson, if not on the part of Young and Bignell. The old "co-operative competition", necessitated by having to unload at one jetty goods consigned to the clients of other agents, was breaking down. Tassie's started using it to try and pinch Bignell & Young's customers. In May 1875, Thomas Young wrote to a Sliding Rock seamstress-

...There are some other goods in same vessel for you but Messrs Tassie & Co have taken these and will not deliver to us as they have hitherto taken your goods...[they] are particularly jealous of us and try in every possible way to impede our doing business.⁴⁴

When Bignell & Young pinched J & C M Bagot's Mt Margaret agency from A D Tassie & Co, Tassie's were "obstructive".⁴⁵ On the other hand, Young felt that "jealousy in business no doubt had not assisted" their efforts to get the Corporation to pave the road in front of their Jetty Store, although it had been promised.⁴⁶ (Gibson was Mayor.) Prior to the survey and building of the railway north, government general storekeeping business did not amount to much in Port Augusta. Apart from the Overland Telegraph Line, the little

there was reflected the government's minimal role in the inland and the Port's evolving position as an outpost centre with a few government services. Tassie's supplied the Telegraph Department, probably the most lucrative contract, and local Waterworks. Bignell & Young had the Police horsefeed contract for Port Augusta, Blinman and Sliding Rock supplied stores to the local hospital and gaol and sometimes handled a little freight for the Aborigines Department.⁴⁷ In October 1875, two months after commencement of building the Telegraph to West Australia, Thomas Young wrote to the Postmaster-General, Charles Todd, ostensibly

...to solicit the favor of your patronage for agency and any supplies from Port Lincoln you may require for the Eucla Telegraph.

Young announced that they were in "a position to supply you on best terms" at the Port Augusta end of the Telegraph as well, in an attempt to oust Tassie's from the Port Augusta Telegraph contract.⁴⁸ Mr Todd does not seem to have accepted this offer. Bignell & Young also tendered for Tassie's Waterworks contract, without success.⁴⁹

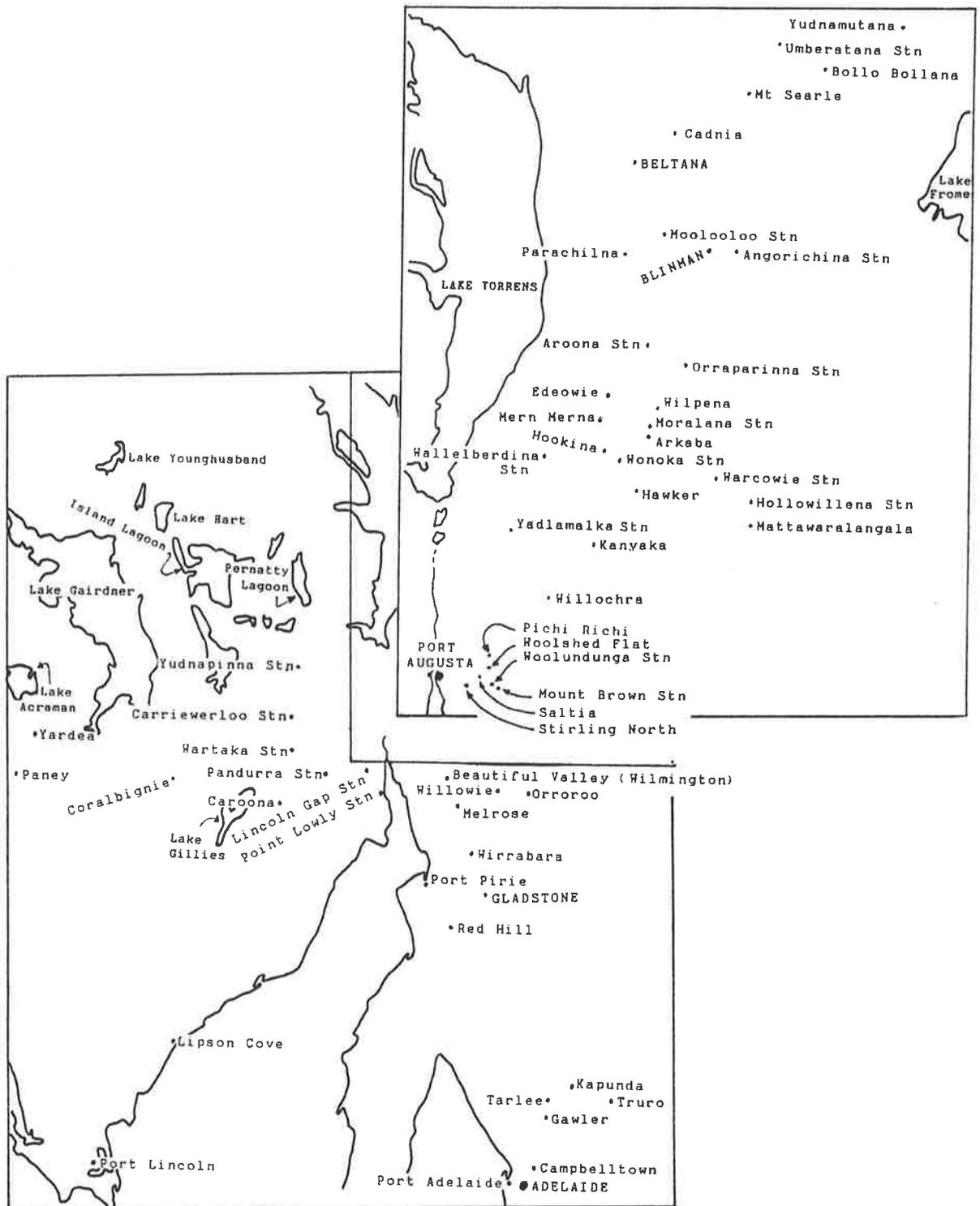
In this guerrilla warfare over customer's accounts, the grasp of Port Augusta businesses upon the inland trade would have tightened. Outsiders and possibly even some of the larger inland storekeepers, would have found the competition from the Port hard to match. Thus Port Augusta probably had near total domination of the entire region's business, so that when railway construction and the surge of wheat came

to the hinterland, virtually all the increased storekeeping business not controlled by the government in Adelaide and tendered there or overseas, would have gone to Port Augusta.

Thomas Young and Frank Bignell constantly corresponded with, visited, or were visited by Adelaide businessmen. Together with numerous trade circulars and market descriptions they received, and the rapidity of telegraphed news, they were well aware of Adelaide and London prices.⁵⁰ They were also sensitive to the comparative effect of Adelaide and London freight costs on each particular line they sold. At Bollo Bollana, Umberatana or Sliding Rock (all tucked away in the Flinders) they were able to boast that they received shipments "direct from England".⁵¹ With some authority they were able to compare their own prices and services with those in Adelaide. For example, Young wrote to J Ormistow of Beautiful Valley just after that area had yielded its first crop of wheat-

Learning that you are keeping a General Store... we think we can serve your trade better than you can be supplied from Adelaide... We import direct from England a good portion of our stock and can offer any of these goods as low as Adelaide and what we purchase in Adelaide we buy to very best advantage... We keep a large stock of Colonial and English Boots, also Furniture, Mattresses and a very large stock of fancy goods of almost every description.⁵²

They were sensitive to criticism of their wholesale or retail prices. Sometimes storekeepers and others



Some of the towns, mines and station properties supplied from Port Augusta.

complained of price increases, or that they were being undersold. Bignell & Young may have come back with a discount, but they often devoted considerable time answering, explaining, justifying.⁵³

Bignell & Young provided many free services and advice as part of their inland trade. Their wholesale trade alone was extensive, and a list of storekeepers and publicans they supplied is included in the Appendices. They did little favours with packing and carting of goods, getting in special items and advising about where and what to sell. For example, H. Spiers, the Mern Merna storekeeper, sent down "hair". Bignell & Young did not know its value but forwarded it to auction in Adelaide.⁵⁴ They also arranged for the design and construction of a solid wagon for him, and when S C Trewenack's Port Augusta wagonworks and blacksmithery had it ready, Bignell & Young offered to help Spiers to dispose of the old wagon.⁵⁵ On another occasion they told H J C Hantke, the storekeeper at Umberatana;

...we will at any time be happy to attend to any matters of business for you in the Port here.⁵⁶

Their commencement as professional wool agents in June 1874 appears to mark the end of their speculative purchases of wool, but in the September/October 1874 "wool season" they sent no wool at all to London. After the recent start as agents in this field it may have been too soon to have attracted any of the trade. Perhaps their removal from their old shop also caused space and organisational

 1876 WOOL EXPORTS BY BIGNELL & YOUNG⁵⁷

	Bales	Tonnes	Value	Bignell & Young Commissions & Charges*
"Pandurra", 50 km west of Pt Augusta	242	39	£4640	£32
Cornelius Bros "Yapoona", Red Hill	17	2.83	£290	18/11
Unknown	12	2	£232	£1/12/-
Mr Angus	900- 1000	146- 162	£16936- 23432	£115 - £130
C W Davies, "Mattawarungalla" 40km east of Hawker	34	6	£690	£4/16/-
Waddell Bros, Red Hill	54	11.03	£750	£3/9/1 ¹ / ₂
TOTALS	1259- 1359	206.86- 222.86	£23538- £30034	£157/16/- - £172/16/-

* Some of the commissions and charges varied from parcel to parcel. See note 57 for details.

problems. Then again, Young suggested another explanation when he wrote to H Rose, their Port Lincoln manager-

...Business is shockingly dull with us for this time of year and money frightfully scarce.³⁸

By the next season they had their own jetty and wool store, and they did much better as the following chart of their 1876 Wool Exports indicates.

The move into shipping allowed the partners to develop trade in new lines. One such line, of much importance in the Port and the inland, was stockfeed. Thousands of tons of stockfeed came in each year from places as distant as Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand, as well as Adelaide, the South-East and points in between. It was a high volume, low profit business. Bulk purchases which they had freighted up in the cheaper sailing ships, allowed Bignell & Young to offer closer competition with the others. But the quality of chaff gave persistent problems. Typical of these was a shipment about which Thomas Young wrote to an Adelaide supplier-

The "Fleetwing" has discharged the chaff...and we are so thoroughly disgusted with it that we declined to take it...we have strong competition to contend with and our neighbours can always get a good article we are much annoyed...to have a lot of rubbish forced upon us...you wrote us that the quality of yours this year was to be first class and so it was for a short time but has again degenerated...we have worked up a good trade for you but we cannot hold against our neighbours if they can supply a better article & Tassies have repute of always supplying the

best.

We wait your instructions as to the disposal of the seven tons and by this post send you a sample of the lot of chaff!! We call it pulled (not chaffed) wild oats.⁵⁹

Bignell & Young's merchandising and other activities blended with real estate interests within the region. In 1873 they bought agricultural land on Eyre Peninsula near Port Lincoln.⁶⁰ They pressed for the survey of township allotments at Sliding Rock Mine in the Flinders Range.⁶¹ When the auction was held in 1874, they bought a block and opened a store there, in partnership with Donald M^cFarlane.⁶² In Port Augusta they managed properties for Fowler & Murray, including the Dover Castle Hotel (by then a boarding house), the Bond Store and the Institute.⁶³ Bignell & Young purchased the Dover Castle and adjoining Bond Store in late 1873.⁶⁴ This was a prime waterfrontage position on the main street, 90m south of Tassie's and Gooch & Hayward's stores, and 50m from Bignell & Young's own store and warehouse (corner Tassie and present-day El Alamein Streets). Three years later they demolished the Dover Castle, and the Bond Store which was subsiding, and erected a warehouse at the end of their new jetty.⁶⁵ The corrugated iron warehouse was demolished in 1985. At the same time they purchased the block next to the south side of Great Northern Hotel. This put them opposite the jetty stores of their two main competitors.⁶⁶ Bignell & Young had previously rented that strip for their furniture warehouse. Several years later they acquired the pastoral lease of

nearby Lincoln Gap Station 10-20km south west of the Port, the present site of the Army's El Alamein Barracks.⁶⁷ They were agents for land transactions in the Port, at Port Augusta West, Saltia, the surrounding Hundred of Davenport, and Stirling North.⁶⁸ In 1876 Young petitioned the Surveyor-General:

The demand here for land for building upon and occupying for dwellings and business purposes is fast increasing and the whole of the allotments in this town being in the hands of private parties none is procurable except at very high rates. I notice a number of allotments are still unsold in the township of Port Augusta West these if offered would fetch good prices and would supply an urgent want at the present time. I beg therefore respectfully to apply that the remaining unsold allotments... be offered for sale in accordance with your usual custom.⁶⁹

Their reputation in real estate was such that Adelaide interests periodically approached them to act as intermediaries in real estate transactions in the Port and inland.⁷⁰

There was much interest in mining the Flinders in the 1860s and '70s. Bignell & Young occasionally sent mineral samples to Adelaide. At least once, they arranged for the shipment of samples through Blinman, probably from H C Swann's Angorichina Station.⁷¹ When the Sliding Rock Mine started, Thomas Young's father joined the flurry of excitement and became the Mine's secretary. Bignell & Young had shares in it.⁷² They also had interests in a copper mine at Saltia, another at Kapunda and goldmines in the

Northern Territory.

Many people in Port Augusta watched the northward march of wheat with mounting anticipation. The invasion of sheep pastures by wheat fields brought close settlement with greater population and economic diversity. Wheat had been planted around Port Lincoln between 1869 and 1872, and Bignell & Young had recently acquired property there. By 1874 they had wheat growing at Burrawing Canyon, behind Lipson Cove on the West Coast.⁷³ Three months later Bignell inquired of John Hart & Co, millers of Port Adelaide-

If you have not completed your arrangements for wheat buying in the Port Lincoln district...favour us with your terms etc...in the event of us becoming your agents for the district. We are well and favorably known and fully think that we shall be able to purchase a fair share of this seasons crop.⁷⁴

That year wheat farmers, in their invasion of the Flinders Range, spilt over Goyder's famous line of rainfall into the hinterland served by Port Augusta. Young wrote that-

...it is almost certain we will be shipping wheat from here next year.⁷⁵

But the first 199 bags did not leave Port Augusta for another 17 months,⁷⁶ and not until 2 March 1878 was the first wheat direct for Britain sent from Port Augusta.⁷⁷

In the meantime the tide of wheat came closer and Bignell & Young moved to capitalise on it. In January 1875, they bought a chaff cutter powered by a one horsepower engine, and sought price lists for agricultural implements.⁷⁸ In

the middle of the year, they sent separate advertising letters to six farmers whose addresses were merely "Hundred of Gregory" (in the Melrose-Wilmington area), and to others, offering to sell wire, probably required to fence the wheat fields, and galvanised iron.⁷⁹ An unusual development during this period was their sales of iron and wire to people as far south as Tarlee, Kapunda and Truro, as well as "Oorooro".⁸⁰ They answered a request for seed wheat from Coralbignie on Eyre Peninsula, 20km outside present-day "marginal agricultural land", and 40km outside that indicated as "agricultural land".⁸¹ After the expectations of the previous four years, that they would all grow rich with the wheat farmers, at the beginning of 1877 Bignell & Young wrote-

The Implement trade has so far been a very unprofitable one to us. We hold all the ploughs we purchased in addition to those sent on commission and on these we have paid f8 and 9

Freight,⁸²

and what was to be an epitaph for wheat in this arid zone-

Wheat there will be none from this Port this season the last sown not yielding any crop in consequence of the very bad season which

in reality has been little better then the drought of 1864 & 5.⁸³

Still, in the following years wheat continued to spread northward to a little past Hawker,⁸⁴ and there were good shipments from the Port, which are discussed in the following chapters. Some wheat was also planted in Port Augusta.⁸⁵

In 1884, the wheat farmers beat a retreat from many of the northern frontier's farms. Thomas Young's grandson,

Peter J Young, recalled that Bignell & Young "had their fingers badly burnt".⁸⁶ They had probably provided considerable credit to the farmers and to the merchants in the once booming northern wheat towns and hamlets.

The frontier environment presented unique and peculiar challenges to any businessman hoping to prosper within it. Conversely, it was men such as Thomas Young who gave the Port the sound, expanding commercial base and vitality it had. Thomas Young, as seen through his correspondence, developed and thrived.

At the Australian frontier, equality and a "fair go" were the measure of a man's character and worth, but the frontier's existence depended on making money. Young reflected these values in his attitudes and business dealings, wanting to see all people treated fairly, including himself. For example, he co-operated in a mining venture with D Bellamy. Bellamy walked off the claim without a word, allowing Young's Mining Lease to lapse and leaving Young to make arrangements for the removal of the ore to the Adelaide smelters. Bellamy also left a debt unpaid and Thomas Young wrote indignantly -

I don't think you have used us very fairly...I am willing to treat you fairly if you [will] us...⁸⁷

On another occasion, an upcountry customer had written, castigating a carrier who arrived quite late. Perhaps Young was also aware of the need to maintain this teamster's

goodwill, which could help the partnership when dealing with him and other bullock drivers. He put in a good word and called on the customer's sense of reasonableness, writing -

where a man has used his best endeavours to deliver the goods speedily we think you should not be too hard...⁸⁸

Thomas Young was hardworking, meticulous and fair in his business dealings. A shrewd businessman and entrepreneur, he was interested in likely investments even to the extent of being prepared to speculate. He was a conduit of reliable, optimistic information about the inland, doing what he could to promote interest in it. It is a commentary on Port Augusta's prospects at the time that it attracted and held men of such enterprising calibre.

Young seems to have accepted the egalitarian and off-hand attitudes of the frontier, while showing an aversion to tolerating them at the expense of business. Nevertheless, he probably had no choice. He was outnumbered by and dependent upon people who marched to the beat of a different drum. On one occasion, for example, a young teamster, Henneker, publicly agreed to load goods to go north but then immediately broke his word, and loaded for a rival company. Thomas Young felt the frustrated powerlessness which must have been a regular experience when dealing with the independent, temperamental yet necessary inland carriers. Not knowing what else to do, he contacted the boy's father and complained of "this very dirty trick and deliberate lie", stating that "of course a man has a right to do as he

likes but we do not care about being made fools of", and, incidentally, asking the father to settle his outstanding account. Yet business was such that they were using Henneker six weeks later!⁸⁹

Probably considered a "good bloke", Young was no "wild colonial boy". More than anything else, he was a typical businessman and good accountant, who sought moderation, stability, steady progress, respectability.

This image is reinforced by what we know of his role in the local society of the time, including his various public services. Although it is not uncommon to see the leading business figures of particular eras, like Thomas Young, also taking the lead publicly, this does not detract from his many involvements. These included Secretary of the Auxiliary Destitute Board, Trustee of the Institute (1875), Secretary to the Local Board of Main Roads (1878-87), Chairman of the School Board of Advice (1880), various positions in the Jockey Club, and Mayor between 1878-81 and again 1897-1900.⁹⁰ They were social roles that also doubled as good business connections.

This public service naturally extended into numerous minor activities. For example, he provided the trustees of the lodge of the Court Pride of the North with sound legal and investment advice to secure their little mortgages to members. He solicited donations from his Adelaide trading partners to build the Institute.⁹¹ He paid 5/- at a lodge

meeting for an absent member "to keep you good", and then he added it to the fellow's bill!⁹² Young acted on behalf of the deceased estates of friends and relations and, for example, when the town's longest resident, A D Tassie, died, he was executor of the estate and later assisted the widow to invest her legacy.⁹³ Thomas Young filled a valued niche in the business and social life of the Port.

After the financial shake-out of the Great Drought, Adelaide and London merchants would have been cautious with credit to Port Augusta businesses. Despite this, Bignell & Young had solid financial support in both places, where they could call on guarantors if necessary. For example, Thomas Young wrote to Fowler's in 1873-

Through an inadvertence on our part at this place we find that we shall be short at the Bank to meet an acct...it is one we ought to retire and afraid we can't and would ask you if you would kindly do us the great favor of seeing [the Bank Manager] and if necessary to pay in the amount we need. We know we are now asking more than we ought to expect you to grant but if you will do so we shall feel very much the kindness shown...

The amount involved was £702/12/3, equivalent to the wages of six labourers for a year.⁹⁴

Their relationship with "the Bank", the National, was probably good and solid. The National's Directors, particularly Abraham and Henry Scott, had an intimate knowledge of the Port and its hinterland. Abraham Scott, the driving force behind the National Bank's South

Australian Board, arranged the purchase of the Port's first bank premises, on the corner of present-day Chapel and Gibson Streets, in 1863-4.⁹⁵ He and his brother at various times owned Yadlamulka, Mt Brown, Woolundunga, Caroonna and Mt Searle Stations.⁹⁶ The National was the first Australian bank to accept land as security for loans, an innovation Bignell & Young took advantage of on at least two occasions.⁹⁷ The partners could call on "the Bank" for good financial references, and at times their overdraft exceeded £700.⁹⁸ Thomas Young was indirectly related by marriage to the Scotts, something which further cemented the commercial relationship.

Bignell & Young usually purchased on credit of one to three months, or longer sometimes, paying commercial rates of interest. In turn, they fulfilled, as would their competitors, a valuable role as small bankers to the inland giving similar credit for smaller amounts, as most of their wholesale and retail sales were tallied on a monthly bill.⁹⁹ No doubt storekeepers, station owners and publicans similarly provided goods on credit.

The great northern advance of wheat after 1869 was the result of the Government allowing the would-be farmers longer and longer periods of credit on the purchases of their land. This led some farmers to ask Bignell & Young for extended periods of credit, to which they replied:

...we have not been canvassing orders in the new areas upon twelve months terms...we are anxious to do business and offer to

supply you with goods you require giving you 3 months clear credit. We should after that have to charge you interest at the rate of 10% per annum and we do hope the coming season may be such as to put you beyond requiring long credit next season.¹⁰⁰

From 1876 they advanced money against wool, and charged commercial rates of interest. Sometimes they lent money and goods for longer periods against other forms of security.¹⁰¹ The extent to which they allowed credit is illustrated in one of their periodic financial reports to the National Bank:

...Blinman...their stock is not less than £1500 exclusive of Book debts. We are not wholly dependant there upon the mine but have a good station connection...Port Lincoln...our stock there is not much under £2100 exclusive of Book debts and Stock here [Port Augusta] £2500 exclusive of debts. Stocks alone are not far short of...£6000 and Book debts £5500, properties £1000 and £400 worth of goods on the Water paid for.¹⁰²

Debt was so much a part of the commercial world, even at the frontier, that it was bought and sold when businesses went into insolvency. For example, in 1866 the debts of Stirling North storekeeper W A W Size were sold to F Bignell & Co, probably by Tassie. Bignell then contacted the debtors, asking them to pay, with some success.¹⁰³ In 1873 Bignell & Young purchased the stock-in-trade and book debts of a deceased Kanyaka storekeeper, George Thompson¹⁰⁴

The correspondence of Bignell & Young is littered with reminder notes to clients that debts were still owed. On

one occasion Young wrote brief notes to twelve overdue debtors on one day.¹⁰⁵ Such letters were generally firm but polite, so that people would pay up and continue doing business with them. Occasionally there was a smidgen of humour when writing to a third party about someone's debts. Chasing a debt owed by an Afghan, Ganadah, Young offered the advice to N E Phillipson of the Beltana camel depot, to "Kindly communicate with him in 'English' ". About a debtor in Melrose, he wrote to a local businessman asking if it was worth suing, "...we cannot get any mone out of him - is he worth powder and shot?"¹⁰⁶

In November 1876 they became the local agents for the New Zealand Insurance Co. They sold commercial and domestic insurance, and covered their own cargoes.¹⁰⁷ This too was not without competition, which Young touched on in a letter to the Adelaide principal agent of N Z I C-

We have your reply about insurance of the Institute. We wired in this instance so as to be able to give a positive reply to the Committee...Three other offices are represented up here and two of these will have an opportunity of offering for the Institute...we presume you send notices of renewal or expiry direct to the Insurers and a list should be sent to us. We notice this is in the instructions to Agents and we would take care to look up renewal premiums.

The commission on this business appears to have been 11% of clients' premium payments.¹⁰⁸

By 1876-7, examination of the records of Bignell & Young showed that groceries and hardware made up almost half their

business. This compared to the beginning of the period, when 50% of their trade was in the more specialised fields of drapery and clothing. In 1872, they toyed with agency work, lacking the proper facilities. By 1876-7 it made up 25% of their business, because they had invested much in capital and worked to build it up. By then 60% of their wholesale side included financial arrangements, dealing in one way or another with purchases, delivery, and provision of credit, compared to 42% of transactions in 1872. Taken with the important position agency business had acquired by 1876-7, financing must have been vital in their growth.

Bignell & Young's growth ran parallel to steady developments in the Port and hastening expectations of the inland. In their expansion and diversification, the partners reflected the opportunities available and the increased sophistication of local business, even before the onset of the boom years.

ORDERS and RELATED CORRESPONDENCE FROM
 BIGNELL & YOUNG to their
 MAIN ADELAIDE SUPPLIERS AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATES,
25 March 1872 - 27 September 1873

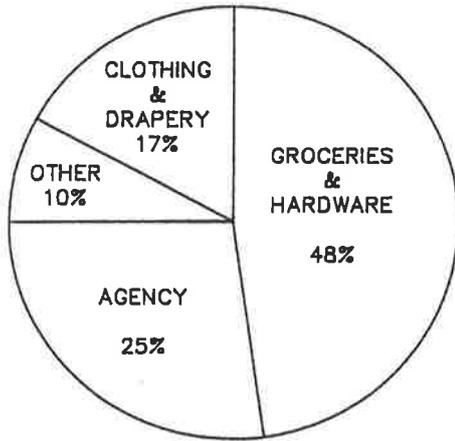
	<u>number of orders placed</u>
D & W Murray, clothiers and drapers, and their financial guarantors and advisors	48
D & J Fowler, grocers and their financial guarantors and advisors	28
Wills & Co, clothiers, drapers and fancy goods	20
Harris Scarfe & Co, hardware and tools	19
A C Knabe, bedding	13
W Jones, fresh fruit and vegetables	11
F H Faulding, chemists	10
J Ballantyne, clothiers and drapers	9
Adelaide Boot Factory	8
W Benbow, furniture	7
P Falk & Co, stationers etc	7
Goode Bros, clothier etc	7
Good Toms & Co, clothiers etc	7
J Dunn & Co, millers, stockfood	6

	201 orders

ORDERS and RELATED CORRESPONDENCE FROM
 BIGNELL & YOUNG to their
 MAIN ADELAIDE SUPPLIERS and BUSINESS ASSOCIATES,
26 August 1876 - 23 March 1877

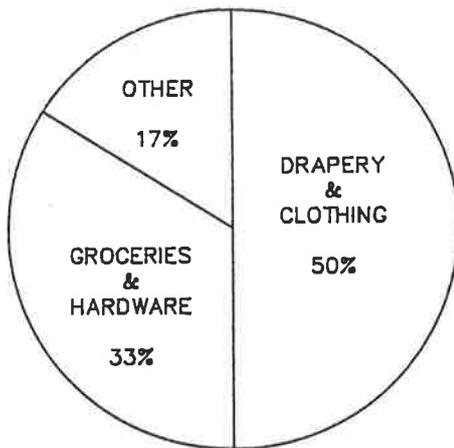
	<u>number of orders placed</u>
D & J Fowler, grocers and their financial guarantors and advisors	70
D & W Murray, clothiers, drapers and financial guarantors	40
W R Cave, stockfeed	32
Harris Scarfe & Co, hardware, builders' and blacksmiths' supplies	25
R Honey, timber	24
Harrold Bros, shipping and general agents	23
Whyte, Counsell & Co, customs and general agents	19
Smart Webb & Co, Victoria, vegetables and processed foods	18
Sinclair Son & Smith, ship owners and cargo speculators	15
G R Selth, shipping and customs agents	13
J C Phillips, solicitor, land and finance broker	10
W & T Rhodes, hardware and machine repairs	9
Adelaide Boot Factory	9
A C Knabe, bedding	7
Hall & Son, cordials, landlords	7

	321 orders



A profile of the business of Bignell & Young in 1872 before they commenced to diversify.

Financial arrangements such as credit, commissions or interest payments were included in 42% of these transactions.



Bignell & Young's profile by 1876-7 put them in an excellent position to exploit the Port's boom period.

Associated financial arrangements were included in 60% of these transactions.

NOTES

- 1 Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:204-5.
- 2 Ibid, 1:182a.
- 3 A: 250-3.
- 4 A: 197-3, 91-3.
- 5 A: 254.
- 6 Blainey G, 1958, Gold and Paper, National Bank, Melbourne, pp410-1; M^cLellan, AAS, 1962, "The Branch at Port Augusta", Nautilus - staff magazine of the National Bank, no 120, pp64-5.
- 7 Peter J Young, personal communication, September 1983.
- 8 Biographical Index of South Australians, op cit, confirmed by P J Young, op cit.
- 9 P J Young, op cit.
- 10 Details of the business operations of A D Tassie & Co, and Gooch & Hayward, were periodically described in the outward correspondence of Bignell & Young. This correspondence is in a set of letterpresses covering the period 1871-7 contained in the records listed in the Appendices. Hereafter, they will be referred to as B&Y, followed by the name and town of the person to whom the letter was written (if this is indicated); then follows the date of the correspondence (where shown); the number of the letterpress, and the folio page number within the particular letterpress follow in brackets after the date. For the reference to an example of the agents billing each other for unloading and storage of goods shipped to the Port, see B&Y, 4/427.
- 11 For example, B&Y to J Henneker, Blinman, 16.12.1876 (7/538)
- 12 They borrowed chairs from the stock of Gooch & Hayward, see B&Y to Mrs Mooney, Melrose, 9.3.1874(4/427); and hairnets from Tassie's stock - B&Y to T Redding, Yardea, 29.10.1872(1/161).
- 13 Thomas Young to Frank Bignell, London, 20.7.1872, (1/99-108)
- 14 They bought out the business of Thirkell, Hickman & Co at Port Lincoln and ordered their first stock on 7.7.1873: B&Y orders to various Adelaide merchants, (1/429-435).
- 15 For their first reference to "our Sliding Rock store", see B&Y to A D Tassie & Co, Port Augusta, 26.7.1874

- (4/172)
- 16 T Young to F Bignell, London 20.7.1872(1/99-108) including six pages of orders.
 - 17 B&Y to D & J Fowler, London 3.11.1873(3/135).
 - 18 Op cit, 1.12.1873(3/204-241) with copies of orders originally sent 3.11.1873.
 - 19 B&Y to D & W Murray, London, 26.3.1874(3/469). See Hirst, op cit, p26 for discussion about imports through Port Adelaide compared to other SA ports.
 - 20 B&Y to D & J Fowler, London, 22.1.1877(7/680-701).
 - 21 B&Y sought quotes from Belbin & Dowdell, Hobart 25.10.1876(7/268) and Arthur Dipon, River Leven 14.11.1876(7/379). However they contracted for the cargo with Moore & Quiggan of Table Cape, Tasmania - see 27.10.1876(7/279 and 348). Later correspondence revealed that the timber had deteriorated because of the radical differences in climate (7/753).
 - 22 Port Augusta Shipping Register, 1859-1916, GRG51/67-8: PRO.
 - 23 B&Y to J Dunn & Co, Adelaide, 4.12.1873(1/256); B&Y to Magarey & Co, Port Pirie, 11.1.1874(5/28); B&Y to W Moorhouse, Gladstone, 15.1.1873(3/343). A load received from Moorhouse was infested with weevils.
 - 24 5.8.1874(4/204).
 - 25 An example of one of these transactions is B&Y to R Seyfang, Melrose, 24.12.1874(5/13).
 - 26 Correspondence between 13.11.1874(4/434) and 9.2.1877 (7/787)
 - 27 6.5.1872(1/48).
 - 28 B&Y to D & J Fowler, London, 2.12.1872(1/195), 29.12.1873(3/305) and op cit, 27.1.1874(3/373).
 - 29 Op cit, 3.11.1873(3/135).
 - 30 B&Y to George S Fowler, Adelaide, 16.7.1874(4/160). In fact, the first wheat shipment of 199 bags, left Port Augusta in the Flinders for Port Adelaide on 12.12.1877, see A:10-3. The first direct shipment overseas was of 8738 bags. It went on the Glaramara bound for Cork, Ireland on 27.2.1878, see Port Augusta Shipping Register, op cit.
 - 31 9.11.1872(1/490-93)
 - 32 For B&Y giving notice they are going into wholesale

- storekeeping, see their letter to E A Stocks, Willochra 26.6.1874 (4/125); arranging to use Gooch & Hayward's jetty instead of Tassie's, see B&Y to Gooch & Hayward, Port Augusta 29.6.1874 (4/125); for alternative arrangements for insurance, see B&Y to South Australian Insurance Co, (Adelaide) 1.7.1874 (4/135); seeking their support to get a shipping agency, D & J Fowler, Adelaide 16.7.1874(4/160) and to shippers Harrold Bros, Adelaide, 15.7.1874 (4/162); formal notification about receiving their consignments for Blinman and Sliding Rock stores through Gooch & Hayward in lieu of Tassie, see B&Y to A D Tassie & Co, Port Augusta 26.7.1874 (4/172).
- 33 B&Y to D & W Murray, Adelaide 1.7.1874(4/134) and 5.8.1874(4/208).
- 34 B&Y to G R Selth, Port Adelaide 6.6.1874(4/80).
- 35 B&Y to Giles & Smith, Adelaide 21.11.1874(4/461); re "Waterlily" - B&Y to G R Selth, Port Adelaide 26.4.1875(4/283); re "Cygnet" - to Selth, 10.5.1875(5/338).
- 36 Memo to Capt Osborne, (18.1.1875) (5/54) with an attachment headed "By Freights Payable at Port Augusta".
- 37 B&Y to Giles & Smith, Adelaide 1.2.1875(5/80-1). The list is obviously not an attempt to identify all the properties and owners in the north.

For those marked with a * Rodney Cockburn's Pastoral Pioneers lists these men with full entries including a photograph.

For those marked with a + they are mentioned at various lengths in Pastoral Pioneers.

