



PROGRESS, PUBS AND PIETY:

PORT ADELAIDE 1836-1915

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## ABSTRACT

### **PROGRESS, PUBS AND PIETY: PORT ADELAIDE 1836-1915**

This thesis argues that social tensions evolved at Port Adelaide, South Australia, between the stable, traditional environment both the working-class and middle-class settlers were trying to create for their families, and the wharfside activities of brawls, bars and brothels which were a common way of life for many transient seafarers after long periods at sea. Comparative studies with other Australian colonial towns, particularly the ports of Fremantle and Williamstown, show that Port Adelaide differed in that it became the base for long ranging temperance and social reform movements with the Reverend Joseph Coles Kirby, Congregational Church pastor at Port Adelaide for 28 years from 1880, exerting a major influence.

The development of the port of Adelaide began in 1836 when the first landing place was hurriedly located among the mangroves of a creek eleven kilometres from the capital. By the 1870s Port Adelaide was a bustling, cosmopolitan town on a stable site. Fine architecture enhanced the streetscape with imposing commercial buildings, warehouses, hotels, Town Hall, Institute and stone churches of many denominations.

Public house and pulpit were intrinsically linked to the development or progress of Port Adelaide from its earliest settlement until 1915. During this period the accompanying social issues in the town were a challenge to townspeople and authorities. Drunken behaviour was frequently a nuisance for locals, visitors and police, as was the delinquent behaviour of larrikins or hooligans. The local police court regularly dealt with such offenders and the Port women who worked as prostitutes. A detailed study of the contrasting lives of two Portonians from quite different circumstances provides insight into the town and its people. Mrs Sarah Francisco (c.1839-1916) was convicted 295 times at the Port for being drunk and disorderly while the Reverend Kirby (1837-1924), campaigned for a decrease in the number of hotel establishments and later for the six o'clock closing of bars.

The reformers saw alcohol as a main cause of society's ills. The tensions between the pubs of a port town and the ideals of a settled, sometime pious community came into focus during the resulting debates on temperance. By 1915 the temperance movement in South Australia had successfully campaigned for a reduction of liquor licences and trading hours. Even in the port town of Port Adelaide, it seemed in 1915 that sobriety and order had triumphed.

## DECLARATION

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

Should this thesis fulfil the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, I consent to it being made available for photocopying and loan.

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Date: ..... *19 November 1999* .....

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## CONVERSION TABLES

### Conversion of measurements

1 inch	2.54 centimetres
1 foot	30.5 centimetres
1 yard (3 feet)	0.914 metres
1 chain (22 yards)	20.108 metres
1 mile	1.609 kilometres
1 acre	0.405 hectares
1 gallon	4.546 litres

### Conversion of currency

£1 (1 pound)	\$2
1s. or 1/- (1 shilling)	10 cents
20 shillings	£1
1d. (1 penny)	0.83 cent
12d. (12 pence)	1 shilling
1 florin	2 shillings
1 guinea	21 shillings (£1.1/-)
1 'bob'	1 shilling

### Conversion of weight

1 oz. (ounce)	28.349 grams
1 lb. (pound)	454 grams
1 ton	1.016 tonnes

## INTRODUCTION

With aching hands and bleeding feet  
 We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;  
 We bear the burden and the heat  
 Of the long day, and wish t'were done.  
 Not till the hours of light return  
 All we have built do we discern.

from 'Morality' by Matthew Arnold (1822-1888)\*

Port Adelaide in the mid-nineteenth century was a town of many challenging contrasts. Sludge shovelled from the river to build up the swampy ground gradually turned to swirling dust in summer heat. The early timber buildings, cheaper and quicker to build than those of stone, were also more rapidly destroyed by fire. Tidal water inundated the town regularly but there was a limited supply of drinking water. Workers toiled without break while ships were in port and then lay idle when the wharves were quiet. Settlers trying to make a quiet home for their families lived next to public houses or 'pubs' which entertained noisy seamen released from months at sea, and clergymen ministered to their congregations while prostitutes and drunks swaggered and staggered by.

It began as a primitive port town of customs men, carters, provedores, publicans, brawny lumpers and loitering women in a province where many of the settlers were dissenters or non-conformists. Douglas Pike described the pioneering colonists as seeking 'utopian

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\* Francis Turner Palgrave (ed.), *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*. London: Oxford University Press, 1928, 422.



dreams' of religious freedom from the established church in their former homeland and a secure lifestyle for their families in their new country.<sup>1</sup>

The overall purpose of this study is to analyse changes in the Port Adelaide town site and the life of townspeople from 1836 to 1915. The thesis argument is that for a number of years Port Adelaide developed in a similar fashion to other Australian colonial ports, particularly Fremantle and Williamstown, until the 1880s. From that time the town differed from these other port towns as proudly independent Port Adelaide workers showed strength by forming their own peak union council and the newly-arrived Congregational minister, the Reverend Joseph Coles Kirby, continued his active campaign for social and moral reform in his new parish, the wider theatres of South Australia generally, and other Australian cities.

The focus in Chapter One is the European discovery of the Port Adelaide River, Colonel William Light's finding of a suitable harbour and port landing site with access to the capital of the colony, and the eventual establishment of a port town. The material for this discussion draws heavily on Light's journal and diaries and on David Elder's summary of Light's role and accomplishments in the early colony.<sup>2</sup>

The Port Adelaide Settlement, soon aptly named 'Port Misery', was a

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857*. (Second edition, Carlton Vic, 1967) 495.

<sup>2</sup> David Elder (ed.), *William Light's Brief Journal and Australian Diaries*. (Adelaide, 1984).

small village at the landing place. It was cleared from mangrove thickets near sand dunes leading to a rough track to Adelaide, eleven kilometres to the south-east. The first impressions for colonists were of mosquitoes, mud and primitive isolation. Few services were available in the first four years of European settlement at Port Adelaide. For the earliest thirsty seafarers there was a grog shop under a rough branch shelter. Gradually basic hotel accommodation and victuals were provided for travellers, seamen and a small port community.

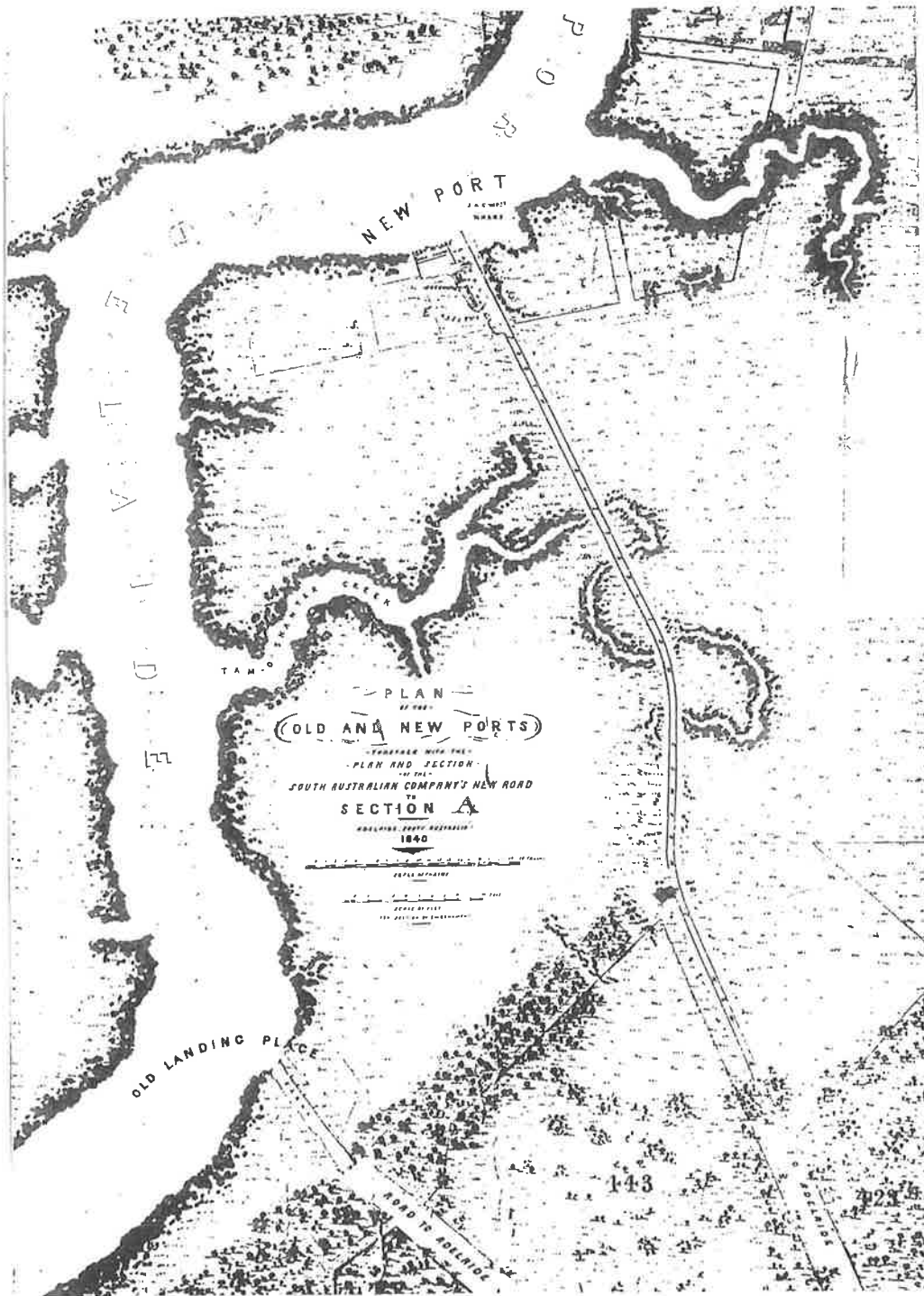
For the devout, a missionary held shipboard services each Sunday and occasionally churchmen in Adelaide arranged small Sunday gatherings on the wharf to cater for a continually changing group of worshippers. There were few clergymen in the colony and congregations shared visiting ministers or willing lay preachers.

Within three years a new governor instigated a relocation of the port further downstream where deeper water could be more easily dredged and ships might tie up alongside a wharf, eliminating the transfer of people and goods by lighters. A raised road was constructed across the tidal flats and Port Adelaide moved to its present site where wharfing, storage and a town gradually rose from the swamps. The 'New Port' opened in 1840 and a new era of opportunity for Portonians began. The town of Port Adelaide, in this study, is defined as being generally within the central town area bordered by the Port River to the west and north,

Todd Street and the railway line to the east, and the present railway line to Lefevre Peninsula to the south.

From 1840 until the 1860s the Port Adelaide pioneers shared a common goal. Chapter Two investigates the way Portonians worked together to overcome flooding on the low-lying site and to establish their town and facilities. The colonisation of the area by European settlers saw the nomadic indigenous people returning to the area less frequently and for the first townspeople life in the inhospitable landscape became a matter of surviving the elements. Frequent tidal inundation in various areas of the town continued for nearly three decades. Fire was also a constant threat in a wooden shanty town dependent on candles and open hearths and large sections of the town were burnt out in the early years. There was little time to concentrate on comforts or the niceties of a civilised society.

Port Adelaide, however poorly sited, endured because of the harbour and convenience to the capital city. The townspeople viewed the development of their town as commendable progress given the conditions they had to overcome with little assistance from the rest of the colony. The Port was used by the wider group of South Australians in a transitory manner without any sense of collective responsibility for its wellbeing and Portonians realised in the early stage of establishing their town that they had to 'go it alone'.



### Illustration 1

Port Adelaide, 1840.

A sketch plan showing the first established landing place, the 'Old Port', and the 'New Port' developed on the present site.

State Archives 1069/1.

As the town developed, the available wharf area was extended in a pattern closely following that analysed by James Bird in his study of British ports, which he described as a typical evolution of 'Anyport'.<sup>3</sup> The extent to which this analysis applied to Port Adelaide is examined in Chapter Two. The work of Donald Langmead provides useful discussion on this question.<sup>4</sup> As the wharf area was extended to cater for the increasing maritime trade the people eventually succeeded in reclaiming land from the tidal flats. The town expanded with hotels and commercial buildings constructed to meet growing demands. Shipping agents, traders and bankers moved in and set about civilising Port Adelaide with more permanent town facilities including a town hall and Institute.

Churches of many denominations were also built to cater for both colonist and traveller and stood as symbols of settlement, progress and piety. Once the more permanent building of the town centre had been accomplished, reformers in the town found time to dedicate their energies to 'improving' society and creating a better human environment in their terms.

From the 1860s Portonians were not one united community in location or perception. This thesis somewhat extends Brian Samuels' study of the late nineteenth-century community structure based on suburban

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<sup>3</sup> James Bird, *The Major Seaports of the United Kingdom*. (London, 1963) 26-27. See also Bird, *Seaport Gateways of Australia*. (London, 1968) 96.

<sup>4</sup> Donald Langmead, 'Port Adelaide 1836-1971', Thesis for Diploma of Town Planning, South Australian Institute of Technology, 1971, 40-62.

groups in the wider district of Port Adelaide,<sup>5</sup> and includes a closer examination of the different Portonian groups which emerged and consolidated as the town developed.

The first and largest group was the workers who lived close to their labour on the wharves, smelters and other industries. After work the men gathered in the pubs with others in the same lines of occupation and gradually developed trade associations and unions. As commerce and industry replaced early residential pockets in the town centre, many working-class families moved to nearby housing estates in Queenstown, Glanville, Sandwell and Birkenhead. For workers, the Port was still a walking town with the streetscape dominated by commercial buildings, stores, warehouses, mills, factories, smelters, pubs and churches.

The second group of Portonians was the large 'bridging' group of townspeople, mainly clerks and shop assistants, employed in 'white-collar' occupations. Professional and commercial men made up the third group, middle-class South Australians who were increasingly involved in local politics and intellectual societies within the town. The pursuit of respectability led to their exodus from Port Adelaide as a place of residence as they gradually moved their families out of the town to extramural localities. Their fine homes, built along the road towards Adelaide in Alberton and Woodville, or over the river along the gulf shore of the

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<sup>5</sup> Brian J. Samuels, "'Community' in the Port Adelaide District 1861-1901". B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1972.

Lefevre Peninsula, were well away from the raw activities of the wharves.

The workers, the 'white-collar' workers, and the middle class shared their settlement with a fourth group, the transient seamen who dominated the town while on shore-leave. Many in this changing crowd engaged in activities which often disrupted the more ordered lives of the townsmen and their families. A fifth group comprised the poor and needy of Port Adelaide who were often destitute and surviving as best they could around the town.

The élite of the colony might be regarded as a sixth group. This upper class was defined by R. W. Dale in 1889 as being that section of society whose Englishness was retained 'by its nearness to the Governor and to Government House'.<sup>6</sup> They had only passing business connections with Port Adelaide although John Newman, a shipping agent and broker at the Port, prided himself on being the first old Etonian in South Australia. He flew the Eton College flag from the tower of his home, 'The Brocas', in Woodville.<sup>7</sup>

The groups mainly centred around different town bases. The workers laboured on wharves, in warehouses and industrial sites and

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<sup>6</sup> R. W. Dale, *Impressions of Australia*. (London, 1889) 10, in J. Nancarrow, 'A Social History of South Australia', B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1963, 23.

<sup>7</sup> Alexandra Marsden, 'A History of the Brocas', a pamphlet commemorating the opening of 'The Brocas' as an Historical Museum in Woodville, (Woodville SA, 1975) 1-2. 'The Brocas' was named after one of the playing fields of Eton College in Buckinghamshire, England.

gathered in the pubs. Many attended church with their families on Sunday. The middle-class Portonians focused on their own businesses, clubs and churches where they had major roles in activities. After a co-operative, ecumenical start, the various Christian denominations grew in number and moved away from their shared venues. They pursued their own tenets and built their separate chapels and churches.

This thesis argues that tensions developed between the stable, traditional environment which both the working-class and middle-class Portonians were trying to create for their families, and the wharfside activities of brawling, boozing and womanising which were the common expectations for many visiting ships' crews after long periods at sea. The study documents and analyses the Port's progress or development of wharf and town and investigates the juxtaposition of waterside and hotel, and town and church. It was a problem of conflicting use of public space when the disruptive behaviour of the seamen spread from the waterside area and the hotels onto the town streets near businesses and houses. The delinquent behaviour of local larrikins created further unease to citizens on the street. A comparison can be drawn with Andrew Brown-May's study of the streets in Melbourne from 1836 to 1923 and the encroachment of nuisances into public areas.<sup>8</sup> Studies of other Australian

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<sup>8</sup> Andrew J. Brown-May, "The itinerary of our days': the historical experience of the street in Melbourne, 1837-1923". Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Melbourne, 1993.



working-class communities are also briefly compared with Port Adelaide: Janet McCalman's early twentieth-century Richmond, Victoria, and Grace Karskens' work on the Rocks area of early Sydney.<sup>9</sup>

Social and cultural issues in the town from the 1870s to the early twentieth century are explored in Chapters Three and Four. The plight of many Portonian women is a social problem examined in this thesis. Long separations were common for wives of seamen and men forced to seek work elsewhere in times of recession. Many women suffered great poverty and raised their families in the older housing areas, 'the slums' of Port Adelaide. For many prostitution was the inevitable outcome of female destitution in the port town and an alcoholic haze was one way out of the unhappiness and hardship for some women. The local hooligans, drunks and vagabonds also caused considerable town concern and many became familiar with the routine of the Port lockup, court and a stint in Adelaide Gaol.

Susan Horan's study of prostitution in South Australia from 1836 to 1914 examined the reasons why women turned to prostitution. In the case of young Irish women Horan considered that, despite differing statements concerning the morality of these girls, 'it is certain that a number were unskilled and remained unemployed for a considerable length of time.

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<sup>9</sup> Janet S. McCalman, *Struggletown: Public and Private Life in Richmond 1900-1965*. (Carlton Vic, 1984). See also Grace Karskens, *The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney*. (Carlton Vic, 1997).

This factor seems generally to have made the compulsion to resort to prostitution still more acute'.<sup>10</sup> Similar reasons were found for the incidence of prostitution in nineteenth-century England.<sup>11</sup> Christopher Nance, writing on South Australian society, supported Horan's opinion and further considered that in Adelaide 'the very existence of prostitutes...was seen by many righteous colonists as being a denial of all those good things which South Australia was supposed to represent'.<sup>12</sup> Francis Anderson identified the lack of sufficient wages for women in New South Wales as a major factor in the choice of many to take 'the only way which seemed open' but also recognised that some women saw 'the desire for money (not always because of poverty) and the things that money will buy', as encouraging prostitution.<sup>13</sup> Some viewed prostitution at Port Adelaide as a major problem. In 1913 the Reverend Lionel B. Fletcher, incumbent of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church, declared that Adelaide people 'were fond of saying that Sydney was the most wicked city in Australia, but the authorities there would not stand the abominable thing which was prevalent in the streets of Port Adelaide for 24 hours'.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Susan J. Horan, 'More Sinned against than Sinning? Prostitution in South Australia, 1836-1914', B.A. Honours Thesis, The Flinders University of South Australia, 1978, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Horan, 14. Horan referred to the study by E. M. Sigsworth and T. J. Wyke, 'A Study of Victorian Prostitution and Venereal Disease', in Martha Vicinus (ed.), *Suffer and Be Still*. (Bloomington, Indiana, 1974) 81.

<sup>12</sup> Christopher Nance, 'The South Australian Social Experiment 1836-71: A Study of Some Aspects of South Australia's Social Development', M.A. Thesis, The Flinders University of South Australia, 1977, 231.

<sup>13</sup> Horan, 15-17. Horan cited Francis Anderson (Maybanke), *"The Roots of the Matter": Social and Economic Aspects of the Social Problem*, published by the Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales, (Sydney, 1917) 12-13, 203.

<sup>14</sup> *The South Australian Register* (hereafter cited as *The Register*), 16 December 1913, in Horan, 9-10.

The workers and the middle class, the two main local community groups, each experienced a different Port Adelaide. Mel Davies recognised that the genesis of South Australia by promoters in England 'occurred within a period of upheaval and turmoil, at a time when the British middle and working classes were emerging as distinct entities, each fighting for new rights and changes to the old order of society'.<sup>15</sup> On one side the worth and power of the Portonian worker was being recognised and led to strong union action in the town. On the other side, social reform movements, including the temperance cause predominantly nurtured by the middle class of the non-conformist churches, increased in intensity with a campaign to reduce the influence of the pubs. In this regard Port Adelaide occupies a distinct place which differentiates it from other ports in Australia.

Port Adelaide's progress in commerce and industry, in pubs and in piety, are in many ways a microcosm of South Australia's development. However the Port had a different character in its large worker population and its cosmopolitan connection with the outside world as documented by Chris Vevers and Jim Moss and discussed in Chapter Four.<sup>16</sup> This difference was evident in the maritime unions in the town which supported the Maritime Labor Council of Port Adelaide from 1886 to

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<sup>15</sup> Mel Davies, 'Establishing South Australia', in Pamela Statham (ed.), *The Origins of Australia's Capital Cities*. (Cambridge UK, 1989) 161.

<sup>16</sup> Chris Vevers, 'The Maritime Labor Council of Port Adelaide 1886-1892', *Flinders Journal of History and Politics: The Port Adelaide Issue*. Vol. 12. (1987) 64-75, and Jim Moss, *Sounds of Trumpets: History of the Labour Movement in South Australia*. (Netley SA, 1985).

1892 rather than be represented by the Adelaide based United Trades and Labor Council formed in 1884. Vevers' essay examined the internal politicking within the colony's union movement and provided further material for discussion in this thesis.<sup>17</sup>

Port Adelaide was a crucible for worker unity in attempts to improve conditions and wages in a period which suffered a series of recessions. As a port the town was dramatically affected by droughts in agricultural and pastoral areas, and the resultant decline in South Australia's economy in the late 1880s was intensified by the world-wide depression. The paradox, as Vevers pointed out, was that 1890, the year of the national workers' strike, was a peak year for the South Australian economy, the consequence of good harvests and the rapid development of the Broken Hill mines which increased trade through the port and caused an initial reluctance on the part of Port Adelaide maritime workers to support the Australia-wide strike.<sup>18</sup>

A comparison can be made with two other British colonial ports in Australia, the towns of Fremantle and Williamstown. The similarities and differences in issues which affected the towns and their people are investigated. Fremantle (1829), the port for Perth, capital of the Swan River Colony, a convict settlement until 1868, and the early ports of Melbourne in the Port Phillip District, William's Town (1837) and

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<sup>17</sup> Vevers, 64-75.

<sup>18</sup> Vevers, 73.

Sandridge (1838), were, like Port Adelaide, port towns separate from the administration centres of colony capitals. James Bird, in his study of Australian ports, commented that the siting and founding of ports was 'an interplay of chance, opportunism, and sometimes sheer foresight'.<sup>19</sup> However each colonial port had its own characteristics of town development.

All Australian capitals, Pamela Statham argued, shared a common British heritage and all were essentially established before the resources and possibilities of their hinterlands had been fully assessed.<sup>20</sup> This was also true of their port towns. In the colonies where great mineral wealth was uncovered in the 1840s and 1850s, copper in South Australia, and gold in Victoria (gold was discovered at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, in the early 1890s), the ports had to accommodate a rapid increase in shipping.<sup>21</sup> This growth opened new opportunities for the people of the ports as they attempted to meet the supply needs of the travelling miners and, in South Australia, the needs of the mining companies to export ore. Port Adelaide, Fremantle and Williamstown were similar in much of their essential development as towns and ports.

Port Adelaide's major difference to the ports in neighbouring colonies was its link with the reform movements in South Australia. Much

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<sup>19</sup> Bird, *Seaport Gateways of Australia*. Preface, viii.

<sup>20</sup> Statham, 'Patterns and Perspectives', in Statham, 14.

<sup>21</sup> Ada Ackerly, 'Immigration and Shipping', History Leaflet 6 for Williamstown City Library, 1987. In Victoria the sudden number of arrivals by sea was extremely difficult to manage; in 1851, 13 892 disembarked and in 1852 and 1853, 94 664 and 92 312.

of the initial impetus for these causes originated at the Port through the work of a local minister, the Reverend Joseph Coles Kirby, who from 1880 until the early 1920s engaged in high politics. As a prominent South Australian protagonist he fanned a crusade for sweeping social and moral reform. He clearly saw the opportunity to use broad legislation and local democracy to achieve the objectives of the movement. In the 1880s and 1890s, while he delivered orations and lobbied in ecclesiastical meeting halls and polished board rooms, the derelict and destitute at the Port were helped by unquestioning Salvation Army workers. Social reform for the Port was conducted on two levels, through the parliamentary process and on the street.

Pious abstainers viewed the wine shop and especially the hotel tap-room as sources of degradation and despair for the weak. South Australian crusaders set out to diminish the influence of 'drink' by using the law to cull the number of outlets and finally to reduce the hours of bar trade. Their ultimate goal, though disguised under the moderate term 'temperance', was the absolute prohibition of liquor.

The Port hotels were the target of the puritan conscience. The hotels, the subject of Chapter Five, catered for the commercial and maritime networks but their main custom was in bar trade. Each pub established a different clientele and encouraged particular occupation groups. The temperance view that hotels could exist without liquor had little

foundation in business reality. In Port Adelaide a temperance hotel was tried but catered for only a select group. J. M. Freeland suggested in 1966 that the term 'wowsers' to describe a teetotaler, amongst other meanings, came from a late nineteenth-century Australian slogan coined by John Norton, 'We only want social evils remedied'.<sup>22</sup> Those who were regarded as wowsers in Port Adelaide were certainly aware of the number of social problems in their midst.

To Sarah Francisco (c.1839-1916), the streets and particularly the hotels of the Port were very familiar for over 40 years from the mid-1870s. Her story in Chapter Six provides a brief picture of nineteenth-century life around the wharf and hotels. Sarah received 295 convictions and long periods in gaol for her drunken behaviour before her notable change towards sobriety late in life due to the patient friendship of a Salvation Army family.

Chapter Seven examines the port churches and their role in town life. A study of church architecture, both external design and interior layout and features, provides some understanding of a church, its people and the economic conditions which shaped its foundation. In 1999, only two church buildings from the 1850s stand in Port Adelaide. Services are still held at St Mary's Catholic Church, and the first Presbyterian Church is enclosed within later warehouse walls and now refitted as a medical

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<sup>22</sup> J. M. Freeland, *The Australian Pub*. (Carlton Vic, 1966) 171. See also Ken Inglis, 'Historians and Language', *Australian Historical Association Bulletin*, Numbers 64-65, 1990, 13-14.

centre. Written descriptions, drawings, photographs and other primary sources, particularly the *Port Adelaide News*, provided information on these and other churches built in the Port from the 1840s to the 1880s.

The clergymen added colour and sometimes controversy to the lives of Portonians. Brief histories of some ministers and activities of the various churches are traced. The non-conformists' belief of 'reward in heaven' often led them to extreme self-control and rejection of worldly pursuits. One contemporary record of their religious life derives from the writings of the 'Unobserved Observer' who visited Port churches during the 1890s and made, with a certain dissenter bias, incisive comments on the different services, congregations and ministers. To some extent, the work of an interdenominational Sunday school union drew the churches into a co-operative group within the town.

Chapter Eight follows Kirby (1837-1924) after his arrival at the Port in 1880. As the third Port Adelaide Congregational pastor he played a major role in the temperance movement, and as a moral reformer founded the Social Purity Society. This study takes account of Jim Jose's examination of Kirby and the extent of his role in the society.<sup>23</sup> Both these crusades, and other social causes he initiated, extended to the wider stage throughout South Australia and other Australian colonies. Kirby and the temperance lobby petitioned parliamentarians and eventually won change

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<sup>23</sup> Jim Jose, 'Legislating for Social Purity, 1883-1885: The Reverend Joseph Coles Kirby and the Social Purity Society', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, No. 18, 1990, 119-134.



in legislation to support their cause. His biographer, Edward S. Kiek, recognised the man's intense drive and common sense.<sup>24</sup>

A high point of participatory democracy emerged in South Australia with the advent of referenda on particular questions of hotel licensing and sales of alcohol on a district to district basis. A local option vote on the question of licensed premises finally took place in some districts of South Australia in February 1906. Chapter Nine explores the process whereby people on the electoral roll were given the chance to decide if there should be fewer hotels and other liquor outlets in their area. In her study of South Australian liquor legislation from 1876 to 1917, S. E. Close supported the argument that 'because liquor legislation lies on the borderline between public order, health, and morals, it affects the attitudes of almost all groups of society'.<sup>25</sup> The campaigners in South Australia used all of these issues to substantiate a cause and the debate was extensive. The result in the Port Adelaide district was the reduction of licences by one-third. Fifteen hotels closed in 1909.

The temperance crusaders moved on to a campaign to restrict hotel trading times and triumphed in 1915 when early closing for hotels and wine bars became law in South Australia. By 1916 waterside workers, seamen, factory hands and others who had previously frequented the bars

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<sup>24</sup> Edward S. Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia. The Life and Reminiscences of Joseph Coles Kirby, Christian Pioneer and Social Reformer*. (London, 1927).

<sup>25</sup> S. E. Close, 'Social Attitudes to Liquor and Liquor Legislation in South Australia 1876-1917', B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1961, 1. Close referred to C. E. G. Catlin, *Liquor Control*. (Home University Library, 1931) 7.

at Port Adelaide up to eleven at night had to finish their drinks by six p.m. Kirby became known as 'Mr Six O'Clock'. Walter Phillips' study provides valuable material used in this thesis to examine the question of early closing and the resultant 'swill' in hotel bars across most of Australia.<sup>26</sup>

From the 1860s progress at the Port was defined by substantial commercial buildings and hotels, industry, established unions of workers, intra- and interstate railway links, schools, an Institute and library, clubs and societies for a variety of interests, sporting facilities and churches of many denominations. The tensions between a waterside pub trade and the ideals of a pious, settled community, were largely resolved through economic progress, demography and legislation. The advent of world hostilities from 1914 to 1918 hastened progress towards more sober values but brought with it a new uncertainty.

For a long period the temperance movement and non-conformist churches claimed a victory but only a battle, albeit substantial, had been won. Public houses survived the restrictions and continued to ply their trade in Port Adelaide as they had from first settlement.

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<sup>26</sup> Walter W. Phillips, "Six o'clock swill: The Introduction of early closing of hotel bars in Australia", *Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, October 1980, 250-266.



## CHAPTER ONE

### A PORT FOR THE COLONY

The tidal flats were thick with grey mangroves. Prop roots anchored in the mud formed a mesh which trapped silt and plant debris carried by the tides. The deposits slowly built up the banks of the inlet until they began to support terrestrial life. As the tide receded the line of aerial roots, erect in military fashion, guarded the shore. Time was the cycle of the seasons.

The British who sailed into the sheltered reaches of the waterway observed the mangrove forest with its tangled roots in the tidal sludge. They had visions of how to civilise the shoreline, deepen the bed of the inlet and tame the banks into timbered right angles. This stream was the best anchorage they had found along the eastern side of a gulf chosen half a globe away as a possible site for the capital of the new colony of South Australia. Time was important to these men.

On 22 December 1836 Colonel William Light, the newly arrived surveyor-general, entered the inlet in a hatch-boat guiding his ship *Rapid*, with her greyhound figurehead, and *Tam O'Shanter*, captained by W.

Freeman, into the reaches of what would be later known as the Port Adelaide River. In his journal he described the event and his thoughts for the site's future.

It was really beautiful to look back and see two British ships for the first time sailing up between the mangroves, in fine smooth water, in a creek that had never before borne the construction of the marine architect, and which at some future period might be the channel of import and export of a great commercial capital.<sup>1</sup>

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The first known British to sight the South Australian coastline were men on board the 60 ton brig *Lady Nelson* in December 1800, *en route* to Port Jackson from England under the command of Lieutenant James Grant of the Royal Navy. At Cape Town they were told of the discovery of Bass Strait and instructed to sail through it to their destination. They made landfall on what is now the coast of South Australia's south-east and observed some prominent land features. Grant named Cape Northumberland, Cape Banks, Mount Gambier and Mount Schank (after the designer of the *Lady Nelson*, Captain John Schank) as they sailed east.<sup>2</sup>

Two years later, Royal Navy Lieutenant Matthew Flinders, on the *Investigator*, spent five days examining Gulf Saint Vincent which he named. Off the entrance to the present Port Adelaide River he marked 'hazy' on his chart. The low lying inlet was not detected from his course nine nautical miles offshore.

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<sup>1</sup> David Elder (ed.), *William Light's Brief Journal and Australian Diaries*. (Adelaide, 1984) 90.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Parsons, *Southern Passages: A Maritime History of South Australia*. (Netley SA, 1986) 4-5. The first landfall on the trip was Cape Banks but Grant was running short of provisions and did not go ashore, leaving Matthew Flinders as the official European 'discoverer' of South Australia.

European sealers and whalers erected huts on Kangaroo Island as early as 1803, many being ships' deserters, or escaped men from convict settlements at Van Diemen's Land or New South Wales. The island's remoteness suited them well. They carried out sporadic raids to the mainland to abduct women from the tribes there and journeyed up the gulf. However no known detailed records exist of their exploration.<sup>3</sup>

In 1831 Captain Collet Barker, in the *Isabella*, was sent by the governor of New South Wales, Sir Ralph Darling, to explore and report on the mouth of the River Murray. This task completed, he entered Gulf Saint Vincent on 13 April that year. He twice passed the mouth of the inlet but failed to notice it. He anchored off what is now Port Noarlunga and trekked to the high point in the hills named Mount Lofty by Flinders. From this vantage point he could see the peninsula, the islands and the shining inlet and waterways. On 22 April he led his party to explore the entrance to the inlet, noting its possibilities as a harbour.

Barker was killed at the mouth of the River Murray shortly after leaving the gulf, and his commissariat officer, John Kent, reported their discoveries to Darling. Captain Charles Sturt recorded them in his *Two Expeditions into the Interior of South Australia*, published in 1833. Marked on the map which accompanied the book was 'Inlet 16 miles'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Robert McKinnon, *Shipwreck Sites of Kangaroo Island*. (Adelaide, 1993) 10-11.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Sturt, *Two Expeditions into the Interior of South Australia*. Vol. 2. (London, 1833) 246.

In June 1833 Captain John Jones, master of the whaling schooner *Henry*, left Launceston for the whaling station at Hog Bay on Kangaroo Island. After delivering provisions he ventured along the east coast of Gulf Saint Vincent in search of water for the drought-stricken station.<sup>5</sup> Jones described entering the southern passage of the inlet with a depth of three and a half to four fathoms of water at the mouth. He found 'a fine harbour, sheltered by an island...which is about three miles in circumference; it is sandy, but there is abundance of fresh water on it, as well as some streams running into the harbour from the main land'.<sup>6</sup> Wilfred Oldham accounted the description of the streams as a 'flattering reference to the various tidal creeks in the locality'.<sup>7</sup>

Three years later the advance party of new colonists arrived in South Australia. On board *Rapid*, Light's 'Letter of Instructions' from the London-based Colonization Commissioners for South Australia, required that he assess a number of sites thought suitable for a main settlement and port.<sup>8</sup> He was aware of Jones' report and the other sightings of the harbour known as Barker's Inlet or 'Sixteen Mile Creek'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jean M. Nunn, *This Southern Land: A Social History of Kangaroo Island 1800-1890*. (Hawthorndene SA, 1989) 45-46.

<sup>6</sup> 'Port Adelaide River. Its First Reported Discovery', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia: South Australian Branch*. Vol. 22, 1923, 74. This account, signed by John Jones ('I have read the above and find it all correct') was first published in a report by Charles James Napier, *Colonization; particularly in Southern Australia; with some remarks on Small Farms and Over-Population*. (London, 1835). See also 'Sketches of the History of Port Adelaide', *Port Adelaide News*, 3 December 1886.

<sup>7</sup> Wilfrid Oldham, 'Discovery of Port Adelaide', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia: South Australian Branch*. Vol. 48, 1947, 16-18.

<sup>8</sup> Elder, 124-129.

<sup>9</sup> Elder 26. On a Bass Strait sealing expedition in 1833, Captain John Hart explored the area 'where Adelaide now stands' and during a trip to England in December 1835 'furnished sailing directions for Colonel Light then about to leave'.

While Light was inspecting Rapid Bay, also under serious consideration as a site for a settlement, Captain Martin of the *John Pirie* made a voyage up the gulf in a whaleboat and entered the inlet and harbour. He reported his findings to Light.<sup>10</sup>

Light and his surveying team worked their way up the eastern side of the gulf. They missed the entrance to the inlet and continued north to inspect what is now Port Gawler. On returning to the brig Light wrote, 'Mr Hill, second mate, told me he had seen from the masthead a river to the southward of considerable breadth'.<sup>11</sup>

The *Rapid* anchored off the later named Torrens Island on 25 September 1836. The party explored the area for two days but, still not convinced that he had located the inlet and harbour reported in such favourable tones by Jones, Light left to search further north. 'I am now despaired of ever finding the beautiful harbour described by Captain Jones', he recorded in his journal on 27 September.<sup>12</sup> After seeing the head of the gulf and noting 'nothing could look much worse', he returned to the anchorage near Torrens Island and, with men in the hatch-boat, the gig and the jolly-boat, spent three days thoroughly investigating the various inlets and creeks among the swampy mangroves.<sup>13</sup> Light was convinced that the waterway was not the harbour described by Jones but

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<sup>10</sup> Parsons, *Port Misery and The New Port*. (Magill SA, 1982) 3.

<sup>11</sup> Elder, 66.

<sup>12</sup> Elder, 66-67.

<sup>13</sup> Elder, 67-69.

recognised the possibilities of this location if he found no other.

In the late 1870s, Admiral William J. S. Pullen wrote to A. Barker, who also served on the *Rapid* with Light. Pullen complained that his contribution to the discovery was not recorded in newspaper articles he had recently received from South Australia and recounted events as he remembered them:

I believe I was the first in it (*i.e.*, the southern reach of the present harbour). You cannot forget the brig dropping me with the hatch boat on September 28, 1836, when I got into an opening above the present entrance and finally anchored in the North Arm, thence proceeding southerly in the gig I passed up the long southern reach. On my return I met Mr. Field in the jolly-boat. On the next day I sailed out in the hatch-boat by Light's Passage, and on arriving on board the *Rapid* reported what I had discovered in my trip up the long southern reach, on receiving which the Surveyor-General decided to return with me the next day, on which occasion he confined himself to an examination of an eastern branch of the creek, and a patient search for fresh water.<sup>14</sup>

Light's interest in finding not just a safe harbour but a good supply of water was important. Indeed, the search for water was to play a dominant role in the later development of the port and the social and economic fabric of the town. In 1977 Ronald Parsons speculated that the town 'may have been the capital of the colony had...Light been able to locate a plentiful supply of fresh water in the vicinity'.<sup>15</sup> Light's confusion about Jones' report on a harbour may simply have been the differences in rainfall in the years of their visits; Jones in July 1833 and Light in September 1836. John Bull reasoned this in 1878 when he wrote

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<sup>14</sup> John Wrathall Bull, *Early Experiences of Colonial Life in South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1878) 290. In 1836 Pullen was a young sub-lieutenant and Light's second officer. Apparently Barker's information had been received too late to be included in the main body of Bull's text. No date is given for the correspondence.

<sup>15</sup> Parsons, *Port Misery*, 1.



it is natural to suppose...that he [Jones] arrived and found the fresh state of the heads of the various branches of the main creek after a heavy and continued rainfall, when the freshets were still running, and that fresh water had displaced the salt at and below their unapproachable heads, as we know is more or less periodically the case now. Jones may also have landed on Torrens Island when he found lodges of rain water on it.<sup>16</sup>

Three weeks later, on 20 November 1836, Light returned to the inlet with his deputy, the young Irishman George Strickland Kingston, and John Morphett. The next day they entered the southern reach. Light enthusiastically described it as 'one of the finest little harbours I have ever seen', and said he had not encountered 'a harbour so well supplied with little creeks that would answer for ship building as this'.<sup>17</sup> Kingston left the party with some men to walk to Holdfast Bay to the south where he had arranged to meet Light three days later with a report of the land between the two sites.

On 23 November Light took sightings on the shore to determine the position of the harbour and had his men lay down buoys at the end of each spit forming the entrance. He wrote to the Commissioners that he hoped in a short time 'to be able to take all ships coming here into as beautiful and safe a harbour as the world can produce'. He suggested that a mud boat and a little human industry could be used to deepen the channels for large ships drawing more than 17 feet of water.<sup>18</sup>

Light left the Port Creek on 24 November and as planned met

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<sup>16</sup> Bull, 290-291.

<sup>17</sup> Elder, 80.

<sup>18</sup> Elder, 80.

Kingston, who gave him a written description of the land. Light was convinced he had located the site for the colony's major port and for its capital further inland but was still committed to inspecting Port Lincoln in Spencer Gulf.

He arrived there in early December disappointed to find only the *Cygnets*, under Captain J. Rolls, alone at anchor in Boston Bay. He had previously sent Captain Thomas Lipson, the naval officer and harbour master, on the chartered barque from Nepean Bay, Kangaroo Island, to meet the *Buffalo* and Governor John Hindmarsh as instructed. He hoped to find the *Buffalo* had arrived.<sup>19</sup> With Lipson and Morphett he examined the harbour and the surrounding country. Light wrote to the Commissioners giving an interesting comparison of the two gulfs, the main harbours in each and conditions for shipping. He favoured the harbour on Gulf Saint Vincent because of its easier and safer access in all weathers. He rejected Port Lincoln as a settlement site because of the apparent lack of fresh water and concluded that 'it cannot be thought of as a first settlement; some years hence it may be made a valuable sea port, but can only be after the colony has increased considerably'.<sup>20</sup>

*Rapid* and *Tam O'Shanter* anchored in the Port Creek on 18 December, *Tam O'Shanter* taking four days to refloat after running

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<sup>19</sup> Elder, 84.

<sup>20</sup> Elder, 86.

aground.<sup>21</sup> Light was pressed for time. He was responsible for a number of decisions and tasks and was later to say that 'he should have been given six months start, and not the mere two he was allotted'.<sup>22</sup> Elder convincingly reasoned that Light was so ill with tuberculosis before leaving England that he was unable to comprehend clearly the enormity of the task.<sup>23</sup>

After his inspection of various other sites, Light felt confident that his choice of harbour was the best decision and arranged to leave the *Rapid*.<sup>24</sup> On 28 December 1836 he set up camp alongside the tents of Kingston and the surveying labourers near the place he had selected as the capital. Here, on the banks of the River Torrens, he learned of the arrival of Hindmarsh at Glenelg on Holdfast Bay, 'but having much to do, had not time to go...and meet him'.<sup>25</sup> Hindmarsh was not pleased with Light's absence from the Glenelg ceremony to swear in the governor and officials.<sup>26</sup> At 4 p.m. the next day Light met Hindmarsh and the

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<sup>21</sup> Elder, 90. See also Parsons, *Port Misery*, 7-8. *Tam O'Shanter* was taken to a small waterway off the Port Creek to be surveyed. The ship lay there for a long time while 'as complete a repair which circumstances would permit' was carried out by shipwright Daniel Simpson. The waterway was known as Tam O'Shanter Creek until it was straightened into the Port Adelaide Canal. A small portion of the canal was preserved in the 1990s redevelopment of the banks of the Port River. Simpson's repairs were not enough to save the ship. On 27 August 1837 when the ship started to take water in Bass Strait *en route* to Sydney, the captain ran her ashore near the mouth of the Tamar River north of Launceston to save her from sinking. The ship was a total loss. See also *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 8 July 1837.

<sup>22</sup> Elder, 28, 77.

<sup>23</sup> Elder, 28.

<sup>24</sup> Elder, 100-104. Light defended his decision in the location of the port and debated the merits of various ports in Australia and around the world in relationship to their major cities and location.

<sup>25</sup> Elder, 90.

<sup>26</sup> Geoffrey Dutton and David Elder, *Colonel William Light: Founder of a City*. (Carlton Vic, 1991) 184.

Hurtle Fisher, and arranged to inspect the proposed town site with Hindmarsh the next morning. Much public discussion followed on its suitability amid controversy 'stirred' by a critical circulated letter produced by George Stevenson, Hindmarsh's secretary. Light was still convinced that he had made the right decision in his location of the main settlement for the colony.<sup>27</sup> In a letter to Fisher dated 9 February 1837, Light wrote that

at the Governor's suggestion, I consented to remove the town about two miles lower down the river, and we also walked together to that spot, which was agreed between His Excellency and myself to be the site: but on examination afterwards, I found the winter torrents overflowed the banks considerably, I therefore returned to the site first selected, and some few days after I had the satisfaction to hear His Excellency approve of it in the highest terms.<sup>28</sup>

On 6 January 1837, Lipson moved his household baggage from the *Buffalo*, which had been sitting at anchor for over a week in Holdfast Bay, and set out in the ship's barge with his family to take up temporary residence at the landing place on the shore of the Port Creek. Lipson and his family had arrived four months earlier on the *Cygnets*, but presumably had sent goods on the *Buffalo* or transferred some of their belongings to that vessel.<sup>29</sup>

Lipson had been appointed naval officer and harbour master in 1835.

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<sup>27</sup> Elder, 35.

<sup>28</sup> Elder, 90-92, 110-111. Fisher was elected the first mayor of Adelaide in 1840 and became the first South Australian to be knighted in 1860.

<sup>29</sup> Parsons, *Port Misery*, 10. In 1838 Lipson erected a 'Manning' house on the north side of Currie Street near King William Street, Adelaide (near Town Acre 113). John, and later Henry, Manning of 251, High-Holborn, London provided prefabricated or 'portable' houses in timber panel form for hundreds of British colonists in the 1830s and 1840s. In 1999 there are only six known remaining Manning structures in South Australia. See also *Port Adelaide News & Lefevre's Peninsula Advertiser* (hereafter cited as *Port Adelaide News*), 7 January 1887. Lipson then built a 'limestone house with a porch entrance' in Currie Street and the family lived there for some time, Lipson travelling by pony to his work at the port.

A year after arrival he was given the added position of 'Collector of the Duties and Customs of the Province of South Australia'.<sup>30</sup> He had entered the Royal Navy in 1793, the same year as Hindmarsh and both had received their promotion to lieutenant in 1802.<sup>31</sup> Lipson's attachment to the colony was to be the more enduring. In 1840 he resigned as collector of customs due to the increased work requiring his attention. He was later elected magistrate and president of the board after a 'Trinity House' was founded for the colony in 1851.<sup>32</sup>

On 18 January 1837 Hindmarsh 'expressed a wish' that Light survey the harbour. Light at first declined, wanting to continue his survey of the capital. He replied that he thought as the harbour master was there, such a survey was more his province. At that time Pullen was also stationed at the port to help Captain Lipson.<sup>33</sup> Hindmarsh insisted, and Light finally consented. Hindmarsh said he would write to place Lipson under Light's orders for this service.<sup>34</sup> Light's journal entry reads

*22 January* - I walked down to the harbour, and slept on board the *Rapid*; the next morning I met Captain Lipson, who seemed a little hurt at the order received from the Governor to place himself under my directions. I asked him if he was perfectly satisfied with the harbour. He said, 'Perfectly so.' 'Can you bring the *Buffalo* in?' 'Yes, whenever the Governor pleases.' 'Very well,' I said, 'in that case I shall immediately return to my work at the town' - which I did.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> John Bach, *A Maritime History of Australia*. (Sydney, 1982) 32. See also James C. Hawker, *Early Experiences in South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1899) 11-12. In 1899 Hawker was in possession of the official document conferring Lipson's appointment as collector of customs and quoted it in full.

<sup>31</sup> Hawker, 11. See also Douglas Pike (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Vol. 1: 1788-1850. (Carlton Vic, 1966) 538-539.

<sup>32</sup> Bach, 35. See also Michael Fitzgerald Page, *Port Adelaide and its Institute 1851-1979*. (Adelaide, 1981) 28-29. The Trinity Board 'was established to license pilots, fix the rates paid by ships using the port, establish and superintend lighthouses, regulate the wharves and supply ballast to ships'. See also Hawker, 11-12. Lipson retired on a life pension in 1855 and died, aged 79, on 25 October 1863.

<sup>33</sup> Admiral William J. S. Pullen, 'Early Days of South Australia', *Port Adelaide News*, 31 August 1883.

<sup>34</sup> Elder, 95.

<sup>35</sup> Elder, 96.

Light's priorities may have been well placed but the port also required urgent attention. The site, approximately two kilometres south of the present Jervois Bridge at Port Adelaide, had a mud bottom and receding water at low tide which created enormous problems for loading and unloading passengers and goods. In 1924, Sir Archibald Grenfell Price concluded that Light 'of necessity, selected the first landing place high up the Port River, at the first spot where the ground was firm and the bank clear of mangroves'.<sup>36</sup> As Light's writing shows, he was aware of the site's inadequacies but chose the most expedient site at the time. The surveyor-general also forecast the eventual relocation of the port to deeper water further north.

There is only one landing at present where ships must of necessity discharge their cargoes on account of the swamps which prevent approach to the waterside at any other spot. Years must elapse and thousands of pounds be expended before they can discharge and remove goods inland from deep water lower down the harbour. Chose, therefore, the only available spot - the dry land.<sup>37</sup>

In comparison with the Port of Adelaide, the European founders of Fremantle and Williamstown also experienced difficult decisions regarding a site for the main settlement and the establishment of a convenient port. Captain Charles Fremantle formally annexed the continent's western territory on the Swan River in May 1829 and the following month Captain James Stirling (later the colony's governor and commander-in-chief) arrived. Both men had reports of good soil on

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<sup>36</sup> Archibald Grenfell Price, *The Foundation and Settlement of South Australia 1829-1845*. (Adelaide, 1924) 175. See also Dutton and Elder, 270, who stated that Light 'resented being blamed for the poor siting as he had no alternative but to place the port where it could be reached on dry land'.

<sup>37</sup> Colonel William Light, cited in Donald Langmead, 'Port Adelaide 1836-1971', Thesis for Diploma of Town Planning, South Australian Institute of Technology, 1971, 25.

which to establish a settlement but on inspection Stirling decided to create two towns, Fremantle, a port town on Arthur Head, the sandy bluff at the mouth of the river, and Perth 20 kilometres up river.

The site of Perth had good water and was mid-way between the port and Guildford, a settlement further upstream in an area of fertile alluvial land.<sup>38</sup> Like Adelaide, Perth had the advantage of having a ready supply of stone, lime, wood and clay for building.<sup>39</sup> Stirling also wanted the capital of the colony 'out of range of naval bombardment'.<sup>40</sup> Similarly in South Australia, Adelaide was protected by being well inland and Fort Glanville (1878-1880) and Fort Largs (1882-1886) on the gulf near Port Adelaide were later built to protect the inner port and capital from naval attack.<sup>41</sup> These were cautious moves after security fears were heightened during the Crimean War (1854-1856) and the American Civil War (1861-1865). The withdrawal of British troops from Australian colonies in 1870 also encouraged an increased effort to prepare for self defence.

In Fremantle where the main gaol, the 'Round House', was built in 1831, there was concern that American privateers would bombard the port and release the convicts.<sup>42</sup> Arthur Head was a natural fortress, however defences planned for the Swan River colony, unlike those on

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<sup>38</sup> Pamela Statham, 'Swan River Colony 1829-1850', in C. T. Stannage (ed.), *A New History of Western Australia*. (Perth, 1981) 185-186.

<sup>39</sup> James Bird, *Seaport Gateways of Australia*. (London, 1968) 21.

<sup>40</sup> Statham (ed.), *The Origins of Australia's Capital Cities*. (Cambridge UK, 1989) 10, cited Stannage, *The People of Perth: A Social History of Western Australia's Capital City*. (Perth, 1979) 1.

<sup>41</sup> A. M. Ward, *A Guide to Fort Glanville South Australia*. (1989) 3. South Australian officials decided it unnecessary to construct a third fort planned for Glenelg, all to be linked by Military Road.

<sup>42</sup> Geoffrey Bolton, 'Perth: A Foundling City', in Statham, *The Origins*, 143.

Gulf Saint Vincent and at Williamstown were never built.<sup>43</sup> On Hobson's Bay, a permanent gun battery was installed in 1855 for the defence of both the port town and the river entry to Melbourne. Further emplacements were added in the 1860s.

Pamela Statham listed three essential preconditions for siting Australian colonial capitals. Statham recognised the obvious need for a good supply of fresh water, and added sufficient elevation to be free of swamps and flooding, and proximity to a deep water safe anchorage near shore. The last condition, Statham argued, 'could be met by a port site removed but accessible to the capital, as in the case of Perth and Adelaide'.<sup>44</sup> Early Fremantle had no convenient land access with its capital, being on the southern and opposite side of the Swan River to Perth;<sup>45</sup> Williamstown as discussed below, also had difficulties with the transfer of passengers and cargo having no direct land link to Melbourne. The port of Adelaide was accessible to the capital across country from its beginnings, with the track and later road continually under maintenance. It was often in poor condition, and warranted the many complaints by users, but the convenient link was there, unlike the situation in Fremantle and Williamstown.

The Swan and Canning Rivers estuary was shallow and blocked at the

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<sup>43</sup> Bolton, 143.

<sup>44</sup> Statham, 'Patterns and Perspectives', in Statham, *The Origins*, 30.

<sup>45</sup> Bird, 21.



mouth by a large limestone shoal nearly 22 hectares in area. With under a metre of depth not even the small ships of the first settlers could enter.<sup>46</sup> In contrast, Port Adelaide River had a small bar at the mouth of the estuary, and another further upstream near Torrens Island, but as a number of reports show, there were generally depths of three to five metres.<sup>47</sup> Once across the bars, Lipson had reported, there was 'a secure and commodious harbour'.<sup>48</sup> In 1908 a wharf was built inside the entrance to the river giving Port Adelaide, like Fremantle, inner and outer harbours. However Fremantle's relatively exposed twin harbours were sited outside the estuary separated by Anglesea Point.<sup>49</sup> The harbours did not have the protection afforded to the Outer Harbour in the Port Adelaide River. Albany in the south, with its protected harbour was, for many ships, a chief port of call in Western Australia.

Unlike Perth, Melbourne, settled by land opportunists from Van Diemen's Land in 1835, developed two port towns. In South Australia Glenelg vied with Port Adelaide for many years as a landing place but in its exposed location was never a serious rival as a port. Statham argued that Melbourne like Adelaide was the 'outright product of private enterprise',<sup>50</sup> so the later competition between William's Town and Sandridge perhaps was not surprising given the geography of the area

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<sup>46</sup> Bird, 98-99.

<sup>47</sup> Bird, 111.

<sup>48</sup> Letter from Lipson, 14 February 1837 (State Archives), cited in Bird, 110-111.

<sup>49</sup> Bird, 105.

<sup>50</sup> Statham, *The Origins*, 7.

around Hobson's Bay at the head of Port Phillip Bay.

Within the colony of New South Wales until 1850, Melbourne was located on the northern bank of the River Yarra Yarra (known as the Freshwater Stream), eleven kilometres upriver from its entry into Hobson's Bay. Ships anchored in the bay as entry to the river mouth, like the Swan and Port Adelaide Rivers, was restricted by a bar.<sup>51</sup> The bar across the Yarra, covered by less than three metres of water, meant that only small craft could navigate to the town of Melbourne sited at another rock barrier of low falls across the river. The mouth of the River Yarra was also that of the Saltwater River (later the Maribyrnong), the two waterways converging approximately four kilometres upstream. This similarity with the reaches below the confluence of the Swan and Canning Rivers above Fremantle meant that both entrances experienced a strong flow of water for much of the year.

In September 1836 Captain William Hobson sailed into Port Phillip to survey the head of the bay. Early the following month Captain William Lonsdale arrived at Point Gellibrand, to the west of the river mouth. As police magistrate in general charge of the district he made the decision to build the military barracks, courts and gaol at the larger settlement on the Yarra with Point Gellibrand as the port. Six months later Governor Sir Richard Bourke directed that the northern extremity of Port Phillip be

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<sup>51</sup> Bird, 70.

named Hobson's Bay and that the two settled towns be William's Town and Melbourne.<sup>52</sup> A feeling of isolation at Williamstown continued for many years. It was separated from Melbourne by Hobson's Bay, and the meandering waterways and low-lying swamps of Stony Creek, the Maribyrnong and Yarra Rivers, and isolated from later settlements to the south.<sup>53</sup> Travel between Williamstown and Melbourne was by small boat against the strong current, or passengers were rowed across the river mouth to 'the beach', a convenient landing place. From there a well-trodden track over three kilometres of sand drifts and marshy land led to 'The Falls' where, before a bridge was constructed, a punt took travellers across river to Melbourne. After a time a pier was privately built at the beach and passengers could alight in comfort and hire carts to Melbourne.<sup>54</sup> The beach area gradually developed into the town of Sandridge (renamed Port Melbourne in 1884), Melbourne's second port town, the history of which was examined by Nancy U'Ren and Noel Turnbull in 1983.

The sites of both early Port Adelaide and Williamstown presented difficulties in off-loading stock and goods. Sheep and some cattle from Van Diemen's Land were first offloaded at Williamstown in November 1835 but it was another four years before a pier was built, the first in

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<sup>52</sup> Wilson P. Evans, *Port of Many Prows*. (Melbourne, 1969) 23-24. William's Town, later known as Williamstown, was named in honour of King William IV. Melbourne was named after the British prime minister, William Lamb, Lord Melbourne.

<sup>53</sup> Ada Ackerly, 'Ferries and Transport', History Leaflet 8 for Williamstown City Library, 1987.

<sup>54</sup> Nancy U'Ren and Noel Turnbull, *A History of Port Melbourne*. (Melbourne, 1983) 12, 14.

Port Phillip. Prior to the completion of the pier, sheep were carried from the ships and horses and cattle swam ashore.<sup>55</sup> Convict labour from Sydney, although restricted to 75 men, was used for the construction of the stone pier and a timber-framed lighthouse nearby.<sup>56</sup>

Stationed at Williamstown by 1840 were the harbour master, boarding and customs officer, water police, and the pilots for the port and river. George Arden, a Melbourne journalist, recorded the town in 1840 as having 'about 100 buildings including two hotels, 8 or 10 mercantile stores...and one or two retail stores'.<sup>57</sup> Growth was steady, the 1841 Census listed 259 inhabitants and a decade later there were 3542 townspeople.

Williamstown was dependent on immigration, the export of sheep and wool and, like Fremantle and Port Adelaide, the provisioning and repair of ships. By the end of the 1840s however Williamstown's monopoly on water transport was eroding as Melbourne steamer owners and boatmen from Sandridge took over.<sup>58</sup>

The first passengers to land at Port Adelaide were most probably those from the *John Renwick* under Captain W. Linnington, which put into Glenelg on 3 February 1837 and the Port Creek Settlement on 21

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<sup>55</sup> Ackerly, 'Establishment Years', History Leaflet 2. Sheep were valuable livestock costing squatters up to five shillings for each sheep transported across Bass Strait.

<sup>56</sup> Ackerly, 'Convicts and Williamstown', History Leaflet 6.

<sup>57</sup> George Arden cited in Ackerly, 'Establishment Years'.

<sup>58</sup> Ackerly, 'Immigration and Shipping', History Leaflet 4.

February, after anchoring in the inlet overnight.<sup>59</sup> On board Dr William Wyatt, the first colonial surgeon of South Australia, recorded his initial view of the area.<sup>60</sup> It appears to have taken seven days to land the migrants.

Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>.: sailed up the creek till the tide left us, when we anchored between a continuation of the same exquisitely beautiful island and peninsula.

Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>.: soon after sunrise the ship got under weigh: I mounted on the mizzen top, where I remained until we anchored, at the termination of our voyage enjoying the inexpressible luxury of witnessing our course through some of the most beautiful scenery I ever beheld. I have not room enough to describe it; suffice it to say that I wished you all here, to view with me the paradise-like scene. After breakfast, crossed the land opposite the ship to the creek settlement, with our captain and the harbour-master....

Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>.: Paid our first visit to Adelaide; it is nearly 7 miles from the creek, over an extensive plain...the road is so level that they contemplate cutting a canal all this distance as a permanent communication between the Creek, or Port Adelaide, to the city.<sup>61</sup>

Michael Page stated in his history of Port Adelaide and its Institute that the *John Renwick* 'went aground, and eventually had to discharge her cargo onto the beaches of Largs Bay'.<sup>62</sup> The necessity to manhandle goods over the peninsula is not mentioned in Wyatt's diary.

Hindmarsh proclaimed the Creek a legal port on 25 May 1837, almost five months after his arrival.<sup>63</sup> This delay proved costly for some colonists as many captains refused to use the creek inlet or only entered under protest. There was good reason for their reluctance as British ships

<sup>59</sup> Parsons, *Port Misery*, 10.

<sup>60</sup> C. M. H. Clark, *A History of Australia*, Vol. 3. (Melbourne, 1987) 58, 'In May 1837 Hindmarsh appointed Dr Wyatt *ad interim* Protector of Aborigines and instructed him to encourage their peaceful residence with the Europeans and their instruction in the arts of civilised life'. He was appointed the first Inspector of Schools in 1851.

<sup>61</sup> Parsons, *Port Misery*, 10-11. See also Langmead, 28. Langmead discussed the suggested construction of a canal from the port to Adelaide but pointed out that, 'within a few years of Light's proposals, the exciting alternative of a railway presented itself, and the canal was never built'.

<sup>62</sup> Page, *Port Adelaide*, 22.

<sup>63</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 25 May 1837.

entering an unproclaimed port invalidated their insurance policies.<sup>64</sup> The declaration of the port was a major step in the events which determined the progress of Port Adelaide from a temporary landing place to a thriving waterfront and eventually to a major colonial centre.

In 1837 Light and his surveyors planned the route from the port to Adelaide. The track known as the 'Port Road' extended from a large sand hill at the landing place to Hindley Street.<sup>65</sup> By May 1837 'Pilot, Harbour, Entrance and Clearance, and Wharfage Dues' could be paid at the first customs office at the Port Creek Settlement, 'a little box with two small windows in it, something like an old fashioned policeman's box....It stood on the sandhills, facing the north. One was glad to get out of it, because it was cooler outside than inside'.<sup>66</sup> Other supplies available included fresh butter from Frank Potts and pork and other meats which, for some time, could only be purchased from the captains of ships in the harbour. Alcoholic beverages could also be obtained.<sup>67</sup>

When John Wrathall Bull arrived in 1838 his ship first anchored off what was later known as The Semaphore. Bull had with him his wife, two children, a brother and sister, three young men under his charge and a maid servant. After the close confines of the long voyage, he was

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<sup>64</sup> Langmead, 24. See also Langmead, 1. Langmead stated that Port Adelaide was declared an international port when the new port opened in 1840.

<sup>65</sup> The site of the old port is now the junction of Frederick Road, Webb Street and Old Port Road, at the northern end of suburban West Lakes. A remnant of the sand hill is visible south-east of the junction where a house can be seen on top of the last of the dunes at 102 Old Port Road, Queenstown.

<sup>66</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 December 1886. Wharfage and other port rates were advertised in *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 17 February 1838.

<sup>67</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 December 1886. See also *Royal South Australian Almanack for 1839*.

presented with the opportunity to escape the ship and explore the surrounding country. His account provides evidence of the earliest progress in the area.

The captain, with consideration for passengers who had a large party on board, invited me and three male passengers to accompany him in the...only boat going to land that day....Then came the climb over the sand hummocks...then the drag of three-quarters of a mile through sandy scrub...and occasional bog.

At length we made the side of the creek, and discovered on the opposite bank a bush shanty and a few wurleys, these erections constituted the Old Port Town. On crossing...to our great joy we found we could get good beer at the moderate price of 2s. 6d. a bottle, of which we partook freely.<sup>68</sup>

The transition of the landing place to a legally constituted port with some permanence was evidenced by the number of ships which registered and claimed it as their home port. The *Hero*, owned by John Barton Hack, was the first vessel to be registered at Port Adelaide on 30 October 1838.<sup>69</sup> It was built at Manning River in New South Wales in 1837 of carvel construction, 40 feet long and 36 tons displacement with one deck and a single mast. The surveying officer for its registration was Daniel Simpson. Lipson signed the Registration Certificate.<sup>70</sup> From 1838 to 1840 there were 15 other vessels entered on the *Register of British Ships: Port of Adelaide* at the original port,<sup>71</sup> including two built at the port, the

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(Adelaide, 1839).

<sup>68</sup> Bull, 19.

<sup>69</sup> *Portonian*, March 1993, 6. Hack was ruined in South Australia's 1842 financial crisis and ended his career as an accountant in the South Australian Railways Goods Department.

<sup>70</sup> Ernest James Stacy, 'Port Adelaide - A Retrospect', in F. E. Meleng, *Fifty Years of the Port Adelaide Institute*. (Adelaide, 1902) 8. The Registration Certificate for the *Hero* is archived at State Records, GRG 41/45.

<sup>71</sup> Collector of Customs, Adelaide, *Register of British Ships: Main Register Prior to Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, Port Adelaide*. Vol. 1, 2/1838-13/1854, 5 November 1838-7 June 1854, Australian Archives, Canberra, CRS A7505/12. This Register and the *Register of British Ships: Certificates of Registry, Port Adelaide*. 2/1838-1/1844, 1838-31 August 1844, Australian Archives, Canberra, CRS A7507/12, both start at entry No. 2.

*Governor Gawler*, 'the first craft launched in the colony',<sup>72</sup> a two-masted schooner which was imported in frame and re-assembled locally by the owner Captain Emanuel Underwood, and the *Jane Flaxman* built by Daniel Simpson.<sup>73</sup>

The harbour in the inlet was excellent and a more accessible and safer entrance was assured after the two bars near the mouth of the river were finally removed by dredging in the 1850s. It was the landing place which caused complaint. With the port declared, the situation had to be resolved and Fisher decided that a canal or cutting through the mangroves to link the sandhills with the deeper water was the best solution.<sup>74</sup>

In a letter dated 3 August 1837 (and printed in the *South Australian Record*), Hack described canal construction at the landing site which would enable lighters from the ships to land goods and cargo on reasonably firm ground.

I have a foreman and fifteen men at work, and have put up a large tarpaulin tent for them, and employ a cook, and ration them all. This canal, which is 840 feet long and 20 feet wide at the top, will enable goods to be discharged at the warehouse without any delay, and the harbour will then be as convenient as possible. Everyone now seems surprised that anyone could doubt that the harbour was a fine one.<sup>75</sup>

The government bought four acres at the head of the canal for £4,

<sup>72</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 February 1887. Italics are used in the newspaper article.

<sup>73</sup> Parsons, *Port Misery*, 38-39.

<sup>74</sup> Parsons, *Port Misery*, 18.

<sup>75</sup> Parsons, *Port Misery*, 18. See also Langmead, 38. The project cost £800, and provided space for eight barges to lie alongside the wharf. Freight to Adelaide by bullock dray cost about £3 per ton. The canal, known as the 'ditch' for many years, was gradually filled in and no trace of it remains. See also Page, *Port Adelaide*, 21. Page incorrectly suggested this was the Port Adelaide or former Portland Canal. The Portland Canal (1887-1889) was at the new port and created by the straightening of Tam O'Shanter Creek.



and erected a few small buildings. The two government warehouses or bonded stores, built on the riverfront, became the landmark for the port. The stores with their curved iron roofs were each '40 feet long, 30 feet wide and 20 high'.<sup>76</sup> Twenty-nine town acres were also laid out for those who wished to buy land at the port.<sup>77</sup> The improvements of the small canal and the cursory stabilisation of the bank into a wharf had encouraged development but it was still only a hamlet of rough huts along with the numerous tents erected by German migrants who had disembarked from the *Zebra* and *Prince George* over six months before.<sup>78</sup> The continued inconvenience to passengers and the atmosphere of the early port was recorded by Alexander Tolmer when he landed from the *Branken Moor* with his family on 4 February 1840.

On our first night in the Colony we were nearly eaten alive - by mosquitoes. The *Brankanmoore* was anchored off the muddy banks of the Port River, and they attacked us in hordes, from their lairs in the mangroves....

After a wretched night, the ship moved about a mile further up-river, to a place named most aptly, by the Colonists, Port Misery, where we disembarked.

There was no wharf or landing-stage - passengers had to be carried ashore on the backs of sailors, and personal possessions were scattered higgledy-piggledy on the muddy beach. We were told that unless they were moved promptly they would be damaged by the tide.

<sup>76</sup> Letter from Thomas Gilbert to Mr Trenow, 22 April 1837, reported in *The South Australian Record*, 8 November 1837, 3-4, cited in Gilbert Herbert, *Pioneers of Prefabrication: The British Contribution in the Nineteenth Century*. (Baltimore USA, 1978) 40. 'At the harbour we have large quantities of stores, where we have put up two of our iron storehouses, which make an imposing appearance...two more are erected in Adelaide, of similar dimensions'. See also C. R. Beresford, 'The Iron Stores at the Old Port', *Portonian*, September 1978, 3-5, 8.

<sup>77</sup> Price, 176.

