



"THE WORSHIP OF GOD IN A STRANGE LAND"

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
SINCE 1836

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## Summary

This thesis traces the origins of the South Australian Jewish community, its identity, and the mechanisms of survival of the group.

The community originated largely in Britain, with a sprinkling of Germans and other Europeans. As individuals, the new arrivals desired social and material success. They also wanted to match the notion of respectability that was peculiar to the Wakefield doctrine. In this they generally succeeded. In the political sphere they perhaps made even more remarkable gains, their political beliefs in turn reflecting that secure and respectable position in society.

The Jewish community of South Australia confronted its identity as a group when the South Australian Hebrew Congregation was formed. This caused immediate problems, not the least because of the number of marriages which had been made outside the faith. The varied religious and social backgrounds of members of the community had also to be accommodated. The result was a community which was bonded together under the leadership of a rabbi, by ties that were almost familial.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century these inherent differences began to reassert themselves. At first, in line with the increasing secularisation of society in general, they manifested themselves in disputes over religious practice. After World War One a more grave crises faced the community, as declining numbers threatened

its very survival. Paradoxically, the subsequent arrival of more Jewish immigrants and refugees in South Australia only served to highlight the problem: they were seen as something of a threat to the old, secure ways. The buildup of antisemitism before World War Two at first also exacerbated the internal difficulties, but eventually caused the community to reorder its priorities.

Nevertheless, a permanent accommodation of all religious beliefs was not to be found, and twenty years after the end of the Second World War a Liberal Congregation was formed. As a result, the increasingly vital forces of education and Zionism are now the main links which hold the community together.

**DECLARATION**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text.  
I consent to it being made available for photocopying and loan.

Pamela A. Carlton

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Australian Archives
ACC	Adelaide City Council
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AHC	Adelaide Hebrew Congregation (originally known as the South Australian Hebrew Congregation)
ANL	Australasian National League
<u>AJHS</u>	Journal of the <u>Australian Jewish Historical Society</u>
<u>JHSE</u>	Transactions of the <u>Jewish Historical Society of England</u>
<u>SAPD</u>	South Australia, <u>Parliamentary Debates</u>
SAA	South Australian Archives
<u>SAPP</u>	South Australia, <u>Parliamentary Papers</u>
SGM	Special General Meeting
UTLC	United Trades and Labour Council