Hoolundunga	E Swinden*
Saltia	J J Swinden+ address Riverton
Willochra	B & G Ragless*
Kanyaka	J H Phillips* Hon W Milne interested
Wonoka	Hayward* and Armstrong*
Warcowie	J C Saunders
Hollowillena	Jno Warwick D Lithgow
Mattawaralangala	C W Davies*
Sundry Stations	Dr Browne* query whether connected with other boats. H S Price has something to do with management
Hirrabara	Tinline+ Murray Hon A B Murray*
Angorichina	H C Swan+ address Semaphore
Artemar	R D Ross & R W D Hemming
Moolooloo	W B Rounsevell+ Mr Crawford
Sundry Stations	Henry Scott*
Carriererloo	G C Hawker* H Scott
Orraparinna	Gleeson* & Beare W L Beare*-Clare
Aroona & Edeowia	W L Marchant*

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Pandurra | D & J Fowler |
| Wartaka | Jno Tapley |
| Sundry Stations | Sir John Morphett* & others |
| Coralbignie | J M Stokes |
| Paney | A M Wooldridge* Fullarton |
| Yardea | Acraman* Mann* & Co |
| Wallelberdina | R Bruce* |
| Moralina | W B Sells* |
- 38 18.10.1875(5/851).
- 39 B&Y to M^cMeekan Blackwood & Co, Melbourne, 1.11.1876 (7/329).
- 40 B&Y to Harrold Bros, Port Adelaide, 25.1.1877(7/727).
- 41 B&Y to W R Cave, Port Adelaide 15.3.1877(7/950).
- 42 B&Y to Whyte, Counsell & Co, Adelaide, 26.10.1876 (7/273).
- 43 For example, between 13.10.1876 and 13.11.1876 there were five such claims. B&Y wrote to R Honey, timber merchant of Port Adelaide about a dispute over one of these claims, 7.11.1876(7/358).
- 44 B&Y to Mrs Stickles, Sliding Rock 7.5.1875(5/328).
- 45 B&Y to J & C M Bagot, Mt Margaret 21.8.1875(5/676) and to Jas Waller, Pandurra 29.8.1876(7/3).
- 46 B&Y to C W Davies, Mattawarrangula 30.12.1876(7/589).
- 47 For reference to Tassie's tender, see B&Y to Charles Todd, Superintendent of Telegraphs, (Adelaide) 4.10.1875(5/788); re Waterworks tender, see B&Y to D & J Fowler, Adelaide 1.11.1876(7/328) (Tassie's had been supplying the Waterworks without tendering for it); re their supply of horse feed, see B&Y to G R Selth, Port Adelaide 2.12.1874(4/484) asking them to get quotes for 20-40 tons good mixed wheaten and oaten hay now that they had the Police contract; asking D & J Fowler, Adelaide to please pass their orders on the hospital and gaol for payment to the Treasury, 26.12.1874 (5/16); memo to Capt Osborne, op cit, the Aborigines Department was one of the orders referred to in note 38.
- 48 B&Y to C Todd, Superintendent of Telegraphs, Ibid; A: 77-3.
- 49 B&Y to D & J Fowler, Ibid.
- 50 These trade circulars and telegraphs are with B&Y's correspondence.
- 51 B&Y to F B Andrews, Sliding Rock 11.9.1872(1/125), to T J C Hantke, Umberatana 17.10.1873(3/106), and to J

- Kingsmill & Co, Bolla Bollana 18.3.1874(3/453).
- 52 B&Y to J Ormiston, Beautiful Valley 12.4.1874(3/487).
- 53 For example of complaints about price increases, see B&Y to James Watson, storekeeper, Kanyaka 17.10.1873 (3/108). B&Y's response to his complaint that goods were cheaper elsewhere was that the opposition must have been selling poorer quality goods; to E A Stocks, storekeeper, Willochra 17.5.1872(1/55); and to Mrs Watson at Kanyaka 3.2.1877(7/767); see also B&Y to F B Andrews, storekeeper, Sliding Rock 11.9.1872 (1/125) when Andrews claimed he could be supplied more cheaply from Blinman. For an example of their dealing with complaints by coming back with a discount, they offered J M Stokes, storekeeper, Coralbignie, discounts on two occasions, 21.5.1872(1/61) and 11.9.1872(1/124), when he complained about prices.
- 54 B&Y to H Spiers, 9.12.1876(7/504).
- 55 To Spiers, 3.2.1877(7/768) and 24.2.1877(7/871).
- 56 4.9.1873(3/41).
- 57 It is possible B&Y exported more wool than indicated here. Indeed, the same could be said for 1874 & 1875. Not all outward correspondence was in the records examined. For reference to each item in this chart, see B&Y's memo (30.10.1876(7/291-3)) of marks, numbers and weights for each of Pandurra Station's 242 bales which provided bale weight variations. Their memo of account to Cornelius Bros, 30.10.1876(7/294) indicated that 17 bales weighed 6349 lbs net, were insured for £290 for a premium payment of £3/10/0 less B&Y 10% (7/-) insurance commission, that shipping charges were 1/3 per bale, plus a weighing charge of 4^d per bale, and fixed charges of 3/- for Bill of Lading and document preparation. Furthermore, the B&Y memo of account to Waddell Bros, Red Hill 3.11.1876(7/334-5) indicated that their 54 bales weighed 26 728 lbs net, were insured for £750 for a premium payment of £13/2/6 less 10% (£1/6/-) insurance commission, and other charges appear to have been pro rata to those for Cornelius Bros. The information from these was then used to infer similar figures in addition to that provided in the correspondence B&Y to Fowler & Murray, Adelaide 30.10.1876(7/295), which referred to 12 bales; B&Y to Harrold Bros, Adelaide 28.10.1876(7/297), which referred to the disruption to their shipping arrangements caused by Mr Angus' 900-1000 bales; B&Y to C W Davies, Mattawarungalla 16.12.1876 (7/537), which refers to "34 Bales Your Wool shipped per Bundaleer and B/Lading sent to your Father", although there were no copies of the bills of lading in B&Y's outward correspondence.
- 58 30.9.1874(4/328).

- 59 B&Y to W R Cave & Co, Port Adelaide, 15.2.1877 (7/819).
- 60 B&Y to Thirkell, Hickman & Co, Port Lincoln 5.7.1873 (1/427) re 50-60 acres, 31.7.1873(1/473) re 31 acres, and 21.11.1873(3/164) re Sections 107 & 108, Hundred of Louth. These sections were of 400-500 acres.
- 61 B&Y to Commissioner of Crown Lands, Adelaide 21.1.1874(3/408); B&Y to J C Phillips, solicitor, Adelaide 12.3.1874(3/442).
- 62 About the partnership with M^cFarlane, B&Y to Geo W Cotton, (Adelaide) 12.3.1874(3/443).
- 63 B&Y to Fowler & Murray, (Adelaide) 30.10.1873(3/132). The tenants were Waede, Tortoise and Johnson respectively.
- 64 Op cit, 22.12.1873(3/297).
- 65 A: 13-3; B&Y to D & J Fowler, London 10.7.1873 (1/447); B&Y to James Cumming, architect, Adelaide 23.8.1875 (5/683).
- 66 B&Y to Mrs Hannah Hobkirk, (Port Augusta) 20.6.1874 (4/111-2).
- 67 B&Y to Acraman, Main & Co, (Adelaide) 6.2.1877 (7/776).
- 68 For example, the sale of a block adjoining Gooch & Hayward's waterfront allotment, see B&Y to Gooch & Hayward, Port Augusta, 15.10.1874(4/370). They also sold a block of land to S C Trewenack, wagon builder, Port Augusta, see 20.2.1874(3/407). There were numerous real estate transaction on the West Side - see B&Y to John Fleming, Point Lowly, 30.4.1873(1/333) and to James Pollack, Campbelltown (S A), 10.3.1876 (7/1003). For the sale of Saltia township land to George Murray of Blinman, a teamster, see B&Y to J C Phillips, Adelaide, 18.12.1873(3/291). There were several land sales in the Hundred of Davenport: see B&Y to August Nestor, Port Augusta, 19.3.1877(7/960) for the sale of 84 acres at £2 per acre. A transaction involving Stirling North land was that of a Bill of Sale from Thomas Young to the Estate of the late Joe Mole, and from there onto James Messenger, 4.6.1873(1/385-6) in which B&Y were agents for Fowler & Murray.
- 69 4.9.1876(7/54).
- 70 For example, regarding sale of the Pichi Richi Hotel to Pascoe: B&Y to J C Phillips, Adelaide 12.3.1877(7/949).
- 71 B&Y to H C Swann, (? Adelaide) 7.8.1874(4/211) and Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 2:251b.

- 72 B&Y to Thomas Young [Snr], Secretary, Sliding Rock Mining Company 6.5.1873(1/344), 9.5.1873(1/347), 16.5.1873(1/358).
- 73 Meinig D W, 1972, op cit p 43; B&Y to H Rose [Manager of Bignell & Young's store], Port Lincoln 23.10.1874(4/388).
- 74 11.1.1875(5/31).
- 75 B&Y to George S Fowler, Adelaide 11.7.1874(4/160).
- 76 A: 240-4.
- 77 Port Augusta Shipping Register, Op Cit.
- 78 B&Y to Ramsay & Co, Adelaide 6.1.1875(5/24).
- 79 B&Y to Messrs James, Scutchins, Schupper, Baron, Zimmermann, Hoskings, 17.6.1875(5/460-2); and to Watts, Beautiful Valley, and D George and Mr Hill, both "near Beautiful Valley" (5/463-4).
- 80 B&Y to R M Cole, Tarlee 23.9.1875(5/747), to Rowett & Hooper, Kapunda 29.8.1876(7/5&243), to A Hendry, Truro 2.11.1876(7/331&392) and J Atchinson, Oorooro [sic] 4.1.1877(7/605) and F T Medley, Oorooro [sic] 1.3.1877(7/901).
- 81 B&Y to J J Mackay, Coralbignie 21.2.1877(7/861); for indication of marginal lands, see Lands Department of SA Map of Land Utilisation and Pastoral Runs, March 1981.
- 82 B&Y to J G Ramsay & Co, Adelaide 4.1.1877(7/603).
- 83 B&Y to D & J Fowler, London 22.1.1877(7/680).
- 84 Mincham, 1980, op cit, Chapters 5 and 6.
- 85 19.8.1882, 18.10.1882 PAD.
- 86 Meinig, Op Cit, Chapter 5 - Drought and Retreat, 1881-1884; P J Young, Op Cit.
- 87 B&Y to D Bellamy, 10.1.1873(1/233).
- 88 B&Y to H T Mansell, Moralana, 21.10.1876(7/251).
- 89 B&Y to J Henneker, Blinman, 16.12.1876(7/538) and to F Bignell & Co, Blinman, 27.1.1877(7/736).
- 90 A: 79, 104, 148, 173, 196; Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, op cit, p21.
- 91 B&Y to Trustees of the Court Pride of the North (Port Augusta), 28.1.1874(3/493), B&Y to Wills & Co, Adelaide, 16.12.1872(1/241).

- 92 B&Y to unknown lodge member, 11.5.1874(4/40).
- 93 Examples of Thomas Young acting for deceased estates are in B&Y to D & W Murray, Adelaide, 16.12.1872(1/217) and to D & J Fowler, Adelaide, 5.5.1873(1/337), re the Estate of Joe Mole; B&Y to Adelaide Life Insurance and Guarantee Co., Adelaide, 2.5.1874(4/23) re the Estate of Francis Young (brother); B&Y to J Herring, Adelaide, 11.2.1875(5/120) re the Estate of Paul Phillips (brother-in-law); B&Y to Hall & Sons, Port Adelaide, 11.12.1876(7/514) re the Estate of Sarah Jane Phillips (sister); and behalf of Tassie's Estate, B&Y to Andrews and Bonnin, Adelaide, 13.2.1873(1/246).
- 94 B&Y to D & J Fowler, Adelaide 3.3.1873(1/265). In 1874, a labourer received around 7/6 per day, or £2/5/- per week, which is £117 p a: see Wage Rates, Statistical Register of 1874, SAPP.
- 95 Blainey, 1958, op cit, pp410-11; A:119-2.
- 96 Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:194/5, 2:66, A:119-2,269-2.
- 97 Blainey, 1958 Op Cit, pp 52-5; B&Y to National Bank, Adelaide 19.9.1874(4/294).
- 98 For example, B&Y to National Bank, Adelaide 9.12.1872 (1/202) £124, 3.3.1873(1/263) f702, 11.4.1874 (3/485) £700.
- 99 Examination of B&Y Drapery Day Book, 1869 and Grocery accounts for 1877-8.
- 100 B&Y to W Anderson, Roths Farm, Willowie 19.12.1876 (7/545).
- 101 An example of another form of security was holding E A Gliddon's lease on the Government well at Parachilna: 10.3.1874(3/431).
- 102 This letter was followed by one to Fowler's in London, telling them of the depressing effect on business expected from a fall in the price of copper: B&Y to National Bank, Adelaide 29.4.1874(4/20). No doubt the price of copper made the Bank call to account businesses such as B&Y.
- 103 See Appendices 2, Group 1, Series 3, Bundle A - 1866 refers.
- 104 B&Y to M Kingsborough, Adelaide 12.1.1874(3/331) and 16.3.1874(3/448).
- 105 B&Y to H Malenoir and G Tennis, Port Augusta, W G Henderson of Wartaka, and H Pavlich, G Harding, J W Stutely, John Long, G Milbank, T Grantham, T Silver and Mrs Griffith, 10.9.1873(3/50-7).
- 106 B&Y to N E Phillipson, Beltana 30.8.1872 (1/123); B&Y

- to Thomas Marshall, Melrose 21.11.1876(7/407).
- 107 They solicited insurance from inland storekeepers. One of their local clients was Lee Song, builder, who insured his iron-roofed wooden building for f200. B&Y to C B Stone, Adelaide 23.12.1876(7/574). In 1878 B&Y sold groceries to Lee Song, Woom Chum and Kong Fat. Lee Song regularly purchased £2-£20 of building materials.
- 108 B&Y to C B Stone, Adelaide 20.3.1877(7/972).

From 1875 to 1884 was the Port's boom time. The causes - the construction of a railway and the spread of wheat growing through the nearby Flinders Range - are examined in this chapter along with an overview of shipping, which reached a crescendo in 1880, reflecting the boom.

From the beginning, Port Augusta's geographical position dominated considerations to build a northern inland railway. The route that it should follow once it left the Port remained a live issue for all of 18 years prior to its actual commencement. Plans to build a railway were first mooted by the Great Northern Copper Co in 1860, and a route was surveyed by G E Hamilton. In that year too, a railway survey was made from Burra to Mt Remarkable (Melrose), but in so doing concluded that the northern district should be connected by rail not to Burra but to Spencer Gulf.¹ In 1863, the Great Drought and the likely construction cost scotched still other negotiations between J R Goodiar, A D Tassie and English railway promoters. The idea was revived after the Drought and the Government agreed to guarantee low interest loans to promoters who would build a Port Augusta railway. This encouraged H R Fuller and various other parties, but the cost of paying for a survey to allow a detailed costing was too great. Fuller dropped the idea, and James Wallace, for the English-based Great Northern Railway Co, took it up. In 1868-9, he estimated the cost of a line to the Yudnamutana mining district at £800 000 but was unwilling to pay for a detailed survey. The Government wanted plans and specifications to be

accompanied by a £5000 deposit which the company was also unwilling to provide.²

The Government all the while was investigating the question of railway construction in the colony. A committee meeting in 1866 again suggested a railway from Burra to Melrose, to hasten development along the route. Melrose was, they said, a good place from which to cross the Willochra Plain to the Yudnamutana country. Four years later, another Government committee suggested a railway over a similar route, but from Port Augusta instead of Melrose.³

In October 1870, during the frenetic commencement of the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line, a Government party was sent to the Port to survey routes for a railway north. In the optimism and excitement of the Telegraph construction, the Government decided to mount its own railway survey. This was done to remove the obstacle which had baulked promoters. A line was surveyed to accompany the Overland Telegraph 300km north to Gum Water Hole, later known as Government Gums and later still, Farina. It followed Hamilton's 1860 survey, along the Main North Road dray track via the string of wells dug by the Government in 1862. An alternative route via Pichi Richi Pass was judged unsatisfactory because of the steep incline, and the need for expensive banking and bridging.⁴

The constant interest in a Port Augusta railway maintained speculative hopes that hitherto marginal mines and pastoral

leases could be made profitable, by having a railway run nearby. The eyes of smart entrepreneurs were never far from the Port. One day it would be an important centre for all the expected inland activity. After the Telegraph was built, it seemed only a matter of time.

During his visit to South Australia, Anthony Trollope took an interest in these developments. He wrote:

The telegraph has been the means of introducing the northern territory into general notice; and now a much greater project has been formed...to make a railway along the telegraph line...right across Australia to Port Darwin!...about 1800 miles, [said to cost] £10 000 000. There are no inhabitants of this country, at any rate none who would use the railway, and at the distant terminus there is no town...There can be no doubt that population would follow the railway, as it always has in the United States...It is proposed that 200 million acres of land shall be given to the railway promoters as the line is made...But there seem to lack two ingredients for the thorough success of such a scheme - a town at the end such as was San Francisco when the railway was proposed across the Rocky Mountains from Chicago...and a wheat growing country for its support, such as California - and such as Oregon is and the Utah territory.⁵

Indeed the engineer with the survey party, R C Patterson, reported:

I found that 200 miles from Port Augusta brought me to the edge of a stoney desert, and it was a matter of no small doubt and difficulty as to where the terminus should be fixed; I ultimately determined upon the 'Government Gums' simply because a good supply

of water could be obtained there... It would be more correct to say that the railway will have its TERMINUS at the beginning of the desert. ⁶

This was hardly the point for those who stood to gain in Port Augusta, as expressed in the poetry column of the Dispatch:

This line we proudly think,
Will form the southern link
Of railway grand;
People and government
Joined in this great intent
To stretch our settlement,
Right through the land. ⁷

The fact that local pastoral leases and mining were often in the hands of Adelaide businessmen had never been of much practical importance to Port Augusta or the inland. Now however, with a railway in the offering, these remote masters became important allies.

In 1874, a group of wealthy Adelaide squatters, stock salesmen and merchants, including the manager of the English & Australian Copper Co, Ebenezer Cooke, formed the Railway Extension League. ⁸ They pressed for the construction of railways to serve their interests, and their first priority was a railway from Port Augusta to the north. ⁹ The cost of cartage had always been a handicap to the development of the Port's hinterland, particularly for promising mines, of

which the Flinders Range was thought to abound. Probably as a result of the League's agitation, in 1874 the Premier, J P Boucant, announced the appointment of a Commission on Railway Construction to report on which South Australian railway developments should take place and in what priority order.¹⁰ With the demands of the new wheat districts and the renewed enthusiasm for railway development, the question of which regions and towns were to be blessed or by-passed by the construction of railways had become an increasingly vexing source of argument. Each region and hamlet put their self-interested claims.

The Commission was born of the great South Australian tradition of intelligent government planning and interference, to see that the best results were achieved. On the political side, it gave the Railway Extension League, which included several powerful identities, what they wanted. In the colonial elections of the following year, Ebenezer Cooke stood for the Port Augusta regional seat of Flinders. He campaigned on a platform of building a railway north as a first priority, and he was enthusiastically received in the Port.¹¹ His English & Australian Copper Co owned the waterfront allotment next to Gooch & Hayward's.¹² Cooke held great hopes for the Flinders Range mines if a railway was built.

The Commission's main concern was to find the cheapest way to get wheat to the ports.¹³ Strategically placed railways were necessary to maximise wheat returns and encourage

further wheat production. It was presumed to be common logic that wheat, wool and minerals would always be taken to the nearest port.¹⁴

A second key design of the Commission was to reach deep into potentially rich pastoral and mining lands afflicted with cartage problems, and remove cartage as a barrier to progress. At the very time of the Commission's inquiries, no mines were operating in the Flinders Range because of the high cost of cartage. T M^cT Gibson estimated that if the railway was in place, Sliding Rock would have sent down 500t of its superb 70% copper ore each month. J Symons claimed that 2000t of ore per month, currently left in the ground, would have been mined and sent to the Port, had there been a railway.¹⁵ It was expected that a railway would enhance such regions for grazing (including the Murray Mallee and towards the Barrier Range, as well as the Flinders) by allowing the quick escape of livestock during times of drought. Surveyor-General Goyder was particularly attracted to this line of thought. He saw it increasing the rental prospects of existing pastoral leases on Crown Land, and opening unleased lands for occupation. The Commission faithfully reflected Goyder's views on this point. He was its Chairman.

Among the first priority to be built was the Great Northern narrow gauge line from Port Augusta to the north, via the Willochra Plain. This route would take the line near potentially rich agricultural land scattered through the

Flinders Range. While the Commission deliberated, surveying proceeded, and by 31 May 1875 the survey was 160km north of the Port.¹⁶

With the benefit of hindsight it can now be seen that this second key design misjudged the central problem of the arid climate in the pastoral north. The core of this problem was the pastoral industry's transport difficulties created by aridity, and secondary to this was the need for transport as an "escape hatch" in times of drought. The solution was better property management, adapted to the climate by trial and error.¹⁷ But the colonists and their Government were eager to overcome the transport difficulties and encourage further development of the region, including mining, for which better pastoral property management was irrelevant. Impatient for progress, the government poured hundreds of thousands of pounds into a solution to the transport question to try and side-step the central problem of the climate. Development of a northern railway was anticipated to make Port Augusta disproportionately prosperous, because the Port was anticipated to be the only outlet for the enormous inland area. These expectations, along with shorter term factors, attracted business to the Port. But the central problem remained, and eventually won the day.

In these terms, the Great Northern Line can now be seen as speculative. Its success depended on the development of the north. Port Augusta's future also depended on the north's expansion. What could not be known at the time was that the limits of the wheat growing areas had been reached and in

much of the north, passed, and the pastoral country could only be slowly "improved", if at all.

The Commission's task was not just to say who would get a railway. It was also charged with developing an overall master plan for the colony's rail system. The master plan decided upon was to impose Adelaide as the focus and principal port of the system. Port Augusta was left with what was expected to be a relatively limited wheat hinterland. (The Commission started in December 1874 and finished in August 1875.) The intention, worked out in greater detail later, was to connect the Great Northern Line to the southern network by a narrow gauge line from Quorn to Terowie, to meet the broad gauge line from Adelaide. The commercial and trading interests of Ports Augusta and Pirie were to be "naturally" protected from encroachments from Adelaide by the break of gauge at Terowie.¹⁸ Passengers and stock, on the other hand, would be able to change trains at Terowie for Adelaide, by walking from narrow gauge to broad gauge carriages. The connecting route, Terowie-Orroroo-Eurelia-Coonatto-Quorn, was planned to run through the rapidly expanding wheat frontier, although by the time it was built it actually skirted the wheat's eastern limit.¹⁹

When it was clear that the Great Northern Railway was to become a reality, it was a source of tremendous optimism at Port Augusta, expressed in doggerel in the Dispatch:

Augusta's safe prove Port,

Where wool-ships now resort,

Will crowded be;
When wheat and copper ore,
Rail borne unto our shore,
Shall swell our exports more,
 To send o'er sea.
From present enterprize,
Our hopes yet higher rise;
 May they not fail,
But may the iron horse
In its triumphant course,
Speed on with steady force,
 Far o'er the rail.²⁰

The anticipated boost in activity began in October 1877, with the arrival of the first railway materials from England aboard the Glaramara 678t. The rails, bundles of fishplates, cases of dog spikes, sets of crossings, nuts and bolts taken from the Glaramara's holds were soon followed by more railway materials in 11 ships: Delawar 1258t with rails and wagons on 5 February; Andes 831t and Stuart 881t in early April with rails, wagons and engines; and assorted railway cargoes on John Paterson 1255t, Jessie Osborne 1056t, Southwick 446t, Olan Bay 1067t, Royal George 1458t, Iona 537t, West Riding 952t and the last, Steelfield 1250t, which arrived on October 1878, and departed eight days before Christmas. There was also an unprecedented influx of colonial vessels.²¹ The Customs Department recorded only 25-50% of all ships visits, and its records show a jump from 10 ships totaling 6014t in 1877, to 33 totaling 22 178t

in 1878. Among the latter were the seven largest ships seen in the Port to that time.

Just prior to these momentous events, the Port's new paper, the Port Augusta Dispatch chided the Government that -

The Northern Railway should have been long an accomplished fact... This would have been the means of averting the disastrous mining failures which have tended to bring discredit on the North... having caused such serious losses to capitalists and... such hardship to numbers of our working men [which] may have been greatly ameliorated, if not entirely prevented, by the construction of the Northern Railway a few years ago.²²

The commencement of the railway's construction, was set for 18 January 1878. Although there were only about 1500 people in the general district, 2000 turned out on the day. To mark the occasion, most businesses declared it a public holiday.²³

The Adelaide dignitaries wanted the increased lease rents, profits, and commissions that would flow from construction of the Great Northern Railway. They demonstrated by their behaviour that they did not really want to visit Port Augusta to turn a sod, particularly in January. When they arrived on the Governor Musgrave, whatever the reason, they were two hours late. Instead of tying up at the jetty, where all were assembled to greet them, they moored in the stream. While the local officials hurriedly rowed out with a copy of an "illuminated address", His Excellency and company were

rowed to the jetty and the official party-

proceeded pell mell to the Institute, and the Town Clerk would have been pitted by his worst enemy (if he had any)...flying up Commercial Road, hastily snatching up the address and reading it as well as he could with the insufficient breath left in him.²⁴

Some of these incidents were detailed soon after in the

Dispatch:

But the Governor (somewhat off hand),
As soon as he heard the brass band,
He walked off from the Jetty,
Though it looked very pretty...
But such hurry made councillors stare,
And some in their rage tore their hair,
While others were heard loud to swear,
And declare, that they ne'er
Were even introduced by the Mayor-

While there-

And such conduct could scarcely be fair.²⁵

Headed by the recently formed Port Augusta Brass Band, the dignitaries went in procession to the work site - "it is no joke to wade through Port Augusta sand" - where Governor Jervois was handed a spade of silver with an elaborate blackwood handle:

He then with the spade made a prod
In the land, which they called the first sod;
In the barrow he threw it
But very few knew it,
But a wink is as good as a nod-

To a "clod"-

And a mile is no worse than a rod*.²⁶

Without further ado, the official party went looking for lunch (they had to wait), ate it, made their speeches, boarded the Governor Musgrave and were on their way back to Adelaide by 4.30pm.

For practical purposes, this improper haste and rudeness was ignored, because the official speeches foretold of the sweet music that so many had long awaited - the tinkle of sovereigns in the cash register. Port Augusta had grown wonderfully in the last 20 years, said the Commissioner for Public Works, G C Hawker, but the past progress was very small when compared with what may be expected during the next 20 years. The Governor elaborated on this, with the prophecy:

Port Augusta [is] destined to be a much greater place than Port Pirie...Port Augusta is a harbour to which all pastoral, agricultural and mineral resources of the country to the north, north east and north west will converse. It will, ere long, be the port for the produce of a large portion of the Western part of New South Wales, and the south west portion of Queensland. It will be the southern terminus of a transcontinental railway which will probably ultimately be carried through the province of South Australia to Port Darwin.²⁷

Ebenezer Cooke, by then the junior MP for Flinders, offered the toast - "Railways and producing interests of South

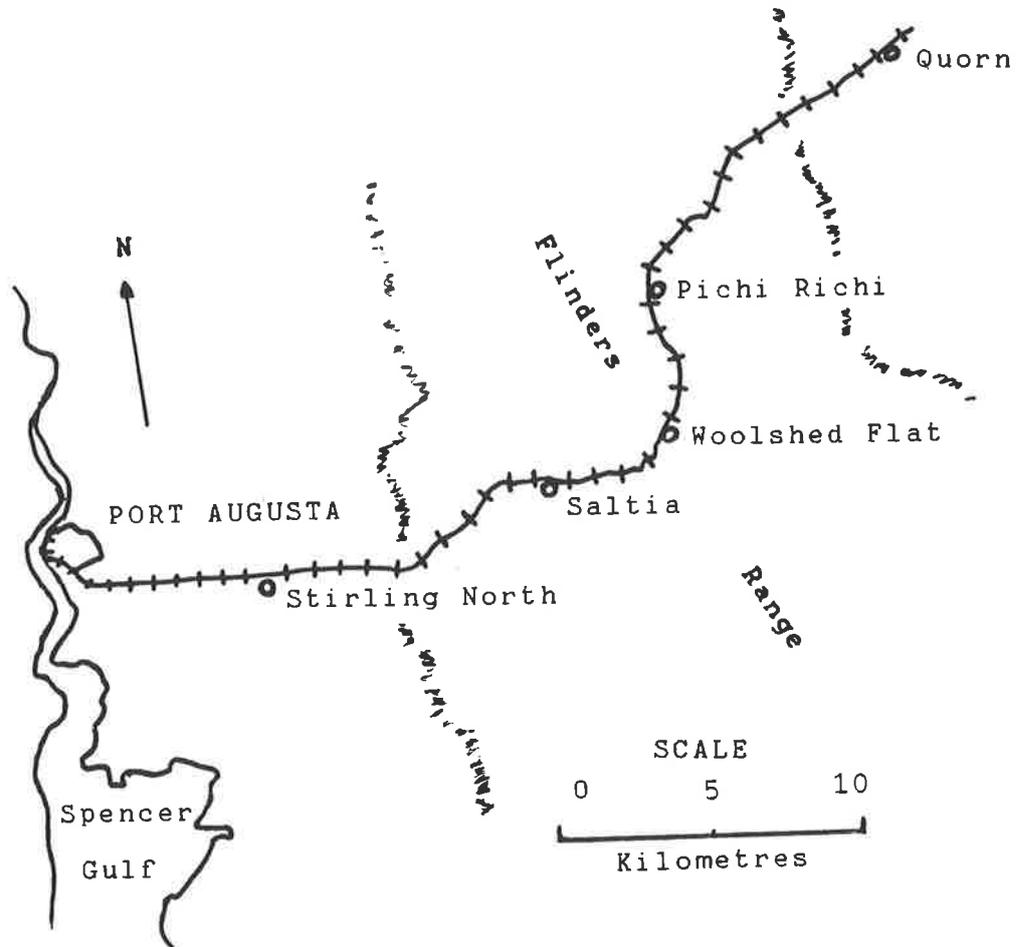
* A rod is 16¹/₂ feet or about 5 metres.

Australia" - a sentiment which, judging from his previous solid support for the railway, came straight from the heart.

The rail from the Port to Quorn was completed in July 1879. The next 70km, to Hawker, was opened for traffic in June the following year. An Overland Telegraph Line station, Beltana, was reached 12 months later and the terminus at Farina in May 1882.²⁸ For over three years the additional incomes and spending accompanying railway construction freed Port Augusta from the unpredictability of the inland's seasons.

As the construction gangs worked their way north, they brought a wave of life-giving prosperity to the nearby towns of Saltia, Woolshed Flat, Pichi Richi, Quorn and further inland. These developments were echoed in the Port, through which all inland goods passed.²⁹ Of particular relevance to the future demise of Port Augusta was that Quorn and not Port Augusta was the government's planned junction point for the two transcontinental lines, one of which would one day supposedly run north to Darwin and the other eventually west to Perth.³⁰ The disadvantages of this plan for the Port would become obvious in the following decade.

It was anticipated that the railway would bring all the inland's produce to the Port for shipment. So it was a great day in June 1879 when Cowan's flour mill at Quorn sent the first railed consignment, 300 bags of flour, to Port Augusta for shipment to Adelaide.³¹



The Great Northern Railway from Port Augusta to Quorn entered the Flinders Range east of Stirling North, from where it climbed and wound its way through Pichi Richi Pass to Quorn.

Immediately there was a problem with return traffic because of the steep incline, sharp bends, and light track on the climb from the Port into Pichi Richi Pass.³² Engines had to be coupled or loads reduced. By December 1881, the Locomotive Department of the South Australian Railway wanted the main workshops at Port Augusta removed to Quorn. The local engineer wrote:

The line through Pichi Richi Pass being of a particularly heavy character to work, it will be necessary to treat that portion... separate from other lines between Quorn and Government Gums or Terowie. There can be no doubt therefore that Quorn is the proper centre for workshops from which these three separate lines may be economically dealt with.³³

Port Augusta was to be the centre-piece and main beneficiary of the Great Northern Line, but from the engineering point of view it was best treated as a spur-line from Quorn.

Portends that the railway would somehow by-pass Port Augusta first appeared at the simultaneous opening of the lines at Quorn from Farina and Terowie on Wednesday 17 May 1882. This event took place at Quorn. No invitations to take part were issued to the Town Council of Port Augusta. During speeches at the opening of the line, Thomas Young took exception to the name which had been given to the railway and said:

it is not the Orroroo and Farina line, but the Port Augusta and Government Gums railway. [I ask the company] to drink to the contractors for the Port Augusta and Government Gums and Orroroo and Farina railways.³⁴

When the Quorn-Terowie connection was made, it was noticed in Port Augusta that some trade which had previously been shipped from the Port, began to go by rail to Adelaide via Quorn.³⁵ This was partly accounted for by the development in Adelaide of markets for exports which had previously only existed in London. For example, there was an increasing tendency to auction wool in Adelaide (and some other Australian cities), instead of London.³⁶ This was not something caused by the development of railways, but was the result of other factors. The advent of rail may have speeded the process. Port Augusta had a long-established pattern of exporting wool direct to Britain. Adelaide wool sales probably disadvantaged the Port because wool that might have been taken to its jetties for transit to London auction rooms, was railed direct to Adelaide from points north.³⁷

It did not take long before the South Australian Railway decided to rail certain goods to Terowie, Quorn and north, in preference to shipping them to the Port and then railing them north. In July 1882, the Chief Engineer at Quorn wrote:

Re delays, I would suggest that all small stores be sent by rail, and not by ketch or steamer [which] may be a fortnight on the way, and several days may be lost unloading. [For example] lead asked for 24/6/82, sent 7/7/82 [and dispatched from Port Augusta] up the line 22/7/82... Small goods by the steamers may be delayed several days at... Tassie & Co's stores before reaching the

line.³⁸

The railway's greatest problem was in consigning goods from their stores to their colleagues at Port Augusta, via carters, Port Adelaide shipping agents, ship's captains, and the Port Augusta shipping agent. Keeping track of the paper work was a formidable task:

If something is not done, the whole department will soon be in inextricable confusion... stores go to the wrong stations... the obtaining of receipts is impossible. Goods advised from Adelaide to arrive on certain vessels arrive in others, and when the local storekeeper consigns up the line his notes are different from those received from Adelaide, and checking is most difficult. There seems to be no exact knowledge in Adelaide as to what the local storekeeper is doing... The confusion is most bewildering. The delays in receiving stores are subversive of all attempts at cheap management...³⁹

Although there were attempts to overcome these problems, one wonders how successful they were. If the railways could not manage to supply their own requirements via the Port's jetties and wharf, it is likely there were similar problems with privately consigned freights. Railway confusion seems to have arisen when co-operation with others was necessary. This could have encouraged private businesses to consign goods for the north exclusively to the railways, to avoid confusion. If this was so, the railways would further have taken inland business away from the Port.