<sup>78</sup> Edward Holthouse, 'Reminiscences of the Old Port, 1838-1839', *Adelaide Observer*, 1, 15 September 1888, *Portonian*, June 1978, 4-6; September 1978, 6-8; December 1978, 5-7 and March 1979, 5-6. See also David Schubert, *Kavel's People*. (Adelaide, 1985) 160, 164. The captain of the *Zebra*, Dirk Meinerts Hahn, stated in his reminiscences of arrival at Port Adelaide on 1 January 1839 that the 124 German emigrants who had arrived six weeks earlier on the *Prince George* had put up a few huts and had later moved to a common section of land they rented for seven years from George Angas for £5 sterling per acre. The 187 settlers from the *Zebra* occupied the earlier huts. The landing place was first recorded as 'Port Misery' by T. Horton James in his account of an arrival at the port in *Six Months in South Australia; with some Account of Port Philip [sic] and Portland Bay in Australia Felix*. (London, 1838) 26-29.

I arranged for our baggage to be landed - above high-water mark - saying that it would be picked up the following day, then we were carried ashore and I looked for some kind of transportation to carry us to Adelaide.

It seemed as though there was nothing to be had, until I spotted an empty bullock-dray that had just delivered a load of bricks. The driver was on his way back to the pugholes at Hindmarsh, but after a little (monetary) persuasion he agreed to take us on into town first.<sup>79</sup>

Kingston left South Australia on *Rapid* in June 1837 and returned the following year, as recorded by Pullen, 'bringing some orders which apparently reflected on Colonel Light, causing him to throw up his position and we, the greater number of his staff, considering he had been badly treated struck work'. Pullen's term, 'struck work', defined this as an early South Australian workers' strike.<sup>80</sup>

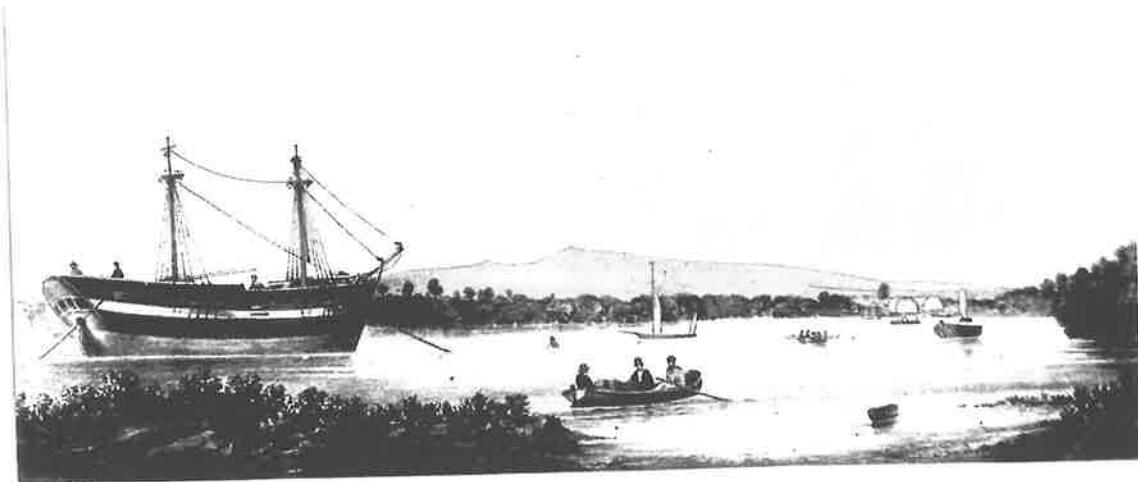
Light, who increasingly suffered illness and had endured a turbulent relationship with Hindmarsh, withdrew from the position of surveyor-general on 2 July 1838 and Kingston took over.<sup>81</sup> Several of Light's staff also resigned and the next day a private firm of land agents and surveyors was established by Light with Boyle T. Finniss and William Jacob, previously his assistant surveyors, Henry Nixon, and draughtsman R. G. Thomas. Known as 'Light, Finniss and Co.' they advertised in the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* on 7 July and set to work conducting a number of important surveys in the colony. On days when

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<sup>79</sup> Murray Tonkin (ed.), *Some Adventures of Alexander Tolmer in Colonial South Australia 1840-1856*. (Adelaide, 1985) 6. Tolmer was appointed sub-inspector of the mounted police and led the gold escort from the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s. He was later the commissioner of police.

<sup>80</sup> Admiral William J. S. Pullen, 'Early Days of South Australia', *Port Adelaide News*, 31 August 1883. See also Jim Moss, *Sounds of Trumpets: History of the Labour Movement in South Australia*. (Netley SA, 1985) 13, 15. Moss recorded the colony's first industrial dispute and strikes on Kangaroo Island in 1836-1837.

<sup>81</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 7 July 1838.



### Illustration 2

The Old Port, Port Adelaide, 1838.

Watercolour by Colonel William Light.

On the left is the store ship *Sir Charles McCarthy* and in the distance the two store-sheds of the Port Adelaide Settlement.

Photograph, Port Adelaide Historical Society.

Light felt reasonable well he worked at the port for the Harbour Survey Company.<sup>82</sup>

Hindmarsh was eventually recalled due to conflict with several prominent colonists and their unrest over his administration. He had never fully accepted that Light as surveyor-general had been given the responsibility to select the site for the capital.<sup>83</sup> Hoping to be able to defend himself in England and return, Hindmarsh left South Australia on 14 July 1837 aboard the *Alligator*. His position was withdrawn and Lieutenant-Colonel George Gawler was appointed as both governor and resident commissioner. Gawler, a British Army officer who had campaigned with the Duke of Wellington during the Napoleonic Wars, arrived in the colony with his family on the *Pestonjee Bomanjee* on 15 October 1838.<sup>84</sup> The change, only two years after proclamation, altered the course of developments at the port and elsewhere in the colony.

Kingston, who had been acting surveyor-general, suffered from lack of professional respect from the small survey team. He soon left to take up the appointment of 'Civil Engineer and Inspector of Public Works'.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Elder, 43.

<sup>83</sup> Price, 64-67.

<sup>84</sup> Pike, *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857*. (Second edition, Carlton Vic, 1967) 172. After Hindmarsh sent despatches to the Colonial Office in London, Fisher lost the position of 'Resident Commissioner'. See also Langmead, 22-25. Gawler's administration of South Australia lasted only two and a half years.

<sup>85</sup> Elder, 24. 'Kingston has some training in engineering and architecture but had little, if any, knowledge in surveying'. See also Michael Page, *Sculptors in Space: South Australian Architects 1836-1986*. (Adelaide, 1986) 14-15, 'many members of the profession then advertised themselves as "Architects, Surveyors and Engineers"'. It may be that the Colonial Commissioners took it for granted that an architect was also a surveyor. Soon after Frome arrived, Kingston advertised that he was in private practice as an architect'.

In late 1838 Gawler invited Sturt to move from New South Wales to South Australia as surveyor-general, not knowing that the commissioners in England had appointed Lieutenant Edward Charles Frome to this office.<sup>86</sup> The confusion of the overlapping appointments was resolved when Sturt agreed to be assistant commissioner and both men co-operated in successfully rescheduling, and eventually completing, the various surveys.<sup>87</sup>

After four months at Government House, Gawler finally invited Light to dine on 25 January 1839. Light declined. He had not been given the opportunity to be reinstated by the new governor, and by the time of Gawler's arrival in October 1838 was probably too ill to consider returning to his former duties. To add to the insult, Fisher's hut and his own alongside had burned down three days before and he had only saved the clothes he was wearing. He wrote in his diary, 'The Governor, after being here months, sends me an invitation to dine with him tomorrow, knowing that I am just burnt out'.<sup>88</sup> Light, who had made so many major early decisions in the establishment of the colony and its port, felt slighted and unrecognised for his efforts.

By 1839 the Port Creek Settlement had some semblance of a small port outpost with the mounted police providing a mail service to and

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<sup>86</sup> Price, 133, 138.

<sup>87</sup> Price, 132-141.

<sup>88</sup> Elder, 144.

from Adelaide. The port was gradually developing and its population consolidating. The *Royal South Australian Almanack for 1839* listed men connected with the port and identified the various employment activities being carried out there. Many of these men and their families were the first resident Portonians.

William Anthony, Port Hotel.  
 Samuel Bartlett, victualler.  
 David Birrell, victualler, Caledonian Hotel.  
 John Brown, storekeeper.  
 Anthony Lillyman, broker.  
 William Simons, victualler, Ship Hotel.  
 Robert Tod, merchant.

Collector of Customs and Harbour Master, Commander Thomas Lipson, R.N.  
 First Clerk, Mr. George Evans.  
 Second Clerk, Mr. Walter Mitchell.  
 Third Clerk, Mr. Thomas H. Lispon [sic].

Landing Waiter and Bonded Storekeeper, Edward Surfle [sic].  
 Boarding Officer, Mr. David Beatton.  
 Wharfinger, Mr. William Dean.  
 And fourteen Wharfingers, Watchmen, and Porters.

Postmaster, John Newman, Esq.

#### SHIPPING AGENTS AND WAREHOUSEMEN.

Charles Beck & Co.  
 James Duncan.  
 John Newman.  
 Patrick Tod.  
 Robert Tod.  
 John Walker.

Wine, beer and 'other malt liquors' were sold at the settlement from its inception. In Bob Hoad's research, 'Licences granted...prior to 21 February 1839', three are listed at Port Adelaide: John Rendall, 'wine, beer and other malt liquors', 28 July 1837, James Beteridge, 'beer and other malt liquors', 16 September 1837, and William S. Simon, 'wine, beer and other malt liquors', 28 February 1838. A 'William Simons',

possibly the same person, is listed for a 'spirits' licence on 14 June 1838.<sup>89</sup> By 1839 there were three hotels catering for a thirsty trade. William Anthony's Port Hotel, and John McBeath's Caledonian Inn were both licensed on 23 March 1839, the 'Port' until 8 April 1840, the 'Caledonian' until 1842.

Edward Holthouse, who described living in the settlement after his arrival on the *Duke of Roxburghe* in late July 1838 (see Appendix A), recalled the Port Hotel doing 'little business comparatively speaking, beyond occasional visits from captains of ships lying in the harbour'.<sup>90</sup> Others remembered differently. J. I. Watts reminisced that on arrival in 1837, 'after an early dinner at Anthony's well-known hotel - a wooden building, clean, and well kept - they proceeded to town in Port Carts'.<sup>91</sup> In June 1838 'about twenty gentlemen passengers' gave 'an excellent dinner of three courses' at the Port Hotel for Captain Andrew Smith of the *Lord Goderich* 'in testimony of their respect and esteem for his character and conduct'.<sup>92</sup> In November 1838 Anthony's advertisement suggested a broad clientele.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> J. L. (Bob) Hoad, *South Australian Hotel Records Prior to 21 February 1839*. (Gumeracha SA, 1988) 18-20.

<sup>90</sup> Holthouse, *Portonian*, September 1978, 6.

<sup>91</sup> J. I. Watts, *Family Life in South Australia Fifty-three Years Ago*. (Adelaide, 1890) 74.

<sup>92</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 23 June 1838.

<sup>93</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 10 November 1838.

PORT HOTEL, FOR FAMILIES AND  
GENTLEMEN.

MR. ANTHONY begs to inform the  
Merchants, Traders and residents of  
Adelaide that the above Hotel is now open, and  
he hopes by strict attention to the comforts of  
his visitors to merit a share of their patronage.

The conveniences of his house are as follows:-

Commercial Room,  
Room for private parties,  
Double Bed Rooms,  
Single Bed Rooms, in all 18 Beds,  
And Tap Room.

The Stabling and Stock Yard will be completed shortly.

By 1839 William Slade Simon's Ship Hotel was open for business at the Port,<sup>94</sup> and there were possibly other drinking houses in the settlement. In January 1839 *The Southern Australian* had a brief report on the *Bengalee* and the fact that it lost 'no crew while in port', most vessels losing 'most if not all', and commented that 'the greatest curse in the colony are the numerous low grog shops that abound everywhere about the town and port, and are the means of seducing sailors from their duty'.<sup>95</sup>

In 1838 T. Horton James, who had strongly supported Port Lincoln as the site of the capital, cynically asked why the town was eight miles from the landing place and decided that the answer of the residents would be 'because we preferred being away from the nasty sailors, and thought

<sup>94</sup> Hoad, *Hotels and Publicans in South Australia 1836-1984*. (Adelaide, 1986) Part 3, 91, 459, 554.

<sup>95</sup> *The Southern Australian*, 9 January 1839. The barque *Bengalee* arrived from Hamburg on 18 November 1838.



it better not to be annoyed with the demoralizing influence of a Sea Port!<sup>96</sup>

The separation of the capital and its port perhaps found more than a degree of favour in Adelaide. This may also have been true for the people of Perth and Melbourne. As in Port Adelaide, land fall for ships' crews at Fremantle or Williamstown meant profit for the publicans. In January 1830 four hotel licences were granted in Fremantle for the Stirling Arms, The Collins Hotel, the South Sea Hall Public House and the George IV Public House.<sup>97</sup> They were insubstantial buildings and in March that year James Turner still described Fremantle as being composed of 'miserable looking tents, most of which were grog shops'.<sup>98</sup> The first hotel licence at Williamstown, issued for the Ship Inn in January 1839, heralded the end of the sly grog huts there from the early 1830s.<sup>99</sup>

While there was a choice of places to buy a drink at Port Adelaide, Sunday worship found only rough venues. In 1837, the Reverend Thomas Quinton Stow, a Congregational (or Independent) minister, John James Barclay and some devout laymen including William Giles, arranged to

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<sup>96</sup> James, 33. There is evidence that James compiled his descriptions using information collected in England but this comment may well have expressed the feelings of some colonists in 1838 being a perceived impression rather than fact. See also Parsons, *Port Misery*, 14. James described disembarking at the landing place in November 1836 but Parsons suggested that James had not been in South Australia before a brief visit in 1838. Parsons concluded that 'The comments and 'information' are a jumble of material taken from various sources, and over a period of time' and that 'It would have been possible to put the whole work together without leaving England by drawing upon already published reports'. See also Elder, 83. Elder referred to a pamphlet by John Stephens, *An Exposure of...James's 'Six Months in South Australia'*, which also suggested that James was a charlatan. Dutton and Elder, 273, described the book as 'amusing but totally unreliable'.

<sup>97</sup> John K. Ewers, *The Western Gateway: A History of Fremantle*. (Nedlands WA, 1971) 11.

<sup>98</sup> Ewers, 10-11.

<sup>99</sup> Ackerly, 'Hotels', History Leaflet 10a.

hold church services at the Port. At first, services were conducted on board ship or on the wharf. In May 1838 Barclay, the first seamen's missionary at the port, began his shipboard mission for the British and Foreign Sailors' Society when he hoisted the Bethel Flag on board the *Lord Goderich*. From ten to fifty people attended the service held on one of the vessels in the harbour each Sunday.<sup>100</sup>

In July 1838 there was a call for subscriptions to establish a place of worship at Port Adelaide for the British and Foreign Sailors' Society under the superintendence of the managing trustee, Reverend Stow.<sup>101</sup> Barclay placed a 'Notice to Seamen and Others', dated 12 July 1838, in the newspaper,

DIVINE SERVICE will be held every Sabbath on board Vessels lying in the Harbour. Service to commence at Eleven o'clock.  
The Vessel will be distinguished by the Bethel Flag.  
Service will also be held at Union Church, Port Adelaide, on Sabbath Afternoon, at Three o'clock.<sup>102</sup>

On the sand dunes the Union Church, a 'rude building' of native posts and palings, became the first purpose-built place of worship at Port Adelaide.<sup>103</sup> In 1840 the church was still in use by Reverend William Longbottom (Wesleyan) and Stow (Congregational) on alternate Sundays, and Reverend Charles Howard (Church of England) on Wednesdays.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> J. F. Bennett (ed.), *The Royal South Australian Almanack and General Directory for 1840*. (Adelaide, 1840) 139. See also pamphlet, 'Seafarers' Centre, Port Adelaide', c.1995. Barclay arrived at Glenelg in October 1837 as a representative of the British Sailors' Society and immediately began visiting vessels at Holdfast Bay. He later travelled by horseback to Port Adelaide to visit seamen on vessels anchored there.

<sup>101</sup> *The Southern Australian*, 7 July 1838.

<sup>102</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, 14, 21 July 1838.

<sup>103</sup> Edward Sidney Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia: The Life and Reminiscences of Joseph Coles Kirby, Christian Pioneer and Social Reformer*. (London, 1927) 144.

<sup>104</sup> Bennett, 1840, 139.

There was no immediate move to provide better accommodation for worship. By the late 1830s people were aware of proposals to relocate the port and those in the hotel trade, small businesses and government positions, occupied with their various duties, were delaying plans for expansion and rebuilding until proposals regarding the new site were resolved.

In October 1838, George Milner Stephen, the colonial secretary, Lipson and Sturt inspected the landing place. Sturt pointed out that it was 'so defective in all its main essentials', the situation would worsen as trade increased and it was necessary to relocate to a site 'where ships would not only have room to swing, but where the deep water inshore would facilitate the erection of piers and wharfs'.<sup>105</sup>

Two months' experience in the colony convinced Gawler that the solution to the problems of the port was to shift to the North Arm. In the long term the idea was excellent. The site had been earlier considered by Light who had recognised its ideal location with deep water close to the shore but had rejected it at the time because of its greater distance (by about six kilometres) from Adelaide. Gawler resolved to move quickly and an impassioned 'Public Notice' extolling the virtues of the North Arm appeared in a special edition of the *South Australian Gazette* on Wednesday 5 December 1838 under the signatures of Stephen and

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<sup>105</sup> Price, 176. See also 'Notes by G. H. Pitt B.A., Archivist', in Alfred A. Lendon, 'Handasyde Duncan, M.D. (1839-1878) and Early Port Adelaide'. Mortlock Library of South Australia, PRG 128/12/4, 72.

Lieutenant George Hall, Gawler's private secretary (see Appendix B).<sup>106</sup>

The congestion near the old port was a problem which could not be ignored even in the short term, with the result that on 21 August 1839, Governor Gawler officially announced that in order to remove the difficulty experienced in carrying goods over the sandhills at the head of the wharf, and also to improve the road across the swamp to the canal, all carters using the road were required to take down a load of filling in their carts to be discharged where indicated by an officer superintending the work. To assist in the operation, men were stationed on the sandhills to help load and unload the carts.<sup>107</sup> Progress was slow but the dumped fill may have helped to dispatch cargo from the wharf to Adelaide with less difficulty.

In October 1839 another public notice concerning the existing port explained that, with relocation, 'the principle source of complaint, annoyance, and loss in this fair province will thus be effectively and permanently removed, and a most important means of its future and increased prosperity afforded'.<sup>108</sup>

Gawler's plan seems to have been a premature and perhaps impetuous decision. The earlier 'difficulties with regard to the surrounding area' referred to in the notice of 5 December 1838 were to

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<sup>106</sup> *South Australian Gazette*, 5 December 1838.

<sup>107</sup> Stacy, 1-2. See also Parsons, *Port Misery*, 30.

<sup>108</sup> *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*, October 1839, in Stacy, 2.

become Gawler's present difficulties. With the governor's endorsement of the scheme, some investors purchased land at North Arm. Gawler obviously favoured this location but his tight budget did not allow for a new roadway to the proposed site. He had also been advised before leaving England that he was on no account to spend money on the development of new towns and that any such outlay must come from private enterprise. North Arm looked too much like a new development, being a good distance from the existing landing place.

The proposal by the governor failed and another site was chosen, the site of Port Adelaide today, halfway between the old port and the North Arm. It could be seen merely as an extension of the original site with the familiar existing port route used for most of the distance. A diversion section of road for a relatively short distance was all that was required.<sup>109</sup> The new port and township site, finally chosen, was four kilometres downstream from the original port, on the deeper water in the newly named Gawler Reach. This had long been the mooring place for ships in the harbour, the head of navigation in the Creek for all craft except lighters and small boats.<sup>110</sup>

Gawler accepted a tender from the South Australian Company for

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<sup>109</sup> The owners of land at North Arm tried until after 1857 to revive the scheme to develop the town of Newhaven on Section 'H', but finally the North Arm project was dismissed. By that time pressure from property owners at the established Gawler Reach site, particularly the South Australian Company, was too powerful. The North Arm was a better location for a port in the river inlet but it was not to be. In modern terms, vested interests won over best practice.

<sup>110</sup> Parsons, *Port Misery*, 32.

Section 'A', the most valuable site on the new waterfront, on the understanding from David McLaren, the dedicated and shrewd new manager replacing Samuel Stephens, that the company would immediately build a wharf and warehouse.<sup>111</sup> Company support for the new site was due to its having already secured the best land in the vicinity of the port and also Section 423 for the sub-division and sale of land at Albert Town.

The company wanted to hold and develop its investment at this site rather than at North Arm.<sup>112</sup> The place selected, however, was inaccessible by land and major works were needed before goods and people could be transported across the mangrove and samphire swamp. The company was also prepared to construct a causeway across this low-lying land to the isolated site. For building the road the company was paid by the government with further areas of land.

On 25 May 1839 Gawler dug the first spade of earth in the construction of the long thoroughfare planned across 92 chains of tidal mudflats and the meandering Tam O'Shanter Creek. The road was to connect the port with solid ground near Albert Town and was planned for completion the following summer. The road embankment was one foot above the highest recorded tide, 45 feet wide at the base with a 35 feet wide carriageway, and ten feet reserved at the side for possible future

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<sup>111</sup> John Blacket, *History of South Australia: A Romantic and Successful Experiment in Colonization*. (Adelaide, 1911) 174. See also Page, *Sculptors*, 14. McLaren, an 'upright young Scottish Baptist', carried out his duties well and returned to London at the end of 1840 to work for the company there.

<sup>112</sup> Katrina McDougall and Elizabeth Vines, *Greater Port Adelaide Heritage Survey*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1989) 5.

widening. It was formed by excavating two parallel ditches with the earth mounded between them.

In June 1839 work was begun by the South Australian Company using stone and gravel from Kangaroo Island for the surface and to reinforce the embankment. Some rock was quarried from a basalt mine near Reeves Point and additional material was obtained from a quarry near Brighton on the mainland.<sup>113</sup> Bringing all this by boat was cheaper and quicker than carting road ballast by dray from the quarry near Government House.<sup>114</sup>

The length of the road was extended as the project progressed. Kingston, now employed as an engineer by the company, supervised the workforce which included Royal Sappers and Miners from the Adelaide garrison.<sup>115</sup> Kingston's former shipmate, Pullen, the colonial marine surveyor, returned to the Port from other duties and took up quarters on board the old *Lady Wellington* with, he wrote, 'a tent on shore for myself'.<sup>116</sup>

The project included the construction of two wharves, one for the government west of the road and one owned by the South Australian Company to the east complete with a six-ton crane. Kingston was engineer

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<sup>113</sup> Parsons, *Port Misery*, 34.

<sup>114</sup> Page, *Port Adelaide*, 23.

<sup>115</sup> Elder, 23. See also *The Register*, 17 October 1840, and Stacy, 2.

<sup>116</sup> Admiral William J. S. Pullen, 'Early Days of South Australia', *Port Adelaide News*, 31 August 1883.

in charge. A two-storey stone warehouse with basement, designed by Kingston to store about 2000 tons of merchandise, was built for the company.<sup>117</sup> £30,000 was spent on the whole project, including £14,000 for road costs.<sup>118</sup> Planned for completion in early 1840, the project ran nine months over schedule. In 1887 a local journalist reported succinctly that 'the New Port was made by the S. A. Company. They had the land and they had the capital. If they had not made the road to Adelaide no one would have made it for years following'.<sup>119</sup>

The first step in the development of the port had been taken and a day of festivities was arranged to celebrate the opening of the new port. On a sunny Wednesday, 14 October 1840, Governor Gawler, his family and leading officials led a procession from the Bank of South Australia in North Terrace where hundreds of invited guests and others had assembled for the start of the celebration. At least 500 citizens riding horses and approximately 432 vehicles, including the colony's only four-in-hand stagecoach *The Young Queen*, phaetons, landaus, barouches, gigs, a bullock team, drays and a donkey cart, set off down Port Road escorted by the officers and men of the Adelaide Corps and a strong contingent of mounted police. About 5000 people, reportedly the largest assembly ever gathered in the province, travelled to the port where vessels in the river

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<sup>117</sup> Elder, 24. See also Parsons, *Port Misery*, 34, and 'Henderson Report', December 1841 (Colonial Secretary's Office: Miscellaneous papers) in Price, 178. 'The Government wharf...carried out under Kingston's supervision, was a most discreditable affair. The piles were sawn off after being sunk only two feet in the mud, one contractor building a house in Port Adelaide upon the pieces removed'.

<sup>118</sup> Page, *Port Adelaide*, 24. See also Stacy, 2.

<sup>119</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 January 1887.



were dressed with bunting.<sup>120</sup> It was a day of self-congratulation for the new colony. The Reverend John Blacket described the proceedings.

The Rev. C. B. Howard offered prayer. In a speech most appropriate to the occasion, Governor Gawler christened the wharf 'McLaren Wharf'....The first bale of goods was then landed upon it, consisting of a box of tea and one of spices. There were 'thundering rounds of applause.' The Union Jack was 'run up' and a Royal salute fired. A regatta followed. Then came a banquet on a colossal scale provided by the manager of the Company....One would imagine that after such a feast there would be little speaking....The speeches were on a par with the provisions. Governor Gawler proposed the first toast 'The Queen and Prince Albert.' David McLaren gave 'The Health of His Excellency Colonel Gawler.'....The Governor made an excellent speech.<sup>121</sup>

Tolmer, at the event with the mounted police, commented with his usual observant candour, 'Everybody cheered the cargo, the *Guiana*, the Governor, Mr. McLaren, and the whole occasion, while more salutes were fired from the wharf and the ships in the river. I haven't sniffed as much powder-smoke since I fought in Portugal'.<sup>122</sup>

Henry Hussey recorded the dramatic end to festivities which also gave some indication of the unreliability of the Port Road to carry heavy traffic. It was a reminder to officials that there was still much to be done.

As the day wore on, some ominous clouds began to arise in the west, and a sudden change of wind about three or four o'clock in the afternoon, threatened to spoil the day's entertainment. The wind increased, and preparations were made for the return journey; but as the coach 'Young Queen,' which was in the van, proved too heavy for the newly-made road, the highway was blocked for a considerable time. Some of the conveyances attempted to get through under the sheds on the Queen's Wharf, and those without covers succeeded; but the trap driven by my father was stopped.

I returned to town in the wagon, and as we drove along the causeway, with the water on each side of us, the sight was as novel and sensational as could be imagined. Parasols, umbrellas, hats and bonnets, were carried by the gusts of wind far and wide....the clouds of dust were such as only to allow a glimpse now and again of the vehicles *en route*.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Blacket, 173-174.

<sup>121</sup> Blacket, 174.

<sup>122</sup> Tonkin, 33.

<sup>123</sup> Henry Hussey, *More than Half a Century of Colonial Life and Christian Experience*. (Adelaide, 1897) 53-55.

As well as the *Guiana* from Singapore, there were thirteen other vessels in the port: the *Courier*, *Ituna*, and *Enterprise* from London; *Martin Luther* from Greenock; *Mary Dugdale* from Bristol and Dublin; *Frances* from Hobart Town; *Governor Gawler* from Encounter Bay; *Jane Flaxman* and *Alice* from Port Lincoln; and *Truelove* and the schooners *John Pirie* and *Victoria* from Kangaroo Island, the last two bearing the flag of the South Australian Company. It was appropriate that the *Rapid* was back from Port Phillip for the celebrations and lay alongside decked out with flags.<sup>124</sup>

The banquet held in the company warehouse for official guests was described in a newspaper report as 'a sumptuous *déjeûner à la fourchette*' which included

5 pieces roast beef, 5 do. boiled, 5 quarters lamb, 5 pieces veal, 15 hams, 35 tongues, 5 pieces spiced beef, 2 turkeys, 2 geese, 45 fowls, 10 ducks, 20 chicken pies, 20 pigeon pies, 5 quail pies, 20 veal pies, 75 covered and other tarts consisting of preserved cherry, damson, plum, green gauge, gooseberry, currant, raspberry, rhubarb, apple, strawberry, black currant, quince, marmalade, and four sorts of Indian preserves. DESSERT---75 dishes of almonds, raisins, nuts, walnuts, figs, pears, citron, apples, lemon and chew chew. WINES---90 dozen wines, consisting of champagne, claret, hock, port, sherry, Madeira, and Bucellas. Likewise---dozen of ale and porter.<sup>125</sup>

The variety of foods for the feast well demonstrated the words of the governor in emphasising the young colony's advances in agriculture, horticulture, pastoralism and manufacturing. 'When we remember that we have not yet completed our fourth year of colonial existence', he

<sup>124</sup> H. T. Burgess (ed.), *The Cyclopaedia of South Australia*. Vol. 1. (Adelaide, 1907) 449. See also Parsons, *Migrant Ships for South Australia 1836-1850*. (Magill SA, 1983) 110-111. The *Rapid* had returned carrying cargo to South Australia on 21 June 1838. The brig was sold to Australian owners and was wrecked at Rotuma, Fiji, on 14 January 1841 while on a voyage to China. See also Stacy, 9.

<sup>125</sup> *The Register*, 17 October 1840. *Déjeûner à la fourchette* literally means 'lunch with a fork'.

intoned, 'I am bold to say, that never was done so much in so short a time as has been done in South Australia'.<sup>126</sup>

This may have been a slight exaggeration to meet the mood of the occasion but the pioneers had much to be proud of, and the development of a decent port was a symbol of their progress. The Port Creek Settlement had been replaced by Port Adelaide on the Port Adelaide River. The name of the waterway had been changed from creek to river to suit the status of the new port town but the familiar problems remained: access across swampy land, frequent tidal inundation and no local water supply. There were advantages. With the new facilities and road, the cost of cartage from the port to Adelaide fell as low as four to five shillings per ton, a great saving to the cost of transporting goods. Although Light knew of the decision to relocate the port, he did not live to see the new facility, having died, aged 54, at his home at Thebarton almost a year before, on 6 October 1839.

By the end of 1840 the population numbered 472 people living at the two port sites and Albert Town, Port Adelaide's first suburb.<sup>127</sup> Built on South Australian Company land, Albert Town contained 61 houses with

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<sup>126</sup> *The Register*, 17 October 1840.

<sup>127</sup> J. F. Bennett, *Historical and Descriptive Account of South Australia: founded on the Experience of a Three Years' Residence in that Colony*. (London, 1843) 134. 'Albert Town, which is immediately beyond the swamp which backs the landing place, is preferred by some, as a place of residence. This village contains a good number of houses erected by mechanics, fishermen, &c., employed at the Port'.

235 inhabitants, the men mostly working at the port.<sup>128</sup>

The first customs house and the two iron government stores, vacant at the Old Port, were auctioned in 1844 and moved to Nile Street. After years of use as chaff and grain stores, one for a time holding machinery to grind wattlebark, they were demolished, the store to the east in the late 1890s and the other in 1929.<sup>129</sup>

The increasingly good reputation of the harbour and port was affirmed on 20 December 1841 when 11 ship masters published a testimonial statement:

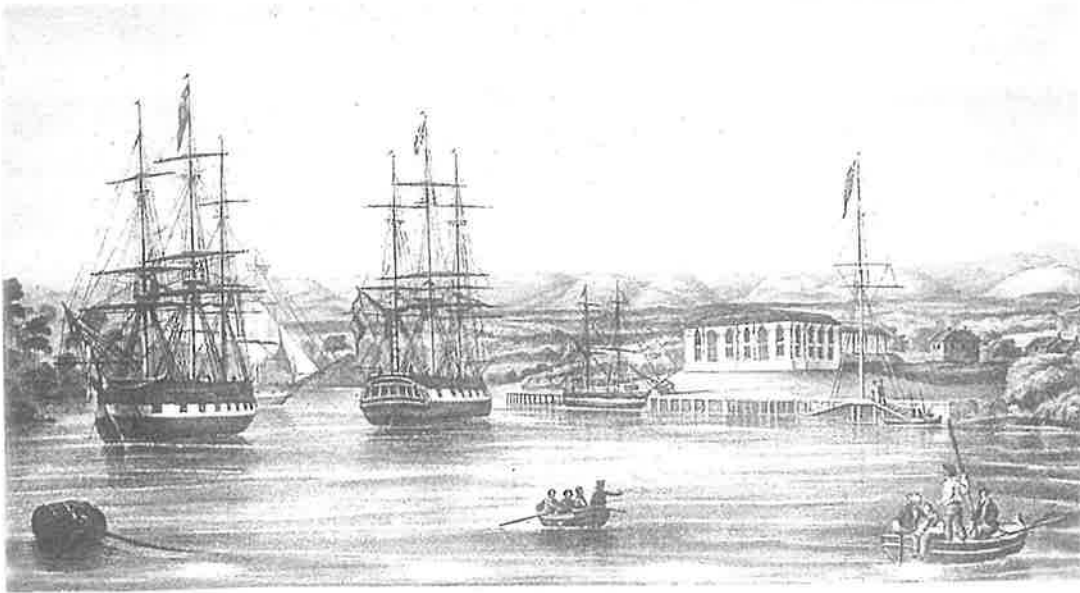
We...being commanders of vessels now lying in Port Adelaide, beg to express publicly our opinion of its capabilities and accommodation. Port Adelaide is a safe and commodious harbor, capable of containing a great number of vessels with safety. At present there are six barques and ships, 4 brigs, a steamer, and 5 schooners lying there. The two barques, each of upwards of 300 tons, two brigs, and a schooner are loading cargoes for Britain, and three undergoing repairs. We have therefore no hesitation in saying that Port Adelaide, though not so extensive, is as safe, and offers as great facilities for loading and unloading as any port in the Australian colonies.<sup>130</sup>

One of the commanders, Obed Delans of the American whaling ship *Mercator*, also went to the trouble of addressing a letter to the newspapers, strongly recommending whaling vessels cruising in the

<sup>128</sup> Price, 180. Price cites 'H.M.S.O. Papers Relative to South Australia', London: House of Commons, 1843, 79. See also G. B. Wilkinson, *The Working Man's Handbook to South Australia*. (London, 1849) 16, in Brian J. Samuels, "'Community' in the Port Adelaide District 1861-1901', B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1972, 9. Wilkinson made a similar observation, 'A mile from the Port we pass Albert Town, containing about 100 houses; it is a straggling settlement, and affords habitation for many who are engaged at the port in supplying the shipping'.

<sup>129</sup> Beresford, *Portonian*, September 1978, 3-5, 8, with a 1928 photograph of the surviving store on the Back Cover.

<sup>130</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 February 1887. The document is signed by W. A. Gibbs, barque *Fama*; W. Rogers, barque *Orissa*; Obed Delans, ship *Mercator*; W. Galbraith, barque *Almena*; D. McLean, brig *Francis Yates*; H. Jones, schooner *Duke of Sussex*; B. F. Simmons, schooner *Vixen*; W. D. Dove, brig *Daphne*; D. Talbot, schooner *Waterwitch*; A. Drisdale, brig *King Henry* and G. W. Brown, schooner *Hawk*.



### Illustration 3

The new Port Adelaide, c. 1840, showing the wharf, flagstaff and South Australian Company warehouse.

Adelaide City Council.

Rupert Jethro Best (ed.), *Introducing South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1958) opposite 17.

vicinity of Australia to put into Port Adelaide whenever they required hands or supplies and provisions.<sup>131</sup>

Seamen found a drink readily available and hoteliers looked forward to increased business with the First Commercial, Help Me Through the World, Hen and Chickens, Steamboat, Port, Prince Albert and the Ship Inn catering for the busy waterfront.<sup>132</sup> The Ship Inn, built of timber, was erected on the site in early 1840 with William Regan as licensee. It was progress indeed when a brick chimney was included in the building, the first in the new settlement.<sup>133</sup>

The publican John McBeath from the Caledonian Inn at the Port Creek Settlement, having 'accumulated a considerable sum of money' from the enterprise, built a 'pretentious-looking' weather-boarded hotel, 'the first that could boast of an upper storey' in what is now St Vincent Street at the new port.<sup>134</sup> Unfortunately for McBeath, his wife Mary Anne and daughter Elizabeth, he had chosen a site 'on a swamp in the back slums and nobody cared to risk their shins against mud and mangrove snags to get their beer' and in 1842, 'McBeath came to grief, and he and his pub had to part company'.<sup>135</sup> McBeath's grand new Caledonian Hotel did not continue as a public house and 'for long afterwards with ill-

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<sup>131</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 February 1887.

<sup>132</sup> Hoad, *Hotels*, Part 3.

<sup>133</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>134</sup> Holthouse, *Portonian*, September 1978, 7.

<sup>135</sup> Holthouse, *Portonian*, September 1978, 7.

natured people it went by the name of "McBeath's Folly".<sup>136</sup> Holthouse recalled meeting 'the poor old man' in the 1860s, when McBeath was 'living in a miserable little slab-hut in the Strathalbyn Ranges' and stated that McBeath's old building was still standing 'very neglected' at the port in 1888.<sup>137</sup>

From 9 April 1840, G. Mildred and S. East were the licensees of the new Port Hotel, which was, unlike McBeath's, conveniently sited on the waterfront. Anthony, the licensee at the old port, had apparently moved on; he had not been a gregarious publican and may have found his calling outside the hotel trade.<sup>138</sup> Holthouse mentioned seeing him 'on the Victorian gold diggings in 1853'.<sup>139</sup> The Ship Inn building, which was licensed at the old port until 25 April 1841, was moved to an unknown location when the construction of the new Ship Inn, also located on the waterfront, was completed.<sup>140</sup>

Piety was also catered for in the new town. Before the port opened, church services were held on the stacks of timber ready for piling at the new wharf. Later a warehouse was used by Church of England, Presbyterian and others worshippers. Congregationalists worshipped on the wharf or the sand by the riverside. While lay-preaching one Sunday

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<sup>136</sup> Holthouse, *Portonian*, September 1978, 7.

<sup>137</sup> Holthouse, *Portonian*, September 1978, 7. See also Graeme Ross (compiler), '1841 Census: District of Port Adelaide', *Portonian*, December 1991, 11.

<sup>138</sup> Holthouse, *Portonian*, September 1978, 7.

<sup>139</sup> Holthouse, *Portonian*, September 1978, 7.

<sup>140</sup> Hoad, *Hotels*, Part 3, 91, 459, 554.

on North Parade, the large William Giles, who replaced McLaren as manager of the South Australian Company in 1841, used an American flour barrel as a platform which collapsed under his weight.<sup>141</sup> Soon after the incident Edward Bayly offered the use of his sail-loft as a venue for the gatherings. In 1926 Edward S. Kiek wrote that 'a receipt for the rent of this strange conventicle is before me. No fellowship existed and the congregation was quite small'.<sup>142</sup> A receipt for the rent of the sail loft, now in the Mortlock Library of South Australiana, reads 'Port Oct 20th 1849. Received of Mr H Giles the sum of Two Pounds 10/- being rent to this date of sail loft used by Independent congregation. Edwd Bayly'.<sup>143</sup>

The 1840 *Directory* mentioned that Barclay, 'who labors with such zeal', was still representing the British and Foreign Sailors' Society and had a seaman's library on board a vessel stationed in the Port, 'from whence seamen may be supplied on application either with tracts or books'. It also recorded the use of the small chapel, 'built from public subscription and used by all denominations', which was a reference to the small Union Church built near the old port site.

By mid-1841 at the new port there was one rickety wooden church known as 'St Paul's-on-the-Piles'. The driving of the first foundation pile

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<sup>141</sup> George Payne Hodge, *An Early Narrative Sketch of the Foundation and Early History of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church*. (c.1899) 4.

<sup>142</sup> Kiek, 144-145.

<sup>143</sup> Dean Eland and Vivien Counsell, *History of a Port Adelaide Church: "Honouring the Past...Anticipating the Future"*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1992) ix, 35, Mortlock Library of South Australiana, SRG 95/166. Henry Giles was the first treasurer of the church.



for St Paul's Church of England in the presence of Captain Sturt on 25 January that year was the beginning of church construction in the town.<sup>144</sup> The residents raised £350 by voluntary subscription to build the church on high posts above the swampland and able to seat over 250 people.<sup>145</sup> The 1840 *Directory* listed only 33 men connected with the town. Clearly the residents were optimistic about future growth as even with their families, visiting travellers and seafarers, there was still ample room in the church at that time. The building was approximately 50 feet by 20 feet with a 14 foot ceiling and sat on piles about six feet above ground level. It was 'the only edifice on the southern side of St. Vincent Street'.<sup>146</sup> On Wednesday 12 May 1841 the following newspaper notice appeared:

TO CHRISTIANS.

THE Church of ST PAUL'S at the New Port will be opened on Sunday next, when the morning services [sic], at 11 A.M., will be conducted by the Rev. C. B. Howard, and in the afternoon, at 3 o'clock, by the Rev. J. Farrell.

All classes of christians have freely joined to raise this humble structure, and ALL are now invited to unite with its first thanksgivings, and add their OFFERINGS on its being dedicated to the God of the Sabbath.

New Port, May 8, 1841.

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The notice indicates that other denominations had contributed to building the church and were welcome there. Robert J. Scrimgeour stated

<sup>144</sup> Document placed inside bottle within the first pile sunk for the foundation of St Paul's, Port Adelaide. George Hadley and Walter Scott are listed as 'Carpenters'. (SRG 94/A85/4, copy at St Paul's Anglican Church Archives.)

<sup>145</sup> 'Projected New Church at the Port', St Paul's Archives. '141 subscribers appear on the final list....<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of the total subscriptions were from non-Portonians'. See also 'Record of Meetings to establish a Church at New Port', 7 January 1841, St Paul's Anglican Church Archives. 'That a vote of thanks be given to Captn Lipson for the kind gift of solid timber for the erecting the foundations of the Church'.

<sup>146</sup> Graham Ross, *Private School Education at St. Paul's Port Adelaide 1846-1927*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1992) 1.

<sup>147</sup> *The Adelaide Chronicle, and South Australian Literary Record*, 12 May 1841.

in his 1986 history of the Presbyterian church in South Australia that it was intended for the use of Anglicans and Presbyterians with the Reverend James Farrell of the Church of England and the Reverend Robert Haining of the Church of Scotland, officiating on alternate Sundays, with the same people attending each service.<sup>148</sup> This was a convenient and ecumenical arrangement until sufficient resources could provide accommodation for the separate congregations. Henry Hussey remembered the day of the church opening when he was 16 years old.

I happened to be at the Port that Sunday, when there was one of these high tides; and instead of attending the service, I was watching the rising water. To provide for such a contingency a raised path or embankment was made, reaching from the North Parade to the Church; and when the congregation assembled there was no sign of a flood. As was usual on these occasions, there was a strong wind from the west, and, as it was cold, the front door was closed during the service. I watched the water rising higher and higher, until it covered the embankment; and by the time the service was over it was lost entirely to view. Imagine the surprise of the people when the door was opened at finding themselves surrounded by water, and with no immediate prospect of being able to reach their homes. Capt. Lipson, the Harbor-master, kindly helped the congregation out of this difficulty by sending boats.<sup>149</sup>

As the people left the building, the change in weight on the spongy soil under the water caused it to lean to one side. While the church wardens deliberated the predicament a few days later, strong winds from the opposite direction fortuitously restored the church to its upright position. It was often possible to row a boat to St Paul's for many years. The building finally collapsed on 28 June 1851.<sup>150</sup>

The activities and services at the new port were far more varied than

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<sup>148</sup> Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Some Scots were Here: A History of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia, 1839-1877*. (Adelaide, 1986) 41.

<sup>149</sup> Hussey, 52-53.

<sup>150</sup> Eugene Lumbers, *Centenary History of Port Adelaide 1856-1956*. (Adelaide, 1956) 24. See also *The Register*, 29 September 1927.

those at the Port Creek Settlement. In the 1840 *Directory*, William Voules Brown, a storekeeper, advertised, 'Shipping supplied with New Milk every day' and Robert Moss Robson ran a boarding and lodging house, and a coffee house, presumably on the same premises. Working in the town were Francis Potts, carpenter, James George, baker, W. Shepherd, butcher, Robert Charles Venn, another butcher and general agent who had been at the Old Port, and George Brusher and Charles Forbes both 'eating house keepers'. An attorney, Thomas Taylor, had arrived, Captain Hugh Quin was chief pilot and William Thorn ran a livery stable. There were familiar names of townsmen and officials who had been stationed at the Old Port such as Daniel Simpson who was listed as shipbuilder.<sup>151</sup> The 1841 *Directory* showed the fading links with the Port Creek Settlement as the centre of business developed to the north:

South Australian Shipping Co.

The undersigned having had great experience in transacting business at the Old Port, beg to inform the Merchants of Adelaide that they have joined in partnership, and are carrying on business under the above firm, at the New Port.

John Stevens  
 Samuel Phillips  
 J. W. DeHorne  
 Henry Simpson

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The Port of Adelaide was finally established on its present site through exploration, perseverance, necessity and expediency. During the four years at the temporary Port Creek Settlement and the first year at the new site, access had been secured to Adelaide, a place of worship had

<sup>151</sup> Bennett, 1840, 149. See also Walter J. Venn, 'A Port Butcher', *Portonian*, June 1995, 7, and Nunn, 85. In 1841 Daniel Simpson commenced a small whaling station at Hog Bay, near Penneshaw on Kangaroo Island. He had a 35 ton cutter, *Sophia Jane* and sold the oil in Adelaide.

<sup>152</sup> J. F. Bennett (ed.), *The Royal South Australian Almanack and General Directory*. (Adelaide, 1841).

been established, and hotels and essential maritime businesses had been set up. There was little time for much else at the port outpost and only the basic ministrations of pub and pulpit were in place by 1841.

During Port Adelaide's earliest years from 1836 to 1840 the town was rising from its waterlogged foundations on the tidal flats but the mangroves had not been easy to conquer and were making settlement extremely difficult. Port Adelaide was beginning to take on its own character though the direction of its eventual progress either as a freewheeling waterside port or as a settled society was uncertain.

The waterside pub took up its traditional role for seafarers and travellers, supplying them with alcoholic beverages to celebrate survival after months at sea and courage for their forthcoming voyages. The hotel was also a gathering place for working men to have a drink and meet their mates after a hard day's work. In comparison, the church's tradition of worship and fellowship had more difficulty in finding an everyday role in the town. There was no resident clergyman and people were widely scattered and concentrating their efforts on the urgent task of taming an inhospitable landscape into a home. Christian worship at the Port had ecumenical beginnings but this was to change as the community grew.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A NEW PORT AND SETTLEMENT 1840-1869

Progress at Port Adelaide, as elsewhere in South Australia, was dependent on government decisions. Governor Gawler was made the scapegoat for the bungles of the South Australian Colonization Commissioners in London and was recalled. Doubts were raised about the colony's financial future and migration began to slow down in 1840.<sup>1</sup>

Captain George Grey was appointed the new governor and resident commissioner on 29 December 1840, and arrived in the colony on *Lord Glenelg* on 14 May 1841. The Gawlers left aboard *Dumfries* the following month. Mrs Gawler, perhaps reflecting the humiliation they felt, wrote of her husband's replacement, 'a mere boy...a captain, too, of only two years standing'.<sup>2</sup>

The port received attention shortly after Grey's arrival when Captain Stokes of H.M.S. *Beagle* began a survey of the harbour. He reported his

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<sup>1</sup> Peter A. Howell, 'One Hundred Years After: reassessing lives for the *New Dictionary of National Biography*', *Voices*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Spring 1995) 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> Derek Whitelock, *Adelaide, from Colony to Jubilee: A Sense of Difference*. (Adelaide, 1985) 42. Whitelock cited a letter from Mrs Gawler to Admiral Hawker, 30 March 1841 (Angas Papers: Quarto Series, 1750). See also Clark, 75, when he extended the thought to state 'a mere boy of twenty-nine years and a junior captain in the army, took over from a hero of Waterloo'.

findings to the governor on 31 January 1842:

I have already commenced the necessary observations, and made further arrangements for surveying such a portion of the Port as I considered would be found generally useful. I was induced to take the above steps from the apparent safety of this really natural dock, and from a conviction of the benefit which would result from such an undertaking to the province generally, and more particularly to its commercial interests. It is a very remarkable circumstance, and deserving of acknowledgment, that of the great number of vessels which have sailed from England to Australia, and of those which have returned direct, not one case of shipwreck had occurred on the voyage to or from the colony.<sup>3</sup>

Stokes' mention of the safety record of ships travelling between England and South Australia would have pleased Grey who wished to encourage more settlers.<sup>4</sup>

A bounteous harvest in 1841 had turned the economy around, and development was further stimulated by the discovery of copper in 1842.<sup>5</sup> In January 1843, due to a labour shortage in the copper mines, Grey recommended that migration be resumed, following which, '35 per cent of all assisted migrants going to the Australian colonies were sent to South Australia'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Port Adelaide News & Lefevre's Peninsula Advertiser* (hereafter cited as *Port Adelaide News*), 25 February 1887.

<sup>4</sup> In 1842 the South Australian Commission was revoked in favour of the general Board of Colonization Commissioners for Land and Emigration which left the governor in sole charge of the colony and responsible only to the Colonial Office in London.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857*. (Second edition, Carlton Vic, 1967) 230-243.

<sup>6</sup> C. M. H. Clark, *A History of Australia*. Vol. 3. (Carlton Vic, 1987) 243.

In order to deal with the increased activity at the port, the charted area of the harbour was expanded. Increased exports of copper, wattlebark and gum helped economic recovery in the colony and created further demand at the port. In 1843 the town was described by J. F. Bennett as 'little more than a small village, the population consisting of a few ship carpenters, fishermen, boatmen, and ship-chandlers, three or four publicans, several shipping agents, the men employed in the harbour and customs department, a couple of butchers, a sailmaker, a blacksmith, &c'.<sup>7</sup> By 1844 the population of the wider Port District was 1320 and grew to 1529 two years later.<sup>8</sup> The town steadily developed. The Reverend E. K. Miller remembered his initial impressions of a busy port town in 1847 and described the adequate but temporary nature of the dwellings and business establishments.

Very little indeed was known in London about South Australia in 1847, so that our first impressions on landing were of surprise and satisfaction....we were quite unprepared for the bustle and activity Port Adelaide presented....the wharves were full of bullock-drays - a novelty to us - delivering copper ore from the Burra mine....The buildings in the Port were numerous but of very varied construction. The better class were of weatherboard, or paling, many of cob, *i.e.*, earth mixed with straw, others of wattle and dab, as it was called; that is, posts placed at short intervals, plaited with tea-tree, the interstices filled with clay and whitewashed, nearly all roofs being of shingle.<sup>9</sup>

The local veterinarian Peter Harvey Wright, who was 'born at the Old Port in 1839 and brought to the present Port as soon as it was

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<sup>7</sup> J. F. Bennett, *Historical and Descriptive Account of South Australia: founded on the Experience of a Three Years' Residence in that Colony*. (London, 1843) 134.

<sup>8</sup> Brian J. Samuels, "'Community' in the Port Adelaide District 1861-1901", B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1972, 7. It is not possible to find exact comparative figures. Samuels stated, 'These figures are for 'Port Adelaide and Albert Town' and 'Port Adelaide' respectively. The boundaries of these Census areas are unknown'.

<sup>9</sup> E. K. Miller, *Reminiscences of Forty-seven Years Clerical Life in South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1895) 26.

habitable', later described the shipping freight activity in the late 1840s which 'generated the chief income of the Port'. English vessels unloaded general cargo and reloaded for the return trip with tallow, wattle bark, wool and silver-lead or copper ore. The wool was 'pressed by screw press, or hand worked by hydraulic press....Other ships would load exclusively with...ore....and some of the crafts would be loaded far below what would now be Plimsol's [sic] mark'. Copper from the Burra mine arrived in three ton loads on bullock drays. Wright stated that 'it was not unusual to see a team waiting...at the weighbridge at 6 o'clock in the morning, and other teams stretching from there to Alberton, so that it would be quite evening before they all got unloaded and away'. He described some imported heavy machinery for the Burra mines for which 'a large wagon was constructed to carry the heavy pieces....drawn by 72 bullocks. There were three pairs of bullocks abreast and twelve in length'. Most supplies such as 'potatoes, fruits and large numbers of horses' arrived from Tasmania and there were 'regular traders to Sydney and Tasmania'.<sup>10</sup>

A beach along the river adjoining the wharves, which Wright remembered as extending 'out some distance', was raised to a narrow bank as a barrier to flood tides and became a pathway.<sup>11</sup> The land was

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<sup>10</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 December 1895. See also *The Rainbow*, 11 July 1895, 5. In 1857 Wright commenced a bootmaking business in the Port and after study opened his Nile Street veterinary practice in 1871.

<sup>11</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 December 1895.





#### Illustration 4

Port Adelaide River, wharves and North Parade, 1846.

Australian Tourist Publications, *Port Adelaide: The Gateway of South Australia*. (c.1950) 18.

Mortlock Library of South Australiana.

gradually built up behind the bank and the first commercial buildings were constructed facing this northern riverfront. The development became North Parade, the first shopping strip in the town with the wharf area expanded along its length.

The boundaries of settlement were earthen embankments: the Port Adelaide River with North Parade parallel to the wharves to the north, Mundy Street alongside the river to the west, St Vincent Street to the south (known for many years as 'the bank'), and the South Australian Company Road or Port Road (the river end later known as Commercial Road) to the east. The banks were built using mud raised from the ditches alongside and from the deepening of the shipping channels and mooring areas in the river. The drainage ditches made it almost possible to circumnavigate the town by dinghy. Inside this levee enclosure were dwellings, shops, hotels, shipping-agents, stables, the customs house and wharf warehouses. The town must have resembled an ancient Celtic village protected by its earthen ramparts.

Over the river the sand ridges of the peninsula, which marked former shorelines, were traditional camping areas for the nomadic Kaurna people. When settlers first arrived there were approximately 700 Kaurna, their numbers already depleted by smallpox which had spread down the River Murray area in the early 1830s. As Europeans colonised their land, the Kaurna gradually lost their home territory which had

extended from approximately what is now Cape Jervis to Crystal Brook in the north.<sup>12</sup>

Wright's reminiscences of early life at the Port included a description of Aborigines living there during the 1840s.

There were a number of aboriginals who generally made the Port their home. They would disappear for a time to return again, sometimes with large numbers of friendly natives....Corroberies [sic] were held on moonlight nights, and on one Sunday afternoon a real fight with spears and other weapons was commenced where the Town Hall now stands, but was soon suppressed by the police arresting some of the principal actors. Though the natives had the name of being lazy, I think they were fairly industrious. The men would chop wood and do other work for the whites with moderate pay. The women made nets for sale, and some of them were really handy helpers in household work such as washing....I do not think there is one of the old tribe left.<sup>13</sup>

Within thirty years there were few Kurna remaining and their traditions and knowledge mostly lost.<sup>14</sup> Tom Gara wrote a detailed account of Ivaritji, a Kurna woman who lived until 1929 and was mentioned in Charles Fenner's *The Centenary History of South Australia*.<sup>15</sup> However there is evidence collected by Sheridah Melvin that some Kurna men from a campsite on the peninsula (near today's Osborne) found work as

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Howard Groome, Aboriginal and Islander Studies, University of South Australia, 8 August 1997.

<sup>13</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 December 1895.

<sup>14</sup> J. D. Woods (ed.), *The Native Tribes of South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1879) ix, cited in R. M. Gibbs, *A History of South Australia*. (Blackwood SA, 1984) 130-131, 'not a vestige of the Port Adelaide tribe remains. The Adelaide tribe is extinct, and so are those which dwell near Gawler, Kapunda, the Burra, the Rufus, &c. In none of these places can a single trace of them be found. They have left no memorials behind them, and their language as a language exists no more'. However Charles Fenner et al (eds), *The Centenary History of South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1936) 18-19, wrote that Philip, the last male of the Kurna who died in Adelaide Hospital in 1897, and his sister Ibaritja, 'known in early life as Itja mau', who lived until 1929. Fenner supported Wood's view on the loss of culture and stated that by 1860 all others in the tribe 'seem to have died, and it unfortunately happens that very little knowledge of their arts and crafts has survived'.

<sup>15</sup> Tom Gara, 'The Life of Ivaritji (Princess Amelia) of the Adelaide Tribe', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of South Australia*, Vol. 28 (1), 1990, 64-104. Ivaritji (meaning 'gentle misty rain') was the daughter of Parnatarja and lived until well into her 80s. See also Rob Linn, *Cradle of Adversity: A History of the Willunga District*. (Blackwood SA, 1991) 9, which shows a Norman B. Tindale photograph of 'Ivaritji' from the Anthropology Archives, South Australian Museum. The caption described Ivaritji as 'a woman of full Kurna descent wearing a possum skin cloak in 1928'.

lumpers on the wharf.<sup>16</sup> Others were employed in storehouses and at a flour mill from 1854 to 1910, and women from across the river (today's Glanville) did some washing and housework in the town.<sup>17</sup> The Kaurna knew the Port area as *Yerta Bulti*, meaning 'unproductive ground or earth'.<sup>18</sup>

By the end of the 1840s the township was a small community, tentatively linked to Adelaide but still very much an isolated settlement similar to those in rural areas within a day's journey of the main town. There was often an acute lack of shipping to transport goods from the colony and in April 1848 a Sydney journalist described stockpiles of Burra ore lying on the Burra Company wharf:

'the Port Adelaide', a miserable looking place...dust in your eyes, bilge-water in your nose, and bullock-drays, carmen, and sailors above, about and around you. The eye is however arrested by one novelty - a wharf covered with immense heaps of copper ore of the greatest variety, richness and beauty; it is like a giant specimen box, for every stone amongst the 5000 tons there lying, is a beauty more worthy of a cabinet than a Swansea furnace. Malachite, green and blue carbonates, in short every variety going.<sup>19</sup>

In 1848 problems of irregular shipments to Welsh smelters were solved when smelting works were established in Newcastle Street, Yatala, the

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<sup>16</sup> R. Lucas, *MFP-Australia EIS Project: An Assessment of Aboriginal Heritage Values*. Report to PPK Consultants, 1991, 24, in Sheridah Melvin, *Kudlyo the Black Swan Dreaming: Veronica Brodie and the Continuity of Kaurna History at Glanville and Le Fevre Peninsula*. Research Report prepared for the Lartelare Homeland Association, 1994, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Melvin, 23.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Howard Groome, 8 August 1997. Geoffrey H. Manning, *Manning's Place Names of South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1990) 3, gave the meaning of *yertabulti* as 'salt swamp that grows nothing'. Groome doubted the exact definition of 'salt swamp' as used by Manning and explained that the meaning of *yerta* was 'ground', 'earth' or 'country' and *Boldingga* or *bulti*, 'sleep' or 'death', so a more accurate translation of the name was 'unproductive ground or earth'.

<sup>19</sup> *Sydney Atlas*, 1 April 1848, in Ian Auhl, *The Story of the 'Monster Mine': The Burra Burra Mine and Its Townships 1845-1877*. (Burra SA, 1986) 154.

first in the Port area to process copper for export.<sup>20</sup>

Other problems were also being redressed. Wharf improvements included the construction of an immigration shed 'near the Custom House' in 1849.<sup>21</sup> New arrivals finally had some temporary accommodation and shelter after landing while they made arrangements to move on from the Port.

In the first decade, service industries connected with maritime needs expanded in the port area. A slipway for boat repairs and a timber yard were examples of early industry. In June 1849 Henry C. Fletcher, an Orkney Islander, arrived in the colony with his family. By September he and William Isbister, a carpenter, had leased two acres of Section 916 for 21 years from the South Australian Company. They also purchased slipyard equipment brought to Kangaroo Island by the company to service a proposed sealing and whaling fleet but left unused when the scheme was abandoned.<sup>22</sup> Fletcher realised its potential and had the rails and large cradle reassembled on the land at Birkenhead, across the river from the town. The laying of the slip was an enormous task which took until March

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<sup>20</sup> *The Register*, 2 August 1848, in The Corporation of the City of Port Adelaide Editorial Committee for the 150 Year Souvenir Booklet, *Mudflats to Metropolis 1836-1986*. (1986) 67. In 1852 the company advertised 'waste products for road making'. In late 1861 the English & Australian Copper Company smelter in Mundy Street commenced production.

<sup>21</sup> *The Register*, 24 March 1849. See also Ronald H. Parsons, *Migrant Ships for South Australia 1836-1850*. (Magill SA, 1983) 66. The government also appointed an immigration officer in 1849 'to render assistance to new arrivals and check upon reports of misconduct of crew or passengers, shortages of food and water, etc., on the voyage'.

<sup>22</sup> A. I. Diamond, 'Aspects of the History of the South Australian Company: The First Decade', M.A. Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1955, 3. One of the objects of the South Australian Company was, 'the pursuit, of whale, seal and other fisheries in the gulfs and seas around the colony'.

1851 when *Panama* was the first vessel to use the new facility. Fletcher's slip provided a much needed service to shipping and on 2 August 1853 *The Register* listed 21 vessels which had been repaired there.<sup>23</sup> Isbister is mentioned in Wilson Evans' book on Williamstown, Victoria, where he proposed to build a large private patent slip.<sup>24</sup> Evans stated that the half-finished venture failed with a loss of money by many local investors. The Williamstown slip was purchased by the government, completed and leased out.<sup>25</sup>

The pattern of wharf development at Port Adelaide was examined by Donald Langmead using Bird's concept of 'Anyport' as a basis for comparative study.<sup>26</sup> Langmead concluded that Port Adelaide followed the characteristics of this evolution with firstly a 'primitive' era (anchored ships and lighterage), followed by 'marginal quay elaboration' (jetties and lighterage continuing for larger vessels), 'simple lineal quayage' (quayed berths in dredged area) and finally 'specialised quayage' (deep-water access to jetties).<sup>27</sup> The expansion of the port followed expansion of industry in the town. One early local business which proved important to the port's eventual progress was David Bower's timber yard, the first in Port Adelaide.

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<sup>23</sup> *The Register*, 28 December 1926, in *Portonian*, September 1976, 3-5. By 1857 Fletcher had installed a steam winch and went on to construct the larger Dunnikier slip which was opened in March 1867.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson P. Evans, *Port of Many Prows*. (Melbourne, 1969) 90.

<sup>25</sup> Ada Ackerly, 'Shipbuilding and Industry', History Leaflet 5 for Williamstown City Library, 1987.

<sup>26</sup> Donald Langmead, 'Port Adelaide 1836-1971', Thesis for Diploma of Town Planning, South Australian Institute of Technology, 1971, 40-62.

<sup>27</sup> Bird, *Seaport Gateways of Australia*. (London, 1968) 96.

Bower migrated to Australia in 1841 and first worked in the eastern colonies and New Zealand. In 1890 he wrote 'his rambelings' at the request of his nephew Richard, describing his early experiences after 43 years in South Australia.

I brought with me only a few pounds, also a cart and a few oranges which I sold in Adelaide for sixpence each. I arrived here in January 1847 and commenced work doing odd Carpenters jobs, there not being a Carpenter in the Port except a very old man. We had a fire in February and things improved. There were only a few shops in the North Parade and three publick houses in the place....I set to work in earnest, bought land in St Vincent Street, which was a swamp, got a road made, built a shop and some wooden cottages, and commenced a timber yard. When the Californian diggings broke out, I was inclined to go but changed my mind and got Married instead and settled down properly to work....In front of that on the beach, was covered with mangroves where the Wharfes are now....we then paid a shilling each way to Adelaide and back in a spring cart without any cover....Carpenters got six shillings a day in Adelaide. The first man I got to work for me, his name was Coles, I got him from town and gave him 7/- a day....I had a Sawpit near the workshop and all deals and sawing was done by manual labour. Your Father having seen it done in England by machinery, induced me to buy a small Steam Engine and Boiler. This was the first Steam Engine erected in Port Adelaide and I found it very profitable....At this time there were no planed boards of any kind imported into the Colony.<sup>28</sup>

Bower, not well schooled in spelling but astute in business, was successful as an early builder and timber merchant and was later elected as mayor of Port Adelaide (1876-1878) and as a member of the South Australian parliament. His initiative started an important local industry with other companies later establishing saw mills, timber drying kilns and timber yards in the town.

In comparison with Port Adelaide, two major factors contributed to a very different atmosphere in the early town of Fremantle in the Swan River colony. Fremantle was the site of a penitentiary and a whale fishery and these facilities brought prison warders and whaling gangs to the town.

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<sup>28</sup> 'David Bower - Reminiscences', *Portonian*, March 1989, 6, 12.

Like Port Adelaide, Fremantle was geared not only for import and export but to provision ships from its many stores. The many hotels catered for the crews. While passing whaling vessels frequently called into both Fremantle<sup>29</sup> and Port Adelaide for supplies, the Fremantle Whaling Company operated a shore station at the northern end of Bathers Bay. Whale oil and whale bone were important items of export.

The 12-sided gaol, privately constructed of locally-quarried limestone, was Western Australia's first public building and, according to Robert Reece and Robert Pascoe, was 'an important symbol of the social discipline which the Swan River gentry hoped to maintain over the lower orders'.<sup>30</sup> Lionel Samson and other townsmen from Fremantle and Perth campaigned in February 1849 for the introduction of convict labour for public works to give the faltering colony a new lease of life.<sup>31</sup> Fremantle, until the late 1860s, and Williamstown to a lesser extent, used convict labour in the construction of many official buildings and facilities.<sup>32</sup> A common sight near the prison in Fremantle was the chain gang, of 50 to 100 men, breaking stones for roadmaking.<sup>33</sup> This available work force was in marked contrast with Port Adelaide which was part of a colony officially founded for free settlers only. The early South Australian port

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<sup>29</sup> John K. Ewers, *The Western Gateway: A History of Fremantle*. (Nedlands WA, 1971) 25. Ewer stated that 'between February 1837 and April 1839 no fewer than sixteen American whalers called at Fremantle'.

<sup>30</sup> Robert H. W. Reece and R. Pascoe, *A Place of Consequence: A Pictorial History of Fremantle*. (Fremantle WA: 1983) 13.

<sup>31</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 18-19.

<sup>32</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 31. Fremantle buildings constructed by convicts included the commissariat and the convict gaol for 250 men in 1850, the Fremantle Boys' School in 1855 and an asylum for deranged convicts in 1865.

<sup>33</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 19.



was not built of stone on a solid rock base.

Port Adelaide, perched on stilted buildings above the high-tide line of the swampy ground, had already been tempered by fire and flood and had tenaciously clung to survival. In 1847 the new town with its timber structures was substantially burnt to the ground. This was the fire that Bower, as a carpenter, had seen as advantageous for his business. It reputedly started in the premises of Woolman, a sailmaker, who was occupying Edward Bayly's loft on the Parade.

Tallow and oakum came in contact with a lighted match, probably thrown down from a pipe; sequel - premises burned down, and in addition, however, Capt. Wakeland's hotel was destroyed, as also was a building occupied by one named Teakle....There was a wooden building used for a vegetable and grocer's shop consumed, besides some offices adjoining belonging to the late Mr. John Newman. Mr. Chas. Germein had a place beyond Bailey's [sic], which was scorched....There was a little wooden public house where the Ship Inn is now, belonging to Mr. Richard Amond. That was saved....the loss inflicted was both comparatively large and severe. The Parade was, however, speedily rebuilt.<sup>34</sup>

A second major fire, on Monday 9 November 1857, was later described by John Sweeney.

The fire started on the premises of Mr. Scarfe, and it cleared the whole of the shops along that line of frontage. The fire commenced in about the middle of the block and burned toward both ends, the only business places escaping the fire being the chemist's shop on the west end and Teakle and Sawtell's on the east. The lane alongside the Port Hotel prevented the fire from consuming the last two named. No water mains with hydrants in those days, neither were there steam fire engines with a brigade. A small manual fire engine housed at Captain Simpson's, was the only fire fighting appliance at Port Adelaide. Immediately after the fire shanties were erected on the opposite side of the road, and business was conducted in the same till the premises were rebuilt.<sup>35</sup>

John Ottaway, a local postman and preacher, and his wife were in the

<sup>34</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 March 1887. See also George Payne Hodge, *An Early Narrative Sketch of the Foundation and Early History of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church*. (c. 1899) 4. Bayly's sail loft was described by Hodge as 'a wooden building standing on four piles or beams some 8 or 10 feet above the surrounding level. The loft was situated at the back of, but on the west side of little street running past Mr. Parker's shop, Pt. Parade'.

<sup>35</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 November 1913. Sweeney served two terms as mayor of Port Adelaide, 1905-1907 and 1915-1917. *The Register*, 10, 11 November 1857 reported the story of the fire.

Wesleyan Chapel in Quebec Street on that November night.<sup>36</sup> Ottaway's account of the inferno closely followed that of Sweeney's but gave a different picture of activities at the Port that evening.

A large missionary meeting was being held...when there was an alarming cry of 'Fire! Fire!' Panic-stricken, the congregation rushed out to find a large blaze showing from the North Parade....After the fire had obtained a fierce hold of the buildings the wind chopped round to the west; and, oh, what a blaze it was. Seeing that there was grave danger of the fire reaching and consuming the post office, I hurried there...gathering up all letters, papers and books into large baskets, removed them into a safe store, placing them under lock and key....The change of wind was fortunate in one respect, for had the flames crossed over the street to where the British Hotel stood, it would have found splendid material in the shape of wooden houses, and explosives, oils, etc., stored there. My home was there, and you can be sure we had an anxious time until all danger had passed.<sup>37</sup>

The scene at daylight the following morning revealed the devastation to the town, 'over a space of several acres of ground, which but a few hours before was covered with handsome edifices and comfortable dwelling-houses, there was...a mass of blackened mouldering ruins.'<sup>38</sup>

Fire also destroyed the Ship Inn in 1852, and Bower rebuilt it to a design by Kingston.<sup>39</sup> Not only fire but flood consumed the Port. The tidal waters had frequently inundated the town as the work of raising protective earthworks continued. Henry Hussey described the living conditions he experienced as a youth. His reminiscences illustrate the ever present problem of flooding and the factors which made it possible for fire to sweep through the town. Its flimsy shanty-town structures crowded together gave little protection and families were bothered by the noise and

<sup>36</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 March 1914. See also *The Rainbow*, 11 July 1895 which gave an account of Ottaway, who arrived at the Port in 1855 to work for the Postal Department. After 'successfully passing the usual theological examination' he was received as an accredited local preacher and served when required at various Methodist churches and other non-conformist churches in the district.