Despite all predictions, despite the common logic that produce would normally be shipped from the closest port,

despite the "natural" protection of their hinterland by the break of gauge at Terowie, and despite the railway's bungling and confusion, Adelaide effectively started to compete with Port Augusta for the inland trade. The railway, instead of providing a competitive service, provided a disservice to the Port.⁴⁰ In an unpublished article, Tony Denholm said that this was similar to the fate that befell many South Australian towns:

The arrival of the railway in a town was a mixed blessing. Most town people were happy to have a railway, anticipating greater business. However in breaking down the tyranny of distance which had brought these communities to life, the railway, which at first breathed life into the towns, ultimately sucked life out of many as their market and exchange functions declined [in favour of] Adelaide.⁴¹

The railway changed the economics of inland transport. Goods that had previously taken 10-12 days to reach Farina by dray took only 24 hours by rail.⁴² The six hour coach trip from the Port to Quorn was reduced to one hour forty three minutes, by rail.⁴³ Inland cartage rates had varied between five and a half pence and 50 pence per tonne kilometre, depending on the season.⁴⁴ The South Australian Railways not only charged less than a penny per tonne kilometre, but at that rate made £24 000 pa before taking into account wear and tear on line and rolling stock.⁴⁵

Initially, this may not have hit the bullock drivers very hard. Just prior to the coming of the rail, Thomas Young

commented on how difficult it was to get a wagon loaded and away to the north.⁴⁶ This was because many of the bullockies had been lured south by good profits to cart wheat. By the mid-'seventies, the Government was evolving a policy that no wheat growing area should be more than 24km from a railway line, and the rail should lead to a handy port.⁴⁷ This removed many longer hauls, forcing the bullockies to merely cart to the nearest rail siding. Although there was not the density of lines in Port Augusta's hinterland, even there, the Great Northern Line creamed off the bullockies' more lucrative routes. The drays were left with far northern tracks to the railhead at Hergott Springs,* and hauls to Quorn, Hawker, Parachilna, Beltana, Copley and Lindhurst. The Port saw the displacement of hundreds of drays guided by two or three men, by mere dozens of three-four man trains.

Livestock had previously been walked to the Adelaide sale-yards, or perhaps to one of the mid-north railheads. Some pastoralists, like J H Angus, had purchased chains of runs so that stock in the north could be walked in stages to saleyards.⁴⁸ The Great Northern Railway altered these patterns. Stock from Queensland, the Northern Territory, and northern South Australia could be walked to Farina, and railed to sale in Adelaide in about 36 hours.⁴⁹ The need for drovers would have been decreased. Undoubtedly the country near the railways was enhanced for grazing.

* Hergott Springs, previously called Government Gums, was changed to Marree under the enemy place names edict of the Great War. See Cockburn, 1984, op cit.

On balance, these changes to the inland transport system undermined Port Augusta's geographical domination of the region's transport network. The town's income would have been reduced, particularly that of the publicans and blacksmiths. The great business of importing fodder must have contracted. To some extent, these downturns would have been offset by the import of 3000t of railway coal each year, and items to replace worn railway material.⁵⁰ Indeed the long-term disadvantages would have been temporarily hidden amidst the rail and wheat activity of the boom.

The railway made the hinterland more accessible to Port Augusta businesses. Judging from the records of Bignell & Young, the railway was used immediately and heavily. Gooch & Hayward soon commenced branches at Gordon, Wilson Hawker and Farina.⁵¹ A D Tassie & Co had a branch at Hawker, and Port Augusta businesses were represented elsewhere along the new railway line.⁵² Closer social links also developed between the Port and towns along the railway. For example, in 1884 Port Augusta played football against Quorn for the first time. Quorn won.⁵³ There was travel on the railways to and from gala days, such as race meetings, both to Port Augusta and inland. Regardless of this, overall, Port Augusta people probably made only very occasional use of the railway to take excursions inland. Passenger traffic to Port Augusta was probably more frequent, but not common. For example, most Quorn people only visited the Port once or twice a year by rail, if at all, until 1960-70, when private

motor vehicles became more common, and the roads were kept in better repair.

When the rail from Port Augusta to Adelaide via Quorn was completed, trips to the capital probably increased. The rail reduced the trip from around 24 hours by sea, to 13¹/₂ hours. Passengers disembarked in the city proper at North Terrace, instead of the out-of-the-way Port Adelaide wharves. Trains left the Port each day bound for the capital, except on Sundays. The journey included two changes of carriages: one at Petersburg and another at Terowie.⁵⁴

Wheat growing generated more employment and income for each paddock used than wool ever could. The prospect of wheat being grown in the Port's hinterland was greeted with tremendous anticipation, because it promised a much denser population than pastoralism. Wheat farmers used mechanised methods of production with large amounts of horsepower, and this could lead to the development of local service and manufacturing industries. If an entire region could be given over to wheat growing, it would cause a big lift in wealth and industry. Wheat farming was seen as a democratic influence, cutting back some of the 240 men who held 40% of the land to feed their sheep, and in their place promoting the interests of the 20 000-30 000 wheat farmers. The whole idea had tremendous and general appeal.⁵⁵

The Great Northern Railway was intended to solve the

transport problems of a drought-prone pastoral region. To the south, however, the need for railways was linked to wheat growing. The marriage at Port Augusta, of a long railway line feeding deep into the pastoral north, with the spread of wheat farming served by the same line to the Port, created a wildly optimistic and excited response. The route of the line was altered to serve the anticipated wheat fields of the Willochra Plain. The laying down of the expensive support fixture of a railway seemed to seal the future of the Port with a guarantee of prosperity.

By the late 'sixties, the spread of wheat farming northward had petered out at Clare. Wheat farming required much money, including the full cash price to pay for the land. In 1869, a new scheme was introduced for the sale of potential wheat lands by the Crown. It allowed 10% deposit with credit for repayments over 6 years.⁵⁶ This was designed to promote wheat growing and it was instantly successful. Wool lands, most of which were leased from the Crown, were resumed, sub-divided into wheat fields, and auctioned. Area after area in the North (and elsewhere) was resumed and sold into wheat farming.

Wheat farming and agriculture were regulated to promote "the small man". The pastoralists, many of whom were big capitalists, would not and could not convert to agriculture. Several sought new pastures. Sir Thomas Elder equipped the 1872-6 northern exploratory party of Ernest Giles to investigate Central Australia. Robert Barr Smith, Cudmore,

and others, increased their pastoral holdings interstate.⁵⁷ The net result for Port Augusta was that between 1878 and 1880 wool exports declined from 28 000 bales to 20 000, reflecting the destruction of sheep pastures by ploughmen, especially between Wirrabara and the Willochra Plain.⁵⁸

As the wheat frontier moved closer to Port Augusta, some of the South Australian planners and regulators warned against the dangers of unrestricted credit selection. Religion, education and the other benefits of closer settlement would be lost if scattering was allowed to occur. From Adelaide, they warned that scattered pioneering could produce "hardy men and women brought up to a practical and laborious life, but it is the development of muscle without a proportionate expanse of mind".⁵⁹ This was the prejudice which made Port Augusta and the pastoral frontier alien to the idealistic planners of Adelaide and their disciples in the settled agricultural districts. As Donald Horne argued in Money Made Us, part of the enthusiasm held for wheat in far away places such as Port Augusta, was that it would bring British civilisation as well as prosperity and displace the rough, boozy, hail-fellow-well-met attitude and uncouth money grubbing of the Australian frontier.

In 1874, credit selection of land for wheat fields north of the Goyder Line was permitted. The Farmers' Weekly Messenger (newspaper)⁶⁰ predicted:

...before long Port Augusta will be busy with the shipment of wheat grown even north of its own latitude.

However, informed local opinion at this time was pessimistic. In evidence to the 1875 Commission on Railway Construction, Hiram Mildred claimed the distinction of being the first to plough the local landscape, between Stirling North and Saltia. The wheat "came up and died for lack of moisture". C H Gooch predicted that farmers would go onto the Willochra Plain, "but if they had a bad season or two they will be ruined". These opinions were in no way novel. The Drought Commission of 1865 had declared the area north of what became known as the Goyder Line, "unfit for the growth of cereals".⁶¹

As the wheat farmers advanced further northward, the seasons seemed to improve, and the pessimists were muted. A long dormant idea came into vogue, the "the rain follows the plough". It was given further publicity and credibility by the Minister for Agriculture. Many people believed the wheat farmers were causing a change of season.⁶² The editor of the Dispatch embellished these beliefs:

the greater part of the lands of the colony were [unfit for occupation] until the soil was consolidated and manured by the squatters' sheep and cattle. By this means the now fertile plains of the Northern Areas have been recovered from the unprofitable wastes, and from the same causes the same results will flow, until...the sheepfarmer will again quit the large areas which he is now preparing for the plough, and agriculture will spread further north than many of us in the present generation are able to realise...our legislators should adopt a really progressive policy...by the planting of forests through

WOOL and BREADSTUFFS EXPORTED FROM PORT AUGUSTA 1878-83⁶⁴

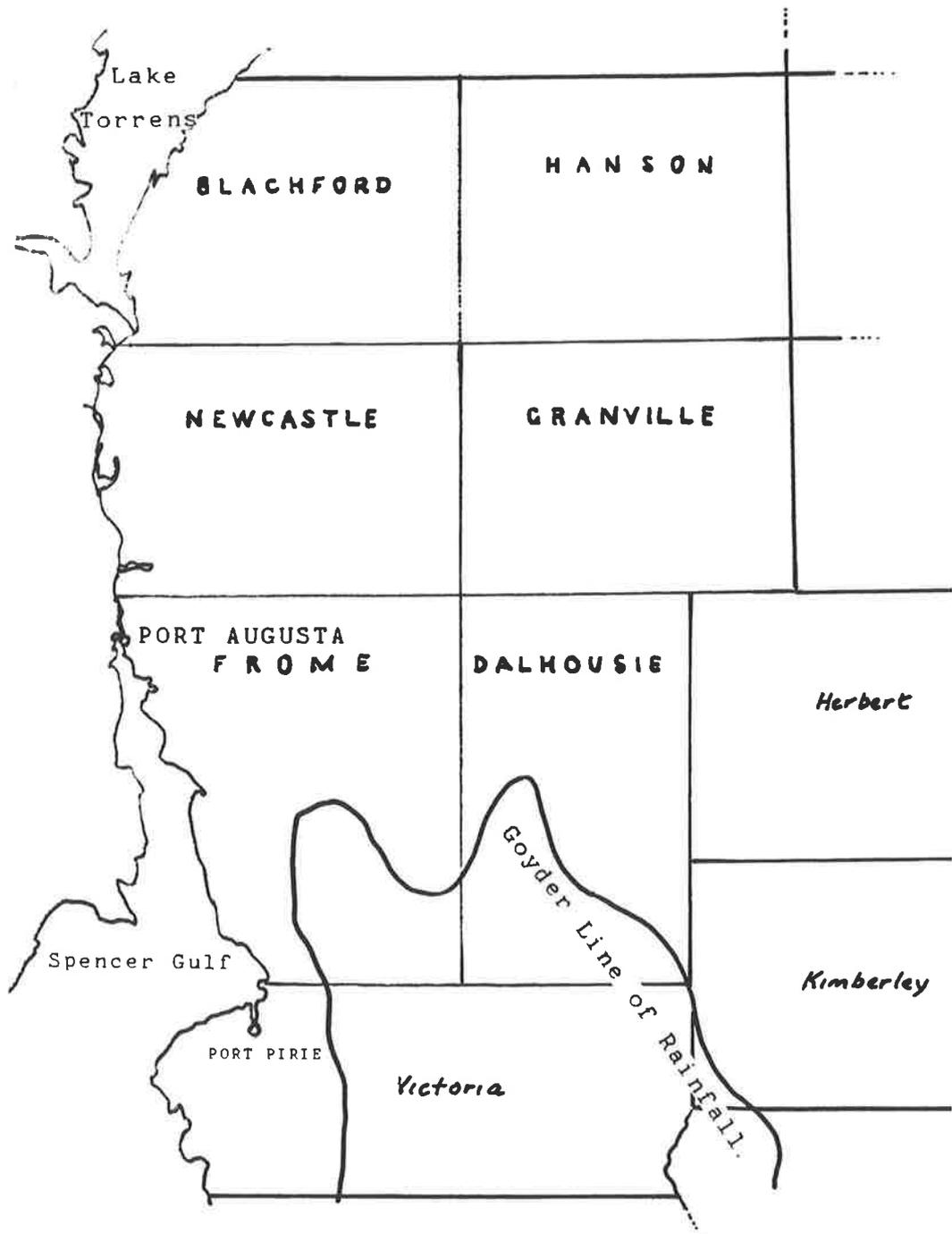
	<u>1878</u>	<u>1879</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>1883</u>
Bushels of Wheat	45 000	114 000	546 000	100 000
Tonnes of Flour	108	450	5 000	not available
Bales of Wool	28 000	not available	20 000	16 082

the country to ameliorate the condition of the climate [and] the present waste and arid lands of the North... may become fruitful fields, and our population be spread over the vast extent of the lands of the interior.⁶³

The editor hoped the Port would become another London or Chicago, dominating an immense and prosperous hinterland, drained by the Great Northern Railway.

In 1876, 100 000ha were selected on the Willochra Plain. The season was poor but that of 1877-8 was better. During 1877, agricultural lands in the North Flinders Range were opened for selection by farmers. Soon the wheat frontier reached to between Lakes Torrens and Frome.⁶⁵ Wheat poured into Port Augusta in amazing quantities. Local firms offered cash advances and the loan of wheat bags to farmers, against next season's crop.⁶⁶ In 1878, a waterfront site was selected for John Dunn & Co's iron and stone fire-proof flour mill, the largest in the colony. Its 25m high chimney became a landmark.⁶⁷ (The mill was gutted by fire in 1926. A beach kiosk was located on the site, until demolished in 1986.) In 1879, several hectares of wheat was grown in Port Augusta's parklands. A little later Thomas Gunther, E Beer and Thomas Young grew wheat on suburban allotments on the West Side, half a kilometre from town. Thomas Young also planted wheat a little north of the Stirling North cemetery.⁶⁸

The season of 1878 was terrific. While Port Augusta registered rainfall of 220mm (9"), the newly planted area



The counties near Port Augusta where attempts were made to grow wheat. Nowadays most agricultural land north of the Goyder Line is considered marginal and subject to intermittent crop failure.

from Wilmington (then called Beautiful Valley) across the Willochra Plain received 265mm(10¹/₂"), and further north in the Flinders received 330mm (13"). Ominiously, the more established areas just to the south received much less - 165-210mm (6¹/₂-8¹/₂"). The following year, in the new wheat growing areas of Port Augusta's hinterland, rainfall was down 40%, and in 1880, down 80% on 1878.⁶⁹

The setback of 1879 became disaster in 1880. In 1882, a wheat grower's epitaph was given by Friedrich Duttler, farming 23km south of the Port, on the Gulf at Winninowie:

That farming in the North is not a profitable undertaking at present cannot be disputed. Goyder's ghost seems to hover about if we are to judge by the result of the last two seasons...the sooner the Government stop selling land outside Goyder's rainfall line the better. I have seen five seasons north of it, and every year, about August, the wheat was in a dying condition...I was told it would be so before I selected; but like so many others, I thought that rain follows the plough, and I paid dear for my folly.⁷⁰

In those crucial years, 15 bushels per hectare was enough to break even.⁷¹ In the counties nearest the Port and a little to the south, profit was uncertain, and within those counties, farmers in the south sections generally fared better than in the north.

While the wheat farmers were expanding into its hinterland, the Port benefitted, being the key point for import of materials and export of the ever increasing harvest.

PRODUCTION FROM PORT AUGUSTA'S MARGINAL WHEAT HINTERLAND
TO THE SOUTH EAST, 1871-82 (COUNTIES FROME and DALHOUSIE)⁷²

Year	hectares	produce (bushels)	average yield/ hectare
1871/2	80	2 848	35.35
1872/3	80	3 826	46.28
1873/4	2 850	55 311	19.45
1874/5	8 900	254 934	28.68
1875/6	21 200	782 249	34.53
1876/7	39 000	439 730	11.28
1877/8	52 700	1 434 445	27.20
1878/9	86 000	1 728 461	20.10
1879/80	122 250	2 948 013	24.10
1880/1	160 000	1 863 398	11.65
1881/2	166 200	1 336 964	8.05

PRODUCTION FROM PORT AUGUSTA'S MARGINAL WHEAT HINTERLAND TO
THE NORTH EAST, 1878-82 (COUNTIES NEWCASTLE, GRANVILLE,
BLACHFORD, HANSON)⁷³

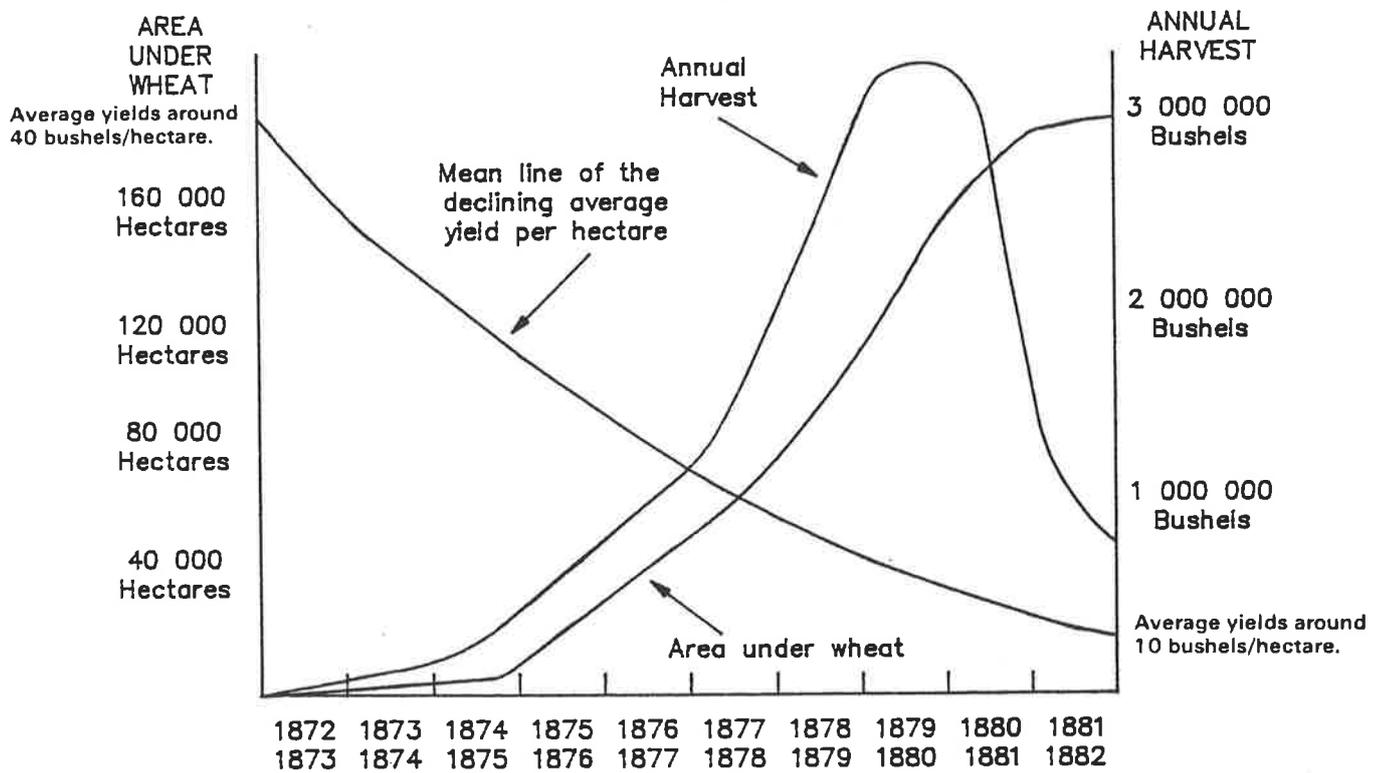
Year	hectares	produce (bushels)	average yield/ hectare
1878/9	5 000	140 839	28.05
1879/80	22 000	325 183	14.73
1880/81	51 600	163 495	3.20
1881/82	61 100	365 550	5.98

Initially, when the soil had never been cropped before, small plantings in well selected places gave good yields. Plantings increased in the expectation of rain, and rain was as vital as it was unreliable. The yields kept falling because there was not enough rain, but, because of increased plantings, there was an increasing harvest. It was a recipe for a disastrous crash. The graph, Declining Average Yields Annual Harvest and Increasing Area under Wheat near Port Augusta 1871-82, demonstrates the predicament. It is based on analysis of harvests in Frome and Dalhousie, the two counties near the Port with the longest history of wheat growing. Both included fair wheat growing country.

Although yields were up and down more than the mean line of average yield suggests, the peak yields of good years were less than the previous best peaks, while great declines in yields were experienced in poor years. The graph shows that the greatest planting and harvests took place between 1878/9 and 1881/2. Yet from 1878/9 average yield for the two counties was so low that, in general, wheat growing could only be unprofitable. In general, after 1878/9 the larger the plantings, the more business flowed through Port Augusta, and the more money the farmers (and those who gave them credit) lost.

In 1883, after three years of drought, Port Augusta's entire hinterland yielded, on average, 3.75 bushels per hectare. It became increasingly common for farmers to surrender or

COLLAPSE OF THE WHEAT FRONTIER DECLINING AVERAGE YIELD, ANNUAL HARVEST AND INCREASING AREA UNDER WHEAT NEAR PORT AUGUSTA, 1871-1882



forfeit their credit lands back to the Crown.⁷⁵ By this time the idea of "marginal lands" was beginning to gain recognition. The margin was thought to be around Goyder's 1865 Drought Line.

The 1884 wheat season was good, but the aridity and the unreliable annual rainfall had by then been highlighted as an unalterable problem. In an article drawing farmers' attention to alternative crops such as olives, mulberrys, dates and wattle, the Dispatch warned against ever again trusting in wheat:

the unusually good harvest which is now being reaped may...revive glowing anticipations [and] it is possible that the severe lessons of the past may be forgotten...It may now be regarded as an established fact that wheat cultivation by itself...is not a remunerative pursuit in the dry areas of the north.⁷⁶

Port Augusta never should have had a boom with wheat. The hinterlands upon which it was based were known to be prone to summer droughts, and to be generally arid. The settlers had great expectations, born of over confidence, optimism and ignorance, that the inland would yield a rich return. With agriculture as with grazing, the development of the inland was inescapably limited by its aridity. Wheat was additionally limited by the cost of transport to the nearest port.

The combination of this railway with local wheat growing did not produce the desired result. The main argument for the

railway had been the need to overcome barriers to transport thrown up by recurring drought. The railway had almost no place in the equation "no rain equals no wheat". Due to the ignorance of the newcomers, the inland had been overvalued and with it, Port Augusta. With the droughts of 1881-3, the colony began a long period of agricultural stagnation. This put a stop to Port Augusta's boom and reversed its history from one of optimism and expansion to pessimism and contraction.⁷⁷

The level of shipping was sensitive to activity in the inland and the Port. The Port, draped around the Gulf, was naturally focused on shipping.

Several categories of shipping visited Port Augusta. Before discussing the level of shipping, issues related to the quantity and quality of these categories should be clarified.

The large, international wool ships attracted the most attention.⁷⁸ Each wool season, between October and January, they came, usually in ballast, and took the clip away.⁷⁹ In the 1860's, they varied in size but averaged around 450t, with a crew of 18-24. By the next decade and in the 'eighties, they were often twice that size, crewed by 20-30, although they ranged in size from 244-1450t. Most of the wool ships were registered in London, and they left Port Augusta bound for London.⁸⁰

Another category often fondly remembered were the ships of the South Australian coast - "coasters". They were the regular provision and mail ships.⁸¹ They shuttled between Port Augusta, Port Adelaide and other South Australian ports, carrying passengers and an array of goods: perishables, such as fruit and vegetables and items such as fuel, lubricants, furniture, newspapers, machine parts. Bignell & Young constantly referred to them, an indication of their essential role in the life of the Port and the inland. They included Investigator 584t, Ferrett 347t, Emu (?130t), Lubra 223t, Royal Shepherd (?300t), Flinders 278t, Kangaroo (?300t). Most were owned by the Spencer Gulf Steamship Co which was taken over by the Adelaide Steamship Co in 1882.⁸² The records of Bignell & Young indicate that when the inland was busy there were as many as three vessels on the line per week. When the trade declined, some of the newcomers might be moved to another colony or country, although while they were on the trade they were considered South Australian coastal vessels.⁸³

A third category of ships were sea-borne wanderers or tramps. They went from port to port and sometimes country to country, seeking cargo. The Customs often showed them as intercolonial or international ships. Sometimes they had no pre-ordained plans. Othertimes they were en route to somewhere, seeking and delivering cargo as they went. Some were periodically consigned to Port Augusta with cargo. In the early 'sixties, they were usually small, 50-100t and

with a crew of 6-12. A decade later they were more often 100-200t, and in the 1880s they were often 200-300t, although some were as large as 900t.

The final category of vessels to visit the Port were small ships of 10-350t. They came in their dozens or even hundreds, a "mosquito fleet" of schooners, barks, luggers, cutters, smacks, sloops, and ketches. Like sea birds they came and went, often unnoticed and unrecorded, carrying what they could get, dribs and drabs of cargo. Sometimes they assumed the role of special courier, one of their number always handy to leave Port Adelaide immediately, and speed goods on their way.⁸⁴

While the categories of shipping can be identified, the precise extent of shipping to Port Augusta is more difficult to arrive at, because the shipping record kept by the Customs Department was incomplete and unsystematic. Nevertheless, recorded visits by international and intercolonial shipping seems to be fairly complete.⁸⁵ Until 1908, there was no straightforward guide to the number of visits by "coasters" or members of the "mosquito fleet". However, from a variety of sources the regularity of their business in the Port can be pieced together.⁸⁶

From 1853-4 when the Port was first settled, it was supplied from Adelaide by coasters and small ships. The service was probably unreliable, prompting the Government to subsidize the Marion, 124t, to visit twice per month, ensuring regular

shipping and postal communication.⁸⁷ This was at a time of heightening interest in the inland, with the expectation that Augusta would become the northern frontier's port.

Prior to the Great Drought of 1864-6, there were two steamers on the run each week, and occasional sailing vessels.⁸⁸ By these estimations coastal shipping doubled or tripled between 1857 and 1863. This was due to the stocking of runs in the Flinders Range, importation of materials to improve leases and dwellings, and probably bringing in mining equipment.

According to Rodney Cockburn's Pastoral Pioneers,⁸⁹ during the Great Drought "there was not quite enough business for one steamer a fortnight". This was probably the situation during the worst period of the three year drought, when all pastoral and mining activity halted. During 1865, only one international vessel loaded wool. The remainder of the wool appears to have been taken on by the regular coaster and the Tasmanian registered Cosmopolite, 145t and Ventine, 117t, and perhaps Pilot, 83t, from Port Frederic, West Australia. They would have taken their cargoes to Adelaide for transshipment to London. There is only a sketchy indication of coastal shipping activity from the end of the Drought until 1871. There does not seem to have been a great post-drought resurgence of activity. There was no inland transport available to immediately take imports in or get exports out, and recovery was slow. Confidence in the inland had been badly shaken and there was a hiatus, until

excitement about construction of the Overland Telegraph Line and expansion of wheat growing seemed to signal a general economic upturn in the colony, which also lifted Port Augusta and the north.

There would have been a solid lift in shipping activity caused by OLT construction during 1872-4. However, apart from greatly increased imports referred to previously, no concise details of greater coastal or small shipping has been found. For the pastoralists, there were a couple of good seasons between 1872 and 1878.

Great Northern Railway construction activity signaled a phenomenal jump in annual international and intercolonial shipping. It rose from the usual 9-11 vessels of 1872-7, to 50 and 55 in 1877 and 1878 respectively, and double that in 1880. In 1880, Port Augusta's share of the colony's international and intercolonial shipping probably peaked at around 10.5%. From 1881 there were deepening operations carried on in the harbour stream so that larger vessels could more easily get in, although Augusta was probably the easiest and safest South Australian port to enter, even before it was dredged.⁹⁰

There was a tendency for ships to deliver a cargo to the Port and depart in ballast, except in the "wool season" when the tendency was to arrive in ballast and depart with wool. This was a common phenomenon in the Australian shipping industry and it increased general freight costs.⁹¹ The

shipping boom which peaked in 1878-80, appears to have temporarily changed this pattern, as some ships were able to arrive with a railway cargo, and depart with wool or wheat. For example, the first overseas vessel to load wheat for London, Glaramara, 678t, came to Port Augusta to deliver rails. Still, eight of the twelve vessels that came with railway cargoes departed in ballast. Nevertheless, from this time the shipping pattern turned somewhat, if only temporarily, and 41 of the 59 international and intercolonial vessels which left the Port in 1880 took away "breadstuffs" (wheat and/or flour). It is not clear whether they arrived in ballast or with cargo. Fifteen still left in ballast. In 1884, the inland's wheat production was peculiarly good, and at least five ships were sent to the Port empty to load with breadstuffs. This pattern continued until the turn of the century, although ever declining.

The railway had a long-term positive effect on shipping in the Port, if not much else. Locomotives required a steady supply of coal from Newcastle, New South Wales. Heavy timber from Australia's eastern and western forests was regularly imported for sleepers, banking and bridging. With exports of wheat added to those of wool, this regularly led to shipping levels which, prior to 1877, had only been achieved in good years, which is not to say very much. The scruffy coalers, with names like Wodonga 281t, Vindex 190t, Zohrab 449t, Colac 958t, Karaweera 1021t, Barrier 1290t, and Craiglee 1233t, only called once a month or so. The larger they were, the less often they were required to call, the

less regularly was wharf labour required and the more the Port's shipping sank into the doldrums.

In 1892, there was a jump in shipping, probably accounted for by activity to do with the extension of the Great Northern Railway to Oodnadatta. The increase only appeared to have occurred in international and intercolonial shipping, possibly bringing rolling stock and railway iron from Britain, and heavy timbers from West Australia, Queensland and Tasmania. The railways themselves may have hauled much of their other requirements from Adelaide, by-passing Port Augusta's wharves.⁹²

From about 1894-5 until 1902-3, the worst drought in Australia settlement history depressed inland activity, and caused stagnation in Port Augusta. Shipping activity was frozen at about 1860s levels. It picked up a little after that, but continued to decline at the pre-1894 rate.

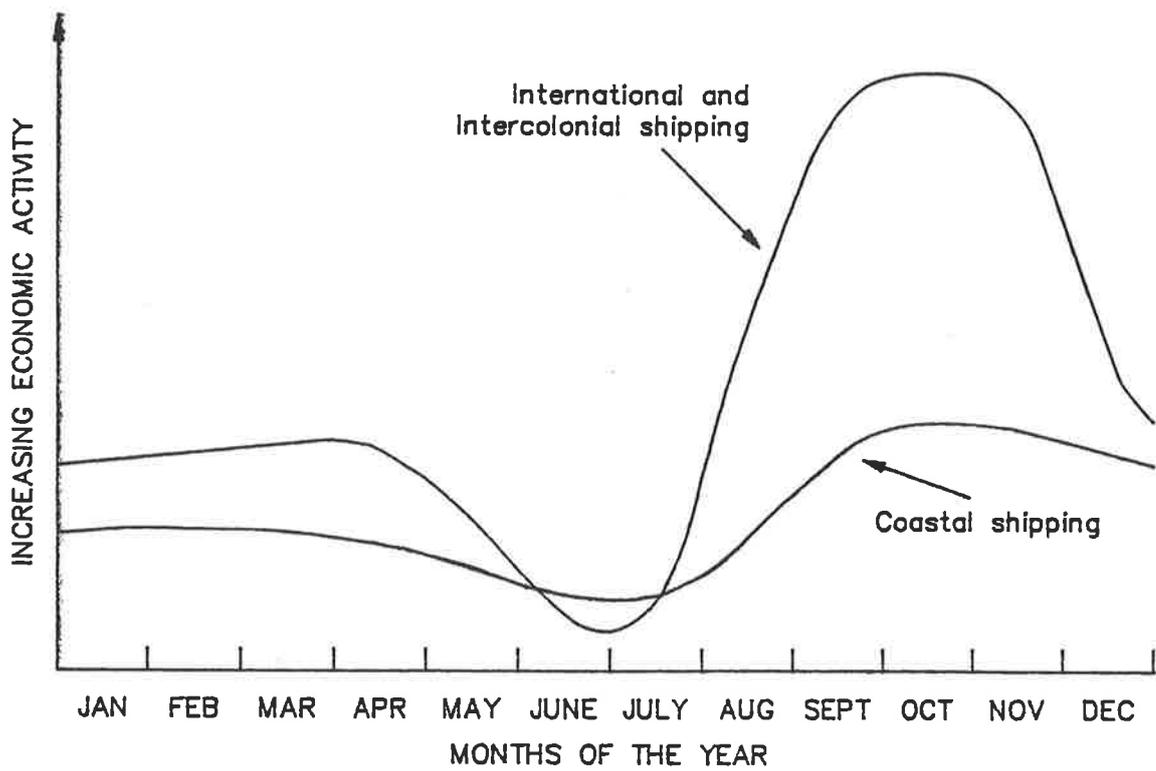
Since the Port's beginnings, ships moored in the stream or at the jetties for months on end, while others stayed for less extended periods, or flitted in and out. There was a seasonal pattern to this activity and it became the Port's pattern. For example, between 1 October and 30 December 1869, an unremarkable year, London-bound vessels with crew in excess of 110 were in Port, and across the entire year ships with perhaps another 200 crew called. Many would have had shore leave.⁹³ At this time, the Port's population was about 400.⁹⁴ In the same period in 1873, there would have

been ships loading with total crew of at least 150, and other ships crewed by 200-300 calling throughout the year. The local population was about 450.⁹⁵ Between 15 September and 30 December 1878, there were at least a dozen ships in Port for up to three months, with crew of at least 230. In addition, across the same year there was the regular shipping, although proportionately up because of railway activity. In the same periods in the two following years, the respective minimum totals of crew aboard ships on extended stays, was 258 and 360. During these last three years the Port's population was about 1400, 1600 and 1700.⁹⁶

This seasonal pattern of activity enliven commerce from October until Christmas. During this season in the average to good years, there would have been 60-200 sailors in or near the Port, as well as a great influx of bullock drivers, their offsidiers, and other "members of the legendary Australian nomad tribe of bush workers" (as Russel Ward called them) from the pastoral districts of the north, east and north west. The annual pilgrimage with the wool provided a chance for people to get down to the frontier's bustling port, purchase a year's supplies for the return trip, and probably do some Christmas shopping. It may have been an opportunity for youngsters to visit the Port, and pick up some seasonal work. Accommodation would have been full.

Port Augusta provided several real attractions for these visitors. By 1871, as the records of Bignell & Young

CYCLE OF TRADE AT PORT AUGUSTA
IN AN AVERAGE TO GOOD YEAR
BASED ON SHIPPING IN THE EARLY 1880 S



demonstrate, the stores of Port Augusta were stocked with an almost unimaginable variety of items, sometimes at less than Adelaide prices.⁹⁷ As Bignell & Young were the lesser of the three significant trading companies at the time, it is likely that the temptations to shoppers were even greater at the stores of their competitors. For example, Gooch & Hayward published an 36 page booklet listing all the goods they sold. It included six brands of bullock bells, 24 types of biscuits, as well as washing machines, medicines and wines.

Unlike many similar sized townships, there was close and sometimes ferocious competition between the larger companies, and this would further have benefited purchasers. The seasonal influx must have given the frontier Port a unique and engrossing flavour. Writing about such an effect, Max Weber observed that in contrast with its surrounding hinterland, the impersonality and complexity of many an urban locale impressed itself on the unaccustomed outsider as cosmopolitanism. Weber argued that this often excited visitors from the hinterland to think, feel and respond differently.⁹⁸ At these times accommodation would have been full, there would have been people camped in backyards and in nearby sandhills, the pubs would have been overflowing, there would have been drays, wagons and carts in hazardous numbers.

Sailors bullockies, other visitors from the inland and townspeople went about their business - talking, looking, buying - to a backdrop of ships in the harbour, the Flinders

Range in the near distance, and the Port surrounded by the vivid brown and arid red landscape. This novel atmosphere may well have been an enduring and very Australian, as opposed to South Australian, feature from the Port's earliest days.⁹⁹ For although the pastoral frontier moved further out and the wheat frontier spectacularly advanced and disastrously retreated, Augusta remained the frontier's Port.

Port Augusta could not have become a growing and then booming town, but for its geographical domination of the inland. The activities which caused the boom did not take place in Port Augusta, but in the inland, and the Port was positioned to benefit greatly. After 1884, a long and relentless decline in wheat growing set in, north and east of the Port. This more or less coincided with the end of the local boom in railway construction. Once built, the railway robbed the Port, to favour Quorn, Terowie and Adelaide instead. These factors fell heavy upon the Port.

After the long burst of optimism, which had really recommenced with the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line, there was a sort of tiredness, ever tinged with hope. As the tide of rail and wheat swept across the hinterland, the Port's fortunes rose. When the tide went out, its fortunes fell. And as each year passed, there was less hope.

NOTES

- 1 Railway Route to Mt Remarkable, 1860, no 38, SAPP;
13.9.1912, p3d, PAD.
- 2 Babbage & Barrington, op cit, p7. For correspondence concerning Wallace's dispute with the Government over the cost of a survey, see Offers to Construct Port Augusta Railway 1869-70, no 104, SAPP.
- 3 Report of the Select Committees of the House of Assembly on Railway Extension, 1866-7, no 161; and four years later, the committee suggestion contained in Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 1870-1, no 52.
- 4 Babbage & Barrington, op cit, pp7-8.
- 5 Trollope, op cit, p238.
- 6 Babbage & Barrington, op cit, p7.
- 7 19.1.1878, p6, PAD.
- 8 15.12.1874, p6, SAGCR.
- 9 Hirst, op cit, discusses the essential interests of the pastoralists and stock salesmen in having this line built. See pp126-7.
- 10 Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, op cit, (Appendix).
- 11 12.1.1875, p2, SAGCR.
- 12 B&Y to Manager, National Bank, Adelaide, 16.5.1874 (7/50).
- 13 Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, op cit.
- 14 Report of the Select Committee on Railway Construction, 1873, no 141. For a description of the importance of sea transport on costs of production, see Blainey, 1971, op cit, Chapter 6.
- 15 Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, op cit.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 For discussion of this see Bowes, op cit, pp21-5.
- 18 Meinig, op cit, pp153-165. It was an Australian phenomenon that railways radiated inland from the nearest port: see Blainey G, 1971, The Tyranny of Distance, Sun Books, Melbourne, p247.

- 19 Hirst, op cit, pp99-102.
- 20 19.1.1878, p6, PAD.
- 21 Port Augusta Shipping Register, Customs Department 1859-1916: GRG51/67-8, PRO.
- 22 18.8.1877, p1b, PAD.
- 23 Descriptions of the preparations for and the ceremonies surrounding the "Turning of the Sod" are contained in 5.1.1878, p3c, 12.1.1878, p3a, 13.9.1912, p3a, 19.1.1878, p3b and 13.9.1912, p3a PAD.
- 24 19.1.1878, p5, PAD.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 17.11.1932, p43b, Adelaide Chronicle.
- 28 A: 244; Quorn Book Centenary Committee, 1978, Quorn and District Centenary 1878-1978, Lynton Publications, Adelaide, p64.
- 29 For details about the wave of prosperity that railway construction brought to these inland towns and further north see A: 109-10, 204-8 and Quorn Book Centenary Committee, op cit, p127.
- 30 Quorn Book Centenary Committee, op cit, pp79-100.
- 31 20.6.1879, p6b, PAD.
- 32 Personal communication with Des Allen, AN Train Inspector, Port Augusta, 28.3.1987.
- 33 Letter from Locomotive Engineer to Commissioner of Public Works, 5.1.1882, no 518: GRG42/5/1881, PRO.
- 34 13.9.1912, p3d, PAD.
- 35 Public Works Report for 1882-3, 1883-4, no 29, SAPP; see also Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, op cit, p23; Buxton, G L, 1966, South Australian Land Acts, 1869-1885m LBSA, Adelaide, p63; A: 268-3a.
- 36 Barnard, A, 1958, The Australian Wool Market, 1840-1900, MUP, Melbourne, pp86-120; Hirst, op cit, p26.
- 37 13.9.1912, p6c, PAD.
- 38 Progress Report on Railway Management (Appendix), 1883-4, no 27, SAPP.
- 39 Ibid.

- 40 This seems to run counter to what Blainey (1971) says in Tyranny of Distance, especially p247.
- 41 Denholm A, 1988 Thinking About South Australian Towns, unpublished paper, History Department, Adelaide University, p13.
- 42 12.1.1878, p4b, PAD.
- 43 14.2.1879, p2a, 10.6.1879, p2a, PAD
- 44 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p169.
- 45 Report of the Transcontinental Railway Commission, op cit.
- 46 B&Y to Reed, Laura, 24.10.1876(7/269).
- 47 Meinig, op cit, p53.
- 48 Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:11a.
- 49 Report of the Transcontinental Railway Commission, op cit.
- 50 Progress Report on Railway Management, op cit.
- 51 19.10.1883, p2d, PAD.
- 52 Mincham, 1980, op cit, p44.
- 53 25.8.1884, p8e, PAD.
- 54 Information about journeys to Port Augusta was provided by Roy Deakin, Quorn, 16.3.1986; see also Quorn Book Centenary Committee, op cit, p222. For details of rail trip to Adelaide see Meinig, op cit, p161.
- 55 1877, p636, SAPD; Minutes of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1871, no 7.
- 56 Meinig, op cit, p35.
- 57 1877, p1270, SAPD; see also Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:26-7, 1:169, 2:122-3.
- 58 Buxton, op cit, p63.
- 59 Pike, D, 1970, The Quiet Continent, CUP, Cambridge, UK, p73 on Wakefield's support for population concentration. See also Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 1870-1, no 23.
- 60 17.4.874, p3a.
- 61 See Cockburn, 1925, op cit, for details of John Ragless' unsuccessful wheat growing on the Willochra Plain in the 1860's and before.

- 62 31.12.1875, p3d, The Farmers' Weekly Messenger.
- 63 12.1.1878, p4, PAD.
- 64 Buxton, *ibid*, and the 1883 wheat figure came from 13.1.1882, p3b, PAD.
- 65 3.11.1878, p6, 20.4.1878, p3, PAD.
- 66 A: 10-4b.
- 67 20.2.1880, p7, PAD; Statistical Register, Part III - no 40, 1885, SAPP; 4.10.1929, p1c, Trans.
- 68 19.8.1882, p6, 18.10.1882, p7, PAD.
- 69 Meinig, *op cit*, pp66-73, 78-81; Bowes, *op cit*, pp8-10; Mincham, 1980, *op cit*, pp58-61.
- 70 1882, p1063, SAPP.
- 71 Meinig *op cit*, p90.
- 72 Constructed from Maps of the Wheat Growing Areas with Statistics, 1883-4, no 76 SAPP.
- 73 *Ibid*.
- 74 *Ibid*.
- 75 Williams, M, 1974, The Making of the South Australian Landscape, Academic Press, London, p47; Surrendered Selections under Crown Lands Amendment Act 1882, 1883-4, no 83, SAPP.
- 76 15.12.1884, p2, PAD.
- 77 Williams, M, 1874, *op cit*, p49.
- 78 Unless otherwise indicated, shipping details were extracted from the Port Augusta Shipping Register, *op cit*. For an example of the attention attracted by the international wool ships see 17.11.1932, p43a, Adelaide Chronicle.
- 79 Large ships may have called to take away ore or smelted metal. A A S McLellan refers to 80 000t of ore carried to the Port from the inland between 1858-63. This is equivalent to 100-300 drayloads each week. This would have had a terrific impact and there is no evidence of such activity: see A: 64-1. See also the Report of the Commission on Railway Construction, *op cit*, which refers to occasional ore shipments of a mere 500t pa; also 13.9.1912, pp5&6, PAD; also statistics for the production of principal SA mines given in Copper in South Australia, 1986, Department of Mines and Energy, Adelaide, p15.

- 80 A few others were registered in Liverpool, Aberdeen, Glasgow and one at Bariff, Scotland. In 1860, one vessel with registration indicated as Bremen, Lower Saxony, called at Port Augusta, possibly the Briliefield, 407t. In 1869, Vasa, 501t, registered in Grimstadt, Norway also called, and from time to time the Shipping Register records occasional visits by foreign vessels. The numbers recorded were never very great. For example in 1880, when 57 vessels were recorded by Customs, only 10 were indicated as having foreign non-British registration.
- 81 A: 59, 121, 134, 227, 236; see also 13.9.1912, p5, PAD and 17.11.1932 p43, Adelaide Chronicle,
- 82 A: 105, 134.
- 83 A: 172, 235.
- 84 Bach J, 1982, A Maritime History of Australia, Pan Books, Sydney, pp246-7; Blainey, 1971, op cit, pp274-5; Theile, R, (?1979), Ketch Hand, Adelaide.
- 85 This conclusion was made after comparing Customs records with details, based on other sources, provided by A A S M^cLellan when he occasionally discussed shipping, for example, A: 26, 27, 53, 134, 240. M^cLellan was the Adelaide Steamship Co agent for Port Augusta, 1924-61 and he had a good knowledge of local shipping matters.
- 86 The Customs Department records posed considerable difficulties for measuring shipping. Details they provided on ship's displacement, deadweight, tonnages of imports and exports were incomplete and inconsistent. Counting ship's visits to the Port was the most reliable method of measuring shipping. However, "costers" and the "mosquito fleet" were often not recorded by Customs when they visited, and they visited often. International and intercolonial shipping was usually recorded, but they visited less often. Considerable attention was then paid to the visits by "coasters" and the "mosquito fleet", to compensate for deficiencies in the Customs record. Assumptions about the regularity of their visits were developed and cross-referenced against trade statistics, general references to local shipping, and occasional details about the movements of specific vessels. As a result of this, minimum estimations of the number of visits by the small ships of the "mosquito fleet" was the hardest to estimate, but as they only account for a fraction of the Port's business, underestimates of visits in that category of shipping has the least impact. Sources used to cross-reference against the Customs record were the records of Bignell & Young and the M^cLellan articles referred to in note 85, as well as those referred to in the ensuing pages. After 1908,

the Customs record is fairly complete and reveals a pattern similar to that constructed for the previous years. From this it has been assumed that the pattern holds true for the entire period.

The resulting estimates of the extent of shipping to Port Augusta are probably a reliable minimum floor figure, and could well be close to the mark of the actual level of shipping. Numbers of ships' visits was probably a reliable indicator of the continual shipping fluctuations, many of which coincided with events which should have effected shipping. A more reliable measure of local shipping could be arrived at by closely studying shipping arrivals and departures from Port Adelaide, Semaphore, Glenelg, Ports Pirie and Lincoln and Franklin Harbour, as well as the reports in the columns of the Adelaide, Pirie, Lincoln and Augusta newspapers.

- 87 3.10.1857, p4, Adelaide Observer.
- 88 Cockburn, 1925, op cit, 1:205b.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 A:56-3b.
- 91 Blainey, 1971, op cit, p199-205.
- 92 Report of the Transcontinental Railway Commission, op cit.
- 93 No direct evidence of the extent of shore leave has been found. That there was shore leave is not in doubt. Sailors were regularly sentenced to terms of imprisonment in Port Augusta Gaol for drunkenness and fighting - see Returns of Prisoners in Port Augusta Gaol: GRG54/191/2, PRO and an account in 13.9.1912, p6, PAD. Unloading and loading an entire cargo usually took three weeks for ships of 600-900t, according to Bach, op cit, p274.
- 94 Anon, 1885, Memorials of Port Augusta, op cit; 13.9.1912, p5, PAD; A:118, 154-4.
- 95 13.9.1912, p5, PAD; 21.7.1932, p46, Adelaide Chronicle; 28.6.1935, p3, Trans.
- 96 A:153-1a, 195-3b; From these figures and information on 1878 school populations, a figure for the populations in 1878 and 1880 have been reached. See A:193-4a, 194-3a for 1878 school figures.
- 97 It may have been cheaper to import merchandise into Port Augusta than Port Adelaide: see Bach, op cit, pp271-5.
- 98 Weber M, 1958, The City [translated by D Martindale and G Neuwirth], The Free Press, New York, pp30-4.

- 99 South Australia has been described as the "least Australian" of the Australian colonies: see Ward R, op cit, p197.

It was long expected that Port Augusta would become an important centre for the inland. Like so many Australian country towns, much of what is seen today dates from the 1880s. This chapter examines the expansion in the Port during the boom, much of which reflected the relationship with the inland, and an increasing role as a regional centre. The chapter also touches on the contemporary social life and attitudes of that time.

Preparations for railway construction meant jobs, bringing more population and income to the Port. Between 1875 and 1878 the population doubled, and by 1884 it had doubled again, and was 2610. The jump in population and prosperity was triggered by the activities surrounding the railway. This caused a swelling of business confidence, because people expected that Port Augusta was destined to become a great national centre and entrepot port. The Government spent £1 000 000 building the railway inland to Farina, and £560 000 on the Quorn-Terowie line.¹ The Port received its greatest boost in income from this expenditure.

Most of the inlanders who periodically came to the Port and most of the crews of ships, were men. Most of the increased population employed in the construction of the railway, were men. They were extraordinarily well-paid. A labourer's wage was seven or eight pence an hour in 1881, but those building the railway were paid a shilling an hour, equivalent to say, £150 a year.² Teamsters were also well-paid, receiving £52 pa plus rations, and other pastoral

POPULATION 1854-1909 ³

1854	5
1856	28
1862	64
1863	100
1866	350
1867	350
1872	450
1875	650
1877	980
1878	1400
1879	1700
1880	2000
1881	2507
1884	2610
1886	2400
1889	1720
1891	2505
1894	2566
1899	1551
1901	2133
1904	1789
1909	1588

workers received rations and between f36 and f45 pa.⁴ Their lives had few social amenities and they looked forward to visiting the Port. Males resident at Port Augusta outnumbered females seven to five during this period, flavouring the Port with their presence and social preferences.⁵ Most of the transients would have only had themselves to support, as did perhaps two or more of every seven local men. Without families to keep their, standard of living was high and much of this income was spent on alcohol.⁶

Reflecting on this period 32 years later the Dispatch said:

The influx of population caused a building boom, and private buildings, business houses and private residences were erected almost regardless of expense. Everyone was making money.⁷

Not surprisingly, during the building boom between 1878 and 1883, 12 hotels were erected in the Port. In great part this reflected the social preferences and expenditure patterns of so many men. In retrospect, the building of hotels does seem to have gone beyond being part of the "building boom" and towards being part of a wild alcoholic spree. In Port Augusta, investors had great faith in the future of alcohol.

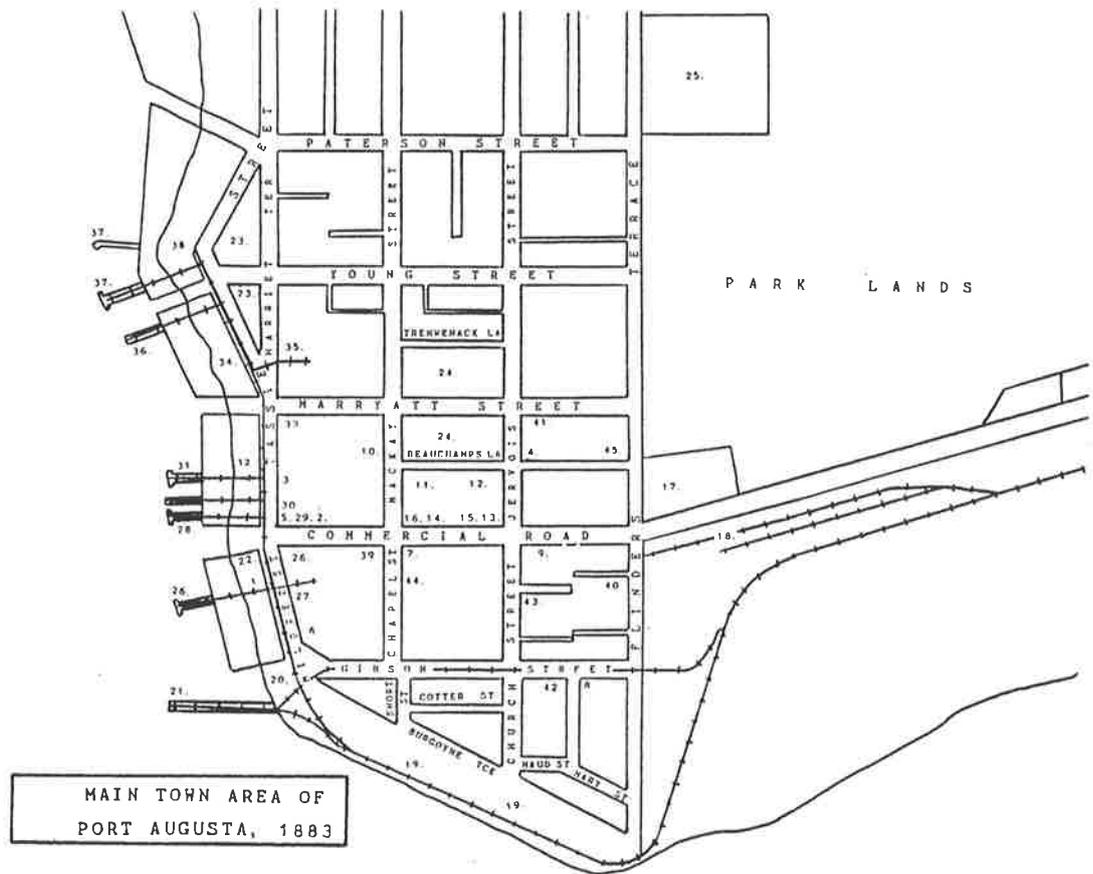
The hotels' siting was influenced by increased waterfront activity and heavier use of the tracks to the inland, particularly the Stirling Road. Several new hotels were located at stock watering points. Siting also reflected the

influence of the railways, and the growth of suburban areas.

Prior to this expansion in the number of hotels there had been six: the first Port Augusta (1855-8), Dover Castle (1856-63), the second Port Augusta (1863-1921), Northern (1863-79), Western (?1867-) and Globe (1871-1971).

The Exchange Hotel was the first of these boom hotels to be licensed. A man who had kept hotels in the Flinders Range for two decades, William Taylor, took out the license in March 1878. The Exchange was built on the Port's best site, at the corner of the main track to the inland, Commercial Road, and Tassie Street, the township's main street, across the road from the stores of Tassie, and Gooch & Hayward. Its opening was welcomed as providing some relief to the shortage of overnight accommodation which had caused hotel patrons to bunk under tables, in hallways, or on ships in the harbour. Construction was financed by local solicitor James Gordon. The hotel is presently known as the Fourways.⁸

The Royal Hotel was built on the corner of Gibson and Mildred (now El Alamein) Street and opened in April 1878. This was across the road from the Customs House and the new Government jetty for landing railway material, perhaps anticipated as becoming the busiest point. While it was being constructed, the railway contractors laid a tramway west from the new railway workshops, down Gibson Street to the new hotel and onto the Government jetty and also along



Key to Map of Main Area of Town

Hotels

- 1. Dover Castle
- 2. (second) Port Augusta
- 3. Great Northern, site of Northern and first Port Augusta
- 4. Globe
- 5. Exchange
- 6. Royal
- 7. Flinders
- 8. Hannaville
- 9. Railway Terminus
- 10. Temperance

Government and Official

- 11. Water Works
- 12. Police Yards
- 13. Court House
- 14. Institute
- 15. Roads Board
- 16. Post and Telegraph Office
- 17. School Reserve
- 18. Railway Station
- 19. Goods Sheds
- 20. Customs House
- 21. Government Jetty
- 22. Police
- 23. Town Reserve
- 24. Town Square
- 25. Old Cemetery

Private Businesses

- 26. Bignell & Young
- 27. T. Sara & Co
- 28. A. D. Tassie & Co
- 29. Port Augusta Dispatch
- 30. National Bank
- 31. Gooch & Hayward
- 32. Bank of Australasia
- 33. Bank of S. A.
- 34. Bottling Establishment
- 35. Coombe Bros
- 36. Cowan & Co
- 37. Dunn & Co
- 38. Dunn's Mill
- 39. Bank of Adelaide
- 40. Trewenack & Bice
- 41. Brewery

Religious

- 42. Wesleyans
- 43. Church of England
- 44. Bible Christians
- 45. Convent

the Mildred Street frontage of the Royal to Tassie Street, where it served the private jetties and warehouses. Like the Exchange, the Royal was of two storeys and built of stone. A local land speculator and agent, Sydney A Wills, probably financed the construction and the first licensee was F Goldney.⁹

Two months later, Alexander Mackay's hotel, "the largest of its kind in South Australia" was opened. Mackay was one of those who long expected and awaited the day when the Port took off. They said he built too big.* The two storey, 40 room stone and Portland cement-rendered hotel stood opposite the Post and Telegraph Office, at the corner of Commercial Road and Chapel Street.

It featured a spectacular promenading platform on top of the roof, 27 metres long and 3.5 metres wide from which point, patrons could see south west to Point Lowly, east to the Range and across the Western Plain. At the beginning of 1879, the name of the hotel was changed to the Flinders Family Hotel and it is still called the Flinders.¹⁰

J H Hutchinson, a butcher, became insolvent financing the construction of the Hannahville Hotel. One of the Port's earliest British settlers, Charles Johnstone, purchased it for £1500, and it opened in August 1878. On the corner of Gibson and George Streets in Hannahville, the first

* Mackay retired to Adelaide where he built a mansion now known as the main building of Wattle Park Teachers' Centre.

suburban area, it was 100m from the new Railway Workshops - probably the fastest growing residential section of the township.¹¹

The first hotel the bullock drivers encountered once they hit the town proper was the Railway Terminus, now known as the Commonwealth Hotel. It was also very handy to the new Railway Workshops. It was opened for business by Robert Luke in March 1880 after two shops near the corner of Commercial and Church were modified.¹²

In February 1881, at the peak of the boom, the Great Northern Hotel was opened. Its site in Tassie Street, 10m north of the Exchange Hotel and across the road from the waterfront and jetty stores, was where the original paling and iron shanty was erected in 1855, the first Port Augusta Hotel. The Northern Hotel was then built upon that site in 1863. The Great Northern Hotel was designed by local architect and Dispatch editor, Thomas Burgoyne, built by local builder and timber merchant, T Sara & Co for its owners Syme & Sison. The first licensee was Allen Anderson. Like Mackay's (Flinders) Hotel, it was of two storeys and about 35 rooms, including four large ground floor bedrooms "for the use of bushmen and others not accustomed to mount to an upper storey". The elegant ironwork for the 19m x 3.5m verandah was cast in the foundry of H Wheelwright & Co, a new local business.¹³

The Wharf Hotel was built on the West Side, at the end of the

jetty and opposite the standpipe from which all humans and animals had to draw their water on the West. It was a plum position for business and pleasure. Construction was arranged by architects Ernest H Bayer and Latham A Withall, opened by Joseph Holmes in May 1881, and was the first two storey building on the West Side. It is now known as the Augusta.¹⁴

By 1881 there had been several years of suburban growth in an area known as the Extension, two to three kilometres north east of the waterfront area. In October 1881, the Town Clerk, G K K Bond, designed the Extension Hotel for William Taylor, the licensee of the Exchange. Built by H Beadnall with stone carted from Two Hummocks, near Blanche Harbour, it had cattle and sheep saleyards adjoining, and was handy to a standpipe. It was a clear attempt to attract the bullockies using the road from the Western Plain and the trade of the new sandhill suburbanites. The site was the eastern corner of Main and Pine Streets, opposite the present-day Central Football Club.¹⁵

The Pastoral Hotel was also opposite a standpipe which adjoined a bullock drivers' camping ground. Both standpipe and public house stood on opposite sides of the intersection of the Main North Road from the Western Plain with Stirling Road, on the eastern side of the Parklands. It was a good site for a hotel. By 1882, there was increasing suburban sprawl along this eastern side of the Parklands and it was handy to the Railway Workshops, where many of the new

population worked. The two storey Pastoral Hotel was erected by hotel promoter, W R Wilson, and designed by Thomas Burgoyne. It was opened in February 1882 by its first licensee, Edwin Field.¹⁶

The area around and about the south-eastern corner of the Hospital Road and Stirling Road was referred to as Kinnear's Town, after Edward (Teddy) Kinnear. He ran a waggon between the Port and Stirling North twice a day and had a boarding-house with stockyards and paddocks adjoining, somewhere near this corner. There was probably a standpipe at the intersection. This site was chosen by John Barker to erect the two storey Suburban Hotel. It was the first hotel on the western side of the causeway from Greenbush and Stirling North along the busiest route into the Port and stood on the outer fringe of the Stirling Road suburban growth. It was built by H Beadnall, designed by the Corporation's Clerk, G K K Bond, and was opened in January 1883 by the first licensee, Harry Leighton.¹⁷

When the Standpipe Hotel was opened by licensee J C L (Charlie) Chapple about March 1883, it provided a billiard room, skittles, stockyards, bullock cueing pens and horses for hire. The Standpipe Hotel was located near the new site of the then recently moved West Side standpipe, a kilometre beyond the village on the track to Lincoln Gap, probably where it was joined by the track north. Sometimes referred to as the Tank Hotel, it provided a good place to spell beasts prior to returning to the bush.¹⁸

From its inception in 1881, the unlicensed Temperance Hotel stood in Mackay Street. It was originally operated by Harry Leighton until he took over the Suburban.¹⁹ There would probably have been other temperance accommodation in a town the size of Port Augusta in the 'eighties, but no trace of it has been found. Indeed the construction of the hotels did not proceed unopposed. There was criticism of hotel promoters, like James Gordon, Sydney A Wills, Syme & Sison, Bayer & Withall, W R Wilson and John Barker, who applied for licenses, erected hotels and then sold (transferred) the license and/or the hotel to somebody who then ran it. These hotel promoters were once called "jackals for the brewers", who provided temptations for teamsters going along Stirling Road.²⁰

By January 1883, on their way from the north to the Port and the jetties, the teamsters had to pass two hotels at Pichi Richi and one each at Woolshed Flat and Saltia, two or three at Stirling North, another at Greenbush, before encountering the Suburban, then the Pastoral, and in the final 400m, the Railway Extension, Globe, Flinders and Port Augusta. Stirling Road was a chain of public houses, ever increasing in density to Port Augusta where, on the waterfront they culminated with the Royal, Exchange and Great Northern. By 1884, the Flinders and Great Northern boasted "handsome barmaids".²¹

Robert Bruce's observation of 1858 that a local brewery

would do well, turned out to be correct. From about 1870, there had been a small stone brewery next to the Globe Hotel, near the corner of Jervois and Marryatt Streets. William Tardrew Perrers acquired it in 1879, took in various partners and when the town was booming, he made substantial extensions.²² He prospered. By August 1880 he had erected the first mansion at Seaview, near the hospital, on seven hectares overlooking the Gulf.²³ Another brewery with a bottling establishment was located on a waterfront allotment between Gooch & Hayward's store & Dunn's Mill. It was operated by William Taylor, licensee of the Exchange and Extension Hotels.²⁴

Over the previous decade, the three big Port Augusta firms - Tassie & Co, Gooch & Hayward, and Bignell & Young - had been laboriously developing their links with the inland. When the boom came they were probably well placed to exploit it. Certainly this was the case with Bignell & Young. As the railway construction moved further north, away from the town, demands upon these merchants did not slacken and indeed increased. Demand from wheat farmers kept increasing. Without doubt, the three big merchants expanded their wholesale and retail businesses in the Port and in the hinterland.

By the early 1880s, Gooch & Hayward were probably the biggest firm, having overtaken A D Tassie & Co in the 'seventies. Gooch & Hayward were shipping and forwarding agents for wool, wheat, minerals, skins, tallow and other

goods, drapers, timber, hardware and general storekeepers, wine and spirit merchants, and agents for all forms of insurance. To meet their expanding shipping needs, in 1879 they erected a second and longer jetty which they shared with their neighbour and competitor, A D Tassie & Co.²⁵ In 1881, after leasing their waterfront allotment from J H Browne for a decade, they purchased it. Soon after, they opened a branch on the West Side.²⁶ Still confident that the best was yet to come, in 1882 they demolished Hackett's old store and had a "commodious" stone store and warehouse built.²⁷ Known in recent times as the Elders Building, it stood in Tassie Street until demolished in 1986 to make way for a Woolworths' supermarket. In 1884, A L Hayward retired from the partnership. He was replaced by Adelaide pastoralists and financiers Thomas P and William P Scott, who traded with Gooch as Gooch & Scott.²⁸

After the death of Tassie in 1874, his partner T M^cT Gibson eventually took another partner, C E Stokes. Gibson died in 1879 and Stokes had the firm during the boom. In 1888 he sold to Gooch & Scott, who renamed the combined business Tassie, Scott & Co. In 1891, this company was sold to Young & Gordon.²⁹

The firm of Bignell & Young were expanding their trade during the seventies. During the boom years they widened their investment in buildings, contributing to the local building boom. In 1881, they demolished the old Dover Castle Hotel premises and erected a stone Bond Store in its

stead.³⁰ The same year they erected a two-storey shop, wool store and residence at Port Augusta West.³¹ Frank Bignell retired in August 1881. Young then went into partnership with one of D & W Murray's men, Robert Gordon. The firm became Young & Gordon.³² Young & Gordon expanded their warehouse and shop, situated on the north-east corner of Commercial and Tassie, by extending onto the adjoining allotment. Here they built a two storey shop and store, today occupied by Prests. Designed by Cumming & Davies of Adelaide, and built at a cost of £5000 by James Fitzpatrick, it was arguably the most outstanding building in the Port-

of the Italian order of street architecture, decorated with Corinthian columns, richly ornamental capitals (and included) large iron girders and massive iron columns...fittings of Huon, Cowrie and Cedar with the effect of a most striking contrast...staircase of blackwood, artistically adorned with richly carved posts...Upstairs there are two mammoth rooms so well balanced and accurately built that not one centre support is required.³³

This, added to the recent completion of Gooch & Hayward's premises, inspired the editor of the Dispatch to declare:

When enterprising and far-seeing merchants see fit to invest in valuable palatial-like edifices for the mere expeditious transaction of their business, it may be safely presumed they have no doubt as to the ultimate colossal importance of the town.³⁴

Young & Gordon eventually opened branches at Mt Gunson, Iron Knob, Nectar Brook, Stirling North, Wilmington, Kingoonya, Oodnadatta and other towns, for varying times during

different periods.³⁵

The boom in building was not restricted to hotels and shops. Just as Abraham Scott and the National Bank saw good prospects at Port Augusta as the inland was opened for development, so too they and other banks increased their interest in Port Augusta between 1875 and the mid 'eighties, when the prospects looked much better. The National Bank had existed in the Port since 1863, and the Savings Bank of South Australia probably operated an agency from the Telegraph Office.

The Bank of Adelaide established a branch in 1875. In 1881 during the building boom, it opened a new building, on the north-west corner of Commercial and Mackay Streets, probably where the National Bank is today.³⁶

The Bank of South Australia had been in the Port since 1876. In 1882, it built and opened "one of the finest commercial buildings in Port Augusta", on the corner of Tassie and Marryatt Streets. Built by T Sara & Co, designed by Wright & Reed, it cost £4500 and is now known as the offices of the Department of Agriculture, or Seaview Hostel.³⁷

The Bank of Australasia opened a branch in a shared waterfront shop during the boom, and soon after paid the top price of £8300 for a waterfront allotment, just north of Gooch & Hayward. However they never built, and in 1897 they withdrew from the Port.

The National Bank had occupied an excellent commercial site since 1872, opposite Tassies' and Gooch & Hayward's stores. It was not until 1886 that they built a neat two-storey stone premises on the site from which Kearney the blacksmith had illegally sold grog in 1854-5. By 1886, they were cheek-and-jowl with the Exchange and the Great Northern.³⁸

In 1877, it appeared that Port Augusta was destined to become a large and industrious town. On the other side of the hills farmers were planting wheat and the Great Northern Railway was to have its terminus in the town. In this promising environment, Thomas Burgoyne commenced the Port Augusta Dispatch newspaper, in waterfront buildings next to Gooch & Hayward and leased from them.³⁹ The first edition came out on 18 August, declaring:

Situated as we are...the influence of the Adelaide press cannot be expected to be often exercised in our benefit. Our wishes and requirements...hitherto have been like the faint ripple...lost in the never-ceasing roar and surge of the torrent...Among other evils resulting from these conditions...is the lethargy residents of Port Augusta have exhibited with regard to the welfare of their district...which is destined, ere long, to become the metropolis of the North...headquarters of trade, politics and literature of a district which comprises nearly half of the colony of South Australia.