<sup>37</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 March 1914.

<sup>38</sup> *The Register*, 11 November 1857.

<sup>39</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 March 1887.

lack of privacy.

My father leased some land on the North Parade, Port Adelaide, where he erected two tenements, one of wood and one of canvas. The former consisted of two rooms for living purposes, and the other was for business, having a fireplace at the back to serve as a kitchen. Like most other places at the Port, they were built on piles, so that the high tides could pass under; but sometimes the water would take entire possession of the floors. On these occasions anything likely to be damaged by sea-water was placed on the tables and bedsteads; and the inmates seated themselves likewise on anything that would raise them above high water. I have seen the water go right through the house, and boats coming up to the front door for persons in them to make purchases. Moveables inside might be kept from floating away, but those outside would be carried off, and find their way, with the retreating tide, out to sea....A cat and her kittens went on a voyage in a box, and I have no doubt many losses of fowls and other living things were sustained. The great difficulty was that we could not tell how high the water would rise, so as to secure anything we considered was beyond its reach. Our place was next to a public-house, and when the sailors were having a dance as if on the deck of their vessel, the noise, with only a boarded partition between us, and the shaking of the floor, was an intolerable nuisance.<sup>40</sup>

John Sweeney similarly described the construction of houses in the Port and gave an on-the-spot account of how early Portonians raised their dwellings above sea level.

The majority of houses were built on stumps well up from the ground level, as a protection against being flooded out should the embankment break away. Such happened on more than one occasion. The house so built received thorough ventilation through the seams in the floors, no tongued and grooved flooring being then used in the construction of the houses of the people. Quite a number were built of emigrant ships' fittings landed from the ships and disposed of for that purpose. The frames were of Van Dieman's [sic] Land timber, and the fittings were used for lining and flooring; in some instances the portside boarding would also be of fittings. Others were built of palings overlapping as weatherboards and were roofed with shingles. The rooms were very small, and low from floor to ceiling. In some instances you would ascend five or six steps to gain admittance to the house. Such a one I was brought up in, and it is only a few years since it was demolished. At that time, instead of going up, you stepped down from the street two steps to get into it....No bathrooms. Baths, yes, in the Port River, Magazine Creek, Tam O'Shanter Creek, Dead Man Hole, and Coal Shed Creek. The small boy fairly lived in the water in those days.<sup>41</sup>

The 'mud-punchers', the men mechanically scooping the sludge from the floor of the river, were building up the area behind the embankments

<sup>40</sup> Henry Hussey, *More than Half a Century of Colonial Life and Christian Experience*. (Adelaide, 1897) 55-56.

<sup>41</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 December 1913.

in a tedious process. Sweeney described the work of the men dredging the river in his childhood.

The only dredging plant available in the early days was the spoon barges worked by manual labor. Yes, and manual it was....Hot or cold, wet or dry, the men plied their calling, in hot weather working in flannels, in rainy weather in oilskins. During the day they would fill the barge with mud, then haul it to the landing place, and if the tide served, would at once commence to discharge their freight; for they could only do such work when the tides were suitable; and they could not afford to lose even one tide. Often, after working hard all day filling a barge they would adjourn for a few hours' sleep, leaving home during the small hours of the morning to again resume their work.<sup>42</sup>

In October 1850 the government took delivery of an 18-bucket steam dredge and four receiving barges to deepen the entrances to the port and remove the outer bars of the harbour. The self-propelled dredge moved by means of a winch attached to an anchor and chain and could operate to a depth of 20 feet. At the trial run of the dredge opposite the government wharf on 10 October it lifted 100 tons of mud before moving on to its primary task at the outer bar. Unfortunately in these conditions it failed to work properly and only became operative after considerable expense.<sup>43</sup>

In 1851 a select committee, enquiring into the use and expenditure of the government dredge, suggested that it be employed in deepening the stream near the wharves. The committee suggested that 'the silt raised could be easily landed at the Government reserve fronting North Parade,

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<sup>42</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 November 1913. See also Eugene Lumbers, *Centenary History of Port Adelaide 1856-1956*. (Adelaide, 1956) 24. Dredging was carried out by barges mounted with scoops on the end of long poles which were manipulated by windlasses. The barges held approximately 30 tons of mud. Between 200 and 300 box drays were used to cart the silt to street works in progress or used by landowners to lift their allotments to the new street levels.

<sup>43</sup> Russell Smith, *1850: A very good year in the Colony of South Australia*. (Sydney, 1973) 98. See also Langmead, 51, 53. The Legislative Council had approved £4000 for the acquisition of the dredge, with the working barges an extra £1300. Annual working expenses were estimated at a further £2000.

and thus by one operation the harbor would be deepened and the town raised'.<sup>44</sup>

The chosen site for the town lacked ideal conditions, the low-lying nature of the area reducing opportunities for rapid expansion. A greater handicap to development was the lack of fresh water, essential to any settlement. The only supply at the port was from a well sunk by the South Australian Company on a sandy patch across the river at Birkenhead near Fletcher's Slip. On 1 April 1853 the land was leased to Thomas Sandwell, a stonemason and the first settler there, who brought the water across to the town in casks, twenty to thirty at a time, towed on flat pontoons. In the absence of horsepower, the casks were hauled onto the Port beach then rolled to the customers.<sup>45</sup> Later, water for domestic purposes was obtained from Davis' waterworks on Lefevre Peninsula, the source of which was soakage from the sandhills.<sup>46</sup>

In 1859 the government carried water by train from Adelaide, each large railway truck carrying five or six 400-gallon tanks filled from the Torrens River near the Adelaide Railway Station. At Port Adelaide, casks were filled from the water tanks and carried in water carts for sale at one

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<sup>44</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 May 1887.

<sup>45</sup> F. E. Meleng, *Fifty Years of the Port Adelaide Institute*. (Adelaide, 1902) 11. See also Hodge, 3, and *Portonian*, June 1975, 11; September 1976, 6; March 1985, 5; December 1986, 10.

<sup>46</sup> Lefevre Peninsula was named in honour of John George Shaw Lefevre, a Colonization Commissioner.

shilling and sixpence per hogshead.<sup>47</sup> Sweeney described the pains taken to conserve this precious water.

Fresh water being so expensive, great care was bestowed upon it. Each house had a cask placed in many instances at the front of the house, so that it would be under the eye of the occupant. In summer the casks, when partially empty, would become leaky, and often I have seen women with a piece of soap or a tallow candle pressing the soft substance in the cracks between the staves to save the water from wasting.<sup>48</sup>

In February 1863 a report to parliament from the engineer of waterworks estimated that piped water from the Thorndon Park Reservoir at Athelstone could provide the Port with 850,000 gallons per day. The proposal was to supply the water through a ten-inch branch main from North Adelaide, an extension of the service to Adelaide commenced in December 1860. Benefits listed in the report included a greater pressure and supply in case of fire at Port Adelaide where 'one-half of the buildings...are of wood', reduced insurance on buildings and goods, a better service supplying water to shipping, and a savings on labour costs with the increased use of steam engines and hydraulic cranes and presses for the wharf area and industry. The government estimated that revenue of approximately £4000 would come from the 550 dwellings and stores in the town, each paying on average one shilling and sixpence per week (or £4 per year) for the supply.<sup>49</sup> Reticulated water was finally laid along Port Road to the main streets of the Port in 1867 although

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<sup>47</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 December 1913. The average worker's wage in 1859 was six shillings per day so for a quarter day's wage a family had water for approximately one week. A hogshead held 52.5 gallons.

<sup>48</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 December 1913.

<sup>49</sup> *Proceedings of the Parliament of South Australia* (hereafter cited as *SA Parliamentary Papers*), 1863, 29, 1-2.

pipes did not connect the suburban areas until much later.<sup>50</sup> A reliable public water supply also brought a major health benefit to the people. In South Australia there were 209 deaths from typhoid in 1866 with a dramatic reduction by 1868. Although further outbreaks of the disease reached peaks in 1882 and 1898, the incidence showed a gradual decline.<sup>51</sup> While, as Philip Woodruff pointed out, sewers or deep drainage in heavily populated areas were the major answer to the problem,<sup>52</sup> clean drinking water was a significant factor in the prevention of typhoid and dysentery in the colony.

As in early Port Adelaide, Williamstown suffered a similar critical shortage of fresh water which was a great disadvantage not only for the town's needs and growth but for ships needing to replenish supplies. In contrast, Fremantle had the advantage of a reliable water supply from a mineral spring supply.<sup>53</sup> For Williamstown water was transported from Melbourne by tanker barge or brought to the town from ponds near the Werribee River to the south-west. In 1864 it was finally piped from a reservoir at Yan Yean, stand-pipes in the streets catering for household use.

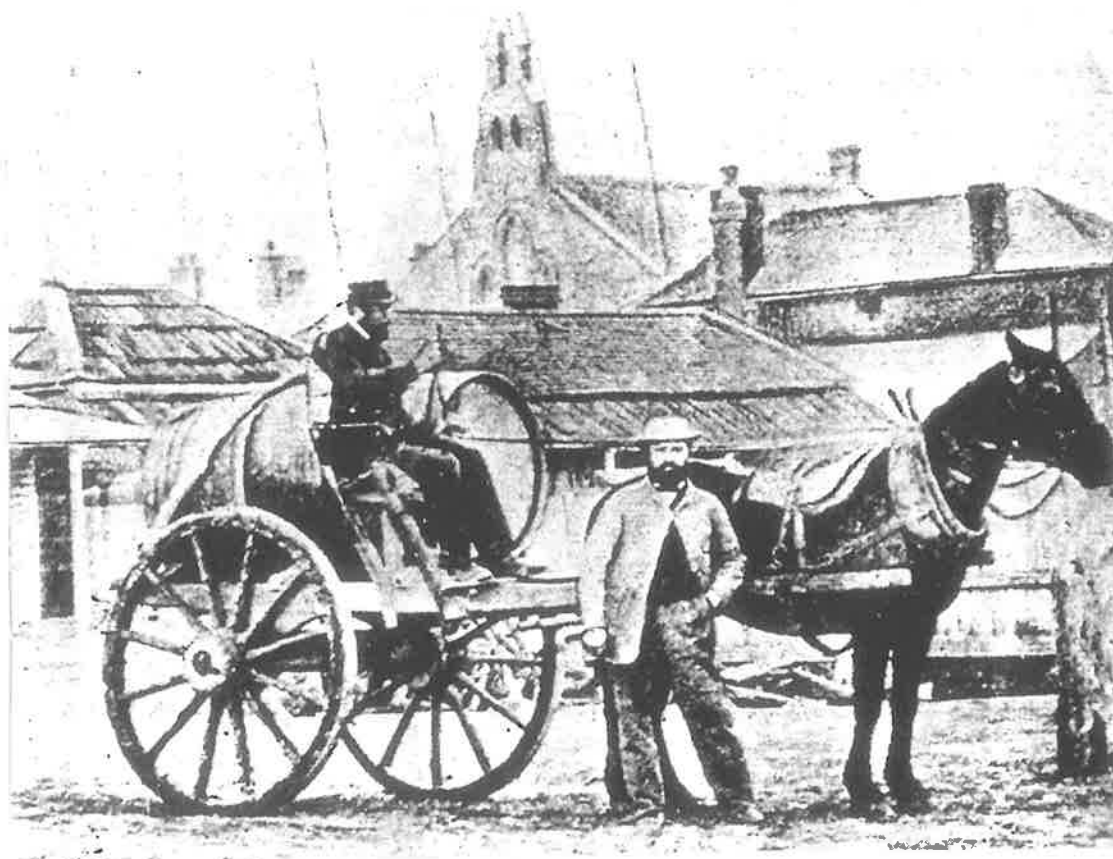
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<sup>50</sup> Katrina McDougall and Elizabeth Vines, *Greater Port Adelaide Heritage Survey*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1989) 7.

<sup>51</sup> Philip Woodruff, *Two Million South Australians*. (Kent Town SA, 1984) 39, 41. See also Marianne Hammerton, *Water South Australia: A History of the Engineering and Water Supply Department*. (Netley SA, 1986) 83. 'The figures spoke for themselves. Adelaide's mortality rate dropped from 23.5 per 1,000 in 1881 to 14.3 per 1,000 after only five years of sewerage. Typhoid had been almost completely eliminated from urban areas'.

<sup>52</sup> Woodruff, 28.

<sup>53</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 3-4.



**Illustration 5**

Water-cart, Port Adelaide, 1860s, with the spire of Wesleyan Methodist Church, St Vincent Street, in background.

Charles Fenner et al (eds), *The Centenary History of South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1936) 224.



While Portonians were establishing their town, the waterfront was developing its own character. The area around the wharves was a service centre for the distribution of people, livestock and goods. Crews released from vessels for a few days in port jostled with travellers staying overnight in the hotels before their journeys to foreign ports or to destinations in the colony. The rowdier activities of the wharfside spilled into the residential area of the Port and in the late 1840s the community was made dramatically aware and wary of the wharf's proximity and its own vulnerability in being part of the port environment. The four police stationed on North Parade adjacent to the wharf were 'often hard pressed to keep law and order, especially with the arrival of new ships'.<sup>54</sup>

Robert Clyne, in his history of the South Australian police force, related an incident in June 1848, when a riot broke out between police and a drunken mob of seamen intent on releasing a man arrested earlier in the day. The foot police had no means of summoning help from Adelaide and barricaded themselves in the police station which was stoned by the rioters. The police emerged with fixed bayonets determined to disperse the mob and in the melee which followed, one man was bayoneted to death. Clyne stated that police charging Europeans with fixed bayonets was unheard of and provoked an immediate outcry.<sup>55</sup> The small police post received little support for their stand. The police

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<sup>54</sup> Robert Clyne, *Colonial Blue: A History of the South Australian Police Force 1836-1916*. (Adelaide, 1987) 101.

<sup>55</sup> Clyne, 101-103.

commissioner and former navy captain, George Frederick Dashwood, expressed horror and accused those involved of rash and hasty behaviour in losing their temper and forbearance which, as police, they were supposed to 'exercise at all times'.<sup>56</sup>

Another riot broke out on New Year's Eve 1849 when 33 vessels were in port and at least 200 sailors crammed the five hotels. After closing time the drunken crews attacked the hotel doors with iron bars before moving on to the ships where they angrily demanded more grog. Deck lights were smashed and the captains of the *Ann Smith* and *Asiatic* defended their ships with firearms while ringing bells and sounding hooters. One casualty from this drastic retaliation was a small boy who was wounded while watching the proceedings from his vantage point on top of some wool bales on the wharf.<sup>57</sup>

The captains eventually turned the seamen away but they spilled into the town's streets thumping on cottage doors and demanding more drink. When the frightened residents refused, the mob broke windows and damaged doors and shutters. Police mingled with the roaming crowd but it was too large to control. Very few at the Port had any sleep that night and the incident must have raised doubt among the townsfolk about their

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<sup>56</sup> Clyne, 103. See also 'Quarterly Report for Commissioner of Police', 20 July 1848 (CSO 1156/1848), cited in Pike, 292. Pike commented 'the police found themselves chasing more absconding sailors every year, thus adding to their own unpopularity at the Port....It came to be an article of faith with many seamen that policemen ought to be assaulted on sight'.

<sup>57</sup> Smith, 1-2.

security in homes so close to the wharves and pubs.<sup>58</sup> Water police were established in the Port in January 1854 but it was the foot police who bore the brunt of town disturbances.

Such incidents had to be accepted to survive in a port town. The port and in many cases the hotels were the livelihood of the townspeople. Men and women needed to live within walking distance of their various jobs related to the wharves and industry, or cooking, cleaning, laundering and ostling at the growing number of public houses. The financial advantages which benefited the whole town outweighed the nuisance element. For example, at one stage during October 1850 there were 54 vessels in port, most for several days. Trade was brisk when officers and seamen came ashore from the ships.<sup>59</sup> Port Adelaide was a thriving port town with *The Register* describing the bustle:

the dense crowd of bullocks, horses, and drays, their dust and sweat besmeared drivers, swearing, halooing, and cracking their long whips, agents hurrying about with papers, Custom-house officers, pilots, and watermen, all actively engaged, innumerable bales of wool, bags of copper ore, and casks being stored and shipped, sailors with their merry yo heave ho! working away at the windlass, hot and breathless new arrivals in their best clothes and black hats, bargaining with boatmen for the landing of their luggage, and the hundred other distractions incidental to this busy port.<sup>60</sup>

Linking the port to its capital was Port Road, still little more than a bush track. Attempts had been made to define it by post and rail fencing but the timber was pilfered for firewood or used to fill the worst holes in the road. It was a busy thoroughfare, as shown in traffic statistics for

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<sup>58</sup> *The Register*, 2 January 1850. See also Smith, 1-2.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, 98.

<sup>60</sup> *The Register*, 2 January 1850.

March 1849 in *The South Australian Government Gazette*. Over 12 working days the road had carried 1553 horse drays, 276 bullock drays, 1288 lighter vehicles, 6204 passengers, 144 horse riders and 737 pedestrians.<sup>61</sup> In the same year the road was described as 'execrable' and heavily laden drays could take up to 12 hours to make the journey one way.<sup>62</sup> In 1851 a user commented, 'there is no regular Road, but the driver goes where he likes and makes a road for himself where he thinks it will be best'.<sup>63</sup> Fortunately, the width of land Light surveyed for the route gave plenty of room for manoeuvring vehicles. Some people walked as noted by Hussey, a contemporary observer who also described travel between the Port and Adelaide.

The communication between the Port and the City was effected mainly by means of spring-carts, with two and sometimes three horses, driven tandem-fashion. These carts were provided with three seats, supposed to hold four persons on each; and the jolting, when heavily laden, can easily be imagined. I have frequently done the journey on foot, and many others did the same - not only to save expense, but because the vehicular accommodation was limited. I have known my mother, who was a weakly woman, ride to town, do her business there, and then walk down to the Port.<sup>64</sup>

Some spring carts, or 'port carts', with names like the *Red Rover* in 1849, carried up to twelve passengers until legislation reduced the number to six passengers for two-wheeled vehicles. They left from Calton's Port Admiral Hotel for Adelaide at half a crown a head.<sup>65</sup> There

<sup>61</sup> *The South Australian Government Gazette*, 1 March 1849, 95, in Pike, 345.

<sup>62</sup> Parson, 66. Normal walking pace is four miles per hour so these trips were extremely slow for the distance of approximately eight miles.

<sup>63</sup> A letter by Mary Meares cited by Mabel Hardy, *History of Woodville South Australia 1837-1874*. Vol. 1. (Woodville, 1960) 14.

<sup>64</sup> Hussey, 56.

<sup>65</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 December 1913. See also J. L. Hoad, *Hotels and Publicans in South Australia 1836-1984*. (Adelaide, 1986) Part 3, 460. Charles Calton ran the Port Admiral Hotel on the north-east corner of Port (later Commercial) Road and St Vincent Street from 1851 to 1860. The hotel is still operating in 1999.

was no protection from the weather and when carts were crowded the ladies complained that their crinolines were 'bent out of shape'.<sup>66</sup> After 1850 the port carts were replaced by omnibuses. The first cart, the *Peter Pry*, advertised that it left, 'the Black Horse in Leigh Street for the Port daily, Sundays excepted'. Others were *The Comet*, the *Royal Admiral Buss*, *Express* and *Eclipse*. The *Express* was pulled by three greys and was 'light in construction...elegant in appearance, with a movable glazed window, a ventilator the whole length of the roof, and an inside lamp'.<sup>67</sup>

In the mid-1850s after the railway was built to the Port, Charles Tanner advertised his conveyances for service between Adelaide and the Port at late night departure times which complemented the train daytime schedule. His service could only be viewed as further progress in transportation to and from the Port.

**Elegance and Safety.**  
 UNEQUALLED PORT CONVEYANCES.  
**TANNER'S**  
 NEW AND SPLENDID FOUR HORSE VEHICLES,  
**THE COMET,**  
 AND  
**THE CRITERION,**  
 NOW RUN DAILY AT THE FOLLOWING HOURS -

The Comet leaves Adelaide at 11 p.m. and 4 a.m.
" " The Port at 9, " 1 "
The Criterion leaves Adelaide at 9 p.m. and 2 a.m.
" " The Port at 11, " 4 "

*The utmost Punctuality observed in Starting.*

*To be properly appreciated these magnificent Conveyances must be seen, when their superiority, both in comfort and safety, over the old Port Carts will be evident at a glance; and the Fares being the same offer every convenience to the Public, without the slightest increase in expense.*

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<sup>66</sup> Hardy, 19. See also Ronald H. Parsons, *Beach Boats, Press Boats and Semaphore*. (Lobethal SA, 1996) 8-9.

<sup>67</sup> Hardy, 19-20.

<sup>68</sup> Parsons, *Beach Boats*, 8.

However much the operators promised safety there were frequent upsets as described by a traveller in 1851: 'we were all turned over in the mud. An omnibus goes twice every day and it always either turns over or sticks fast. Sticking fast or turning over are thought nothing of.'<sup>69</sup>

The mail coaches also carried passengers and both the liveried driver and guard were armed as the route had its share of 'bad characters'. On 4 October 1850 the newspaper carried the headline 'Defeat of a Highwayman' in a report which described an altercation on the Port Road. Returning to Adelaide on horseback after 'disposing of her wares' at the Port, Mrs McCarthy, 'an old colonist of industrious habit', was accosted by 'a ruffian on horseback' who commanded her to 'deliver up her money'. As he grabbed her the resourceful Mrs McCarthy bit into his hand and, holding the reins with her foot, whipped him until he 'began to sing out for quarter'. She continued her journey with earnings intact.<sup>70</sup>

The road was still in poor condition in 1866 when *Bailliere's Gazetteer* noted 'it is in such bad order as to be little used, and bears the unenviable notoriety of being one of the worst kept and most greatly neglected roads in the colony'.<sup>71</sup>

In the western Australia colony the road between Fremantle and Perth was a greater handicap. Road travel was arduous and the river

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<sup>69</sup> Hardy, 20.

<sup>70</sup> *The Register*, 4 October 1850, cited in Hardy, 21.

<sup>71</sup> Robert P. Whitworth (ed.), *Bailliere's South Australian Gazetteer and Road Guide*. (1866) 10.

transport schedule meant business transactions could take days to finalise. Fremantle merchants were disadvantaged by the location of all banks and government offices in Perth.<sup>72</sup> During the 1850s however Fremantle's population increased five-fold to 2392 while Perth merely doubled to 2762.<sup>73</sup> By 1854 the rapid growth of Fremantle led to some discussion at a public meeting in Perth that the colony could not support two principal towns and, as argued by Lionel Samson, Fremantle's position as a seaport made it the logical site being 'more like the capital than Perth'.<sup>74</sup> The merchant's pride in his town however was not sufficient reason to move the seat of government.

The Port Adelaide to Adelaide route was officially under constant repair by the Central Road Board which had been set up in 1849. Almost 20 years later a 14 foot width was finally macadamised. The state of the road only minimally deterred traffic and more people began to view the Port as a town where investment in business and a home could be established.

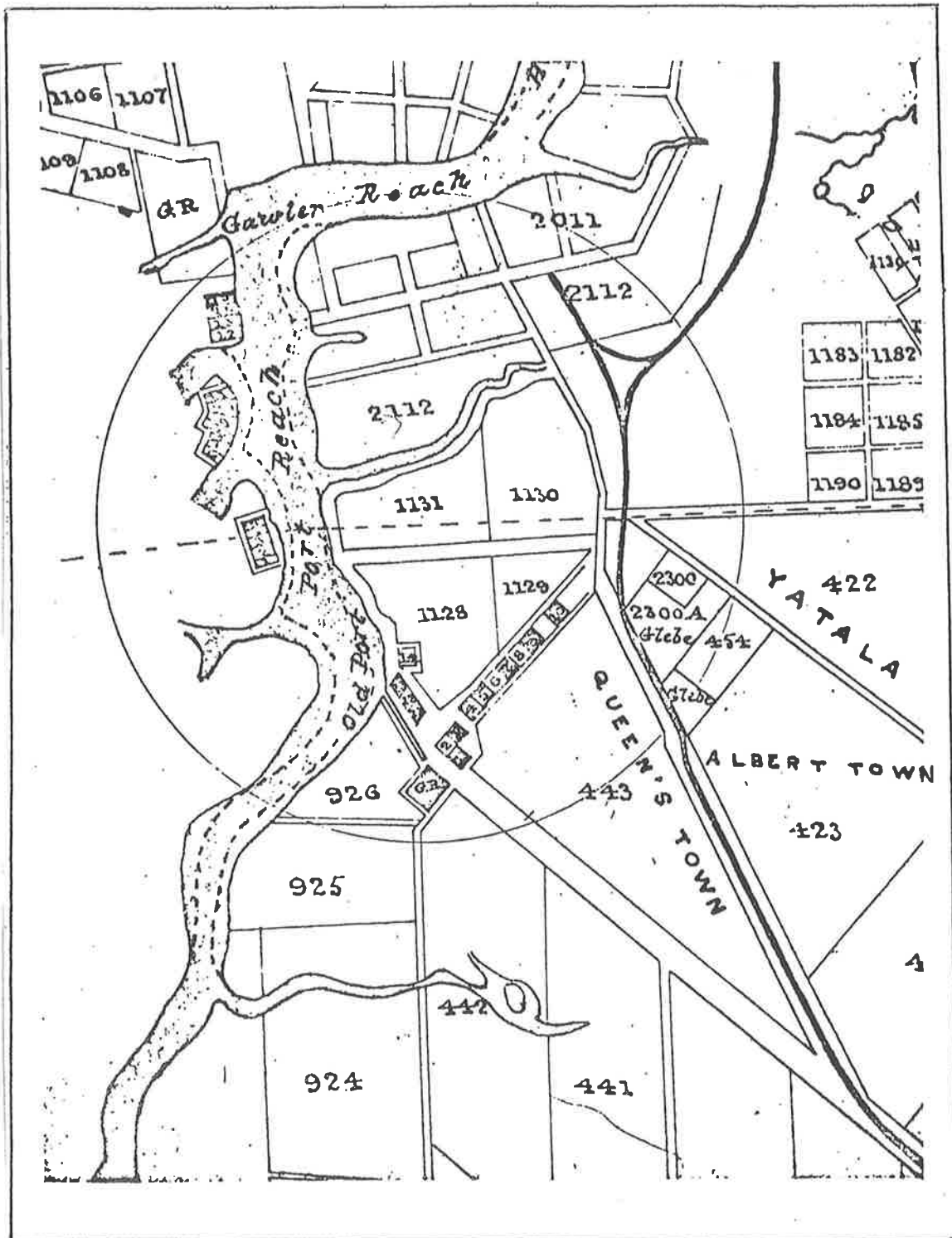
Private land ownership at the Port was substantially controlled by the South Australian Company but on 13 October 1850 a trust held by Captain John Hart and others auctioned its acquired land at Port Adelaide on Section 2112 (134 acres excluding eight acres set aside for St Paul's

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<sup>72</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 21. The first bank in Fremantle, the National Bank of Australasia, was opened 37 years after settlement in 1866.

<sup>73</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 18, 22. In 1848 Fremantle had a population of 426 compared with Perth's 1148.

<sup>74</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 21-22.



**Illustration 6**

Initial subdivision of the Port Adelaide area, 1840s-1860s.  
The main Port Land Company land is Section 2112.

A. I. Diamond, 'Aspects of the History of the South Australian Company',  
M.A. Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1955, 295.



Church and its Glebe) and Section 704 (80 acres). This move by the group, which eventually emerged as the Port Land Company, effectively broke the South Australian Company monopoly on available land at the Port and enabled development to take place south of St Vincent Street.

One of the buyers was George Selth Coppin, a well known comedian and actor, who purchased Allotment 64 of Section 2112 on the south-west corner of Port Road and St Vincent Street to construct a hotel, the White Horse Cellars Inn, which included a theatre. Arriving in the colony from Melbourne in 1846, Coppin opened the Royal Exchange Hotel in Hindley Street in 1849 and the next year, in partnership with John Lazar, rebuilt the Queen's Theatre in Adelaide and renamed it the Royal Victoria Theatre.<sup>75</sup> Such was the progress at the Port that expanding his interests there made good business sense at that time with the theatre company able to play alternate evenings at the two theatres.

Accounts of the construction of the White Horse Cellars Inn provide good comparative descriptions of the swampy hollow from which it emerged and the grandeur of the final structure.<sup>76</sup> There were considerable problems with the site as the newspaper reported.

The site was a water-hole. The builders had to cut a hole in the embankment in the Port-road to drain the water out while the foundations were got in. During the course of the building an accident was met with, the scaffolding giving way on the west side and three men getting hurt. One laborer fell from the top to the bottom but alighted on a soft spot - thanks to the presence of much mud there....The White

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<sup>75</sup> E. D. Alexander Bagot, *Coppin the Great: Father of the Australian Theatre*. (Melbourne, 1965) 139.

<sup>76</sup> Designed by Adelaide architect William Weir, it was built by Walter Smith, a Portonian timber merchant and building contractor.

Horse Cellars were splendidly built according to those days. It comprised a theatre equal to anything of the kind in Adelaide.<sup>77</sup>

On 17 March 1851, Coppin opened 'the splendid bar for the accommodation of the inhabitants and Visitors to this Vicinity'.<sup>78</sup> The planned opening night for the theatre on 16 June was postponed for nine days when the Port Land Company embankment was breached, causing severe flooding in the area west of Port Road and leaving many Portonians cleaning up damage to their homes rather than attending the new theatre.

There was some division in the town about the theatre and drinking establishments and Coppin attracted disapproval from at least one townsman. William Giles, South Australian Company manager, opposed the Port Theatre and expressed some strong words in one of his numerous sermons on the moral danger of such an establishment: 'if that den of iniquity, Mr. Coppin's theatre, were to catch fire, I would refuse the use of the company's fire engine to put it out....what is more, any man in the company's employ assisting to extinguish the flames would be instantly dismissed'.<sup>79</sup>

On 25 June 1851, Coppin wittily explained his reasons for building at the Port and replied to Giles with lines from an opening duologue performed with Lazar.

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<sup>77</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 May 1887.

<sup>78</sup> Bagot, 140.

<sup>79</sup> Bagot, 142.

- Lazar - Well, now, old fellow, may I beg to ask  
What moved you first to undertake the task?
- Coppin - Because I daily saw that on each side  
The port's dimensions were extended wide;  
And that its fast-increasing population  
Must stand in need sometimes of recreation.  
Nor be compelled in nobblers sense to drown,  
Or spend their ready cash in trips to town.  
We need not urge in this enlightened age  
The use of a well-regulated stage,  
By which more wholesome lessons may be taught  
Than dreamt of in the vulgar bigot's thought,  
Whose godly zeal, or, rather, worldly ire,  
Would fain see every playhouse well on fire.<sup>80</sup>

In contrast to Giles' fervour for theatre destruction, John Sweeney, a later mayor, remembered that it was 'quite a nice little place' and described it

with dress circle and stageboxes, pit and gallery and I remember seeing such performers as Madam Lee and her talented daughters, old Harry Leslie of Christy Minstrel fame...and many others, all clever actors of their day, graced the boards of the local theatre.<sup>81</sup>

The interior was designed by Mr Hillier from the Strand Theatre in London, who had designed the interior of Coppin and Lazar's theatre in Adelaide. The building was lighted, a journalist noted, by 'a magnificent chandelier, and reminded one of the Adelphi, in London; and, according to the critics of the day, both building and performance would have done credit to that great metropolis'.<sup>82</sup> Port Adelaide was indeed progressing. Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' was one of Coppin's first-year productions and ladies' nights were arranged at the theatre 'once a week'.<sup>83</sup>

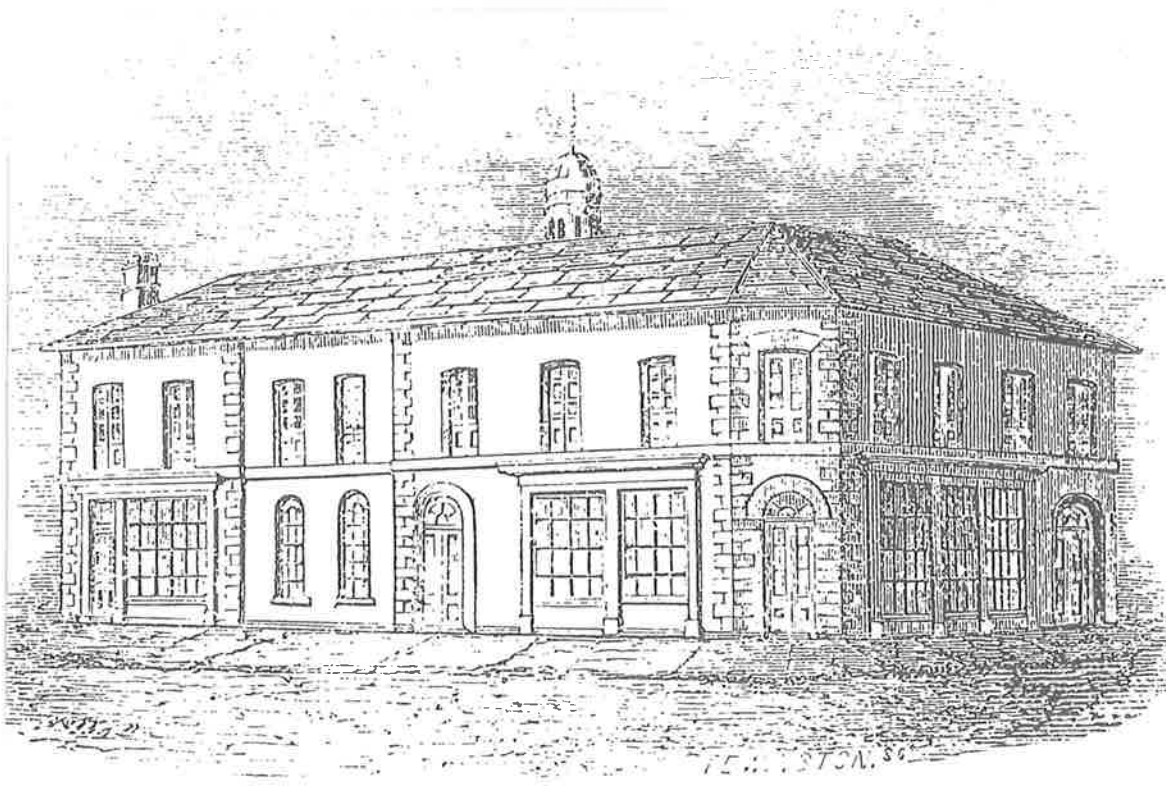
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<sup>80</sup> 'Port Adelaide in the Fifties: Port Theatre', *The Compass*, August 1906, 80-81. A nobbler was a mixture of spirits and water and also a glass size in nineteenth-century Australia.

<sup>81</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 December 1913.

<sup>82</sup> *The Compass*, August 1906, 80.

<sup>83</sup> *Reminiscences of Miss Annie Jane Duncan*, Book 1, 1934, Mortlock Library of South Australiana, PRG 532, 48. Annie, the daughter of Dr Handasyde Duncan, the immigration agent and health officer from 1854 to 1878, recalled her father mentioning these evenings in the theatre opposite their home in St Vincent Street. The substantial limestone and brick residence built for the health officer did not escape the problems faced by other housing. Annie described the big cellar underneath 'the office', as eventually 'half full of water' and 'the haunt of rats which made unheard of noises at night, and often did some damage'. The house was 6-8 feet above the level of the embankment street. About 1877 the roadway was further raised and the occupants then had to go down three steps to the front door.



### Illustration 7

White Horse Cellars Inn, Port Adelaide, 1852.

Brian J. Samuels, *The Port Adelaide Centre: Past and Present*.  
(Port Adelaide SA, 1987) 47.

Brian Samuels stated that Coppin, with his hotel and theatre established, 'sought to foster further custom by erecting a lookout on that building and a relaying semaphore on the Peninsula beach so that ships' masters could communicate with their vessels and, more importantly,' Samuels astutely noted, 'migrant-packed ships could signal their arrival to his hotel'.<sup>84</sup>

Coppin built another hotel next to his semaphore station at Scarborough on the Lefevre Peninsula and advertised 'free transport from the White Horse Cellars to Coppin's new Semaphore Hotel and Marine Thermopolium on Government Esplanade'.<sup>85</sup> The hot sea baths and hotel were 'in a style equal to the Houses of the far-famed Watering Places of the Mother Country' and Coppin had the grounds 'laid out...after the plan of the Surry Zoological Gardens' with the intention of converting them 'into a beautiful South Australian menagerie...as soon as circumstances will permit'.<sup>86</sup> The site of the semaphore and the adjoining Semaphore Hotel changed the name of Scarborough by popular usage to 'the Semaphore'.

In the Port, nine hotels were serving customers by late 1851. Coppin's White Horse Cellars Inn was diagonally opposite the Port Admiral on the Commercial Road - St Vincent Street intersection. On

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<sup>84</sup> Samuels, "Community", 15.

<sup>85</sup> Bagot, 147.

<sup>86</sup> Ronald Parsons, *Beach Boats*, back cover.

North Parade was Prince's (sometimes known as Prince's Pier Hotel, opposite Prince's Wharf on the south-east corner of Mundy Street), the British (south-west corner of Nelson Street), the Port and the Ship Inn.<sup>87</sup> The Commercial was on the south-east corner of Commercial Road and Divett Street, The Carpenters' Arms, on the south-west corner of St Vincent Street and Robe Streets and the Britannia on the south-east corner of McLaren Road and Lipson Street.<sup>88</sup>

Coppin took an interest in town affairs. At meetings during May and July 1851 to discuss the establishment of an Institute and library, he promised the free use of 'his large and valuable library' and the Freemasons' hall (then located at his theatre), until more permanent accommodation could be considered. The Institute opened with great optimism on 31 July 1851, in the 'large and handsome room near the theatre' but in the months ahead there were dramatic changes in the life of the colony and its port and with the resultant lack of support, the library closed after only nine months.<sup>89</sup>

The reduction in readers was caused by a flood of local men heading with other South Australians for central Victoria when gold was discovered at Clunes near Ballarat.<sup>90</sup> A great exodus of men left in late

<sup>87</sup> Prince's Wharf was constructed for the English and Australian Company copper smelter.

<sup>88</sup> Of these original buildings only the Port Admiral and the White Horse Cellars Inn remain, the Port Admiral still licensed. The British, Commercial and Britannia remain in business in rebuilt premises on the same sites as does the Golden Port Tavern on the site of the former Carpenters' Arms.

<sup>89</sup> Meleng, 15-16.

<sup>90</sup> Meleng, 14. The initial rush to dig gold left only 11 adults, and a boy as Institute subscribers with some of these remaining readers also later departing for Victoria.

1851 and the effect of the gold rush on the young colony was devastating; nearly a third of the adult males left and 'by the end of January 1852 two-thirds of the Colony's supply of coin had gone to Victoria, the frightened bankers were stopping credit, and general insolvency seemed imminent'.<sup>91</sup>

Coppin, 'caught without reserves in the sudden storm', had his interests placed in receivership in early 1852.<sup>92</sup> He was one of the many entrepreneurs who faced financial ruin as business slumped badly throughout the colony. The court allowed Coppin to retain his theatrical wardrobe and he and his family quietly retreated to Victoria where he set about establishing a new business.<sup>93</sup>

The effect of the gold rush on employment at the Port was paradoxical. The town was depleted of manpower while the need for shipping increased as more South Australian fortune hunters sought passage to Port Phillip Bay. On Saturday 10 January 1852 eleven vessels advertised passage to Melbourne. If cabins were full, passengers crowded into steerage and some even paid to travel on deck. Ships sailed every day with their captains demanding increasingly higher fares.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Fenner, 80.

<sup>92</sup> Bagot, 150. *The Port Adelaide News*, 6 May 1887, recalled that 'the theatre did not pay' so it is possible that the theatre was in financial trouble before the banks stopped credit.

<sup>93</sup> Bagot, 160. See also S. Janet South, *George Selth Coppin*. (Sorrento Vic, 1994) 6. South stated that 'although not legally obliged to do so, he went back to Adelaide in January, 1854, and paid all his creditors in full'. *The Register*, 29 July 1861, cited in Samuels, "Community", 36, noted that Coppin made another brief return to the Adelaide stage to 'tremendous applause' in 1861 while on tour with a new acting company.

<sup>94</sup> Hussey, 110.

The use of larger ships and crowding in the harbour caused problems and John F. Fawcett, master of the Liverpool ship *Harriet Humble*, commented in 1853 that 'This is a most unsafe port for large vessels'.<sup>95</sup> Tonnage of ships was increasing as large clippers took over the route with passengers eager to reach the goldfields in the shortest possible time. The harbour pilot warned shipping not to sail up the river until the tide was favourable. At the wharves at low tide the water was only ten feet deep so most ships bottomed on the mud and were so crowded together they leant on adjacent vessels. Fawcett witnessed the bowsprit of one ship settle on the stern of the adjacent ship and, as the tide raced out, the ship lifted with the sound of breaking timber. Fawcett's 18 man crew went ashore to the row of hotels along the wharf but 11 deserted, presumably to make their way to the goldfields, and he had to pay the inflated sum of £40 each for new seamen to sail his ship to Chile.<sup>96</sup>

Many of the town women were used to their men being away at sea but now the majority were left to fend for themselves and their children as the remaining townsmen left for central Victoria. On the wharves any able-bodied man who sought a job found one and a new, very mobile group, not familiar to the port, worked on the docks. Cargoes of local produce such as flour, butter, cheese, hams and bacon were shipped to Melbourne to be sold to the diggers at raised prices. The small

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<sup>95</sup> J. Fawcett, 'Voyage of the *Harriet Humble* from Liverpool to Australia', *Nautical Magazine*, 1855, 78, cited in Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance*. (Melbourne, 1966) 197.

<sup>96</sup> Fawcett, 197-198.



community changed. Times were uncertain and town life was different. The families had little or no support and the men who were around had little relationship with the town beyond contributing board-money and buying food and drink.

Visitors from ships which called in on their way to Port Phillip added an exotic air to the waterside. Crowded American and British ships arrived at the port from 'Hongkong' with men heading for the goldfields.<sup>97</sup> Those Chinese who disembarked in Victoria were charged a 'poll tax' of £10 and to avoid this cost (which was equal to their fare from China) many Chinese landed at Port Adelaide or Guichen Bay, in the south-east of the colony, and made their way overland.<sup>98</sup> There were four barques from China at McLaren Wharf in 1856 and in previous years groups had camped near Levi's Wharf, north-east of the town, before starting their long trek on foot to the diggings.<sup>99</sup>

Having failed to amass fortunes, a large number of South Australians including Portonians with some money saved, returned home in 1853 and 1854.<sup>100</sup> In the Port, as elsewhere in the colony, land sales resumed.<sup>101</sup> An

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<sup>97</sup> Pike, 459.

<sup>98</sup> Margaret P. Rendell, 'The Chinese in South Australia before 1860', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia: South Australian Branch*, Vol. 54, 1953, 24, cited in John Dallwitz and Susan Marsden, *Robe Historical Interpretation Study*. (Adelaide, 1983) 15. The tax was imposed under the *Victorian Act* (39 of 1855) which was designed to discourage immigration in response to the anti-Chinese feelings on the goldfields. Over 16 000 gold seekers from China landed in Robe on Guichen Bay from the mid 1850s (10 154 from 17 January to 3 May 1857) and in response to public opinion and fears about Chinese immigration the government in South Australia restricted Chinese immigration from late 1857 to 1861. See also *The Register*, 13 May 1857.

<sup>99</sup> *The Register*, 21 April 1927.

<sup>100</sup> John Cashen, 'Owners of Labour', in Eric Richards, *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*. (Netley SA, 1986) 111.

<sup>101</sup> Hussey, 110.

effort was made to re-establish an Institute and, with donated books and magazines, a weatherboard building in Walter Smith's timber yard became the Mechanics' Institute. It was situated on the corner of Nile and Mildred Streets at the rear of the Port Hotel. Interest by subscribers was high but the committee could not acquire a large enough supply of books and the venture failed in December 1855.<sup>102</sup>

The number of ships, and the tonnage of cargo handled, more than doubled between 1847 and 1855.<sup>103</sup> Port and colony were approaching adulthood with growth and progress reflected in the colony's own army unit, in colonial self government in 1856 and in the continuing incorporation of towns.

Port Adelaide was given corporate status on 27 December 1855 and on 8 January 1856, at the Ship Inn, a public meeting 'of persons entitled to be placed on the citizens roll of Port Adelaide' was held to establish a town council.<sup>104</sup> Debate about how members were to be represented, the method of election of the mayor by representative or popular vote, and the contests between proportional, exhaustive or 'first past the post' voting, all reflected a lively interest in the political process. Four men were nominated for mayor and Captain Edward French and Edward Gascoyne Collinson tied with 18 votes each. The chairman of the meeting,

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<sup>102</sup> Meleng, 14-15.

<sup>103</sup> Michael Page, *Port Adelaide and its Institute 1851-1979*. (Adelaide, 1981), 31.

<sup>104</sup> 'Port Adelaide, Past and Present: Its History and History Makers', *Port Adelaide News*, 22 December 1893.

William James, would not give a casting vote and a second vote was called with French, a master mariner, elected the first mayor of Port Adelaide.<sup>105</sup>

Until January 1861 meetings of council were held at the White Horse Cellars Inn which, like the Ship Inn, had a central role in the social life of the Port, having a number of large public meeting-rooms. The court house was used for council meetings for a time and the first office leased to the Port Adelaide Corporation was burnt down. A building on the north-west corner of Lipson and Divett Streets became known as the town hall but in the 1860s met the same fate. All early council records were destroyed in the fire.<sup>106</sup>

The Port representative for the first South Australian House of Assembly in 1857 was John Hart, later three times premier of South Australia. A man of diverse colonial financial interests, Hart had established a flour mill at the Port in 1855 after realising that the steady grain market to New South Wales could be extended to the more profitable commodity of milled flour. Hart imported machinery from England and, with limestone from Yorke Peninsula, built his own mill which still survives as a building in 1999.

By 1860 Hart was employing 30 men and the increase in exports to

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<sup>105</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 December 1893.

<sup>106</sup> *Review of the City of Port Adelaide*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1901) 3.

the eastern colonies and overseas and the profits from the mill furthered Hart's wealth. His business successes were reflected in an elegant residence, 'Glanville Hall', built of limestone in 1856 on an 80 acre property on the Lefevre Peninsula.<sup>107</sup> In 1865, the year that he first served as premier, a tower and a billiard room were added to 'Glanville Hall'. Brian Samuels described it as 'a home where Governors were entertained, hunt clubs met, the business of government was debated, a large establishment of servants was kept up, and a family of seven children reared. It was and is unique in the Port District. No other Portonian before or since has attained the premiership...and built such a gracious home on a large estate'.<sup>108</sup>

A timber bridge, the 'Port Bridge', was built in 1859 across the river at the western end of St Vincent Street and with the completion of a jetty at the Semaphore the following year, Lefevre Peninsula gained a much-needed link with the inner port area. The bridge became known more appropriately as the 'Hart Street Bridge' being at the eastern end of Hart Street which led to the town from 'Glanville Hall'. The areas on both sides of the bridge were used as camp sites by Aborigines and Annie Duncan recollected that in her childhood:

near the bridge and Capt. Hart's mill was an embankment where the only blades of grass ever seen in the Port used sometimes to grow and every year the few remaining blacks used to camp with their dogs and their picaninnies in 'wurlies',

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<sup>107</sup> Page, 29-30. 'Glanville Hall' was named after Hart's mother, Mary Glanville. Now a Senior Citizens' Club, the house can still be seen today at Semaphore South. The limestone, from near Port Vincent on the Yorke Peninsula, was brought across the gulf by sailing barges which unloaded into drays at low tide on the western side of the river nearest the building site.

<sup>108</sup> Samuels, 'John Hart and Glanville Hall', *Portonian*, December 1988, 15.

which were only wind shelters built up of branches and twigs and anything they could collect. They squatted inside, made their fires and did whatever cooking they were in the habit of doing, themselves wrapped up in opossum or kangaroo skin rugs.<sup>109</sup>

In the mid-1850s along North Parade from Hart's Mill a number of businesses were run by women.<sup>110</sup> John Sweeney recalled that Mrs Hayman managed the Ship Inn, Mrs Malin was baker and pastrycook, and Mrs Blake kept a fancy goods and stationery store which included a circulating library which helped to fill the need for town readers after the closure of the Mechanics' Institute. Other women performed jobs traditionally thought to be in the male domain. Eliza Butler was a bootmaker and Henry Todd, the North Parade barber, employed his daughter Betsy as an assistant. Sweeney considered her probably 'the first lady barber in South Australia'.<sup>111</sup> Later, in 1879, Miss M. Pearce, one of South Australia's earliest women photographers, opened a studio in St Vincent Street 'next to the Church of England'.<sup>112</sup>

The customs house, which included the harbour master's residence,<sup>113</sup> was at the eastern end of North Parade on the corner of Commercial

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<sup>109</sup> Alfred A. Lendon, 'Handasyde Duncan, M.D. (1839-1878) and Early Port Adelaide'. Mortlock Library of South Australiana, PRG 128/12/4 (Typescript, 1932), 45. The grasses were bulrushes 'which grew everywhere in the sandhills' and the Aborigines 'used to split these reeds and make mats and baskets'.

<sup>110</sup> John Sweeney's reminiscences provided a pen picture of North Parade, *Port Adelaide News*, 16 January 1914.

<sup>111</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 January 1914.

<sup>112</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 February 1879. See also 'Port Adelaide's Early Photographers', *Portonian*, June 1997, 14.

<sup>113</sup> Page, 29. The Lipson family moved from town when the harbour master's residence at the new port was built near the wharf. It was the first substantial house in Port Adelaide and featured a garden and a piano 'which excited great admiration in a community struggling to create a reasonable lifestyle'.

Road, with the police station and the post office alongside. Sweeney

remembered:

next in order came Sawtell's, jeweller and nautical instruments; Teakle, grocer; Port Hotel, proprietor...Blackler....Menpes, draper...Crocker and Hamilton, drapers; then a shop I cannot place; Jas. Grosse, ironmonger and grocer. It was here that Mr. Scarfe first commenced business....Ship Inn...H. Ranford, butcher; Mrs. Malin, baker and pastrycook...Eliza Butler, bootmaker; and then a chemist shop on the corner.... You will note that the requirements of the town were well catered for along this line of frontage.<sup>114</sup>

Progress and change were rapid, and communication improved between Adelaide and its port with the installation of up-to-the-minute technology. Rivalry developed between private enterprise and the government when, as a private venture, James Macgeorge linked the two business centres by the 'South Australian Magnetic Telegraph' on 26 November 1855. *The Register* commented, 'yesterday was rendered remarkable in our local annals by the operation for the first time in South Australia, of the electric telegraph - Mr. James Macgeorge having commenced the transmission of messages to and from the Port on the wire recently erected by him'.<sup>115</sup> His earlier offer to sell the imported apparatus to the government and to erect the line had been declined. The government refused his application to run the line along Port Road but, after negotiations with the Adelaide and Hindmarsh councils and various land owners, Macgeorge acquired a 'somewhat circuitous route to the Port'.<sup>116</sup> When a government telegraph service between the Port and Adelaide was proposed, Macgeorge petitioned parliament, arguing that

<sup>114</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 November 1913.

<sup>115</sup> *The Register*, 27 November 1855. See also *The Register*, 6 November, 3 December 1855.

<sup>116</sup> *SA Parliamentary Papers*, 1855-1856, 64.

'competition between the Government and private individuals is injurious, and ought to be avoided'. He suggested that the government leave his line and use its resources to link Adelaide with, for example, Gawler Town, Port Elliot or Cape Jarvis where a submarine cable could connect Kangaroo Island.<sup>117</sup> His reasoning was to no avail. On 18 February 1856 the rival government line opened to Port Adelaide with an office in the customs house, an extension to Semaphore and lower charges. Macgeorge steadily lost business and finally sold his line to Elder Smith and Company.<sup>118</sup>

More engineering development followed when on 21 April the government-owned railway opened to public traffic.<sup>119</sup> Barely 27 years after George Stephenson had demonstrated his *Rocket* in England, the transfer of nineteenth-century technology placed steam locomotion in this Antipodean corner to the pride of its citizens.

From the beginning of settlement some means of transport other than road vehicles had been intended. Light had surveyed a wide access to the port allowing space for a canal alongside Port Road. The railway age had overtaken barge transport and a South Australian Colonial Railway

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<sup>117</sup> *SA Parliamentary Papers*, 1855-1856, 64.

<sup>118</sup> *SA Parliamentary Papers*, 1884, 191, 6. See also D. A. Cumming, and G. Moxham, *They Built South Australia: Engineers, Technicians, Manufacturers, Contractors and Their Work*. (Adelaide, 1986) 135. Elder Smith sold the line to the government which dismantled it in the early 1870s after Charles Todd completed the Overland Telegraph Line. See also *The Register*, 1 January 1857. McDougall and Vines, *Port Adelaide State Heritage Area: Existing Condition, Assessment and Recommendations*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1992) 71, stated that in 1867 a bluestone telegraph station, designed by Thomas English, the commissioner of public works, was built in North Parade. Macgeorge was involved with other projects in Port Adelaide, the main one as architect of the Congregational Church built in 1868.

<sup>119</sup> Hardy, 24.

Company was formed as early as 1840 to look at the possibility of constructing a single-line, horse-drawn railway along Port Road.<sup>120</sup>

The project by an English group, the 'Adelaide City and Port Railway Company', was planned under the direction of H. W. Parker. At the Port a Railway Hotel was constructed in anticipation of the railway from Adelaide terminating outside the hotel.<sup>121</sup> In March 1850 the scheme was abandoned as unworkable due to proposed government tolls and the name of the Railway Hotel was changed to the Port Admiral.

A further attempt was made to establish a rail link using steam power on a new route separate from Port Road. This scheme was abandoned but in 1851 a select committee was set up to re-study such a proposal. It recommended that the government construct the railway. The *Railway Act* (No. 1 of 1851) was passed on 3 October that year. George Elder Junior was appointed chairman of a 'Board of Undertakers of the Adelaide City and Port Railway', a body of five men chosen to execute the work on behalf of the government. They too rejected ideas of horse-drawn power in favour of steam and sent to England for the necessary equipment and rolling stock of passenger carriages and goods wagons.

The Board's broader vision of establishing the line on a new route required buying back land. Many owners were difficult to trace and

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<sup>120</sup> Hardy, 21.

<sup>121</sup> Jack Royans, 'The Adelaide City and Port Railway: Its Construction and Cost', *Flinders Journal of History and Politics: The Port Adelaide Issue*. Vol. 12, 21-22.



others demanded exorbitant compensation. The years of exodus to the goldfields put the project on hold until the workforce returned.

In November 1855 three locomotives, each costing £2430, arrived on the brig *Theodore*. The names *Victoria*, *Albert* and *Adelaide* were placed on the engines 'in handsome brass characters'.<sup>122</sup> On 1 February 1856 No. 1 engine, *Adelaide*, headed from the Port to Alberton on the first of many free runs which successfully tested the track under the observation of B. H. Babbage, the local chief engineer.<sup>123</sup> A week later the same engine with 12 carriages and trucks made the trip to Adelaide. A more official run from Adelaide was organised for 8 March when members of the Legislative Assembly and other prominent citizens travelled in carriages pulled by No. 2 engine, *Victoria*.<sup>124</sup> The train reached speeds of 17-miles-an-hour and made Port Adelaide in good time but on the way back it derailed just past Woodville and had to be jacked back on the line.<sup>125</sup>

After further trials, a formal opening of the railway by the governor, Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell, took place on 19 April 1856 with, *The Observer* reported, a 'splendid *déjeuner*' laid out in the new store of the South Australian Company at McLaren Wharf for 'the

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<sup>122</sup> Hardy, 22. See also Malcolm Thompson, *"Rails through Swamp and Sand": A History of the Port Adelaide Railway*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1988) 10. The locomotives were designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and manufactured by Fairbairn of Manchester. A fourth engine, *Australia*, was proposed but never acquired.

<sup>123</sup> Langmead, 34. The railway was a broad gauge line of five feet three inches.

<sup>124</sup> Thompson, 10. The train consisted of one first class carriage, two second class carriages and two third class carriages.

<sup>125</sup> Hardy, 24.

wealth, talent and beauty of Adelaide'.<sup>126</sup> The total cost of the project was £203,000 and the line opened on Monday 21 April 1856 with six trains each way on weekdays and two on Sundays. The stops from Port Adelaide were Alberton, Woodville, Bowden and Adelaide.<sup>127</sup>

Landowners near the line complained that sparks from the engines caused grass fires in summer, forcing the Board to buy one chain of all crops bordering the rail to cut fire breaks.<sup>128</sup> Spark arresters were installed on the locomotives but fires continued to cause concern. After one farmer blamed passengers throwing cigar ends from the train and produced evidence found on his property, the Board paid him compensation.<sup>129</sup>

Sweeney's memories of the early Port gave an account of his personal experience of travelling by rail.

The third class was a carriage with a roof but no side protection from the weather....After some time the department fixed American leather side blinds. For a ride in such a waggon the fare was 1/- each way, which several years later was reduced to 1/8 return. I do not remember the fares for first and second classes. The first train from Adelaide arrived at the Port about 8 a.m. and the last train left for the city at 6.10 p.m. The intervals between trains were very lengthy, and the trains were hung up at the Port at times for quite a couple of hours. The guards and engine-drivers, who were great at fishing, would adjourn to the wharf opposite the Britannia Hotel, which was a favorite fishing spot, and fill in their spare time in the innocent sport of angling.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>126</sup> *The Observer*, 19 April 1856, in Hardy, 24. See also Ern Kirk, 'To the Port by Rail', Part 3, *Portonian*, September 1976, 10-11.

<sup>127</sup> Samuels, *The Port Adelaide Centre: Past and Present*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1987) 38. When the present train route to Lefevre Peninsula was opened in 1916, the Commercial Road station became 'Port Adelaide' and the station on St Vincent Street became 'Port Dock'. See also Lumbers, 100. The double line to the Port was opened in September 1880.

<sup>128</sup> Hardy, 25.

<sup>129</sup> Hardy, 21-26.

<sup>130</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 December 1913. See also 13 April 1883 when the fares to Adelaide were listed as, single 1/-, return 1/8, monthly 25/-, Adelaide to Woodville 8<sup>d</sup>. and Woodville to Port Adelaide 7<sup>d</sup>.

In the Port another Railway Hotel began business opposite the imposing new Port Adelaide Station.<sup>131</sup>

In 1854 a railway was laid between Sandridge and Melbourne and port activities gradually moved to the eastern side of the Yarra mouth leaving Williamstown mainly to industry and as a boat building and maintenance centre. While it lost the position of chief port, railway workshops and other industries were established in the area which expanded rapidly with steam-driven machinery after the connection of piped water. Ironically 1854 was also the year when the town, so long isolated, was connected to Melbourne by Australia's first telegraph line.<sup>132</sup> Williamstown was not linked to Melbourne by rail until January 1859.<sup>133</sup>

Fremantle like Port Adelaide benefited as a port from the railway. The rail link to Perth and Guildford opened in March 1881 and heralded an upgrading of port facilities. The town changed its focus from High Street and particularly Cliff Street, where merchants had early established their warehouses along the lumpers' and carters' sandy and cumbersome route from the sea jetty at Anglesea Point to the jetty and wharf on the river.<sup>134</sup> A new commercial centre developed near the station at the river end of Cliff Street.

Similarly in Port Adelaide a new town focus developed when the

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<sup>131</sup> Hoad, Part 3, 491.

<sup>132</sup> Evans, 108.

<sup>133</sup> Evans, 104.

<sup>134</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 8.

railway station opened on St Vincent Street. The thoroughfare expanded rapidly, taking over from North Parade the role of main street for shopping and business.<sup>135</sup> While many saw the railway as progress there was a contrary outcome to the new service. The convenience of rail encouraged people to go further afield and by 1879 the local newspaper was reporting storekeepers' complaints that residents of the Port walked past their shops which were laden with 'all one could need' and travelled to Adelaide to buy similar goods at dearer prices. The article continued, 'The crowded state of the Saturday night trains from the Port to Adelaide has become a matter of notoriety. Port Adelaide and its suburbs seem to "pour themselves out" to visit the city, and hundreds of pounds which in justice should be spent among the local tradesmen are carried away to town'.<sup>136</sup>

The people of Adelaide however were hardly anxious to discover the delights of Port Adelaide in return, except perhaps at the annual New Year's Day regatta on the river. They regarded the town as disagreeable, a view echoed by J. D. Woods, who expressed surprise at a festively decorated Port Adelaide during a visit by Prince Alfred, the first Duke of Edinburgh in February 1868.

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<sup>135</sup> 'The Memories of Captain Andrew Walter Todd', *Portonian*, September 1995, 6.

<sup>136</sup> *Port Adelaide News. Shipping & Commercial Advertiser* (hereafter cited as *Port Adelaide News*), 17 May 1879. See also *Port Adelaide News*, March 1904, when the same complaint was still being heard in the paper. 'Adelaide has drawn away from the Port a great deal too much of the business which legitimately belongs to the waterside establishments....Its shops, could they rely upon the custom they ought to get, are in a position to supply everything anybody wants, but it is disheartening to lay in goods for customers who pass by shop doors to buy in Adelaide identical lines at higher prices than they would pay in the Port'.

Those who are accustomed to see that extremely disagreeable but prosperous seaport town in its working dress could scarcely recognise it in its holiday attire. The good people who are doomed to reside in that very unfashionable watering place had evidently determined to outdo Glenelg in festive decoration.<sup>137</sup>

However Woods admitted that 'The Port, although by no means a fine town, contains many really handsome buildings, and a large number of extensive and substantial warehouses. There are also many fine hotels'.<sup>138</sup>

It was disappointing for Portonians when authorities in Adelaide arranged for H.M.S. *Galatea*, on which the prince was captain, to anchor off Glenelg in preference to the official port. The Port Adelaide councillors sent a deputation to plead their case on board when it arrived at Holdfast Bay. The Portonians were unable to change the official decision,<sup>139</sup> but with great diplomacy it was decided that the prince having 'made his public entry at Glenelg...was to take his departure viâ Port Adelaide'.<sup>140</sup>

In 1885 there was still competition between Glenelg and Port Adelaide over which should be the port of call for mail steamers. The Port journalists were bitter in their comments regarding their rival but one seemed in need of a history lesson when he described Glenelg as 'that insignificant corner of South Australia where Capt. Cook unfortunately

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<sup>137</sup> *Port Adelaide since 1856: 125th Anniversary*. (1981) 8. The prince laid the foundation stone of the Sailors' Home at the eastern end of St Vincent Street on 18 February 1868 and personally donated £50 towards the building fund. The home was opened by Governor Sir Anthony Musgrave on 16 January 1875 with accommodation for 40 men and an aim to 'provide for the moral and intellectual welfare and improvement of such seamen'.

<sup>138</sup> J. D. Woods, *A Narrative of the Visit of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh K.G. to South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1868) 108, in Samuels, "Community", 42.

<sup>139</sup> Woods, 8, in Samuels, "Community", 42

<sup>140</sup> John Milner and Oswald W. Brierly, *The Cruise of H.M.S. Galatea, Captain H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., in 1867-1868*. (London, 1869) 200.

hoisted his flag on an old gum tree'.<sup>141</sup>

Most well run ports had a medical officer to assist in the frequent injuries incurred at such labour intensive work places and also to enforce quarantine rules. The residents benefited from these appointments with the available medical assistance in their town. Peter Wright stated that the 'first medical man, Dr Coutts, who arrived in the colony in 1839...was in attendance at my birth'.<sup>142</sup> In most towns at that time a woman was fortunate if a midwife was available to assist in the delivery of her child. Health services in Port Adelaide in the mid-1850s were recalled by Sweeney. Local doctors were remembered as kind and attentive sometimes supplying food from their own home for patients in need.<sup>143</sup>

Sweeney recalled the doctors' means of travel and the activities of the medical men around the town as observed by a boy. Although the population of the Port was comparatively small, the district they served covered a large area including Semaphore, Alberton, Queenstown and Yatala. Drs Todman, Forwood, and Tripe made their visits on foot. Dr Duncan, the health officer at the Port for 22 years, usually visited his patients in a fly (a one-horse carriage) and Dr Robert Gething 'at times, but very seldom...used a fly with leather springs'. He usually rode on

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<sup>141</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 February 1885.

<sup>142</sup> P. H. Wright, 'Old Time Memories', *Port Adelaide News*, 20 December 1895. See also Lendon, 35-36. Dr Duncan, who practised medicine at Port Adelaide from 1845 to 1878, 'had a predecessor in the shape of Mr. Coates, who had previously been in practice at Hindmarsh'. Coates was at the Port until about 1845. This is most likely the same doctor as Peter Wright's Dr Coutts.

<sup>143</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 January 1914.

horseback, breeding and breaking in the horses himself. Sweeney often watched Gething 'at the rear of Jones Bros., St. Vincent Street, which was then a swamp', running a colt around a ring with a foreleg strapped up to quieten it before saddling up.<sup>144</sup> Sweeney also remembered details of home nursing and early dental treatment in the town which consisted solely of decayed teeth being removed by a blacksmith or a barber.

At that time there was no casualty hospital....any operations were performed at the homes of the patients....those who filled the positions of nurses did the general housework in addition to cooking for the family, and the remuneration for such services was one pound per week....There were no dentists other than old Mr. John Bennett, blacksmith, of Nile Street. He manufactured an instrument something in the shape of a claw hammer, and for a time he acted as tooth-drawer general. Later the late Mr. Weise, who was then a barber, procured a set of forceps, and for quite a number of years carried on that line in conjunction with his other business. Mr. Bennett's charge was 1/- per tooth, Mr. Weise's 2/6, but notwithstanding the increased charge, Mr. Weise soon had all the trade.<sup>145</sup>

A casualty hospital was designed by Edward Angus Hamilton, the colonial architect, in early 1859. Francis (Frank) Reynolds' tender of £117 was accepted in 1862 for fitting out the rooms but it was 1883 before a hospital was constructed in Nile Street.<sup>146</sup> Temporary arrangements were made for many years by converting the female cell at the police station and roofing an area of adjoining exercise yard for hospital use.<sup>147</sup> A midwife, Mrs Turner, later provided a 'Lying-in Home' in Wright Street and advertised in the local newspaper, 'Accommodation for ladies. Terms moderate. Medical Attendance if Required. Twelve

<sup>144</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 January 1914. Dr Gething, his wife Jane and six children lived on what became known as 'Gething Corner', the south-east corner of St Vincent Street and Commercial Road.

<sup>145</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 January 1914. In the 1850s wages for nurses, regarded as unskilled workers, were approximately half that of tradesmen.

<sup>146</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 April 1883. The newspaper reported the erection of a 'new Casualty Hospital' designed by Edward John Woods and built by J. Williams.

<sup>147</sup> Flightpath Architects and SACON Heritage Unit, *Port Adelaide Police Station, Courthouse and Casualty Hospital: Conservation Report*. (Adelaide, 1992) 142.

years experience in the colony'.<sup>148</sup> To complete life's services to Portonians, a specialised 'Funeral Establishment' began business in the late 1850s, advertising:

R. Carr Undertaker  
St Vincent-street, Port Adelaide  
If you want your funerals neatly, cheaply, & respectably  
performed, you must employ an undertaker.<sup>149</sup>

Before this time some carpenters in the town combined the undertaker role with that of coffin-maker, filling a gap in services as Mrs Blake had done with her shop library when the Institute closed in late 1855.

The assets of the former Mechanics' Institute had been 'divided in equitable proportions towards the liquidation of various demands' and the collection of books and other property had been handed over to Smith to satisfy his large claim for outstanding rent. Smith's building with its stored library and early records were destroyed in the 1857 fire so a completely new start was necessary and a move made to again re-establish the town's Institute.

The Institute finally reopened on 10 October 1859, again located at the White Horse Cellars Inn after the new owner, Captain Jacob W. Smith, generously offered a room 'until the completion of the new Customs house, when it was confidently expected that the Government would grant a portion of the old building for Institute purposes'.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 August 1888.

<sup>149</sup> *The South Australian Book Almanack for 1860*. (Adelaide, 1860).

<sup>150</sup> Meleng, 15.



A *soirée* marked the occasion of the opening with

the large room in the White Horse Cellars...decorated with flags and densely crowded with ladies and gentlemen. Numbers stood on the balcony in front of the open windows, while a few late comers had to be content with listening to the music from the other side of the street.<sup>151</sup>

The 144 subscribers paid an annual subscription of £1 and it was decided to open the library for two hours daily from four to six o'clock. Mr Magraith offered his services as librarian, without payment, until the committee could afford to employ someone in the position.

The library was well received and well used. In 1862 a deputation from the Port Adelaide United Assistants' Association requested that the Institute be opened on certain nights of the week.<sup>152</sup> The committee decided to allocate £20 for the purpose for one year as soon as the association introduced 15 new subscribers. The committee's condition was fulfilled within a week, 15 new members were enlisted and the Institute opened on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings.

A magazine club, 'which had been in existence for a few years', offered to transfer its collection to the Institute and library books were collected from many sources including the Central Institute in Adelaide.<sup>153</sup> In 1864, the Institute moved into an upstairs room of the town council building on the corner of Lipson and Divett Streets for an annual rent of £5 and later into the old customs house on the North Parade corner.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Meleng, 16.

<sup>152</sup> Page, 67-68. Page suggested that this group was 'a kind of trade union of shop assistants' who could not use the library because of the later closing time of 'commercial establishments'.

<sup>153</sup> Meleng, 15, 17.

<sup>154</sup> Meleng, 17.

After a decade, life was settling down and the townsfolk organised a number of societies and clubs to cater for the diverse interests of the port community. Some of the activities available during the 1850s included a Rifle Corps, Cricket Club, Book Club, Musical Society and Sacred Choral Society.<sup>155</sup> By 1866 there was a 'company of volunteer rifles, a battery of volunteer artillery, and a rowing club' for those interested.<sup>156</sup> The Port Adelaide Rifle Company commanded by Alfred Searcy, and the Port Adelaide Artillery founded by Captains Quin and Simpson, were particularly popular during periods of concern about possible military threats which raised heated debates regarding self defence and an increased interest in munitions.<sup>157</sup>

Activities for Protestant children outside the home were mostly associated with Sunday School but boys from most Portonian families, were given much more freedom to roam than girls and found their own fun, not just fishing and mud-fighting but games with an element of danger. The Commercial Hotel was gutted in the 1857 fire and before it was rebuilt in 1869, a small, presumably derelict, two-roomed brick cottage known as 'Polly Grey's' shared the site. George Hodge mentioned Polly Grey running the Commercial Hotel during the early 1850s.<sup>158</sup> A group of boys including Bob and Willie Mussared, Ashley and Ernest

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<sup>155</sup> Samuels, "Community", 30.

<sup>156</sup> Whitworth, 10.

<sup>157</sup> Page, 109.

<sup>158</sup> Hodge, 3. See also Hoad, Part 3, 126. Hoad listed two licensees for the Commercial Hotel as Grey; A. Grey in 1845 and E. J. Grey 1850-1851.

Forbes, Isaac Lipman, John Sweeney and Joseph Hains took over the cottage as a meeting place for their amateur theatrical troupe. Sweeney recalled their production, *The Will and the Way* with entry gained 'through the broken panel at the lower part of the door. One room served as the stage and auditorium [with] seating of kerosene tins'. Wax candles were provided by Joseph Hains from his father's store.<sup>159</sup>

Sweeney borrowed a pistol from Mrs Hains which Lipman charged with shot so that the loud sound would give better effect to the scene in which he and Mussared were duellists. He forgot to tell Mussared until the pistol was at his head when he suddenly shouted to aim 'up in the air'. The report of the firearm immediately brought the police to the spot and a hurried exit was made through the broken panel. Sweeney recorded that *The Will and the Way* was their last production and the end of most of the company's theatrical careers.<sup>160</sup>

Sunday School was less exciting but safer and the churches continued to influence the lives of all ages. Members of the various congregations came together from time to time. In 1861 Hart was chairman of the re-established Port Adelaide Sacred Music Society and at the first concert felt it necessary to explain that the society, 'although holding their concert in the Congregational Chapel, was perfectly free from sectarianism. It

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<sup>159</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 January 1914.

<sup>160</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 January 1914. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 18 March 1887. Mussared kept up his interest in amateur theatre. During a political campaign many years later, 'Mr. S. J. Skipper wrote a burlesque which was enacted at the Town Hall....Amongst the actors in the "hit" was Mr. Mussared, as the Ancient Mariner'.

consisted of members of all the different congregations who had trained themselves for the practice of sacred music'.<sup>161</sup>

The Port centre was quietly developing an air of prosperity and permanence, the stone buildings belying the town's unstable nature as their foundations settled in the hardening land fill. By the 1860s substantial buildings were prominent on well-formed streets. The new combined police station, court house and customs house opened in 1860 on Black Diamond Corner at the intersection of Commercial Road and St Vincent Street.<sup>162</sup> Its colonnades brought a classic style to the centre of the town. The Police station was on the north-west corner with the court house, topped by an elegant dome, and the customs house to the north along Port Road.<sup>163</sup> A Union Bank was constructed in Lipson Street in 1859 from a design by the noted Adelaide architect, Edmund William Wright. It gave an appearance of solid reliability as did the National Bank in Divett Street, built in 1863 with a conservative, classical façade.

'Black Diamond Corner' was possibly named after a fleet of approximately 40 coal ships, known unofficially as the 'Black Diamond Line', and owned by Captain Henry Simpson, his son James Liddon Simpson and other merchants. Simpson established a large stockpile of

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<sup>161</sup> *The Register*, 3 July 1861, in Samuels, "Community", 31.

<sup>162</sup> Lendon, 135-136. In 1857 the strength of the Port Adelaide police was two sergeants, one corporal and fifteen constables. The complex was designed by Hamilton and built in bluestone and red brick by Thomas English and Henry Brown for £7500.

<sup>163</sup> Vines, *Port Adelaide Conservation Study*. (Adelaide, 1977) 28. An effective system of footings for the unstable soil was devised by the architect with construction on a raft of river red gum embedded in lime concrete.

coal, known as 'black diamond', which frequently extended towards St Vincent Street from Queen's Wharf, where his ships usually berthed.

The townspeople in this changing street environment reflected the diverse industries and occupations within the Port. The 1861 Census indicated that of 496 working males, 15 years and older, 238 were involved in sea navigation, 74 in manufacturing, 60 in trades, 60 labouring, 40 dealing in food and drink, and 25 outfitters and shoemakers. Many of the men employed as labourers worked in Hart's Mill, others as mudpunchers dredging the river, or as lumpers on the wharves. In 1866 the English and Australian Copper Company smelter employed 40 men. Of the women, 14 years and over, 376 were classified as wives, widows or single women of no specified occupation, while the remaining 183 were employed as domestic servants with a small number working as dressmakers and outfitters.<sup>164</sup> The homes of these townspeople however remained threatened by inundation and with rapid expansion of the Port and its suburbs, there was a continual demand for the completion of protective embankments and for landfill to raise the level of the town.

In 1860 the *Marine Board Act* replaced the old Harbour Trust with a board which had full responsibility for the distribution of silt.<sup>165</sup> The Port

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<sup>164</sup> *SA Parliamentary Papers*, 1861, Census, Part 2, Table 5, 34-35.

<sup>165</sup> *Marine Board Act*, Number 17, 1860, Section 34, 'All silt, sand, mud, and other materials raised by the Marine Board...shall be the property of the Board; and any person who shall remove or carry away any such silt, etc....without the consent of the said Board...shall be liable to imprisonment for any period not exceeding one calendar month, or to the payment of a penalty not exceeding Twenty pounds'.

Adelaide Corporation appealed to the government arguing that it had first right to the silt as the 'Principal Sea Port of the Province' and that the corporation should be responsible for best placement of the silt for the benefit of the town.<sup>166</sup>

The Town Clerk, Mr Edmunds, warned the Port Adelaide Council of the possibility of flooding. This resulted in the council forwarding a strong objection to the Marine Board on its method of silt disposal.

I am directed to submit to you that the Town of Port Adelaide has the first claim to all silt to be raised from the river until the whole of the Town is raised to its proper level and the inhabitants placed out of danger. At present the largest portion of the town is about five or six feet below high water mark and subject to inundation at any moment should the embankment give way, a thing not unlikely to occur, in which case the loss of life and property must be very great.<sup>167</sup>

Legitimate demands for a share of the silt were also being made by the Glanville and Portland Estate District Councils. After conferring with the Board, South Australia's chief secretary replied that there was a responsibility to a wider body of colonists and silt should be provided to protect people in districts other than Port Adelaide, and that the corporation would receive its fair proportion.<sup>168</sup> Of the 20,000 tons to be raised in 1865, the corporation was to receive 11,000 tons and the two district councils 3000 tons. The remaining 6000 tons were allocated for ships' ballast and for sale to private parties.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Port Adelaide Corporation Meetings, Rough Minute Book, January 1864 to September 1867, State Records, MRG 12/1, 13 May 1865, in David Reid, 'Some Aspects of the Port Adelaide Flood of 1865', *Flinders Journal of History and Politics: The Port Adelaide Issue*. Vol. 12. (1987) 34.

<sup>167</sup> Letter from Edmunds to the Chief Secretary, 3 January 1865, cited in *Port Adelaide since 1856*, 6.

<sup>168</sup> Chief Secretary Outward Correspondence, Volume 38, Letter to Port Corporation Town Clerk (State Records, GRG 24/4), in Reid, 34.

<sup>169</sup> Port Adelaide Corporation Meetings, Rough Minute Book, January 1864 to September 1867 (State Records, MRG 12/1, 30 March 1865), in Reid, 34.

The silt allocated to the corporation was not well managed. The corporation overseer of works had only one man working on the western embankment along The Minories and on 4 May 1865 silt was actually taken from the embankment so that Mr Blackler 'could fill up his backyard'.<sup>170</sup> One report stated that of the 5000-6000 tons used over the years in building The Minories embankment, as much as 500-600 tons had been taken from it by the corporation for other purposes.<sup>171</sup> The overseer was later fired for negligence.<sup>172</sup>

On 11 May 1865, gale-force winds hit the area, driving a huge tide up the Port River on the following day. Sandbags were brought in to strengthen the most threatened levee alongside The Minories, but despite all attempts to reinforce the bank, the water broke through that evening, washing the barrages away and flooding the southern section of the town to a depth of five feet. The residents, mainly unskilled workers and their families, had placed their trust in the embankment and were marooned by the sudden inundation.<sup>173</sup> Once again the town was reminded how vulnerable and tentative its hold was on the site.

Properties in St Vincent Street were not badly affected, most having been raised above flood level, but the foundations dug for the new Town

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<sup>170</sup> Port Adelaide Corporation Meetings, Rough Minute Book, January 1864 to September 1867 (State Records, MRG 12/1, 4 May 1865), in Reid, 34.

<sup>171</sup> *The Register*, 16 May 1865, in Reid, 34.

<sup>172</sup> Port Adelaide Corporation Meetings, Rough Minute Book, January 1864 to September 1867 (State Records, MRG 12/1, 25 May 1865), in Reid, 34.

<sup>173</sup> *Port Adelaide since 1856*, 16.

Hall were flooded. In the surrounding streets, fences, outhouses and verandahs were destroyed by the force of the water and debris was strewn everywhere along with stacks of logs and sawn timber from the timber yards. Merchandise in shops and warehouses was spoiled and 'when the waters receded the soft soil of the township...was an oozing swamp'.<sup>174</sup>

The worst damage occurred in the low-lying residential area south of St Vincent Street where many of the small cottages were moved from their wooden stumps, households lost all their belongings and goats, poultry and pets were drowned. Surprisingly there were no fatalities and in one bedroom, a doctor delivered a baby while standing in three feet of water.<sup>175</sup>

Land speculators were concerned about their investments at the Port. Less than a month after the flood, on 7 June 1865, Emmanuel Solomon, the owner of property which was inundated, auctioned two free-hold dwellings and seventeen vacant allotments in The Minories and Quebec, Robe, Cannon, Dale and Leadenhall Streets.<sup>176</sup> Two days after the flood, Hart wrote in his diary, 'this is the greatest disaster that ever befell Port Adelaide - and will de-value its property for years. My section 910 will suffer greatly as the people will have no confidence in building where they have to depend for safety on sea-walls'.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Page, 69.

<sup>175</sup> Lumbers, 35. See also accounts of the flood, *The Advertiser*, 13, 15 May 1865, and *The Register*, 26 May 1865.

<sup>176</sup> *The Register*, 7 June 1865, in Reid, 36.

<sup>177</sup> Papers of Captain John Hart, 'Diaries 1865-1872', Mortlock Library of South Australiana, PRG 218, in Reid, 29-30.



Other buildings affected were on land originally subdivided by the Port Land Company in which Hart had a major interest. On 19 May and 2 June 1865, a parliamentary debate took place on the issues of securing the town, and aid to the victims. Hart proposed that the government provide no more than £5000 at the rate of £2 to every £1 raised by the people of Port Adelaide. Thomas Reynolds, the treasurer, argued that the costs should be shared by the government, the corporation and the Port Land Company, 'who were at least morally responsible as the sellers of the land flooded to keep up the outer embankments'.<sup>178</sup> Walter Duffield and John Colton, 'in sympathy with the sufferers', held the opinion that the land speculators and developers should subscribe very largely to the cost of repairs, the company having 'failed in its duty towards the settlers'.<sup>179</sup> Finally, on 2 June, Hart's motion that the work should be carried out by the Port Adelaide Corporation was passed, sixteen votes to twelve.<sup>180</sup> It was of little help to the town to find someone to blame.

The corporation moved quickly and by early June had spent £1045 on carting soil to The Minorities.<sup>181</sup> By 22 June the embankment was seven feet high and able to withstand any tide. The townspeople cleaned up and, although suburbs like Rosewater were flooded well into the next century, this was the last tidal flood at Port Adelaide. The editor of *The Register*

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<sup>178</sup> *South Australian Parliamentary Debates*, First Session, 1865, 274, in Reid, 35.

<sup>179</sup> *South Australian Parliamentary Debates*, First Session, 1865, 401, in Reid, 35-36.

<sup>180</sup> *South Australian Parliamentary Debates*, First Session, 1865, 402, in Reid, 36.

<sup>181</sup> Port Adelaide Corporation Meetings, Rough Minute Book, January 1864 to September 1867 (State Records, MRG 12/1, 25 May 1865), in Reid, 36.

wrote, 'surprise is felt that the Port people, having nothing but an earthen embankment between themselves and the sea, should have allowed that embankment to become insecure'.<sup>182</sup> Why the authorities, 25 years after the town's foundation, had not solved the first and most urgent problem of stabilising the port site was perhaps partly due to the enormity of the task. However the prolonged debate between council and land developers, some of whom were councillors, on which group were responsible for the security of the town from flooding, mismanagement of the silt distribution without a planned schedule, and the apparent negligence of the corporation in using the embankments as a quarry for fill, contributed to the longevity of the project and its problems.

Defence against flooding in Williamstown also took many years to overcome. In the 1860s the mouth of the Yarra was recut and stone walls erected to reroute the flow. However one inundation in 1868 created devastation as did the 'great flood of 1906' when debris, including animal carcasses and wrecked boats, littered the town.<sup>183</sup> Fremantle, perched on its rocky outcrop, had only swirling sand to disturb its occupants.

The original Port Adelaide had been known as Port Misery; the new port, depending on the weather, was being referred to as 'Mudholia' or 'Dustholia'.<sup>184</sup> Respect for all the town had accomplished was tarnished

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<sup>182</sup> *The Register*, 16 May 1865.

<sup>183</sup> Evans, 45-46.

<sup>184</sup> Lumbers, 24. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 21 June 1879 which reported the condition of the streets in the town, 'their general miserable state - covered with mud in winter and ankle-deep with dust in summer'.

and *The Advertiser*, in the aftermath of the flood, reminded its readers of the importance of the town. It was described as having a unique position in local government bodies: 'Port Adelaide is not only a municipality, it is a national emporium and depot. It is the headquarters of the national Customs establishment; it is conjointly with Adelaide, the seat of Government'.<sup>185</sup>

In 1866, fifteen months after the flood, the opening of the new town hall gave the residents a much needed boost of civic pride. In Fremantle the town hall was not built until 1887 but on its opening a similar renewed optimism in the future of the town was noted.<sup>186</sup> The foundation stone at Port Adelaide was laid by Sir James Fisher on 10 June 1865 and the building formally opened by Mayor Jacob William Smith, before 'a vocal and instrumental concert' directed by George Loder on Wednesday 27 August 1866.<sup>187</sup> The theatre at the White Horse Cellars was superseded by the new town hall, and the auditorium designed to seat 800 people became the meeting centre for the town's activities and ceremonies. In his 1866 edition of *Bailliere's South Australian Gazetteer and Road Guide*, Robert Whitworth noted the theatre's decline and stated that it was 'rarely open for dramatic performances'.<sup>188</sup> Other established businesses also began to change. George Scarfe joined George P. Harris in Adelaide in

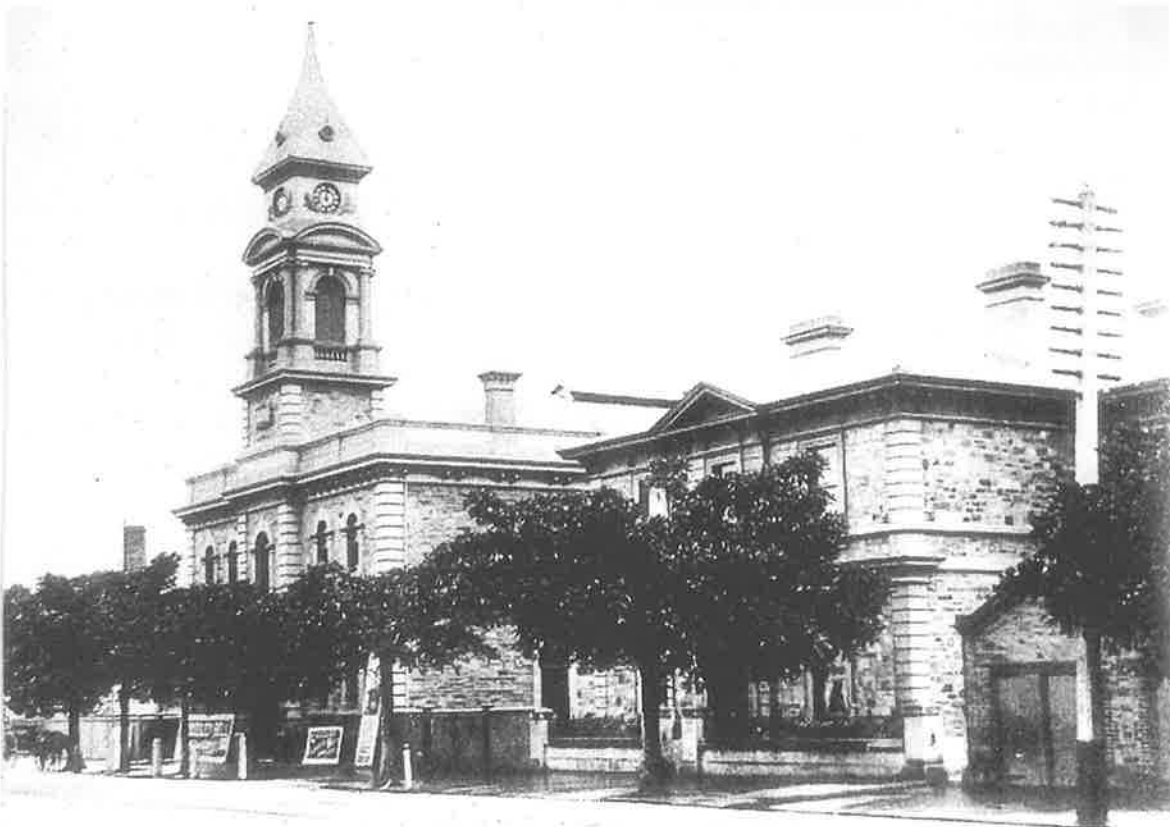
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<sup>185</sup> *The Advertiser*, 22 May 1865.

<sup>186</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 44.

<sup>187</sup> *The Register*, 30 August 1866.

<sup>188</sup> Whitworth, 10.



### Illustration 8

Town Hall, St Vincent Street, Port Adelaide (1866).

The town hall was designed by architects Edward Woods and Edmund Wright, then in partnership. Construction was begun by the former mayor, Frank Reynolds, a timber merchant and contractor, at a cost of £4980. Built with stone from Dry Creek, it stands as a well-proportioned building with a symmetrical façade featuring rendered dressings and crowned by a lofty spired tower. A clock was installed in the tower in 1867. The building on the right is the Medical Officer's residence rebuilt in 1883.

Port Adelaide Historical Society.

1866 and sold his prominent shop, 'Ironmongers, Grocers and Ship Chandlers' on North Parade, to his brothers Alfred and Augustus.<sup>189</sup>

Also in 1866 the Independent Order of Odd Fellows built a two-level hall and five two-storey houses in Dale Street on the south-west corner of Marryatt Street diagonally across from St Mary's Church. The hall's 'temple' façade perhaps symbolised the lodge's traditional values and dependability. It was an example of the growing number of lodges active in the town.

The Port Adelaide churches too were growing in number. By 1866 the incumbents of five major churches ministered to 1883 adherents. The clergy were the Reverends Samuel Green, St Paul's Church of England; James Ambrose Nowlan, St Mary's Catholic Church; Daniel J. Draper, Port Adelaide Wesleyan Methodist Church; James Henderson, Port Adelaide Free Presbyterian Church and Matthew Hodge, Port Adelaide Congregational Church.

The 1866 Census recorded the religious affiliation of the Port residents. Separate figures were given for Port Adelaide, Alberton/Queenstown, Portland Estate and Glanville on the Lefevre Peninsula. Table 1 shows the number of worshippers and percentages for a population of 2270 Portonians (male and female):

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<sup>189</sup> Samuels, *The Port Adelaide Centre*, 24.

RELIGION	NUMBER	% (rounded)
Church of England	937	41
Roman Catholic	351	15
Wesleyan Methodist	295	13
Protestants not otherwise defined	166	7
Presbyterian	152	7
Congregational or Independent	148	7
Baptist	101	4
German Lutheran	33	1
Mormon	28	1
Objected	24	1
Not stated - adults	20	1
Other religions	9	0.5
Primitive Methodist	6	0.5
TOTAL	2270	99

In 1866 the largest number of Portonians, 937, affiliated with the Church of England although it is not known whether they were regular attendants at the services. With these Anglicans along with 735 connected with other Protestant churches, and the 166 who did not nominate a church but defined themselves as Protestants, the town was predominantly Protestant. These figures reflected the religious make-up of South Australia in general, only a small proportion of migrants, mainly from Ireland, belonged to the Catholic Church.

Compared with the five churches, eighteen hotels in the central Port area dominated the streetscape in 1869, including the Ship Inn rebuilt that year. The hotels and publicans were:

Australia's Pride (John Parsons)	Port (Henry Carwithen Ford)
Australian Clubhouse (F. E. Bucknall)	Port Admiral (J. Yeo)
Britannia (Alexander Russell)	Prince's (Thomas Yeo)
British (James Ralph Russell)	Railway (M. A. Coleman)
Commercial (D. Wald)	Ship Inn (Jonathon Smith)
Wellington Inn (Dan McFie)	Sussex (J. Winch)
Exchange (D. Vidal)	Wharf (J. E. Haytread)

<sup>190</sup> SA *Parliamentary Papers*, 1867, 'Census of South Australia 1866', Population Tables 5, 'Religions of the People'.

Globe (T. Hicks)  
Lass O'Gowrie (D. McKendrick)

White Hart (W. S. Murray)  
White Horse Cellars (W. Knapman)<sup>191</sup>

A number of families such as the Russells, Fords, Knapmans and Yeos, became familiarly linked with Port Adelaide's hotels, working at different establishments in the town over many decades.

W. J. Purvis recorded his reminiscences of the Port's commercial centre in the mid-1860s.<sup>192</sup> When compared with Sweeney's description of the heart of the town in the mid-1850s (see page 110), the two accounts demonstrate the rapid spread of the town and the growth and diversity of services in one decade. Purvis, a librarian at the Institute, described a detailed walk around the town mentioning each business and the people who worked there, and noted other features he passed on his way (see Appendix D). He mentioned two pharmacists on North Parade, 'Chas. Downer's Pharmacy' and 'Faulding's chemist shop'. The Fauldings developed their business into one of the country's major pharmaceutical companies.

In exploring the early history of South Australian country towns, A. F. Denholm outlined a situation which would have been very familiar to Portonians in describing the development and progress of their own town.

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<sup>191</sup> Hoad, Part 3. The 'Wellington Inn' was later named the 'Duke of Wellington Hotel'.

<sup>192</sup> W. J. Purvis, 'Old Port Adelaide, Old Ships, and Old Identities', *The Advertiser*, 2 November 1927.

They set about the task of bringing elements of civilization to their communities by erecting schools, churches, sporting facilities and some fine town halls....the earnestness, determination and courage which had led them to the frontier served them well in their task of building oases of civilization in the wilderness.<sup>193</sup>

While these points were true for the Port as a town, the reason for its location and existence, and consequently its focus, was the harbour. In 1866 Robert Whitworth emphasised the distinctive difference: 'Port Adelaide has all the characteristics of a seaport town; its shops, commodities, hotels, and manufactories, all seem intended for the accommodation of a seafaring population'.<sup>194</sup>

Fremantle also was distinctively a port town although its geographical siting gave a different boost to its economy during the 1860s through the needs of the pearling industry in the north. Shell was exported from Fremantle and hotels and shopkeepers profited by the annual visits of pearling masters, but more importantly for the town, the industry created a demand for luggers and shipbuilding rapidly increased.<sup>195</sup> The 1860s saw further progress. In 1867 a timber bridge built by convict labour over the river at Fremantle gave the town ready access to Perth by road and opened up the opposite bank for the settlement of North Fremantle.<sup>196</sup> The following year a Mechanics' Institute, founded in 1851, merged with the Working Man's Association to form the Fremantle Literary Institute.

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<sup>193</sup> A. F. Denholm, 'Setting the Scene', in A. F. Denholm, Susan Marsden and Kerrie Round (eds), *Terowie Workshop: Exploring the history of South Australian country towns*. (Adelaide, 1991) 6.

<sup>194</sup> Whitworth, 10.

<sup>195</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 32-36. In 1868 shell worth £5000 was exported and by 1870 increased to £62,000 per annum. It was used to manufacture buttons and was also a source of fine quality lime.

<sup>196</sup> Reece and Pascoe, 21.



Over its first 30 years the settlement at Port Adelaide, like that in early Fremantle, had become a vital town for its colony, the import and export hub and the major point of arrival for new settlers. It was a departure centre for the colony's merchants and leaders who were extremely mobile and frequently travelled to the other colonies and back to England on business.

By the end of the 1860s the Port had the appearance of an established town, with an array of fine official buildings and well-built hotels, banks, offices, warehouses and churches. The establishment of a library, lodges and various clubs was seen as a sign of community maturity. However, the people of Port Adelaide still shared the dilemma of ports world-wide: the struggle of a community establishing a traditional long-term township adjacent to a wharveside which catered for the short-stay maritime workers who sought entertainment and distraction. The congregations of the churches and the clientele of the hotels were diametrically opposed in their respective needs from the town.

## CHAPTER THREE

### COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

During Port Adelaide's early years there was a consciousness of a close-knit community. Peter Wright remembered the 'neighbourhood' feeling in the Port of his boyhood during the 1850s.

From an early date we were a fairly self-contained lot, having those among us who could supply almost any of the others moderate wants, either in food, clothing, houses or even ships. In those days we all knew everybody and everybody's business. On the whole they were a hardy industrious lot of folk, fairly contented with the circumstances in which they were placed. They were mostly of the labouring class, some having been sailors or fishermen, with the usual compliment [sic] of tradesmen.<sup>1</sup>

By the early 1870s the landfill in the main area of the town was finally completed and, having conquered the inundations, the Port developed rapidly. The foul mud of the unmade streets turning to dust in dry weather was a minor irritation compared to years of flooding and later a local journalist could make light of a once serious situation: 'happily the present vigorous enforcement of the Harbour Regulations prevents people who have been standing in the dust all day from tumbling into the harbour all night and silting it up'.<sup>2</sup>

The town heart centred on St Vincent Street. The thoroughfare and its established facilities now projected a sense of permanency. In the ten

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<sup>1</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 December 1895.

<sup>2</sup> *Port Adelaide News and Commercial and Shipping Gazette* (hereafter cited as *Port Adelaide News*), 10 August 1878.

years between 1861 and 1871 the population increased from 1708 to 2482.<sup>3</sup> However as the Port grew the feeling of neighbourhood diminished. The town had developed a separation from the waterside encompassing the expanded wharf areas along the river and North Parade, the former 'main' street.<sup>4</sup> Progress in the form of town growth created a sense of pride of achievement for Portonians but the intimacy of a pioneer village community was changing.

Brian Samuels tentatively explored the term 'community' and asked whether, in the three years he selected, 1861, 1881 and 1901, the Port Adelaide District was justified in being called a community and whether Portonians viewed themselves as such.<sup>5</sup> In his search to define 'community', Samuels observed that Faith Thompson's understanding of the traditional meaning of community was somewhat 'idealized' when she interpreted it as 'a human settlement of a defined area, which is small, enduring, and relatively self-sufficient....with a quality of social life among the inhabitants'.<sup>6</sup> Wright's description of the early Port would certainly fit this definition but as Port Adelaide expanded in size and diversity of business, the relationships within the settlement, as might be expected, became more complex.

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<sup>3</sup> *Census of South Australia*, 1861 and 1871. (Colonial Statistics 1804-1901, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1989, microfiche).

<sup>4</sup> 'The Memories of Captain Walter Todd', *Portonian*, September 1995, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Brian J. Samuels, "'Community' in the Port Adelaide District 1861-1901". B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1972, ii-iii.

<sup>6</sup> Samuels, 1-2. See Faith Thompson, 'Suburban Living and the Concept of Community', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 7, October 1971, 24.

Samuels suggested, with some reservations, that those who worked in the Port did not view themselves as a cohesive community. He found that 'a sense of identity with one's place of residence may have been stronger than identity with the district as a whole' and offered some evidence for this in 'the existence of the several councils'.<sup>7</sup> He concluded that the usual tenets of 'traditional community' could not be identified in the town itself but that the surrounding residential areas or settlements 'partially dependent on the port' approximated 'in varying degrees to...traditional communities'.<sup>8</sup> Samuels' observation of divisions in Portonian society, as reflected in residential areas, are expanded in this study to include some of the different groups which formed as the town became larger and more socially complex. These groups included Port Adelaide's destitute and poor, the temporary seafarers who Grace Karskens described in the Rocks, Sydney, as 'waves of visiting seamen',<sup>9</sup> the workers and labourers, a large 'bridging' group of townspeople - the clerks and shop assistants, the middle or 'middling' class, and the upper-middle class or élite.

There are difficulties in attempting to define community groups, a problem noted by Janet McCalman in her study of Richmond, Victoria in the first half of the twentieth century. McCalman identified 'an uneasy class' of 'low-paid white-collar workers, self-employed tradesmen and

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<sup>7</sup> Samuels, 63.

<sup>8</sup> Samuels, 62.

<sup>9</sup> Grace Karskens, *The Rocks: Life in Early Sydney*. (Carlton Vic, 1997) 19.

small shop keepers' bridging the gap between the élite and the vast working class.<sup>10</sup> F. J. Hunt observed in a sociological analysis of neighbourhood and community that 'the structure of the neighbourhood/community is very much affected by size which, as it increases, gives rise to groups with different values, life-styles, and subcultures, and to complex patterns of interrelationships'.<sup>11</sup> These factors were evident at Port Adelaide from the 1850s onwards as the population spread across the river and down the road to Adelaide.

For the purposes of this study of the Port and its people, 'community' is defined after Jean Martin as 'the collectivity of people who occupy a common territory, share a common life and interact within a local institutional complex'.<sup>12</sup> Karskens cited the American historian Thomas Bender's description of the 'we-ness' or membership of a community as not always accompanied by 'social unity or harmony'. Bender argued that 'conflict, suspicion, hostility and exploitation', although 'mediated by the emotional bonds', may also be integral to a community's existence.<sup>13</sup>

As the Port developed it is likely that sharing a day-to-day common space for occupational purposes, rather than being part of a particular

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<sup>10</sup> Janet S. McCalman, *Struggletown: Public and Private Life in Richmond 1900-1965*. (Carlton Vic, 1984) 19.

\*<sup>11</sup> F. J. Hunt, 'Education', in A. F. Davies, Sol Encel and M. J. Berry (eds), *Australian Society: A Sociological Introduction*. Third Edition. (Melbourne, 1977) 214.

\*<sup>12</sup> Jean I. Martin, 'Suburbia: Community and Network', in Davies and Encel, *Australian Society: A Sociological Introduction*. Second Edition. (Melbourne, 1970) 302-303.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America*. (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1978) 6-9, in Karskens, 51.

residential neighbourhood, was influential in grouping the people into related communities of workers and middle class. Networks relating to occupation groups, societies or church were indicators that Port Adelaide was no longer the cohesive community it once was with a unity of purpose. Bender's 'social unity' was breaking down with the expansion of the Port, the increase in population and the changing residential areas. Town and business relationships did not extend to the intimacy of the home as the local paper noted in 1895:

there are characteristics in the outward bearing of Portonians which have a local flavour, and are peculiar to themselves....Rival business men who, perhaps, have never entered each other's homes, meet in the street and clasp hands with all the warmth and appearance of sincerity that could be wished for in the closest friends. Acquaintances of a day or a month or two are often made fast friends....The indoor life of Portonians is not so cordial or so full of warmth as the 'street life.' The sacredness of the hearth is comparatively unknown; the circle of close friends which gathers round the chimney-corner is replaced by the drawing-room crowd of acquaintances who indulge in the exquisite luxury of 'parlour games,' and other amusements.<sup>14</sup>

The writer noted a working-day equality of citizens around the town streets with a respect for workers in all spheres of business and industry.

Class deference, particularly in workers' conversations, was minimal:

the common crowd speak of well-known townsmen in a familiar strain using their Christian names to denote them. When you hear the swaggering wharf-labourer over his 'butcher' speak of the powers that be as 'Charley' or 'Jim' you come to the conclusion that reverence does not form part of the Portonian's education. The 'street life' of Portonians is cordial and pleasant, redundant with cheery gossip but often befouled by the darkest slander....there is no 'standing on ceremony,' a marked absence of dignity and polish, in fact a mudholian flavour is given to the whole business which makes them 'jolly good fellows' with a huge contempt for the more refining and polished influences.<sup>15</sup>

The activities of the transient seamen and the waterside workers

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<sup>14</sup> 'Portonian Manners and Customs', *Port Adelaide News*, 6 September 1895. See also Gerald Alfred Wilkes, *A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms*. (South Melbourne Vic, 1978) 66. A 'butcher' was a beer draught measuring two-thirds of a pint. In 1999 it is approximately half a pint or 170 ml. The butcher measure was possibly first used in Adelaide at the Newmarket Hotel for meat workers on short breaks from the slaughter yards opposite.

<sup>15</sup> 'Portonian Manners and Customs', *Port Adelaide News*, 6 September 1895.

mainly centred around the wharves and pubs at the Port. Those toiling on the wharves and in seasonal industries gathered together for early morning selection of workers by foremen, with those not chosen often at a loose end for the day. These frustrated men frequently ended up at the tap-room to air their grievances together. Off duty ships' crews mingled in the hotels with local men from the wharves, mills and copper smelters in after-work gatherings. The workers' homes were in nearby Portland Estate, Queens Town (Queenstown) and Rosewater. Ferries crossed the river to Birkenhead or Glanville.<sup>16</sup> The Port remained a pedestrian town for workers until May 1879 when the first tracks and the steam-powered tram, *Eureka*, were installed by the 'Port Adelaide, Queenstown, Alberton and Portland Estate Tramway Company Limited'.<sup>17</sup>

After a trial run the tramway was opened by David Bower on 22 May 1879. There were 15 trips daily along Port Road from Glyde Street, Albert Park, to St Vincent Street but after three years 'bad roads and flooded tracks caused problems with the steam motor'.<sup>18</sup> In 1882 it was sold to the Glenelg Railway Company and replaced by a horse-drawn tram. After horse traction was introduced, a more frequent service was

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<sup>16</sup> Samuels, 107. See also Penny Matthews (ed.), *South Australia: The Civic Record 1836-1986*. (Netley SA, 1986) 460. See also Ronald H. Parsons, *Southern Passages: A Maritime History of South Australia*. (Netley SA, 1986) 271. The privately run Central Ferry began service in 1878 from the end of Commercial Road to Elder Street, Birkenhead, and later the Dunnikier Ferry operated across the river from Mundy Street to the Dunnikier Slip landing. Heath Street at Birkenhead, lined with workers' cottages, was known as 'Mudpunchers' Row'.

<sup>17</sup> L. S. Kingsborough, *The Horse Tramways of Adelaide and its Suburbs 1875-1907*. (Adelaide, 1967) 17-20. See also Lester Firth & Murton, *An Insight into the Development of Western Adelaide*. (Adelaide, 1982) 35. Electric trams were installed in 1917 to Albert Park, Rosewater, Semaphore and Largs and ran until 1935.

<sup>18</sup> Neville S. Smith, *Tramcars, Trolleybuses in and around Port Adelaide*. (Adelaide, 1998) 2. The ten-horsepower steam motor was manufactured by Merryweather of London.

run at busy periods. With tram travel available, workers could consider living a little further out of town.

It is possible to discern the changing nature of Port society in the growth and spread of various occupational groups from Census data. The groupings used here are those suggested for the study of social data by W. A. Armstrong in 1972.<sup>19</sup> While exact comparative figures for all years are not available, the figures for Port Adelaide reflect both growth and the changing trends in occupations.

OCCUPATION	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1901
Agriculture and breeding		102	7	5	234	859
Mining		6	2	29	25	51
Building		157	23	52	773	1157
Manufacture	1	57	120	131	996	4771
Transport	7	214	155	182	1057	2578
Dealing	14	28	129	166	884	3046
Industrial Service						1152
Public Service and Professional	6	36	116	182	922	956
Domestic Service		148	126	136	632	1769
Property Owning and Independent		75	4	10	45	
TOTAL	28	823	682	893	5568	16 339

<sup>19</sup> W. A. Armstrong, 'The Use of Information about Occupation', in E. A. Wrigley, (ed.), *Nineteenth Century Society. Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data*. (Cambridge, 1972) 284-310. The categories are from the 'Booth-Armstrong Classification of Occupations'.

<sup>20</sup> *Census of South Australia*, 1861 and 1871. (Colonial Statistics 1804-1901, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1989, microfiche). Occupation classification is shown as a total count of male and female workers. The 1841 figures are from Directories which do not list dependants or those employed in domestic service. The 1891 figures are not included as in that year occupations were not shown in the Census results and the figures estimated from Directories are unreliable. The figures can only give an overview as changes in the various council boundaries make comparisons difficult (see Appendix C). Samuels, 117, gave the example of Birkenhead which was a separate district in 1881 and had merged with Port Adelaide by 1891.



Figures in Table 2 shows the increase in population from 28 people (half of whom were in dealing in 1841) to over 16 000 in 1901. As would be expected in a port town the main occupation groups from 1851 to 1881 were transport (which included warehouse workers as well as stevedores and carters), dealing (traders, provisioners, and hotel and lodging house keepers), manufacture, public service and professional, and domestic service. 'Building' was a major group which included firstly, management occupations such as estate agents, contractors and inspectors, secondly, operative occupations such as carpenter, bricklayer, mason, locksmith, painter, plumber, glazier, plasterer and signpainter, and thirdly, a roadmaking group which included excavators and labourers.

Accommodation, food and other travel requirements created jobs and much needed income for many Port women who served as maids, cleaners, washerwomen and kitchen staff at the hotels, dining rooms and coffee houses. From the 1880s a rapidly growing cohort of people, particularly women, were employed in domestic service for Portonian professionals and public servants who were a large, and expanding, group.

With the growth of the town, industrial service developed rapidly around the turn of the century.<sup>21</sup> Those engaged in transport, mainly maritime, continued to grow but their presence was outstripped by the

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<sup>21</sup> Periods of growth were determined from the 'Prosperity Curve' in Charles Fenner, *South Australia: A Geographical Study*. (Melbourne, 1931) 210-211, reproduced in Susan Marsden, *South Australian State Historic Preservation Plan: Historical Guidelines*. (Adelaide, 1983) 64C.

rapid influx of a variety of occupational groups particularly in manufacturing. Transport workers, as a proportion of the working population, fell from 26% in 1851 to 15% in 1901. The trains took over the transportation of goods to Adelaide and beyond, and displaced many of the carters with their single drays.

From the 1870s workers were increasingly joining trade associations or unions.<sup>22</sup> The American writer Mark Twain visited South Australia in 1895 and wrote, 'The workingman is a great power in Australia but South Australia is his paradise'.<sup>23</sup> By the 1880s Port Adelaide's large number of workers, particularly those employed in factories and on the docks, were recognised as a powerful group through their union affiliations.<sup>24</sup>

Not all were at work. Over the sixty years of Census information, Port residents included unemployed men, women with home duties, children, pupils at public or private schools or at home, house guests, pensioners, prisoners and inmates of charitable institutions, and, from the mid 1870s, university and theological students.<sup>25</sup> This group comprised over half of the total population at the Port from 1850 to 1901 with

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<sup>22</sup> The Corporation of the City of Port Adelaide Editorial Committee for the 150 Year Souvenir Booklet, *Mudflats to Metropolis 1836-1986*. (1986) 87. The booklet listed a number of workers' societies, associations and unions from 1863 under the heading, 'Trade Unionism: Port Adelaide'. See also K. R. Bowes, 'The 1890 Maritime Strike in South Australia'. M.A. Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1957, Appendix B.

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Langhorne Clemens, under his pseudonym Mark Twain, recorded his travel experiences in *Following the Equator* in 1897. This excerpt is from *Mark Twain in Australia and New Zealand*. (1973 edition) 181, cited in Eric Richards, 'South Australia Observed 1836-1986', in Eric Richards (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*. (Netley SA, 1986) 23.

<sup>24</sup> Chris Vevers, 'The Maritime Labor Council of Port Adelaide 1886-1892', *Flinders Journal of History and Politics: The Port Adelaide Issue*. Vol. 12. (1987) 64-75. The United Trades and Labor Council (formed in 1884) and the Maritime Labor Council (1886-1892) were substantial factors in labor relations in Port Adelaide and South Australia and united workers seeking better wages and conditions.

<sup>25</sup> The Aboriginal population was not counted in the Census until 1971.

women and children dependent on those in employment being the largest number of Portonians. The interests of these residents exerted pressure on the social and moral character of the town.

Labourers amongst the settlers were often reminded that many in South Australia wanted the traditional British divisions in society to continue although John Hirst concluded that from 1870 to 1917, the 'social composition of South Australia was different from that of the eastern colonies. There were no convicts and fewer Irish to harbour resentment against the well-to-do'.<sup>26</sup> J. F. Bennett observed that freedom away from the mother country gave many early colonists an air of being 'not trammelled by an excess of useless ceremony or affectation, which impart too much of an unnatural aspect to English society'.<sup>27</sup> The message of equality was emphasised from time to time particularly to new arrivals who had not yet realised the working man's belief that society in the colony was different from that in the 'old country'. At Port Adelaide, a wharf hand objected to 'a fashionable English gentleman' lecturing him on 'deference to superiors' and refused to carry the newcomer's carpet bag with the comment, 'You may keep your dignity and I will keep my blue shirt and we shall see who will wear the best and longest in this country'.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> John B. Hirst, *Adelaide and the Country 1870-1917: Their Social and Political Relationship*. (Melbourne, 1973) 45-46.

<sup>27</sup> J. F. Bennett, *Historical and Descriptive Account of South Australia: founded on the Experience of a Three Years' Residence in that Colony*. (London, 1843) 135.

<sup>28</sup> R. Young, *The Southern world; journey of a deputation from the Wesleyan Conference to Australia and Polynesia*. (London, 1854) 66, in Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857*. (Second edition, Carlton Vic, 1967) 496.

Port Adelaide's middle class mainly comprised four occupation groups classified by Armstrong as: 'building', 'dealing', 'public service and professional', and 'property owning and independent'. The public service and professional occupations included customs officials, post office and telegraph workers, municipal officers, chemists, teachers, clergymen, clerks and police.<sup>29</sup> Jobs such as sweeper, scavenger and the nightman, who removed human waste from the many backyard privies, were also categorised as public service but were labouring occupations.

By the early 1880s there were approximately 1000 professional and public service workers in the town. The growing number of 'white collar' workers included shipping clerks, postal and office workers, and shop attendants who lived in the town or the nearby suburbs. The town was losing much of its rollicking manners and a new concern for morality and industriousness was emerging.<sup>30</sup> Increasingly, as business prospered, many in the middle class chose to leave their homes in the Port and reside in the outer areas of Albert Town (Alberton), or Semaphore and Largs on the Lefevre Peninsula.<sup>31</sup>

Semaphore developed rapidly once a branch train service was opened in 1878. Joining Hart's 'Glanville Hall' on the peninsula, John Dunn Junior built a summer retreat of three large family apartments,

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<sup>29</sup> Armstrong, 284-310.

<sup>30</sup> See Chapter Four, 'Progress and social improvement at the Port from the 1870s'.

<sup>31</sup> The township of Largs was laid out and the land auctioned in 1873. It was developed after 1881 with the construction of the jetty, hotel and the extension of the railway from Glanville on the Semaphore line. The Esplanade opened in 1884 but remained a sandy track for many years.

'Westward Ho!', on the Esplanade at Semaphore North in 1883 with profits from his family's successful flour mills.<sup>32</sup> As in Alberton, housing allotments on the peninsula were larger, making room for a fashionable, trellised fernery and the planting of trees, shrubs, vines, fruit trees, vegetables, flowers and lawns. Several grand homes were built during this period.

Many Port businessmen chose to live at Woodville, conveniently halfway between Port Adelaide and Adelaide. Shipping agent John Newman built 'The Brocas' on Woodville Road in 1840 and lived there until his death in 1873 when it was purchased by Henry Fletcher, owner of the patent slip and shipwright's yard on the river.<sup>33</sup> The property remained in the Fletcher family until 1939. Another grand home, 'St Clair', was built in 1842 (near the eastern end of the present Cheltenham Racecourse) for Robert Richard Torrens, the collector of customs and M.L.C. from 1851 and later the colony's treasurer.<sup>34</sup> When Torrens left the district in 1854 the name 'St Clair' was transferred to a home built in 1850 next to 'The Brocas' for Port Adelaide grocer S. R. Clarke. Timber merchant David Bower lived there from 1874 until his death in 1898.<sup>35</sup> Other well known Portonians at Woodville were Richard Honey, a Port contractor and owner of the Lion timber mills, who built 'Lionville',

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<sup>32</sup> Anthony Stuart (ed.) *A Miller's Tale: The Memoirs of John Dunn of Mount Barker*. (Kingswood SA, 1991) 125-126.

<sup>33</sup> Susan Marsden, *A History of Woodville*. (Woodville SA, 1977) 28, 31.

<sup>34</sup> 'City of Woodville: Abridged History and Local Government'. (Woodville SA, 1971) 17.

<sup>35</sup> Marsden, 36, 76.

and Captain Henry Simpson, owner of the Black Diamond line of colliers, who lived at 'Tenterden' on the south-west side of Port Road from 1840.<sup>36</sup> On his death the property passed to his son John Simpson.

Substantial houses with gardens were rare in the poor soil of the immediate Port area but were sometimes described, as in the following 'for sale' notice.

In Lipson-street, a convenient and well-finished House of 5 rooms, Kitchen, Bathroom, Playhouse, Wood and Fowl House, and good Garden; suitable to anyone whose business requires a residence in the Port.<sup>37</sup>

A large oval garden with paths and shrubs designed in June 1848 for the government reserve at Port Adelaide was enclosed on three sides by government buildings. If laid out as planned the garden would be of short duration as facilities rapidly expanded on the site.<sup>38</sup> The salty land-fill of the Port failed to nourish exotic trees. Even as late as 1891 when the council attempted to beautify the streets by planting two hundred street trees the local newspaper observed, 'all of these have, we believe, died, with the exception of the gums which are thriving well'.<sup>39</sup> In a 1910 issue of *The Compass* an article entitled 'Botanic Gardens for the Port' suggested the council gardener could 'exercise his skill in other directions' other than beautifying the streets with flower beds in the vicinity of the town hall and along the pavement in Commercial Road,<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Marsden, 25.

<sup>37</sup> *Port Adelaide News. Shipping and Commercial Advertiser* (hereafter cited as *Port Adelaide News*), 26 February 1881.

<sup>38</sup> 'Plan of the Government Reserve at Port Adelaide', drawn by J. Young, 15 June 1848, State Archives.

<sup>39</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 January 1892.

<sup>40</sup> *The Compass*, April-May 1910, 323.

but no plans for a public recreation park and gardens were put into action at the Port.

In the 1870s the Port was a manufacturing and industrial centre, and a major urban centre often competing with Adelaide. The concentration of workers at the Port was not reflected in the composition of the town's council which was comprised mainly of middle-class traders, merchants, building contractors and professional men. Also represented on council were self-employed small businessmen including shopkeepers and those with specialist skills in the building trade.<sup>41</sup> Doctors, accountants and solicitors also took an active role as councillors and on the many town committees.

From 30 March 1878 decisions by the town council were reported in a weekly town newspaper, *Port Adelaide News and Commercial and Shipping Gazette*.<sup>42</sup> The paper briefly covered news from overseas and reported the main local activities in the commercial centre, including the shops and hotels, and news from the churches. Industrial news regarding workers mainly focused on the frequent accidents and fatalities. *The*

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<sup>41</sup> Port Adelaide Corporation, Mayors' Reports, 1881-1916. Only property owners/ratepayers were eligible for election to council.

<sup>42</sup> The newspaper was known as the *Port Adelaide News and Commercial and Shipping Gazette* from 30 March to 12 October 1878, *Port Adelaide News* on 19 October 1878, *Port Adelaide News. Shipping and Commercial Advertiser* from 26 October 1878, *Port Adelaide News and Lefevre's Peninsula Advertiser* from 11 December 1883 to 15 January 1897 and *Port Adelaide News*, in 1904 and from 1913 until 1933. See also Samuels 75, and 'Newspapers in Port Adelaide', *Portonian*, September 1989, 6-18. There were four other attempts to establish a Port Adelaide newspaper; *Australian Standard and Port Adelaide Intelligencer* (E. L. Grundy, editor) 10-24 August 1850, *The Galatea and Port Adelaide Intelligencer*, 12 October-23 November 1867 (extant copies only, the paper may have had other issues), *The Port Post*, c.1875 (no extant copies) and *The Portonian*, (Duncan Campbell Francis Moodie, editor), 12 August 1871-16 May 1879 which then moved to Adelaide until February 1881.

*Fremantle Herald* was first printed in 1867 and a second newspaper, *Era*, produced by ex-convict George Barrow, survived for a year from 1868 to 1869.<sup>43</sup> Williamstown also produced its own town newspaper, the *Williamstown Advertiser*, with the first issue on 17 November 1874.

The 'Police Court Report' was a regular feature of the *Port Adelaide News* with pen sketches illustrating the daily drama of lives at the Port such as that of Mary Scanlan, abused by her husband and then dying from 'effusion on the brain, the direct result of drink'. After her drunken habits, 'six months of excessive gin, consumed in bed', she gave her daughter a last piece of advice: 'Bridget, never drink. Look at me; I am dying through it. But give me some gin; I must have a last drink. It's your father's fault'.<sup>44</sup> Readers who lived in the suburbs could now learn, not only about the drunken antics of seamen about the town, which might be expected, but about the plight and behaviour of townspeople, including the women, such as the 'middle aged female inebriate, whose eyes appeared to have suffered from the indulgence...fined 5s. which she tossed on to the table with a very business like air, and expectorating viciously, made her exit with an aspect of supreme contempt for her surroundings'.<sup>45</sup>

Many Portonians, ground down by poverty, lived in the town's slum

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<sup>43</sup> Robert H. W. Reece and R. Pascoe, *A Place of Consequence: A Pictorial History of Fremantle*. (Fremantle WA: 1983) 34-35.

<sup>44</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 September 1878.

<sup>45</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 April 1882.



areas. In the heat of February 1873 one visitor described the rows of sub-standard cottages and the damp conditions which in one way had worsened for the town's poor after 30 years of landfill, the earlier ebb and flow flushings of tidal inundations replaced by confined, stagnating pools.

Many such places may be seen (and smelt) even in the principal streets about the Port....It will be seen that as the roads are raised on either side the houses get sunk in a hollow, which becomes a reservoir of stagnant water, household rubbish and animal matter, frying in the summer sun, and stewing in the winter until, by Nature's perverted cookery, it becomes a feast of fever and a flow of smells.<sup>46</sup>

The outbreak of disease in these cramped and unhealthy conditions was an ever-present threat, and a newspaper report in 1875 drew attention to the urgent need for the services of town scavengers or rubbish collectors to remove the accumulation of refuse in backyards: 'the absence of vigorous efforts of scavenging causes the watertables to be filthy and the contents putrid during hot weather. A radical change in these affairs is desirable...typhoid fever and other malignant diseases may break out and become rampant'.<sup>47</sup>

The early, poorly-built cottages, particularly in overcrowded 'Little Jerusalem' between Timpson and Todd Streets, were still occupied in the early 1880s but by then were in advanced stages of dilapidation.<sup>48</sup> As with the 'casual poor' McCalman described in Richmond, the poor of Port Adelaide lived from week to week, 'the worst off from day to day'.<sup>49</sup> One

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<sup>46</sup> *The Register*, 25 February 1873, in Geoffrey H. Manning, 'Tales of Port Adelaide and Le Fevre Peninsula', *Portonian*, September 1993, 10.

<sup>47</sup> *The Register*, 23 July 1875, in Manning, 11.

<sup>48</sup> In an interview on 11 August 1997, Ray Gilbert, historical researcher, stated that the area was known as 'Little Jerusalem' because of early occupation by Jewish migrants.

<sup>49</sup> McCalman, 23.

area of housing used by this group was described by a journalist in a 1881 article, 'Saturday Night in Port Adelaide':

I...wend my steps towards the region of 'New Jerusalem.' I wander through some of the dark ways of that subterranean quarter of the town, and peer down into the cimmerician darkness in which nothing is distinguishable. One could almost fancy that he was looking in upon a collection of vaults rather than human habitations. As though the inhabitants preferred darkness no streak of light is distinguishable through any crevice of the dismal abodes. At the door of one dwelling the outline of a female form can be dimly traced. Upon what can she meditate as she thus gazes out into the dark and lonely alley? No ray of cheerful light streams through the open door, to lighten the dreary aspect of things. One can rather fancy that clouds of darkness are issuing forth from the cavernous depths inside.<sup>50</sup>

To the west of Nelson Street behind North Parade the same pedestrian observed a 'series of curious dwelling-places, almost underground habitations. The footpath has gradually been raised until the doorways have been half blocked up and appear more like windows'.<sup>51</sup> The old, high-density shanty areas forced one visitor to comment:

I hope the Port of bygone days smelt a little sweeter than the Port of today does. There are gutters full of unmentionable filth which lies sweltering in the sun....There are miserable hovels that are a disgrace to South Australia and there are dirty, bare-footed children running about who appear neither to regard God nor fear man; if any place invited fever and cholera and made their work easy for them, that place is Port Adelaide.<sup>52</sup>

In July 1881 the Port council proposed to inspect the 'unwholesome' hovels which were 'an offence to public decency and an eyesore to the town'.<sup>53</sup> The following month, the sanitary inspector presented a report on dwellings which in his opinion were 'unfit for human habitation'. His report on 33 places provided a graphic description of the occupants and their living conditions. The locations show the dilapidated conditions of

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<sup>50</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 1 June 1881.

<sup>51</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 1 June 1881.

<sup>52</sup> *The Register*, 17 February 1880, in Manning, 11.

<sup>53</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15, 19 July 1881.

what was essentially the older sections of the town. Most of the places specifically mentioned as occupied were tenanted by women and children.

- 6 - House between Nile-street and North parade. Holes through walls and roof; windows broken; altogether in a very bad state; a miserable wretched place, occupied by woman and three children.
- 10 - House in Nile-street, a paling place of two rooms; holes through the sides and roof. Six children - a very miserable place.
- 19 - House in St. Vincent-street, two very miserable small rooms, roof only 7 feet high, wet coming in, no ventilation. Parents and three children occupy.
- 21 - House in same street, three small damp rooms, very miserable, ceiling falling down, water under the floor; no ventilation; back room let to woman and child.
- 23 - Another house in same street occupied by woman and six children; back rooms in a dreadful state; back wall 5 feet high; water coming through the roof. The whole of the premises owned by this proprietor are in a miserable state.
- 24 - House in Dale-street, in a most miserable condition; water coming in through roof of back rooms; water under house: windows broken; place not fit to live in; occupied by man with five children. Served notices respecting place.
- 30 - House in Liddon-street; front rooms 3ft. 10in. below footway; back rooms only 5 feet high; water coming through roof; walls tumbling down; entire house in horrid state; not fit for human habitation. (Four children).
- 33 - House in Timpson-street; miserable, damp rooms; anything but healthy; 2 feet below street; roof 5 feet from footway; not fit to live in; woman occupying it with 5 children thought it unfit to live in but times are very bad.<sup>54</sup>

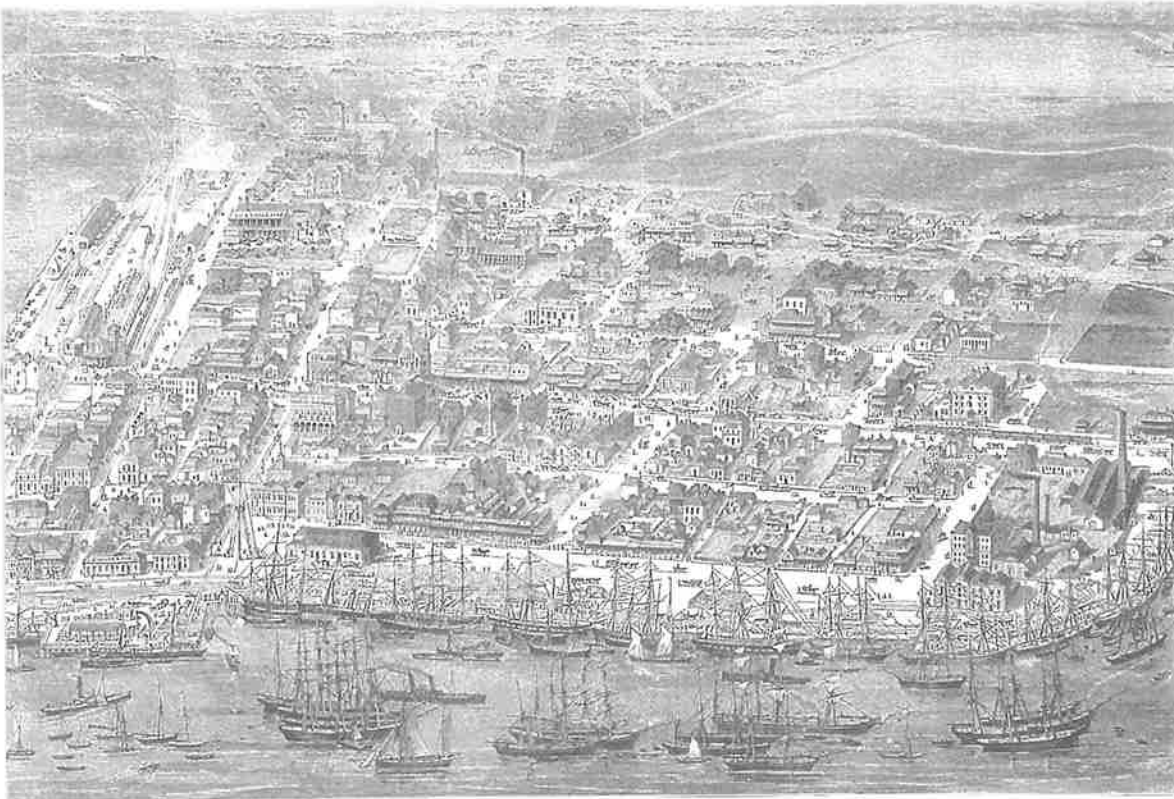
In September 1881 the Board of Health proposed that 'owners of the condemned houses be served with notices that the buildings will not be allowed to be inhabited after one month from that date'.<sup>55</sup> The tenants were forced to find other low cost accommodation and by November a council report stated that 'fourteen of the recently condemned houses have already been removed from the sites which they disfigured, and the work of demolition is still proceeding'.<sup>56</sup> The council was successfully 'cleaning up the town' but appeared to have little or no regard for the people displaced in the exercise. Progress for the town came at a cost for some

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<sup>54</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 2 August 1881.

<sup>55</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 September 1881.

<sup>56</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 November 1881.



**Illustration 9**

'Birdseye view of Port Adelaide', 1879.

Supplement to *The Illustrated Adelaide News*, May 1879.

residents, and although 'Jerusalem' was redeveloped, Todd Street never became, as one writer predicted, one of the finest streets in the port.<sup>57</sup> The problems shifted to Leadenhall Street which was described in December 1882 as having 'become the new Jerusalem of Port Adelaide' with 'a rookery of six wooden houses' behind the Salvation Army barracks being cause for complaint.<sup>58</sup>

At the Port the on-site disposal of human waste had become an increasingly noticeable problem in the established and growing urban area. In 1882 the newspaper commented, 'cesspits are too abominable an invention to be used anywhere'.<sup>59</sup> A year later the paper mentioned the 'anti-septic tank system of dealing with night soil'.<sup>60</sup> The regular removal and disposal of waste was a more manageable system for the council and by January 1884 collecting the rubbish of the town was 'done by contract, the scavenger being required to visit every house once a week'.<sup>61</sup> There was another contract for the 'cleansing of cesspits' with the soil 'disinfected before removal'.<sup>62</sup> The condemned cottages were not the only area of complaint about public health. The morgue or dead-house on the police station premises caused concern with its noxious stench in summer conditions. The health inspector, Thomas Farrell, reported that the

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<sup>57</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 November 1883.

<sup>58</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 December 1882. See also the issue dated 22 April 1887 when a story headed 'Atrocious cruelty of a father' told of family desperation after the mother died and how the drunken father beat three girls aged 8, 6, and 2 and left them alone and hungry at a house in Leadenhall Street.

<sup>59</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 December 1882.

<sup>60</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 July 1883.

<sup>61</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 January 1884.

<sup>62</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 January 1884.

morgue was 'only nine yards from St. Vincent-street, the principal thoroughfare of the town, and not far from the Court house, Casualty Hospital, Town Hall &c'.<sup>63</sup> It was 'injurious to the health of the neighbourhood' with

dead bodies often in advanced stage of decomposition...kept for a considerable time for inquest and identification....The gutter which carries off drainage from an inlet in the floor of the morgue receives all offensive liquids from the washing of dead bodies &c....[and is] carried under building and discharged into river near ferry steps in Commercial-road. The high tides wash back...at times stench is sickening.<sup>64</sup>

Areas of overcrowding and poverty were common in Australian colonial cities at the time. McCalman has described scenes of poverty in Richmond and Karskens examined similar inner city poverty in Sydney. Port Adelaide's problems were compounded by the low-lying nature of the terrain and the exodus of the better-off to the fringes of the town. As the worst areas of derelict housing were cleared and other aging hovels in or near the main streets demolished to make way for the expanding commercial area, more tenants followed to the outskirts of the town and the closer suburbs. Glanville became the home for many of the Port's poor.<sup>65</sup> In Victoria, Williamstown expanded in a similar pattern as early housing made way for commercial and industrial interests and the original narrow laneways of one- or two-room cottages were gradually replaced.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 January 1884.

<sup>64</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 January 1884.

<sup>65</sup> *A Review of the City of Port Adelaide*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1901), in Samuels, 84. See also Samuels, 90A.

<sup>66</sup> Ada Ackerly, 'Naming Streets and Features', History Leaflet 9 for Williamstown City Library, 1987.

The social problems caused by overcrowding and poor housing were also transferred from the town to the opposite bank of the river. During February 1887 a typhoid epidemic broke out in Glanville with 15 cases reported. The newspaper noted that typhoid or enteric fever, known as 'sewer fever', would 'with proper sanitation...be unknown'.<sup>67</sup> The disease spread with five more cases reported in nearby Hart Street. The town council acted quickly, cesspits were checked and nightsoil trenches were spread with lime.<sup>68</sup>

The Port's prostitutes frequented the town's dark, narrow lanes and streets.<sup>69</sup> At least one brothel opened for business at Glanville with four women charged with 'keeping a disorderly house' in May 1884.<sup>70</sup> Many 'ladies of the night' were apprehended and appeared before the stipendary magistrate in the unflattering light of day.<sup>71</sup> The local police showed varied degrees of rigour in keeping the streets clear of prostitutes. A visitor from Adelaide in 1873 observed that 'if any of our Adelaide sirens who flaunt about the city at all hours by day or night attempt to exhibit their free-and-easy manners in the Port they are speedily recommended to transport themselves elsewhere'.<sup>72</sup>

Street women such as Sarah Carter, 'a young woman of light

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<sup>67</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 June 1891.

<sup>68</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 February 1887.

<sup>69</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 July, 3 September 1915.

<sup>70</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 27 May 1884.

<sup>71</sup> There are few records of the lives of the prostitutes on the waterfront; all Magistrate's records for Port Adelaide and Adelaide were officially destroyed in the 1960s. Newspaper Police Court reports and Adelaide Gaol records are the main sources of information. There are only rare references to brothels in the town.

<sup>72</sup> *The Register*, 25 February 1873, in Manning, 10.

reputation', provided regular work for the local police court. On 2 May 1881 she was fined 20 shillings for 'loitering on St. Vincent-street for improper purposes, the constable giving evidence',<sup>73</sup> and eight days later Sarah and Mary Bonn Brooks were sent to gaol for a month for again loitering for immoral purposes.<sup>74</sup>

The *Port Adelaide News* police court reports reveal a general picture of the wretchedness of the lives of some local women at the Port. Unwanted pregnancies sometimes led to infanticide as evidenced in two inquests by the coroner. In April 1881 one female infant, 'the supposed child of Sarah Bridgland', died by 'immersion in excrement' in an outhouse birth;<sup>75</sup> in December 1885 a male infant was found dead on the footpath in Leadenhall Street.<sup>76</sup>

Women who managed to rear their children for a time were in danger of losing them if convicted for prostitution. In March 1887, with magistrates Muecke and Cleave on the bench, a local journalist reported what he termed a 'sad case', a 'painful case' at the court when two mothers were sentenced to 14 days in gaol. The 'kind-hearted arresting constable' supplied each child with a bun for their breakfast. When the mothers appeared to identify their children, 'the little ones cried heartily, and were only pacified as each mother took her little ones in her arms and

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<sup>73</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 May 1881.

<sup>74</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 May 1881.

<sup>75</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 April 1881.

<sup>76</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 December 1885.



soothed them'. The judgement however was more extensive than the regular 'two weeks'. The mothers, were 'relieved of the responsibility of the children' who, charged with being neglected, were to be taken care of 'by the State till the boys attain the age of sixteen, and the girls eighteen years'.<sup>77</sup>

In November 1885, some well-known 'young gentlemen' were questioned in the police court during a case involving a brothel. The fact that sons of the 'middle class' had regularly used the local establishment led a writer with the pseudonym 'X', to pen a letter to the editor of *Port Adelaide News*, headed 'Another Evil', with the comment, 'the young girls...are simply the material result of what others have made them'. The writer condemned the actions of the young men and challenged 'society' to ostracise them for their behaviour. This, it was suggested, might be more effective than legislation, which, the writer noted, 'may slightly lessen the evil, or cause it to be carried on more secretly...a few convictions may result, but one may feel pretty sure that the "Curled darlings of Society" will not be amongst those convicted'.<sup>78</sup> The writer identified the women as unfortunate victims of their environment and summarily dismissed them. Anger was directed to the lack of punishment for the young men who broke the rules of 'proper behaviour'. The immediate reaction was to preserve a desirable 'society' with any

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<sup>77</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 11 March 1887.

<sup>78</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 November 1885.

perceived flaws hidden from view.

At first the *Port Adelaide News* rarely used the word 'prostitution' and reported the occupation of the women in a number of ambiguous, but easily decoded, ways: 'three flashy females', 'members of the demi-monde', 'lewd women', 'idle and disorderly', 'wretched girls', 'loitering women', 'asphalte trotters', the 'frail sisterhood', 'streetwalker', 'a lady of professional impropriety', and a 'number of soiled doves [who] opened an establishment'.<sup>79</sup> In December 1878 a journalist reported a public meeting on the 'Chinese Question' and 'their practice of importing girls for the purpose of prostitution'.<sup>80</sup> The word 'prostitution', in this instance, was no longer hidden behind colourful allusions.

Many cases involved repeat offenders over the years. Susan Slater, 'a lady of professional impropriety and habitually intemperate', was fined ten shillings in February 1881 and the same two months later.<sup>81</sup> Others had a second chance as in the case of Margaret Cameron who was given 14 days' imprisonment, 'to commence from the time that she again appeared before the Court'.<sup>82</sup> In January 1880 Susy Kane was fined ten shillings for prostitution, ten shillings for indecency and five shillings

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<sup>79</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 March, 19, 26 April 1879, 23 February 1883, 18 April, 9 September 1884.