Burgoyne was one of those who had come to the town in 1856 and had optimistically awaited the time when he could say

out loud these oft wished words. As the boom progressed, he became increasingly busy. In 1880, he surrendered editorial control to his foreman, David Drysdale, who held the position and eventually owned the paper until 1910.⁴⁰ The Dispatch trumpeted the interests of the north in general and the Port in particular, trying to turn whimpers into roars. It reported local news assiduously, and the news from local and northern towns was often quite detailed. It carried South Australian news, with correspondents located in Adelaide and elsewhere, and it reported intercolonial and overseas news. The telegraph ensured that news was up-to-date, and developments everywhere could be followed as they occurred. It was not necessary to read Adelaide papers to be kept abreast of happenings. The Dispatch promoted and added to the Port's independence and separate sense of identity.

"The only nourishment upon which this paper can thrive", wrote the editor, "are advertisements". With the enormous upsurge in commerce between 1877-84 - there was at one time a staff of 18 - it did thrive. In 1881, Drysdale had the two storey Exchange Building erected opposite Bignell, Young and Gordon's, and the paper was published there.⁴¹

Thus we can see that those institutions Meining⁴² identified as good symbols of the commercial development and status of a town - banking services, a newspaper, local government and an institute - came to full fruition between 1875-7, once it was confirmed that Augusta would be port to a railway. But

Port Augusta was not like the railway boom towns of, for example, the USA, which were often ephemeral and without even limited civic spirit. Port Augusta had waited long for its day.⁴³

From the Customs House in the south to Dunn's Mill and Cowan's Jetty in the north, by 1880 the Mildred-Tassie Street waterfront area was dominated by long established businesses.⁴⁴ Consequently most of the retail growth took place along Commercial Road, during which time it was more or less transformed into the way it looks today. The bulk of construction appears to have been commenced in 1881-4, which was the period towards the middle and end of the boom. Many business came into existence or expanded just in time to be confronted by the slump. The great energy of the boom's upward surge was caused by building activity, generating its own demands for labour and material. Had shops and warehouses already existed, the boom would have been much more "orderly", and the let-down would not have been as great.

During the period 1875-84, the Adelaide Government consolidated the previous tendency to make the Port its northern administrative outpost. In so doing it also engaged in a certain amount of building, some of which was probably a response to the wild enthusiasm accompanying the Port's boom. Not only was the Port a regional service centre in the eyes of Government, it was a growing town in its own right and some development was quite local in its

intent. The Government had a jetty built during 1877, primarily to serve the railway. It was only planned to be temporary, but was the longest in the Port, jutting out into the stream a little north of the weatherboard Customs House on Flagstaff Reserve. Its length was reduced 27m, back to 155m, because of protests that it obstructed the stream. It was seven metres wide and had a line of rail running to its head and connected into the Tassie-Mildred-Gibson Streets tramway system.⁴⁵

The Government also undertook a number of other building works during the period. Inevitably, they built a Railway Station, completed towards the end of 1880.⁴⁶ The Northern Roads Board, an organisation to service the region, occupied a space in the Institute, but with increased road activity, its own small stone building was erected in 1881, in Commercial Road between the Police Station and old Town Hall.⁴⁷ That year too, the Waterworks, which had previously only supplied domestic and shipping needs, was called upon to supply the substantial demands of the railway. The 10cm Woolundunga pipeline was replaced with one of twice the diameter. Towards the end of the decade, a five centimetre main was laid across the Gulf to the West Side, and the Woolundunga Reservoir was renewed and interconnected with Nectar Brook Reservoir. This made for a more assured water supply to meet the increased and diversified demand.⁴⁸

In 1881, the first Circuit Court was held in the Port and a local Licensing Bench was established.⁴⁹ The Court House,

on the north western corner of Commercial Road and Jervois Street, was dwarfed by the demands placed upon it and in 1884 a new Court House was erected. Constructed of puce Saltia stone by the local firm of T Sara & Co, it was located on the corner of Jervois Street and Beauchamps Lane. This was just behind the old Court House, which was thereafter used as a Police Station and residence.³⁰

From the time that it was first erected, the Port Augusta Gaol was too small to adequately contain the prisoners from the Port and places north to beyond Alice Springs. It was rare when the prison was not overcrowded.³¹ There were some additions in 1876. By 1883, it was in a delapidated crumbling condition "which invites its occupants to step outside and enjoy the freer air of the surrounding district". During 1884, staff residences, outbuildings and the entire prison were surrounded by a wall, and cells were increased to accommodate up to 36.³²

T Sara & Co was engaged to erect a new Customs House in 1885.³³ Situated on the south west corner of Commercial Road and Mildred Street (now El Alamein Street), it was built of Point Lowly stone and until it was recently demolished to make way for Woolworths, it was the Returned Services League building. A Post and Telegraph Office was built on the West Side in 1885 by R Honey, a Port Adelaide timber merchant and builder, who opened a branch in Port Augusta during the boom.³⁴

The Government held an inquiry into wharves and jetties in 1881. Local jetty owners indicated their willingness to yield their interests in favour of a government wharf. With the tremendous upsurge in shipping, all needed the deeper berthage and other benefits a good wharf would provide.⁵⁵ Nothing was done until 1885, when the waterfront was reclaimed, with five of the old jetties buried under the fill. The new wharf came into use in 1886.⁵⁶

The largest employer during this period may have been Gooch & Hayward. They had 50 people on full-time and an additional 20 people were employed when the season demanded.⁵⁷ From this we can deduce that A D Tassie & Co probably employed 40-50 with 12-20 seasonal workers, and Bignell, Young & Gordon probably much the same by that time. T Sara, whose timber yard, building depot and offices were in Chapel Street, employed up to 60.⁵⁸ Around 1877, Sara had purchased Bignell & Young's timber yard, and it might have employed 6-12 people. Sara's building business was dependent upon the boom, and in quiet times he may have been reduced to 15-20 employees. R Honey, timber merchant and builder, was probably in a like situation. J M Asher, tailor of Commercial Road, employed 20,⁵⁹ and he was not as big as W Symons, tailor and draper of Commercial Road, who probably employed 30-40. Another Commercial Road tailor, H S Neil, may have employed half a dozen. The 13 hotels probably employed 6-12 each. It is not known how many were locally employed by the South Australian Railway and the other branches of government, nor how many were employed by

the other businesses in town, which included Farr, the cabinet-maker and undertaker, R B Randall, baker, C J Zeesing & W Brennan, butchers, A E Carrig, the chemist, G Rosam or J W Davies, both watchmakers and jewellers, A Bothwell, saddler, the grocers Taylor & Polglase, the hairdressers George Lewis and H A M^cLean, J H Osborn, a clothier, H Wheelwright, the ironworker, nor how many worked in the offices of R Hall, Cave & Co, or Bagot, Shakes & Lewis' office all of whom were agents. At the peak, there could have been a dozen or more blacksmiths and farriers working, and there was a large coachbuilding, wheelwright and blacksmithing workshop, probably in Gibson Street, operated by Trewenack & Bice.⁶⁰

There is no evidence of industrial organisation in the Port prior to the coming of the railway. Whether the formation of employer groups and trade unions was triggered by the presence of a large, concentrated, organised railway workforce is not known, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that was the case. In September 1879, the three biggest firms in the Port combined in refusing to pay overtime to sections of their workforce who laboured more than eight hours per day. Twenty-five men struck and the customary overtime was reinstated. In December, there was another dispute with the same employers. This prompted the formation of the Port Augusta Working Men's Union, formed under the rules of the South Australian Labour League. Apparently a lift in the rate of pay was negotiated. The new rates were 1/- an hour per eight hour day, six days per

week with the same 1/- an hour paid for any additional time worked. That was £2/8/- for a 48 hour week.⁶¹

A few of the Port's labouring men received very high rates for pressing wool. They were paid 1/- an hour plus a penny each per bale pressed, which added 12/- to each day's pay while the wool season lasted. These "princes" of the working men made £6 per week, but there were only three such men employed by Gooch & Hayward.⁶² On the other hand, some workers were called upon to carry 118kg bags of wheat, loading ships all day, probably for 1/- or less an hour. Several attempts were made at Gulf ports to have the size of these bags reduced, but they did not seem to meet with success.⁶³

The tremendous upsurge in the tide of local and inland activity gave rise to several ambitious projects. Like so many ideas, they sprang from the general acceptance of the Port's perceived geographical domination of transport, communication and supply to the inland. Alternatively, once there was an inkling that the Port's domination was not as total as imagined, local people promoted projects designed to ensure this domination.

The first such project reflected the fervent hope that the Great Northern Railway would keep going north - "to Java".⁶⁴ The unsuccessful tenderer applied to the government in 1877, offering to construct a line to Port Darwin.⁶⁵ He was not successful. It was another decade before the Great Northern

Line reached Coward Springs, 50 years until it reached Alice and it has still not reached the Java sea at Darwin.

In 1883, a public meeting held in Port Augusta called for a railway to go from the Port to Phillip Ponds near Pimba, thence to Strangway Springs, The Peake, Charlotte Waters and presumably from there to Alice Springs and Darwin. This route would not only have provided a feeder into an enormous though fairly dry and marginal area, but avoided Quorn and Pichi Richi Pass so that the trade went to Port Augusta only. The day before, 187 bales of wool had arrived by camel from Daroo Station, Queensland. The journey had taken 10 months. This prompted some people at the public meeting to call for the Great Northern to be extended north east to the Queensland border, so that produce from there could more easily be secured by the Port. At this time the railway construction was past Farina approaching Hergott Springs (Marree).⁶⁶ The railways were seen as the great colonising tool, to annex the produce of the enormous inland areas to Port Augusta. The thought that this produce was not worth the effort needed to capture it, did not arise.

A proposal for a combined bridge and wharf was put to the Commission on Wharves and Jetties of 1880-1. The plan called for a bridge to be built across the Gulf, from Marryatt Street to Loudon Road on the West Side. A bridge would provide an important physical link for the two populations, there was increasing north west traffic to the Port wanting to use the shipping facilities of the east, and

a bridge would cut out the 24km overland journey from east to west via Yorkey Crossing. It was proposed that the central section of the bridge be built wide and strong enough to double as a 200 metre-long wharf served by two lines of railway. Beyond the wharf was to be an American swing bridge to allow vessels to pass beyond, similar to that at Port Adelaide. The fixed bridge would then continue to the West Side. The cost was put at £40 000. No more was heard of the proposal after its submission to the Commission.⁶⁷

A grandiose proposal was to dig a canal from the Port to Lake Eyre. It was thought that the climate and rainfall would be changed for the better if an inland sea was created. The Port would become the Suez of Australia, the aridity would be finally altered and Port Augusta would be the principal commercial beneficiary, perhaps overtaking Adelaide as the main city of the colony. Much of the inland is well below sea level, but the canal would have had to be excavated in places through 37m of rock and be 416km long. It was questioned whether the canal's fall of 20mm per kilometre would be sufficient for water to flow inland. In 1883, the cost was estimated at £37 678 650 and the idea was abandoned as impractical.⁶⁸

A modest project which commenced in 1883 was ostrich farming. The farm was 13km from Port, along the Yorkey Crossing Road. Frank Bignell went into partnership with W Campbell, and attracted assistance from the government,

which was keen to see ostrich farming commence. Previous Australian attempts to profitably acclimatise the South African birds had been unsuccessful. They had to be securely fenced, as they could easily out pace a horse, they were prone to rheumatism, the males attacked people and kicked wooden fencing to pieces, and chicks had previously been killed and eaten by native cats. At Port Augusta, town water was connected, and in the arid sandy environment the birds acclimatized and prospered. They ate the local vegetation, and some lucerne was cultivated for them. Capricious fashion dominated the ostrich industry, and the value of pairs of birds fluctuated between £14 and £250, from time to time. In 1901, persistent drought forced the farm to cease, and most of the birds were removed south. Today a handful of their progeny still inhabit the area, running wild.⁶⁹

In 1875, affairs were looking very promising for the Port, and a group organised a petition for local government. By mid-year, T M^cT Gibson was elected Mayor unopposed and Alexander Mackay, G Cobbin, S C Trewenack and H Johnson were elected councillors, defeating T Y Cotter, William Taylor, Robert Bottomley and a man named Baker.⁷⁰ The first meeting was held in November and Thomas Burgoyne was voted Town Clerk at £100 pa. The first rates, which totalled £280, were levied on town lands valued at £5135, probably in 1876.⁷¹ There were two wards. North-east Ward consisted of 62 rate payers and 51 resident voters, and South-west Ward made up of 85 rate payers with 79 resident voters. The

eastern town limit was Flinders Terrace and the northern limit, Stuart Terrace.⁷² By 1881, the Corporation's rate base had quadrupled, although it is not clear if the boundaries had been expanded.⁷³ Probably not.

Most of the Corporation's income appears to have been spent on roads. By 1875-6, only about 50m of the west end of Marryatt Street was cleared of sand drift and scrub. It was improved, probably during 1877, so the increasing traffic down Commercial Road could leave the town along Marryatt Street, thence Flinders Terrace and Stirling Road. Stone from Point Lowly was shipped across for use in consolidating sandy streets, especially Commercial Road.⁷⁴

A significant municipal gesture, then as now in Port Augusta, was the attempt to foster trees. In August 1877, the Mayor planted trees in Gladstone Square. The area was fenced to keep out stock, particularly goats, and 900 litres of water per week was granted for the trees by the Waterworks.⁷⁵

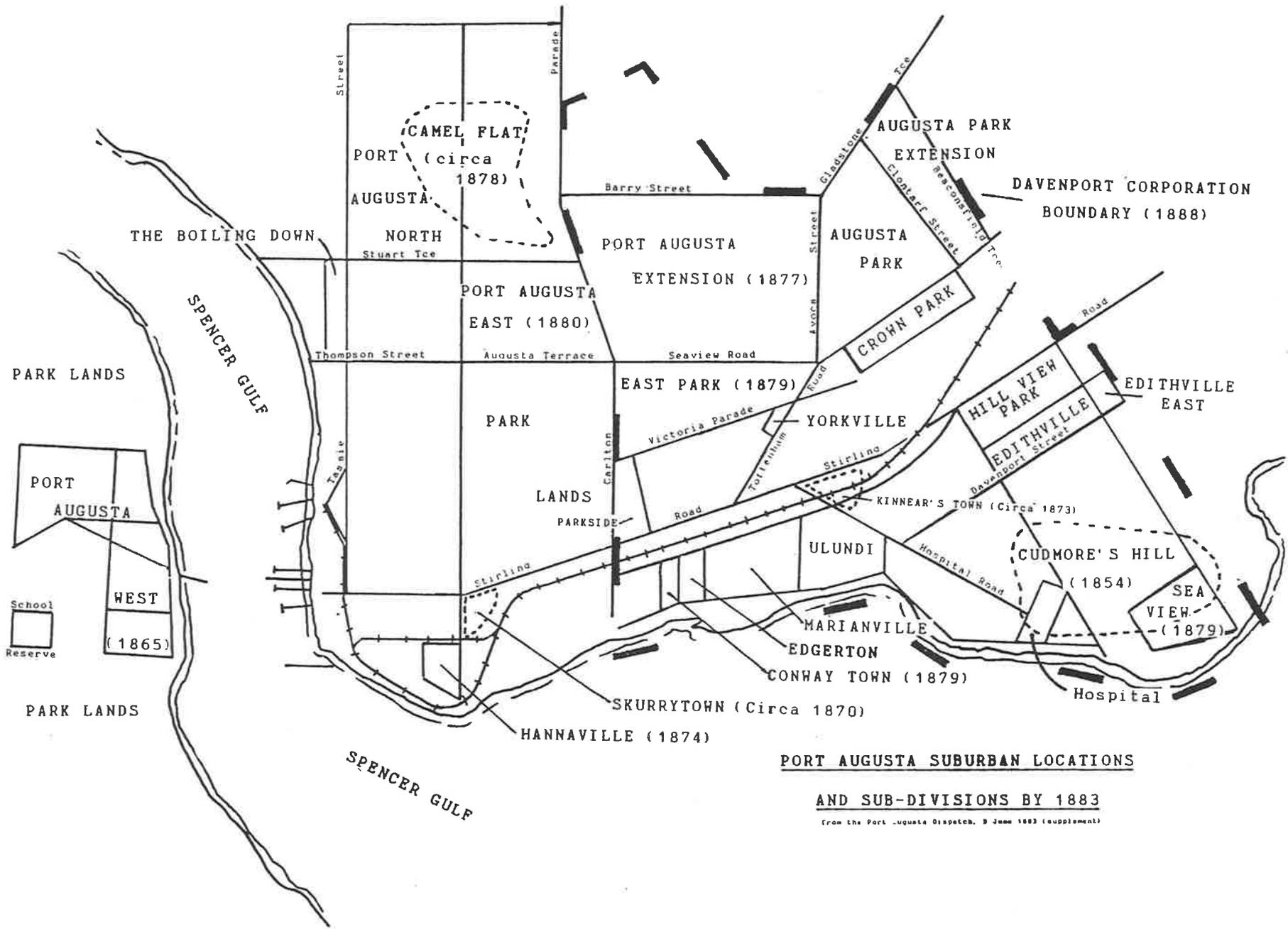
With the commencement of railway activity people came who anticipated staying and they wanted somewhere permanent to live. When the first suburban allotments on the Extension were offered for sale in November 1877, they were snapped up.⁷⁶ The Extension was east of the main town, beyond its limits, along the North Road to the Western Plain in the area bounded by Seaview, Carlton, Conroy and Elsie Streets.

The Port's prosperity was giving rise to a class of wealthy people. They wanted somewhere rather better to live, with views, away from the more populous parts of town. The dress-circle sub-division of Sea View was created in 1879, an hour's stroll through the sand and scrub from town, though a mere 10 minutes by buggy. The blocks had 30 and 60m hillside frontages to Spencer Gulf, and were 100-150m deep. Perrers built a mansion there on 7ha, and Gooch, and Stokes built nearby.⁷⁷

In 1878-9, the Port became busy with the first good season's wheat, there was work in the South Australian Railway Workshops, and demand for suburban allotments picked up. East Park and the little sub-division on Conway Town were offered for sale. East Park was closer to the town than Extension, but in the same general direction, bounded by Seaview Road in the north, Tottenham Road to the east, to the west, Carlton Parade and on the south by Victoria Parade.⁷⁸

Conway Town, was named after John Nixon Conway, former mail coach contractor, landlord of Commercial Road shops and the Railway Terminus Hotel. He had a well-built stone house on the beach near the site of the Pastoral Hotel. Conway Town consisted of 17 quarter acre allotments bounded by Spencer Terrace, Railway Parade and Centre Street.⁷⁹

In 1880, Port Augusta East allotments were sold. This sub-division was bounded by Flinders Terrace, Stuart Terrace,



**PORT AUGUSTA SUBURBAN LOCATIONS
AND SUB-DIVISIONS BY 1883**
(From the Port Augusta Dispatch, 9 June 1883 (supplement))

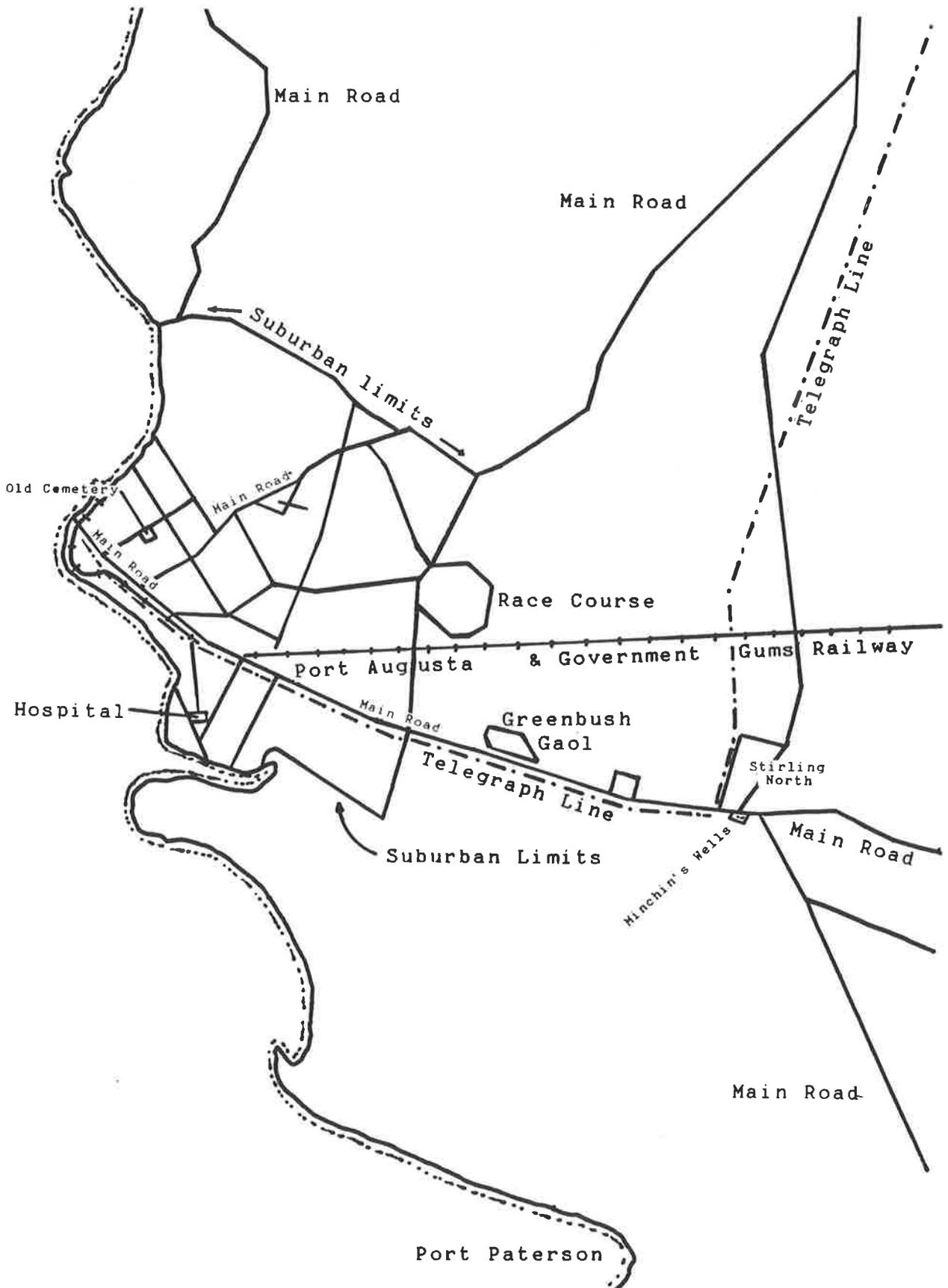
Carlton Parade and Augusta Terrace, beyond which, to the south, lay Park Lands all the way to Stirling Road. There were several other sub-divisions and locality names as indicated on the map of suburban locations. In August 1880, the Dispatch declared:

the rapid extension of the suburbs is truly astonishing...on Stirling Road within a few months quite a respectable town had sprung up.⁸⁰

No less astonishing was the sub-division into housing allotments of the lagoon to the east of the town. In 1883, to meet the increased demand for housing allotments, the West Side's survey was extended.⁸¹

A Post Office was opened at the Extension in 1882 but closed in 1884, then re-opened, probably as population fluctuated, something which is discussed in the next chapter. East Park got a Post Office in 1884, and the West Side in 1878.

As the pace of life in Port Augusta increased, little towns sprang up nearby. Out by the Gaol at Greenbush, an hotel was licensed in 1878, and there was an eating house near it.⁸² Edwin Swinden had Swinden Town surveyed at the foot of Horrocks Pass in 1879, and it seemed that it would become quite a settlement. A hotel, coach stop and stables were operated in the 1880s, but it ground to a halt in the depression of the mid 1890s.⁸³ The township of Miranda was surveyed on Yatala Harbour in 1881, and may have served as a resort and holiday place for the Port and Stirling North.⁸⁴



PORT AUGUSTA AND NEARBY AREA SHOWING RAILWAY AND TELEGRAPH LINES
adapted from map accompanying Lands Proposed to be offered as Workingman's Blocks, 1893, no 164, SAPP

When there was work, Port Augusta port had always been a working man's town. By 1877-80, a man with no education could sell his labour and earn a good wage. Perhaps not surprisingly, there was little enthusiasm for education in Port Augusta. This is demonstrated by examining Comparison of School Attendance - Port Augusta and Saltia, 1875. In that year, the two schools by were staffed with a teacher and an assistant teacher each. The Port's school room was a little bigger than Saltia's, but then the Port's total population was 650, whereas that of Saltia, Pichi Richi and the surrounding runs was perhaps only 300-350. Yet at Saltia, the average school attendance was 65% higher, the school was opened 40% more, and more children attended each month, on average, than in Port Augusta. Why? The fact that there were 16 "evening scholars" at Port Augusta, but none at Saltia, suggests that there may have been employment available for school-aged children in the Port. Indeed many more than 16 children may have been in employment, but only 16 bothered to continue with their education. If this was so, then there were fewer children at school in the Port because so many children had jobs, and only a minority (equal to 16) actually continued with education. Another issue effecting the attendance of children at school was the number of destitute scholars. There was probably great pressure on destitute scholars to find a job. Of the 60-100 school-aged children in Port Augusta, each month 25-65 did not attend school.

COMPARISON OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
PORT AUGUSTA and SALTIA, 1875^{a b}

School	Port Augusta	Saltia
teacher	John L Davis and female assistant	Henry W Masterman and female assistant
pupil accommodation	47	36
pupils - male	40	34
- female	24	30
- total	<u>64</u>	<u>64</u>
evening scholars	16	0
destitute scholars	5	0
average number of pupils attending per month	35	38
number of days school open	170	236
average number of days attended by each scholar	60	99

Furthermore, had the entire 64 on the Port Augusta roll in 1875 attended on any one day, there was only room for 47. Overcrowding may also have discouraged school attendance, once a pupil was able to find work. Another dimension was revealed by the editor of the Dispatch during the struggle to have a proper school erected. A great number of the Port's children were going into the world deplorably ignorant, he said, partly through want of a proper school building, partly through the indifference of their parents,⁸⁶ and partly, he could have said, because of the availability of paid employment in Port Augusta and probably surrounding properties.

By 1877, there were about 200 school-aged children in the Port. Erection of a school building had been approved, although it was claimed selection of a site was delayed by the system of centralisation, as a Board sitting in Adelaide, so far from here, could not be aware of local conditions, and Local Boards should be created.⁸⁷

Earlier rumours suggested that work would commence on the school building at the convenience of the contractor - who was busy building an hotel! This probably referred to Sara & Co. These rumours were incorrect. The truth of the matter was that the government could not purchase a suitable site at a reasonable price, because of inflated land values caused by the Port's building boom. Consequently, a Bill was passed alienating a section of the Parklands for a school. Previously Parklands to the south of Stirling Road had been alienated for railway purposes.⁸⁸ The railway

lands and school grounds set in place a process which by 1988 has seen nearly all of the original public Parklands alienated, or barred to the general public.

The first government-erected school was completed by the end of 1878. In November the teacher, Elizah Gold, called for enrolments and received 88. With the ever increasing population of the Port, the school building was immediately inadequate for the number wishing to attend. This was apparent before the first class commenced. Extensions were eventually done to the new school in 1883.⁸⁹

In 1878, there had been approaches for a school to be erected on the West Side. The South Australian Education Council decided to wait and see how enrolments went at the new school on the east before proceeding. A school was later built and opened on the West Side in August 1881. It commenced with 29 pupils on the roll.⁹⁰

In 1877, the Roman Catholic Convent school, St Augustine's, had 120 pupils. In 1882, there were 30 boys and 80 girls - over a third of the Port's school population - attending the nuns' Commercial Road school.⁹¹ At this time, only 300 of the Port's 2500 people were of the Roman Catholic faith. A great many non-Catholics must have sent their children to the Sisters.⁹² There was also an Anglican High School for Boys, as well as an establishment for young ladies, operated by Mrs A Mackay in Mackay Street.⁹³ In 1883, the private schools catered to 73 boys and 124 girls, of whom eight

pupils were boarders. Seven pupils were less than five years of age, 44 were five to ten, 107 were ten to fifteen. Nine were older than fifteen.⁹⁴

The churches received a spark of new life with the jump in population. The first resident Wesleyan minister arrived in 1878, and by September he had overseen the erection of a matchboard church in Gibson Street. It was later used as a Salvation Army Citadel, and later still, a garage and repair shop.⁹⁵ Additions were made to the Anglican Church in 1882 and various other church buildings were erected or extended during the Port's boom period.⁹⁶

The Presbyterians had not held regular services for 14 years when, in December 1881, they met in the Institute with a visiting minister. With renewed vigour they urged the appointment of a resident clergyman, and in October 1882 one finally arrived. He was Reverend Robert Mitchell. He began arousing support for a church building and in May 1883, reflecting the buoyant mood adrift in the Port, he reported that -

From our watchtower we see a great enterprise ahead. The future is pregnant with meaning to us, and by the Grace of God, we will yet reap abundant harvests in Port Augusta.⁹⁷

The Presbyterians used the Institute for services. Four hundred attended a public tea to raise funds for a building in 1883, but there were only 36 adherents on the membership roll. Still, Mitchell "was ambitious of being pastor of a real live church in the Port".⁹⁸ In January 1885, they

accepted the tender of Doig & Cole of Adelaide to erect a modest structure. It was designed by Adelaide architect T H Smeaton and opened in September 1885.⁹⁹

Once a Roman Catholic priest was living in the Port, serious fund-raising for a church building commenced. All Saints Church was opened in July 1883. It was designed by Adelaide architects, Wright and Reed, built by P T O'Dea, with Thomas Burgoyne designing the accompanying presbytery and supervising the entire project. From time to time school classes were conducted in the church building.¹⁰⁰

The competition for souls and sovereigns did the Bible Christians no good:

Our position today is lamentable. [Our] Church buildings compared with other handsome buildings, are most repellent. With the great future that Port Augusta undoubtedly has before it, it is imperative that the buildings should be modernized. Plans and specifications are prepared and tenders are being called.¹⁰¹

Thomas Burgoyne designed their additions and in 1885 they were opened. They cost £1095, most of which was borrowed.

But as their Circuit Report stated:

We lack zeal, and determined individual labour. Many are hearers of the word only, and not doers. Could the indifference that prevails be broken through our success would be ensured... We have the great confidence in believing that the weapons placed at our disposal will be rightly used to accomplish His mighty purposes.¹⁰²

Whereas people at the centre of commerce and with the interest to speculate and make profit, were promoting various developments during the boom, some of the public facilities remained as they had been when the population was much less. The only rooms for hire and casual use in Port Augusta were in the Institute. The Institute, built in 1875, became increasingly important in the community and was well used - for "conversaciones" with Brass Bands, museum displays, telephonic exhibitions, theatre, musical evenings, military displays, choral performances, boxing, opera, church services, meetings, as a classroom by the Sisters of St Joseph, and as a library.¹⁰³ The educational and culturally uplifting hopes of the 1860s gave way under the weight of popular demands and changed views, to a role as a community centre and public hall. The Corporation had a small room from which the Town Clerk attended to official business, thus enhancing the Institute's role as the community centre. Later an office and meeting room were erected by the Corporation on the adjoining block, now occupied by the Town Hall.¹⁰⁴ Although there were large rooms available in hotels, the Institute remained the central meeting place until naturally displaced in 1886 by the opening of the Town Hall.

The changes in the Port brought on by the growing population also influenced some of the public entertainments. A tradition of annual goat races was started in the 1850s and survived into the 'seventies. The track seems to have been on what is now the car park behind the State Bank, starting

on or near the present-day site of Price's Bakery, in from Church Street, thence down the access into the carpark from Chapel Street - a straight track parallel to Gibson Street and Commercial Road. . By 1865, boys in jockey costume rode the goats in a full programme of events including hurdle race, and culminating in the Port Augusta Cup.¹⁰⁵ It is not known when the annual goat races lapsed, but in 1878 many of the Port's new businessmen and a few of the old, arranged with the Crown Lands Department to have the make-shift horse racing track east of town formally given over to that purpose. The civilising pressures were trying to push the frontier back. The race course was given in care to the Corporation and remains so today.

A jockey club was formed in 1881 and has been in more-or-less continuous existence to the present-day.¹⁰⁶ Its patron in 1881 was the Governor, Sir William Jervois. Jervois bought a house in Chapel Street and may have been a regular visitor. Port Augusta loomed large as the colony's second port and as an increasingly important centre. Many important and powerful colonial personalities, and many of the town's businessmen, were associated with the racing club at this time. It became a tradition to have a big race meeting and visitors spent a week or more in Port. It was the time when pastoralists and stockowners met and seems to have evolved into a Race Week, the Port's first annual carnival and gala week. Events were organised to coincide with it, including sheep dog trials, a ball and other festivities.¹⁰⁷

The temperatures in summer regularly sit between 30-40°C in the day, and for parts of the evening. Naturally, the Gulf allowed some relief, and sea bathing was not uncommon. By 1879, it was becoming a problem, and the Corporation enacted by-laws to regulate it. Bathing was segregated by sex, into places well away from residential areas. Males could bathe north of Dunn's Jetty and females south of Government Jetty. It was an offence to wilfully expose oneself more than necessary in the act of bathing. The times of bathing were regulated, and all males were compelled to wear bathing trunks. There were numerous prosecutions for breaches of these by-laws.¹⁰⁸ In 1884, an eight metre shark was seen cruising off Dunn's Jetty, and several five to six and a half metre sharks were also sighted.¹⁰⁹

Although Port Augusta was at the frontier, then as now, cost-saving innovations and the latest technologies and developments were examined, and adopted where possible. The coming of the railways to the Port probably introduced the new water-resistant "Portland" cement, so called because, with time, it became as hard as Portland stone, compared to conventional lime cements which flaked.¹¹⁰ The foundations of the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Churches, and Gooch & Hayward's store, included beds of Portland cement, probably imported from Britain.¹¹¹ Mackay's Hotel and the Suburban Hotel were rendered with it.¹¹² In 1883, Young & Gordon's installed gas lighting in their modern emporium store.¹¹³

The telephone was invented in 1876. The following year reports of its tests in Adelaide were read with great interest in the Port. In 1878, telephonic experiments were conducted between Semaphore in Adelaide, and Port Augusta, and between Port Augusta and northern towns, using the lines of the Overland Telegraph Line.¹¹⁴ At the local Telegraph Office, Postmaster-General Todd demonstrated a telephone through which came the chimes of the Adelaide Post Office clock, as it struck nine:

We need scarcely say that but a few years ago this would have been scouted as an impossibility.¹¹⁵

In 1883, the Telegraph Office and new Railway Station were connected by telephone, and in the following year Dr Markham's Chapel Street residence was connected to the Hospital. These were individual direct line connections. There was no exchange until 1911.¹¹⁶

In many parts of Australia, there was hostility towards the Chinese. Among the influx of men to work on the construction of the Great Northern Railway were at least 100 Chinese labourers. Many in Port Augusta shared the racial concerns and prejudices of the Australian nationalists of the day. Under its editorial page banner motto "Be Just to All and Fear None" the editor of the Dispatch wrote:

The introduction of Chinese labour among the English speaking race in other countries has already lead to serious complications. The capital objection to the Chinese is that they reduce the price of labour...The best of our labouring population finding themselves superseded by the Chinese...those semi-savages

of the labour market...[white] men who have families to rear and educate, cannot possibly compete with those who only require the barest necessities of life...we should make the [Railway] Works the nucleus of a settled population into the North...so that the Navvies Camp may gradually grow into the Township. [The Chinese] come without wives and families, [and] employers of Coolie labour should be compelled to introduce [both] sexes, and then, instead of scenes of shameless immorality...we may have a settled population of Easterns who would have a certain stake in the country...and would be available for drafting into our Northern Territory, and there lay the foundations of a prosperous settlement.¹¹⁷

The most telling anti-Chinese criticism of the Dispatch was its repetition of charges that -

They live on food which would hardly keep an Englishman...they will herd together [and] are not companionable in the English working man's sense...they do not drink, they do not spend evenings in public houses.¹¹⁸

That was probably one of the most serious accusations that could be levelled at a man at Australia's frontier.