<sup>80</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 7 December 1878. The danger of opium and prostitution in relation to the Chinese was again discussed in *Port Adelaide News*, 5 May 1879. See also Richards, 21. On the subject of opium it is interesting to note that in 1888 a visiting Congregational minister suggested that 'South Australia should develop its commercial production of the poppy for the manufacture of opium, presumably for the oriental markets'.

<sup>81</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 February, 6 April 1881.

<sup>82</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 February 1881.

costs.<sup>83</sup> It was highly possible that women would need to reoffend to recoup that amount of money. An 'old offender', Mary McEvoy, who was described by the court reporter as 'walking the downward path of life', was sent to gaol for 14 days in October 1891 and for two months in December the same year for being 'an idle and disorderly person'.<sup>84</sup> The evidence seems to indicate that at times family members worked together as prostitutes. Four women charged with keeping a disorderly house at Glanville in 1884 included Susan Parker, Hannah Mazay, and Anne and Ellen Kennedy, possibly sisters.<sup>85</sup> The name Mazey, or 'Mazay', was noted again in December 1891 when, with Harriet Lynch, Anne and Sarah Mazey were charged with loitering and sent to gaol for one month.<sup>86</sup>

Public assumptions about the Port, prostitution and the behaviour of seamen in the town, were often close to that defined by Michael Page, although the police were increasingly controlling the intrusions of unacceptable behaviour in public places. Page's claims about non-conformist church members certainly have validity.

The people of Port Adelaide always were greatly concerned with the morals, welfare, and behaviour of the floating population of seafarers, no doubt with some justice. Hundreds passed through the port each year and although a certain number were local residents, employed in the coastal and intercolonial sailing ships and steamers, a great many were deep-sea sailors. The majority were British...and they reached Port Adelaide at the end of a gruelling voyage from British or European ports. The pubs and brothels were eager to relieve them of their pathetic wages when they came ashore looking for some relaxation, and the upright citizens tut-tutted at the sight of drunks sleeping it off in the gutter or staggering noisily back to their ships. They strove to improve the situation not only for the sake of the local maidens but also because an earnest reforming and evangelistic spirit was characteristic of the nonconformist element of the population.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10 January 1880.

<sup>84</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 October, 11 December 1891.

<sup>85</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 27 May 1884. (See page 136.)

<sup>86</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 11 December 1891.

<sup>87</sup> Michael Page, *Port Adelaide and its Institute 1851-1979*. (Adelaide, 1981) 95-96.

The dockside generated other employment for women. There was work doing ships' washing and in the kitchens and laundries of hotels. Domestic servants were in high demand throughout the colony but had little security of employment. Many lived on-the-job. Shurlee Swain described a similar situation in her study of the poor in Melbourne: 'Most servants lived in, and if dismissed, whatever the reason, lost their home as well as their livelihood'.<sup>88</sup>

In 1879 the *Port Adelaide News* reported that hundreds of single female migrants arriving at the Port found work in South Australia: 'All the female immigrants ex *Loch Fyne* were engaged within three hours of landing. More are wanted'.<sup>89</sup> In January 1881 Mrs Cotton at the National Bank residence inserted an advertisement in the newspaper over two weeks: 'Wanted useful girl', and in October 1882 was again advertising, on that occasion for a 'respectable young girl as nursegirl'.<sup>90</sup> It would be appropriate for a bank manager and his wife to select their staff carefully, perhaps employing a daughter of a family they knew in the town. Such employment however was not readily available to the poorer women with children at the Port. For them remaining unemployed for an extended length of time increased their chances of turning to prostitution.

Susan Horan's 1978 study of South Australian prostitution referred

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<sup>88</sup> Shurlee Swain, 'The Poor People of Melbourne', in Graeme Davison, David Dunstan and Chris McConville (eds), *The Outcasts of Melbourne: Essays in Social History*. (Sydney, 1985) 101.

<sup>89</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 March 1879.

<sup>90</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5, 8, 15 January 1881, 24 October 1882.

to Bernard Shaw's recognition of the plight of poor and needy women in England. In 1894 Shaw stated that 'prostitution is caused, not by female depravity and male licentiousness, but simply by underpaying, undervaluing, and over working women so shamefully that the poorest of them are forced to resort to prostitution to keep body and soul together'.<sup>91</sup> Horan agreed with Judith and Daniel Walkowitz's suggestion that it was reasonable to assume in English port towns during the 1860s that women engaged in prostitution had 'previous sexual experiences and that for many the distinction between promiscuity and clandestine prostitution may have remained blurred'.<sup>92</sup> Many of the Port Adelaide women are likely to have faced similar circumstances.

The court house was one location in the town where the raw realities of life and language were openly aired. In 1883 the language used in the court upset the sensibilities of one person, perhaps a compulsory witness, who wrote to the editor of the local paper after a case against 'the woman Kennedy for keeping a disorderly house'. The writer objected to witnesses having to repeat 'vilely-obscene' words and to those in the court having to listen 'no matter how disgusting'. A suggestion was made to have 'any language offensive to delicacy' written down and shown to the

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<sup>91</sup> Bernard Shaw, 'Mrs. Warren's Profession', in Dan H. Lawrence, *The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw Collected Plays With Their Prefaces*. Vol. 1. (London, 1970) 231, cited in Susan J. Horan, 'More Sinned against than Sinning? Prostitution in South Australia 1836-1914'. B.A. Honours Thesis, The Flinders University of South Australia, 1978, 16, Footnote 36.

<sup>92</sup> Judith R. Walkowitz and Daniel J. Walkowitz, "'We are not Beasts of the Field": Prostitution and the Poor in Plymouth and Southampton under the Contagious Diseases Act', *Feminist Studies*. Vol. 1 (3/4), 1973, 73-106, cited in Horan, 15.

magistrate and the 'necessary parties'.<sup>93</sup> On the other hand, less easily offended Portonians frequently attended court sessions which they seem to have regarded as a source of free theatre and entertainment.

In 1879 the Adelaide Licensing Bench published a reminder in the Port newspaper that the *Licensed Victuallers Act* of 1869 levied a penalty for allowing prostitutes to assemble at hotel premises.<sup>94</sup> While there are scattered reports of prostitutes in the town's streets there are very few in relation to the pubs. The police were increasingly vigilant. The *Port Adelaide News* stated in 1882 that 'no sooner does a prostitute begin to ply her wretched traffic...than she is at once brought into contact with the police, and so dealt with by imprisonment....The process is effectual, and the port is saved from witnessing those scenes of utter debauchery with which certain portions of Adelaide are familiar'.<sup>95</sup>

The comparison of the Port with Adelaide was a common subject in the local paper which was always ready to prove that Port Adelaide compared well. There was also a desire to put a more rollicking Port behind. In early 1882 the paper proudly reported a reduction in the incidence of prostitution, a 'marked absence of open and avowed dissoluteness', compared with the 'conspicuousness of flaunting profligacy' in Adelaide. The reason given for the change at the Port was the increase in police surveillance and action against street prostitution

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<sup>93</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 11 May 1883.

<sup>94</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 March 1879. A levy 'of not more than £20'.

<sup>95</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 February 1882.

and brothels.

Hindley-street is notorious for its array of harlots on parade in some parts of the day and far into the night: to no place or thoroughfare in Port Adelaide can such a significant descriptive epithet apply. Of course, we readily admit that years ago severe things might have been written of the Port: its wharves sometimes witnessed scenes utterly degrading and disgraceful. There were things done in open day which were a shame to our boasted civilization. But all this belongs to the past, and now the Port is, as we have indicated, remarkable in the extreme - remembering its large population and its classifications, and the constant influx of sea-faring men from foreign ports - for its quietude and decorum.<sup>96</sup>

However upright citizens of the now settled Port were far from satisfied. In June the following year a local group refuted the claim that the problem was under control when a 'Social Purity Deputation' appeared before a meeting of the local council. In early 1882 the Reverend Joseph Coles Kirby, incumbent at the Congregational Church, began the social purity movement which eventually had significant effects in Port Adelaide, South Australia and other Australian colonies. Kirby was part of the deputation along with Dr Curtis, Canon Samuel Green representing the Church of England, J. E. Dempster, representing the Presbyterian Church, and Emanuel Hounslow, the Seamen's Missioner. On this occasion Green was chief spokesman and delivered a condemnation of prostitution in the town.

In the last twelve months the aspect of the Port of an evening had altered much for the worse. There was a great deal more of prostitution than there used to be and he constantly saw those unhappy women walking the streets. Only a short time ago a girl fourteen years of age was sent to the Destitute Asylum from Port Adelaide to be confined - She was of weak intellect, though not an idiot, and the reputed father had gone to sea.<sup>97</sup>

Dr Curtis commented that 'in his professional rounds he had noticed an increase in prostitution in Port Adelaide, and had seen girls of 13, 14 and

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<sup>96</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 February 1882.

<sup>97</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 29 June 1883.

16 years of age out at all hours of the night'.<sup>98</sup>

Council members replied defensively, questioning the accuracy of these observations. The local paper reported Councillor Beattie making comparisons between various English and Scottish seaport towns and saying he 'had never been in a better conducted port'. Councillor Haddy was 'grieved to hear the remarks of Canon Green about immorality in Port Adelaide, and without reflecting on his veracity was sure they were highly colored, and he did not think they should be allowed to go forth to the world unquestioned. He believed that the vigilance of the police and the Council's officers had kept the town very clear of the evil referred to'. The mayor was convinced the problem was not one relating to Port women. In his view 'any increase (if any) of evil was merely from bad characters being driven from Town [Adelaide], and stopping in the Port until the last train'.

The council clearly came down on the side of propriety. Councillor Malin was 'glad that the movement had originated in the Port'. The council was clear in its desire to ensure that the reputation of the Port was upheld and that 'social purity' be encouraged. The report concluded that 'all of the Councillors spoke in favor of complying with the wish of the deputation [and] resolved to sign the petition'.<sup>99</sup>

In March 1884 Green presented a lecture on 'Impure Living' and

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<sup>98</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 29 June 1883.

<sup>99</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 29 June 1883.



made an earnest appeal to his listeners to abstain from 'the great sin'.<sup>100</sup> A month later Mayor Thomas King and the council were besieged by complaints when the town hall was hired for a masquerade ball, 'for the profit of a party of city prostitutes' and seemed 'to have been converted into a sort of pandemonium'.<sup>101</sup> The police checked on activities. One writer of a 'Letter to the Editor' stated that the Inspector of Police visited the supper room about midnight and was heard to say, 'Light Square is well represented here to-night'.<sup>102</sup> For many weeks letters to the *Port Adelaide News* were mainly in regard to the event. To add further embarrassment to the council and shock to the churches, the ball occurred on Maundy Thursday with 'dancing...kept up until 5 a.m. on Good Friday morning'.<sup>103</sup> The outrage from certain upright citizens was not confined to the date of the event; complaints were also voiced against the 'scanty dress', the 'number of disreputable characters', the 'swearing and obscene language' of the revellers, and the fact that 'permits to remain open until 2 a.m. were granted to two hotels nearby'. 'The Mask ball', said one writer, 'was...a disgrace to the town and an outrage on decency'.<sup>104</sup>

In the newspaper three days later one ballgoer defended those who attended.

There was no indecency of dress. That several of the ladies present might not have passed the Sunday-school standard of moral rectitude, I freely admit; but I

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<sup>100</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 March 1884.

<sup>101</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 April 1884.

<sup>102</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 April 1884.

<sup>103</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 April 1884.

<sup>104</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 April 1884.

positively deny that any obscene language was used in the room, or that anyone was under the influence of liquor.<sup>105</sup>

The presence of known prostitutes attending public events had to be accepted even if not condoned. In the same paper a correspondent asked,

to what place of public entertainment can one go without meeting members of the frail sisterhood? At theatres, balls and concerts they are always found; but providing they behave decently and are not obtrusive in their manners, I fail to see how we are always to discriminate.<sup>106</sup>

At the Port, one councillor held the leading men of the town to account at the next meeting of council: 'It was a disgrace to Port Adelaide that such an assemblage should be permitted in the Town Hall....[it] may be better to refuse lettings than insult the public sense of decency'.<sup>107</sup>

Whatever the truth of the incident it demonstrated the tension between two views of acceptable behaviour. The desire for respectability was increasingly making ground on the free and easy ways of an earlier seafarers' town.

By May the issue had been all but forgotten with the paper reporting, 'The Port is a remarkably quiet place, thanks to the preventive vigilance of Sub-Inspector Doyle and his small staff of peace officers'.<sup>108</sup> As reported in the local press, the most troublesome problem at the Port appeared to be 'the crowding of men and lads at the publichouse corners especially Saturday nights and on some other nights - very unpleasant'.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 April 1884.

<sup>106</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 April 1884.

<sup>107</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 April 1884.

<sup>108</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 May 1884.

<sup>109</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 May 1884.

Four months later the town prostitutes had returned to their usual activities and 'Notes by the Footpath Philosopher' in the Port paper commented on 'the number of young girls who frequent the asphalt between the Commercial-road and Jervois Bridge after dark....It appears to me that police policy amounts to leaving "tolerably well" alone; there is no anxiety to look out for work, or some of these asphalt trotters would be requested to face His Worship'.<sup>110</sup>

In 1886 a local trio set up and moved their brothel around the suburbs just one step ahead of police. They finally came to court but showed no reluctance in continuing their way of life in the future.

Three young women, two of whom are under 20 years of age, appeared on the charge of keeping a disorderly house in Rosewater....started business in Glanville...Corporal Kelly disturbed the nest and the three blushing beauties removed to Alberton...Constable Davidson caused their removal within ten days. Their business resumed in Rosewater, where Constable Beare succeeded in arresting them....Pleaded guilty....Upon leaving the Court one of the girls cried out, 'Good-bye, all, for three months. See you again soon.'<sup>111</sup>

The port continued its cycle of quiet then flurry on the waterfront although by the mid 1880s it was generally busy with ships. Stories of drunken seamen, fighting, stealing, riotous behaviour and indecent language continued in the paper, alongside lengthy discourses on Sunday's sermons from the churches. By the early 1890s there is evidence that police at Port Adelaide were again keeping a close rein on prostitution and brothels in the town and that many reported offences were by Adelaide prostitutes who frequented the Port for business. For example

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<sup>110</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 September 1884.

<sup>111</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 24 September 1886.

police records for October-November 1892 show no 'known prostitutes' at Port Adelaide while 208 are noted for Adelaide and 10 for 'Country Districts', the 'only area outside Adelaide city and suburbs with a positive result in this regard'. As well as those women 'known' to police there were 'occasional' or 'part-time' prostitutes not recorded.<sup>112</sup>

The police reports for Port Adelaide maintained that whatever soliciting took place was carried out by prostitutes 'visiting' from Adelaide, 'their beats...generally around the stores and wharves'.<sup>113</sup> Two such women, formerly occupants of a brothel in Waymouth Street opposite the Shakespeare Hotel in Adelaide, travelled daily to Port Adelaide in 1914 to carry out business there.<sup>114</sup> They opened a cool drinks and confectioner's shop, but at night at least, there was 'no doubt', a police report noted, 'but that it is a house of ill-fame'.<sup>115</sup> There is evidence that using such a shop as a front for prostitution was not uncommon. *The Advertiser*, 18 August 1915, remarked on the 'little fruit or cool-drinks shop' as a screen for such activities and Horan noted a 'number of such cases' in police files.<sup>116</sup> A similar ruse of the period was found by Bronwyn Dalley in a recent New Zealand study.<sup>117</sup> In the case of New

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<sup>112</sup> Reports sent to Police Commissioner's Office, Adelaide. (State Archives, GRG 5/2, P.C.O. 1892, File 967) in Horan, 9.

<sup>113</sup> Report by Foot Constable Curtain. (State Archives, P.C.O. 1913, File 851) in Horan, 9-10.

<sup>114</sup> Memorandum, Commissioner of Police, Adelaide, to Inspector Bennett, Port Adelaide. (State Archives, P.C.O. 1914, File 631) in Horan, 9-10.

<sup>115</sup> Horan, 9-10. Horan observed from police reports that both women were served notice by their landlord a couple of months later with Lizzie E-- returning to her husband, a photographer in Morphett Street, and Mrs H-- to an address not ascertained by the police.

<sup>116</sup> Horan, 18.

<sup>117</sup> Bronwyn Dalley, 'Lolly Shops "of the Red-light Kind" and "Soldiers of the King": Suppressing One-woman Brothels in New Zealand, 1908-1916', *New Zealand Journal of History*. Vol. 30 (1), 1996, 3-23.

Zealand however a 1908 Supreme Court ruling legalised prostitution where a woman provided sexual services in her home or in commercial premises she rented or owned for her exclusive use. This legal position facilitated the use of small lolly shops as fronts for prostitution.<sup>118</sup>

At Port Adelaide concern was understandably raised when residential areas were affected by activities usually restricted to the wharfside precinct. The lack of adequate town lighting was a constant source for complaint. It was difficult to move around the Port at night. There were no street signs and the only lights were the compulsory lamps outside the hotels.<sup>119</sup> The hotels did not always adhere to the law and were frequently fined for neglecting to provide lights. In the police court on 12 June 1878,

Charles Brown, landlord of the Prince's Hotel, Port Adelaide, was charged on remand from the previous day with neglecting to have a lighted lamp in front of his house between sunset, June 9, and sunrise of the following morning. Robert Sayers, of the Port Hotel, Henry Barnes, of the Wharf Hotel, Arthur Russell of the British Hotel, and John Murphy, of the Britannia Hotel, were similarly charged. Mr. Wadley appeared for the defendants and stated that....he thought Nock's Act was somewhat inconsistent in not allowing the publicans to open for sale and at the same time compelling them to keep a light....each fined minimum penalty of 10s. without costs (after assuring the Bench that they intended to comply with the Act in future).<sup>120</sup>

In 1878, the council considered street illumination and conducted a poll of ratepayers to gauge support for gas street lighting. On 22 November 1878 the mayor explained the situation.

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<sup>118</sup> Dalley, 3-23.

<sup>119</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 July 1883, which also included comments on the 'dim mysterious light emitting from the miserable little lamp over the local Police Station'.

<sup>120</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 June 1878. In 1876 the second *Licensed Victuallers Act, 1869* was amended by a Bill introduced by David Nock, M.L.C. for the District of Light.

Last year it was thought advisable to light the streets with gas, and a poll of the ratepayers was taken, but the result was adverse; hence nothing has been done in the matter, which I feel sorry for, as to traverse the back streets more particularly in the dark is objectionable, and not in keeping with the rapid improvement of the town.<sup>121</sup>

The mayor was able to report however that the council had fixed street names at corners during the year. 'This will be found to be very useful', he said, 'particularly to strangers visiting Port Adelaide'.<sup>122</sup> Limited progress may have been made but the lack of adequate street signage was a recurring problem at the Port for another 35 years. A newspaper report in 1913 made the complaint that very few streets had name-plates and property numbers for both business and residential premises were non-existent.

It must result in considerable loss to our business community....The business man, for an address of any definiteness at all finds himself reduced to giving his address as 'rear of Sailors' Home,' 'opposite the Institute,' 'opposite Town Hall,' 'near Ferry,' or any other well-known land-mark of the Port. We know of no other city in the Commonwealth where such an antiquated state of things exists....correspondence and business is constantly going astray as a result of this state of affairs, and, at the best, delay in postal delivery is an inevitable result.<sup>123</sup>

One group which took advantage of the Port's lack of street lights were the larrikins who in the early days of the Port, as Peter Wright recalled, were simply boisterous young men.

As permanent residents there were a lot of strong, healthy, rollicking young men, whose ranks were often swelled by returning whalers from the fisheries, by a number of old hands from Kangaroo Island, and numerous kindred spirits from the vessels in the harbour. When these were on for a lark the fun grew fast and furious, both by day and night.<sup>124</sup>

By 1873 larrikin behaviour caused complaint at the Port: 'the evil doing of droves of catfish youths who think it needful to moon about the

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<sup>121</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 November 1878.

<sup>122</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 November 1878.

<sup>123</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 December 1913.

<sup>124</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 December 1895.

bridge...till it develops itself in spiteful and often-times disgusting remarks upon passers-by'.<sup>125</sup> Fears were expressed that it was 'scarcely safe for a lady to walk alone in the back streets of the Port after dark'.

The paper gave an account of Miss Oxley of Commercial Road,

who returning home from a friend's in Quebec-street, was knocked down by some cowardly rascal just opposite Lindsay's foundry. Her screams for assistance frightened the fellow, who made off so promptly that, although constables Smyth and Rae were on the spot almost immediately, no trace of him was visible.<sup>126</sup>

One writer to the paper understood that underlying social problems were a frequent cause of many young men being drawn onto the streets and asked,

can anything be done for our boys? There are some hundreds who are qualified for the 'Larrikin' class, and who night after night pursue their studies in the streets. Can anything be done for them? They are forced out of their homes by the squalor, the want of space, and in some cases by absolute brutality, or by the utter absence of anything that goes to make what the more fortunate of us prize as 'home life'.<sup>127</sup>

In 1879 C. W. Prest wrote to the *Port Adelaide News* with comments on 'the hundred-and-one well-defined stinks Port Adelaide can boast, to say nothing of its many larrikins and roughs'.<sup>128</sup> In a later issue he commented on the unsuitability of both Adelaide and the Port as places for a family to live compared with the residential areas of Glenelg, North Adelaide and Islington. Workers had little choice but to live near their place of employment.

I know Port Adelaide well - having kind remembrances of many of its people - known the improvements since St. Vincent-street was flooded - know of its increased importance - rise in property - social status - and excellence of its newspaper; but for all that it is not so free from vice as Glenelg - or so well drained as North Adelaide - or so healthy as Islington. Lipson-street is no doubt very good,

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<sup>125</sup> *The Register*, 3 April 1873.

<sup>126</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 September 1879.

<sup>127</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 August 1879.

<sup>128</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 March 1879.

but you must not blame me if I say it won't compare for a moment with Childers-street. And when I speak of roughs and larrikins I well know there are far more in Adelaide...Port Adelaide as a seaport, &c., is not and can't be expected to be, so desirable a place to bring up a family as Islington.<sup>129</sup>

Youth delinquency was a widespread problem in cities around Australia and in many countries overseas. Melbourne larrikins during the 1880s were described in a 1985 study by Chris McConville as 'great powerful young men who, getting half-drunk are generally reckless to consequences' and as in the Port, 'evenings idled away on street corners, rowdy displays and deliberate insult of "respectable passers-by" defined the larrikin'.<sup>130</sup> John Lack in his history of Footscray and Janet McCalman in her history of Richmond both highlight the larrikin nuisance in these suburbs of Melbourne.<sup>131</sup> McCalman recorded one resident stating that groups of larrikins in the early twentieth-century 'were opposite to the churchgoers - there was a definite division between those who went to church and those who didn't. A lot of the unrespectable - the larrikins - were against the government and the law. And in a lot of cases they were drunkards. They liked to break up things and were jealous of people who got on'.<sup>132</sup>

In Sydney the gang mobs of larrikins were known as 'the push' which was a term used for a convict labour gang. 'Push' was also used around Melbourne but has not been noted in Port Adelaide reminiscences.

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<sup>129</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 April 1879.

<sup>130</sup> Chris McConville, 'From 'criminal class' to 'underworld'', in Davison et al, *The Outcasts of Melbourne*, 72.

<sup>131</sup> John Lack, *A History of Footscray*. (North Melbourne Vic, 1991) 216-218, 242-243, 260, and McCalman, 28.

<sup>132</sup> McCalman, 28.



However the maritime derivation of larrikin from 'skylarking' (dropping on a rope from ship's rigging for a joke), which became 'larkin' around', or fooling about, was part of a port vernacular.<sup>133</sup> The term 'hooligan' from the Gaelic *uallachán*, a braggart, was less frequently used.<sup>134</sup>

As in Richmond the loitering youths at the Port were not just an annoying street element; they frequently destroyed property and in one case distressed an animal to death. In May 1881 J. Deslandes, woken by noises in his yard, found 'some larrikins' around his valuable draught horse which died the next day. In a newspaper interview he stated that 'he would try the effect of a dose of powder and shot upon the next midnight prowler he discovers on his premises'.<sup>135</sup>

In 1882 'the spirit of larrikinism' in the Port was said to be 'rampant amongst us' and in December that year Councillor Bridgman complained that 'larrikins jostled people near the market buildings of a night'.<sup>136</sup> The feeling was widespread in the colonies at the time. In his study of Melbourne streets in the nineteenth century, Andrew Brown-May described the 'growing concerns not only about circulatory congestion, but about class respectability, noise, race, litter, and municipal self-image'.<sup>137</sup> Port Adelaide seemed to be coping better with the problems of

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<sup>133</sup> E. Dyson, *Fact'ry 'ands*. (1906) 119.

<sup>134</sup> Craig M. Carver, *A History of English in Its Own Words*. (New York, 1991) 242.

<sup>135</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 11 May 1881.

<sup>136</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 17 February and 1 December 1882.

<sup>137</sup> Andrew J. Brown-May, 'The itinerary of our days': the historical experience of the street in Melbourne, 1837-1923'. Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Melbourne, 1993, Abstract.

transient seamen than with the home-grown larrikin. A reporter on a Saturday evening walk around the Port in 1883 found it was crowded but relatively free from the drunken behaviour expected in a shipping port, 'with the exception of a group of larrikins and larrikinesses at the corner of one street (and which of the two sexes [sic] behaved worst 'twas hard to say)'.<sup>138</sup> With intentional discretion, the incomplete word 'sexes' was left for the reader to deduce.

Port Melbourne and Williamstown, the port towns on Hobson's Bay, experienced similar trouble. Wilson Evans stated that at Williamstown in 1874 'larrikinism became rife...when young roughs and toughs swarmed the streets bashing young brass-bounders from visiting ships. In October of that year a mixed mob of apprentices from ships and local toughs numbering 300 slugged it out in Nelson Place'. Offences in the town were at most times restricted to the large number of intoxicated persons 'expected in a seaport where hotels occupied most street corners' and 'between cycles of larrikinism, the local crime rate was not high'.<sup>139</sup> Nancy U'Ren and Noel Turnbull argued that at Port Melbourne 'rowdyism was certainly the problem police were required to deal with most often'. Shopkeepers in the town worried about the effect on their businesses and complained of 'larrikins insulting customers and throwing rubbish into shops'.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 December 1883.

<sup>139</sup> Wilson P. Evans, *Port of Many Prows*. (Melbourne, 1969) 52.

<sup>140</sup> Nancy U'Ren and Noel Turnbull, *A History of Port Melbourne*. (Melbourne, 1983) 163.

At Port Adelaide, troublesome though the larrikins were, they infrequently degenerated into rival gangs or hardened criminal behaviour. There was a view that the problem could be contained by better street lighting, a stronger police presence and diversion to other less anti-social activities.

One Portonian, uneasy about the loitering youths, renewed the discussion on the need for lighting, 'if the streets were gaslit we'd have less mischief. We must get the town better-lighted'.<sup>141</sup> The local council was moving in the same direction. On 19 March 1881, the town clerk's office advertised for tenders 'for 50 gas lamps and pillars'.<sup>142</sup> The next month the paper had some encouraging news with the announcement, 'we are glad to see Mr. R. Lindsay's tender has been accepted for the street-lamps for the Port'.<sup>143</sup>

Shops which opened on Sundays were avoided by the pious. It remained for non-churchgoers to provide custom or at least to hang around in the vicinity of the only street activity on that day. In February 1885 the Reverend R. Kelly from the Methodist Church, and an advocate for closing shops on Sundays, observed:

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<sup>141</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 January 1881.

<sup>142</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 March 1881.

<sup>143</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 April 1881. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 9 September 1881. At a corporation meeting it was reported that 'thirty additional lamps and pillars to be ordered. Nine for St. Vincent-street'. A lamp was requested 'near the Birkenhead ferry steps' to which Councillor Honey replied 'if the Marine Board would hand over Mundy-street Wharf as promised the Corporation would see to the matter. They had a lamp at the street corner which was sufficient'. The Port was first illuminated by electric light on 1 January 1899 from a power house built in Nile Street by the 'South Australian Electric Light & Motive Power Company', the first town supply in the colony. In 1907 the facility was closed when power was supplied from a station in Grenfell Street, Adelaide. A power station at Osborne opened in 1923.

none of the respectable class of people patronised those shops; it was mostly the troublesome classes. He had noticed crowds of young men of the larrikin class, and women of a doubtful character, congregated round the doors of some of the shops which opened on Sundays, and the language uttered by them was very annoying to passers-by.<sup>144</sup>

The council discussed the problem of the roaming youths in January 1894 after the town surveyor reported that

during the holidays the larrikin element had been in evidence. Six of the Corporation wheeling planks and two wheelbarrows were thrown into the river near the Dale Street wharf. The Planks were lost and one barrow, considerably damaged, was recovered. Tree guards and trees were removed completely, gratings broken away from their places, two water troughs carried away - one, an iron one, presumably thrown into the river. This notwithstanding that several special constables were sworn in to assist the police.<sup>145</sup>

Some townspeople tried to provide alternative activities designed to give the town a better image. A group of 'more fortunate' youths began the Port Adelaide Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society. An advertisement announced that the society, 'assisted by friends, will give a musical and literary entertainment in the Oddfellows' Hall on Monday evening'.<sup>146</sup> Mr Johnson recited, very appropriately for the gathering, 'Damon and Pythias', the saga of two youths of the fifth century B.C. whose loyalty to each other symbolised true friendship which was rewarded by Dionysius I of Syracuse.<sup>147</sup> The Port concert, for sixpence admission, drew a full house but was hardly enticing activity for the rough and tumble youths wandering the streets. The problem of the roaming larrikins continued. Calls were still being made to solve the situation in 1904.

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<sup>144</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 February 1885.

<sup>145</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 January 1894.

<sup>146</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 June 1878.

<sup>147</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 June 1878.

The 'Boy Problem' is not being considered one moment too soon for the good of Port Adelaide. Many property owners know to their cost how serious are the depredations committed by boys. The wharf rat; the neglected child and the offspring of criminal parents is increasing in numbers.<sup>148</sup>

The churches endeavoured to improve the tone of the town but those in need of reform eluded the cause. Only a select few would plan a night out to hear Reverend Robert M. Hunter who travelled from Adelaide and 'delighted a good audience at the Wesleyan Church, Port Adelaide, on Thursday evening, with his excellent lecture on 'The Scottish Covenanters'.<sup>149</sup> Slightly more thrilling was watching 'a match...played on the Port United Quoit Ground, between our local champion, Ben Godfrey, and Joe Ellis [of] West Torrens'.<sup>150</sup> The delights of the game however would be lost on the rowdier town youths.

A newspaper column entitled 'Amusements' discussed the entertainment preferences of the townspeople and concluded that

dancing, of the 'cow-shed' variety principally, is extremely popular, and one has only to walk past any of the popular halls on almost any night in the week to be assured of this fact.

Portonians are very fond of amusements of a light description. Their popular enjoyments are not of the intellectual stamp that would appeal to the sober but somewhat slow mind of the Scotchman, or of his continental friend, the German; in fact the Portonian loves fun, which, everything considered, is not at all peculiar. He doesn't care about bothering his cranium too much; he rather prefers the physical sensation of laughter to the more aesthetic and intellectual enjoyment which is produced by the pursuit of knowledge or initiation into the intricate windings of philosophy.<sup>151</sup>

Clubs for a variety of sports were becoming increasingly popular.

The Port Adelaide Bicycle Club was formed on 12 February 1885 with its

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<sup>148</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 August 1904.

<sup>149</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 October 1878.

<sup>150</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 11 February 1887.

<sup>151</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 September 1895.

first event on 2 March, a ride from the Port to Gepps Cross and back. At the meeting of the club it was decided 'that the club costume should be navy blue, with majenta-and-blue forage caps'.<sup>152</sup> The club included its own brass band.<sup>153</sup> Also popular was the Homing Club mentioned in the local press in 1887 when 'four birds competed in a race from Manoora - 75 miles. The birds were dispatched by the 7.40 a.m. train from Port, and were courteously released by the Station master, Mr. Pills, at intervals of fifteen minutes apart'.<sup>154</sup> A Baseball Club was formed in 1889 with Mayor John M. Cleave as president. The club colours also included magenta and blue which were becoming the town colours.<sup>155</sup>

The marine environment motivated competition in aquatic sports and the annual New Year's Day Regatta, which featured sailing, rowing and swimming, was a regular event from the late 1840s. In 1861 *The Register* reported visitors coming by train and by road all 'bent on pleasure, and...desirous of reaching the scene of gaiety' where 'the Port...presented such a...cheerful appearance'.<sup>156</sup> Adelaide folk considered this a holiday outing to the Port by train and enjoyed their day on the quayside or on board the various craft in the harbour.<sup>157</sup> In 1881 the *Port Adelaide News* recorded that 'they came by train and on foot; in equinine-propelled vehicles of all descriptions, and from the family buggy to the German

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<sup>152</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 February 1885.

<sup>153</sup> *Mudflats to Metropolis*, 37.

<sup>154</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 29 July 1887.

<sup>155</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 29 March 1889.

<sup>156</sup> *The Register*, 26 January 1861.

<sup>157</sup> *Portonian*, December 1989, 3-13.

waggon; from the barouche to the donkey-cart. Thence they bestowed themselves into nooks and crannies; over and under the wharves, on ferry steps and in ships' rigging with astonishing celerity'.<sup>158</sup> In 1914 Sweeney recalled past regattas, not knowing that year's festivity would be the last.

Thousands of persons lined the water frontages, and it was looked upon as Port Adelaide's gala day....The only place of outing on New Year's Day was the Port, and to the Port they came - merry-go-rounds, Aunt Sally, and all such games were at hand, and the cries of those who were out for business livened up the line of the water frontage. I can almost to-day hear them calling, 'Lemon kali, a penny a glass.'

The programme opened with a first-class sailing race....The bulk of the rowing was in heavy boats such as life boats, whale boats, ships' gigs etc., and some splendid contests were witnessed.<sup>159</sup>

Sailing was a sport as well as an occupation in the town and the first meeting of the Sailing Club was held at Birkenhead Hotel on 15 September 1891.<sup>160</sup>

Away from the water, horse racing was popular with both participants and spectators. A Port Adelaide Racing Club was formed and held its first race day in March 1890 at the 100 acre Jenkins Paddock on Grand Junction Road. On 26 December 1895 the club opened a new racecourse, Cheltenham Park.<sup>161</sup> While the respectable citizens of the town welcomed the growth in sport as alternative activity to larrikin loitering, the social reformers disapproved of another venue which permitted gambling and drinking.<sup>162</sup> The social reform movement was gathering

<sup>158</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 January 1881.

<sup>159</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 2 January 1914.

<sup>160</sup> *Mudflats to Metropolis*, 38. The yearly subscription to the club was 10/- with an entry fee of 5/- for yacht owners and 2/6 for those with a motor boat.

<sup>161</sup> *Mudflats to Metropolis*, 37.

<sup>162</sup> Wray Vamplew, 'Sport: More than Fun and Games', in Eric Richards (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*. (Netley SA) 1986, 437. Vamplew stated that 'A major feature of South Australian sport was its association with alcohol'.

momentum and would eventually effect change, not just in the progress of Port Adelaide, but across South Australia and beyond.

In April 1870 discussions were held between J. A. Rann, G. Ireland and R. W. L. Leicester on the possibility of forming a new sports and social club for the young men of the district which could also attract and interest spectators without betting.<sup>163</sup> The result was the Port Adelaide Cricket and Football Club which met on 13 May 1870 and elected John Hart junior as the first president.<sup>164</sup> The minutes from the inaugural meeting read, 'Members are informed that the opening practice will commence at 3 p.m. on Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> inst.'<sup>165</sup> So began a proud Port Adelaide tradition.

The locals played their first inter-club football game on the North Parklands of Adelaide where Port Adelaide Captain J. Wald led his team against the 'Young Australians' captained by H. Y. Sparks. No date is given for the game but it was not a pleasant day for players or spectators, being played in a dust storm and strong winds, and ending in a draw.<sup>166</sup>

The return match was held on 24 May 1870 at Buck's Flat on Hart's

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<sup>163</sup> A. R. McLean, *100 Years with the Magpies: The story of the Port Adelaide Football Club 1870-1970*. (Hindmarsh SA, 1971) 10.

<sup>164</sup> Eugene Lumbers, *Centenary History of Port Adelaide*. (Adelaide, 1956) 88-91.

<sup>165</sup> Michelangelo Rucci, 'The Magnificent Mag[entas]pies', in *Port Adelaide since 1856: 125th Anniversary*. (1981) 30.

<sup>166</sup> Rucci, 30.



'Glanville Hall' estate.<sup>167</sup> In 1873 Woodville, Willunga and the two colleges, Prince Alfred and St Peter's, had sides in inter-club competition and Port Adelaide played Kensington for the first time in a match at Buck's Flat on 5 July. They played to Kensington rules which meant that points scored as 'behinds' were not counted and the teams changed ends when a goal was kicked.<sup>168</sup>

The Port team of 15 players included the well-known Port Adelaide family names of Newman, Ford, Bickers, Le Messurier, Ireland, Rann senior and Rann junior, Williams, Pickaver, Will Fletcher, Ede, Sam Tyzack, Townsend and Brown.<sup>169</sup> When the team played 'away' they were farewelled and met on their return by 'an excited throng' of Portonians.<sup>170</sup>

The larrikins may not have played the game but were active in barracking for the home side and had 'heroes' to emulate. In the early years of the club, supporters were entertained before the game and at half-time by a brass band, and later by throwing cow pats if Port was beaten. For a little more refinement an annual invitation-only end-of-season 'grand ball' was held with members bearing all the expenses.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> George McKell, 'Sporting Clubs', in *Mudflats to Metropolis*, 32. See also Sheridah Melvin's brief history of the Buck family in *Kudlyo the Black Swan Dreaming: Veronica Brodie and the Continuity of Kaurna History at Glanville and Le Fevre Peninsula*. (Research Report prepared for the Lartelare Homeland Association, 1994) 13. Robert Buck and his son Robert were crew on the *Rapid* from England in 1836 and worked as watermen and lightermen at the port. They built huts where the family lived for many years on the territory known to Aborigines as *Palti* meaning 'flat or stretched out', and which European settlers named Buck's Flat. See also Alfred A. Lendon, 'Handasyde Duncan, M.D. (1839-1878) and Early Port Adelaide'. Mortlock Library of South Australiana, PRG 128/12/4 (Typescript, 1932) 128. Buck's Flat was the area north of Bower Road and west of the embankment along the river, now Causeway Road.

<sup>168</sup> Rucci, 30.

<sup>169</sup> Rucci, 30.

<sup>170</sup> Rucci, 30.

<sup>171</sup> Rucci, 31.

The Port Adelaide club officials tried but failed to obtain Buck's Flat as a permanent home ground for the club. An earlier Port Adelaide Cricket Club had obtained a lease of an oval at Alberton and after this club disbanded, the new group took over the liabilities of the old club with assistance from the Port Adelaide Council.<sup>172</sup> In 1877, the various clubs formed the South Australian Football Association to regulate the rules of the game.

At first the Port footballers played in the colours of blue and white. In 1878 the official uniform became 'rose pink cap, jersey and hose with white knickerbockers' and in 1883, magenta jersey, magenta and blue cap and navy-blue knickerbockers. The stockings, in alternate stripes of magenta and blue, could only be purchased at T. G. Smith's Port Adelaide drapery store in St Vincent Street.<sup>173</sup> In 1902 the team became known as 'The Magpies' when the uniforms were changed to black and white.<sup>174</sup>

In September 1895 the *Port Adelaide News* recognised the unity of spirit which football brought to the town: 'Football becomes the leveller of all distinctions and draws together knots of men of all classes, ranks and occupations having the one common mark of Mudholian extraction, and a consequent interest in football'.<sup>175</sup> The club's formation apparently had the wide support of all community groups:

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<sup>172</sup> McKell, 32. See also McLean, opposite 15, the first grandstand at Alberton Oval was built in 1903.

<sup>173</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 April 1887, referred to 'the notable "Tom Smith's," which, both inside and outside is thronged with members of the football community, apparently conversing over the day's play'.

<sup>174</sup> Rucci, 30-31.

<sup>175</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 September 1895.

you hear the well-dressed grey-headed business man and man of affairs of the chief seaport town of the province, discussing with a fervid eagerness of a school-boy the latest football....Old, young and middleaged, during the football season, are saturated with the same eager spirit of partizanship.<sup>176</sup>

In their history of Port Melbourne, U'Ren and Turnbull recognised the role of sport in bringing about a new sense of community:

'Divisions...between god-fearing and the godless and the respectable and the non-respectable, between the temperance Protestants and the publicans, between the workers and the owners....tended to be submerged in one particular area - an area of immense significance to the history of the area - the sporting field'.<sup>177</sup> The same was true for Port Adelaide.

Those in Port Adelaide caught up in football fever included Sunday worshippers. The newspaper suggested that a well-known minister, most likely the Reverend Kirby of the Congregational Church, might like to include the topic of football in a sermon if he had not already done so.

It is worthy of remark that the staple subject of conversation among churchgoers as soon as the parson's mouth is shut is the inevitable football, and heated discussions are often heard issuing from groups of ardent religionists as they descend the steps which lead to their places of worship. We should not be surprised if it was found that one well-known member of the clerical profession, who is an 'artist' at choosing attractive subjects for his discourses, has not, at some time during his ministry, chosen that of football. If he has not he might take this hint.<sup>178</sup>

The continued interest in the Port Adelaide Football Club and its staying power and success to the present day is not surprising. From the beginning, the town supported the club and its own young men in a colonial society which regarded the Port working class as inferior. As

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<sup>176</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 September 1895.

<sup>177</sup> U'Ren and Turnbull, 114.

<sup>178</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 September 1895.

observed by Peter Donovan and Bernard O'Neil in 1997, 'the Port Adelaide Football Club grew to symbolise the character of the district - tough, working class and with a strong sense of solidarity'.<sup>179</sup> William Bunday, the South Australian attorney-general, stated in 1880 that 'one of the greatest charms connected with manly exercises is that...they level all social distinctions'.<sup>180</sup> Such effects were apparent at Port football games.

This chapter demonstrates the changes and social complexities at the Port from the 1870s. The town, finally on dry ground, developed from a close neighbourhood to broad community groups, from a focus on the waterfront and seamen to the town streets and citizens. The plight of the destitute steadily improved as unhealthy slums gave way to demolition and council controlled sanitation. The dark streets became illuminated and the churches, social purity and piety became stronger forces. Prostitution was monitored and loitering discouraged by the vigilant foot police. The larrikins refrained from the worst features of association with criminality as happened in the pushes of Melbourne and Sydney. For many their energies were redirected with the emergence of local sporting teams as they became fervent supporters of the football team in particular.

Dogged persistence, 'beating the odds' and managing on their own terms were lessons Portonians had learnt from the earliest days and football brought the wharf and town peoples together, at least in spirit,

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<sup>179</sup> Peter F. Donovan and Bernard O'Neil, *In the Marist Tradition: Sacred Heart College Adelaide 1897-1997*. (Somerton Park SA, 1997) 12.

<sup>180</sup> Vamplew, 445.

most winter Saturdays. The town motto, *Haud Pluribus Impar*, 'not inferior to many', even if not widely known, was an idea to which all the groups in the town could relate.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PROGRESS AND SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT AT THE PORT FROM THE 1870s

By 1870 Portonians had secured their site and rebuilt their town with more permanent commercial and civic structures. Where would the town citizens next focus their energies? To many of the non-conformist clergy and middle-class townsmen, the most visible and pressing town problem appeared to be one related to alcohol with drunken seamen and delinquent behaviour by the Port larrikins. The same group seeking social reform, also decried the time and money workers spent in the pubs. Prostitutes continued to loiter as near as possible to the hotels where the highest concentration of potential customers was to be found. Increasingly the police patrolled these areas and lessened the amount of obvious soliciting in the town streets. The police, the reformers argued, should continue their firm action to control inebriates, larrikins and loitering ladies.

There was a pervasive view by reformers that workers should be encouraged to improve their minds and seamen should have places other than the hotels to congregate. Alternative social activities were made

available in the town through Institute classes and the mission facilities for seamen. Societies and clubs for special interests were also organised by middle-class males who had time for new diversions once businesses were established.

Like their counterparts elsewhere, Port Adelaide's civic fathers practised parochialism and believed in progress and development for their town. South Australian towns, Tony Denholm suggested, 'endeavoured with varying degrees of success, to provide themselves with the hallmarks and symbols of urban status'.<sup>1</sup> At Williamstown the Williamstown Athenaeum was founded in a pre-fabricated iron shed in 1854 and later a custom-built Mechanics' Institute which opened in July 1860. To leading Portonians, one of the most urgent symbols of town status was to erect a permanent Institute. In the early 1870s, David Bower, an earnest Presbyterian and philanthropist, donated £500 to build an Institute on condition that the people of Port Adelaide raised a like amount.<sup>2</sup>

Bower was personally interested in the education of children from worker families. He stated that 'the education of children and the improvement of youth had been for a long time uppermost in his mind' and expressed the wish that 'arrangements should be made in the new

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<sup>1</sup> A. F. Denholm, 'Setting the Scene', in A. F. Denholm, Susan Marsden and Kerrie Round (eds), *Terowie Workshop - Exploring the history of South Australian country towns*. (Adelaide, 1991) 8.

<sup>2</sup> *The Register*, 7 July 1898. Bower's obituary referred to him as, 'Quiet, self-possessed, unemotional, plain, matter-of-fact, unpretentious - he was nevertheless a conspicuously useful and, in a very real sense, patriotic colonist'.

building for a free school until such time as the Government made provision for free schools for the working classes'.<sup>3</sup>

The Institute's main fund-raising event was a week-long bazaar in the town hall which Governor Sir James Fergusson opened on 16 October 1872. At the ceremony he formally handed over the land grant to the Institute committee. In parliament, the tenacity of Henry Kent Hughes over three years finally gained one-for-one subsidies for all South Australian institutes thereby effectively doubling their resources.<sup>4</sup> This meant a grant of £2500 towards the Port project. The bazaar raised over £600, and other donations followed.<sup>5</sup>

The Institute was built on the former site of the government-owned No. 4 bonded store used by Captain Simpson, who 'readily surrendered' that portion of his lease for the project which included extending Nile Street to Commercial Road.<sup>6</sup> Robert George Thomas won the architectural competition in 1872 for the design of an imposing bluestone and brick building.<sup>7</sup> Due to the tight budget, the contractors, James Williams and John Cleave, modified the corner tower to a mansard roof, look-out and flagpole.<sup>8</sup> The concrete foundations were laid on the

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<sup>3</sup> Frederick Edward Meleng, *Fifty Years of the Port Adelaide Institute*. (Adelaide, 1902) 18.

<sup>4</sup> Meleng, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Meleng, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Meleng, 20.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Fitzgerald Page, *Port Adelaide and its Institute 1851-1979*. (Adelaide, 1981) 81. Page's revision drew heavily on the 1901 work of Meleng, then the Institute librarian.

<sup>8</sup> Page, 81.



unstable, original level of the Port 'with colonial red-gum timber cross-sleepers and longitudinals well bolted together and bonded'.<sup>9</sup> When the construction reached footpath level, David Bower was invited to lay the building's foundation stone of Macclesfield marble. The ceremony was held on 31 October 1874 after a circuitous official parade which headed west from the town hall rather than east where the site was 'just around the corner'.

It was headed by the Mayor and Town Councillors, and the President, Vice-President, and other officers of the Institute. Then followed members of Friendly Societies in their regalia, the Good Templars carrying a handsome banner, the Working Men's Association being also represented by their banner with the motto 'Pro bono omnes.' Schrader's Brass Band and the Portland Estate Drum and Fife Band formed part of the procession, and played suitable music....The ladies of the Bazaar Committee and their friends were seated on a platform constructed for the purpose over the basement....A large number of people had assembled in the streets....All the ships were dressed in gayest colors from stem to stern.<sup>10</sup>

Bower expressed the hope that the Institute would create intelligent and useful members of society and that the boys in its school would be 'properly qualified for the duties and difficulties which they might have to encounter'. He stated that 'it was the duty of the people of Port Adelaide to see that this Institute helped to achieve that end'. He also felt the Institute 'might be made to afford pleasant recreation to young men living in the town, and seafaring men would be able to come there, and always find the latest papers from various parts of the world'.<sup>11</sup>

The mayor and president of the Institute, John M. Sinclair, invited

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<sup>9</sup> Meleng, 22.

<sup>10</sup> Meleng, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Page, 83. See also Meleng, 24-25.

contributions to be placed on the foundation stone. Employers in the town supported the endeavour to improve the minds of their men. Captain Simpson presented 'a cheque for £100 on account of his Black Diamond Line and Elder Smith the wool merchants'.<sup>12</sup> Labourers increasingly had more leisure time with the move for an eight-hour working day gaining acceptance. The workmen on the building were not forgotten when they were invited by Williams and Cleave to join the Institute committee and 'other gentlemen connected therewith' to a dinner that evening at the Port Hotel. Over 60 attended and speeches and toasts abounded. As recorded in the history of the Institute, William Quin proposed a toast to the workmen 'upon whom in a great measure the success of the undertaking was dependent. He hoped they would give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, and with the present advantages and prospects, he predicted a long career of prosperity for the working man'. In reply, Mr Mattison 'assured the company of the good feeling which existed between the employés and employers, and expressed a hope that the contract might realise a good profit'.<sup>13</sup>

Two years later, on 23 October 1876, Governor Sir Anthony Musgrave opened the building. Two vice-regal visits in the space of four years, and both associated with the Institute, marked a distinct change of interest in the fortunes of the Port. The spring morning was filled with an

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<sup>12</sup> Page, 83.

<sup>13</sup> Meleng, 26.

air of celebration. 'Business was for the most part suspended during the after part of the day', Meleng reported, 'and those who could ill afford to attend the ceremonial were by no means loth in the exhibition of their sympathy with the proceedings by very unsparing displays of bunting'.<sup>14</sup>

Being a port town 'the ships at the wharfs...also donned their holiday costume, and altogether the Port had the appearance of being thoroughly en fête'.<sup>15</sup> The railway authorities arranged for an afternoon train carrying the vice-regal party to continue past the station and pull up outside the main entrance to the Institute where a temporary platform was erected. Mayor Sinclair presented the governor with the key to the building and introduced the proceedings by giving a brief history of the earlier Institute locations in the town. He acknowledged David Bower's contribution in the establishment of the new Institute in its prominent custom-built home on the corner of Nile Street and Commercial Road. Sinclair was conscious of a need to provide alternative activities for seamen in the town.

The building will be used in the first instance as a Library and a Museum, but it is intended ultimately to have a room set apart for the accommodation of seamen from vessels arriving at the Port. I need hardly say this will be a great boon, because it will keep them out of much worse places.<sup>16</sup>

In his address Musgrave reflected on community and social conscience. He insightfully acknowledged that physical effort was a

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<sup>14</sup> Meleng, 28.

<sup>15</sup> Meleng, 28.

<sup>16</sup> Meleng, 28.

foremost need in the initial development of the young colony but urged the use of the library to improve the intellect. On such a day his sentiments would be well received.

I think it will be admitted that all aids to the diffusion of knowledge are likely to aid in promoting the growth of healthy public opinion on all matters affecting the welfare of the body politic, and to prevent its degeneration into what has been termed 'stormy ignorance.'

In a community and on a continent such as this, shut off from the old world containing all the worthiest collections of the works of men eminent in literature and science and art, applied as our labors must be for years to come for the most part rather to material than to intellectual advancement, it is to the convenient disposition of libraries and the liberal circulation of useful current literature that colonists must look for retaining their character as an intelligent, progressive, and farseeing people.<sup>17</sup>

After a successful fund-raising bazaar and exhibition which followed the opening, Williams and Cleave held another dinner, this time in the town hall, for 'about seventy or eighty guests' including employees, friends, the Institute committee, Port councillors and other leading citizens.<sup>18</sup>

The Institute cost approximately £6000, and on opening day there was still £2000 owing. Bower helped by providing 'furniture and other necessities' and, after further bazaars, concerts and fund-raising activities failed to cover the remaining debt, he paid it.<sup>19</sup> The main facilities in the building included a residence for the librarian, three school rooms, a free reading room, a members' reading room, an art gallery, a museum, the library and later a juvenile library, possibly the first public children's

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<sup>17</sup> Meleng, 29.

<sup>18</sup> Meleng, 32.

<sup>19</sup> Page, 84-85.

lending library in Australia.<sup>20</sup> With a bequest from Bower of £700 on his death in 1898 a large lecture room was added to the Institute with an entrance on Nile Street and was named the 'Bower Lecture Hall' in recognition of his support over so many years.<sup>21</sup>

With the Institute and library finally out of rented premises there were 300 members of the latest town facility. Meleng wrote that 'the first year's operations in the new building proved very satisfactory, increased accommodation for seamen and others being highly appreciated. The crowded state of the free reading-room suggested the necessity for a subscribers' room, which was accordingly opened from the Nile-street frontage'.<sup>22</sup> By 1882, evening classes were commenced at the Institute and the 1883 prospectus of evening classes offered a selection of subjects ranging from chemistry, architectural, mechanical and freehand drawing, and elementary and applied mechanics (three text books), to grammar, elocution, French, German, Greek and Latin. T. W. Lyons held separate classes in singing for gentlemen and ladies, and a class in 'Freehand Drawing and Painting in Water-colors and Oils' was conducted for ladies

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<sup>20</sup> Meleng, 22. See also Page, 106-107. The juvenile library, 'based on the American plan', opened in early 1901 after the successful introduction five years earlier of juvenile scholarships by the librarian, Arthur Rose.

<sup>21</sup> In 1879 the new customs house was built on the site of the former one. Until 1890 it was separated from the Institute by a small lane which was then built in up to first floor level. In the early 1900s the additional height was filled in and matched to the existing architecture, however the basements of the two buildings are still separated by the width of the former lane. See *The Compass*, August 1906. The Bower Lecture Hall was refurbished as a public reading room in 1906.

<sup>22</sup> Meleng, 32.



**Illustration 10**

Port Adelaide Institute (1876).

Photograph B10740, Mortlock Library of South Australiana.

by Mr Drews on Tuesdays at 4 p.m.<sup>23</sup>

The fee for classes, except where specified, was 12/6 per quarter: Institute subscribers were given a reduction of 2/- from the fee of each class. One guinea per quarter covered tuition in the three classes of arithmetic (Thursdays, at 7 p.m., text book: Barrard Smith's *Arithmetic*), algebra (Captain W. P. Lee, Thursdays at 8 p.m., text book: Todhunter's *Algebra for Beginners*) and geometry (Captain W. P. Lee, Thursdays at 9 p.m., text book: Todhunter's *Euclid*).<sup>24</sup>

The developments at Port Adelaide followed a pattern seen in other colonial towns though few had such a generous benefactor as Bower. The purpose of institutes was both educational and to a degree recreational. They had a focus on useful skills but also a broader interest in self improvement, refinement and development of the intellect. Some thirty years earlier in the Port Phillip District, Reverend Thomas Osborne, in the introductory address of the Port Phillip Mechanics' Institution in Melbourne, argued that 'Mechanics' Institutions, unlike Universities or the usual places of education, are not solely for the purpose of communicating and receiving instruction, but for the two-fold object of

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<sup>23</sup> 'Prospectus of Evening Classes formed and in the course of formation in connection with the Institute', quoted in Meleng, 54.

<sup>24</sup> Meleng, 54. See also 'The Memories of Captain Andrew Walter Todd', 5. Todd recalled Captain Lee also conducting a school at the sailors' home to 'learn men the rule of the road of the sea. I, A. W. Todd, went there and when I went up for my Master's Certificate I passed with honours'.

pleasure and information'. Osborne urged that lectures be varied so as to broaden the intellectual horizons of mechanics.<sup>25</sup>

C. J. Stevens, the Port Adelaide reporter for *The Register* from 1876 to 1886 (and member of the Institute who taught Pitman's Shorthand on Friday evenings), felt strongly about the benefits of the Institute and its offerings for self improvement. He expressed sentiments similar to Osborne's earlier thoughts.

An Institute should be a centre of culture, and no effort spared to render the culture complete as far as circumstances permit. It is not often possible to make it of an advanced character, but it can oftener than it is be made effective on the lower planes. For this reason lectures, classes, art gallery, museum, debating societies, literary associations, smoke socials, and dramatic representations, all and every thing which without offence to reasonable susceptibilities conduce to improve the mind, refine the taste, and elevate the tone, particularly of young people, should be encouraged.<sup>26</sup>

Those working in offices or serving in shops were dressed to meet people through the day and were more comfortable with 'dropping in' at the library or attending a class. On the other hand for the seamen and workers, the Institute offered little competition to the relaxation and camaraderie experienced in the tap-room 'clubs'. The men could gather at the pubs in dirty, sweaty clothes and filthy boots but to enter the Institute, a wash and a change of clothes was appropriate. Even removing the grime was difficult for most workers and in 1881 the need for public baths at the port, 'so a working man can wash', was expressed in the local

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<sup>25</sup> Thomas Hamilton T. Osborne, 'The Advantages of Mechanics' Institutions: Part I', *Port Phillip Gazette*, 18, 22 April 1840, reprinted in Philip C. Candy and John A. Laurent, *Pioneering Culture: Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts in Australia*. (Adelaide, 1994) 87-88.

<sup>26</sup> Meleng, 54. Stevens was later assistant editor of *The Register*.



newspaper.<sup>27</sup> This need was apparently remedied. In 1883 'the sole public baths in the Port' opposite the railway station are mentioned in the press.<sup>28</sup>

Some townsmen wished to provide places for visiting seamen to meet fellow seafarers and read overseas newspapers in an atmosphere away from hotel bars. Michael Page argued that 'Dr. Bollen's Mission to Seamen and the reading room for seamen in the Port Adelaide Institute, were established as innocent counter-attractions to the prostitutes and boozing dens, and were much appreciated by the more sober seafarers'.<sup>29</sup>

However workers found it increasingly difficult to feel a sense of belonging to the Institute. By November 1879 one man suspected that there was a deliberate plan to deter labourers from entry to the members' reading room. He wrote a letter to the editor of the *Port Adelaide News* under the heading 'What are Institutes for?'

Sir - As a working-man who was once a subscriber to the Port Institute, I wish to know what was the object sought to be gained by changing the annual subscription from 12s. 6d to 21s.? Was it to exclude working-men from the private reading-room for the benefit of the black-coated gentry; or was it considered that the free reading-room was quite good enough for the labouring class. Anyhow, the system has been most effectual in accomplishing the object.

I am Sir, respectfully,  
ONE WHO USED TO BE A SUBSCRIBER.<sup>30</sup>

As John Rann pointed out at the meeting of the Port Pioneers' Eight Hour Society in 1879, there had been a noticeable change in emphasis; the Institute had been 'perverted from its original purpose' in that David

<sup>27</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 April 1881.

<sup>28</sup> 'The Port Adelaide Saturday Night', *Port Adelaide News*, 4 December 1883.

<sup>29</sup> Page, 96.

<sup>30</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 November 1879.

Bower had intended it as an Institute for the working man.<sup>31</sup> The committee, mainly drawn from middle-class merchants, had not sustained Bower's altruistic vision and the working class felt excluded from the very place established for its benefit. Philip Candy argued that most institutes, although intended 'for the benefit of the working-classes', relied on 'the support, encouragement and leadership from among the middle-classes, and in many cases this led to tensions between the aspirations of those for whom they were intended, and those who actually benefited from having the resource in the local community'.<sup>32</sup> This was clearly happening at Port Adelaide.

Fremantle, Western Australia, also experienced a shift in emphasis at its Institute. There, stated Candy, the Reverend Joseph Johnston, a Congregational minister 'concerned with the intellectual as well as the spiritual needs of the colonists...often lectured to the Fremantle Mechanics' Institute and when it showed signs of becoming a "gentlemen's club"...was instrumental in founding the Fremantle Workingmen's Association'.<sup>33</sup>

Changes in public education for children also affected the Port Adelaide Institute's intended use. The *Education Act* of 1875 was taking effect by the time the Institute was opened, and all children within two

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<sup>31</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 October 1879, in Brian J. Samuels, "'Community' in the Port Adelaide District 1861-1901". B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1972, 73.

<sup>32</sup> Philip C. Candy, "'The Light of Heaven Itself': The Contribution of the Institutes to Australia's Cultural History", in Candy and Laurent, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Candy, 6.

miles of a school between the ages of seven and thirteen years were required to attend. Committee members of the Institute, who had concentrated their efforts on adult education anyway, no longer pursued a commitment to implement Bower's wish of three years earlier, to hold free classes for needy children within the Institute. The idea was abandoned.<sup>34</sup>

Education at the Port was a varied experience. Until the mid-1870s there was no compulsory schooling and children were dependent on their parents' financial position and desire for education for their sons, and, in enlightened families in the mid-nineteenth century, their daughters. Peter Wright provided an insight to teachers and schools in the Port during his youth in the 1850s and early 1860s.

Of schoolmasters, Mr. Peddler, said to be the son of an English gentleman, was first. His mode of dealing with the boys was to make taffy for them and otherwise coax them to do their lessons, they on their part taking charge of the master at times and making him do as they pleased. Mr. Matthew Duncan Waygood kept school for a short time with great success. Then in the church school we had Mr. Myers, Big Fat Moody, P. C. Perry, and last the venerable Thomas Dallison, and private schools Cave and Leath, about each much might be said.<sup>35</sup>

The school conducted by Alfred George Cave was near Collinson's Wharf and there is a record of a John Forbes Leith teaching at a St Vincent Street school, 1853-1855, and Mary Ann Leith, also at St Vincent Street, 1854-1855.<sup>36</sup> In 1914 John Sweeney offered further observations on early

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<sup>34</sup> Page, 104.

<sup>35</sup> *Review of the City of Port Adelaide*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1901) 5, in Samuels, 38. Alexander Moody was the schoolmaster at St Paul's. St Paul's Archives holds a receipt for his salary, dated 7 August 1847.

<sup>36</sup> Errol J. Chinner, *Schoolbells Ringing: Early and Government Schools which served the People of the Port*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1996) 5. See also Helen Northey, 'Public Schooling in Port Adelaide, 1850-1880', *Flinders Journal of History and Politics: The Port Adelaide Issue*. Vol. 12. (1987) 42.

Port schools, their locations and teachers. The open floor space of former church buildings which were outgrown and replaced through increased attendances made useful schoolrooms.

The first school that I attended presided over by a male teacher, was Mr. Caterer's. The school house was situated in a hollow next to the Congregational Church....Later Mr. Caterer transferred his school, and with it the scholars, over to Mr. Thos. J. King, who transferred the school to the basement of the old Congregational Church, and under his guidance a good sound grounding was imparted. Mr. King was a very kind teacher, but a severe one when necessity demanded it. He was a man of fine physique, and not any more manly man ever graced...Port Adelaide. His portrait hangs on the wall of our...Council Chamber, and oftentimes when sitting there I look and admire in reverence the man who did so much for all the boys of Port Adelaide. In later years the old Wesleyan Church in Quebec Street was acquired by Mr. King, and the school removed thereto, and almost up to the time of his death he, together with his good wife, presided over it. As a worthy tribute to his services he was elected to the Mayoral Chair, which position he held with dignity, and commanded the respect of all. Yet another school in Port Adelaide was presided over by a dear and kind old gentleman, Mr. Dallison. He was also verger at St. Paul's Church for a number of years.<sup>37</sup>

Thomas J. King conducted a senior school, known as King's School, from 1858 until his retirement in 1879. King later served as mayor of Port Adelaide from 1883 to 1885. In 1859 King's School was described in *The South Australian Government Gazette* as 'one of the most successful schools in the Province'.<sup>38</sup> King's wife Emma, described in a 1871 *Gazette* as 'a well-qualified and experienced mistress', ran a school for younger pupils, the Quebec Street Infant School.<sup>39</sup>

Thomas Dallison, a verger at St Paul's Church from the 1840s and the teacher at a private school sponsored by the church,<sup>40</sup> was described in

<sup>37</sup> John Sweeney, 'Some Fine Old School Masters', *Port Adelaide News*, 9 January 1914. See also *The South Australian Government Gazette*, 3 March 1859. Thomas King replaced Thomas Caterer in 1858 when Caterer transferred to a school at Glenelg.

<sup>38</sup> *The South Australian Government Gazette*, 3 March 1859, in Northey, 43.

<sup>39</sup> *The South Australian Government Gazette*, 1871, 626, in Northey, 46.

<sup>40</sup> Graham R. Ross, *A History of Private Schools in the Port Adelaide and Semaphore Districts 1841-1910*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1992) 9.

1860 by William Wyatt, then inspector of schools, as 'a careful and persevering teacher', but his building in Church Street and appliances, 'decidedly poor'.<sup>41</sup> In 1863 Dallison moved the school to 'an excellent room of large dimensions, affording full scope to the efforts of its conductor and his valuable assistant, Miss Dallison'.<sup>42</sup> Dallison remained headmaster until 1875 and his daughter Annie ran a school in St Vincent Street in 1876 and 1877.<sup>43</sup>

St Paul's Grammar School was founded in 1862 on Junction Road (now Grand Junction Road) with the Reverend Frank Garrett as headmaster. A meeting of interested townsmen agreed on the need for a school to 'provide the elements of a liberal education by instruction in Latin and Greek, English, Arithmetic and Mathematics'.<sup>44</sup> Sweeney remembered 'a number of the better-to-do class built a school on Junction Road and imported a gentleman from England (Mr. Garrett) and thus created the Port Adelaide Grammar School'.<sup>45</sup>

The school was independent of St Paul's Church of England, but was controlled by trustees who were also vestrymen of the church. The school, which was renamed the Port Adelaide Grammar School in 1870 when Allen Martin was appointed headmaster, provided a preparatory

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<sup>41</sup> *The South Australian Government Gazette*, 1860, 368-369, in Northey, 40.

<sup>42</sup> State Records, GRG 24/6, 1863, 180, in Northey, 40.

<sup>43</sup> Northey, 42.

<sup>44</sup> Chinner, 'LeFevre Primary & Junior Primary School: Centenary Souvenir 1878-1978', (1978) 12.

<sup>45</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 January 1914.

education for those boys too young to attend the Collegiate School of St Peter's in the city.<sup>46</sup> The grammar school became the Port Adelaide Public School in 1876 under the new educational system. Sweeney stated that 'later, when State schools became the order of the day, the Government secured the school building, and in their wisdom did not permit Mr. Martin to get astray. He was appointed headmaster, and later inspector'.<sup>47</sup>

The school became a Model School in 1878 where 'the art and practice of teaching could be demonstrated and learned' and Martin, headmaster until 1899, was respected as a highly efficient and successful teacher and administrator.<sup>48</sup> The school maintained its high standards and results and took a large number of free scholars' previously known as 'Destitute Children'.<sup>49</sup>

The Sisters of St Joseph conducted Catholic schools in Port Adelaide and Queenstown from 1868,<sup>50</sup> providing 'basic education' to 'about ninety girls' and some boys at the 'Nuns' School' a school-room built alongside St Mary's Church in Dale Street while 'about forty boys' were taught

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<sup>46</sup> Northey, 48. See also Chinner, *Schoolbells Ringing*, 11. In the 29 years Martin was headmaster he witnessed the school grow from a single teacher school to one with 1000 pupils and 22 assistant teachers.

<sup>47</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 January 1914.

<sup>48</sup> Northey, 48. After leaving in 1899 Martin became an inspector of schools for the Education Department.

<sup>49</sup> Northey, 48. In 1999 the school is the Adult Aboriginal Education and Training Centre of Tauondi College.

<sup>50</sup> The Josephite schools were closed during the temporary excommunication of Mary McKillop from 22 September 1871. The Sisters of St Joseph did not return to Port Adelaide until 1877 and reopened their school in 1878. See also Marie Therese Foale, *The Josephite Story: Mary McKillop and the Sisters of St. Joseph, 1866-1893*. (Sydney, 1989) 3.

by Mr O'Sullivan.<sup>51</sup> In 1896 Mayor W. H. Thompson acknowledged the teaching work of the Josephite nuns in the town:

he had been for many years observant of the self-denying labors of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Port, and was confident they were carefully educating the children committed to their care. Indeed, so highly was the Catholic system of education appreciated, that he knew of many Protestants who had sent their children to the convent in Adelaide that they might have the advantage of a high-class education.<sup>52</sup>

When the 'Compulsory Clause' of the Education Act came into effect in July 1878, 'School Visitors' were appointed, including James H. H. Vockins, superintendent for Port Adelaide.<sup>53</sup> Attendance was compulsory for 35 days in each quarter year of about 55 days.<sup>54</sup> Vockins investigated both truancy and irregular attendance and his work was frequently reported in the local newspaper. In September 1878 it recorded that in the part of Port Adelaide already canvassed, with 1970 children of school age, 184 'required compulsory measures to induce attendance'.<sup>55</sup>

David Bower, nearing the end of his term as mayor in 1878, was appointed chairman of the local 'Board of Advice' for the new Council of Education in South Australia.<sup>56</sup> He continued his efforts to provide education for all children. The parents of children not attending school

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<sup>51</sup> *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 30 October 1869, 399. 'There is also a school at the Peninsula...attendance 60; and at Queenstown...attendance 80.' See also Heather Hartshorne and Josie Wilkinson, *The Carmelite Priests and Brothers in South Australia: 1881 to 1999, (1902 to 1999 Port Adelaide/Pennington)*. 1999, 3. The Catholic church, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, is popularly known as St Mary's. In 1904 a new school was built in Quebec Street and the old school-room became the church hall.