Prior to the construction of the railway, there were Chinese residents in the Port. Lee Song constantly ordered building materials from Bignell & Young, and he was building houses and doing carpentry work. A man named Woom Chum lived locally, and there were probably others. A man who may have been a prospector named Kong Fat, purchased general stores on his way through the Port in 1878.¹¹⁹

In 1879, in one of the first of several efforts over the decades by prominent individual townsfolk to oppose the popular tide of racism against the Chinese, and later the Aborigines, Thomas Young wrote a letter to the Dispatch in favour of tolerance of the Chinese.¹²⁰ A delegate from the Chinese labourers, he wrote, had called on Dr Markham with a donation of £30 for the hospital. Markham refused it, saying that in case of sickness or accident to the Chinese community, they would be admitted on the same terms as the Europeans. The man then called on Young, who apparently advised him to deposit it in a bank for a sickness fund. Perhaps the man had been sent to Young because he had a reputation for being broad-minded and having integrity. Despite the increased population, the Port was a relatively small place in 1878. For a businessman to make such a potentially unpopular point reflected strong beliefs and courage.

The local Aborigines - once they were dispossessed of the land, controlled and restricted, malnourished, mistreated, and neglected - perished in large numbers. Nevertheless, there seem to have been Aborigines in the locality of Port Augusta from time to time, but they were rarely referred to. Probably all would have had some traditional tie with the place. Sometimes Aboriginal wurlies appeared along Stirling Road.¹²¹ In 1882, hundreds of Aborigines from the north west appeared at Port Augusta West. The Dispatch reported:

Quite a number of them are unable to speak English and are exceedingly shy...in a state of almost complete nudity and all

the males have lost the two front teeth...the scarcity of water and rations in the back country is the cause of this unusual influx...encamped near the racecourse...for the most part they have not learnt to drown their sorrows in the flowing bowl...The Police supply them with rations and blankets...A small amount of trade is done in boomerangs, spears, waddies, and corroborees are held, and they go round with the hat.¹²²

This was an occasion on which Aborigines used Port Augusta as a regional service centre in the same sense as the colonists used it.

By 1884, Aborigines from all over the inland seem to have been sent to Port Augusta Gaol, to serve sentences. Many were identified as coming from points along the Great Northern Line, or from places further north, from where they would have been walked in to Hergott Springs Station.¹²³

The regional role of the Gaol saw to it that many Aborigines, who may otherwise only have known of Port Augusta through myth and song, were brought to the Port for imprisonment.

Port Augusta was a long way removed from Adelaide, by temperament as well as distance. Yet when the Government planned inland schemes, it was the Port's geographical position which, perhaps to their distaste, dominated much of their thinking in Adelaide. In 1875, a parliamentarian visited the Port as one of a party to view the terminus of the proposed railway, and

after a few hours discomforture we hurriedly steamed down the

Gulf, thanking heaven we were not compelled to stop on shore.¹²⁴
The explorer, W H Tietkins, bound for the inland in 1879,
also looked upon the frontier Port with considerable
disdain:

27 February Arrived at Port Augusta at the head of Spencer
Gulf...The town is built on a sand bank without any trace of
vegetation and shade. The white walls of the stone buildings,
the glittering roofs of corrugated iron and the red sand
surrounding all make this place very sufficiently odious and on a
hot windy day, huge columns and clouds of red sand are furiously
driven before the thrice heated blast. It is perfectly blinding
to the eyes. Add to this ants and flies in and over everything,
and Port Augusta is a pandemonium.¹²⁵

By 1881, some Adelaidians had mellowed in their attitude to
the Port somewhat, because -

the future prosperity and population of Port Augusta and
neighbourhood will be larger than Adelaide...as it is, intending
visitors to Port Augusta should cable ahead for the hotels seem
to be always pretty full...in Port Augusta, all is business,
without even time to look at the view of the hills.¹²⁶

The general expectation that business would prosper in Port
Augusta attracted many people, particularly businessmen.
While there was prosperity and Augusta was the colony's
second port,¹²⁷ businessmen, backed by the momentum of the
prosperity, were able to exert their influence. To some
extent, they were able to force back the frontier and its
attitudes. They were able to make it more like what they

imagined their South Australia should be, with many large hotels, more stylish Government buildings, large and efficient business premises, churches, horse-races, and some imaginative projects to give their businesses and the town prospects for the future. The continuation and development of their influence was, however, dependant upon the enormous expanse of inland Australia proving to be as fertile, rich in minerals, and susceptible to development as all expected it was.

Port Augusta's boom was caused by developments to enable the inland to be exploited. But very little exploitation on the scale envisaged took place, despite Port Augusta being ready, waiting. Today, many Australians still await these inland developments which still have not occurred on anything like the scale once expected.

NOTES

- 1 Statistical Register, 1904, SAPP.
- 2 A: 114-2b.
- 3 Sources for the population figures were numerous and sometimes somewhat inconsistent. Inconsistencies arose from the inclusion of the populations at Stirling North and Port Augusta West on some occasions and their exclusion on others. Another source of inconsistency arose when population figures were given for the "Corporate Town" which embraced Stuart Terrace and Flinders Terrace to Spencers Gulf, and excluded the scattered populations along Stirling Road, Carlton Parade, at Port Augusta West and a few other nearby localities. By cross-referencing and careful studies of contemporary commentaries, much if not all of the confusion has been cleared away leaving statistics which must be close to the truth. Sources of population figures used to compile chart were, for
 - 1854 A: 22-2b
 - 1856 13. 5. 1881, 13. 9. 1912, PAD; 21. 7. 1932, Adelaide Chronicle; 28. 6. 1935, Trans.
 - 1862 as for 1856, as well as A: 16-2a, 22-2b, 224, 228, 237-3b, 272-2b and Nautical Description of Port Augusta, op cit.
 - 1863 M^cLellan's estimate, see A: 118.
 - 1866 Memorials of Port Augusta, op cit; 13. 9. 1912, PAD; A: 29-2b, 38-1b.
 - 1867 A: 1, 118, 151-4.
 - 1872 13. 9. 1912, PAD, 21. 7. 1932, Adelaide Chronicle' 28. 6. 1935, Trans.
 - 1875 13. 9. 1912, PAD; 21. 7. 1932, Adelaide Chronicle, A: 56-1a, 194-1a, 237-2b, 252-2.
 - 1877 A: 192-4a.
 - 1878 A: 193-4a, 194-3a.
 - 1879 Meinig, op cit, p73; A: 153-1a.
 - 1880 A: 195-3b.
 - 1881 Census, 1891, no 74, SAPP; 13. 9. 1912, PAD; Thomson, K W, 1953, "Port Augusta", PRGSSA, no 55, pp21-5; A: 22-2b, 23-2b, 130, 194-1a, 195-3b, 216-1a.
 - 1884 Statistical Register, 1885, SAPP.
 - 1886 A: 56-1a.
 - 1889 Statistical Register, 1889; A: 46-2a.
 - 1891 Census, 1891, no 74, SAPP; Thomson, op cit.; 13. 9. 1912, PAD.
 - 1894 Statistical Register, 1894, SAPP.
 - 1899 Statistical Register, 1900, SAPP.
 - 1901 13. 9. 1912, PAD; Statistical Register, 1915, SAPP.
 - 1904 Statistical Register, 1905, SAPP.
 - 1909 Statistical Register, 1910, SAPP.
- 4 Statistical Register, 1895, SAPP.
- 5 Census, 1891, no 74, SAPP.

- 6 For further discussion see Blainey, 1971, op cit,
pp170-2.
- 7 13.9.1912, PAD.
- 8 24.11.1877, 16.3.1878, 20.4.1878, PAD.
- 9 17.11.1877, 4.12.1877, 10.1.1878, 25.4.1878, PAD.
- 10 16.8.1877, SAGG; 20.9.1878, 15.6.1887, PAD.
- 11 4.5.1878, 21.9.1878, PAD.
- 12 5.3.1880, 23.9.1881, PAD.
- 13 21.5.1880, 11.2.1881, PAD.
- 14 11.2.1881, PAD.
- 15 7.10.1881, PAD.
- 16 17.2.1882, 18.4.1882, PAD.
- 17 8.6.1878, 3.2.1883, PAD.
- 18 18.6.1884, PAD.
- 19 A: 131.
- 20 10.1.1882, PAD.
- 21 20.6.1883, 26.3.1884, PAD.
- 22 18.8.1877, 11.7.1879, PAD.
- 23 13.8.1880, PAD.
- 24 15.2.1884, PAD.
- 25 27.6.1879, PAD.
- 26 31.3.1882, PAD.
- 27 19.10.1883, PAD.
- 28 17.10.1884, PAD.
- 29 A: 67-1.
- 30 7.1.1881, PAD.
- 31 10.9.1880, PAD.
- 32 4.8.1881, PAD.
- 33 10.2.1883, PAD.

- 34 Ibid.
- 35 A: 67-2.
- 36 13.8.1880, PAD.
- 37 30.9.1882, PAD.
- 38 M^cLellan, 1962, op cit, pp54-5.
- 39 A: 35-2a.
- 40 13.9.1912, p5, PAD.
- 41 A: 140.
- 42 Meinig, op cit, p191-3.
- 43 Carter, op cit, p60.
- 44 Owners and Occupiers of Waterfrontages at Port Augusta, 1882, no 45, SAPP.
- 45 A: 240-3.
- 46 1.10.1880, PAD.
- 47 17.8.1878, PAD, A: 81-2a.
- 48 A: 154.
- 49 13.9.1881, 25.11.1881, PAD.
- 50 21 and 29.7.1884, PAD.
- 51 Daily Issue of Rations to Prisoners, Port Augusta Gaol, op cit.
- 52 14.3.1883, PAD.
- 53 13.12.1885, PAD.
- 54 21.3.1885, PAD.
- 55 Report of the Commission on Wharves and Jetties, 1881, no 27, SAPP.
- 56 A: 166-2a.
- 57 19.10.1883, PAD.
- 58 A: 129-3a.
- 59 3.2.1882, PAD.
- 60 This conclusion was reached after surveying PAD advertising for parts of the period, and from the location of business places on the map of the town

- published in the PAD of 9.6.1883.
- 61 12.9.1879, 10.12.1879, PAD.
- 62 19.10.1883, PAD.
- 63 3.2.1883, PAD.
- 64 26.1.1878, PAD.
- 65 20.10.1877, PAD.
- 66 9.6.1883, PAD.
- 67 Report of the Commission on Wharves and Jetties, op cit.
- 68 Canal from Port Augusta to Lake Eyre, 1883-4, no 88, SAPP. There is also a description and comments on the proposal in Appendix 9 of the Report into Land Industries of the Northern Territory of Australia, 1937, no 4, CPP.
- 69 7.4.1883, p39a, 8.6.1901, p2d, Adelaide Observer; Herbert, T J, 1913, "Ostrich Farming in Australia", Agricultural Gazette of NSW, 2 June, v24, pt1, pp511-21
Rolls, E C, 1984, They All Ran Wild, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, pp319-21.
- 70 Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, op cit, pp20-1.
- 71 9.6.1886, PAD.
- 72 A: 43-1a.
- 73 Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, op cit, pp20-1.
- 74 A: 42-2.
- 75 A: 153-1.
- 76 A: 128-1b.
- 77 19.8.1882, PAD.
- 78 9.6.1883, PAD.
- 79 27.9.1882, 9.6.1883, PAD.
- 80 13.8.1880, PAD.
- 81 A: 194-3.
- 82 A: 132-2.
- 83 20.2.1880, 17.3.1882, PAD.
- 84 20.5.1881, PAD.

- 85 Report of the Education Board, 1876, no 26, SAPP.
- 86 8.12.1877, PAD.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 2 and 23.11.1878, 20.6.1883, PAD.
- 90 Port Augusta West Primary School, 1981, op cit, pp7-12.
- 91 19.8.1882, PAD.
- 92 A: 75-3a.
- 93 15.9.1877, 24.11.1877, PAD; A: 85-3.
- 94 Statistical Register, 1884, SAPP.
- 95 Oates, op cit, p6.
- 96 3.12.1881, PAD.
- 97 "Report from Port Augusta", Presbyterian Magazine, May 1883, no 115, p76.
- 98 Ibid, November 1883, no 149, p121.
- 99 19.1.1885, 28.9.1885, PAD.
- 100 17.7.1883, PAD.
- 101 Oates, op cit, p6.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Palmer, op cit.
- 104 A: 79-3.
- 105 28.10.1892, PAD.
- 106 9.10.1878, 13.5.1881, PAD.
- 107 A: 3-5, 104-6.
- 108 14.1.1881, 6.1.1883, PAD.
- 109 25.3.1927, Trans.
- 110 Stacy, W, 1984, "Bridges", Pichi Richi Patter, v12, no 2 pp23-30.
- 111 15.5.1883, 7.10.1883, 19.1.1885, PAD.
- 112 20.4.1878, 3.2.1883, PAD.

- 113 A: 271-4a.
- 114 5. 1. 1878, 11. 5. 1878, PAD.
- 115 20. 4. 1880, PAD.
- 116 Personal communication with M J Gooley, Telecom Archivist, King William Street, Adelaide.
- 117 5. 1. 1878, PAD.
- 118 Ibid.
- 119 Grocery Day Book, 6. 12. 1877-31. 7. 1878, B&Y.
- 120 10. 7. 1879, PAD.
- 121 A: 21-3a.
- 122 3, 10 and 17. 3. 1882, PAD.
- 123 Return of Prisoners at Port Augusta Gaol, op cit.
- 124 A Trip to Port Augusta and Back by a Citizen of Adelaide, 1881, Adelaide.
- 125 Mincham, 1977, op cit, p151.
- 126 A Trip to Port Augusta... op cit.
- 127 3. 2. 1881, PAD.

This chapter traces the reasons for Port Augusta's decline and its effects on the town.

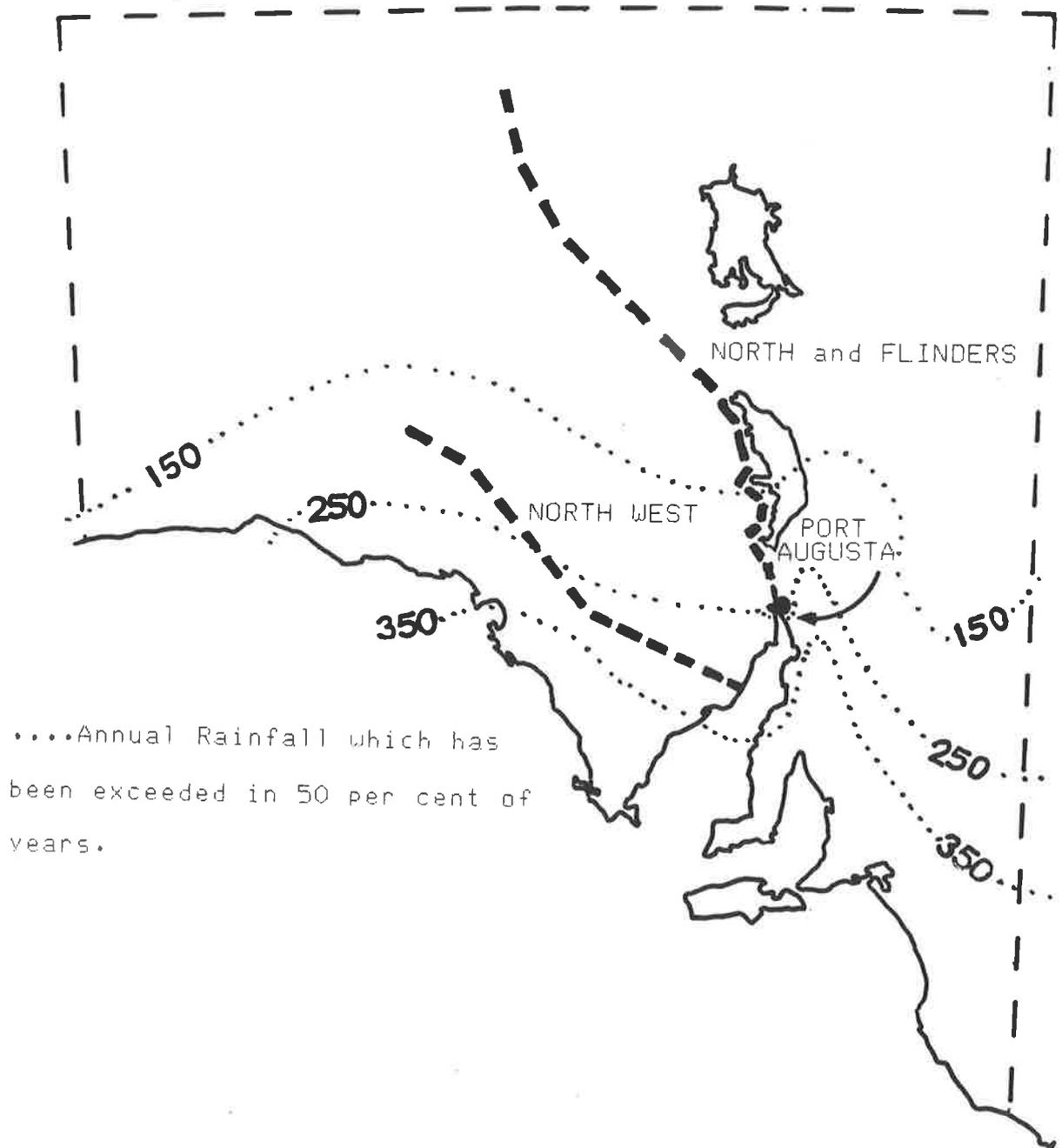
Much of the Australian continent is characterised by clear skies and the absence of rain.¹ The first British settlers of Port Augusta were impressed if not stunned by the aridity, and rainfall records were kept by Hiram Mildred from at least 1859.² Rainfall figures are in the Appendices. Any records prior to this have not been located, although it is possible A D Tassie kept them. This series of annual rainfall figures is one of the most complete in Australia.³

At Port Augusta, north and north west, rainfall is exceptional and drought is the norm.⁴ Before the Great Drought of 1864-6, pastoralists made virtually no allowance for drought. Since then there have been gradually increasing precautions.

Pastoralists often appear to have "gambled" on rain, rather than make possibly expensive provisions against drought. This "gamble" probably pervaded the region. Many pastoral workers were employed by these "gamblers". Those in the Port who gave the pastoralists credit and were equally dependent upon good seasons, "gambled" with them. This fitted comfortably into the frontier lifestyle.

The pastoralists were usually capitalists, big men, small in number. They were so small in number that in 1884 it was

GUIDE TO PREDICTING RAINFALL IN PORT AUGUSTA AND
ITS HINTERLAND⁵



said only four men leased the entire pastures to the north west of Port Augusta. This number was disputed by some, such as Thomas Burgoyne, who said No - the number was more like thirteen.⁶ Clearly, their numbers were low. Most of these pastoral lessees resided in Adelaide and gambled in the northern pastoral industry with their earnings from other more reliable pursuits. For many, when they visited their holdings it was as the big men, the big gamblers, who would make money despite South Australian laws to hinder pastoralists' and during their visit their base was usually Port Augusta. When they returned south they took back their gambler's risk-taking view of the north and of Port Augusta.

The gamble was complicated by the lack of predictability of rainfall, added to confused thinking over the usefulness of water.⁸ Even during the Great Drought of 1864-6, this was illustrated with reports of adequate water in several of the drought-stricken Flinders areas, but no feed. Adequate water aggravated the problem, because in good seasons it allowed the country to be comfortably overstocked. When rain failed to come, every twig of vegetation was consumed. This appears to have often done unnoticed, irreparable damage to the countryside, and the edible plants in particular. When the country recovered, it failed to return to the best condition it was in prior to the last drought. After several bad seasons, certain heavily grazed plants did not regenerate when rain came and this was probably overlooked. Thus, there were ever decreasing levels of recovery from drought, somewhat like the decreasing yields faced by the

wheat farmers.⁹

Over a given period, taking into consideration the nature and intensity of land use, rainfall is the best single objective indicator of drought. Pastoralists often set this given period according to subjective goals, and failed to take account of the land or its vegetation. For long-term survival, the period probably should have been matched with how long it took valuable edible plants to recover from drought grazing, in a land where drought is the norm. But the "gamblers" did not think this was the way the game was played. Part of the reason for this was that they did not know the pattern of rainfall occurrence.¹⁰

Although the rainfall in the north and north west is somewhat less than at the Port, time has shown that the Port's rainfall pattern is typical of the inland regions upon which it depended.¹¹ Furthermore, the extensive series of annual rainfall figures for the Port (listed in the Appendices) is an excellent basis for generalisations about rainfall. Port Augusta's average rainfall of 200-300mm, or 233mm to be precise, is very low even by Australian standards.

Putting average rainfalls aside, in the past for every two years in which it was relatively wetter, there were three years in which it was relatively drier. Indeed, Port Augusta and its hinterland were drier than the averages indicate.¹² What was considered "average" rainfall was, in

fact, marginally inadequate for the pastoral industry after about two years. They must then have had a "good" or "very good" year - another "average" year and they began to suffer.

If we accept that "average" rainfall was marginally inadequate, then it follows that three "average" years of rainfall was defacto drought, that drought or defacto drought years "broken" by one or more years of so-called average rainfall was no break at all. It is a minor variation of this principal to say that where "average" seasons were interspersed with better seasons, this constituted a run of "good years", for both pastoralists and Port Augusta.¹³ Between 1885-1908, the Flinders and north, from where most of the Port's exported produce came and where most of its imported stores were sent, suffered 13 bad years and three mediocre years, out of a total of 23.

Furthermore, in the Flinders between 1889-95 there was a continual pegging back of the wheat frontier and consequent losses, despite good seasons for pastoralists. Thus, even in the seven "good" years, there was a period of recession for the region and the Port, although it must be conceded, there were the odd bright spots.

In the north west, bad seasons outweighed good by four to one, and to complete the general view, Port Augusta's rainfall was just as disheartening as that of the Flinders

SUMMARY OF THE SEASONS, - Port Augusta and Hinterland,
1885-1908.

	Good Seasons	Total	Indeterminate Seasons	Total	Bad Seasons	Total
Flinders and North	1889-95	7	1904-6	3	1886-8; 1896- 03; 1907-8	13
North West	1889-90; 1903 -4; 1908	5			1885-8; 1891- 02; 1905-7	19
Port Augusta	1889-93; 1906 -8	<u>7</u>	1903-5	<u>3</u>	1885-8; 1894- 02	<u>13</u>
		<u>19</u>		<u>6</u>		<u>45</u>

and north. Many old-timers declared that, overall, the country was in a worse state than during the drought of the 'sixties.¹⁴

As Meinig and others have said of so many townships, Port Augusta was bound to the sequence of frontier expansion and depended upon and mirrored its hinterland.¹⁵ Consequently, it was ground down by constant runs of "bad seasons". If it is accepted that these "bad seasons" were the norm, then we can see that what was really happening to Port Augusta, through its hinterland, was a natural, necessary but depressing and painful downward re-adjustment to the real nature of the hinterland's overvalued productive capabilities.

Two other factors developed between 1885-1908 which depressed the Port. The first was a result of the hinterland's downward re-adjustment. The north west, from which the Port received between a third and a fifth of its wool, was more or less abandoned.¹⁶ Secondly, less produce was sent to the Port from the Flinders and north because the railway increasingly tended to siphon it off to Adelaide, via Quorn and Terowie.

The result of this period of drought and depression is seen in the trade figures for 1885-1901. With the exception of Shipping, dealt with in a previous chapter, complete series of figures are not available for most of the period. This could be because Port Augusta's trade had become relatively

DETAILS of TRADE - PORT AUGUSTA 1885 -1901¹⁷

	Bales of Wool Shipped	Wheat Exports in Bushels	Value of Imports (£)	Value of Exports (£)
1885			104 000	694 000
1886			44 000	178 000
1887			73 000	376 000
1888			15 000	502 000
1889			13 000	340 000
1890			8 000	710 000
1891	44 068	1 587 777	35 000	715 000
1892	38 192	452 817	22 000	378 000
1893	48 330	1 325 188	17 000	542 000
1894	38 659	874 345	8 000	329 000
1895	41 962	399 050	12 000	290 000
1896	28 876	10 796	7 000	103 000
1897	21 307	nil	17 000	200 000
1898	19 853	nil	11 000	224 000
1899	17 791	1 320	7 000	90 000
1900	17 849	592 629		
1901	12 403			

insignificant by this time and did not warrant particular attention or the publishing of official statistics.

Nevertheless, shipping figures for the period faithfully reflect the trade figures.

Wool exports tumbled almost continuously from 1893 until 1901, by which time they were down 400%. Wool prices were very low during this period, aggravating the decline.¹⁸

Wheat exports varied more responsively to the seasons. 1893 was a record year for the export of Breadstuffs from the Port. After that year, the grip of drought and the incessant cropping of exhausted fields in pre-superphosphate days,¹⁹ reduced wheat exports from 1 325 000 bushels in 1893, to 400 000 in 1895, and 10 000 bushels the following year. No wheat left Port Augusta in 1897 or 1898 and only a little over 1000 bushels was sent away in 1899, after which there was a partial recovery.

The collapse of wheat exports would have had a most serious effect on the Port. By 1893, Dunn's Mill was probably the largest local employer²⁰ and when wheat exports collapsed the wages of many workers would have greatly declined, with a flow-on effect to the rest of the town.

The Port's exports were shackled to the inland. With the deterioration in the season from 1887 to 1888 there was a corresponding deterioration in exports for 1888 and 1889. In the following two years, the seasons were remarkably good and from 1889 to 1890 exports doubled and remained at that

high level in the next year, echoing the very good second season of 1890. In 1897, the value of exports picked up despite the previous season steadily deteriorating from dry to very dry. This could be because of the first gold exports from Tarcoola in 1897-8.

Imports into Port Augusta had always existed in the shadow of Adelaide. The import needs of the inland tended to be for more regular, smaller quantities than exports. It may have been more convenient to tranship goods north by rail. If so, the true extent of "imports" to the inland would not be revealed in Port figures. After 1887, shipping imports through Port Augusta appear to have become relatively insignificant, although the figures could be understated if many of the goods were transhipped by the coastal trade from Adelaide. Nevertheless, the decline in imports followed the trends of the other indicators.

It appears that between 1900 and 1908 these downward trends persisted. Nowhere is there any suggestion that this was not so. For example, exports for 1904 and 1909 are similar in size to the depressed figure of 1886, and lower than figures for 1887-95 and 1897-8. Imports seemed to have remained at the very low 1899 levels in these years too.

During 1884, rich silver finds were made in the Barrier Ranges. This added heat to the cauldron of debate about railways, and the ensuing Barrier Railway debates came to the boil in 1883-4 and again in 1888-91. Both debates were

greatly influenced by the routes of existing railways and the costs of further construction.

The proposed routes to the New South Wales border were, firstly, from Terowie to Cockburn to connect the existing broad gauge Adelaide line. This proposal linked the main point of imports and exports to the mines, Adelaide, and eliminated the need for a change of gauge. It was also argued that most supplies and equipment going to the Barrier Ranges would be sent from Adelaide, so it was a direct route for that traffic. But the broad gauge line cost much more to construct than narrow gauge, and would handicap Pirie and Augusta in competing for the trade.²¹ Adelaide interests also put forward a route via Morgan. There was a lack of water and little pastoral occupation along the route, and the Surveyor-General scuttled that proposal with ease.²² A broad gauge line from Burra was rejected as too expensive.²³ A fourth proposed route was from Port Germein to Orroroo and Cockburn, but it was rejected for many good reasons.²⁴

Two routes were proposed which advantaged Port Augusta: from Hawker connecting to the Great Northern Line, and from Carrieton to connect to the Quorn-Orroroo line. Port Augusta interests argued that the routes were shorter distances to the seaboard than the alternatives, thus cartage would be cheaper. But no water was found along the Hawker route, and since water was essential for steam trains, this proposal was eliminated.²⁵ Of the Carrieton route, the Commissioner for Public Works, Thomas Playford

said:

the Carrieton route was out of the question [because] this railway was one on which a large amount of stock would be carried, and the market for stock was not at Port Augusta. Stock came from that direction instead of going to it.²⁶

Although it was acknowledged that Augusta was a good port, it was not much used for imports. If Augusta was made the Barrier port, goods would have to be transhipped from Adelaide.²⁷ The claims of Port Augusta were therefore summarily dismissed and it was a choice between Pirie and Adelaide.²⁸

The government decided to run the line to the Barrier Ranges from a point (Petersburg) between Port Adelaide, Port Pirie and Port Augusta. This was the shortest construction route of those proposed. It was an important fact that it ran through country which could yield 16 500 bales of wool, to a point at Cockburn from which 46 500 bales might be hauled into South Australia. As Andrew Tennant said of Silverton during the debates, "It might be here today and gone tomorrow", and the railway might end up relying upon the pastoral industry to earn its livelihood.²⁹ This was a compelling reason for building a cheaper narrow gauge line through the best pastoral country, to the mine. In view of the rivalry between the three ports, the government-

decided upon Petersburg, which, being the junction of three lines, a fair chance was given to the northern ports against Port Adelaide.³⁰

It would give the producer of wool the advantage of sending to

Port Augusta if vessels were loading there; it would give vessels at Port Pirie the same opportunity of getting freight there if desirable; and it did not throw Port Adelaide out altogether.³¹

By November 1884, when the Petersburg and New South Wales Border Railway bill was passed, there was some consternation that Port Pirie was destined to become a major port. It was "a creek", "an inferior port", "a ditch".³² It is questionable, however, that Pirie was "only the bit of a dug out place" its detractors claimed.³³ Captain Munro stated at a public meeting at Port Pirie, in 1884, that he took his 1420t vessel, Knight of the Thistle, out of Pirie drawing 5.76 metres, although the Marine Board mistakenly advised clearance only to a depth of 5.33 metres. Captain Pratt said that he would have no hesitation in loading to 6 metres³⁴ - good clearance by Port Adelaide standards, and close to par with Augusta.

At the time, the rise of Port Pirie was not of great moment to the booming Port Augusta, but as each year brought a further decline in Port Augusta's fortunes, there were bitter regrets:

the people of Port Augusta were so certain of the superiority of their position that they did not trouble themselves about it as they should have done, and they have had to suffer for their laxity.³⁵

This laxity contributed to Augusta becoming little better than another dying Gulf port. Although the Barrier mines

COMPARATIVE POPULATIONS - PORTS AUGUSTA AND PIRIE. ³⁶

Year	Augusta	Pirie
1881	2 200	901
1894	2 566	4 556
1908	1 358	11 267

were in the north east, residents of Port Augusta expected their dominating geographical position and good harbour to trump the claims of their opponents. In not winning the fight for the Barrier trade, Port Augusta was doomed to lose other fights - for smelters, port and channel improvements, and associated business. The Barrier mines were the richest in what the people of Port Augusta realised was an otherwise desolate and disappointing hinterland. Expectations declined markedly, and Augusta was no longer synonymous with inland developments and activity. The population of Augusta stagnated and declined, and that of the winner, Pirie, surged ahead.

Construction of the railway line commenced in 1885, and reached the New South Wales border in June 1887, by which time Silverton was on its last legs. However, an enormous source of silver and lead was discovered at nearby Broken Hill. This triggered a speculative mining boom, and renewed attempts to tear the Barrier trade away from Port Pirie. The most serious and persistent threat was mounted by the Adelaide merchants and Port Adelaide shippers, but there was also a Royal Commission into the feasibility of building a railway from Port Augusta to Cockburn.³⁷

From Port Augusta, the mayors of the three local Corporations of Port Augusta, Port Augusta West and Davenport, as well as businessmen, government officials and others, united in 1889 to push their claim as "the Natural Shipping Port of Inlet and Outlet for the Barrier Range".

They argued that the depth at Port Augusta harbour compared favourably with that of Port Jackson - "so much better than anywhere else" - a veiled reference to Port Pirie. The stream was four or five times wider than Port Pirie. There was inadequate wharfage at Port Pirie. Sometimes vessels had to dock two and three abreast from the Pirie wharves. Goods, particularly Oregon timber from the United States of America, had to be lightered into Pirie because Samuel's Creek, the early settlers' name for Pirie, was too shallow for the lumber ships.

If there was a line of rail from the Barrier to Port Augusta, it was said that Huddart, Parker & Co would put on a line of steamers to take the extraordinarily valuable smelted metals to the United Kingdom. The Mayor of Broken Hill said it would certainly be an advantage to have access to Port Augusta, and I K Stubbins, timber merchant of the Barrier, declared:

if a line of railway went to Port Augusta we would send our trade there on account of the greater depth of water and the more room there is for stacking timber, which Port Pirie does not afford. It is only the beginning for Broken Hill...this place is only half of what it will be.³⁸

The Manager of the Silverton Tramway Co wanted a direct line to Port Augusta. There were twelve ships outside Port Pirie at this moment, he said and they could not get berths. And so the arguments for Port Augusta went on.