<sup>52</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 February 1881.

<sup>53</sup> Northey, 48.

<sup>54</sup> Pavla Miller, *Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society*. (Netley SA, 1986) 57.

<sup>55</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 September 1878, in Northey, 48.

<sup>56</sup> Chinner, *Schoolbells Ringing*, 15. Other members of the Board were, John Henderson, Hugo C. E. Muecke, Chairman of Rosewater District Council; George Shorney, Chairman of Lefevre's Peninsula District Council; George Willimott, Chairman of Glanville District Council; Henry W. Thompson, Chairman of Portland Estate District Council and William Christie.

after a warning notice had been sent to their home, were served with a second notice ordering them 'to attend before a meeting of the Board appointed by the Government to show cause why they should not be summoned before a magistrate and fined'.<sup>57</sup> In March 1879, in its 'School Census for Port Adelaide', the board reported 2217 children on the school rolls; 1698 aged between seven and thirteen years and 481 of these non-attendants. Of the 481 children, 223 entered schools on persuasion, 211 on the first notice and 17 on the second notice. The chairman considered this highly satisfactory since, 'reckoning on an exempt 28, there are only two not in attendance at a public school'.<sup>58</sup>

By mid-1879 several parents had appeared before the board. The inclemency of the weather and the impassable state of the roads were among the reasons given for not sending their children to school. The parents were not fined but required to promise that the children would attend 'as soon as these hindrances were removed'.<sup>59</sup> In November eleven parents were summoned to Port Adelaide Police Court and fined for neglecting to send their children to school.<sup>60</sup> The following November, Vockins reported to the inspector general of schools that six parents were fined. Four of the eight children involved resided in Portland Estate

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<sup>57</sup> Correspondence: Inspector General of Schools, GRG 18/3/1090, 'Report of Superintendent of School Visitors', 1879, (State Records) in Northey, 48.

<sup>58</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 1 March 1879.

<sup>59</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 July 1879, in Northey, 49.

<sup>60</sup> Correspondence: Inspector General of Schools, GRG 18/1/13, 'First Report of the Port Adelaide Board of Advice', March 1880, (State Records) in Northey, 48.



where parents would find difficulty paying fines of five shillings plus ten shillings costs per child.<sup>61</sup>

Education, however, was still not free and school fees were fixed at fourpence to sixpence per week unless the parents' claim of being too poor to pay was approved.<sup>62</sup> Working-class groups in the Port were concerned about this issue and held a meeting which resolved that 'as education was compulsory it should also be provided without charge'.<sup>63</sup> The main outcome of the meeting was the presentation of petitions to parliament by the Port Adelaide Working Men's Society and the Port Adelaide Seamen's Mission representing 1700 men with a 'lively and intelligent interest' in education.<sup>64</sup> An editorial in the *Port Adelaide News* supported their view.<sup>65</sup> Another public meeting on free schooling was held at Port Adelaide in 1883 which received support from various local societies such as the 'Working Men's Association, Seamen's Union, Engineers' Society, Boilermakers, Carpenters and Joiners, Shipwrights and others...representing 2,000 or 3,000 men'.<sup>66</sup> In 1891 fees were

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<sup>61</sup> Northey, 52. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 27 October 1882, when Henry Douglas and Thomas Cartwright appeared before Mr. R. J. Turner S.M., 'for not sending their boys to school, as required by the Act...each fined 5s. and 20s. costs'. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 10 November 1882 when Vockins reported to the police court on 'many convictions for neglecting to send children to school'.

<sup>62</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 July 1878.

<sup>63</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 July 1878.

<sup>64</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 July 1878, in Brian R. Astill, 'Historic Port Adelaide Schools', Unpublished Research Paper, The University of Adelaide, August 1986, 7.

<sup>65</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 29 July 1878, in Astill, 7.

<sup>66</sup> D. Grundy, 'Free schooling and the state in South Australia 1875-98', in I. Palmer (ed.), *Melbourne Studies in Education 1983*. (Carlton Vic, 1983) 187, cited in Miller, 68.

abolished for those under thirteen years and this was extended to all students in 1898.<sup>67</sup>

With primary education for children established and Institute classes available for men or women seeking knowledge and skills, the leading citizens of the town endeavoured to form their own interest groups. Elizabeth Webby argued that 'the growth of the mechanics' institute movement in Australia during the nineteenth century was an important, but far from the only, sign of the new thirst of knowledge. While the institutes were distinguished as being, at least nominally, open to all classes, a host of other, usually more exclusive, societies sprang up'.<sup>68</sup> Webby attributed the fostering of self-improvement to a period in Australia from 1820-1850; in Port Adelaide this move took place in the 1870s, thirty years after its foundation but only shortly after the consolidation of the town. The local groups took many forms and showed a great variety of intellectual interest, although several seemed to rise and fall, some being reformed and replaced. This growth towards intellectual activities for townspeople was a move away from both pub and church. As Kerrie Round pointed out 'associationalism was widespread' and there was a flurry of 'joining'.<sup>69</sup> Townsmen had an activity to attend on most nights in the week.

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<sup>67</sup> Astill, 7. See also 'Port Adelaide Primary School 1862-1970: Centenary Souvenir', 11.

<sup>68</sup> Elizabeth Webby, 'Dispelling "The Stagnant Waters of Ignorance": The Early Institutes in Context', in Candy and Laurent, 29.

<sup>69</sup> Kerrie Round, 'Celebrating the Past: The Growth of Amateur History in South Australia', Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1995, 53. 'South Australia too was a "nation of joiners"'.

The Port Adelaide Parliamentary Debating Society, formed on 21 May 1879, had a short life. The Pickwick Club, which practised skills in public speaking, replaced it in July 1880 and survived for four months before being disbanded.<sup>70</sup> At a meeting of Pickwickians on 26 October the Reverend Samuel Green, incumbent of the Church of England, gave the first lecture in a promised series on 'Spiritualism'.<sup>71</sup> Members pledged themselves to 'investigate the phenomena of so-called spiritualism and to give to each the fullest and most careful study'. A spiritual circle was formed by the same group with female members admitted.<sup>72</sup> One member, the journalist William Sowden, observed that 'Socially the engagement was highly successful; scientifically its achievements justified differences of opinion'.<sup>73</sup> On 7 May 1881 the *Port Adelaide News* mentioned the 'Revival of Pickwick Club at Mr. King's Schoolroom', and a fortnight later cynically commented that 'If it were a boxing club, followed by a ball or a go-as-you-please, or anything athletic, there would be some sense in following it out; but the mere cultivation of the intellect and of a power to express oneself intelligibly! Is it worth it?'.<sup>74</sup> The development of refinement and intellectual discourse found competition in winning the hearts and minds of some Portonians.

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<sup>70</sup> William J. Sowden, 'The Pickwick Club, and Others', in Meleng, 63-66.

<sup>71</sup> Bede Nairn et al (eds), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Vol. 4. (Carlton Vic, 1972) 289. Green 'ran a shortlived Spiritual circle with his wife, "an effective Planchette medium", at the Port Adelaide Institute, in 1880 and 1881. It was probably simply an expression of his lively curiosity, not the product of a dissatisfaction with his faith'.

<sup>72</sup> Sowden, in Meleng, 66.

<sup>73</sup> Sowden, in Meleng, 66.

<sup>74</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 May 1881.

Other associations included the Port Adelaide Chess Club, mentioned in the local press in February 1881 and a Port Adelaide Mathematical Society founded in 1880 and renamed the Port Adelaide Scientific Society in 1889.<sup>75</sup> An insight into the society's activities was given in 1904 and the work of three early members highlighted as outstanding. The society encouraged research by its members but many of the studies were only recognised as innovative and useful outside Port Adelaide.

An unsuccessful attempt has been made to revive the Scientific Society, which years ago rendered such excellent service to the cause of science in Port Adelaide. The original society was truly a remarkable one, and it is doubtful whether any similar society in Australia can show such tangible results for its labours. It used to meet at the Sailors' Home, and amid its discussion were developed the late R.W.O. Kestel's remarkable theory of solar repulsion, a work that ought to win for him posthumous honours, and Captain Inglis' laborious and tremendous calculations to discover a tide constant for Port Adelaide, a work so stupendous and exhausting that its success lifts its originator into the ranks of great mathematicians; there also Captain Weir found inspiration that resulted in the creation of his azimuth, a diagram so valuable that it was at once adopted by the British admiralty. These three works alone should have gained perpetual distinction for Port Adelaide, but no one in this city values them; their sole recognition comes from without. But apart from inventive work of the character described, the members engaged in investigatory work with results which brought credit to themselves. The astronomical observations of Mr William Russell, for instance, have often been published, and sometimes have been in advance of the Government astronomers.<sup>76</sup>

The second annual meeting of the society was held at the Sailors' Home on 12 April 1882 with Captain W. Smith in the chair and Captain W. P. Lee honorary secretary. The number of members had increased from seven to

<sup>75</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 24 February 1881, 5 April 1889. The name change was decided at the ninth annual meeting of the society.

<sup>76</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 11 June 1904. See also Samuels, 81. Samuels noted that the works of Ralph Kestel, 'Radiant Energy, A Working Power in the Mechanism of the Universe' (1898) and Captain A. Inglis, 'A New Tide Predictor' (1918), are held in the State Library of South Australia. See also *A Golden Achievement 1849-1929: A Record of the work of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1929) 15, which stated that Kestrel's interest in astronomy which questioned Newton's theory in *Principia*, 'gave rise to derision' and that 'he died of a broken heart'. The society later amalgamated with the Adelaide Astronomical Society where perhaps Captain Patrick Weir's star chart was of some interest. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 25 October 1895 and 27 March 1896. Weir became master of the 'Barr Smith Lifeboat', newly named *City of Adelaide* in 1896 when it was reported, 'He is a good mathematician and will be remembered in connection with his invention respecting azimuth diagrams'.

eleven, still a small group. Subjects covered during the year mainly emphasised a nautical application and included

the principle and construction of several scientific instruments...such as the Gyroscope...also an ingenious machine invented by a member (Mr. W. A. Jones) for measuring with great precision the expansion and contraction of various substances under electrical and magnetic experiments. The advantages and disadvantages of various forms of naval architecture with respect to resistances of water was duly considered. Special interest attached to the question, owing to its connection with the refrigerator.<sup>77</sup>

At the June meeting in 1882, E. Govett, the Port representative of *The Advertiser* 'gave an interesting description of a shorthand machine which he had invented and is patenting, and which will, he avers, take down 250 or 300 words per minute'.<sup>78</sup> The newspaper continued to report on the meetings of the society which each year covered a variety of subjects influenced by maritime or navigational interests.<sup>79</sup> In 1882-1883 topics had ranged from the action of the screw propeller to a discussion on 'the great comet'.<sup>80</sup> The work of these keen, local enthusiasts was certainly a thought-provoking activity for a small group at Port Adelaide, some member of which accomplished significant studies.

Other Port activities included a Glee Club, a Ladies' Glee Club and the Port Orpheus Society which continued to foster an appreciation of singing and harmony for both young and old well into the twentieth

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<sup>77</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 April 1882.

<sup>78</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 June 1882.

<sup>79</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 May 1886, 5 April 1889.

<sup>80</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 April 1883.

century.<sup>81</sup> The Port Amateur Christy Minstrels were re-established in April 1879 to give 'a grand entertainment in aid of the Gawler Workmen out of Employment' in conjunction with the Port Pioneer Eight Hour Gawler Strike Committee. The evening concert in the town hall was 'under the Patronage' of Mayor Theodore Hack and two members of parliament, David Bower and William Quin.<sup>82</sup> By encouraging support for the families of Gawler workers out on strike, these prominent town leaders could also be seen to be showing support for the cause of an eight-hour working day.

Public lectures were also held under the 'auspices of the Chamber of Manufacturers'. In November 1882 Horatio Yeates delivered two scientific papers in the 'reading room of the Port Institute'.<sup>83</sup> Of more cultural interest in the same month was a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's 1878 comic operetta 'H.M.S. Pinafore' presented by Mr Lyon's Amateur Opera Company in the town hall over two nights, with 'profits to the Port Institute'.<sup>84</sup> Of more practical interest, symbolic of Port Adelaide's final emergence from the primæval mud, the council was asphaltting the footpaths that week.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 November 1913.

<sup>82</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 April 1879.

<sup>83</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 November 1882. The topics were 'Voltaic or Current Electricity: its Production and some of its Practical Applications', and 'Electro Magnetism and Electro Motors'.

<sup>84</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 24 November 1882.

<sup>85</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 24 November 1882. See also 1 December 1882 when it was reported that metal from Kangaroo Island was being used in asphaltting the footpaths.

In 1882 a Young Men's Literary Association was formed at a meeting in the schoolroom of the Congregational Church in Charlotten Street. Mr E. Govett gave a lecture on 'Palæontology' at the July gathering.<sup>86</sup> By September there were comments in the local press that the group 'meets in an inconveniently situated part of town', giving the impression that in 1882 the Congregational Church was still considered to be on the outskirts of Port Adelaide.<sup>87</sup> The article pointed out that the Institute had insufficient room for the various interest groups; the Mathematical Society 'has to seek accommodation at the Sailors' Home' and there was no space for the Port Adelaide Chess Club.<sup>88</sup> The Port Adelaide Young Men's Literary Society, still in the schoolroom at the church, wound up its first session in November 1882 with 'a conversazione'.<sup>89</sup>

In early 1883 there was an air of prosperity in the town and Portonians continued to give time and energy to associations and worthy causes. In response to comments made by the new governor, Sir William C. F. Robinson, the following cameo of progress reflected local pride. Portonians no longer saw their town as being at some point along the path of development and progress but well established in culture, business and industry. They were irritated by those who dwelt on the past.

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<sup>86</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 June, 7 July 1882.

<sup>87</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 September 1882.

<sup>88</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 September 1882.

<sup>89</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 November 1882.

We have four large flour mills, extensive smelter works, and nowhere in Australasia are there warehouses to excel if to equal those which have recently been erected at the site of another of our great works - the Port Adelaide Dock. When to these are added the boat building yards at Birkenhead, from Messrs. Fletcher's and Cruickshank's downwards, it will be seen that the work done in this town is not merely the building up of the streets of a city out of a marshy waste, but that it includes the establishment in those streets of substantial industries sufficient to secure a permanent and solid base to sustain the permanent prosperity of the town as a manufacturing centre alone. Then whilst we have these evidences of business enterprise, the tastes for arts and sciences is exhibited in our fine Institute, and in the first Art Gallery in South Australia.<sup>90</sup>

Portonians of good intent and financial security, 'pillars' in their local church, benevolently worked for their town but were often patronising to the labouring class and particularly showed little sympathy for those with problems of alcoholism. Although they would acknowledge and aspire only to Christian values and virtues, their lives echoed the ancient Roman mores of *gravitas*, a sense of responsibility; *frugalitas*, with its discipline, firmness of purpose, good humour, energy and simple tastes; and especially *pietas*, the performance of duties towards the gods, the family, and the state.

In February 1879 the number of various Christian denominational affiliations and a small Jewish community in the Port district were reported in the *Port Adelaide News*.<sup>91</sup> Table 3 shows the number of adherents along with population percentages.

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<sup>90</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 March 1883.

<sup>91</sup> 'Numerical positions of various churches in Port Adelaide district stated by the last official return', *Port Adelaide News*, 8 February 1879.



TABLE 3 - PORT ADELAIDE RELIGIONS, FEBRUARY 1879

RELIGION	NUMBER OF ADHERENTS	% (rounded)
Church of England	3878	40
Roman Catholic	1587	16
Wesleyan	1387	14
Presbyterian	1007	10
Independent/Congregational	592	6
Baptist	538	6
Primitive Methodist	227	2
Lutheran	124	1
Bible Christian	115	1
Jews	84	1
Christian Brethren	61	<1
New Jerusalem	14	<1
Methodist New Connexion	7	<1
Unitarian	7	<1

In comparison with the figures from the previous decade (see Table 1, page 135), five further protestant denominations were included: Bible Christian, Christian Brethren, New Jerusalem, Unitarian and Methodist New Connexion, but the proportions of the other religious groups in the town remained very similar. The 28 Mormons listed in 1866 were not represented in 1879.

In Port Adelaide, as in England, Congregationalists were prominent in business and mercantile circles and included, amongst others, sea captains, Henry Simpson, George Hall, James Smith and John Bickers, owner of the B. B. Line of sailing ships, Charles Morris, timber merchant, James Grosse, ships' chandler, Ralph Kestel and Francis Reynolds, building contractors, Joseph Stone of the South Australian Stevedoring Company, Henry Giles, grain merchant, J. W. Channon of Smith, Channon and Company, John Hannay coach builder and temperance hotel owner, Alfred Good, carrier, James Haddy, undertaker, and Frank Cockington, printer. Eight mayors of the Port were members

of the church.<sup>92</sup> Although only six per cent of the town's religious affiliates, they were substantial employers in the town. Walter Phillips cited A. D. Gilbert's observation that 'upward social mobility was a factor in changes that took place in Evangelical Nonconformity in England' while arguing that 'it was much the same in the Australian colonies. People came to Australia to improve themselves and the expectations of many were largely fulfilled'.<sup>93</sup> The 124 Lutherans held their first service in the Foresters' hall in Port Adelaide and built churches on the peninsula, at Semaphore in 1928 and later at Largs. They had a very small presence at the Port preferring a rural lifestyle reminiscent of the one in their Silesian homeland.

Even with a number of established churches in the town, there was an apparent need for another seamen's mission: 'Inaugural Services will be held in Town Hall, Port Adelaide, on Lord's Day, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 1879....Moody and Sankey's Hymns. All are invited - Sailors especially'.<sup>94</sup> Two months later Sunday afternoon worship was reported to be 'well attended' with the local church choirs 'rendering valuable assistance' to the services.<sup>95</sup> The mission was managed by a 16-man committee with

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<sup>92</sup> Dean Eland and Vivien Counsell, *History of a Port Adelaide Church: "Honouring the Past....Anticipating the Future"*. (Port Adelaide, 1992) iv. See also Jubilee Brochure, 'We've been at the heart of the Port for over 150 years', Port Adelaide Uniting Church, 1999.

<sup>93</sup> A. D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change 1740-1914*. (London, 1976) 159-161, in Walter W. Phillips, 'The Social Composition of the Religious Denominations in late Nineteenth Century Australia', *Church Heritage*. Vol. 4, No. 2, September 1985, 85.

<sup>94</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 January 1879. The ship-board mission of John Barclay operating 40 years before had ceased after the establishment of land-based seamen's missions at the Port.

<sup>95</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 March 1879.

ministers of religion from the town and suburbs as ex-officio members. A missionary, Emanuel Hounslow, was employed to visit each vessel on arrival and invite sailors to attend the Sailors' Rest facility during their stay in port.<sup>96</sup> In January 1880, at the meeting to mark the first anniversary of the mission, the size of the task and the volume of overseas traffic through the port was indicated in the missionary's report: 'Year now just closing...overseas ships, of which there cannot be less than 600...with a complement of nearly 10,000 men'.<sup>97</sup>

The amount of shipping arriving in the port is evident from newspaper reports. During January 1880 there were 52 vessels totalling 25 265 tons and comprising

4 brigs - 1051 tons	6 full-rigged ships - 5832 tons
5 barquettes - 1302 tons	7 steamers - 4614 tons
5 schooners - 594 tons	25 barques - 11,872 tons.

The vessels came from Brisbane, East London, Glasgow, Liverpool, New York (one each), Cape Town, Mauritius, The Baltic, Western Australia (two each), Sydney (four), Melbourne, Tasmania (six each), London (seven) and Newcastle in New South Wales (eleven).<sup>98</sup>

The seamen, particularly those from the increasing number of faster steamers, had a very different view of ports-of-call to the earlier sailors who had endured months of deprivation at sea between landfalls. The

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<sup>96</sup> 'The Seamen's Mission', *Port Adelaide News*, 22 February 1895.

<sup>97</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 17 January 1880.

<sup>98</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 7 February 1880. Vessels from Newcastle mainly delivered much needed coal supplies for shipping.

behaviour of men on landing was changing with improved conditions at sea and shortened travel time. In 1888 a newspaper writer observed that

with the spread of education and temperance, the old world idea of a sailor is fast passing away. The idea of a sailor in former times was of a heave-ho, rum-coloured, grog-soaked, lively, hearty individual, who, on jumping ashore from his ship was 'ready for any game you like, my boys,' and generally was taken in tow by some Nancy or other land-shark, who stuck to him till all his ready-money was cleaned out....Nowadays, however, Jack is, to some extent, more inclined to a sober and rational spending of his time ashore, and the formation of homes, rests, and other institutions at seaports throughout the world is an evidence of this.<sup>99</sup>

The Sailors' Rest was a rented building in the centre of the town where, the local paper reported, seamen could

congregate, play draughts, chess etc., read the newspapers, various annuals and current literature. Here also 'Jack' can find writing paper and material for writing, can meet 'chums' from other vessels, obtain tea, coffee, etc., and meet friends belonging to the Mission to chat and encourage him onward and upward. On Thursday and Sunday evenings services are held at the Rest, while on Friday the Blue Ribbon Army carry on their temperance crusade with results which have been highly beneficial to many a British and foreign sailor....a new line of work is to be tried in offering a service once in three months in the Port Adelaide Town Hall.<sup>100</sup>

The mission with its Sailors' Rest was a separate institution to the Prince Alfred Sailors' Home run by superintendent G. Hills. The home provided accommodation next to the station in St Vincent Street and also, for a period, rooms for the mission. An advertisement for the home in 1882 suggested excellent alternate accommodation to the hotels:

#### SAILORS' HOME

Seamen and men working upon the port wharves can obtain

First Class Accommodation and every comfort.

Plunge and Shower baths, Reading Room, Bagatelle, and other amusements, and a well-stocked LIBRARY.

Terms - 15s. per week, in advance.

Separate bedrooms for boarders.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>99</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 August 1888.

<sup>100</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 February 1895. See also *Portside Messenger*, 14 August 1996 which reported on the Seafarers' Centre of the British and International Sailors' Society in Nelson Street, 'the oldest charity in South Australia', carrying on the tradition of the early missions but now providing a bar for visitors. The society name was changed from the 'British Sailors' Society' in 1995.

<sup>101</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 17 March 1882.

In 1895 there was some thought to combine the services of the sailors' home and the seamen's mission but they remained separate.<sup>102</sup> There were still men who failed to find a bed for the night. In some cases, as reported in the *Port Adelaide News*, they turned up in court for 'sleeping out': 'George Wilson and William Smith seamen, aged 18 and 21, charged under the Vagrant Act with *primitivism* - sleeping out in the open air - were sentenced to seven day's imprisonment'.<sup>103</sup> Wilson and Smith, most likely destitute, may have preferred the March night sky to staying in a charity shelter, but by the 1880s such behaviour was an affront to civility at Port Adelaide.

Facilities at the Prince Alfred Sailors' Home's deteriorated steadily. By 1889 when the Royal Navy and Merchant Service arranged for men to stay there, they reported that despite its 'handsome exterior' it was 'utterly comfortless' and

so like a second-rate poorhouse, so cheerless and unattractive, and not over clean, that none of the men could be persuaded to endure a second night within its walls. We feel deep sympathy with any poor merchant seaman who is bound by 'stress of weather' to put up at that place.<sup>104</sup>

The naval officers, after moving to the nearby Temperance Hotel, met with the missionary, Hounslow, 'to discuss their 'field of work' and found he agreed that the home was in a 'very sad condition' and needed

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<sup>102</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 February 1895. At the annual meeting of the Seamen's Mission in the Port Adelaide town hall on 4 February 1895, a statement was made regarding the two bodies, 'we wish at once to correct a misapprehension existing, by stating that the Seamen's Mission and the Sailors' Home are absolutely and entirely distinct, though we are of the opinion that they should be worked together'.

<sup>103</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 March 1881.

<sup>104</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 June 1889, reprinted from *Sunbeam*, 'a little paper published in Sydney for the Royal Navy and Merchant Service'.

upgrading.<sup>105</sup> The report by the officers included some prophetic observations and asides on the town's vitality and future.

Port Adelaide seems to have more life and activity in it than even the city itself, and is, no doubt, destined to be an important place in the future. In a few years time, when it has a canal through to Largs Bay, and its river deeper and wider, and solid embankments stretching along its sides; when the railway will not run through the public streets, and the people have the right to expel the far too numerous grog-sellers from their midst by vote, if they wish to do so, then it will be greatly improved.<sup>106</sup>

As early as 1838 a Total Abstinence Society was formed in South Australia to combat the problems associated with 'grog-sellers'.<sup>107</sup> *The Register* reported there were 'about 50 pledged members' by 1850.<sup>108</sup> In Port Adelaide the Reverend George Newenham, deacon at St Paul's Church of England, called a meeting on 6 June 1848 'for the purpose of forming a Total Abstinence Society'.<sup>109</sup> He remarked 'it was high time to make an aggressive movement upon the drunkenness of the Port' and stated that 'half of the burials in his first two years were the direct result of intoxication'. At the conclusion of the meeting seven signed 'the pledge' including Newenham.<sup>110</sup> In November 1860 the local council received an 'unsolicited cheque from the Total Abstinence Society for £5', which was 'declined by the council and the cheque returned, although "the

<sup>105</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 June 1889. The Prince Alfred Sailors' Home finally closed in August 1924 and the impressive stone building was demolished in 1932.

<sup>106</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 June 1889.

<sup>107</sup> Reference to the Total Abstinence Society was made in *The Southern Australian*, 21 July 1838, cited in S. E. Close, 'Social Attitudes to Liquor and Liquor Legislation in South Australia 1876-1917', B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1961, 131.

<sup>108</sup> *The Register*, 2 January 1850.

<sup>109</sup> Graham R. Ross, *Rev. George Cobbe Newenham (1823-1853): 1846-1849 Resident Deacon - St. Paul's Church, Port Adelaide.* (1992) 4.

<sup>110</sup> Ross, 4.

intention of the Society" was appreciated'.<sup>111</sup> The following year the society paid for a drinking fountain in Commercial Road, the idea being to quench the thirst of passers-by and so alleviate the need for alcoholic drinks.<sup>112</sup> By 1876 there were four water fountains at the Port; the South Australian Company fountain in Todd Street; a government fountain at the railway station in St Vincent Street; a public fountain on the Commercial Road and Nile Street corner and the Formby memorial fountain 'on the corner of Nelson Street and North Parade'.<sup>113</sup>

Provision of water fountains as a plan to reduce hotel use was a common strategy. Williamstown has an identical fountain to the Formby fountain in Port Adelaide.<sup>114</sup> There, the 'Wilkinson Memorial Fountain' was purchased by public subscription in memory of the Reverend George Wilkinson of Holy Trinity Church, 'an avid teetotaller'. It was erected in 1875, stated Ada Ackerly, to 'dispense pure water to discourage the thirsty from heading...to one of the (then) forty hotels available in the town'.<sup>115</sup> Brian Harrison highlighted the importance of drinking fountains both to temperance, and to sanitation, in the major cities of nineteenth-

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<sup>111</sup> Eugene Lumbers, *Centenary History of Port Adelaide 1856-1956*. (Adelaide, 1956) 30. Information from the council's Rough Minute Book which survived the early destruction of council records in a fire.

<sup>112</sup> *The Register*, 27 June 1861. The fountain was manufactured by Fuller & Company. The water was brought by train from Adelaide until 1867 when the fountain was connected to the water main. See also *The Register*, 2 August 1861. Waste water collected in a tray below for dogs. See also *Port Adelaide Council Annual Report*, 28 November 1876.

<sup>113</sup> The Glasgow-forged Formby Memorial Fountain with its pillared cupola of decorative iron work and base of Macclesfield marble and Mintaro slate is inscribed, 'ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION, TO JOHN FORMBY ESQ., J.P. MAYOR 1870-1-2 & 3'. In 1999 it is located on the south-east corner of Lipson and St Vincent Streets, outside the former railway station site.

<sup>114</sup> Ada Ackerly, 'A Walk in Old Williamstown', History Leaflet 11, Williamstown City Library, 1987.

<sup>115</sup> Ackerly, 'A Walk in Old Williamstown'.

century England.<sup>116</sup> In June 1860 Lord Shaftesbury observed that if fountains were established in the East End of London, 'water would carry the day over gin, beer, or any thing else of an intoxicating character'.<sup>117</sup>

Drinking fountains of the 1870s are often symbolic reminders of the temperance movement in the Australian colonies which followed similar movements in the British Isles, North America and Northern Europe. A brief study of what was happening in these overseas regions places the Australian and particularly South Australian movements in context. Individuals such as the Capuchin priest Theobald Mathew in Ireland and England, and John Bartholomew Gough in America preached that moral degradation, ill-health, poverty and crime were the results of alcoholism.

Mathew spent many years working for the welfare and education of the poor and in 1838 took a pledge of total abstinence. Ginger-beer at a penny a glass was sold to his listeners in London in 1843. Harrison argued that teetotallers deserve much credit for the increase in the sale of cordials, soda-water, lemonade and ginger-beer in England during the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>118</sup> Mathew devoted his work to the temperance cause campaigning as far afield as America before his death in 1856.

In 1808 a temperance group began meeting in Saratoga, New York, and in the next few decades societies formed in other American states, in

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<sup>116</sup> Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872*. (London, 1971), 300.

<sup>117</sup> *Morning Star*, 1 June 1860, in Harrison, 300.

<sup>118</sup> Harrison, 300-301.



the British Isles, Norway and Sweden. In 1874 the undenominational Woman's Christian Temperance Union was founded in America and spread its work internationally.<sup>119</sup> This group, and the later Anti-Saloon League formed in Ohio in 1893, wielded strong political influence in America, turning from moral appeals for moderation and abstinence to demands for government control through liquor legislation.<sup>120</sup>

Russia tried a 'state monopoly system' on the retail sale of spirits, firstly in the provinces east of the Volga and later in the south and west of the country. By 1904 the system was established over the greater part of European Russia and Poland.<sup>121</sup> A 'no-private profit' system was adopted in Scandinavia which entrusted 'a monopoly of the sale of liquor to a body of citizens, who have no personal interest in it'. In Norway and Sweden, where the 'companies' handed over the profits to municipalities in aid of rates, the system led to the temptation of municipalities to 'press the sale of spirits'. The Norwegian company, the Samlag, then determined that profits would be distributed to philanthropic societies with incomes dependent on voluntary contributions.<sup>122</sup>

S. E. Close has shown how the Australian colonies (and later the states) 'followed Britain in their adoption of the licensing system' and all

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<sup>119</sup> To help combat the liquor trade in South Australia a branch of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union opened in Adelaide in 1886.

<sup>120</sup> Close, 16.

<sup>121</sup> Close, 5-6.

<sup>122</sup> Close, 5, 7-10.

'experimented with forms of local option or local veto' for the reduction in sales of alcohol.<sup>123</sup> (The temperance movement for local option voting in South Australia is discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine of this study.) From 1839 South Australia had strict licensing laws at a time when in Britain licences 'were never refused' to establish 'any number of beerhouses'.<sup>124</sup> Some South Australian legislation preceded the British, for example in 1891 stricter provisions about the age of children and the registration of clubs occurred ten years before similar legislation in Britain.<sup>125</sup>

In the first South Australian Act, no drink was to be supplied to the Aborigines of the colony, licensed houses were to close at 10 p.m. and were closed on Sundays except for travellers and, between the hours of half-past one and three, for the sale of malt liquor only to be drunk off the premises. In the second Act of 1839 wording was changed to rectify an error in the original Act, with an additional provision preventing gambling in public houses. Close suggested that from the earliest days in South Australia there was a fear that 'the presence of liquor would encourage men to gamble'.<sup>126</sup> It was an attempt to protect the public from moral danger by law. In the crusade against alcohol, temperance societies were to have a wide-spread influence on the South Australian public.

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<sup>123</sup> Close, 17.

<sup>124</sup> Close, 23.

<sup>125</sup> Close, 17.

<sup>126</sup> Close, 23-24.

The earliest campaign emerged from the Total Abstinence League started in 1839 by George William Cole, a Methodist layman,<sup>127</sup> later a parliamentary temperance advocate during the mid-1870s. In Port Adelaide during the 1870s the Primitive Methodists formed a Temperance Society with weekly meetings at the Working Men's Hall. In August 1879 forty members were present.<sup>128</sup> The Port Wesleyan schoolroom was the scene of another group, the Port Wesleyan Temperance Society, which met monthly.<sup>129</sup> The Independent Order of Good Templars, another Port temperance fraternity, continued their cause advertising 'Temperance Entertainment' at the 'Hand of Friendship Lodge...in the Working Men's Association Hall' where 'there was a good attendance, the room being quite full'.<sup>130</sup> Other temperance organisations in the town were the Wesleyan 'Bands of Hope' and the Port Adelaide division of the Blue Ribbon Army which also met at the Working Men's Hall.<sup>131</sup>

One example of temperance activities in the town was the Blue Ribbon Army's two days of 'Special Services' in March 1882. On Sunday the Reverend John Nelson preached two sermons and on Monday a tea and free concert was held in the hall under a banner with the motto 'Temperance and Happy Homes'. The entertainment items probably

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<sup>127</sup> Close, 57.

<sup>128</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 August 1879.

<sup>129</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 September 1879.

<sup>130</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 June 1879.

<sup>131</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 August 1884. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 31 December 1880 which described the annual picnic of the Port Adelaide Congregational Band of Hope. The president 'exhorted members to take greater interest in the working of the society'.

reinforced the views of the select audience listening to the many songs and recitations 'with a moral' on the program. The *Port Adelaide News* reported the event presided over by Dr George Bollen 'the first mayor in these colonies to don "the blue".' The choir rendered 'The Badge of Blue', Mr Bray sang 'The Vacant Chair', and Mr Bell gave a recitation entitled 'Alcohol'....Mr Francis sang 'Don't marry a man if he Drinks' and encores were called for the choir's piece 'Social Class' and Mr J. H. Sinclair for his song 'Over the Hills to the Poorhouse'. Other items included songs by Miss A. Eldridge's 'God bless our Home', Miss M. Matthews' 'Break it gently to his mother' and a recitation, 'The Drunkard's Nose', by Mr J. Howell.<sup>132</sup>

In 1884 the Church of England endeavoured to follow the lead of the non-conformist churches in becoming more involved in the temperance movement; a renewed interest which the late Reverend Newenham would have commended. At the evening service on Sunday 24 February 1884 Canon Samuel Green, in place of the sermon, read a 'pastoral letter' from Bishop George Kennion which urged the members of the church 'amongst other duties...to become total abstainers or temperate in their drinking habits'. The newspaper report on the service stated that 'we understand a "White Cross Army" is to be started in Port Adelaide, having for its

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<sup>132</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 March 1883.

platform, Purity of Life, Temperance and Total Abstinence.<sup>133</sup>

The following Sunday Green gave a 'Purity and Temperance' lecture based on Proverbs 20: 1, 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise'.<sup>134</sup> A Church of England Temperance Society was formed with 49 members, 'sixteen of whom were total abstainers'.<sup>135</sup> Kennion's speech to a meeting of the group, which was attended by Canon Green and Dr Curtis, the medical officer to the local Board of Health, was reported in the paper. The article included his claim that 'the Church had aroused itself to its duty, admittedly after the lead had been taken by the Nonconformists, and was grappling with the question of national drunkenness'. He confessed that he

had tried the total ticket several times, but with the pressure of his work had broken down, and proved a personal requirement for a moderate amount of stimulant. It was either total abstinence and unfitness for work or moderation and fitness. He had embraced the latter.<sup>136</sup>

The bishop's moderate position on the use of alcohol, in the reporter's opinion, was a perilous one as 'His Lordship omitted reference to slippery places, and also all mention of the fact that a man becomes a drunkard only by degrees'. The argument against the evils of drink was put in a new light by Canon Green who, the journalist stated,

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<sup>133</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 February 1884. See also George Herbert Jose, *The Church of England in South Australia 111. 1882-1905*. (North Adelaide SA, 1955) 41, and David Hilliard and Arnold D. Hunt, 'Strands in the Social Fabric: Religion', in Eric Richards (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*. (Netley SA, 1986) 215. Dr Robert William Dale, a leading Congregationalist from Birmingham who visited South Australia in 1888, referred to the second Anglican bishop of Adelaide, George Wyndham Kennion, as 'cordial and affectionate to individual Nonconformists and generous in his estimate of their religious work'. The bishop, educated at Eton and Oriel College, Oxford, married a sister of Sir James Fergusson, former governor of South Australia 1869-1873.

<sup>134</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 February, 18 March 1884.

<sup>135</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 27 May 1884.

<sup>136</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 June 1884.

took great pains to convince his audience that he was *serious*, and by way of illustration he said that drinking 'good' beer would promote temperance, and abolishing barmaids would tend to the same end. On these points he appealed to publicans. He knew some who were pillars of the church in early days. Barmaids, if employed, should not be less than forty-five years old, nor possess the slightest pretensions to good looks....

He was going against adulteration of beer, and was determined to procure samples from every publican in Port Adelaide, and get them analysed, and publish the results! In the mean time he was open to make private experiments if any publican wished his opinion.<sup>137</sup>

Curtis also attracted criticism for his more permissive approach.

Dr. Curtis had prepared a rich feast of facts which most newspaper-reading people readily recognised as old acquaintances. The bulk of his teaching was in favour of taking a share of good beer.

He ventured on dangerous ground in the statement that disease attacked total abstainers more readily than moderate drinkers. *Perhaps* that accounts for the lower fees charged to total abstainers for life insurance and for friendly society contributions. Local abstainers had better look up the facts; and so had the worthy doctor.<sup>138</sup>

The reporter, like many others who 'left to catch trains', found the speeches unsatisfying and the bishop's predilection for perhaps a pre-dinner sherry or an after-dinner port, and Green's proposed study of beer purity, were not well received in some parts of the Port. Three weeks later the paper expressed 'curiosity whether Canon Green has carried out his scheme for suppressing the sale of adulterated liquors, and as to the number of sample bottles he has secured'.<sup>139</sup> The temperance cause of the Church of England, regarded as having a 'liberal attitude to alcohol',<sup>140</sup> was not taken seriously in the local press.

In 1895 another Church of England incumbent, the Reverend F. W. Samwell, started the St Paul's Club 'with the primary object of forming a

<sup>137</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 June 1884.

<sup>138</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 June 1884.

<sup>139</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 24 June 1884.

<sup>140</sup> Dirk Van Dissel, 'The Adelaide Gentry, 1850-1920', in Richards, 365.

*rendezvous* for young apprentices and officers (not the seamen) on the various vessels trading with this port'.<sup>141</sup> At the inaugural meeting on 1 August there were 90 members.<sup>142</sup> The club at the Royal Arms Chambers, 'open all day and every evening', included separate rooms for smoking, writing, cloaks, refreshments and a 'long room facing St. Vincent-street set aside for the general business of the club'.<sup>143</sup> Books, games and amusements were provided. Samwell's reason for this venture was explained:

Many of the apprentices on the vessels are sons of professional men in England, are connected with good families, and should be, Mr. Samwell considers, introduced into good society when staying at this port, rather than allowed to drift....The object of the club, Mr. Samwell affirms, is not to clash with the Seamen's Mission, but to reach a different class and to serve a different object. No religious element will be introduced, although a moral tone will pervade the doings of the club.<sup>144</sup>

John Herbert Hannay attempted to make it easier for abstaining visitors, and Portonians, when he established a temperance hotel. With his family Hannay arrived in South Australia on board *Nugget* in 1854, eight days before his fifteenth birthday. He later built up a successful business in Port Adelaide as a blacksmith, wheelwright and coach builder, and married Constance Elizabeth Radcliffe in 1868. Their story is an example of middle-class lives at Port Adelaide. Death in childbirth, infant death and remarriage were common family experiences in the nineteenth

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<sup>141</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 June 1895.

<sup>142</sup> *The Register*, 1 August 1895.

<sup>143</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 July 1895. The 'Royal Arms Chambers' were noted on the March 1881 map (Block No. 1) on the corner of Timpson Street next to the hotel built in 1878. The exterior carries through the same design elements of parapet, brackets and balcony cast-iron work and appears to be one building. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 11 April 1884, when the rooms of Messrs. Grundy, Nesbit and Leader, Solicitors, Notaries, Commissioners, &c., 'were located at the 'Royal Arms Chambers next to Ford's Hotel'.

<sup>144</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 June 1895.

century and Hannay's family were no exception. His wife died in 1871 after the birth of their daughter, Constance Maria. In 1872 Hannay married a widow, Elizabeth McPharlin, and their son Herbert was born the following year. Constance died when nearly four and in 1876 another daughter Eva Elizabeth was born.<sup>145</sup> In 1879, adjoining his coach-building business, Hannay built a substantial stone and brick establishment of 12 rooms, J. H. Hannay's Port Temperance Hotel, run by his wife.<sup>146</sup>

John Hannay took a deep interest in educational welfare and was a teacher in the Congregational Church Sunday School for 33 years. He was a senior member of the Institute committee for many years and was one of the original subscribers to the Port Adelaide Scholarship Fund. A trustee of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, he was also a founder of the Juvenile Lodge of Odd Fellows, a member of the Glanville District Council, and represented Glanville Ward in the first Semaphore Corporation.<sup>147</sup> Hannay's hotel was well advertised in the local press before starting business in June 1879.

<p>Just what we wanted!  The Port Adelaide Temperance Hotel.  an Establishment answering all of the purposes of a Coffee Palace!  Tea and Coffee....  Cordials of every kind....  and the Proprietor believes that he has hit upon  The Right Thing at Last.</p>	148
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<sup>145</sup> Greg Pink of Largs Bay (relative of Elizabeth Hannay), Information File, 1996, Port Adelaide Historical Society. Hannay's son, Herbert, worked in the coach-building factory and took over after his father's death in January 1907, continuing the business until c.1916.

<sup>146</sup> Katrina McDougall and Elizabeth Vines, *Port Adelaide Centre Heritage Survey*. (Adelaide, 1994) 41.

<sup>147</sup> John Hannay's obituary, *The Register*, 21 January 1907. See also 'Information requested on the Hannay Family', *Portonian*, June 1988, 10. Hannay Street, Largs Bay, is named after John Hannay.

<sup>148</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 17 May 1879.



Hannay began the venture at the right time. As a temperance advocate he offered an alternative accommodation and meals venue to the licensed hotels, and as a businessman he recognised the temperance trend and catered for it. A month after opening an advertisement in the local press read:

Which house in Port Adelaide supplies the best TEA and COFFEE and all kinds of Temperance Refreshments at all hours? Why J. H. HANNAY'S, Commercial-Road, of course! 149

A local journalist reported that

to Mr. Hannay, of Commercial-road, belongs the credit of opening the first coffee-tavern in South Australia; and he has set to work in a thoroughly enterprising fashion. A large and handsome building has been erected, the various apartments of which are lofty and neat. There are - a large dining-room, 28 ft. x 20 ft., two expensively-furnished apartments for the use of private parties; and ten bedrooms. A temperance bar is open all day and far into the night, and at this tea, coffee, cocoa, and all kinds of temperance beverages are dispensed at a merely nominal charge.<sup>150</sup>

The newspaper continued its support under the heading 'News of the Week': 'Hannay's Coffee house and Restaurant...is a house which the total abstainers should right heartily support, and indeed it is deserving of the patronage of all classes in the community'.<sup>151</sup> Hannay's hotel was chosen as

<sup>149</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 July 1879.

<sup>150</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 May 1879. The popularity of coffee houses in Adelaide developed a little later. From the foundation of the South Australian Temperance Alliance in 1884 there were a number of successful unlicensed 'dining rooms'. The *Alliance Minutes*, 15 December 1885, record that 'Coffee Rooms were opened for rest and reading'. In 1908, 'Grant's Coffee Palace' was opened by Jonathan Grant in the Austral Stores, Hindley Street. In 1919, John West took over the business and renamed it West's Coffee Palace. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 5 July 1879, for the 'Prospectus of the South Australian Coffee-taverns Company', and *Port Adelaide News*, 4 October 1879, 'The coffee taverns movement is to be successful after all'.

<sup>151</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 July 1879. See also J. F. Bennett, (ed.), *The Royal South Australian Almanack and General Directory for 1840*. (Adelaide, 1840). As early as 1840 there was a coffee house in the Port run by Robert Robson but it is not known if this was established specifically as an temperance alternative to the hotels. See also the description in Harrison, 304, of coffee shops, eating houses and refreshment rooms in the context of the temperance movement in England. The first coffee palace in London, the Limehouse 'Edinburgh Castle', was opened in 1873 by the philanthropic Dr T. J. Barnardo.

the venue for the 'Gospel Temperance Mission' which held a meeting there in January 1883.<sup>152</sup>

The trend in temperance catering continued in the establishment of dining rooms which provided cheap meals without alcohol. Leo Wibel opened refreshment rooms in Commercial Road opposite the Institute,<sup>153</sup> which were later run by G. Thoms as the Flagstaff Dining Rooms, advertising 'Tea, Coffee & Refreshment Rooms', with breakfast and tea costing sixpence and dinner ninepence.<sup>154</sup> Way Lee ran a similar establishment.

Way Lee, Commercial-road, Port Adelaide, begs to inform the inhabitants of Port Adelaide, that he has just opened New and Extensive Dining Rooms, where a substantial meal can be obtained at all hours for 9d.<sup>155</sup>

The local paper carried a 'Declaration of War against intemperance'.

Strong and fierce is the hold, and difficult to shake off; but 'where there's a will there's a way', and perhaps many, to whom this warning may come, are yet in time to turn from the poison, to live a happy and useful life to themselves and others without having recourse to strong drink, the cause of short happiness and long sorrow.<sup>156</sup>

The Port Wesleyans stayed in tune with the strong temperance movement in Britain and the United States. In 1879 they advertised a 'Temperance Sermon' entitled 'The Mission of Rechabitism to Australia' to be delivered by their local minister, Reverend A. Stubbs.<sup>157</sup> The success of

<sup>152</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 January 1883.

<sup>153</sup> *Sands & McDougall Directory*. (1891) 59.

<sup>154</sup> Photograph I8, Port Adelaide Historical Society collection. See also *Sands & McDougall Directory*. (1901) 65. The Union Dining Rooms run by E. O. Swensson were alongside the Flagstaff Dining Rooms towards the harbour.

<sup>155</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 April 1881.

<sup>156</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 11 May 1878.

<sup>157</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 October, 1 November 1879.

the occasion, 'in the presence of a large audience', promoted the Rechabite cause against alcohol and for membership of a benefit society. However it would seem that, by its very topic and venue in the church, the Reverend Stubbs would preach to an audience of those already converted to the temperance cause.

In his examination of the social composition of religious denominations in Australia, Walter Phillips noted that the attempts of the church to reach the working class 'began to look feeble', and 'the utterances of many churchmen on social questions, particularly on temperance, widened the breach'.<sup>158</sup> In Port Adelaide the various churches embraced the temperance movement with more or less enthusiasm. The efforts of the Wesleyans and Congregationalists showed most energy.

A show was necessary to entice the needy to the meetings. Matthew Burnett's Mission came to town in 1880. After a 'great fervency of address', a signing of the pledge was the climax of meetings held by this 'apostle of temperance'.<sup>159</sup> Burnett, a layman evangelist from Yorkshire, migrated to Victoria in 1863 and spent three years, 1880-1882, in South Australia employed by the Wesleyan Home Mission Committee as a temperance crusader.<sup>160</sup> The local churches informed Burnett of 800

<sup>158</sup> Phillips, 89.

<sup>159</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 October 1880. See also Arnold D. Hunt, *This Side of Heaven: a History of Methodism in South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1985) 128.

<sup>160</sup> Hunt, 127-128. Burnett, the 'first evangelist to preach the gospel of temperance among Australian Wesleyans' caused dissension in a number of towns and by 1882 many Wesleyans questioned the value of his mission. The Wesleyan superintendent at Gawler refused to open churches in his district to Burnett who also faced opposition in Clare where he was 'pelted by eggs'.

teetotallers connected with the town's existing temperance societies, to which he responded with the aim for '2000 pledges in the month at least 200 of them to be obtained amongst the sailors, seamen and fisherman'.<sup>161</sup>

On Saturday 6 November 1880, Burnett held his third 'Great Mass Meeting' at the Port, with the aptly entitled address, 'Social Shipwrecks', accompanied by a talk by the Baptist minister, Reverend J. Price. The advertisement promised 'songs by various gentlemen' and a procession of 'Rechabites, Good Templars, Sons of Temperance, Torch and Banner Bearers, and a United Temperance Choir' of a hundred voices leaving the town hall at 7 p.m. sharp 'headed by a band'.<sup>162</sup> The meeting, at the waterworks office, was chaired by George Bollen, a local doctor.<sup>163</sup>

After three weeks of crusade, there were 1104 pledges, and 1350 signed for the month.<sup>164</sup> For all his 'signing up' success, Burnett and his temperance carnival were merely passing through, but prepared the way for the right man to lead the local crusade forward, and influence the whole colony through a consistent campaign for moral and social reform. On 2 October 1880, a paragraph in the *Port Adelaide News* announced what was to be a new era at the Port when

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<sup>161</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 October 1880.

<sup>162</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 November 1880.

<sup>163</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 November 1880.

<sup>164</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 November 1880. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 21 November 1882. Burnett, 'the Evangelist and Temperance Revivalist', planned his farewell visit to Port Adelaide with a meeting in the town hall 'in aid of funds for the Seamen's Mission'. A report in *Port Adelaide News*, 26 February 1884, stated that 'Matthew Burnett left South Australia for Victoria'.

the Rev. J. C. Kirby, the new minister for the Congregational Church, Port Adelaide...arrived by the steamer Victorian on Thursday. We hope and expect that he will have a prosperous and useful career.<sup>165</sup>

Kirby's reform agenda was large scale, individual help for the needy at the Port was left to others. Well known Portonians such as Sarah Francisco and John Sinnaman or 'Crabby Jack', habitual drunkards needing urgent help, were both likely candidates for more immediate assistance from the temperance movement.<sup>166</sup> The crusaders however followed a different agenda and inebriates continued to keep the police busy. A journalist, perhaps hardened to a continuing social problem in the town, endeavoured to keep his readers amused by a report of drunkenness in the streets during May 1881.

One of our police constables gleaned a rich harvest from the gutters on Tuesday night, rescuing from that favorite couch three devotees of Bacchus. The first haul that the constable made was an antique specimen of feminine humanity, to convey whom to the watch house he had to employ the friendly assistance of an onlooker.<sup>167</sup>

It is unknown however if the local alcoholics appreciated, or even knew of, the growing social pressure steadily evolving into a strident temperance movement.

During one week the following May it was very quiet at the police

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<sup>165</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 2 October 1880.

<sup>166</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 July 1878, 23 February 1881. See also Taylor Weidenhofer, *Mitcham Heritage Survey*, (Adelaide, 1995) 112-113. There was some attempt in South Australia to recognise the problem of alcoholism and look for solutions. The Inebriates Act was passed in parliament in 1874. The Act provided for a 'Home for Inebriates' which was opened at Belair in 1877 with accommodation for 12 patients and a supervisor; it was renamed 'Hope Lodge' in 1893 and closed c.1906. 'The prevailing attitude to alcoholism', Taylor Weidenhofer stated in their survey, 'was that there was no medical cure for the condition, and one could only combat it through "moral strength through Christian religion"'. The treatment was 'remarkably unsuccessful'; the superintendent, Reverend W. L. Morton, stated to a Royal Commission held on the treatment of inebriates in 1906 that 'he had a failure rate of 95%'.

<sup>167</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 May 1881.

court and it is likely that the members of the temperance movement viewed this fact to be partly due to their influence. Again with a degree of irony, the newspaper noted that

the moral condition of the Port has been in an abnormal condition of purity lately. It would almost seem as though we had arrived at that age 'when all grow good.' For a week the vigilance of Sergeant Doyle and his energetic emissaries has been unable to furnish a single 'horrid example' for the edification of Mr. Turner's admiring courtiers, whose countenances are beginning to look sad and dejected, as they contemplate the glory which seems to have passed away. Is Mr. Proctor's comet nearer at hand than that gentleman has led us to believe, or what is the producing cause of the present extraordinary state of morals? At the rate we are progressing, if our worthy S.M. does not make haste to recover from his indisposition (which we sincerely trust he will do), he will find his occupation gone.<sup>168</sup>

Economic reasons significantly contributed to the police court's inactivity. In the mid-1880s South Australia suffered a slump in the economy, a follow-on from drought in rural areas. Wharves were devoid of wheat bags and the port workers idle and unpaid. There was little money for the pub as the men and their families rationed what meagre resources they had left. In late July 1885 a committee was formed in the town for the relief of the destitute poor and reported that 'several ladies had consented to assist...in canvassing and inspecting cases, and it was resolved to appoint a ladies' committee sufficiently numerous to cover the whole district'.<sup>169</sup>

Lists of the needy were to be drawn up as a result of these visits and donations to the 'Port Poor Fund' were published in the *Port Adelaide News*. After two weeks the chairman closed the fund explained that they ought not to continue to collect from thrifty people and that the

<sup>168</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 May 1882.

<sup>169</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 July 1885.

committee considered it inadvisable to drain more money from the public than was absolutely necessary. In place of cash some donors offered firewood or clothes.<sup>170</sup> However monetary donations and home visits continued, the details of which were recorded in the press.

Received £221.2.10 for original Port Poor Fund and £30.5/- for general relief account.

Semaphore South and Glanville Committee.

The district had been divided into four, and all likely places in each division had been visited....The extent of distress was not so great as was anticipated. The wants were chiefly wearing apparel and bedding.

Rosewater Committee.

The house-to-house visitation had been successful, genuine cases of pinching poverty had been found, mostly arising from lack of employment for men. Three strong women would be glad to do washing and nursing if procurable. Deserving cases had been relieved.

Semaphore North and Birkenhead Committee.

...reported relief of six deserving cases.

Woodville, Queenstown, & Alberton Committee.

Eight ladies visited, 35 cases relieved.<sup>171</sup>

L. M. Tier, the jocular publican who made himself 'conspicuous in administering and providing relief for the poor of the Port', arranged a concert to boost funds, with the council granting free use of the town hall but 'a number of seats were empty'.<sup>172</sup>

Most of the townspeople were affected by the depression and on 1 September 1885 holiday activities for 'Demonstration Day', which attempted to brighten one day at least, turned out to be sober celebrations; only the larrikins, young men without family responsibilities, appeared to have money for alcohol. The *Port Adelaide News* reported:

Bad Times

The holiday on Tuesday last left Port Adelaide livelier than an ordinary country churchyard. Flags were hung across St. Vincent-street, and the hotels were all more

<sup>170</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 August 1885.

<sup>171</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 August 1885.

<sup>172</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 August 1885.

or less decorated with bunting, all showing loyalty to the eagerly looked-for Demonstration Day. The Working Men's Association held their usual sports on the grounds at the rear of the Gasworks, and the proceedings were of the most respectable and orderly character; very few persons were seen to be the worse for liquor, which fact added greatly to the respectability of the gathering. A number of mere lads were, we regret to say, seen rolling about helplessly drunk, but they were members of the larrikin class, of which drunkenness is an inherent quality. The beautiful banner belonging to the Association...was also exhibited, and in the bright sunlight was seen to full advantage.<sup>173</sup>

In relation to labour, one of the 'new social difficulties', the paper stated in May 1886, was the way in which trade unions were arresting 'the action of the old-fashioned law of supply and demand....free competition has been condemned and checked by trade unions [which are]....destined to multiply in number because they constitute the best means of enabling the wage-getters to elevate their own position'.<sup>174</sup> In Port Adelaide, of 500 men, only 150 were working on the wharves with the result, the paper suggested, that 'either the men must scramble for what little work there is, and underbid each other, and cut wages down, or a few must be employed and the many must be idle'. The article endeavoured to give both sides of the predicament and showed astuteness in describing the emerging new order: 'we have, therefore, in two different classes of society, two different principles at work. Amongst capitalists the price of money is still regulated strictly by the law of supply and demand; amongst working men, where competition is disparaged, the price of labor is kept up, even though the quantity used is diminished'.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 September 1885.

<sup>174</sup> 'South Australia and Its Depression', reprinted from *The Sydney Morning Herald*, date unknown, *Port Adelaide News*, 28 May 1886.

<sup>175</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 May 1886.



By March 1887 the paper suggested that the Port Misery of 1837 was now Port Poverty,<sup>176</sup> and in early June the same year reported that of 'about three miles of wharfage only about one mile was occupied'. The article expressed the hope that 'before many months are over our shipping trade will improve and work be provided for the large number of lumpers now idle'.<sup>177</sup>

In Port Adelaide workers' attempts to secure better conditions meant confrontation with many of the factory owners who were also feeling the adverse effects of worsening economic conditions. Employers sought 'freedom of contract' with wages determined by supply and demand in the labour market. The workers resisted. When the colony's economic outlook slightly improved in 1887 it was associated with an expansion in shipping which in turn required an increased workforce on the wharves.<sup>178</sup> The organisation of unions in the Port was helped by the concentration of workers in one area. Chris Vevers argued that 'the maritime trade was significant to the trade union movement in that it gathered large numbers of workers experiencing similar social and economic circumstances into one or two places such as Port Adelaide and Port Pirie'.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 March 1887.

<sup>177</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 June 1887.

<sup>178</sup> K. R. Bowes, 'The 1890 Maritime Strike in S.A.', M.A. Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1957, 34-37, cited in Chris Vevers, 'The Maritime Labor Council of Port Adelaide 1886-1892', *Flinders Journal of History and Politics: The Port Adelaide Issue*, 65.

<sup>179</sup> Vevers, 65.

There were many minor grievances which united the maritime workers of Port Adelaide and which were not being addressed to their satisfaction by the unions' peak council, the United Trades and Labor Council (U.T.L.C.), formed in 1884. The two largest societies in the Port, the Working Men's Association and the Seamen's Union, had seen 'the advantage of a new peak council consisting solely of those engaged in the maritime trade' and in 1886 the Maritime Labor Council of Port Adelaide (M.L.C.) was formed.<sup>180</sup> At the completion of its first year there were eight affiliated societies with 2200 members. The August 1886 Report of the U.T.L.C. indicated it had 19 affiliated societies representing nearly 3000 working men at that time. Vevers stated that 'although the numerical strength of the M.L.C. was smaller than the U.T.L.C., it still had substantial support'.<sup>181</sup> He outlined the defiance of Port Adelaide workers in upholding their own council and withstanding tests of strength and solidarity.

In October there was a strike on the waterfront when shipowners refused to consider grievances of seamen and ships' officers seeking higher wages. Their wages were poor. Jim Moss' study of the labour movement in South Australia noted that seamen received £48 a year, half that earned by wharf labourers, and some masters earned only £120 a

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<sup>180</sup> Vevers, 66.

<sup>181</sup> Vevers, 66, 68.

year, for skilled jobs with considerable responsibilities.<sup>182</sup> Canon Green, who was closely involved with the cause of the Working Men's Association, addressed a public meeting on 10 October attended by between 2000 and 3000 strikers. Moss argued that Green's speech, entitled 'Who is the Monkey?', 'purported to sympathize with the working men but asked them to reject their leaders and return to work'. The workers remained on strike and 'the following day all shipping and business came to a standstill'.<sup>183</sup> This dispute was a forerunner to further trouble on the waterfront over the following three years and further financial hardship in the town. In December 1889 Mayor Ralph Kestel, donated ten percent of his yearly allowance by presenting 60 tickets worth five shillings each to various ministers of religion at the Port, 'to be distributed amongst the deserving poor of the town, to enable them to procure a few Christmas luxuries'. David Bower arranged to supply all the town poor with 'a good Christmas dinner'.<sup>184</sup> Patricia Brown's description of the paternalistic 'merchant princes' of Fremantle as men of social conscience who felt obliged to provide charity as well as government and leadership, would fit well their Portonian counterparts at that time.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Jim Moss, *Sound of Trumpets: History of the Labour Movement in South Australia*. (Netley SA, 1985) 137.

<sup>183</sup> Moss, 139.

<sup>184</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 December 1889.

<sup>185</sup> Patricia M. Brown, *The Merchant Princes of Fremantle: The Rise and Decline of a Colonial Elite, 1870-1900*. (Perth, 1996).

In August 1890 the solidarity of the waterfront workers was tested when they again struck work with the support of seamen, shearers and other Australian unionists. The problems at Port Adelaide were a microcosm of bitter dispute and class struggle between employees and employers throughout the eastern colonies. A decade later J. J. Pascoe outlined his thoughts on the effects of the strike action.

South Australia, in common with its neighbours, was grievously affected by a maritime strike, which paralysed trade, and caused such heavy losses to individuals and to trading companies, that years of careful management were necessary to enable them to cover lost ground. It was a time of social unrest, where class was pitted against class.<sup>186</sup>

During the 14 weeks of the strike, workers' families at Port Adelaide endured great hardship, relieved to some extent when the Waterside Strike Committee provided 'about 450 men' with 'strike pay'.<sup>187</sup> The *Port Adelaide News* aligned itself with the local men and offered support in its own fashion. The editor wrote on 29 August that

Port Adelaide, some of its detractors say, 'is the very hot-bed of "Unionism"'. We don't deny the charge. In fact, we feel highly honoured at the distinction, in evidence of which we purpose publishing 'the history of the Port Adelaide Working Men's Association' from its inception up to the present day.

By October the problems had worsened and the paper reported that 'by day the non-combatants become more indignant at the persistence of the Employers' Union in shirking a conference with the Labor Unions',<sup>188</sup> and published lists of donations to 'The Waterside Strike Fund'. On 7 November the paper less-supportively commented,

<sup>186</sup> J. J. Pascoe (ed.), *History of Adelaide and Vicinity*. (Adelaide, 1901) 198.

<sup>187</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 September 1890.

<sup>188</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 17 October 1890.

Heigh-ho! When will that happy day come when strikes are no more?...We are tired of hearing business men complaining of the depression of trade, and of seeing such a number of foot and mounted police about the streets; it is not natural for Port Adelaide to be thus guarded.<sup>189</sup>

The following week the headline read, 'THE END OF THE STRIKE'.<sup>190</sup> The thwarted unions, sapped of resources and strength, turned to a new long-term plan engaging in political action designed to see labour representatives elected to parliament.

For a short period the Port came alive again and the newspaper reported, 'Erection of sugar refinery works going on well',<sup>191</sup> and that 'the "Old Curiosity Shop", at the corner of Lipson and Divett-streets is being demolished in order to give place to imposing banking premises'.<sup>192</sup> A 'Cornish Association' was formed in the town and the Acorn Lodge of the United Order of Druids held a banquet at the Duke of Wellington Hotel.<sup>193</sup> The men were back at work and employers such as the building contractor Ralph Kestel, were making profits again.

The large and beautiful new stack just erected by Mr. Kestel for the Sugar Refinery Co. was completed last Tuesday, when the Union Jack was hoisted at the top. The large stack is 150 feet high, in shape diagonal. It is without doubt the prettiest stack in Port Adelaide.<sup>194</sup>

Hard times were not yet over. With the exception of Western Australia, financial crisis hit all the Australian colonies when export prices declined sharply. The banking industry suffered heavy losses and

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<sup>189</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 October, 7 November 1890.

<sup>190</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 November 1890.

<sup>191</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 February 1891.

<sup>192</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 March 1891.

<sup>193</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 January, 27 February 1891.

<sup>194</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 March, 3 April 1891.

the Bank of South Australia closed its doors in 1892. The newly formed Port Adelaide Democratic Association heard M. H. Taylor, the former 'Emigration Agent and Lecturer to the South Australian Government' deliver a speech in the Trades' Societies' Rooms on the private ownership of land entitled, 'The Great Enemy of Labor'.<sup>195</sup> Dr Bollen spoke to the same group on 'Statism' and on his return to the Port from overseas the Reverend Joseph Kirby lectured on 'The Economic Condition of the People in India', and stated that fifty million persons in that country were 'bordering on absolute destitution', perhaps making his audience feel that life at the Port wasn't so bad after all.<sup>196</sup> Links between the M.L.C. and U.T.L.C. forged during the national workers' strike in 1890 led to the U.T.L.C. being again recognised as the peak union council in 1892.

Forty steamers arrived at the Port during July 1892,<sup>197</sup> but conditions did not improve and on 19 August the paper reported again on 'slack times' in the police court 'where there have been very few cases of wrong doing to punish of late'.<sup>198</sup> A parade had always cheered up the town and in late August 1892 the union 'eight hours' demonstration procession round the Port streets and down to Alberton Oval was, for many, a welcome diversion from coping with tight budgets.

The following Port Adelaide Unions will take part...Banners:- Port-road Drivers, Federated Seamens' Union, Shipwrights, Carpenters, Sailmakers, Working Mens' Association, Sawmill and Timberyard Employees, Masons, Engineers, Painters,

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<sup>195</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 May 1892.

<sup>196</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 August, 8 July 1892.

<sup>197</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 August 1892.

<sup>198</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 August 1892.

Port Adelaide Drivers, Plasterers, Laborers, Coasting Seamen's Union, and Federated Stewards and Cooks. Societies with no banners:- Certified Engineers, Port Adelaide Storemen, Millers, Port Adelaide Licensed Carters.<sup>199</sup>

In the town where unions were major topics of discussion by workers, the papers now had news of a proposed union of colonies. The local journalist was sceptical about the success of such a plan.

Australian Federation

Much as we would like to see all the Australian provinces united under one Federal government, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that, under present circumstances, any such union would be more artificial than real.<sup>200</sup>

In the new year, 1893, 'The New Australia Movement' got under way.

By 1893 a return to progress was in the air with the opening at the Port of John Gill and K. Gellert's 'New Roller Flour Mill'.<sup>201</sup> Even the seamen's mission had new confidence, opening a new 'Seamen's Mission Hall and Sailors' Rest in Robe-street'.<sup>202</sup> The local council, with some confidence in its financial state, hired James Brunell, 'the well-known painter and decorator of this town', to undertake a thorough renovation of the Port town hall and buildings complete with 'dado paper imported from Yokohama',<sup>203</sup> and the Port Adelaide Branch of the Young South Australian Patriotic Association 'held a most successful smoke social in the School of Music, Dale-street'.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>199</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 August 1892.

<sup>200</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 September 1892.

<sup>201</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 May 1893.

<sup>202</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 May 1893.

<sup>203</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 17 February, 13 January 1893.

<sup>204</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 June 1893.

However there were still many Portonians in need and in July 1893 the paper reported a consignment of three tons of 'Potatoes for the Poor' from Port McDonnell on board the ketch *Lillie Hawkins* 'generously subscribed by different donors for the relief of distressed families in Port Adelaide'.<sup>205</sup> In October the local relief fund committee chaired by Mayor Charles Tucker decided to 'administer assistance upon a restricted basis as long as the money lasted'.<sup>206</sup>

While attempts were being made to provide the basic needs of food and shelter for the town poor, the seamen's mission continued its endeavours to reform the lives of seamen 'morally and spiritually'. In September 1894 an editorial praised the mission's work and commented on the importance of seamen, on whom, it stated, 'the whole community' depended. 'Without this class commerce and trade would be necessarily at a standstill, for the means of exportation and importation would be cut off'. It was necessary, the editor continued, that 'in the interests of the whole community...the men to whom the great and important function of transmitting produce from country to country is entrusted, should be sober, industrious and trustworthy men' but he stated, it was 'well known' that 'in many cases the reverse is seen. It cannot be doubted that sailors are often given to vice and immorality in a greater measure than landsmen. When a sailor comes ashore he is at once subjected to great

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<sup>205</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 July 1893.

<sup>206</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 October 1893.



temptations from the various evil influences which immediately surround him'.<sup>207</sup>

The sailors, whether or not yielding to temptation, were doing so quietly and not disturbing the town. In October the paper reported one week 'entirely free from criminal records' and the next with only one offender before the court, neither seaman nor Portonian but 'one drunk, who came from Adelaide'. There was an 'unusual freedom from drunkenness' in the town and the reporter expressed puzzlement as to 'who should receive the credit, the Salvation Army, the temperance organizations, the publicans, the police, or the weather'.<sup>208</sup> The reformers no doubt continued to be pleased with the apparent change in the town whatever the reason.

Port Adelaide, as a main port, always contained a fairly mobile population which was one of its major differences to other South Australian towns, yet in 1895, after another economic down-turn, mobility verged on exodus particularly from run-down areas. Residents were noticeably leaving Port Adelaide, perhaps seeking work elsewhere. In July a house agent showed 'a heap of keys of empty houses'.<sup>209</sup> That summer there was another outbreak of typhoid fever and the residents of Semaphore and Port Adelaide were warned to check 'dairies and house

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<sup>207</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 September 1894.

<sup>208</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 October 1894.