But the Pirie businessmen fought back. "We want more

railway rolling stock - that is the chief trouble", said J Darling & Sons, Pirie wharf agent. It was said that if the harbour was deepened, it would double wharf frontages. Claims of delays to shipping were disputed with evidence of vessels' fast loadings. "Port Pirie can cope with three times the shipping it does", said a local storekeeper and timber merchant. Pirie had the rail to Broken Hill, and if the government spent more on railway rolling stock, and £17 000 on the harbour, most complaints would be satisfied. This was the most economical solution and it was taken by the government.³⁹

Solomon Israel summed up Port Augusta's plight:

At present we are very much down. A lot of public money has been expended here, and except the wharves, it is bringing in nothing. Port Augusta possesses less than half the people she did some years ago, and that is not only due to the general depression, but development has not taken place.⁴⁰

Twenty years later, the Dispatch reflected on the loss of the Barrier trade:

Despite the unique advantages of Port Augusta over all the other ports, the political influence of Port Pirie was too strong and that which by geographical right was Port Augusta's was diverted to Port Pirie. This blunder has cost South Australia hundreds of thousands of pounds and with the increasing trade of Port Pirie its unsuitableness as a harbour and its natural disadvantages are daily becoming apparent.⁴¹

There was bad feeling between Port Augusta and Port Pirie which dated from 1884, and reached its peak in the late 1880s. Whenever a sea captain, tired of waiting for a Pirie anchorage, wrote an angry letter to the press abusing that port, the Dispatch invariably reprinted it, "as a sacred duty".⁴² Sometimes Pirie and Augusta were prepared to bury the hatchet and combine to fight the overwhelming influence of Adelaide, rallying around the cry "Centralisation". On the rare occasions that this happened, the northern outports had a few successes against the throttling influence of Adelaide.⁴³ Yet the rivalry remained. The two ports eyed each other like cautious dogs, but not without humour. For example, in 1893 a Pirie patriot wrote-

Port Augusta is the biggest hole in South Australia. It would be a still bigger hole if it were not for an accumulation of sand...you can't get a fair sized ship up to the wharf without running into a mud bank...Port Augusta has more pubs to the square yard than any other town in South Australia. They don't drink there, they wallow...what with the liquor they drink and the mud that they have in the harbour, they are muddied all the year round...there are people in Port Pirie who can lick a Port Augustian any day and come up smiling.⁴⁴

In his article on country towns and Australian regional history, Weston Bate suggested that the most promising way to measure and confirm details of social change, such as befell Port Augusta after the boom of the late 'seventies and early 'eighties, was with a demographic approach.⁴⁵ If

we apply his advice, we can see that the rising population of 1875-83 excited onlookers as much as the later declining population demoralised them. The puncturing of inflated expectations blinded later observers to the Port's relatively high population for parts of the 1890s compared to the boom time. Local historian Alan M^cLellan was such an observer who repeatedly referred to the decline of half or two thirds of the Port's population in the 1890s, although study of the figures reveals not decline but fluctuation.⁴⁶

Arriving at figures for the population of various parts of the town is complicated. The geographical areas upon which such figures were based varied. For example, before 1889 the population figures were sometimes specifically nominated for those people living on or near Stirling Road, and in the Extension. However, after the inclusion of these suburbs into the Corporation of Davenport in 1888, some of the Stirling Road and Extension population figures were lumped with those for the remainder of the east and north suburban area, and shown as "Davenport". (Port Augusta West was also incorporated in 1888, making a total of three local government areas at Port Augusta.) When the Corporations of Davenport and Port Augusta West came into existence, an additional complication was that their populations were sometimes shown individually and sometimes shown with those of the Corporation of Port Augusta, as simply "Port Augusta". With careful scrutiny and cross-checking, a picture of the Suburban Population Distribution, 1881-1908 has been developed.

 SUBURBAN POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, 1881-1908⁴⁷

	1881	1884	1889	1891	1894	1899	1901	1904	1908
Main part of town	1318	1340	1050	1100	1250	1441	933	860	748
Stirling Road	307	332	153	129	135	120	163	86	80
Extension	171	185	95	174	166	110	68	54	30
Remainder of East and North Suburbs	194	537	237	766	685	600	600	420	280
West Side	210	216	185	336	330	300	369	225	220
TOTALS	2200	2610	1720	2505	2566	2571	2133	1645	1358

The effect of the downturn in the Port's fortunes is best seen in the general population trends. The temporary rises of population apparent in the totals for Suburban Population Distribution, 1881-1908 no longer held promise, and the falls were more or less anticipated.⁴⁸

Still, by the 1890s, the arid hinterland was a little better secured and the Port benefitted from certain basic activity regardless of season. There was regular shipping business, not just for the delivery of stores but also railway material and coal. The transport system was "drought-proofed", even if the pastoral industry it served and depended upon, was not.

As can be seen from the chart of Suburban Population Distribution, the more settled townspeople mostly lived in the main part of town, and it was there that the better-off visitors probably stayed, particularly in the hotels. Most of the newcomers attracted to the Port in the boomtime did not have money for hotel rooms. They probably lived in temporary accommodation outside the main part of town. These were the newest areas in the east and north, as well as the Extension and Stirling Road. Initially the newcomers would have camped under canvas and built humpies. When the Extension was sub-divided, the building of more economical wooden houses probably commenced and, with the offering of other areas for sale, the same would have happened there. Some people may have purchased a block upon which to permanently camp and others may have camped on other

people's lots, or on unsold suburban land, of which there was no shortage.

When work became scarce, the newer suburban areas probably tended to shed population more than the older. When the demand for labour increased, this process was more or less reversed. Thus a pattern of fluctuating population seems to have been established in which some suburban parts gained three times their population, or lost half or two thirds of it, from time to time. In spite of this general explanation, some of the fluctuations in the distribution of the population throughout the suburbs and in the main part of town cannot be accounted for. Perhaps some fluctuations were related to the way figures were collected, counting transients and visitors on some occasions and not counting them on others.

When the Great Northern Line was extended to Oodnadatta between 1889 and 1891, the Port's population jumped by 785. Of this number, two thirds resided in the newer north and east suburban area and about 20% lived on the West Side. The population of 1894 probably reflected the good season, 1893. Of the people who came for the renewed railway activity and remained for whatever reason, by 1894 about 150 had relocated in the older, main part of town. The Census of 1891 revealed that there were 38 uninhabited houses in the older area, and we can presume that more of them would have been substantial and more attractive than the uninhabited houses of either Davenport or the West Side. People from

the suburbs probably occupied a number of them over time. It can be seen that by 1899, the overall population of the Port had actually increased by five. This is hard to account for in a period of general depression. People may have come to the larger country towns such as Port Augusta, rather than remain in the city. Others may have been "humping their blueys" to the West Australian goldfields, or perhaps to Tarcoola, and their numbers temporarily boosted the population. It is not clear.

The population fluctuations on the West Side merit attention. Like the main part of town, the West Side was older and more established. Still, its population fluctuated 100% between 1889 and 1901. Unlike the Stirling Road area, the West Side seems to have had a permanent population base of around 200. This is not unexpected, because the West was really a separate town. The West Side population's stability may well have been sustained by having two main places of employment, east and west of the Gulf. To some extent, they probably had their own hinterland, the north west. They may well have excluded eastsiders from jobs on their side when they could. It was more than the Gulf between them but the Gulf was enough. The West Side was consequently a more closed place than Port Augusta. There was a jump in the West Side's population between 1889 and 1891, which seems to have held through the 'nineties. Perhaps the initial jump was caused by increased employment opportunities on the east due to the extension of the railway to Oodnadatta. Why did the population remain

more or less stable throughout the 'nineties? It cannot just be explained away with the Tarcoola gold rush because that goldfield, although discovered in 1893, was not exploited until 1898.⁴⁹ In 1896, there was a flurry of activity when the old defective coastal telegraph line to Perth was replaced with one across the Eyre Peninsula.⁵⁰ But this would only have boosted employment on the West Side for six to twelve months. Throughout the 1890s to the turn of the century, the abandonment of many north west leases was a contrary influence, which would have worked to depress economic activity and employment at Port Augusta West and the east side. It is not known what caused the West Side's population to jump by 82% between 1889-91 and what sustained it at that level throughout the depression of the 'nineties. There was a lot of mining activity at Tarcoola between 1899-1901 which could account for the 23% increase in the Port Augusta West population during these years.⁵¹

At the turn of the century Port Augusta West's population was relatively stable, but the older main part of Port Augusta and the extension had lost a total of 550 between 1899-1901. The Stirling Road area increased in population a little, and the large number of people living in the east and north areas of the suburbs remained stable, at 600. In 1903, the eighth or ninth unbroken season of drought, the hinterland's entire wheat crop failed and there were no shipments out of the Port.⁵² It would appear that in 1904 as a consequence, there was a further general decline of 488 in the population, including 40% of the West Side's

population, and 30% of the previously stable east and north suburban population. This is an indicator of the relative importance of wheat, even at this late stage.

Thus, between 1899 and 1904 the overall population declined 40%, and by 1908 it had declined again by 13% of the 1904 figure. Many Port Augusta buildings had been demolished and carted away during the 'nineties.⁵³ Wooden houses changed hands for a few pounds, the Extension Hotel was delicensed, and the Western Hotel was, for a period, let for £3 a week.⁵⁴

What sort of place was Port Augusta in the 1890s?

Study of the 1891 Census provides some answers. By 1891, about half the population lived in the older main part of town, where almost every second building was of solid construction: stone and a few of brick. Half the houses were small by today's standard, three or four rooms, and this was the usual size of Port Augusta domestic residences. Most residences probably consisted of two main rooms, being a bedroom and dining/sitting room, with a lean-to running along the back wall which was divided into a kitchen and a second bedroom. A door from the kitchen usually led to the dining/sitting room, and another kitchen door led to the second bedroom. A third kitchen door opened to the backyard, in which was a pan toilet and in a separate shed, the laundry tubs and wash-house. Many older Port Augusta houses still display an ancestry from this basic design.

In the main part of the township area, every fifth building was a large stone store, shop, or hotel and there were several large stone houses. The remainder of the houses and other structures were of wood and probably poorly built. One in four or five houses was vacant, including some stone houses.

Four in every ten people lived in the suburbs to the north and east by 1891. Probably the densest suburban clusters of little three- and four-roomed wooden houses were along the Park Lands end of Stirling Road, in East Park along Carlton Parade and a little further east and in Port Augusta East at the Parkland end of those blocks running back to the Corporation's limits at Stuart Terrace. It is also apparent from examination today that there was a cluster of houses north of Paterson Street, built along the western side of the sandhill which runs down to the Gulf from Flinders Terrace. There was probably another collection of houses around the west end of the Extension, towards Carlton Parade. Between these main collections of dwellings there would have been houses scattered around, but fewer and fewer further away from the main part of town. Most of the suburban area was sub-divided by 1883, but largely remained unoccupied until the 1950s. Named suburban areas which do not appear to have been much or at all occupied in 1891 were Ulundi, Edithville and Edithville East, Hill View Park, Crown Park, Augusta Park and its Extension, and Port Augusta North except along the east side of Tassie Street. An area,

 ACCOMMODATION IN LOCAL CORPORATION AREAS - 1891⁵⁵

Details	Port Augusta		Davenport		Port Augusta West	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
houses - inhabited	248	87	173	84	67	85
- uninhabited	38	13	34	16	12	15
rooms per house						
- one	8	3	1	0.5	2	2.5
- two	23	8	26	13	5	6
- three-four	141	49	127	61	44	56
- five-six	61	21	36	17	11	14
- six +	53	19	17	8.5	8	10
- unknown	-	-	-	-	9	11.5
cnstrn material						
- stone	121	42	51	25	12	15
- brick	7	2.5	3	1	1	1
- iron	4	1.5	-	-	7	10
- wood	154	54	153	74	51	65
- canvas	-	-	-	-	-	-
- unknown	-	-	-	-	6	9

 POPULATION of MALES and FEMALES in the CORPORATION of PORT AUGUSTA, 1881 and 1891.⁵⁶

	males	females	total population
1881	755	563	1318
1891	628	646	1278

shown on maps of the time as The Boiling Down, upon which stood the ramshackled remains of the thriving industry of 25 years before, probably remained vacant until the Commonwealth Railway put buildings there around 1920.

Almost three quarters of the houses erected in the suburbs were of two to four rooms, and built of wood. Of the 107 suburban dwelling, 34 were vacant.⁵⁷

There were a number of undesirable areas in the east: Camel Flat, where camels, goats and probably bullocks bellowed and reigned supreme; Augusta Park Extension, upon which were the Slaughtering Reserve and Manure Depot; and probably The Boiling Down. Sand and dust would have been inescapable in the suburbs and a nuisance everywhere.

The West Side was probably as closely built as the main part of the east side township, with most of the 77 buildings sited upon an area no larger than the east side's Commercial-Mildred-Gibson-Flinders Terrace block. Unlike the older part of the east, three quarters of its buildings were of wood or iron construction and, unlike the east, quite a number of its stores and shops were made of these materials, whereas on the east side the same firms had stone premises. As elsewhere, one in six or seven houses was uninhabited.

Within the area of the Corporation of Port Augusta, between 1881 and 1891 there was an overall 3% fall in population.

However, the balance of the sexes changed markedly, reflecting the decade of economic adversity. In 1881, there were 192 more males than females. This is accounted for by the availability of employment in the Port for men in general, and single younger men in particular. By 1891, the balance was almost even, with a slight preponderance of females.

Closer inspection of the Corporation of Port Augusta Census details for 1891 reveal about 50% more females than males in the age group 5-14, and 33% more females in the age group 15-20. If there was a similar preponderance of females in the other age groups of younger adults, one would presume that many married men and possibly their older sons, had left the womenfolk and children in the Port while they sought work in the hinterland. However, this pattern does not exist among the remainder of the adults, and there is no inkling of what the explanation for it might be. The population of the Corporation of Davenport displayed the same odd predominance of females amongst the 5 to 20 year olds. There also tended to be more adult females than males. The unavailability of employment probably accounted for the absence of the men. The composition of the smaller population of the West Side was more evenly spread across the age groups than was apparent in the other two Corporation areas.

The 'nineties was a time of generally falling wages. A labourer working six days a week earnt around £1.16.6, a

AGE DETAILS OF POPULATION - 1891⁵⁸

Corpora- tion	sex	all ages	0 4	5 14	15 20	21 24	25 29	30 34	35 39	40 44	45 49	50 54	55 59	60 64	65 69	70 74	75 79	80 84	85+
Port Augusta	male	628	94	107	58	60	66	71	44	39	27	20	10	10	10	5	5	2	-
	f/m	646	109	151	87	60	72	40	35	20	21	22	15	9	2	2	-	-	-
Davenport	male	408	81	115	33	18	31	25	27	15	17	16	9	9	10	2	-	-	-
	f/m	487	94	138	54	27	36	35	23	22	15	16	10	9	3	4	1	-	-
Port Augusta West	male	167	29	51	12	10	11	9	14	7	5	4	7	2	5	-	-	1	-
	f/m	169	32	45	20	9	13	19	6	5	9	4	4	2	-	1	-	-	-

WEEKLY COST OF FOOD, 1891⁵⁹

Single Person	Man, Wife, two primary school- aged children		
1 Kg good quality beef	1/-	2 Kg good quality beef	2/-
1 Kg mutton	6 ^d	1 Kg mutton	6 ^d
1 dozen eggs	6 ^d	1 rabbit	5 ^d
3 litres milk	5 ^d	1 Kg butter	2/-
3 x 1 Kg loaves bread	9 ^d	8 x 1 Kg loaves bread	2/-
1/2 Kg butter	1/-	4 Kg potatoes	4 ^d
2 Kg potatoes	2 ^d	2 Kg onions	3 ^d
1 Kg onions	1 1/2 ^d	2 dozen eggs	1/-
1 cabbage	2 ^d	9 litres milk	1/3 ^d
		2 cabbages	4 ^d
	---		---
	4/7 ^d		10/1 ^d

blacksmith £2.11.0, a barman £1.10.0, and a barmaid earned half as much for the same work, that is 15/- per week. These wage rates were down 3/- to 5/- a week on recent earlier rates. Of this, a single man may have spent about 5/- per week on food, and a man with a wife and two primary school-aged children may have spent perhaps 10/- on food.⁶⁰ Rents seem to have been around 3/- to 7/- per week. A person in regular work would have been reasonably comfortable. However, for many of the Port's workers, employment depended on the seasons and if a run of dry seasons struck, none but permanent public servants were guaranteed a regular salary.

The decline in the Port's fortunes was reflected in church affairs. Declining collections created financial pressures, because of the continuing need to repay debts accumulated during the building boom. Some competition developed in the timing of functions which could yield funds. Old adversaries, the Bible Christians and the Wesleyans, clashed over such an issue in 1889. They held their anniversary celebrations and fund-raising activities on the same day. Their congregations had much in common, including the burden of each having to conduct a chapel and each keep a minister. By 1897, these financial reasons forced them to unite and in 1905 the united congregation only numbered 53. Yet relatively heavy financial burden remained and they "were always in trouble" during this period.

The Anglican minister was forced to depart in 1887, as lack

of funds made it impossible to keep up stipend payments. The Anglican's fortunes did revive somewhat. The minister was replaced within 12 months and some minor building works were undertaken during the 'nineties. But by 1903

special efforts were required by the congregation to meet the necessary payment of the minister's stipend and the working expenses of the church.⁶¹

The Presbyterian minister, Reverend Robert Mitchell, left the Port in 1894, perhaps fortuitously for local finances, to establish the Smith of Dunesk Mission at Beltana. Out of this grew the Australian Inland Mission and the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the latter having a base in the Port today. In his place, James Holdsworth became the lay preacher and apparently carried on until a replacement minister arrived in 1916, 22 years later. Holdsworth also served on the managements of the Hospital, School, Institute, Oddfellows, Rifle, and Cricket Clubs, was a Justice of the Peace and Town Clerk from 1888-1930.⁶²

When the newly appointed Roman Catholic Bishop of Port Augusta, John O'Reily, arrived by train in 1888, he was given an enormous welcome. All denominations subscribed to present him with a gift purse made of velvet, decorated with harps and shamrocks embroidered into the cloth with gold bullion. The purse contained 300 sovereigns. The arrival of this Prince of the Church may have been interpreted locally as a vote of confidence in the Port, increasing his popular acceptance. When Bishop O'Reily left in 1895 his

replacement as Bishop lived at Pekina, suggesting that the Catholics could no longer justify a resident Bishop in a dying little port like Augusta.⁶³

By 1891 compulsory attendance was supposedly enforced at the public schools on the east and west, but not at the Roman Catholic school. The head teacher on the east thought that a great many children were not attending any school at all. There were probably about 250 scholars attending Port Augusta Public School, perhaps 45-55 at the West Side school. The Church of England conducted a school (probably Renou's) with another 15 children, and fees of 6^d to 1/- per week. Attendance at the Convent School numbered 40-50. There was a private school at Port Augusta West which had an enrolment of 40, and a further two or three private schools on the east, with enrolments totalling perhaps 50. In all, 140-150 children attended non-government schools.⁶⁴

At Stirling North most of the district's fruit and vegetables were grown. By 1898, there were 60ha of produce gardens and about 40ha of orchards, which included 1580 almond trees, 3260 orange, 2450 lemon, 155 olive trees and a further 23ha under grape vines.⁶⁵ There was at least one dairy at Stirling and possibly another at Augusta Park and its Extension. There were poultry farms in the district, including one on the West Side. There was bee-keeping. Port Augusta West was supplied with fresh produce from Bryant's Garden, a popular picnic spot for West Siders.⁶⁶

Meetings of the local Agricultural Bureau were held from at least 1904. Members spent afternoons inspecting vines and fruit trees, discussing poultry farming, dairying, and orchard-keeping. At each meeting a paper was read and there were displays of produce, bee-keeping apparatus, grass varieties and so forth.⁶⁷ The sustained period of drought was a fertile agenda topic for Agricultural Bureau meetings, usually attended by eight or ten men. Of great relevance for Port Augusta were their experiments to stabilise sand dunes. Twenty years before, the Corporation had.

sewn all the vacant land and ridges with couch grass to bind the sand. [It had] withstood drought successfully but the drought of 1893-1901 caused the grass which was growing on sand ridges exposed to southerly and northerly winds to perish, with the result that several very large hills...began to drift...other grasses were tried...marram, American dune grass, lupins, all without success. The best result had been obtained by planting couch grass, and on the most exposed portions, laying down a covering of manure over the places where the drift was worse.⁶⁸ Lucerne conquered the drifts, but it had to be irrigated. Almost anything was used to slow the shifting sands - farmyard manure, seaweed, city refuse, and street sweepings were also effective agents.⁶⁹

This was the era of the "Working Men's Blocks", five to ten hectare allotments where working men could make a homestead of their own and reside with their family while keeping up their original employment. There was a section between Stirling North and the Stirling North Cemetery bought by the

government to re-sell for this purpose and there were Working Men's Blocks on Carlton Parade, probably north of the new Cemetery.⁷⁰ As Meinig said of many South Australian country towns like Port Augusta, their big expanses of vacant suburban land were "vast expanses of wasteland". Why the government did not amalgamate this suburban land into Workingmen's Blocks is not known.⁷¹ Ivy Cilento Merrill's father had one of the Carlton Parade blocks. Blockers attempted to grow fruit and vegetables, perhaps keep a few head of stock and, ideally, become self-sufficient. The problem was, as Mrs Merrill said, "No water".⁷²

In most parts of Port Augusta, the smell of horses and other stock was inescapable. By the late 1890s, in the relatively small area of Port Augusta Corporation, there were 148 horses, 68 cattle and 60 pigs - more than one smelly beast for every household. Most of the cattle and pigs were probably corralled in only a few locations, but milch cows and working horses would have been accommodated in built up areas. Many people kept domestic fowls. On the West Side, humans were quite outnumbered by animals. Everywhere there were complaints about goats and on the West Side, camels and cows as well. They ran wild.⁷³

Corporation officials could destroy any goat found at large. Commercially, the entire period 1885-1908 was bleak compared to what had just passed. The Dispatch wrote of 1886 as a year of drought, insolvencies...losses in stock, depreciation of prices...and generally diminishing production.⁷⁴

TOWN LIVESTOCK STATISTICS 1898 ⁷⁵

Corporation area	Working horses	milch cows	others cattle	goats	pigs	sheep & lambs	other stock	poultry
Port Augusta	148	19	49	28	60	1	0	2730
Davenport	94	75	79	48	69	7	2	3120
Port Augusta West	339	60	236	236	56	421	7	820

Right through the period in Port Augusta (and the rest of Australia) there was a general decline, perhaps typified by the setbacks suffered in the liquor business. The Extension Hotel was delicensed in 1896. The South Australian Brewing Co, which had taken over the brewery (now Northern Gateway Hotel), moved its operations to Adelaide. The Standpipe Hotel was delicensed in 1902, and the Suburban in 1907.⁷⁶

Businessmen found they had time on their hands, and on occasions could stroll around the town in business hours. On one such occasion, Thomas Young's son, Syd, was passing the time in this way and years later he related the incident to A A S McLellan:

The man in charge of the Customs House had a habit of forgetfulness (and) he came to his office one afternoon to find Syd Young sitting on the slate steps leading up to the closed front doorway of the Customs House. He sat down with him and they yarned away for a while. At last, the Customs man glanced up at the notice pinned on the door, which read "Back in 20 minutes". He turned to Syd and said "Where is this fellow? We've been waiting more than 20 minutes". It was, of course, himself who had pinned that notice there!⁷⁷

The Port's business had certainly faded from the days when the three big businesses had to compete to find bullock drivers to load for them! The nature of business and the world of commerce itself had changed, as the Dispatch lamented:

Everything has to be ready, and if a "wheat special" is somewhat later in its arrival at the wharf, there is such weeping and

wailing and gnashing of teeth that one might imagine that the end of the world had come. The old happy go-lucky days have gone never to return.⁷⁸

Thomas Young appears to have assumed a patriarchial status. Thirty-five years later people recalled his welfare assistance during those hard times of the 1890s. Some still possessed the Queen's Jubilee lolly medallions he gave them as children in 1893.⁷⁹

On its long downhill slide, the Port kept many of its optimists and opportunists, constantly on the lookout for a grand project of redemption. No matter how low their fortunes sank, there was always that few in the Port who knew - knew - that its geographical position must be worth something. A stubborn hope perhaps, but it was voiced again when the Federation movement came to the fore. In 1894, during the debate about the site of a future federal capital, the Dispatch urged that Port Augusta be carefully scrutinised:

No other position offers the same advantages for communication and general expeditious transit...as a centre of operations, it cannot be equalled, [as] by telegraphic communication Port Augusta is already connected to the whole of the civilised world...the Queensland Railway Line could bridge the continent from Brisbane to Port Augusta...the moment the Broken Hill to Sydney line is completed a connecting link will bind the Federal Capital (assuming it to be Port Augusta) to the capital of New South Wales...a railway from Perth to Port Augusta has

been the subject of open negotiation. No one will surely be found who believes such a line will not be constructed...the Transcontinental Railway [to Darwin] will have its southern terminus here...Commercially...Port Augusta is the natural outlet and centre of a large pastoral, agricultural and mineral interest, and could be made easily accessible to all the colonies for federal movements and negotiations...The climate, is salubrious...the Australian Squadron could sail up to this Port without any undue ruffling of gulf waters...there are scores of suitable places for docks, slips, gridirons, graving docks and all the accessories required by a large seaport...The hills and plains surrounding...offer alike suitable areas for manufactures, industries, villa residences and all the other concomitants for the capital of the United States of Australia.⁸⁰

Two years later at the planting of the first pole in the new telegraph line to Eucla, West Australia, all speakers hoped that the new line was

only a forerunner of a line of railway...that would convey Queensland cattle across to the West.

They anticipated that it would hasten Federation because- there were great difficulties in the way of a railway to West Australia except it be constructed on a federal basis or by a federal government...Brighter things were in store for Port Augusta and the days of desolation were at an end.⁸¹

Support for projects of so-called inland development still cropped up - such as the proposal to extend the railway from Copley to Innaminka,⁸² and from Hergott Springs to

Kopperamanna,⁸³ or even a railway to West Australia. Occasionally there was a spark of light in these hopes, as, for example, when the line was extended to Oodnadatta during 1891,⁸⁴ or when the local Member of Parliament, Alexander Poynton, pushed for bores, dams and wells to be built in a chain to West Australia, to pave the way for a railway. The proposal was narrowly defeated.⁸⁵

It is now apparent that most of these railway proposals reflected the gambler's hope, against economic and development logic. Railways from the edge of the desert, through desert, to a point in desert or marginal country, were futile. Unprofitable railways could discredit any geographical advantage Port Augusta might have. The value of railways depended on penetrating better country, or on the existence of good mines. Anyway, the increasing centralisation of commerce and the railway network gathered business to Quorn, Terowie and Adelaide, not Port Augusta.

Williams and Meinig each discussed reasons why some towns survived and sometimes flourished while others wilted and perished, discussions which shed light on the Port's existence between 1854 and 1908. Williams, while not dealing with "The North" and the pastoral areas of the interior in his study, eluded to the advantage gained when a settlement was the first to be surveyed in a region, as was the case with Port Augusta.⁸⁶ While many towns had the problem of "attracting trade" away from neighbouring towns, this was not an issue for the Port because, for the first quarter century of its history, it was the main

town and only port in the northern pastoral region. In the context of Australian urban history, for much of the period examined Port Augusta was a primate commercial town, reflecting its role opening up new and economically monocultural lands. In his discussion of township development, Williams pointed to the often beneficial effects of certain government facilities being located in a particular town. While this no doubt applied to the Port, most developments benefitting the town preceeded government involvement, indeed led to pressure being put on the government to provide much needed public facilities, such as the police station and barracks, the causeway across the lagoon, a reliable water supply, a gaol and a telegraph office - to list a few. Port Augusta had no competing nearby town to vie for these facilities until the rise of Quorn in 1882-4, by which time the government facilities at Port Augusta were a long established fact.

The thesis reinforces the oft repeated notion in Australian urban history, of the importance of a town's hinterland in determining its fate. Meinig described how the northward advance of wheat threw up new towns in Port Augusta's hinterland after 1877.⁸⁷ But most of these towns looked to Port Augusta for supplies rather than competing against it. Indeed the hinterland proved to be marginal for the agriculture and its associated towns, thus making the established position of Port Augusta relatively stronger. Many of these

small towns had to compete against each other for the trade of dwindling numbers of wheat farmers. None could compete against Port Augusta for domination of the region, except Quorn after the railway turned the tables in its favour. Even then, Augusta was the only port and this guaranteed it a certain share of the trade despite the existence of Quorn and the railway. In the context of Australian local history these points, and the many points of economic orientation in the thesis, throw light upon the fate of the large area of Australia's pastoral domain which was Port Augusta's hinterland. The thesis underlines the often-overlooked place that economic history should have in Australian local history.

At the turn of the century the Port remained the main transport, communication and supply point for a huge, but relatively valueless geographical area. Previously this position had been unchallenged. By the late 1880s it was competing with the railway, but to a large extent the railway was irrelevant to the demise of Port Augusta. The frontier and the inland, of which so much had been expected, and which had consequently attracted several imaginative government schemes, did not live up to expectations. The downward re-evaluations of the inland's potential led to a long slide in the Port's expectations and fortunes.

At the turn of the century Port Augusta was crawling towards obscurity, and by 1908 it was well along that track.

NOTES

- 1 Gibbs W J & Maher J v, 1967, Rainfall Deciles as Drought Indicators, Bulletin no 48, Bureau of Meteorology, Melbourne, p1.
- 2 Report of Commission on Railway Construction, op cit. The minutes of Evidence contain Mildred's annual rainfall totals 1859-74.
- 3 Gibbs, op cit, piii. Rainfall figures for 1875-86 are contained in Appendix A of the Report of the Transcontinental Railway Commission, op cit; and for 1881-1985, in the statistics of the Bureau of Meteorology, Adelaide.
- 4 Gibbs, op cit.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 4.11.1884, p1552-3, SAPD.
- 7 Hirst, op cit, pp13-5
- 8 Gibbs, p2.
- 9 Hindmarsh, op cit; Ralph, op cit; "Understanding Sheep Behaviour", op cit.
- 10 Gibbs, pp2-3.
- 11 Ibid, figure 2-4.
- 12 Based on Gibbs' meteorological figures nos 5-28 and pp22-3. See also Richardson, op cit, p122; also 13.9.1912, PAD; and Thomson, op cit, p21.
- 13 This generalisation needs to be qualified with a comment about peculiarities in the flow of inland produce to the Port. For example, after a good season, by the time sheep were shorn the season could have become abnormally dry. There could be a bumper clip but because of drought along the tracks to Port Augusta, or to a rail siding, pastoralists might have been unable to get their wool down to the Port. One or two season's clips could be withheld for these reasons. Then a shower of rain might produce sufficient herbage along the tracks for the bullocks to get a feed as they went, and abnormal quantities of wool might then arrive in Port Augusta. See 30.10.1884, pp1512-7 SAPD for discussion of this.
- 14 13.9.1912, PAD.
- 15 Meinig, op cit, pp166-7. See also Denholm, op cit, p12.
- 16 Jessup R W, 1950, "The Geography of North-Western South

- Australia", PRGSSA, v51, December, p1. See also Richardson, op cit, p70.
- 17 Figures for wool export 1891-1900 from Customs Report, PAD 25.1.1901; 1901 figure from Adelaide Chronicle 21.7.1932. Wheat exports, see Customs Report, PAD 25.1.1901. Import figures for 1885-9 from Statistical Register 1890, SAPP; imports for 1890-4 from Statistical Register, 1894, op cit; imports for 1895-9 from Statistical Register, 1900, op cit; import figures for 1882-8 are confirmed in Port Augusta - The Natural Shipping Port of Inlet and Outlet for the Barrier Traffic, Port Augusta, 1889, p9.
- 18 Barnard, op cit, pp192-205, 229-30.
- 19 Williams, 1974, op cit, p50.
- 20 By 1909, Dunn's was the largest employer. However, it is not known when it displaced the wool and shipping firms from this position. See Cyclopedia of South Australia, 1909, Adelaide, (2 vols), 1:601.
- 21 30.10.1884, p1523, 4.11.1884, pp1525-6, SAPD.
- 22 Donley R J R, 1975, The Rise of Port Pirie, published by the author, Port Pirie, p35.
- 23 30.10.1884, p1523, 11.11.1884, p1626, SAPD.
- 24 Donley, op cit.
- 25 Donley R J R, personal communication.
- 26 30.10.1884, p1522, SAPD.
- 27 11.11.1884, p1626, SAPD.
- 28 Donley, op cit, p36.
- 29 4.11.1884, p1556, SAPD.
- 30 11.11.1884, p1626, SAPD.
- 31 4.11.1884, p1525, SAPD.
- 32 30.10-11.11.1884, pp1523-1634, SAPD.
- 33 Report of the Royal Commission on the Port Augusta-Cockburn Railway, 1891, no 24, (Minutes of Evidence of John Melville, Port Augusta Harbourmaster), SAPP.
- 34 4.11.1884, pp1559-60, SAPD.
- 35 Report of the Royal Commission on the Port Augusta-Cockburn Railway, (Evidence of David Drysdale), op cit.
- 36 13.9.1912, PAD; Statistical Register, (Population),

- 1899 and 1910 SAPP.
- 37 Donley, op cit, p37; Report on the Royal Commission on the Port Augusta-Cockburn Railway, op cit.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid (Evidence of Solomon Israel).
- 41 13.9.1912, PAD.
- 42 11.8.1893, Quiz and Lantern (newspaper).
- 43 Donley, op cit, p38.
- 44 11.8.1893, p13, Quiz and Lantern.
- 45 Bate, op cit, p211.
- 46 For M^cLellan's references to population decline see A:19-3b, 52-1, 127-4, 167-2b, and for M^cLellan influencing references, see Oates, op cit, p6, and Historical Souvenir of Port Augusta, op cit, p28, and Story of Port Augusta, op cit, p19. For contemporary 1890 references to the supposed declining population of the 1890's, see the evidence of Solomon Israel to the Royal Commission on the Port Augusta-Cockburn Railway, op cit, and the evidence of Hugh Bawden to the Public Service Commission, 1891, no 30A, SAPP.
- 47 See note 73 in the previous chapter for enumeration of problems with Port Augusta population figures and for sources of suburban population figures.
- 48 13.9.1912, PAD.
- 49 Ibid. See also Richardson, op cit, pp70 and 150.
- 50 17.7.1931, Trans.
- 51 Richardson, op cit, pp70, 150.
- 52 13.9.1912, PAD.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 A:19-3b, 99-4, 127-4.
- 55 Census, 1891, op cit.
- 56 This is according to the Census. The head teacher at Port Augusta School, Hugh Bawden, gave evidence to the Public Service Commission, op cit, that there were 300 vacant houses in Port Augusta, which contradicts the Census data.