<sup>209</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 July 1895.

sewerage disposal'.<sup>210</sup> It was likely tenants were anxious to leave the older dilapidated dwellings with poor facilities for a number of reasons. The most feared disease outbreak in a port was bubonic plague, spread by rats from visiting ships. Cases were reported in Sydney in 1900 and almost immediately a victim of what 'looked like plague' was reported at Port Adelaide when a runaway sailor from the barque *Formosa* died in hospital:

the body was wrapped in a blanket soaked in disinfectant, sealed in a waterproof cloth and put in a coffin containing strong disinfectants. The coffin itself was encased in a wooden box, taken to Largs Pier, put in an empty barge and towed to Torrens Island where it was buried three feet deep.<sup>211</sup>

There was need for concern. Nine years later five cases of plague at the Port were reported with four deaths. It was fortunate that this outbreak arrived long after the worst of the Port's slum areas had been cleared. Action was slow. The Central Board of Health was cynically reported as having 'in due course, acted promptly'. It 'took over full direction of the campaign thirty-seven days after the last person had died and twenty-seven days after the last infected rat had been found'.<sup>212</sup>

In 1901 the town population reached 20 000 after the annexation of the surrounding district councils areas, and Port Adelaide was proclaimed a city. Winter was a bitter time for many citizens and charity and welfare groups endeavoured to help where they could. In 1904 Hounslow, then

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<sup>210</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10 January 1896.

<sup>211</sup> Peter Morton, *After Light: A History of the City of Adelaide and its Council, 1878-1928*. (Kent Town SA, 1996) 123.

<sup>212</sup> *Portonian*, June 1973, 10.

secretary for the Port Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers' Friend Society, called for 'gifts of fuel, clothing and blankets as well as money' when further relief for the destitute poor was needed.<sup>213</sup> Unemployment did not ease until 1907 when the colony again prospered with good seasons and record crops.

This chapter has traced the middle-class endeavour and determination to change the social attitudes of Portonians and to improve the image of the Port. Progress at Port Adelaide was not only measured by the number of warehouses or imposing bank buildings, or even by the design of the town hall but by the range of educational and social activities. Alternative leisure places to the pubs were set up. Courses at the Institute, clubs, and temperance meetings were designed for personal improvement.

The Institute was, as in other towns across the country, a symbol of this movement. It gave opportunities to the working man to extend his trade knowledge, read more widely, study refinements and emerge as a more worthy citizen. Education for the workers' children and the growth of a myriad of societies on a broad range of interests reflected this movement. Success though was mixed.

There was a return to survival rather than the development of the intellect when economic recession hit the working man and his family.

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<sup>213</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 2, 23 July 1904.

Working men had a new confidence through their union strength but this was to little avail during strikes or depression. From 1884 to 1907 (with the exception of better years from 1890 to 1893) unemployment persisted for a large proportion of the workforce.

The frontier port town, while still the recreation zone for transient seamen, had changed to an industrial and commercial city, with the continued surveillance by local police determined to lessen drunkenness, prostitution and loutish behaviour. The streets near hotels and around the wharves were patrolled by the foot police who knew many of the larrikins and loitering ladies on their beat. Open soliciting was noticeably reduced and delinquent behaviour contained. An increasing number of seamen preferred to stay at the Sailors' Rest, catch up on newspapers and play cards and billiards rather than spend their wages in the bar.

The merchants and business men of the town increasingly involved themselves with church activities and causes. Walter Phillip's claim that late nineteenth-century churches were 'bastions of...middle class respectability' appears to be reflected in Port Adelaide.<sup>214</sup> When the initial building of facilities was more or less completed, people throughout the colony found time to devote to social and moral reform. In particular temperance movements were formed to reduce the problems of drink and drunkenness. As in other towns water fountains, cordials and soda

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<sup>214</sup> Phillips, 88.

drinks were more frequently available and temperance hotels, coffee houses and unlicensed dining rooms offered alternative meal venues to the traditional hotels.

However the struggle between the supporters of the pubs and the soldiers of temperance was far from over. Extreme positions emerged on either side. The following chapters provide a closer study of hotels and churches at the Port with a description of two larger-than-life residents illustrative of this polarity.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PORT HOTELS

The first South Australian liquor licence was granted in May 1837 and in February 1839 the first *Licensed Victuallers Act* came into force and remained with minor amendments until 1863.<sup>1</sup> With this early focus on licensing premises, South Australia began government control over the sale of liquor and in the same year, 1839, George Cole started the colony's first temperance campaign with his Total Abstinence League.<sup>2</sup>

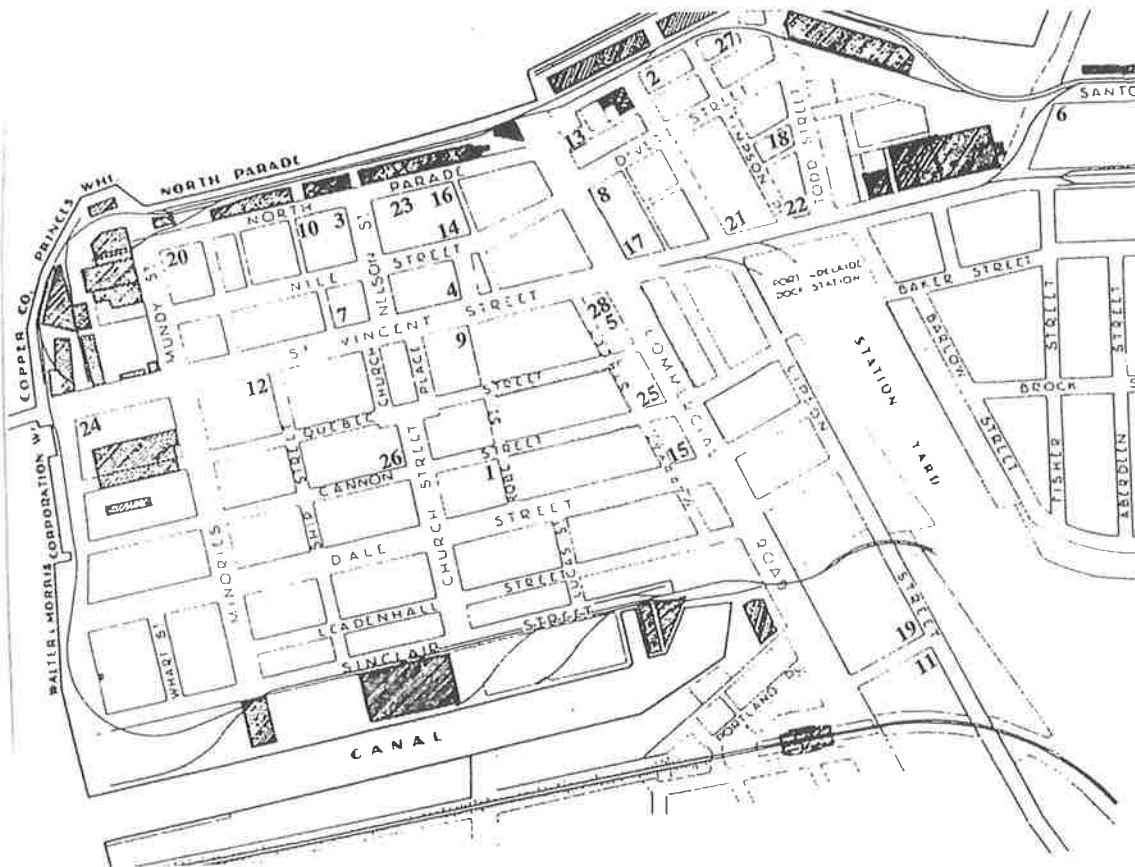
To understand the concern of temperance reformers in Port Adelaide it is important to study the source of their irritation, the hotels and wine bars in the town. Migrant labourers, already known for their love of a drink in British and Irish pubs, found their thirst even more stimulated working in the hotter, and drier, climate of South Australia. The educated and urban radical Francis Stacker Dutton, who arrived in the colony during the 1840s, condemned the pubs in South Australia as

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<sup>1</sup> J. L. Hoad, *Hotels and Publicans in South Australia 1836-1984*. (Adelaide, 1986) Part 1, 1-2. The first South Australian licence was granted to John Guthrie of Adelaide on 31 May 1837 for premises known as 'Guthrie's' on the south-west corner of Currie and Gray Streets, the site of the present Edinburgh Castle Hotel.

<sup>2</sup> S. E. Close, 'Social Attitudes to Liquor and Liquor Legislation in South Australia 1876-1917', B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1961, 57.

HOTELS			
1	Australia's Pride	15	Newmarket
2	Britannia	16	Port
3	British	17	Port Admiral
4	Brunswick Pier	18	Port Dock
5	Central	19	Prince Alfred
6	Colac	20	Prince's
7	Duke of Wellington	21	Railway
8	First Commercial	22	Royal Arms
9	Golden Port (Globe)	23	Ship Inn
10	Hen and Chickens (approx.)	24	South Australian Club House
11	Jervois	25	Sussex
12	Lass O' Gowrie	26	The Port Anchor (Kent)
13	Lighthouse Inn (Exchange)	27	Wharf
14	Livingstone's Arms (White Hart)	28	White Horse Cellars



**Illustration 11**

Plan of Port Adelaide showing location of hotels.

Adapted from South Australian Harbors Board map, 1938.

'lounging places for the working classes to spend their earnings in'.<sup>3</sup>

At Port Adelaide, ships' crews, paid off and with cash in hand, welcomed shore leave and in turn were very welcome in the local hotels. It was common for captains to rehire the same men for the next voyage rather than carry a permanent crew. Their money spent, seamen in a foreign port had few options but to sign on again. With the high concentration of hotels in port towns where many negotiations took place, both legal and illegal, some hotels acquired a notoriety for illegally acquiring needed crew. This was the case in Williamstown where by 1860 there were 27 hotels and a further 13 in 1880. In the 1870s two hotels in the town were charged with employing a 'runner' to entice disgruntled sailors to desert.<sup>4</sup> Another scheme was 'shanghaiing' or 'crimping', which shipped unconscious men as crew, often through drugging at hotels or boarding houses. Crimping continued in Williamstown until the late 1880s.<sup>5</sup>

A study of the local Port Adelaide hotels provides a marker of their evolution and change albeit a form of progress in the Port which eventually ran foul of those seeking civility and temperance. The hotels

<sup>3</sup> Michael Page, *Colonial South Australia: Its People and Buildings*. (Melbourne, 1985) 78. See also Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857*. (Second edition, Carlton Vic, 1967) 149.

<sup>4</sup> Ada Ackerly, 'Hotels', History Leaflet 10a for Williamstown City Library, 1987. Both publican and seamen benefited by the scam; the seamen, under alias, acquired a new ship and the publican acquired a booking fee from a captain needing crew and the seamen's advanced wages which they passed over to pay for their accumulated debts while in hiding. The men collected their kits which the publican held and sailed away.

<sup>5</sup> Wilson P. Evans, *Port of Many Prows*. (Melbourne, 1969) 65.



were intricately linked with the establishment and development of the town. Hotel buildings, including their additions and alterations over the years, reflected the changing economic climate and social dynamics of the Port. This chapter describes some of the changing scene as small, single-storey pubs were replaced with double-storied buildings featuring verandahs and balconies which added to the town's improving architectural character.

Before the various local organisations, clubs and lodge groups built their own facilities, they used the hotels for meetings. In 1884 the Duke of York Lodge met at the Globe Hotel 'on alternate Tuesdays', and the Loyal Jervois Lodge at the Duke of Wellington on 'alternate Wednesdays'. The Foresters 'Court Concord' also met at the Duke of Wellington.<sup>6</sup> Land sales, furniture auctions and business transactions relating to cargo were also carried out in the pubs.<sup>7</sup> To assist customers ordering goods from overseas, captains and travelling salesmen hired sample rooms at the hotels to display catalogues or examples of their wares.

Social occasions and club presentations were marked by special functions and dinners at hotels. The 1882 prize night for the 'Port Adelaide Poultry Society Show' was celebrated at the Port Admiral

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<sup>6</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 August 1884.

<sup>7</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 October 1878. A land auction was held in Ford's Royal Arms Hotel. See also 30 November 1878 which mentioned hotels being used as auction rooms for a furniture sale.

Hotel.<sup>8</sup> In March 1883 the 'B battery of artillery' held a social dinner at the Commercial Hotel, 'for sixty to seventy gunners and non-commissioned officers along with several visitors'.<sup>9</sup> Sporting club committees frequently used pub facilities; the Ship Inn was the original venue for meetings of the Royal South Australian Yacht Squadron and the Port Adelaide Sailing Club.<sup>10</sup> In 1881 the Port Rowing Club met at the Ship Inn and the Port Adelaide Football Club at the Commercial Hotel.<sup>11</sup>

Politics at the Port were linked with the hotels from the first elections. In February 1851 when Captain George Hall was elected member for Port Adelaide,<sup>12</sup> a heated contest escalated in the town between the parties of Hall and his opponent William Giles. Hall's 'blues', wearing blue ribbons and flying blue flags, went 'round the town pulling down every yellow flag' which represented Giles.<sup>13</sup> During the campaign some offence was taken by Hall's followers while Giles' party lunched at the Commercial Hotel. The hotel was surrounded and windows were smashed.<sup>14</sup> In 1857 when John Hart made his bid for the House of Assembly there were similar 'exhibitions of strong feelings'.<sup>15</sup> Two hotels played a supporting role during the campaign when Hart's 'blues' set up

<sup>8</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 October 1882.

<sup>9</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 2 March 1883.

<sup>10</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>11</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 July 1881. See also 18 March 1887. The Port Adelaide Football Club was still meeting at the Commercial in 1887 when E. Formby was elected president and J. Smith appointed captain.

<sup>12</sup> Hall was formerly the master of the *Guiana*, the barque at McLaren Wharf when the new port was opened in October 1840.

<sup>13</sup> Page, 80.

<sup>14</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 March 1887.

<sup>15</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 March 1887.

base in the Port Admiral and their opponents rallied with orange and green colours at the Exchange. Positions were staked out with vigour and enthusiasm and a little physical activity to drive home the cause was not out of character at the Port.

A sight of the opposition colours was the signal for a brawl, and when a candidate addressed a meeting in one of the pubs 'the fighting men' had to beat off invasions by the other party. Captain Hart, the favorite of the Port Admiral drinkers, won the seat with a majority of 116, which his supporters proudly painted in huge black figures on an outside wall of the hotel.<sup>16</sup>

Hotels were used as polling stations for council elections. In 1879 three hotels, the Royal Arms, Duke of Wellington, and Jervois (for east, west and south wards), and the town hall (for central ward), were the chosen voting places.<sup>17</sup>

Council also used the hotel facilities for civic functions as in December 1882 when the outgoing mayor, Henry Thompson, was farewelled at the Port Admiral. Forty 'prominent citizens' assembled after the presentation for 'champagne and light refreshments'.<sup>18</sup> The Port Admiral was located on the noisiest and busiest intersection in town with a train line turning the corner and the sound of screeching metal wheels adding to the traffic noise outside. In 1887 Councillors Whiting and Wallace stated that the 'speed of trains should be reduced through the streets' and that 'they had seen goods-trains go round the Port Admiral Hotel corner at quite fifteen miles an hour'.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Page, 80.

<sup>17</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 29 November 1879.

<sup>18</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 1 December 1882.

<sup>19</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 January 1887.

In 1879 a hotel became the collection point for donations to a strike fund when the Port Adelaide Eight Hours Committee met at the Duke of Wellington Hotel in St Vincent Street on a Saturday evening, to 'receive all Subscriptions for the men on strike at Gawler'.<sup>20</sup> Other unions using the Port hotels included the Port Adelaide Amalgamated Society of Engineers (the amalgamated engineers, sea-going engineers and boiler makers), which held its seventh annual dinner at the Duke of Wellington in May 1883 and met 'every alternate Friday' at the hotel from August 1884.<sup>21</sup> The Seamen's Union also met at the Duke of Wellington. The Stewards and Cooks' Union was founded at the Globe Hotel on 5 July 1884; an understandable choice of venue as the publican, W. H. Wallace, was secretary of the union.<sup>22</sup> The Builders' Laborers' Association and the Bricklayers' Society met at the Australian Clubhouse Hotel,<sup>23</sup> and the Colac Hotel, built in 1883 on the corner of Santo Parade opposite Number 1 Dock, later developed strong ties with the waterside workers and the union movement in the town, a connection it encouraged for over 100 years.

The venue of a hotel did not preclude women from a meeting. In 1891 the 'Port Adelaide, Semaphore and Suburban Dairymen's Association' met at the Port Admiral Hotel to discuss new milk prices of

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<sup>20</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 February 1879.

<sup>21</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 May 1883, 26 August 1884.

<sup>22</sup> Chris Vevers, 'The Maritime Labor Council of Port Adelaide 1886-1892', *Flinders Journal of History and Politics: The Port Adelaide Issue*. Vol. 12. (1987) 69.

<sup>23</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 August 1884.

5d. per quart, 2½d. per pint and 1½d. per half pint but 'the ladies present strongly objected to this' and it was 'finally decided that the prices fixed at the last meeting be adhered to'.<sup>24</sup>

The hotels were not just for the living. In Section 23 of the 1839 *South Australian Licensing Act*, a licensee could not refuse 'to receive any corpse which may be brought to his public-house for the purpose of a coroner's inquest being held there'. In November 1864 the owner of the Port Hotel wrote to the colonial secretary about the extenuating circumstances this law created and suggested the new hospital at the Port might be a more suitable place to hold bodies during inquests.

There is now at the Port a Casualty Hospital which I supposed would be the legitimate receptacle for persons found dead....On a recent occasion a seaman who died after a fight with another on board a vessel was brought to my house and left a considerable time till buried during which time an inquest was held and the body lay in my ordinary taproom to the great detriment of my business.<sup>25</sup>

In 1869 a licensed victualler was exempted from this provision if the hotel was within one mile of a 'Police Station having cells' and in 1880 the distance was extended to two miles. It was not until 1908 that a licensee was relieved of the obligation to house a corpse, even if in advanced stages of decomposition, or of a person who had died with an infectious disease. Many hotel owners built a separate morgue or 'dead house' on their property but were not compensated for providing this

<sup>24</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 June 1891.

<sup>25</sup> Correspondence to Colonial Secretary from H. T. Ford, Port Hotel, Port Adelaide, GRG 5/2/1864, in Averil G. Holt, *Port Adelaide Casualty Hospital: commemorating the first Hospital 1862-1884 and the centenary of the second hospital 1884-1984*. (Port Adelaide SA, 1991) 4.

service although it was necessitated by the demands of the law.<sup>26</sup> In a case in 1881, the inquest in one hotel related to a death in another.

Mr. T. Ward J.P. held an inquest at the Port Admiral Hotel on Monday afternoon last, before a jury, on the body of William Ferguson, late fireman on the steamer Franklin, who was found dead in a privy of the Club House Hotel, on the previous day.<sup>27</sup>

Some hotelkeepers, seeking increased custom from travellers, changed the emphasis of their service to one of 'family accommodation'.

On 30 March 1878 the Port Hotel advertised:

The Most Comfortable Family Hotel in Port Adelaide; the Rendezvous for Shipmasters. Dinner and La Carte. Bedrooms Newly Furnished with all Modern Furniture and Appliances; Splendid (new) Billiards (by Alcock); Depot for Lion Brewery; Sparkling Ales; Plunge and Shower Baths, Good Stabling.<sup>28</sup>

In December 1876 the new owner of the White Horse Cellars, William Whithorn, attempted to create a similar image by renaming his establishment the 'Family Hotel'. J. Harper Reid, the owner during 1878, continued the name.

<p>The Family Hotel Port Adelaide. J. H. Reid, Proprietor invites attention to his CALEDONIAN CONCERT ROOM conducted by an Experienced Manager. Admission to this Hall FREE. Civility, Cleanliness, and prompt attention in every department.<sup>29</sup></p>
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Wine shops and saloons were also in business at the Port. The industrious Christina Todd, who also owned the fruit shop alongside her wine bar, provided wines from other colonies and countries to out-of-

<sup>26</sup> Hoad, 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 March 1881.

<sup>28</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 May 1878.

<sup>29</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10 August 1878. The name 'Family Hotel' was used from 11 December 1876 until March 1879 when publican, Duncan Reid, changed it to Black Diamond Hotel.

town customers who were, no doubt, pleased to find a home brand.<sup>30</sup>

THE ONLY WINE SHOP IN PORT ADELAIDE  
 Mrs. Todd, in thanking her friends and the Public for the liberal  
 support  
 accorded to her, states that A Supply of the Best Wines is  
 available  
 From all The Neighbouring Colonies, including  
 Hardy and Halbrook's Vintage.

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To Seamen belonging to Foreign Vessels Mrs. T. assures  
 them that she can supply them with the beverages from  
 their own Country at Town rates. 31

When the railway from Adelaide opened in 1856, the Port Admiral was finally able to cater for train travellers, being ideally situated between the wharf area and the railway station in St Vincent Street. In the same year the Railway Hotel opened opposite the station. By 1878 Henry Ford, publican at the Port Hotel on North Parade, recognised the town's changing focus to St Vincent Street and Commercial Road and moved to a new hotel, the Royal Arms, also near the station.

Preliminary Announcement.  
 Royal Arms Hotel.  
 Near Railway Terminus, Port Adelaide.  
 H. C. Ford, late of the Port Hotel, hereby informs his Friends and the Public generally that he will OPEN the above new and First-class HOTEL for business THIS MORNING, the 15<sup>th</sup> inst., and that the ROYAL ARMS HOTEL will be found replete with every convenience and comfort which experience could suggest and money supply. 32

In competition with the Royal Arms and the Port Admiral, J. E. Haytread at the Railway Hotel advertised his premises 'open on Sundays on arrival of Trains to bonafide travelors [sic] only. None but those will be admitted'.<sup>33</sup> Laws for Sunday trading times differed over the years,

<sup>30</sup> *1891 Sands & McDougall's South Australian Directory*, 63.

<sup>31</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 24 August 1878.

<sup>32</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 June 1878.

<sup>33</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 April 1878.

The Act of 1839: permitted Sunday trading between 1.30-3 p.m. only for the purpose of serving malt liquor to bona fide travellers and to regular customers not drinking it on the premises.

The Act of 1855: extended Sunday trading hours to 1-3 p.m. and 8-10 p.m.

In 1872 an amendment provided for the sale of liquor on Sundays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and 3-8 p.m. There was also a provision that the licensee could close the premises on Sundays provided that a notice was posted up, 'Closed on Sundays'.

In 1877 Sunday trading hours were restricted to 1-3 p.m. and

in 1891 no Sunday trading was permitted.<sup>34</sup>

Publicans could choose not to open their tap-rooms on Sundays and

Jonathon Smith, the 'popular host' at the Ship Inn from 1860 to June

1884, was for many years 'the only landlord who closed his hotel in the

Port on Sundays, and put up a notice to that effect'.<sup>35</sup> Some pubs were

caught illegally serving non-travellers.

Thomas O'Neill, licensed victualler, landlord of the White Hart Hotel, was charged that he, being a holder of a publican's licence, did unlawfully supply liquor in the tap of his licensed house to persons not being bona fide travellers or lodgers staying in the said hotel, between 3 and 9 o'clock p.m. on Sunday, June 23, being hours prohibited by law.<sup>36</sup>

In 1879 a reporter observed that 'it was well-known to everybody that the Sunday-Closing law is openly set at defiance'. He continued,

the only conclusion that any sane man can arrive at is that it is better to be without laws than to have those which are a mere farcical form. Our Legislature seems to be utterly unable to deal with any question that affects the liquor traffic, and all the tinkering that is done only tends apparently to make matters worse than they were. We ought to feel ashamed and disgraced at things as they now exist.<sup>37</sup>

A 'Commission for Enquiry into the Liquor Trade' met in August 1879

and recommended reinstating hotel trading on Sunday evenings. The

inability of the commissioners to form a consensus was parodied in the

local press and even their decision to reopen hotels on Sundays was seen

<sup>34</sup> Hoad, Part 1, 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 March 1887. See also Hoad Part 1, 3. Hoad stated that the term 'bar-room' rather than 'tap-room' was not used until 1880.

<sup>36</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 29 June 1878.

<sup>37</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 July 1879.



as a compromise because of the difficulties in policing and controlling out-of-hours trading.

Teetotallers, Publicans, and Sinners will be disappointed. As a matter of fact, if the Commission...were put in a bag and shaken for seven years, they would come out unblended. How was it possible then to get from them a satisfactory report after their enquiry? Not a doubt of it, every man amongst them went conscientiously to work, and is conscientious still, and differs from his fellows still, and would to the end of the chapter. But we feel sorry that they, aiming at their best, have reimposed upon licensed victuallers the burthen of again opening their houses for drinking purposes on Sunday evenings. We venture to believe that the concession to that portion of the public which *will not* keep the law, will lead to wider breaches.<sup>38</sup>

In 1883, a writer in the local paper bemoaned 'the admirable logical social life that religiously shuts all the museums and picture-galleries on "the Lord's Day," and opens all the grog-shops'.<sup>39</sup>

Shopkeepers faced a similar issue when the town council considered following Adelaide council in banning shops from trading on Sundays, 'for the better observance of Sunday in the town of Port Adelaide'.<sup>40</sup> Shop owners complained of the situation being unfair when hotels were permitted to open for periods on Sundays while they were barred from doing so. Their main argument was that circumstances in a port town were different to those in Adelaide and that many travellers in Port Adelaide required service from both shops and hotels on Sundays. With a plea for commonsense, the newspaper editor deplored a situation which, he argued, would discourage travellers from wandering around the shops and keep them in the hotels where they could only obtain alcohol.

A law which will suit Adelaide, will not therefore apply with equal justice to Port Adelaide. A seaport is unique in its circumstances. It is full of strangers and visitors, who usually have a great deal of time in hand on Sundays, which is mostly

<sup>38</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 August 1879.

<sup>39</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 August 1883.

<sup>40</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10 March 1885.

spent perambulating the street and the beach. These people require refreshments. The law provides that they can get them openly between 1 and 3 p.m. at the hotels; and if they are *bona fide* travellers at other times. If the Corporation closes refreshment shops on Sundays, they in effect drive these thirsty and hungry persons into the publichouses; and tempt them to make false representations when necessary to get their wants supplied. Is it not a lesser 'evil' to allow people to get nonintoxicants rather than intoxicants any time and especially on Sundays?<sup>41</sup>

At a council meeting reported in March 1885, Councillor Lindsay presented a memorial signed by 120 ratepayers, 'praying the Corporation not to enforce the by-law relating to Sunday trading in the town'.<sup>42</sup> The memorial drew attention to the poor economic climate in which retailers needed to trade as much as possible and stated

that in consequence of the present depression, to close the fruit and other shops that keep open would mean utter ruin to the shopkeepers, who even with the extra days' sales, could hardly make two ends meet. The refreshment-rooms at the stations remained open on Sundays, and it was equally fair to allow private individuals to keep their shops open.<sup>43</sup>

The motion was put, 'that the by-law be not enforced' and was carried, 'Crs. Bridgman and Bennett alone voting against it'.<sup>44</sup> Sunday trading at the Port shops was allowed to continue during the financial gloom of 1885 along with the station refreshment room and the hotels.

Many publicans produced their own beer. William J. Wooldridge purchased land in St Vincent Street in 1850 to build the Carpenters' Arms Hotel and brew beer in adjoining premises. When the buildings were destroyed by fire about 1865 a new hotel, the Globe, was erected but the brewing operations ceased.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10 March 1885.

<sup>42</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 March 1885.

<sup>43</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 March 1885.

<sup>44</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 March 1885.

<sup>45</sup> Maurice H. Ward, *Some Brief Records of Brewing in South Australia*. (1951) 5. See also Hoad, Part 3, 245. Hoad recorded early publicans at the Carpenters' Arms: William J. Wooldridge 1851-1856, James Wright 1856-1857 and William R. Wooldridge 1857-1868.

In December 1866 William Knapman transformed the back of the White Horse Cellars into a brewery, producing 'Cannon' brand beer at the rate of 12 hogsheads per week. In 1883 when production reached 50 hogsheads the brewery moved to larger premises on The Minories. The new building, facing Corporation Wharf, was '100 feet by 30 feet' with a middle tower 'three stories above'.<sup>46</sup> The business continued until 1910 as 'W. Knapman & Son's Cannon Brewery'. Drinks produced included Big Gun Draught Ale, Big Gun Ginger Stout and Baden-Powell Tonic Ale.<sup>47</sup> At Williamstown, Breheny's label, 'Artillery Beer', had a similar military connotation. Two local breweries were established there once piped water was available, an essential supply which Knapman also relied on at Port Adelaide.

In many instances a hotel was frequented by men in the same trade association or union. The Jervois was 'freely patronised by teamsters and haycarters' because of its 'splendid stabling accommodation',<sup>48</sup> and the Dock Hotel in Todd Street, on the corner of Liddon Street, was popular with stevedores. Liddon Street was later renamed Stevedore Place when the former hotel became the stevedore's office.<sup>49</sup> Henry Goddard, licensee of the Lass O'Gowrie from 1900 to 1909, 'spoke highly of the seamen

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<sup>46</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 April 1883. The Knapman residence, built on the site at the same time as the brewery, remained at 21 The Minories until 1997 when it was demolished.

<sup>47</sup> Brian J. Samuels, *Port Adelaide Centre: Past and Present*. (Port Adelaide, 1987) 34. See also *The Compass*, April-May 1910, rear advertisements.

<sup>48</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909. The Dock Hotel ceased trading in 1909 and after other uses over the years again opened as a hotel, the 'Port Dock', in 1986.

<sup>49</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

and firemen who visited the premises. Their custom was preferred to that of the "locals," who were always causing trouble'.<sup>50</sup> The nomenclature of the Carpenters' Arms and the Commercial perhaps relates to their clientele, the Commercial Hotel being named before the northern end of Port Road became Commercial Road. There was a 'meeting of persons interested in the formation of a Clerks' Association' at the Commercial in January 1883.<sup>51</sup> After the Carpenters' Arms was destroyed by fire and rebuilt as the Globe, the Port Adelaide Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners met at the Duke of Wellington.<sup>52</sup>

The names given to Port hotels echoed sentiments or events important to a particular period. Some reflected the colony's British origins and perhaps the hotel owners' memories of their homeland and former connections there: Royal Arms, Britannia, British, Caledonian, Brunswick Pier, White Horse Cellars, Kent and Sussex.<sup>53</sup> Others were named in honour of well known personages: Duke of Wellington, Prince of Wales, Prince Albert, Prince Alfred, and Livingstone Arms (the rebuilt hotel which opened in 1879 on the site of the former White Hart Hotel), most probably named after David Livingstone, the Scottish missionary and explorer in Africa who died in 1873. The Jervois, which opened in 1879, was named in honour of the then governor, Lieutenant-

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<sup>50</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>51</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 January 1883.

<sup>52</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 1 June 1881. See also 26 August 1884.

<sup>53</sup> The well-known figure of a white horse at Uffington, Berkshire, England, was formed, possibly in the ninth century or earlier, by exposing the white chalk of the hillside.

General Sir William F. Drummond Jervois.

The names of the Steamboat, Jolly Tar, Dock, Port Anchor, Sailors' Return, Ship Inn, Wharf and Port Admiral had a nautical connotation. In 1851 the new licensee of the Railway Hotel, Charles Calton, renamed it Port Admiral. He had run the Royal Admiral Hotel in Hindley Street, Adelaide from 1845 to 1847. The *Royal Admiral* was a barque used as a South Australian migrant ship which arrived from London and Falmouth in December 1840. The 'Sardine Tin' was a name commonly used for the Australian Clubhouse Hotel, originally constructed of galvanised iron until rebuilt in 1878.<sup>54</sup>

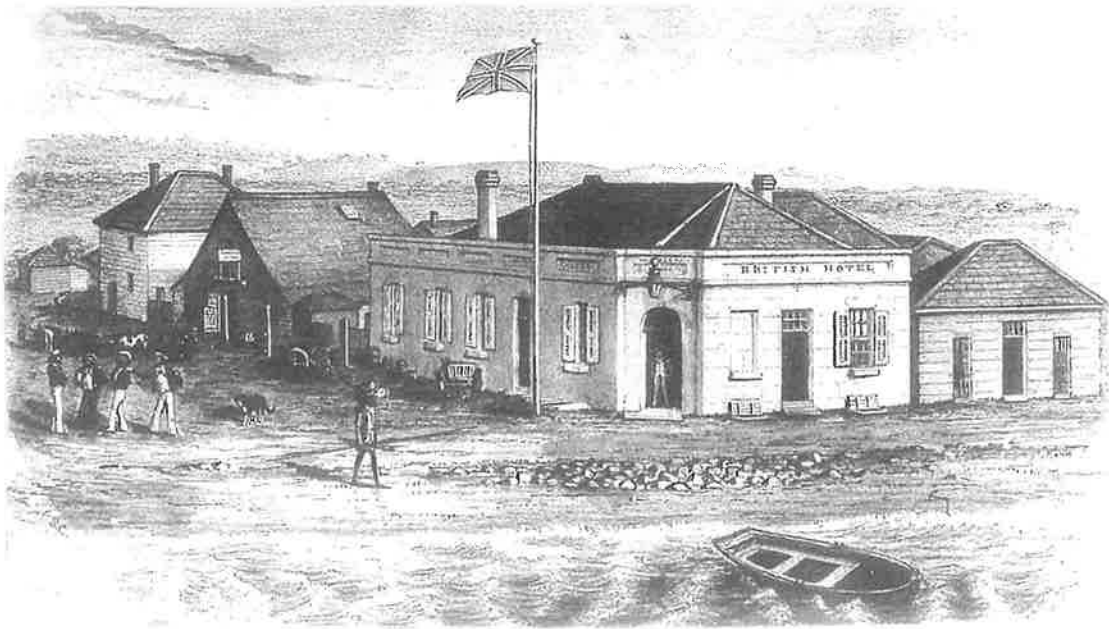
The Newmarket, Exchange, and the second Railway related to their convenient proximity to the named facilities.<sup>55</sup> The Central explained its excellent position in the town. Names pertaining to Australia were Australian Clubhouse and Australia's Pride. One commemoration marked by pub names throughout the continent was Australian Federation in 1901. Port Adelaide missed the opportunity but the Jetty Hotel at Semaphore was renamed the Federal Hotel in March that year.<sup>56</sup> No Port hotels used names derived from Aboriginal words as did some nearby

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<sup>54</sup> Hoad, Part 3, 563.

<sup>55</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 December 1883. The busy Exchange Hotel, McLaren Wharf, was described as 'not wanting custom'.

<sup>56</sup> Katrina McDougall and Elizabeth Vines, *Greater Port Adelaide Heritage Survey*. (Port Adelaide, 1989) 240.



### Illustration 12

The first British Hotel c.1849, on the Nelson Street corner of North Parade. The present two-storey hotel was built on the same site in 1883.

Photograph, Book 1, B19, Mortlock Library Of South Australiana.

towns and suburbs.<sup>57</sup>

As in the rest of the colony, the 1870s was a period of rapid growth in Port Adelaide and the number of hotels built reflected the general prosperity and financial optimism.<sup>58</sup> The *Port Adelaide News* provided extensive detail and information on hotel layout and design, and changes in management. Building and rebuilding hotels in the town provided work over many years for architects, contractors and their tradesmen, and for the clerks of the Licensing Board in Adelaide after its appointment in 1869. The following newspaper items record examples of the rapid expansion of the hotel industry in Port Adelaide during the late 1870s and early 1880s.

The White Hart Hotel, Nile-street, is undergoing demolition. Messrs. Lidbury & Collier...have the contract to erect a much larger hotel on the site.<sup>59</sup>

George Baker of Port Adelaide gives notice that he deposited with the clerk of the Licensing Bench in Adelaide, Plans of a Hotel to be erected in Esther Street Port Adelaide to be called the New Dock Hotel.<sup>60</sup>

Plans were filed by...G. R. Selth for the Port Adelaide Market Hotel.<sup>61</sup>

#### Our Progress

Three hotels have been built, one has undergone alterations, and one is building. The Royal Arms Hotel...was opened this year by Mr. H. C. Ford. Mr. J. Murphy has erected a fine hotel built with coloured stone at a corner of Lipson and Russel [sic] streets, at a cost of over £3,000. It contains twenty-three rooms and is ornately finished; builders Messrs. Kelly, Corry, Stephens, & Co. Another hotel has been put up on the opposite corner of Lipson and Russel [sic] streets. It is two-storied, has sixteen rooms excluding the basement which has seven additional apartments.

<sup>57</sup> Sheridah Melvin, *Kudlyo the Black Swan Dreaming: Veronica Brodie and the Continuity of Kurna History at Glanville and Le Fevre Peninsula*. (Research Report prepared for the Lartelare Homeland Association, 1994) 15-16. Some Kurna place-names are Yatala (meaning 'water running by the side of a river'), Pooraka ('dry creek'), Taperoo (from *tapurro*, the skin of a possum used as a drum by women and girls at a corroboree), Midlunga ('place of the *midla*', a spear-throwing tool) and Yerlo ('sea'), a railway station on the Outer Harbor line. The former siding of 'Outer Harbor Cottages' was renamed Yerlo in 1951 but no longer exists.

<sup>58</sup> Hoad, Part 3. There were 18 hotels at the end of 1869 (see page 135). By 1879 seven others had opened.

<sup>59</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 November 1878.

<sup>60</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 November 1878.

<sup>61</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 December 1878.

Cost £2,000; architect, Mr. W. Campbell; builders Messrs. Lidbury and Collier.

The Australian Clubhouse Hotel has been rebuilt for Mr. Henry Burges at a cost of over £2,000. The site is at the foot of the Jervois Bridge in St. Vincent-street, at the corner of Formby-parade. The building is two-storied and has sixteen rooms, beside the basement with seven apartments. Architect, Mr. W. Campbell; builders, Messrs. Lidbury and Collier.

The Livingstone Arms (the new hotel being erected on the site of the old White Hart) is receiving the finishing touches, and has a neat and compact appearance. It is also very commodious, the rooms being large and lofty.<sup>62</sup>

The New Hotel which is being built by Messrs. Williams for Mr. Dyer, is now rapidly approaching completion. The building is of two stories, and has 54 feet frontage to St. Vincent-street, and 75 feet to Santo-parade....Contract price about £3000. Mr. C. L. Gardiner is the architect.<sup>63</sup>

New Exchange Hotel  
cnr. Commercial & McLaren-roads, Port Adelaide  
James Williams removed from Old Exchange Hotel into this new and commodious house.<sup>64</sup>

Between 1878 and 1882 no fewer than 11 hotels were built or renovated.

Of these buildings, the Family (Black Diamond), Brunswick Pier,

Australian Clubhouse, Dock, Royal Arms, Commercial and Colac are

extant in 1999, the latter four still licensed pubs.

During the same period other hotels upgraded their facilities. Mr Addison of the Commercial Hotel made large additions to his premises designed by the architects Campbell and Hamilton with the £1000 contract won by 'Messrs. Cleave and Williams'.<sup>65</sup> Several rooms were added to the Brunswick Pier Hotel in St Vincent Street,<sup>66</sup> and Robert Sayers, at the Port Hotel, imported a 'very handsome billiard table from Boston'.<sup>67</sup>

The description and measurements of the new Prince's Hotel,

<sup>62</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 27 March 1879.

<sup>63</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 February 1881. The 'New Hotel' was named the Colac Hotel.

<sup>64</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10 February 1882.

<sup>65</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 July 1879.

<sup>66</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 January 1879.

<sup>67</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 February 1880.



designed by architect William Beattie and built by Thomas Sparnon, appeared in *The Register* in 1873 and typified the type of hotel construction so familiar in the Port. Built of Dry Creek stone with red brick dressings on the corner of North Parade and Mundy Street (not Marryatt Street as the article stated), it was ideally situated to catch the trade of mill and smelter workers and catered for travellers or boarders with seven bedrooms on the first floor. Ceiling heights of 13 feet on the ground floor and 12 feet upstairs would give rooms a feeling of spaciousness.

Mr. Thomas Yeo, the proprietor, having renewed the lease for two and a half years from the South Australian Company, has had the old house, which encroached six feet into Marryatt Street [sic], pulled down and a handsome new structure erected with a frontage to North Parade of 54 feet and to Marryatt Street [sic] of 41 feet. There are cellars six feet six inches high the full size of the building, including water tank under the taproom for roof water 16 feet by 10 feet by five feet six inches. On the ground floor is the bar, which is 24 feet by 18 feet. The taproom is 18 feet by 12 feet, the private parlour 18 feet by 11 feet six inches, the parlour 19 feet by 18 feet, and the dining-room 18 feet by 17 feet....Upstairs there is an assembly room of 25 feet by 18 feet six inches, with casement door leading on to a balcony; three bedrooms with fireplaces...and four other bedrooms without fireplaces....A passage four feet wide runs through the centre of the building and leading on to the balcony....A balcony six feet wide extends round the building....The kitchen, which is behind the dining-room, is 21 feet by 15 feet....All the rooms are well ventilated. The roof is in one span covered with iron, with gable at one end and hips at the other. A brick parapet extends round the two fronts.<sup>68</sup>

On two known occasions at the Port, the Licensing Board created conflict rather than healthy competition between businesses when it approved buildings and granted licences to hotels in close proximity. In 1878 a licence was granted for the Brunswick Pier, on the north-west corner of St Vincent Street and Robe Street, directly opposite the Globe, licensed in 1851, on the south-west corner. St Vincent Street, however,

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<sup>68</sup> *The Register*, 30 January 1873.

was a busy, main thoroughfare with a train line down the middle and the hotels were able to continue in competition until 1909 when the Brunswick Pier was closed.<sup>69</sup>

A more confronting situation was created in 1878 when the Board approved licences for the new Prince Alfred Hotel and Jervois Hotel in Lipson Street, separated by narrow Russell Street.<sup>70</sup> The new businesses advertised aggressively and competitively in the same newspaper:

**PRINCE ALFRED HOTEL,  
LIPSON-STREET, PORT ADELAIDE.  
ROBERT BULMAN, Proprietor.**

R. B., late of the firm Bulman & Watts, Government Providores, hereby returns thanks for past patronage, and informs his friends and the public generally that he opened the above first-class Hotel consisting of a spacious Bar, Bar-parlours, Dining-room, large Club-room, Sitting-rooms, and well-ventilated Bedrooms, &c., Plunge and Shower Baths. The Cuisine Department is replete with every requisite convenience.

The Balcony commands an extensive view of the Port and shipping, the suburban townships, the city of Adelaide, &c., and the range of hills from O'Halloran Hill, Mount Lofty, even to Gawler Town.

Families visiting Port Adelaide will find every accommodation. The choicest Ales, Wines, and Spirits in stock. Rooms for respectable Boarders, Extensive Stabling and Sheds.

**JERVOIS HOTEL.  
LIPSON-STREET, PORT ADELAIDE.  
JOHN BLANCH, Proprietor.**

J.B. (late master of the Bronzewing) informs his Friends and the Public generally that he has taken the above first-class Hotel, comprising Superior Accommodation for all classes of Customers, spacious Bar, Bar-Parlours, Sitting-Rooms, Suits of Apartments for Visitors, &c.

The Balcony commands a splendid view of the Port shipping and suburbs.

The Hotel being newly-built, is furnished throughout with the newest furniture, well-ventilated bed-rooms, &c.

None but the Best Brands of ALES, WINES, and SPIRITS, &c., kept on stock.

A large Yard, extensive Shed and Stabling. Civility and prompt attention in every department.

<sup>69</sup> The 'Globe', renamed 'Golden Port' in December 1981, continues trading in 1999. The Brunswick Pier building was remodelled as a shop and offices.

<sup>70</sup> *1891 Directory*, lists two small cottages between Russell Street and the Jervois Hotel occupied by William Morris, driver, and Alex Joseph, labourer.

<sup>71</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 March 1879. Both buildings are now demolished.

The town paper reported at length on the competition for custom between the two hotels along with the involvement and deliberations of the local council.<sup>72</sup> On 14 August 1879, after receiving a letter from the Licensed Victuallers' Association which alleged that the Jervois Hotel was 'conducted disgracefully', the council debated whether to prevent a new licence being granted to Mrs Hackendorf and her son Michael.

Mayor Theodore Hack reflected the view of the town's upright citizens in his stand that hotels in the Port should be of good repute. He argued that he had been previously informed that 'Mrs. Hackendorff [sic] bore a bad character, and was not fit to hold a publican's licence'. Although he had 'no personal knowledge of the case', and no police enquiry had been made, he was anxious that hotels in the Port should be 'conducted respectably, and he had felt well-disposed to assist the Licensed Victuallers' Association in the course they had taken'. However other councillors rallied to support the publican. Councillor Hains stated that he 'had known Mrs. Hackendorff a number of years, as a keeper of a sailors' lodging-house. There might have been a little noise occasionally, but that was neither here nor there; she was an honest, hard-working woman'.

Many on the council recognised this issue as a ruse to remove competition between two rival adjacent hotels and not as a valid

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<sup>72</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 August 1879.

objection to a 'disorderly house'. It had been, Councillor Cleave argued, 'a very serious mistake for the Licensing Bench to grant licences to two publichouses in such close proximity' and added that 'he had seen half-a-dozen men there, as he was coming home from church, as drunk as they could stand. He was not one to hound people down, but it was the duty of the Corporation to see such proceedings stopped'.

Other councillors were more realistic about six inebriates outside Port Adelaide hotels and their relevance to the discussion. Councillor Kestel did not think they could 'entertain the letter', on the ground that 'the Council had refused to interfere in the case of the Brunswick Hotel, when the landlord of the Globe asked their help'. Councillor Thompson 'thought the Council would be going beyond its province to interfere, because there was danger in taking up the functions of another body of men, and also because they had no complaint from the proper quarter'. The matter was dropped.<sup>73</sup>

However, once the council debate was published in the local press the defamations against Mrs Hackendorf, and the bitter contest between the two hotels, were public knowledge. It was later observed, 'For a while each vied with the other to catch the trade, and the licensees sold beer at a considerably reduced price. The cut-throat competition, however, did

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<sup>73</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 August 1879. The report incorrectly spelt the name of Ralph Kestel, a builder and member of the Port Adelaide Scientific Society previously mentioned in Chapter Three. The name Hackendorff is spelt 'Hackendorf' in the Directories and hotel licences.

neither any good'.<sup>74</sup>

The Prince Alfred Hotel was voluntarily closed in 1880 when the licence was purchased by the owners of the Jervois, Messrs Harris, Simpson, Hyman and Cocker. The Hackendorfs reopened the Prince Alfred for the owners and it remained in business until 1895. The Jervois continued trading until 1909. Over the years the two hotels and the people involved in the incident and its aftermath were mentioned in the local press, making it possible to follow the story further. The Jervois continued to promote its connection with town cartage and in 1892 one of 'Mr. M. Hackendorf's admirably appointed drays' was used by the Port Adelaide Operative Painters and Paperhangers for their picnic at Inglewood.<sup>75</sup> By 1896 Mrs Margaret Heard was conducting a boarding house in the former Prince Alfred building.<sup>76</sup>

In 1879 there were 'about seventy licensed lodging-houses in Port Adelaide'.<sup>77</sup> J. C. Addison of the Commercial Hotel advertised as the 'Late Superintendent of the Sailors' Home',<sup>78</sup> and in the 1860s Mrs Hackendorf had run a boarding house for sailors on the southern side of the White Horse Cellars in Commercial Road.<sup>79</sup> In 1913 Mrs M. Reynolds advertised

<sup>74</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>75</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 February 1892.

<sup>76</sup> *1896 Sands & McDougall's South Australian Directory*, 60. See also *1891 Directory*, 67. Five years later Mrs. Heard had moved into the cottage alongside the Jervois Hotel and was listed as a cab proprietor. The *Port Adelaide News*, 6 April 1883, mentioned a cab stand at the railway station nearby with the number of cabs increasing from 'a solitary vehicle' in 1881 to twelve licensed cabs in 1883. Presumably the service would have further expanded by 1901.

<sup>77</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 April 1879.

<sup>78</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 February 1879.

<sup>79</sup> W. J. Purvis, 'Old Port Adelaide, Old Ships, and Old Identities', *The Advertiser*, 2 November 1927.

accommodation at her boarding house 'near Train and Wharf', the former Dock Hotel in Todd Street.<sup>80</sup>

Many of the hotels provided accommodation for boarders and were 'home' to a large number of permanent and itinerant workers in the town.<sup>81</sup> This often brought problems which the boarding houses also experienced. In 1913 Miss Jane Smith was witness to an assault at her lodging house in Commercial Road when, hearing 'a row upstairs', she saw 'Arthur Henry Goode hit Albert Smith with a tomahawk' which was 'the outcome of a drunken row after meeting at the Globe Hotel'. Mr Mussared, then magistrate at the Police Court, fined Goode £5.<sup>82</sup>

Hotel boarders and customers held some hotel personnel in high respect and were loyal to the establishments so frequently identified by temperance groups as exacerbating society's ills. When Mrs Hansen, the wife of the proprietor of the Australian Pride Hotel, 'died somewhat suddenly', the 'flags at the Port were half-masted, and the funeral...largely attended'.<sup>83</sup> Jonathon Smith at the Ship Inn made a lasting impression on many people when he 'took the pledge to help a friend, by example, to regain his sobriety'.<sup>84</sup>

At times there was trouble with customers and even assault. The

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<sup>80</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 August 1913.

<sup>81</sup> See advertisements in *1896 Directory*, 64i, 64j.

<sup>82</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 December 1913.

<sup>83</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 February 1879.

<sup>84</sup> Annie Jane Duncan, 'Reminiscences of Miss Annie Jane Duncan', Book 1 (1934) 46. Mortlock Library of South Australia, PRG 532.



### Illustration 13

The third Ship Inn on North Parade, c.1870s.

The Ship Inn built at the new port in 1840 was destroyed in the 1847 fire and rebuilt in 1852 to a design by George Strickland Kingston. The second hotel was burnt in the 1857 fire and the publican D. Warnock, who was uninsured, suffered an estimated loss of £2000.

*The South Australian Register*, 11 March 1857.

Photograph, Port Adelaide Historical Society.

proprietor of the Port Hotel, Mr H. Blackler, 'lost a finger owing to being bitten by a man of anything but good repute named Dick Fisher, which necessitated the amputation of the finger'.<sup>85</sup> Thomas Doyle, proprietor of the Sussex Hotel, may have curbed some trouble makers on his premises by advertising 'for many years connected with the Police Department'.<sup>86</sup> It was not only men causing disturbances. After hearing noises in the bar parlour at the Globe Hotel, the publican's wife rushed in to find Susan Parker and Alice McCabe attacking Ann Edwards. Sub-Inspector Doyle was called and the two women were charged with assault in the police court the next day.<sup>87</sup>

Some publicans were jovial, gregarious characters, cheering their customers, whether celebrating or commiserating with a drink. In 1887 a writer for the local paper visited the Commercial Hotel where he was entertained by Mickey Tier, publican from late 1883 to 1887 and the man who had helped provide relief for the town poor in August 1885.

I heard singing and dancing at the Commercial hotel occupied by Mr. L. M. Tier, and on coming to the hotel itself, I find it full of the comic loving portion of the community of Port Adelaide. But the 'don' of the evening is the facetious 'Mickey' himself, and anxious ears and eyes, are awaiting for him to come forward and pour forth his comic contributions, in which are included the most hideous facial phases.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>85</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 November 1913. See also *The Advertiser*, 2 November 1927. W. J. Purvis recalled one of the Port's 'queer characters', Dick Fisher, 'who drove about 200 Chinamen up the Port-road, armed only with a piece of rope'.

<sup>86</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 March 1879.

<sup>87</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15, 18 July 1884. See also 4 December 1883 when the Globe was described as 'quietly-conducted'.

<sup>88</sup> 'Stroll through Port Adelaide on a Saturday Night', *Port Adelaide News*, 22 April 1887. See also 4 December 1883, which commented on Tier's Commercial Hotel, 'where the secret of attracting and maintaining a large business has apparently been learned'.



In April 1887 Tier continued his charitable work when he combined with fellow publican and magistrate W. Mussared, both had an interest in amateur entertainment, for a town hall concert in aid of the 'Widows and Orphans of those who lost their lives in the late Bulli Disaster' when 85 lives were lost in a underground colliery fire in New South Wales on 23 March 1887.<sup>89</sup>

Heath Nash took over as publican at the Sussex Hotel in Commercial Road, on the north-west corner of Cannon Street, from September 1876 until 1879. Nash had many stories to entertain his customers having been a member of John McDouall Stuart's expedition which crossed the continent from south to north in 1862.<sup>90</sup> The same week Stuart and his exhausted group reached Clare, the bones of Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills were carried through the town on their way to Adelaide and then by sea to Melbourne where the remains were buried with extravagant ceremony.<sup>91</sup> Perhaps Nash's tales of adventure 14 years later were coloured with South Australian pride of success in comparison with the disasters of the Victorian expedition.

Some publicans moved around the Port managing various hotels over a number of years. One such family, the Russells, were associated with hotels in the town for over 70 years. James Ralph Russell, a former

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<sup>89</sup> *Portonian*, December 1994, 1. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 20 March 1885. W. Mussared was publican at the Lass O'Gowrie in 1885.

<sup>90</sup> Rob Linn, 'Payneham Cemetery Historical Survey', 1990, 20.

<sup>91</sup> C. M. H. Clark, *A History of Australia*. Vol. 4. (Melbourne, 1978) 162-163.

proof-reader with *The London Times*, his wife Anne and four young sons from six years to six months in age, arrived at Port Adelaide in August 1849.<sup>92</sup> They settled on a farm at Woodville where three more sons were born between 1855 and 1864.<sup>93</sup> James ran the British Hotel at the Port from April 1864 to December 1870 and three sons continued managing the premises until 1906: James Thomas in 1871, Arthur from 1872 to 1881 and Walter from 1882 until June 1883.<sup>94</sup> The hotel remained in the family until 1937 when it was sold to the South Australian Brewery.<sup>95</sup>

In 1873, James Thomas Russell erected two stone houses, each with six rooms, on the corner of Cannon and Church Streets. During March 1876 the dwellings were converted to a hotel of eleven rooms, the Kent Hotel, with Russell listed as licensee until September 1876.<sup>96</sup>

A. Russell was licensee of the Duke of Wellington in 1862 and 1863 and the Exchange Hotel from 1864 to 1867. Arthur ran the Britannia for a time, Alexander Russell is listed as licensee of the Britannia from 1870 until 1873 and A. Russell junior from 1887 to 1895. Alex Russell ran the Criterion in Francis Street (north of Santo Parade) in 1881 and Arthur

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<sup>92</sup> 'Russell Family and Port Hotels', *Portonian*, December 1984, 5. The name given in the article was James Robert [sic] Russell. The children were James Thomas (aged six), Thomas Ralph (four), Edward Wix (two) and Alfred (six months).

<sup>93</sup> *Portonian*, June 1988, 11-12. Alfred was born in 1855 (presumably Alfred born in 1848 had died), Walter in 1857 and Henry in 1864. See also Letter, dated 1 August 1996, from Mark Russell of Gooseberry Hill, Western Australia, to the Port Adelaide Historical Society. James and Anne also had three daughters at Port Adelaide who all died in infancy. Mark is a descendant of Alfred.

<sup>94</sup> Hoad, Part 3, 75.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from Mark Russell, (Files, Port Adelaide Historical Society).

<sup>96</sup> McDougall and Vines, *Port Adelaide Centre Heritage Survey*. (Adelaide, 1994) 31. The hotel is known as the Port Anchor in 1999.

followed him in 1882. A. Russell was listed as licensee at the Criterion from 1886 until 1889.<sup>97</sup>

From December 1874 until 1877, the Australian Clubhouse Hotel on the corner of St Vincent Street and Formby Parade next to the Port Bridge was licensed to J. H. Reid, who became Walter Russell's brother-in-law.<sup>98</sup> The Reid family were also prominent publicans around the Port hotels. J. Harper Reid was the licensee at the Family Hotel in 1878 and Duncan Reid from December 1878 until 1884. Duncan Reid renovated and renamed it The Black Diamond Hotel as he had been employed by the 'Black Diamond Line' for a number of years as the master of the *Kalahome*.<sup>99</sup> He held the licence for the Port Admiral from 1890 to 1892. Other names of families connected with a number of Port hotels include Bishop, Blackler, Knapman, Hains, Yeo and McAuley.<sup>100</sup>

While the many hotels were the dominant buildings and were useful venues for groups within the town, a disturbing impact for the middle-class community was the hotel connection with the drunken behaviour of customers in the streets. The *Port Adelaide News* frequently reported on disturbances relating to hotel business which ended up in the police court. Some of these numerous incidents include Thomas Manning, labourer, fined five shillings and costs for disturbing the peace at the Britannia

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<sup>97</sup> *Portonian*, December 1984, 5. See also Hoad, Part 3.

<sup>98</sup> *Portonian*, December 1984, 5.

<sup>99</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 March 1879.

<sup>100</sup> Hoad, Part 3.

Hotel in April 1878,<sup>101</sup> and William Young who pleaded guilty to disturbing the peace at the Port Hotel and was fined 20 shillings and five shillings costs in May 1878.<sup>102</sup> In 1879 John Gowlnock, a seaman, was sent to gaol for a week, with hard labor for 'imposing upon Mr. Ford, of the Royal Arms, by obtaining beer without possessing the wherewithal to pay for it'. Thomas Flaherty, was fined 35 shillings for disturbing the peace of the Black Diamond Hotel, 'while in his cups', and breaking one of its windows.<sup>103</sup> Herbert, an indiscreet Bacchanalian, was ordered to pay ten shillings.<sup>104</sup> Charles Henry was charged 50 shillings for being drunk and pugilistic when he hit Constable Smyth in the face.<sup>105</sup> Five inebriates paid five shillings each to the Court in February 1881,<sup>106</sup> as did three 'seedy-looking individuals for over-stepping the bounds of sobriety' and six others in the same state during May that year.<sup>107</sup>

A comparison of these fines can be made with others of a more general nature during the same period, such as Alf Jones, 'fined 10/- plus 10/- costs' for having 'no name on dray', and L. Conrad, a butcher, fined '10/- plus 15/- costs' for 'leaving horse and dray without attendance'.<sup>108</sup> It would appear that drunkenness, without damage to property or assault, was a relatively minor offence unless repeated, in which case a gaol

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<sup>101</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 April 1878.

<sup>102</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 May 1878.

<sup>103</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 February 1879.

<sup>104</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 February 1879.

<sup>105</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 February 1879.

<sup>106</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 February 1881.

<sup>107</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 May 1881.

<sup>108</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10 January 1880.

sentence was imposed.

It was not only the inebriates who attended court. In June 1878 Thomas O'Neil, licensed victualler, was charged with suffering disorderly persons to assemble in the White Hart Hotel and fined £5.<sup>109</sup>

Wine shops were also a source of annoyance to some townspeople. In 1884 the school teacher and mayor, Thomas King, received

serious complaints of the conduct of some wine-saloon-keepers who kept dancing rooms, where dancing was kept up all night, and young girls were led away from their homes. He did not approve of a law which closed respectable hotels at 11 p.m., and allowed wine-shops to keep open as long as they liked.<sup>110</sup>

Slops and smells emanating from the hotels frequently caused complaints and the publicans from the Lass O'Gowrie and the Britannia were singled out for charges in January 1880.

D. Eunson and J. Murphy, hotelkeepers, were charged by Inspector Richards with allowing urinal refuse to flow into the gutter, contrary to the by-law. A month ago all the publicans in the Port, whose urinals drained into the gutters were served with a written notice to discontinue the connection, and Eunson and Murphy being the first cautioned not having complied, were made the defendants in a sort of test case. Fined in the lowest penalty.<sup>111</sup>

Another occurrence of smells in 1882 prompted a letter to the newspaper.

'Foulest of Foul Smells'

Ladies were compelled to put up with a good deal that they see and hear in the streets without showing that they notice anything objectionable....but when the sense of smell is attacked, it becomes a public matter. On Saturday night the stench that proceeded from a private recess in St. Vincent-street, attached to the Black Diamond Hotel, was something sickening. Who is responsible: Landlord or Corporation?<sup>112</sup>

Black Diamond corner was reported as 'one of the least pleasant spots in the Port', especially on Saturday nights when men crowded

<sup>109</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 June 1878.

<sup>110</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 April 1884.

<sup>111</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 January 1880.

<sup>112</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 March 1882.

around the hotel doorways.<sup>113</sup> The corner was the main intersection in the town and any annoyance either from odours or crowds was likely to affect the enjoyment of Saturday night when it was the custom of Portonians to promenade around the shops and streets, talking to friends and acquaintances.

In October 1884 Knapman started a major conversion of 'the extensive frontages' of his Black Diamond Hotel into shops and on the southern side erected a new hotel, the Central.<sup>114</sup> After a decade, the Central Hotel was repainted 'by Mr. Brunell, and decorated with two pretty tableau. The hotel presents a vastly improved appearance'.<sup>115</sup> The Port Admiral was also repainted in December 1894 with a forecast that the paint would be 'again rubbed off in time, we have no doubt, by the energetic individuals who repose in comfort against its surface'.<sup>116</sup> That year the paper reported that shops were spreading the Christmas spirit with 'shop-windows...freshly dressed' and an 'appearance of sprightliness' characterising 'the whole town'.<sup>117</sup>

In 1879 J. Kellet and Mr Corey built a two-storey long frontage of shops on Commercial Road between Marryatt and Dale Streets for the

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<sup>113</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 May 1884.

<sup>114</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 24 October 1884. 'The old Black Diamond Hotel is being transformed and shop windows being constructed'. The Central Hotel is still licensed in 1999.

<sup>115</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 December 1894.

<sup>116</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 December 1894.

<sup>117</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 December 1894.

Port Adelaide Market Company, to a design by the Adelaide architect G. C. E. Joachimi.<sup>118</sup> Known as the New Market building, it was opened on 20 November 1879. In 1890 the cafeteria on the corner of Dale Street was refurbished as a bar and other rooms were adapted to form a 17-room hotel, the New Market, which was run by the Heise family for 50 years until June 1940 and continues business in 1999.

In the minds of the temperance workers pubs were the source of a social evil in the town. Crusaders sought reduction in the selling and drinking of alcohol. Prohibition rather than 'temperance' was their ultimate aim. However from settlement the many pubs were an index of the Port's prosperity. Their construction provided work. The bars served as convivial meeting places for both seamen and town workers. Travellers used the accommodation, and hotel facilities were welcomed by clubs, societies and associations.

Local people around the pubs each held a story which reflected the often tough environment of the Port. The life of one such woman, whose story is taken up in Chapter Six, exemplified the 'battlers' and their frequent hardships in the town.

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<sup>118</sup> The owners of the New Market building hired a prestigious architect for their capital investment in the Port; Joachimi also designed the opulent residence, 'Ochiltree House' in East Terrace, Adelaide.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SAUCY SARAH RARELY SOBER

Sarah Francisco became a well known personality in Port Adelaide, particularly in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Her notoriety was due to her unruly, drunken behaviour around the Port and her frequent appearances before the local stipendiary magistrate. Sarah's final fame was her change to more temperate habits in the last years of her life. Her story is an example of the struggle within the Port between the forces for civility and impropriety, of a desire for community building and progress on the one hand, and for indulgence or inebriation on the other.

At the Port, some townspeople were attempting to establish a settlement pursuing strict values related to their Christian faith, alongside people whose world revolved around the activities of the seafarers and the wharf area with the hotels as the hub. Sarah's life is a window on that more permissive world.<sup>1</sup> Her resilience and the pathos of her story shine

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<sup>1</sup> Information about Sarah Francisco was initially found in the weekly Police Court report in the *Port Adelaide News*. Sarah was chosen from a long list of similar offenders who were recorded, her name emerging more frequently than the others. While these reports are tantalisingly sketchy, they nevertheless give a vivid picture of one resident of the Port and her struggle to survive against the odds of addiction and tough times particularly during the years of economic depression in the 1880s and 1890s.



through the newspaper's routine weekly recording of events at the police court.

Sarah Wearing or Whelan was born in Ireland about 1839, the daughter of a blacksmith.<sup>2</sup> Her mother died when she was five and Sarah went to live with an aunt on a dairy farm where she learned to milk cows, make butter and bake bread.<sup>3</sup> Her acquired kitchen and cleaning skills were to support her from complete destitution later in life.

In 1845 the potato crop in Ireland was blighted for the first time with *Phytophthora infestans*; the problem exacerbated over following years as further crops almost totally failed.<sup>4</sup> It was a time of catastrophic upheaval with the entire working population becoming socially unstable and mobile. Over two million people attempted to escape the decimation of their families by leaving Ireland and relocating in North America and British colonies around the globe. During this period large numbers of young single females, selected from orphanages and workhouses, received assisted passages to South Australia to take up domestic service. At Port Adelaide in 1855, over 4000 single girls arrived of whom, Eric Richards

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<sup>2</sup> '295 - The Remarkable Story of Sarah Sullivan', *The War Cry*, 30 December 1916. A series of weekly articles was written from interviews with Sarah before her death; Part 1 by 'Sheila', the *nom de plume* of Mrs Staff-Captain Spencer Taylor, 30 December 1916 to 10 February 1917, and Part 2 by 'Hibiscus', the *nom de plume* of Adelaide Ah Kow, 24 February to 12 May 1917. The surname 'Sullivan' was a pseudonym used by *The War Cry*. The *Passenger List indexes: Immigrants arriving in South Australia under United Kingdom assisted passenger schemes, 1847-1886*, (Mortlock Library of South Australiana) record Sarah's name as Whelan. The record of Sarah's marriage shows her maiden name as Wearing. Information from Church Register of St Patrick's, Adelaide, Sister Marie Foale, Catholic Church Archivist, Diocese of Adelaide, 23 February 1995.

<sup>3</sup> *The War Cry*, 30 December 1916.

<sup>4</sup> Cherry W. Parkin, 'Irish Female Immigration to South Australia during the Great Famine', B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1964, 6.

noted, '74 per cent were Irish, many from the poorhouses'.<sup>5</sup> The evidence suggests that Sarah's sister came to the colony at this time while Sarah, aged between six and sixteen during the decade of the potato famine, survived in Ireland to grow tall, as later descriptions attest: 'her height...unusual in a woman, gave an air of dignity, which the proudly carried head did not contradict'.<sup>6</sup>

Sarah started her working life by going into service with a Quaker family but hoped to migrate to South Australia after somehow receiving accounts from her sister of her life there.<sup>7</sup> In his study of Irish emigration, David Fitzpatrick argued that 'the rump of those who stayed home were deeply involved, through the emigration of siblings, neighbours and children'.<sup>8</sup> In her mid-twenties Sarah left by steamer from Dublin to Plymouth, a major port of embarkation for Irish emigrants heading to Australia.<sup>9</sup>

On 9 August 1866 Sarah left for Port Adelaide on board the *Peeress*,<sup>10</sup> travelling on an assisted emigrant passage arranged by her

<sup>5</sup> Eric Richards, 'Irish life and progress in colonial South Australia', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 27, May 1991, 224. The girls were often sent to the wrong destination. 'Of a group of 464 interviewed in Adelaide in 1855, 72 had applied to go to Sydney, 159 to Melbourne, three to Geelong, and one had expected to go to America'. See also State Records, GRG 35/48/1855. Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857*. (Second edition, Carlton Vic, 1967) 457, recorded that the St Patrick's Society 'provided for the girls' accommodation a large shed at the Port and eight country depots, with a matron and a local advisory committee for each'.

<sup>6</sup> *The War Cry*, 6 January 1916.

<sup>7</sup> *The War Cry*, 30 December 1916, 6 January 1917.

<sup>8</sup> David Fitzpatrick, 'Irish Emigration in the Later Nineteenth Century', *Irish Historical Studies*. Vol. 22, September 1980, 126.

<sup>9</sup> Parkin, 23. In the 1850s, special depot facilities were provided at Plymouth where single Irish girls had a medical examination, vaccinations and were accommodated before embarkation.

<sup>10</sup> *Passenger List Indexes*.

sister.<sup>11</sup> 'During the famine and its immediate sequel', Fitzpatrick stated, 'more than four-fifths of Irish emigrants to the Australian colonies were state-assisted, and...remained the rule until the 1890s'.<sup>12</sup> Sarah was listed as 26 years of age, a single Irish adult, a 'Remittance' emigrant and a Colonial Passage Certificate Holder. In the column headed 'Conduct during Voyage' Sarah's behaviour was noted as 'middling'; comments for other passengers are 'good', 'quarrelsome', 'most industrious' or no remarks recorded at all. On the three month journey were 312 emigrants, comprising 76 English, 51 'Scotch' and 185 Irish; 79 single women and 140 single men. The *Peerless* arrived in Port Adelaide on 7 November 1866.<sup>13</sup>

At Port Adelaide Sarah moved in with her sister, brother-in-law and niece Mary. For a time Sarah helped her sister who was employed doing ships' washing.<sup>14</sup> On 19 November 1867 Sarah was married to John Francisco at St Patrick's Church in Grote Street, Adelaide, by a Jesuit priest, Reverend Father Johannes Nepomucene Hinteröcker. John's occupation was listed as 'seaman'.<sup>15</sup> Although the original St Patrick's was demolished in 1958, the Church Register was preserved. Sarah signed the register with an 'X' and John obviously laboured over his child-like

<sup>11</sup> *The War Cry*, 6 January 1917.

<sup>12</sup> Fitzpatrick, 131.

<sup>13</sup> *Passenger List Indexes*. See also *Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping 1865-1866*. (London, 1865) Mortlock Library of South Australia. The *Peeress* was a metal ship of 777 tons and 158 feet (48 metres), built in 1859 at Sunderland, England.

<sup>14</sup> *The War Cry*, 6 January 1917.

<sup>15</sup> Telephone interview with Sister Marie Foale, 23 February 1995.

signature.<sup>16</sup> The register recorded that John Francisco was from Genoa and Sarah Wearing from Adelaide.<sup>17</sup>

Sarah's marriage to 'Handsome Frank', a year after her arrival, was an extremely unhappy one, with continued violence from her husband after his heavy drinking bouts.<sup>18</sup> Information recorded by a friend, Will Roberts, and used in a 1917 article in *The War Cry*, stated that Frank finally abandoned Sarah and their two small sons.