- 57 Blue Book, 1882, SAPP and Census, 1891, op cit.
- 58 Census, 1891, op cit.
- 59 Statistical Register, 1894, op cit.
- 60 Ibid
- 61 Oates, op cit, p6. See also A:52-1b.
- 62 A:139; Centenary History of Education at Port Augusta Primary School, 1978, Centenary sub-committee, Port Augusta, p14.
- 63 A:76
- 64 Public Service Commission, op cit; Report of the Minister Controlling Education, with Appendices (1894), 1895, no 44, SAPP.
- 65 Statistical Register, (Land Use), 1899, op cit.
- 66 Port Augusta West Primary School, op cit, p22.
- 67 Reports of Davenport meetings of the Agricultural Bureau, Journal of Agriculture of South Australia, 1904-5.
- 68 Ibid, no 1, v8, 18.8.1904, p109.
- 69 Ibid, 1.4.1905, p528.
- 70 Land Proposed to be Offered as Working Men's Blocks 1893, no 164, and 1896, no 107 SAPP. For conditions surrounding the use of Homestead Blocks see Progress Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Unemployment Problem, 1894, no 110 op cit.
- 71 Meinig, op cit, p71.
- 72 Interview with Charles and Ivy Cilento Merrill, 17.12.1984.
- 73 Port Augusta West Primary School, op cit, p22.
- 74 3.1.1888, PAD.
- 75 Statistical Register, (Livestock), 1899, op cit.
- 76 A:127-4,132-3,221-2,130-4,133-3.
- 77 A:167-2b.
- 78 13.9.1912, PAD.
- 79 3.2.1928, 12.2.1932, Trans.

- 80 17. 8. 1894.
- 81 1. 5. 1896, PAD (reprinted in 17. 3. 1931, Trans.)
- 82 Copley to Innaminka Railway, 1890, no 46, SAPP.
- 83 Hergott Springs to Kopperamanna Railway, 1893, no 174, SAPP.
- 84 Memo from Traffic Manager to Chairman of Commissioners, SAR, 17. 2. 1894: GRG42/5/1362, PRO.
- 85 13. 9. 1912, PAD.
- 86 Williams, op cit, excluded "The North" and pastoral region, see p3 and the following pages. For the advantage of the first settlement, see pp378-80.
- 87 Meinig, op cit, pp171-3.

APPENDIX 1

Relief given to Port Augusta and Stirling North residents by
the Port Augusta Destitute Board, (1867 no 213, SAPP)

Name	Resi- dences	Description	Period on relief (weeks)	Cost f
John Lancaster	PA	infirm, married	40	16. 6. 10
Ellen Burns	PA	able-bodied, widow	27	5. 9. 3
James Green	PA	able-bodied, married	2	3. 10. 4 ¹ / ₂
Christina Domier	PA	sick, married	3	2. 15. 11 ¹ / ₂
Thomas Grantham	PA	relief only to family, married	4	3. 3. 7 ¹ / ₂
John Ashwood	PA	relief only to family, married	7	4. 9. 1 ¹ / ₂
Margaret Scannell	S	able-bodied, 7 children, widow	3	11. 9. 8 ³ / ₄
Joseph Wellby	PA	infirm, married	26	18. 4. 3 ³ / ₄
M ^c Kenzie	PA	infirm, single	2	3. 10. 4
Catherine Jackson	S	able-bodied, married, deserted by husband	5	2. 16. 8 ¹ / ₂
Ann Vale	PA	able-bodied, married, deserted by husband	1	15. 5
Mary Halliday	PA	able-bodied, widow	26	5. 18. 3 ¹ / ₄
Hermann Isenberg	PA	sick, single	2	1. 18. 4 ¹ / ₄
Kate Whiting	S	able-bodied, married, husband in Gaol	41	19. 15. 10
Pat Wayling	PA	sick, married	20	8. 15. 1
W ^m Bailey	PA	sick, single	-	2. 0. 0
W ^m Pearson	PA	sick, single	-	2. 0. 0
Blankley Lycett	PA	sick, single	-	2. 4. 0
W ^m Besanco	PA	able-bodied, married	-	5. 0. 8
Bridgit Wilkinson	PA	able-bodied, married	7	3. 8. 9
Henry Clothier	PA	able-bodied, married	1	9. 0

Name	Resi- dences	Description	Period on relief (weeks)	Cost f
Helen Farrow	PA	able-bodied, widow	7	1. 4. 5 ¹ / ₂
Hester Gillies	PA	sick, married	-	4. 7. 0
M A Pelton	PA	able-bodied, husband in Gaol, married	8	2. 14. 2
Henry Paverlitch	PA	able-bodied, married	-	2. 12. 0
Margaret Wallman	PA	able-bodied, married	4	2. 6. 10
David Kay	PA	relief only to family, married	4	2. 9. 8
James King	PA	relief only to family, married	8	7. 13. 4 ¹ / ₂
Mrs Blinman	S	sick, married	2	15. 6. 1
Thomas Carrol	PA	able-bodied, single	-	34. 12. 0
Mary Ann Atkinson	PA	sick, single	-	3. 12. 0
W ⁿ Nickolls	PA	sick, single	2	6. 1. 8
Frederick Fox	PA	sick, married	4	3. 7. 10
W Willmott	S	able-bodied, married	-	4. 5. 6

APPENDIX 2

RECORDS OF

F Bignell & Co
Bignell & Young
and Young & Gordon

These records were located in an upstairs area of Young & Gordon's Commercial Road, Port Augusta premises. This area was a vacant office with a disused kitchen adjoining, and beside the office presently used by Mr Peter J Young, manager of Young & Gordon's. Most of the records were stored in an office cabinet, a tea chest and a cardboard box. The cabinet held most of the books of accounts etc, and the tea chest was roughly piled with bundles of letters, invoices, receipts and orders. There were a large number of similar letters etc piled into the tea chest in loose form, the bundles having come apart.

Peter J Young said that the records were discovered in the ceiling of the old Bignell & Young/Young & Gordon's store on the corner of Commercial Road and El Alamein Street. When the building was being demolished in 1970 the records spilt onto the site. Mr Young retrieved what he could but about 1/3 of the material was lost.

Robert J Anderson, 10 October 1984.

SUMMARY

GROUP 1: F Bignell & Co, 1863-1869.

Series 1 - Grocery line

Series 2 - Drapery

Series 3 - Inward correspondence

GROUP 2: Bignell & Young, 1868-1882.

Series 1 - Letterpresses (outward correspondence)

Series 2 - Drapery, haberdashery etc.

Series 3 - Grocery line

Series 4 - Bills of lading & cart notes

Series 5 - Invoices

Series 6 - Cheque butts

Series 7 - Inward correspondence etc

GROUP 3: Young & Gordon.

GROUP 4: Young Family Papers.

GROUP 5: Bignell Family Papers.

GROUP 6: P J Young Papers.

GROUP 7: Photographs.

GROUP 1: F Bignell & Co.

Series 1: Grocery

Journal January 1864 - September 1865: written in Frank Bignell's hand for the first 150 pages and possibly all through; 478 pages, of which the last 38 are blank; dimensions 37 cm x 24 cm; binding in fair condition.

Series 2: Drapery

Day Book 1.5.1863-8.7.1868: of about 200 unnumbered pages; written on the front and back covers in black ink is "1863 MAY"; marone patterned muslin cover with leather spleen and trim; binding in poor condition; dimensions 37 cm x 16 cm.

Series 3: Inward correspondence - letters, invoices, notes, orders etc

Bundle A - 1866 All items concern the book debts of W A W Size, Storekeeper of Stirling North. The book debts appear to have been sold to A D Tassie & Co then passed on to F Bignell, or sold by Size to Bignell; about 30 items.

Bundle B - 1867-8 Mainly orders for clothing, drapery, and footwear, a few letters and one or two other pieces of correspondence; mainly from 3 July 1867 - 5 May 1868; about 100 items.

Bundle C - 1868 Predominantly orders for clothing, drapery etc, but includes more letters than in Bundle B. Letters are from the

North, Adelaide, Port Augusta etc;
about 100 items.

Bundle D - 1868 as above, but with a greater variety of letters - seeking goods and services other than orders for drapery, clothing etc, including a request for a cash loan, a bill for watch repairs, a comment about Warren's impertinence etc; about 100 items.

Bundle E - 1869 Similar to Bundle D.

Bundle labelled "December 1869" -ditto-; about 9 items.

Bundle labelled "January 1869" -ditto-; about 16 items.

Bundle labelled "August 1869" -ditto-; about 4 items.

GROUP 2: Bignell & Young

Series 1: Letterpresses (bound ricepaper pages used for
making pressed copies of OUTWARD
CORRESPONDENCE)

- 1 25 March 1872 - 8 August 1873: about 500 pages; index.
- 2 missing
- 3 9 August 1873 - 15 April 1874: about 500 pages; index.
- 4 15 April 1874 - 16 December 1874: about 500 pages;
index removed.
- 5 18 December 1874 - 13 October 1875: about 990 pages;
index.
- 6 missing
- 7 26 August 1876 - 23 March 1877: about 1010 pages;
index.

(The letterpress numbers used are derived from notations on the spines and/or covers of the letterpresses.)

~~SERIES~~ 2: Drapery, haberdashery etc.

Journal 12 October 1868 - 29 September 1869: written in Thomas Young's hand; 366 pages; sea-blue cover; binding in poor condition; dimensions 33 cm x 21 cm.

Day Book 9 July - 30 October 1868: about 250 unnumbered pages; white cover and spleen; binding in fair condition.

Journal 2 January - 19 July 1869: consisting of three journals sewn together, each of about 70 pages; new sky-blue binding in excellent condition.

Journal August 1871 - March 1875: written in T Young's hand; 363 pages; bound in marone pattern paper-like material in poor condition; paper label affixed to spleen (partly illegible) "August 7* to March 75" *illegible.

Journal April 1872 - May 1873: in T Y's hand; green book muslin binding with leather spleen and corners in poor condition; the word "JOURNAL" printed on spleen, and in T Y's hand "April 1872 to May 1873"; dimensions 33 cm x 21 cm.

Journal May 1873 - April 1874: 733 pages; written in T Y's hand; binding in very poor condition; dimensions 32 cm x 20 cm.

GROUP 2: Bignell & Young

Series 3: Grocery Line

Cash Book 29 March 1866 - 19 September 1870: all entries in Thomas Young's hand; 500 pages of which only 81 have been used; labelled in T Y's hand "Cash book" and on the spine "Day Book"; dimensions 12" x 4".

Day Book 8 February - 4 October 1875: most entries in T Y's hand; labelled on the cover "A"; of 200 pages; dimensions 12" x 4".

Journal April - October 1875: most entries in T Y's hand; 282 pages; binding in fair condition; dimensions 14" x 9".

Cash Book October 1874 - June 1877: in T Y's hand; 282 pages; binding in good condition; dimensions 10" x 4".

Day Book 23 February 1876 - 12 September 1876: mainly in T Y's hand; 497 pages; binding in very poor condition; dimensions 24" x 9".

Day Book 8 February 1876 - 26 December 1877: mainly in T Y's hand; of about 250 pages; dimensions 40 cm x 15 cm.

Day Book 13 February - 30 November 1877: mainly in T Y's hand; of 750 pages with 4 pages added at the back; binding in very poor condition; dimensions 40 cm x 16 cm.

Day Book 9 June - 5 December 1877: entries in T Y's hand; 566 pages with 4 sheets added at the back; cover of red muslin with letter "K" inked on the

cover; binding in very poor condition;
dimensions 32 cm x 20 cm.

Day Book 6 December 1877 - 31 July 1878: all entries in T Y's hand; the following is written on the spine "M Grocery Side December 6th 1877 to July 31st 1878"; binding in poor condition; dimensions 40 cm x 16 cm.

Journal February 1883 - February 1884: handwriting similar to T Y's but hard to identify; about 500 pages of which 181 have been used; binding in good condition; dimensions 27 cm x 16 cm.

Orders approximately 31 January 1871 - approx 14 March 1872 also possibly 13 October 1870 and/or 3 March 1873: in T Y's hand; unbound and in poor condition; about 100 pages; dimensions 32 cm x 20 cm.

GROUP 2: Bignell & Young

Series 4: Bills of Lading and Cart Notes - receipts signed by Carters showing they have received the goods listed.

Book 18 December 1876 - 14 February 1877: for horsefeed, wheat, groceries, drapery, anonymous packages etc; about 250 pages.

Book 18 September - 20 November 1878: book labelled 'ironmongery' but including packages, cases, drapery and sundries as well as ironmongery and hardware; about 250 pages.

Book 14 December 1878 - 17 January 1879:

- ironmongery, leather, drapery, hardware; about 250 pages.
- Book 20 January - 1 April 1879: ironmongery, hardware, sundries, groceries, furniture, paint; about 250 pages.
- Book 6 March - 19 May 1880: drapery, hardware including timber, ironmongery, groceries; of about 250 pages.
- Book 13 July - 30 September 1880: groceries, drapery, ironmongery, hardware, timber, drums of oil, kerosene; about 250 pages.
- Book 19 January - 26 March 1881: groceries, alcohol, drapery, ironmongery, hardware; about 250 pages.
- Book 9 June 1881 - 21 June 1882: this book about three times as long as the others but with a great many of the duplicate pages that have been removed from the other books still intact. About 50 pages have been used; includes orders for sundries, alcohol, oil by the drum, hardware; appears to have been cart notes from the West Side Store and by rail to Beltana.
- Book 19 May - 2 July 1881: twice the size of most of the books, consisting of 250 + 250 pages; orders for groceries, hardware, ironmongery, timber, drapery, alcohol.
- Book 23 March - 23 May 1882: S A Railways car notes to northern stations and sidings; about 250 pages.
- Book 13 November - 9 December 1878: Timber Yard cart

notes to Port Augusta, Beautiful Valley,
Willochra, Quorn; about 250 pages.

Book 7 July - 9 October 1878: -ditto-

Book of Stubs 12 June 1879 - 7 June 1882: marked "Wharf
Store for Cowan's orders"; about 200 pages.

GROUP 2: Bignell & Young

Series 5: Invoices

Outsized Book/Bundle 14 June 1867 - 17 July 1871: with
scrapbook layout, invoices being stuck in and
folded on each of the many pages; binding in
very poor condition; dimensions 40 cm x 27 cm x
20 cm thick.

Bundle 1 May 1875 - 25 October 1875: unbound, tattered
and in poor condition, held by cotton tape to a
piece of wood; invoices of various sizes;
dimensions 25 cm x 40 cm x 4 cm thick.

Bundle 1 November - 23 December 1875: -ditto-

Bundle 1 January - 31 August 1876: unbound invoices of
various sizes, cotton taped together with a
metal pin in top L H corner; tattered.

Loose Bundle 1876: about 50 invoices.

Loose Bundle 10 January 1878 - 15 January 1878: about 20
invoices folded into a parcel approx 22 cm x 10
cm.

Manilla Envelope Miscellaneous: diary 1877; note book
possibly orders - 1870's; note book 1874; diary
1882.

GROUP 2: Bignell & Young

Series 6: Cheque Butts

Numbers 827 - 1199 6 April 1872 - 14 July 1873
1200 - 1493 18 July 1873 - 16 February 1874
1494 - 1766 16 February - 7 November 1874
1559 - 2060 3 November 1874 - 3 June 1875
1792 - 2283 25 April 1874 - 2 April 1875
2558 - 3157 3 February - 21 August 1876
4433 - 4719 27 June - 1 September 1877

GROUP 2: Bignell & Young

Series 7: Inward Correspondence - orders, letters & invoices. This comprises 8000-9000 individual pieces of correspondence. When it was originally arranged perhaps 40-50% was tied in bundles, probably by somebody at the time the correspondence was last referred to for business in the 1870's. The string and the knots used to tie the material had not appeared to have been undone since then. The rest of the correspondence was loose in a tea chest. Some of the loose material appeared to have come from the same broken bundles, and all appeared to be about the same year or even the same months. The rest was more jumbled. Most of it is now in bundles according to years.

1870 16 bundles approx 50 items
1871 4 bundles approx 150 items
1872 4 bundles approx 200 items

1873 19 bundles approx 1000 items
1874 5 bundles approx 200 items
1875 16 bundles approx 1300 items
1876 5 bundles approx 150 items
1877 6 bundles approx 300 items
1878 7+3 in one bundle 500 items
1879 8 bundles approx 600 items
1880 14 bundles approx 800 items
1881 25 bundles approx 1700 items
1882 11 bundles approx 400 items

mixed 1870 - 1882 16 bundles approx 800 items

Manilla folder (clipped together) Advertising circulars

Manilla folder (clipped together) Advertising circulars

Manilla folder: invoices from London merchants for 1876.

Manilla folder (enveloped): Shipping notes for 1874

divided up into month order.

Manilla folder (tied): Port Lincoln branch invoices for

1875, many of which are for agricultural

implements.

GROUP 3: Young & Gordon

This group is not large enough to warrant breaking it into

Series numbers, so items have been numbered.

Item Nos

- 1 three cheques, circa 1932.
- 2 Book: Payments and Receipts Journal, July 1941 -
 August 1956; blue cover, red cloth spine; 10" x 14";
 190 pages.
- 3 Book: Ledger (with index), 1924 - 1946; blue/lilac

- cover, fawn leather spine; 11" x 14"; 250 pages.
- 4 items - Hairdressers' Coop Society, 1967, 1969.
- 5 items - share certificates 1951-5; 5 items.
- 6 Minutes of meeting to discuss selling out to Eudunda's, 1950.
- 7 Articles of Association - 3 copies; drink recipes etc; 6 items in all.
- 8 One order 1884.
- 9 Special Notices from R G Dunn & Co for D & W Murray, Adelaide, 1913-14; Balance Sheet 1915; 4 items in all.
- 10 List of shareholders 1933; share certificate 1933.
- 11 Share certificate 1955; Trading statement, Profit & Loss statement, Balance Sheets - 1951-3; MTPA Status Report; Board members biographies.
- 12 Drink recipe book (?1933)
- 13 List of staff 1913; the break-up of Thomas Young's will.
- 14 Notes - Greenbush Hotel; F H Faulding & Co background briefing notes (typeset)

GROUP 4: Young Family Papers

Not divided into Series, so items numbered only.

- 1 1838 Death Cert of T Young; Cert of Title (photocopy) 1880; pew receipts x 2, 1877; poem; notice 1880.
- 2 Quantity of newspapers incl "The Young Soldier", "The War Cry", and mainly biographical extracts from the "Port Augusta Dispatch" - 1880's - 1890's.
- 3 -ditto-

- 4 Newspapers and clippings - many biographical of the Young Family; incl a history of Bignell, Young & Gordon's (typescript) by A A S McLellan which he has signed and dated 18.4.1967.
- 5 -ditto-
- 6 -ditto-
- 7 Greenbush Hotel.
- 8 Probate documents on Estate of Isabella Cowan, 15.3.1962.

GROUP 5: Bignell Family Papers

Specifications for cottage, signed Thomas Burgoyne, 1874.

GROUP 6: P J Young Papers

Not divided into Series, so items numbered only.

- 1 P J & N J Young, & P L Nourse insurance policies.
- 2 Correspondence 1968-78, five items.
- 3 Memorandum of Agreement for land, 1970; share certs.

GROUP 7: Photographs.

Several albums, plus photographs framed and unframed, mounted and unmounted; perhaps 300-600 mm shelf space in quantity.

APPENDIX 3

Inventory of goods from Bignell & Young's main Adelaide suppliers in a sample period from 25 March 1872 to 17 September 1873.

D & W Murray

Women's kid gloves, cloth gloves, cord nets, invisible nets, skirts, shawls, bonnets and various hats, striped regatta and other shirts, linen face collars, sets of long hair pads, guerseys, scarves, stays, corsets, nightdresses;

Men's moleskin, canvas and other trousers, Italian twilled and other shirts, Yankee hats, cabbage tree hats, caps vests, elastic belts, monkey jackets, collar checks, waterproofs, oilskin and leather leggings, men's and women's hose socks;

Infant's lambs wool polka dot jackets, moleskin daipers, boy's twill, bizantine and other shirts, moleskin and other trousers, children's black cloth jackets;

Calicao, wigton check, doeskin, American duck, wigan stiffener, frilling, tubular, braid, serge, satin silk, book muslin, drab jean; curtains, hat bands, buttons, lace, ruffles, pins, stay fasteners, Russian binding, thread, cotton, tape, cord, various braids, silk binding, blankets, tape measurers;

Sewing machines and spare parts, Elephant brown paper, envelopes, carpet bags, Murdock's toilet vinegar, white toilet quilts.

D & J Fowler

Dried apricots, apples, figs, black currants, raisons, assorted fruits, and lemon peel; nutmeg, white, black and cayenne peppers, currie, mustard, capers, carraway seeds, almonds, hotelliers bitters, vinegar, tandotickno;

Oatmeal, maizena ("not corn flour"), sago, pearl barley, oats, butter, cheese, yellow crystal and ordinary sugars, fine salt, Glen Ewin jam, Albert biscuits;

Eagle pickles, cases of oysters, lobsters, whiting, tinned green peas, carrots, preserved tongues and mutton, vegetables, and Cross & Blackwell's preserved meats; sides of bacon, bloaters, sardines, hams; cocoa, ordinary tea, orange pekoe, green tea ("hard to get"), Black swan tobacco;

Washing soda, extract of soap, blue, soda crystals, starch, clothes pegs and lines; blacking, blacklead,

Oakey's knife polish, saltpetre, kerosene, matches; bath bricks, Elephant brown paper, diary paper, boiled oil, hair brooms, snuff candles, sperms.

Wills & Co

Black cashmere galoshed children's boots, infant's woollen boots, frock bodies, youth's cotton braces, byzantine shirts, neckerchiefs, trousers, leather belts, pilot jackets, peaked and other caps, quilted skirt's, women's woollen scarves, women's woollen polka dot jackets, hair rolls, scarlet ribbed hose;

Derry, hession, white serge, buttons, blankets, Wilson & Wheelers sewing machines, brass backed combs, small steel split rings; Children's painted pannicans and tin plates, harps, school slates;

Envelopes, note paper, pocket books, various qualities of writing paper, ready reckoners; novellettes and books with such titles as "Willy Reilly", "The Black Angel", "Fiery Cross", "Hunted to Death", "Handy Andy": and "The London Home Journal"; playing cards; Lemon juice, glycerine, sponges.

Harris Scarfe & Co

Carpenter's pencils and squares, screw augers, screwdrivers, gimlets, adze handles, pampa knives, glass knife rests, tilly moulds, awls, axe handles, blocks and tackles; cross-cut, pit and handsaws; brass and iron window knobs, sash butts, T-hinges, nails, rules with slides, brass and iron chest locks and hinges, coffin furniture, claw hammers;

Horse shoes, solder, bellows, horse-shoeing hammers, buffers for horse-shoeing, horse and bullock cells; Iron boxes with lift-off lids, canvas canteens, mason's sieves, round-mouthed American shovels, electroplating service, and a sausage machine;

Ivory-handled dessert knives, table and dessert spoons, scoops with handles, camp ovens, plain and fancy kerosene lamps, twine, wooden washing boards, pen knives, quartpots, flour sieves, brass-backed combs, bedsteads.

A C Knabe

Palliasses, mattresses made of fibre, flock, straw, and hair; flock pillows, leather mattresses for sofas, bolsters, cork mattresses with leather covers for camping out.

W Jones

Oranges, apples, plums, quinces, apricots, loquets, cabbages, various sorts of potatoes, green peas, and onions.

F H Faulding

Widow Welshes pills, Gruicault's Matico pills, cod liver oil, Dutch drops, Pialt's developing cream, Deconian cream, Faulding's Seidlitz powders, Brownes chlorodyne, laudanum, rhubarb pills, pectoral drops, collyrium, sweet spirits nitre, Steadman's soothing powders, Steadman's red precipitate powders, marking ink, cigars, camphor;

Baking powder, vinegar, cocoa nut oil, lime juice and glycerine, cherry tooth paste, bees wax, essences of cloves, ratafia, lemon, and peppermint.

J Ballantyne

Calicoes, striped hession, book muslins, Horrock's long cloths, hollands and fine hollands, army ducks, flannels, velvets.

Reefer coats, various patterned shirts, dust coats, trousers, marcella vests, felt hats, alma caps, blankets, mosquito nets, table covers.

Adelaide Boot Factory

Shoes and boots called Blucher, Hungarian, balmoral, stockyard, kangaroo, wallaby, buckskin, and combinations of these names such as Wallaby Bluchers for adults and children; patent leather boots, men's and women's canvas slippers; children's extra special levants, children's black cashmere boots; sole leather, awls.

W Benbow

Cedar sofas with scroll backs, cedar tables and chairs, toilet tables, wash stands, chests of drawers, large meatsafes and a cutom-made cheffonier designed by Thomas Young. Tables and chairs were cometimes sent in pieces to save freight and damage and assembled. Special instructions and care concerned packing. A range of varieties and prices were ordered concurrently.

P Falk

Note paper, envelopes, erasers, Swain's copy books, faint-ruled cream laid foolscap paper; Bread knives, buffallo handle carving knives, forks and steels, mirrors, Florida

water.

Goode Bros

Tweet vests in assorted patterns, trousers, serge shirts, collars, hose, llama lustre braid, mouse Yankee hats, squatter's hats, ladies' white straw hats; flannel, blankets, bush rugs.

Good Toms & Co

Alpine hats, printed moleskin trousers, kid gloves.

J Dunn & Co

Various qualities of flour, clean wheat, fowl's wheat, pollard.

APPENDIX 4

Inventory of goods ordered by Bignell & Young from London with letter to D & J Fowler of 1 December 1873.(a) Silber & Flemming

Folio page 227: - brooches, eardrops and bracelets made of Vulcanite; real jet brooches, aluminium propelling pencils, two qualities of English hunting lever and ladies' gold Geneva watches; musical boxes in 8" x 10-1/2" barrel inlaid Rosewood cases; fluted roan lined leather pocket books having five pockets with elastic bands and limp morocco lined roan pocketbooks; embossed leather photo albums, Japanese thermometers, 12" panoramas, various types of note paper and envelopes, drawing and cedar pencils, stone bottle writing inks; cribbage boards, boxwood dice leaps & dice.

Folio page 229: - crystal cream, assorted pomades in stopped bottles, Rose hair oil, cherry tooth paste, glycerine soap, crystal glycerine, kid leather powder puffs, best plain polished puff boxes, papier machine; oval wood-backed and bone-backed nail brushes; various qualities and descriptions of hair combs, "Somebodys" luggage bon bons, glass tumblers of various kinds.

Folio page 230: - containers for sugar, cream, butter, jam & water; 54 organ concertinas with 20 keys, celestials banjos, violin bows and strings, tamborines; woolly-headed dolls, china bathing dolls.

Folio page 233: - gutta piecha dolls, dressed combo dolls, dressed nankeen dolls, dressed rag dolls and crying dolls with moving eyes (dolls wholesale prices 1/6 - 21/-); Noah's Ark animals, bricks with glass windows, painted balls, dominoes, Christmas tree ornaments; English toys including horse & carts both white wood and painted; painted tin drums, painted tamborines, iron jew's harps, best make tin whistles, toy leather whip whistles, dolls houses, spades of wood & iron, toy watches, soft animals for infants, toy banjos, white wood tool boxes.

Folio page 234: - spring humming, wood crinolene humming and Prince of Wales ring tops; toy pistols, metal pop guns, assorted sand toys, brass horns; stained wood and mahogany money boxes; puzzles, white wood Swiss animals, Swiss wood man and cart, assorted masks, assorted noses, bundles of white willow shavings, and gold and silver shavings, paper ornaments, babies' swings, rattles; folding chairs, ladies croquet chairs, strong plain camp stools, plain bone and also ivory napkin rings, ivory gum rings.

(b) Perry & Co

Binker's patent paper ink, pine cork pen holders in boxes, lacquered flat loaded paper binders, fountain ink stands, Herbert's gum, blue-black ink, violet writing ink and violet copying ink in stone bottles.

(c) J & R Morley

Folio page 214: - various braces, hair nets of various sizes, silk gloves, various infants coloured wool boots, llama braid, vandyke white cotton braid, J & R Morley's super fold white linen buttons, chamois leather corset fasteners, Thomson's unbreakable & Thomason's bone silver-tipped corset fasteners.

Folio page 216: - linen-faced paper collars, linen-faced shirt fronts both frilled and economical, various styles of shirts, white cotton Turkish and other styles of towels, men's elastic belts, black belt ribbon.

Folio page 218: - machine-hemmed handkerchiefs, best quality Brussels bags with fixed locks, American cloth bags of various sizes; black silk squares, bandannas, Tom Thumb cabinets, a dome tie box, various ties, fine and superfine white cotton socks.

Folio page 223: - cotton pants, Franklin frocks, J & R M's averaged Chinese and averaged Indian tape; thread crochet & knitting cottons, brown cheese cloth, twills; followed by 3 pages of indecipherable orders for drapery, clothing and haberdashery.

(d) Bradbury Greateox & Co

Folio page 204: - six Gresham, six Lockman and six Singer sewing machines as well as various needles, stands, oilers, cabinets, tables, an iron portion of a stand to replace a previously smashed one, various spare parts and packing instructions.

Folio page 205: - 24 dozen loom huck towels, calico, twill; cotton Denmark, and Victoria table covers;

Folio page 207: - black, scarlet, blue, green, humbolt, pink & white French cord lute; linen finish or cambric finish lawn, alpaca; cotton, union & linen tick, various sturdy qualities of holland.

Folio page 209: - various muslins, mosquito net, paper collars, reform dux collars, extra stout machine silk reels, bonnet cottons, extra heavy skirt steel; laces, ribbon.

APPENDIX 5

Storekeepers, publicans etc supplied by Bignell & Young
1869-77.

Locality	Storekeeper's Name	Period during which they dealt with Bignell & Young
ARKABA	E Kirwan	16 April 1874- 23 February 1877
BOLLA BOLLANA	J Kingsmill & Co	18 March-1 May 1874
	Whitbread & Hantke	28 August 1874
HAWKER'	A West	21 January-18 July 1869
	Clairstrom	21 June-2 July 1869
	Jones	18 June 1869
HOOKINA	W Taylor	17 July 1873- 7 March 1877
MORALANA	H F Mansell	23 October 1876- 20 March 1877
MERN MERNA	A Wyly	26 January 1874- 16 April 1875
	H Spiers	15 April 1875- 24 February 1877
KANYAKA	C Hare	12 April 1872- 7 October 1875
	James Watson Mrs Watson	17 October 1873- -10 March 1877
	Mrs Hammond	14 August 1874- 28 October 1875
SALTIA	Hilton	14 January 1878-
SLIDING ROCK	F B Andrews	11 September 1872- 12 February 1874
	W Augustus Helling	27 June 1873- 25 June 1875
	C Faulkner	14 August 1874- 6 February 1877
	A Wyly & Co	February 1877
	W P Logan	16 December 1876-

20 March 1877

Mrs Stickles

STIRLING NORTH F Coventry 3 October 1872-
20 January 1877

UMBERATANA T J C Hantke 25 April 1873-
17 October 1873

WILPENA R & Mrs Jane Kirwan 16 April 1874-
10 March 1877

WILLOCHRA E A Stocks 17 May 1872-
21 January 1878

J Drought 14 August 1874-
10 February 1877

WONOKA W M Green

MELROSE Thomas Marshall 11 July 1872-
23 January 1877

Mrs Berkshire 25 June 1875-
12 February 1877

BEAUTIFUL VALLEY R Rodgers 9 September 1876-
10 March 1877

W Barrett 25 August 1876-
6 March 1877

CORALBIGNIE J M Stokes 21 May-
11 September 1872

APPENDIX 6

Annual Rainfall - Port Augusta, 1859-80

Year	mm	Year	mm	Year	mm
1859	51	1866	154	1874	175
1860	249	1867	306	1875	248
1861	179	1868	157	1876	115
1862	211	1869	153	1877	267
1863	211	1870	354	1878	219
1864	126	1871	283	1879	182
1865	50	1872	377	1880	334
		1873	234		

Source: Report of Commission on Railway Construction

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38 Monthly and Annual Rainfall - Port Augusta, 1881-1908

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jne	Jly	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	totals
1881	8	0	9	13	34	38	4	33	19	17	1	11	187
1882	0	0	3	102	22	11	7	20	1	27	142	8	343
1883	0	4	6	26	65	11	14	22	6	7	49	16	226
1884	2	1	90	30	97	25	2	15	22	15	9	12	320
1885	18	28	9	31	18	18	3	4	31	15	2	46	223
1886	11	0	0	2	2	1	38	87	7	4	19	59	230
1887	1	0	2	66	31	25	21	44	9	36	6	30	271
1888	10	0	15	21	24	27	22	12	24	1	1	2	159
1889	48	15	4	63	66	51	4	27	25	38	13	1	355
1890	47	46	3	28	31	51	43	31	13	21	14	4	332
1891	16	2	7	47	6	51	19	40	14	28	3	4	237
1892	7	6	0	7	7	14	6	31	104	99	17	8	306

1893	5	1	9	42	86	35	21	12	31	13	32	21	308
1894	0	1	8	17	19	14	14	25	39	47	13	82	279
1895	31	1	8	72	3	18	17	23	14	3	5	18	213
1896	46	3	14	4	27	27	31	25	16	5	10	13	221
1897	10	11	2	2	10	29	48	20	7	12	1	3	155
1898	0	18	1	27	11	62	13	87	2	2	4	0	227
1899	1	38	9	25	14	56	9	10	30	7	4	6	209
1900	10	2	58	16	6	31	11	17	17	11	7	24	210
1901	0	14	6	13	2	10	23	29	19	26	6	7	155
1902	10	10	14	0	0	29	3	11	8	14	28	27	154
1903	5	8	40	31	12	12	14	16	69	14	62	33	316
1904	30	37	2	15	5	25	29	9	2	82	6	8	250
1905	14	0	2	18	50	23	13	5	19	12	0	0	156
1906	0	3	38	1	25	60	12	24	57	13	13	30	276
1907	0	2	9	15	36	67	34	23	26	9	27	14	262
1908	32	21	16	18	24	19	6	30	53	78	6	24	327

Source: Bureau of Meteorology, Adelaide.

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