Frank was continually down at the river fishing, or loafing about, and one day came home with a pain in his ankle; from this cause he was confined to his bed for nearly three years, and Sarah waited on him with a dogged perseverance and patience, often repaid with blows and ill-words.  
For the first year he got £1 a week from the lodge, the second 10s. a week.  
After three years he was sent away for a change.  
He was to be away a fortnight, 'and,' said Sarah... 'he has never returned for forty years!'<sup>19</sup>

As described by her friend, Sarah worked hard to keep her small family together.

When they were quite little she would set off with one in her arms, the other on her back.  
She has worked from 3 a.m. till 11 p.m. at night!  
Hotel work, cleaning, anything at all that would help to keep the three together and food and clothes for all.<sup>20</sup>

While at work one day in a hotel, Sarah's duties were interrupted by her eldest son running in crying that his brother had fallen down one of the steep Port embankments. There was little sympathy from her employer.

<sup>16</sup> Sister Marie Foale, 23 February 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Church Register information from Sister Marie Foale, 23 February 1995. Genoa was a major Mediterranean seaport then in the Kingdom of Sardinia, now in north-west Italy. In Jill Statton (ed.), *Biographical Index of South Australians 1836-1885*. (Adelaide, 1986) 527-528, there is no mention of Sarah Wearing or Whelan (or a similarly phonetic name), however there is a record of a John Francisco, a 'Master Mariner', who resided in Port Adelaide.

<sup>18</sup> *The War Cry*, 13 January 1917.

<sup>19</sup> *The War Cry*, 13 January 1917. Research has been unable to uncover any further information on John Francisco.

<sup>20</sup> *The War Cry*, 20 January 1917.

The alarmed mother left her washing and ran hurriedly through the passage, but was arrested by the sight of a crowd gathered at the bar door, and a child lying on the counter absolutely still....But soon there were signs of life appearing, and she received the rough command: 'Take him away and lay him down; he is only stunned with the fall, *and get on with your work!*'<sup>21</sup>

Sarah however carried the child to a doctor but there was little he could do but drive 'the little family home in his own trap'.<sup>22</sup> Sarah had experienced five years of misery and personal tragedy in Port Adelaide. After the death of her son that night, Sarah turned to alcohol to dull her sorrow.

Sarah Francisco first appeared before the court for drunkenness on 30 July 1872.<sup>23</sup> Other convictions followed. In the Port Adelaide Police Court on 30 June 1876 Sarah was charged with assaulting 'Mary Ann Barnett at Port Adelaide' and given a sentence of £5 or two months' gaol with hard labour. Sarah served the sentence in Adelaide Gaol and was released on 24 August.<sup>24</sup> The fact that she went to prison rather than pay the £5 fine is indicative of her financial position at that time. Five days later she returned to prison for one month with hard labour for 'Indecent Language' after being given the alternative sentence of a £2.15/- fine. Her occupation is listed in both 1876 gaol register entries as 'housewife'.<sup>25</sup>

Sarah was described in the gaol register as aged 35 years, her religion Roman Catholic, a married housewife, and a migrant who

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<sup>21</sup> *The War Cry*, 20 January 1917.

<sup>22</sup> *The War Cry*, 20 January 1917.

<sup>23</sup> *The War Cry*, 20 January 1917, 3 February 1917.

<sup>24</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. E, 30 June 1876, State Records 2414/1/9.

<sup>25</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. F, 29 August 1876.

arrived in the colony in 1866 having travelled from Plymouth. Further references in the gaol registers, 1876 to 1888, under the column heading 'Trade or Calling', record her variously as housewife, washerwoman, servant, prostitute and charwoman. The registers note that she was unable to read or write and give her date of arrival from 1864 to 1868. The variations in register details was possibly due to the reluctance or stubbornness of the prisoners but more likely to their state of mind on admission and inability to clearly recall facts at that time. In Sarah's case the numerous entries over the years showed mainly similar information.

In 1878 Sarah served four prison sentences, one for being a 'Habitual Drunkard' (14 days hard labour), two for being 'Drunk at Port Adelaide' (7 days hard labour), and one for 'Disturbing the Peace' (14 days hard labour). On the last three occasions before the bench she had the opportunity to pay two fines of £1 and one of £2.10/-.<sup>26</sup> It seems that Sarah's son was cared for by her sister and brother-in-law during her first incarcerations but it is not known where he lived as her absences became more frequent.<sup>27</sup>

The only reference to a warrant being issued for Sarah's arrest was in December 1880: 'Sarah Francisco, by Foot Constable Rae, for larceny,

<sup>26</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. F, 19 July, 26 August, 13 and 20 September 1878.

<sup>27</sup> *The War Cry*, 20 January 1917, 'Sarah was sent to an asylum for two months...on being given her liberty...she went on to her sister's and demanded the child, and when she saw him she ran to him with outstretched arms'. See also Robyn Hukin, 'The Bran Children of Port Adelaide', *Portonian*, March 1996, 15. The police court report, 6 April 1878, stated that two children (aged two and five) 'were sent to the Industrial School' while their mother was in gaol. Sarah's son may have been similarly placed.

at Port Adelaide; fourteen days' hard labor'.<sup>28</sup> The explanation of this being her only warrant would seem to be that the police knew where to locate her or because her unruly behaviour around the town was so visible and audible they could find her near the scene of the offence, making a warrant unnecessary.<sup>29</sup> In later years she was frequently found on Sunday mornings 'sleeping off Saturday night' on a bench in the tennis court shelter-shed on Port Road just south of what is now Grand Junction Road.<sup>30</sup> A former resident of the Port, Alf Capel, recalled his mother saying that Sarah was 'a colourful character, she did washing and ironing around the town and was often drunk and pushed home in a wheelbarrow'.<sup>31</sup>

The first noted reference to Sarah in the police court column in the local newspaper was for Wednesday 23 February 1881 when she appeared before Mr Turner, the stipendiary magistrate: 'Sarah Francisco, widow, of Hiberbian [sic] descent, habitually addicted to over indulgence in the "crater" was fined 20s. for drunkenees [sic]'. The court reports do not mention the type of drink Sarah preferred, although this information is recorded for others, including one offender of a similar age, Margaret Cameron, a whisky drinker, convicted the same day for the same

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<sup>28</sup> 'Summary of Apprehensions during the month of December, 1880', *The South Australian Police Gazette*, 5 January 1881.

<sup>29</sup> 'H. G. (Bill) Rose, 1914-1991', *Portonian*, December 1991, 5. Bill's reminiscences included hearing stories of Sarah Francisco 'who would be regularly taken away drunk in the Black Maria'.

<sup>30</sup> Telephone interview with Len Manning, formerly of the Port Adelaide Salvation Army Corps, 12 April 1995.

<sup>31</sup> Telephone interview with Alfred Capel, August 1995. His grandfather, Henry Hains, lived in Dale Street from 1849 and his mother, Julia, was born there in 1877.

offence.<sup>32</sup> In *The War Cry* interviews, Sarah mentioned buying a jug of beer,<sup>33</sup> and on another occasion she informed the court she had been drinking porter,<sup>34</sup> a dark bitter beer or stout brewed from charred malt.

Sarah's appearance before the stipendiary magistrate on Saturday 14 May 1881 was descriptive of her behaviour, on this occasion aggravated by her antagonism toward Constable Burns, the arresting officer.

#### FRANCISCO AGAIN

*Sarah Francisco*, of infamous celebrity, again paid her devoirs to the Court to answer to a charge of drunkenness. With a brazen demeanour which excited some merriment amongst the spectators in court, she stood with arms akimbo and alternatively volubly addressed the Magistrate and abused the police. She asserted that she was constantly watched by Constable Burns, who persecuted her without mercy. She asked the Magistrate whether he would like to know the reason of the constable's spite against her, but His Worship did not evince much interest in the matter. The prisoner, however, informed the Bench that some six years ago when, like 'Dear little Buttercup' she 'was young and charming,' Constable Burns, captivated by her beauty and graces, sought her hand in marriage, but was scornfully rejected. Now, he would neither marry her himself nor allow anyone else to do so. The prisoner was fined 20s., and indulged in a scuffle with the police whilst being removed.<sup>35</sup>

Even allowing for some exaggeration in Sarah's story, it can be calculated that six years before, in 1875, she was in her mid-thirties, not a young lady, and by then a deserted mother with her remaining child to support.<sup>36</sup> One week later she was again before the bench: 'Sarah Francisco again put in an appearance, under the guardianship of P. C. Burns, to answer to

<sup>32</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 February 1881.

<sup>33</sup> *The War Cry*, 27 January 1917.

<sup>34</sup> *The War Cry*, 10 February 1917.

<sup>35</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 May 1881. The song 'Little Buttercup' was written by William Gilbert (librettist) and Arthur Sullivan (composer) for their 1878 operetta 'H.M.S. Pinafore'. The character Buttercup sold goods along the waterfront; 'Then buy of your Buttercup, dear little Buttercup, Sailors should never be shy'.

<sup>36</sup> *The War Cry*, 21 April 1917, recorded Sarah as saying that she had never known the exact date of her birth. Sarah's age was assessed from the inscription on her grave at Cheltenham Cemetery which records her death in 1916 at the age of '77 years'.



a charge of being a habitual drunkard, and was sent to gaol for two calendar months'.<sup>37</sup>

In July, August and October 1883 Sarah spent further time in Adelaide Gaol, for 'Indecent language' (14 days hard labour, described as 'Housewife'), 'Drunk at Port Adelaide' (14 days hard labour, described as 'Prostitute'), 'Disturbing the peace' and 'Drunk' (£2.15/- or 14 days and 15/- or 7 days, described as 'Washerwoman') and three months with hard labour for being a 'Rogue and Vagabond'. Sarah was released from prison on 28 January 1884 and returned the next day for one month with hard labour for 'Using indecent language at Port Adelaide'.<sup>38</sup>

In 1862 a third floor was added to the 1858 double-storey female cell block at Adelaide Gaol making accommodation in total for 30 women. The block was adjacent to the single-storey 1849 female cell block, both buildings having back-to-back cells opening directly into yards 1 and 2. Young female offenders, assessed by authorities to be 'reclaimable' and 'not yet known to be of abandoned habits', were in a yard separate from those who had previous convictions and were known to the police as prostitutes and thieves. In 1857 *The Adelaide Observer* stated 'there can be no doubt that much mischief arises from the mixing

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<sup>37</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 May 1881.

<sup>38</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. H, 13 July, 8 August, 8, 15 October 1883 and 29 January 1884.

up of young girls...with the hardened offenders and shameless women whose very contact is pollution'.<sup>39</sup>

Debtors were separated from both groups. In 1881 an upper storey of 38 new cells for women was added to the 'Laneway Block' with the cells opening to an internal corridor.<sup>40</sup> The women's prison environment was a reasonably healthy one: 'the wards and cells are as clean as the strictest housewife could desire, the woodwork being constantly scrubbed and each piece of brick and stone being white washed every week'.<sup>41</sup> As well as gaol cleaning duties, women under sentence were employed at various times in 'picking oakum' which involved teasing apart old rope into fibre pieces for use in caulking boat timbers, making ore bags for the English and Australian Copper Company, and doing the washing and mending for the gaol.<sup>42</sup>

Sarah was reported as having her 'own' cell, a 'particular one which she had always insisted on occupying during her frequent terms of imprisonment. It had been no secret that whatever prisoner occupied it must evacuate it immediately the "rightful" owner appeared'.<sup>43</sup> On another occasion, *The War Cry* wrote, she was informed by the keeper that 'everyone who comes here three times in one year has to go into No. 1 yard'. Sarah replied 'fiercely', 'If I come here 227 times, I won't go

<sup>39</sup> *The Adelaide Observer*, 18 April 1857.

<sup>40</sup> Schwager Brooks and Partners, *Adelaide Gaol Conservation Plan*. (1989) 90.

<sup>41</sup> *The Adelaide Observer*, 18 April 1857.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Sue Scheiffers, Manager, Adelaide Historic Gaol, 15 February 1995.

<sup>43</sup> *The War Cry*, 7 April 1917.

into No. 1'. When they placed her in there 'she kicked the policeman fiercely on the shins, threw off hat and shawl, and showed fight. For this she got fourteen days and seven days on bread and water'.<sup>44</sup> From this anecdotal evidence it would appear that 'Sarah's cell' was facing 'No. 2 Yard' which was for less hardened offenders.

After being released from gaol and enjoying four days of freedom, Sarah was again convicted on 4 March 1884. The police court reporter referred to Sarah, then 45 years old, as having been before magistrate on well over 50 occasions.<sup>45</sup>

Police Court (To-day.)

*Sarah Francisco*, an old offender, was charged with drunkenness, and disturbing the public peace, also with assaulting P.C. Randall. She was found creating a disturbance in the street, and at the police station she bit the constable in the arm, tearing his coat and shirt and inflicting a wound on the arm. The defendant made an eloquent appeal on her 'bended knees' to be allowed to go free, but was sentenced to six months imprisonment. The defendant exclaimed 'If I could catch Randall I wouldn't mind taking twelve months'.<sup>46</sup>

Six months later, on 5 September, having just finished serving her sentence of hard labour at Adelaide Gaol for assaulting Randall, Sarah was in trouble again but was given a reprieve.

At the Port Police Court this morning, a middle-aged Port Adelaide lady...with no claim to beauty (*Sarah Francisco*), stood before Mr Turner, S.M., on two charges of drunkenness and indecent language. Prisoner, in defence, stated that the arresting constable was drunk, and she showed her bruised hands to the Magistrate, saying that the bruises were the result of the handcuffs, which were cruelly placed upon her; the magistrate took pity on her as she only came out of jail on the 2nd inst., and mulcted her in the sum of 15s., not to be enforced till the next conviction. She promised faithfully, never to come before him again.<sup>47</sup>

The next conviction was not long after her faithful promise. Exemplifying

<sup>44</sup> *The War Cry*, 3 February 1917.

<sup>45</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 January 1885, specifically mentions 102 convictions since 1875.

<sup>46</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 March 1884.

<sup>47</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 September 1884.

the frailty of human resolution, particularly when under the influence of alcohol, Sarah hindered a policeman 'in the execution of his duty at Port Adelaide' and was in prison again on 25 September for one calendar month with hard labour.<sup>48</sup>

On 16 January 1885 the *Port Adelaide News* reported, 'At Wednesday's Police Court Sarah Francisco again presented a smiling countenance'. There is no record of her having gone to prison on this occasion but on 30 January, two weeks later, the magistrate showed an obvious impatience with Sarah in sentencing her to 12 months with hard labour for being an 'Incorrigible Rogue'.

The following list was produced at Wednesday's police court against Sarah Francisco: - Since 1875, convictions - Sixty-two times for drunkenness, fourteen for using indecent language, three each for disturbing the peace of public-houses, for riotous behaviour, for wilfully damaging property, and for assaulting the police; twice each for disturbing the public peace, for being a habitual drunkard, and for stealing, and once each for common assault, for resisting the police, for being a lunatic, for using insulting behaviour, for using abusive language, for hindering the police in the execution of their duty, for disturbing the peace of a ship, and for being a rogue and a vagabond....Sentenced this 102<sup>nd</sup> time to one year's imprisonment.<sup>49</sup>

It is a valid observation that there was a sense of security in her second, or perhaps only, real 'home' at Adelaide Gaol because on 28 December 1885, after two days of freedom, Sarah was again 'disturbing the peace' of the Port and returned for a further 14 days.<sup>50</sup> *The War Cry* stated, 'she had come to look upon it almost as "home, sweet home"' and that according to the police, on being released from gaol after serving a

<sup>48</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. H, 25 September 1884.

<sup>49</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 January 1885. See also *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. H, 28 January 1885.

<sup>50</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. I, 28 December 1885.

sentence for drunkenness, she asked the gaol authorities to keep the same clothes for her as 'she would be back again in a day or two'.<sup>51</sup>

In December 1885 Sarah was described in the gaol register as 'Servant' so at that time she may have been cleaning or carrying out kitchen work at one of the hotels. On 4 February 1886 Sarah, described as a 'Charwoman', was hurried back to gaol for 'Indecent Language' with a sentence of 14 days hard labour. The *Port Adelaide News* reported 'Mrs Sarah Francisco has been convicted for the 105<sup>th</sup> time. Her weakness is imbibing. This noted personage of the police court is a tall muscular woman, well on in years. She has Irish wit, and sometimes keeps the court in continual merriment'.<sup>52</sup> Released on 17 February, she was back inside the next day for a further two months hard labour for being 'Idle and disorderly'.<sup>53</sup> She was discharged on 17 April 1886, and presumably carried out duties as a charwoman at the Port for a full month before going back inside on 18 May for a fortnight's hard labour after not paying her fine of £5 for being 'Drunk at Port Adelaide'.<sup>54</sup>

The regularity of Sarah being arrested and sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour continued from 1886 to 1888.<sup>55</sup> In 1889

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<sup>51</sup> *The War Cry*, 3 February 1917.

<sup>52</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 February 1885. See also *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. I, 4 February 1885.

<sup>53</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. I, 18 February 1886.

<sup>54</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. I, 18 May 1886.

<sup>55</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. I, 2 July 1886, 4 October 1886, 14 December 1886, 14 June 1887, 7 July, 9 August 1887 and 14 January, 30 April 1888.

six months of Sarah's fiftieth year were spent in gaol.<sup>56</sup> In desperation the magistrate twice placed her under the 'Aborigines Act' for a period of 12 months for her 'own good'.<sup>57</sup> What Sarah termed the 'Black Act' was most likely the ordinance passed in 1872 to prevent Aborigines from obtaining alcohol from the hotels and wine bars.<sup>58</sup> On one of these occasions, possibly worried about her casual work in the hotels, Sarah protested that she got her living from the pubs. 'No', said the magistrate, 'they get it from you'.<sup>59</sup> The local hotel licensees were warned that a fine of £20 would be imposed if they served Sarah Francisco. Sarah responded typically to the decision by making a parody of the situation.

She was not without a sense of humour. When a disgusted and implacable bench placed her under the Aborigines Act for twelve months-viz., made the selling of liquor to her a punishable offence-Sarah advertised and ridiculed their decision by blackening her skin, parading the streets, and crying to all and sundry that she was an aboriginal.<sup>60</sup>

For the 'short periods of liberty she enjoyed', Sarah rented 'any old detached room or shed' around the town and sometimes used the lock-up at the police station when nothing else was available.<sup>61</sup> She kept herself clean and frequently turned up at the Port Adelaide casualty hospital demanding that, as a 'Government woman', she be allowed to use the bath.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. J. Sarah's age is given as 50 in entries on 21 October and 26 December 1889.

<sup>57</sup> *The War Cry*, 27 January 1917.

<sup>58</sup> A. A. Abbie, 'The Aborigines of South Australia', in Rupert J. Best (ed.), *Introducing South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1958) 23. The 1872 Ordinance 'debarred Aborigines from intoxicating liquor'.

<sup>59</sup> *The War Cry*, 27 January 1917.

<sup>60</sup> *The War Cry*, 27 January 1917.

<sup>61</sup> *The War Cry*, 24 March 1917, 'often she had gone to the police station and demanded a cell in which to sleep'.

<sup>62</sup> *The War Cry*, 27 January 1917.

In 1890 Sarah was sent to gaol, with 'hard labour', for three months in January, 14 days on 2 April and 12 months on 19 April. She was released 'By His Excellency's Warrant' on 15 August but on 8 December sentenced to 14 days for 'Insulting Behaviour', and on 22 December to two months. In 1891 she was drunk at the Port on 17 March, St Patrick's Day, and was sentenced to 14 days in prison.<sup>63</sup> On 16 July 1891 the *Port Adelaide News* reported: 'Sarah Francisco...pleaded that under the excitement of being released from gaol, after an incarceration of three months, she had taken more than was good for her'. The magistrate fined her 20 shillings and on default ordered her to gaol for the month.<sup>64</sup>

Sarah rated another mention from the police court reporter when she appeared before Justices of the Peace, Charles Downer and R. S. Guthrie, on 15 September 1891: 'Sarah Francisco appeared as defendant to a charge that she was a habitual drunkard. Enforced total abstinence for two months was ensured by sending her to gaol for that period'.<sup>65</sup>

Throughout the 1890s the pattern of her life continued,<sup>66</sup> and in September 1892 a local journalist speculated, 'Sarah Francisco is doomed apparently to end her days in gaol'.<sup>67</sup> Sarah, however, still had nearly a

<sup>63</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. J, 2 January, 2, 19 April, 8, 22 December 1890, 17 March 1891.

<sup>64</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 17 July 1891.

<sup>65</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 September 1891.

<sup>66</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. J, 26 February, 12 March, 20 May, 6 June, 13, 29 August 1892. Vol. K, 11 October 1892-12 May 1897.

<sup>67</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 September 1892.

quarter of a century left in her life and both her spirit and her liver were surviving well.

On 31 January 1895 the Police Court at Port Adelaide provided good theatre with Sarah defiantly defending her hard work and honour. It may have amused the public onlookers but to the aging and injured Sarah it was humiliating. She reacted angrily with her Irish accent having lost little of its richness after 30 years in her new country. This was her only conviction in 1895.

#### THE INCORRIGIBLE SARAH AGAIN.

On Thursday morning, the redoubtable Sarah Francisco was brought before Mr. W. Johnstone S.M., charged with drunkenness. The ancient offender, whose white locks and hoarse voice with an 'Oirish' accent, give her a formidable appearance, appeared on this occasion with a broken arm, which, she alleged was caused by rough usage from a constable while locking her in the cell. The allegation was denied, however, amid frequent protestations and interruptions from this excitable lady, and the S.M. preferring to take the evidence of the police, sentenced her to fourteen days' imprisonment. It appeared from the evidence of the police that Mrs. Francisco had been brought into the station at about 8 a.m. on Wednesday, and made no complaint about a broken arm until 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. Sarah was also charged on the information of Sub-Inspector Doyle, with having been convicted of three offences during the last few weeks, and with being an idle and disorderly person, and therefore deemed to be a rogue and a vagabond. 'How can you say I'm a rogue and a vagabond,' interrupted Sarah fiercely, 'And me scrubbin' and slayvin' from mornin' till night; have you ever known me to stayle anythin'?' The S.M. informed her that in a legal sense she was a rogue and a vagabond, and forthwith sentenced her to three months' imprisonment. Against this Sarah vigorously protested, but it was to no avail, and she was dragged out by the police. As she left the chamber, she made a fierce lunge at Constable Morrow, and frequently turning round as she was being conducted to the cell, hurled all the imprecations at the poor Constable's head that her Irish tongue could compass. On passing through the court-room on the way to the cell, she went down on her knees, faced Constable Morrow, and striking a table with a blow that would have felled an ox, gave vent to her wrath in hoarse unintelligible Irish, much to the amusement of the listeners.<sup>68</sup>

In 1895 Sarah's name is mentioned in the Port Adelaide press during a coroner's inquest. At the time she was working as a servant at the Port

<sup>68</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 1 February 1895.



Hotel and when a young fellow worker, Alice Burgess, appeared ill Sarah offered her a cup of tea. As a witness at the later inquest into the death of Alice's baby, Sarah was depicted as thoughtful, reliable and responsible.<sup>69</sup> The landlord's wife trusted her in a difficult situation (see Appendix E). The verdict found that 'the child came to its death through want of proper attention at its birth, but there is no evidence of criminal intent or neglect'.<sup>70</sup> The report illustrated part of the lives of kitchen staff and the ostler at the hotel, the hours they worked, and the fact that some lived-in. It also demonstrated some of the varied responsibilities of a publican's wife, and the understanding of the coroner.

By the winter of 1896, Sarah, now listed as 'Cook', was in prison again with 'hard labour': on 1 June for 14 days, on 24 June for 14 days and on 14 July for two months.<sup>71</sup> On her return to the Port on 12 September she managed herself well until March 1897 when she had two convictions of 14 days for 'Disturbing the peace'.<sup>72</sup> From a conviction on 29 September 1898, 'Drunk at Port Adelaide', to 17 November 1903, 'Resisting police and disturbing the peace', Sarah was in and out of gaol 13 times, mainly for drunken behaviour which included 'Abusive words', 'Indecent language', 'Disturbing the peace of North Parade' and

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<sup>69</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 August 1895. See also J. L. Hoad, *Hotels and Publicans in South Australia 1836-1984*. (Adelaide, 1986) Part 3. The Port Hotel was built in October 1838 on North Parade. John Whallin was licensee from 11 September 1888 until 7 September 1896. The hotel closed in May 1951 and was later demolished.

<sup>70</sup> *The South Australian Police Gazette*, 28 August 1895.

<sup>71</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. K.

<sup>72</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. K, 13, 27 March 1897.

'Disturbing the peace of Commercial Road'.<sup>73</sup> Sarah was in the local news again on 23 January 1904: 'This unfortunate woman, owing to her well-known weakness, was once more, during the week, brought before the local police court'.

On 30 October 1904 the *Port Adelaide News* gave an insight to Sarah's incarcerations that year.

At the Police Court yesterday...Sarah had to answer a charge of drunkenness on Saturday last. She pleaded not guilty and was fined one pound or a month. She was then charged with being an habitual drunkard. The police records showed that she had been sentenced in all to 206 days imprisonment during the present year, and had been locked up 162 days. Three months was added to the present score. She only came out of gaol on Friday.

It appears from the press report that Sarah spent most of 1904 in gaol. Aged about 65 years and having spent overall 'approximately sixteen and a-half years' in prison, it seemed that Sarah's tale would end with her either dying in her cell at Adelaide Gaol or in a Port Adelaide gutter.<sup>74</sup>

Between 1 March 1905 and 9 November 1908 Sarah's life continued in its usual pattern. Approaching 70 years of age she was habitually drunk at Port Adelaide and in Adelaide Gaol for weeks or months at a time.<sup>75</sup>

On six occasions from 1905 to 1907 she had the chance to pay fines ranging from £1 to £5 rather than go to prison but returned to her cell.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. L, 12 May 1897-5 July 1902 and Vol. M, 7 July 1902-19 February 1908.

<sup>74</sup> *The War Cry*, 3 February 1917.

<sup>75</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. M, 7 July 1902-19 February 1908 and Vol. N, 20 February 1908-1 December 1912. A study of Sarah's convictions show that they ranged fairly equally throughout the months of the year. For example there was no apparent seasonal pattern to Sarah's time in gaol such as through winter when she had more need of shelter, or near the popular celebrations of Christmas and New Year.

<sup>76</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. M.

What followed in Sarah's life in the next few years astonished Portonians even more than her antics in the street or the courtroom.<sup>77</sup> It was certainly a source of amazement to the Port magistrate and police constables who used her unfolding story as an example to others.<sup>78</sup>

The first Salvation Army corps in Australia was formed in Adelaide by Edward Saunders and John Gore at an open-air meeting in the Botanic Gardens on 5 September 1880.<sup>79</sup> This was 16 years after the beginning of the Salvationist movement founded in 1865 as 'The Christian Mission' by William and Catherine Booth in the dockland slums of East London to remedy pauperism and vice.<sup>80</sup> In early 1882 Salvationists were active at Port Adelaide and in June held 'a parade of witness' through the streets.<sup>81</sup> On 17 November 1882 the third corps in Australia officially began work in the town in the former Presbyterian Church in Marryatt Street led by Captain Thomas Sutherland and his wife. The Salvationists care of the poor and needy of the town is exemplified in the story of Sarah's rehabilitation.

It was the practice of Army members to attend the police court

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<sup>77</sup> Information from George Ellis, Territorial Archivist, The Salvation Army Heritage Centre, 29 March 1995.

<sup>78</sup> *The War Cry*, 14, 21 April 1917. See also Barbara Bolton, *Booth's Drum: The Salvation Army in Australia 1880-1980*. (Sydney, 1980) 42.

<sup>79</sup> John Whitehead, *Adelaide, City of Churches*. (Magill SA, 1986) 152. Saunders and Gore, who both claimed conversion at one of Booth's meetings in London, met in early 1880 at Adelaide's Wesleyan Church in Pirie Street when Matthew Burnett was preaching. When testimonies were asked for, Saunders heard Gore speak and realised how their experiences were similar. Shortly after their meeting, they began working in Light Square, Adelaide. See also William T. Nicholls, *The Royal Blood Washed: A History of the First Hundred Years of the Adelaide Congress Hall Corps 1880-1980*. (1987).

<sup>80</sup> Bolton, 9. The Christian Mission was renamed 'The Salvation Army' in 1878.

<sup>81</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 June 1882.

where there was an arrangement with the magistrate that some who were sentenced could, with their consent, go to the Salvation Army Home instead of a term in prison. About 1894, a young Salvation Army Captain, Susie Morris, had spent the morning in Sarah's cell at Port Adelaide. Over a 'steaming jug of beef tea and sufficient hot dinner for two' provided for Sarah by the hotel-keeper across the street from the lock-up, Sarah obstinately refused Susie's plea for her consent; a stand which Sarah later regretted.<sup>82</sup> After her marriage to William E. Roberts, Susie continued to take an interest in Sarah's life over the years. At one time, 'hearing she was in the city gaol, and feeling concerned about her', Susie Roberts travelled up to town especially to visit Sarah.<sup>83</sup>

While selling *The War Cry* around the Port streets and hotels, the then Sergeant-Major Mrs Roberts often had a chat with Sarah. One evening, Sarah, wearing her old tea-cosy hat, turned up unexpectedly at the Salvation Army hall carrying a vegetable marrow with a face cut on it and loudly demanded that "'the baby" should be christened'.<sup>84</sup> Knowing Sarah's distrust of institutions, Mrs Roberts offered Sarah frequent invitations to her home to have a cup of tea or even to stay but Sarah never accepted.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *The War Cry*, 3 March 1917. The name 'Morris' is used in the articles but may be a pseudonym.

<sup>83</sup> *The War Cry*, 3 March 1917.

<sup>84</sup> *The War Cry*, 3 March 1917. 'Sarah's white head [was] grotesquely crowned with a tea-cosy, which she had seized from a draper's shop, when the busy assistants had not been able to attend to her as quickly as Sarah thought proper....the draper, who was too wise to interfere with her when she was in a temper...knew...that she would be sure to return another day and pay for the goods'.

<sup>85</sup> *The War Cry*, 3 March 1917.

In 1909 there was a special meeting at the Salvation Army hall to celebrate William Booth's eightieth birthday and with the promise of a slice of cake, Sarah, 'fresh from gaol' and 'forced by rheumatism to use a stick', went with Susie Roberts.<sup>86</sup> Her behaviour and manners during the meeting were regarded by those present as outrageous. Sarah having had 'sufficient drink to make her noisy', continually interjected the speaker by calling out 'When's the cup of tea coming on?'<sup>87</sup>

That night Adjutant and Mrs Wyatt found a bed for her at the Salvation Army Hall quarters.<sup>88</sup> In the morning Sarah set off with good intentions to collect her belongings and return but met some of her old drinking companions which led to spending another night in the Port lock-up.

During 1909 Sarah spent almost six months in prison. In 1910 she had four convictions including one on 30 December when, listed as aged 72, Sarah was charged with 'Wilfully damaging 3 panes of glass to the extent of 25/- at Port Adelaide'.<sup>89</sup> The familiar pattern of her life continued throughout 1911.<sup>90</sup> On 28 March 1912 Sarah received her 294<sup>th</sup> conviction for being 'Idle and disorderly' and returned to gaol for 14 days.<sup>91</sup> Mrs Roberts wrote to her with the promise that she and Mrs Wyatt

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<sup>86</sup> *The War Cry*, 10 March 1917. Booth was born in Northampton, England, on 10 April 1829.

<sup>87</sup> *The War Cry*, 10 March 1917.

<sup>88</sup> *The War Cry*, 10 March 1917.

<sup>89</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. N.

<sup>90</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. N.

<sup>91</sup> *Adelaide Gaol Prisoners' Register*, Vol. N.

would see her on the first visiting day. That Sarah appreciated the letter, 'was shown by the fact that it was found among her few belongings after her death'.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps one of her fellow inmates or a warder read the words to her.

On her release on Wednesday 10 April, Sarah walked to the Port Salvation Army quarters where she had promised to return, but 'felt too ashamed to do so' and wandered back to her usual haunts.<sup>93</sup> The next day she was 'run in again' with her case to be heard on the Monday morning. Adjutant Wyatt heard the news and his wife and Mrs Roberts visited Sarah at the Port police station on Sunday, when she consented 'to go with The Army next day if the magistrate gave her the option'.<sup>94</sup> On Monday 15 April 1912, Sarah was sentenced to three months in prison or be 'taken in hand by the Salvation Army'.<sup>95</sup> It was her 295<sup>th</sup> conviction but had a new outcome. *The War Cry* commented that 'the police had the strange experience of hearing the incorrigible Sarah plead "Guilty" for the first time',<sup>96</sup> and on the Monday morning 'police had the unprecedented experience of escorting their old offender into court, and *not* escorting her out again'.<sup>97</sup>

Sarah stayed at the quarters for two or three weeks, then 'as the

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<sup>92</sup> *The War Cry*, 17 March 1917.

<sup>93</sup> *The War Cry*, 17 March 1917.

<sup>94</sup> *The War Cry*, 17 March 1917.

<sup>95</sup> *The Advertiser*, 18 July 1914.

<sup>96</sup> *The War Cry*, 10 February 1917.

<sup>97</sup> *The War Cry*, 17 March 1917.

Officers had a sick child' it was arranged for her to live at the home of Will and Susie Roberts in High Street, Queenstown, where Susie Roberts ran a small store and confectionery with the help of a Salvationist friend, Miss Willcox, who also lived on the premises.<sup>98</sup> Sarah dexterously influenced the decisions for her living arrangements with the Roberts.

The sitting-room was behind the shop, the kitchen and scullery still further in the rear; the three bedrooms were upstairs....To Sarah, accustomed to renting any odd little back room, it appeared sumptuous. 'If I'd known you were as well off as this,' she said in her usual blunt fashion, 'I'd have come up long ago'....

The laundry and woodshed adjoined the back fence, and the space between them and the kitchen was occupied by a small room opening on to the garden. To this small room Sarah took an immediate fancy. She decided to sleep there, rather than to occupy the spare room upstairs. She could get out and in without necessarily encountering visitors or negotiating stairs. So the small back room was cleared of its odds and ends, and suitably furnished.<sup>99</sup>

Sarah was not a suddenly reformed character. 'It was months before any real change could be seen in her', *The War Cry* wrote in 1917, 'and often during that time her friends had need of all their patience' and 'though she might be sober for weeks...as sure as there was anything special on at the corps...Sarah would turn up a little the worse for drink and cause a disturbance'.<sup>100</sup> The long-suffering Roberts coped with Sarah's many escapades. It was expecting too much of her to change lifelong habits but, it was commented by the Roberts, 'no matter how she might have spent the day, she regularly returned to her little room at night'.<sup>101</sup> Sarah had encouragement and help from people who knew her and

<sup>98</sup> *The War Cry*, 17 March 1917. High Street was the western side, or 'down track' of Port Road which bounded Queenstown, the Roberts' store being the fourth shop to the south from Wilson Street.

<sup>99</sup> *The War Cry*, 17 March 1917.

<sup>100</sup> *The War Cry*, 24 March 1917.

<sup>101</sup> *The War Cry*, 17 March 1917.

watched out for her around the town. Perhaps, as David Malouf has observed in the Australian scene, they were her audience, brought together from all walks of life at the Port and participating in her very public presence.<sup>102</sup>

People all around were interested in her. In those first trying days a policeman twice got hold of her when she was in a half-drunken state, put her on the car and sent her home....The tram conductor had found time to do the same. Once he even called her from the bar: 'Come, Sarah, it's time you were going home,' and helped her and her parcels on to the car, afterwards setting her down before the door.<sup>103</sup>

There are many accounts of Sarah's continuing exploits but no accounts of her ever returning to the Port lock-up.

That year, 1912, Sarah spent Christmas with the family, 'the first Christmas in twelve years that she had spent out of gaol'.<sup>104</sup> One evening during this summer the Roberts and Sarah were sitting on a jetty when a magistrate recognised her while out walking and exclaimed 'This is never old Sarah!' Sarah replied with dignity 'Excuse me, Sir...it is Mrs. Francisco'.<sup>105</sup> When winter arrived Sarah 'ailed somewhat' and a doctor was called. Sarah was concerned at the extra work she was causing Susie Roberts in caring for her. Both the doctor and the chemist refused payment, the doctor saying to Mrs Roberts 'You are doing your share; I'll do mine.' Henceforth, *The War Cry* article stated, 'medical attention and medicine were ensured for Sarah free of charge'.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> David Malouf, *A Spirit of Play: the Making of Australian Consciousness*. (Sydney, 1998) 23.

<sup>103</sup> *The War Cry*, 14 March 1917.

<sup>104</sup> *The War Cry*, 14 April 1917.

<sup>105</sup> *The War Cry*, 14 April 1917. In the articles the Roberts are referred to as the Richards, and Sarah as Mrs Sullivan.

<sup>106</sup> *The War Cry*, 14 April 1917.



Sarah's story was told to Will Roberts at this time. *The War Cry* explained that, in the paper's serialisation of her story, 'any conversation is in the actual words of Sarah herself, nothing having been added other than what she stated'.<sup>107</sup> Will was steady and understanding. He worked for the same firm for many years, and before his marriage nursed his widowed mother until her death. He spent many hours by Sarah's bedside as she told 'tales of her youthful escapades...in her own inimitable style'.<sup>108</sup> Sarah recovered enough to slowly visit friends around the town with the aid of her walking stick.

The Port Salvationists began to raise money for their own hall in 1911 after meeting in temporary accommodation since 1884. In 1913 they moved into the new Salvation Army centre, citadel and quarters, in Dale Street, described as 'an ornament to the town and in every way fitted for Salvation War'.<sup>109</sup> A tea meeting was planned for the opening by Lieutenant Colonel Cain on 1 March 1913, and one of the Port's publicans, 'delighted with the change in Sarah', donated a table at which Sarah was to sit. When she arrived 'she was slightly the worse for liquor, and interrupted the meeting to such an extent that people said she was past redemption, and it was waste of time trying to help her'.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> *The War Cry*, 20 January 1917.

<sup>108</sup> *The War Cry*, 14 April 1917.

<sup>109</sup> *The War Cry*, 29 March 1913. A cottage on the Dale Street frontage was moved to the rear of the allotment and renovated and the new hall constructed to street alignment. The Adjutant's home was built alongside the hall to the west.

<sup>110</sup> *The War Cry*, 24 March 1917.

Soon after the opening, Mrs Roberts was on duty at a 'Self-Denial Fair' held for several afternoons and nights at the hall. Sarah tried to assist but caused trouble amongst the helpers. Mrs Roberts later received a message that Sarah was in a hotel drinking.<sup>111</sup> The Roberts, at the end of their patience, said she would have to find other lodgings but Sarah defiantly caught the tram 'home'. 'For a week or two', the article continued, 'things were not too satisfactory. Sarah would go out in the morning with the avowed intention of looking for a room and return at night announcing that she had no intention of moving'.<sup>112</sup>

One evening Sarah did not return and after a fortnight Mrs Roberts set out to search for Sarah in all her known haunts and amongst her acquaintances but 'people were not too willing to tell anything they knew. It had never been wise to give information regarding Sarah'.<sup>113</sup> After many days Sarah was found living in a shed at the back of 'Johnny Allsorts', a sailors' swap shop and second-hand store on North Parade.<sup>114</sup> She does not appear to have been in the hotels during her absence or Susie Roberts would have located her sooner. Sarah returned 'quietly to the little back room'.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *The War Cry*, 24 March 1917.

<sup>112</sup> *The War Cry*, 24 March 1917.

<sup>113</sup> *The War Cry*, 24 March 1917.

<sup>114</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 February 1887, Johnny Allsorts was advertised as 'Opposite the Institute, Commercial-road, and on 22 April 1887 featured an advertisement for 'JOHNNY ALLSORTS, The Sailor's Friend' giving the address as 'opposite the British Hotel'. See also Brian J. Samuels, *The Port Adelaide Centre: Past and Present*. (Port Adelaide, 1987) 27. The bargain providor moved his establishment to North Parade in the 1880s.

<sup>115</sup> *The War Cry*, 31 March 1917.

The peaceful atmosphere of the Roberts' home was frequently disturbed by Sarah's black moods until that year's 'Self-Denial Appeal' which gave Sarah the opportunity to plan a day out in Adelaide where she was also well known.<sup>116</sup> While there she revisited the gaol for the final time.

She had plenty of friends, she said, who had taken freely of her money in days past; if the Adjutant would give her a card she would show them how to put their money to good account. Only, she would need to be driven round to see them....A gig was borrowed, the Adjutant took the reins, and...Sarah was driven to the city....there were certain hotels where a stop had to be made while Sarah presented her card and demanded a subscription for the work of The Army. Not a publican refused her. All of them congratulated her on her reformation....

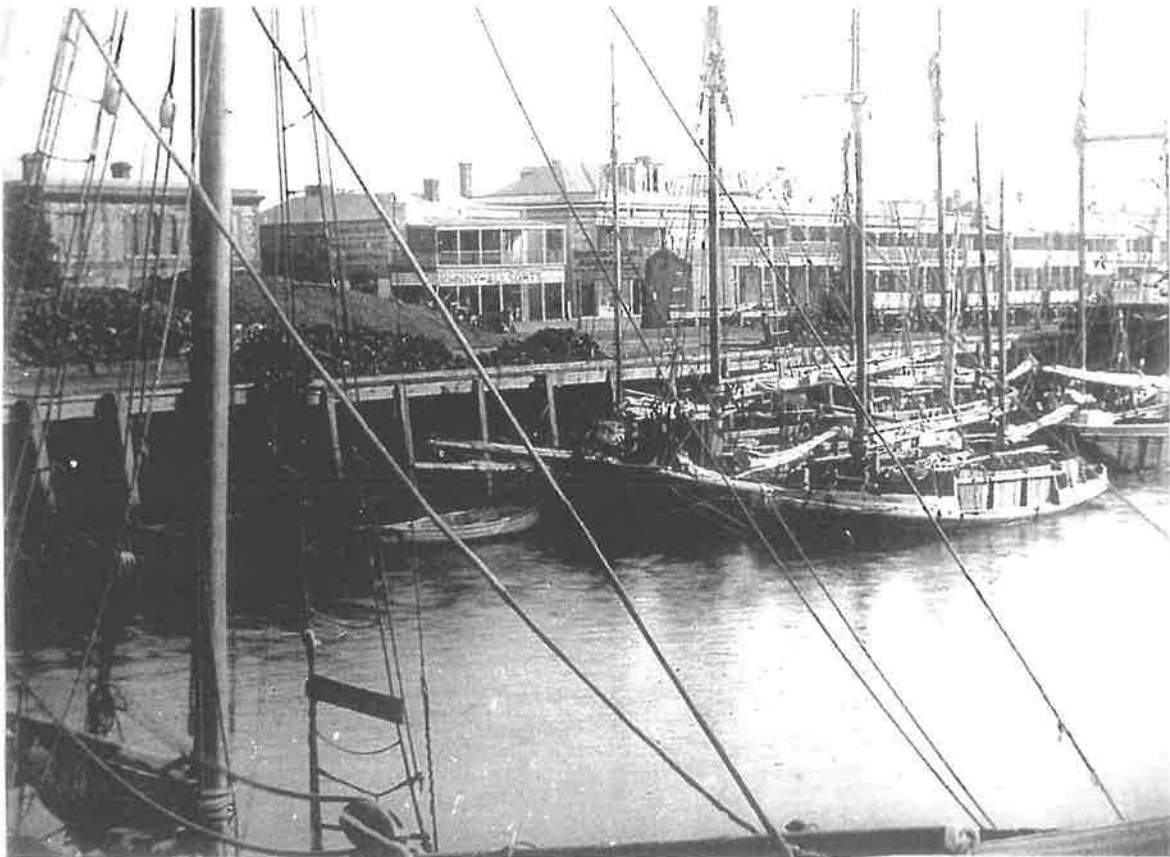
Lastly, before returning home, Sarah insisted on calling at the city gaol. Here she was very well known indeed. The head warder came out to talk to her, and to add his donation and congratulations. 'I'm not coming back any more,' Sarah called out as she bade him good-bye. 'You can let my cell'....Sarah returned home in high spirits.<sup>117</sup>

The Salvation Army Women's Rescue Home in Gilbert Street, Adelaide, was Sarah's home when Susie Roberts could no longer attend to her during the increasingly frequent bouts of illness.<sup>118</sup> The Roberts took her back to Queenstown from time to time; in July 1914 they organised a 'birthday' party to celebrate the second anniversary of the day the magistrate handed her over to the care of the Army. Sarah was thought to be well over 70 years of age. The newspapers carried reports of Sarah's

<sup>116</sup> Bolton, 179, 186. This method of fund-raising for the Salvation Army began in 1888 and was a public appeal as well as an exercise in self-denial for a week by Salvationists. The Red Shield Appeal replaced the Self-Denial Appeal in 1967.

<sup>117</sup> *The War Cry*, 7 April 1917.

<sup>118</sup> *The War Cry*, 7, 21 January 1899. In 1899 The Salvation Army purchased the former Bushman's Club property with buildings extending from Gilbert Street through to Whitmore Square. The building facing Gilbert Street became a maternity home/rescue home for women known as 'The Bridge', and behind this, two stone buildings facing the Square became a Prison-gate Brigade Home with dormitory accommodation and workshops.



#### Illustration 14

Johnny Allsorts, North Parade, c.1890.

The two-storey stone building housing the shop is to the north-east of Mildred Street with the Port Hotel on the other corner. The photograph also shows the waterfront with coal heaped on the wharf.

Photograph, Port Adelaide Historical Society.

party and stories of her life and convictions, and these were read to her.<sup>119</sup> The 30 invited guests included 'the friends who had lent their gig to drive her around the city, neighbours who had been kind to her during her illness; some of the comrades of the corps, and one or two of the Officers of the Home'. Sarah, *The War Cry* article stated, was 'no less delighted with her own appearance. One of her friends had presented her with a black Roman satin blouse, another with a lace collar, both of which she had donned in honour of the occasion, and with her wavy and still abundant white hair tastefully arranged, she looked worthy of the seat of honour'.<sup>120</sup>

The Salvation Army social secretary moved Sarah into the Salvation Army Women's Shelter in central Adelaide 'thinking that the different women coming and going day by day would brighten Sarah's life, and break the monotony'. Sarah slept in the dormitory and 'enforced order by her sheer strength of will'.<sup>121</sup>

The Roberts wanted Sarah to return for Christmas 1914 but by then Sarah could only 'get about with difficulty'. A solution was found to the Roberts' concern about how they would collect her from the city.

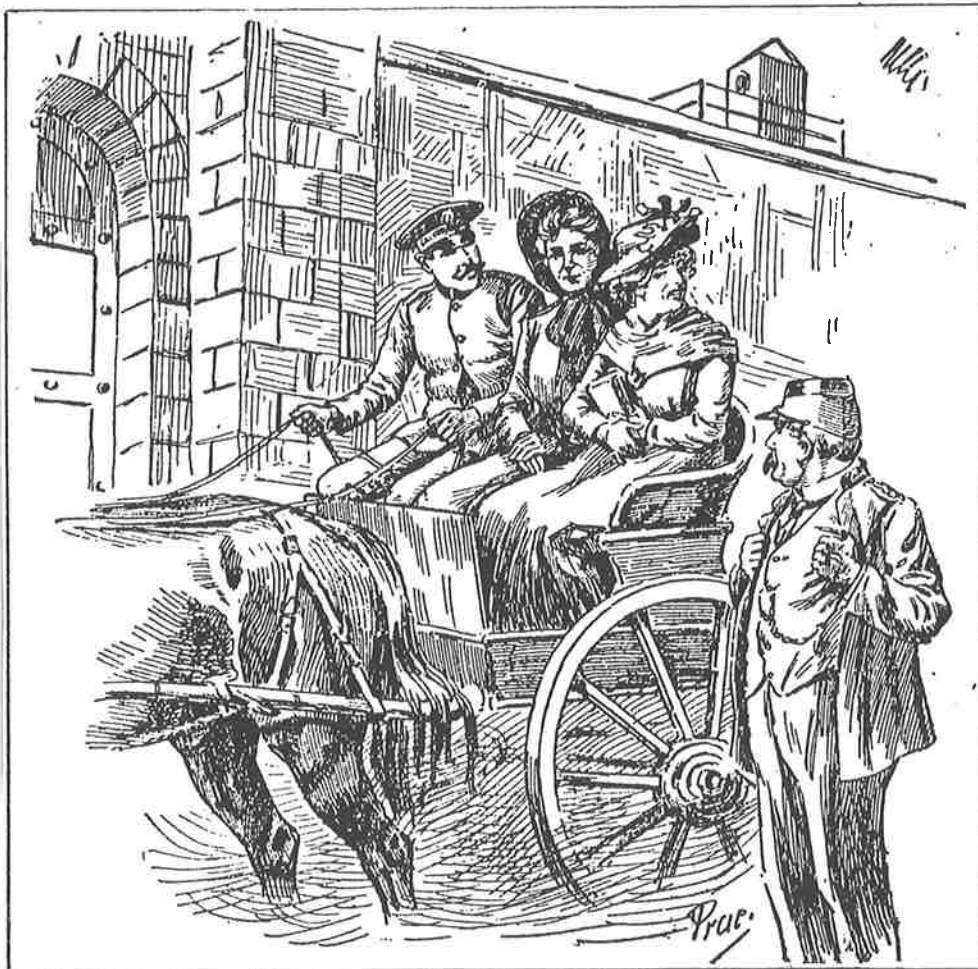
A publican, to whom Sarah was well known, helped her out of her dilemma by offering her the use of his motor-car. 'And any other time that you wish to bring Sarah down or take her back, you are perfectly welcome to it,' he said

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<sup>119</sup> *The War Cry*, 21 April 1917. See also *The Advertiser*, 18 July 1914. The headings of the article read, 'Sentenced to 180½ Years in Gaol. Amazing Record of Sarah Francisco. Noted Character Reformed'. The article included the statement, 'There was a time when the name was as well known as that of the Prime Minister or any other celebrity'.

<sup>120</sup> *The War Cry*, 21 April 1917.

<sup>121</sup> *The War Cry*, 21 April 1917.



**Illustration 15**

'You can have my cell'.

*The War Cry*, 7 April 1917.

generously....Her holiday lasted for three months, and she returned to the Shelter in the car that brought her down.<sup>122</sup>

In December 1915 she again returned to the Roberts. While she was spending Christmas there, her son John, out of contact with his mother for 20 years, was recognised on an interstate wharf by 'Jumbo', a sailor familiar with Port Adelaide.<sup>123</sup> Told of his mother's recent life, John wrote to her and Mrs Roberts replied, 'asking him to pay a visit to his mother as soon as possible'. Sarah asked if she could stay until her son's visit and planned what she would wear, having 'her bonnet re-trimmed'.<sup>124</sup> He had not arrived by Easter, when Sarah 'had a bad turn', and after being nursed through her illness by Mrs Roberts realised she had to return to Adelaide.

Sarah was now confined to bed and arrangements were made to move her back to the Rescue Home to a room vacated by another officer alongside the matron, Adjutant Lewis, who gave her 'unremitting attention' throughout the winter.<sup>125</sup> Six weeks after Sarah's return to the home, her son John arrived.<sup>126</sup> John stayed with the Roberts for some

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<sup>122</sup> *The War Cry*, 28 April 1917.

<sup>123</sup> *The War Cry*, 28 April 1917. 'Jumbo, the very sailor who, years before, had rescued her when she had leaped into the river, noticed a man working on a wharf on the other side of the Australian continent, whose features strongly resembled Sarah's, and whose name (he had changed it somewhat), was not unlike hers. Getting into conversation with him, he discovered that the man was indeed Sarah's son'. See also *The War Cry*, 3 March 1917. Jumbo knew Sarah well having rescued her from the Port River one night. 'She had been wrangling with another woman on the wharf, and becoming furious, had put an end to the argument by taking a flying leap into the water'. Sarah's opponent called out to Jumbo who 'went to her rescue. A boat lowered a basket and hoisted Sarah on board'.

<sup>124</sup> *The War Cry*, 28 April 1917.

<sup>125</sup> *The War Cry*, 28 April 1917.

<sup>126</sup> *The War Cry*, 5 May 1917.



### Illustration 16

Sarah and her friends, Queenstown, c.1914.

Written on the back of the post card photograph:

*Mr. & Mrs. Will. Roberts, Sister L. Willcox & Mrs. Sarah Francisco  
an old Trophy reclaimed at Pt. Adelaide during Adj. Wyatt's term of  
Officership. 295 Convictions, drink.*

Photograph, David Morris, South Australia Division Salvation Army Historical Society.



weeks and 'during the first week or two travelled to the city daily' to see her but after 'unsuccessfully seeking permanent and suitable work near at hand', *The War Cry* recorded, 'he 'took affectionate leave of his mother' and returned interstate.<sup>127</sup>

In her final months at the Rescue Home Sarah became very weak and died in her sleep on 2 November 1916, with Susie Roberts and Adjutant Lewis by her bed. Her body was taken to the Roberts' home in Queenstown, from where she was buried two days later at the Port Adelaide and Suburban Cemetery at Cheltenham (now known as the Cheltenham Cemetery). The original grant for her grave site was issued to Susan Treloar Roberts. The small grave-marker faces west and is in the shape of the Salvation Army shield resting on a plain concrete grave slab.<sup>128</sup> The inscription is simply worded:

*In Loving Memory*  
of  
**SARAH FRANCISCO,**  
**DIED NOV 2<sup>ND</sup> 1916.**  
**AGED 77 YEARS.**

AT REST

**ERECTED BY M<sup>RS</sup> W. E. ROBERTS.**

Sarah had made arrangements for her burial in her own style.

Nine years before, Sarah had extracted a promise from a firm of undertakers to bury her free of charge. 'When you see Mr. Haddy,' she said to Mrs. Roberts

<sup>127</sup> *The War Cry*, 5 May 1917.

<sup>128</sup> Information from Jim Everett, Enfield Memorial Park, 23 February 1995. (The Enfield Cemetery Trust manages Cheltenham Cemetery.) The details of the gravesite are: Cheltenham Cemetery, Allotment 302 South, in Section M, Driveway C, Path 30 (27<sup>th</sup> grave on the left when facing Port Road). The graves on either side of the plot are Hand, O'Grady, 'Sarah Francisco', Smidt and Raymont. Information also from David Morris of The Salvation Army, South Australia Division Historical Society, March 1995, who provided a photocopy of an earlier Salvation Army shield-shaped badge.

once, 'ask him if that promise still holds good.' Mr. Haddy had replied that it did, and Sarah had been comforted that a 'respectable' funeral was assured without further expense to her friends. So it was in a handsome nickel-mounted casket that Sarah's body was laid to rest.<sup>129</sup>

Her funeral notice in *The Register* read,

<p><b>FRANCISCO.</b> - The Friends of the late Mrs. <b>SARAH FRANCISCO</b> are informed that her Remains will be Removed from the Residence of Mr. W. Roberts, High street, Queenstown, on <b>SATURDAY</b>, at 3 p.m., for Interment in the Cheltenham Cemetery.  <b>J. C. HADDY &amp; SON</b>, Undertakers, Port Adelaide, 'Phone 2128;  115 Flinders street, Adelaide, 'Phone 1677;  Jetty road, Glenelg, 'Phone 78.</p>	130
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For so many years the Port's wharfside hotels and surrounding streets and lanes were Sarah's district seen through an alcoholic haze. Her world was inhabited by other characters known to the townspeople, Crabby Jack, the many 'loitering women' including Willis and O'Donnell, the 'soliciting Nunn', Louise Clark Wells who paraded the streets in 'men's attire', Herbert the indiscreet bacchanalian, the idle and disorderly Susan Slater, and a washerwoman charged with begging alms; these were Sarah's contemporaries and acquaintances.<sup>131</sup>

Sarah however also seems to have a wider group of town acquaintances who showed an interest in her activities and often a consideration for her needs. Workers showed a quiet admiration for her larrikin-like pluck and defiance of authority. Over the years a number of

<sup>129</sup> *The War Cry*, 5 May 1917.

<sup>130</sup> *The Register*, 4 November 1916.

<sup>131</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 July, 3 August 1878, 15 February, 12, 19 April 1879, 26 February 1884, 15 September 1885.

magistrates attempted to help or protect her within the bounds of the law. A request from Sarah could summon a hot mid-day meal in the local lock-up from a nearby hotel or provide a bath at the Casualty Hospital. A tram conductor would personally lead her out of a bar and see her safely off at her stop at Queenstown. After she became infirm, vehicles were made available for her transport, the doctor and chemist waved their fees and charges on her behalf, and the local undertaker promised to provide her with a casket and respectable funeral. She was a proud Portonian and part of the diverse town scene for over forty years; in the Australian idiom she represented someone down-on-their-luck who deserved a break.

Around the pubs at the Port was a mixture of humour, pathos and often a misery which few of the alcoholics had the strength to change. The formal Port churches were generally ill-equipped to deal with the problems and needs of Sarah and others like her. Sarah's life stands as a symbol of Port Adelaide society to be found around the wharves and hotels.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE PORT CHURCHES

By the late 1870s Port Adelaide's increase in population enabled seven Christian churches to maintain a strong presence in the town. Contributions from worshippers covered expenses which included the costs of clergy and their transport, and the maintenance and upgrading of church buildings.<sup>1</sup> Improvements and additions to the churches included vestries, porches, stained-glass windows, organs and choir galleries. By 1885 most denominations were securely established in the town and gathered in 'stately churches'.<sup>2</sup>

The local churches were continually striving for a place in the life of Port Adelaide. A census taken of church attendance at the Port Adelaide evening services on Sunday 26 August 1888 recorded 2384 worshippers which only accounted for about 18 per cent of the district population.<sup>3</sup> However as Brian Dickey stated in a study of the Port Adelaide Methodist

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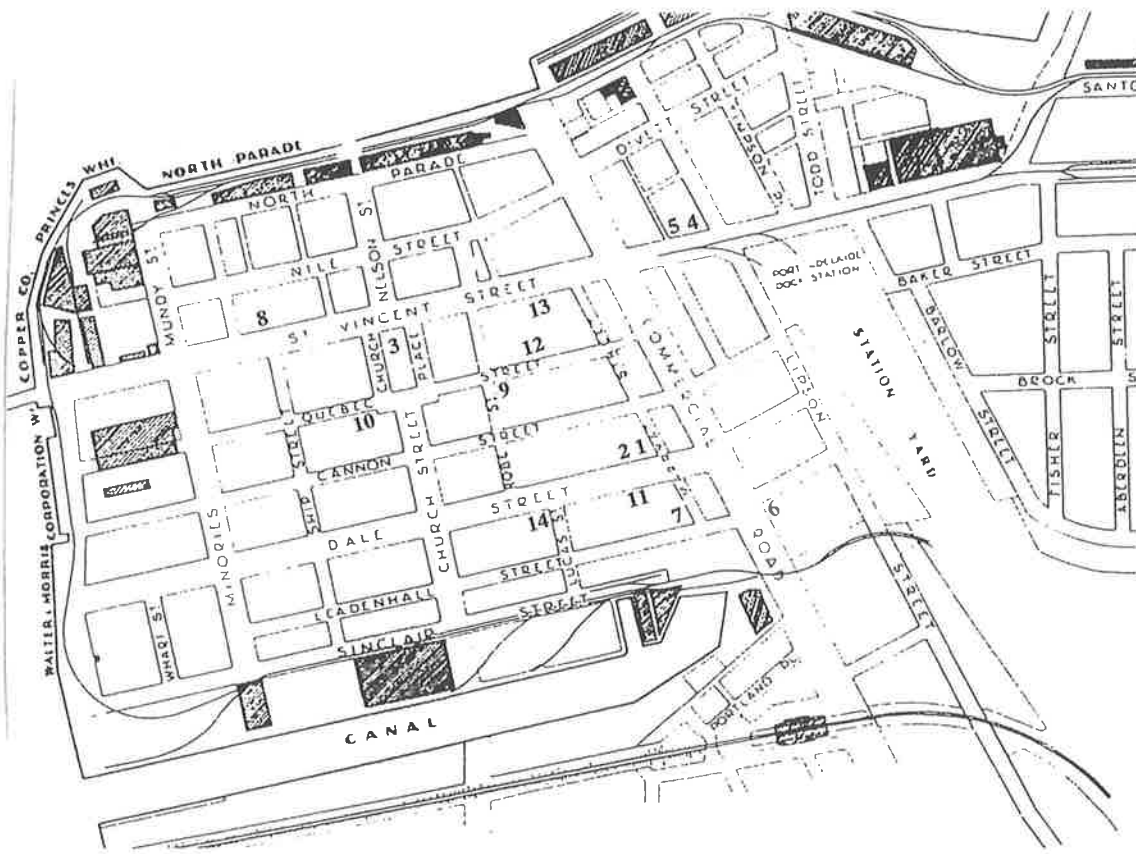
<sup>1</sup> The first churches built by each congregation were: Church of England, 1841; Congregational, 1849; Methodist, 1851; Presbyterian, 1857; Catholic, 1858; Primitive Methodist, 1878; Particular Baptist, 1880s; Salvation Army, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Garran, *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*. (Sydney, 1886) Part 24, 441.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Dickey and Elaine Martin, draft copy of *Building Community*, a history of the Port Adelaide Central Mission, (August 1999) 16-17. See also Helen Northey, 'Around the Port Adelaide Churches in 1886', 98, who also cited the census of 'attendance at Divine worship in Churches in the Port Adelaide area', 26 August 1888, *The Christian Weekly and Methodist Journal*. (Adelaide), 31 August 1888.

**CHURCHES**

- 1 Catholic, Church of the Immaculate Conception (1858), known as St Mary's
- 2 St Mary's Hall (1869), formerly Sisters of St Joseph Schoolroom
- 3 Church of England, St Paul's (1841, 1852, 1905)
- 4 Congregational (approximate location, c.1850)
- 5 Congregational (approximate location, 1853)
- 6 Congregational (1868, now Uniting)
- 7 Presbyterian (1857)
- 8 Presbyterian (1882)
- 9 Primitive Methodist (1877)
- 10 Salem Strict Baptist (1893)
- 11 The Salvation Army Citadel (1913)
- 12 Wesleyan Methodist (1851)
- 13 Wesleyan Methodist (1863)
- 14 Wesleyan Methodist (1885)



**Illustration 17**

Plan of Port Adelaide showing location of churches.

Adapted from South Australian Harbors Board map, 1938.

Mission, the evening services were 'thought of as attracting more of a working class attendance', and excluded Sunday School children and those who attended early services; the Catholic mass, for example, was only held in the morning. As Dickey also noted, the census revealed that 'non-Anglican protestant churches attracted two-thirds of the worshippers that Sunday evening'.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter gives a brief history of each church, its incumbents and their movements, and some descriptions of the buildings and congregations. Such an understanding is important to an appreciation of the competing social forces as they emerged in Port Adelaide. The study illustrates the different church groups at the Port, the growing piety in the town and the distinguishing personalities of the many clergy. It reflects one side of a struggle for civility and stands in opposition to Chapter Five which engages in a similar study of the pubs of the Port.

Port Adelaide churches and pubs provide a good setting for a study of colonial architectural history. While the treatment here is brief, the architectural details are explored as evidence of the traditions of the churches, their preference for austerity or flamboyance and significantly, the financial state of the congregation.

Few clergy lived in central Port Adelaide. Most had transport

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<sup>4</sup> Dickey and Martin, Draft, 16-17.

provided as part of their stipend so had no need to live next to their church. A ten-roomed manse for the Presbyterian minister was built near Alberton on the corner of Lipson Street and Junction Road, described in 1883 as 'a much-coveted corner block, near Port Adelaide Gasworks'.<sup>5</sup> Also at Alberton 'near the old cemetery and glebe-land' was the Church of England rectory, 'repaired and improved' in 1857.<sup>6</sup> The Catholic priest lived near his church for many years before a new presbytery was built out of town towards Alberton on the corner of Port Road and Cleave Street.

Joseph Kirby, the Congregational minister appointed in 1880, lived at the southern end of Lipson Street, reasonably close to the church, before moving in 1888 to Semaphore where lawns, 'a quaint arbour' and almond trees made pleasant surroundings.<sup>7</sup> In 1890 the family returned to Lipson Street, between Cleave Street and Junction Road, in a house with a stable, 'ample grounds', tall trees and a 'beautiful chandelier, with hanging lamps' in the drawing-room which pleased the pastor's wife as it 'reminded her of the Paris of her girlhood'.<sup>8</sup>

For many years the Sisters of St Joseph lived in Dale Street, next to

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<sup>5</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 27 April 1883.

<sup>6</sup> Peter W. Patterson, *The Church of St. Paul's Port Adelaide, Diocese of Adelaide South Australia, 1839-1953*. (Typed booklet), 4-5. Reverend Patterson was the assistant minister at St Paul's from 1951 to 1953. See also Katrina McDougall and Elizabeth Vines, *Port Adelaide Centre Heritage Survey*. (Adelaide, 1994) 80. In the 1920s the Church of England acquired a two-storey house in central Dale Street, 'the most fashionable residential area in Port Adelaide'.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Sidney Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia. The Life and Reminiscences of Joseph Coles Kirby, Christian Pioneer and Social Reformer*. (London, 1927) 283.

<sup>8</sup> Kiek, 285.

their Port school and church. In 1904 a new convent and school were built in Quebec Street. In 1913, the Salvation Army adjutant and his family moved into the 'Quarters' or 'Barracks' alongside their new citadel in Dale Street, close to people from town and wharves who might turn up at the door.

Some clergy stayed in their incumbencies at the Port for many years; Samuel Green spent 25 years at St Paul's, and the Congregationalists Matthew Hodge and Joseph Kirby each served for 28 years. Yet many Port clergy were very mobile and made official exchanges, working tours and semi-private visits to the other colonies and overseas to America, Europe and especially England. Frequent farewells and returning welcomes were held by their congregations.<sup>9</sup>

Congregations were encouraged by clergymen to practice strict personal control in the warmer climate and vast natural landscape where people had an awesome freedom and opportunity to go their own way. Church leaders, like the members of their flocks, made enormous personal adjustments to living so far from the accustomed regulations of their homeland and took up a paternalistic leadership. C. M. H. Clark's observation that 'parsons lent the weight of divine authority to their bourgeois vision of the world' held true in Port Adelaide.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 September, 20 October 1882.

<sup>10</sup> C. M. H. Clark, *A History of Australia*. Vol. 3. (Carlton Vic, 1979) 408.



Bible study, choir practice and Sunday school work took up much of the committed churchgoer's spare time. In Port Adelaide, where town leaders were also prominent in religious activities, it was fitting for the newly elected Mayor Ralph Kestel in 1889 to describe the outgoing mayor, John Cleave, in words of Protestant ecumenical commendation.

It is asserted that no more popular man resides in the municipality than Mr. J. Cleave. As cosmopolitan as a Methodist in his sympathies; as orthodox in his belief as the most rigid Presbyterian; as regular in church attendance as the most attached Congregationalist; and as decorous and devout as any Episcopalian of his town, he is well-liked by all classes....A staunch teetotaler and had been from his birth.<sup>11</sup>

In his study of class and religion in late nineteenth century England, Hugh McLeod argued that 'it was in the matter of church attendance by adults that the class differential was widest'. Except among 'Irish Roman Catholics', he observed, 'only a small proportion of working-class adults attended the main Sunday church services. On the other hand, most of them would have attended church regularly as children and would ensure that their children did the same'.<sup>12</sup> McLeod stated however that 'the great occasions of life' for the people, 'demanded the dignity of a church service'; christenings or baptisms, marriages, funerals, and Christmas, Harvest Thanksgiving, and perhaps Watch Night or New Year's Eve, were marked by the working-class family attending church.<sup>13</sup> Census figures which acknowledged membership of a church were not synonymous with church attendance figures. Many Port Adelaide workers

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<sup>11</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 August 1889.

<sup>12</sup> Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City*. (London, 1974) 29.

<sup>13</sup> McLeod, 29-30.

would restrict attendance to special family celebrations as McLeod observed in England.

Passing visitors were able to attend services familiar to them in the town's many places of worship. Each week at the Port, unlike most South Australian settled towns, clergy had to cater for a broad group of unknown people as well as resident Portonians and could rarely predict the number or makeup of their congregations. The same was true for other port towns such as of Williamstown and Fremantle.

In Fremantle a Wesleyan chapel was built in 1840, and in 1843 the original St John's Church of England was prominently located in the middle of King's Square on what was later the town hall site. The Congregationalists opened their first church in 1854 but the Presbyterians waited until 1890 before erecting a church in the town.<sup>14</sup> The Catholic chapel, presbytery and convent were erected in 1859.<sup>15</sup> In Williamstown permanent church buildings were not erected for a number of years. A Wesleyan Chapel was opened in 1854 and the following year held the town's first recorded public temperance meeting. A Presbyterian manse was built in 1856 before the first church in 1860. The present St Andrew's opened eleven years later. Congregationalists held their first meeting in Captain Joseph Dalgarno's store in April 1856 and the present

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<sup>14</sup> John K. Ewers, *The Western Gateway: A History of Fremantle*. (Nedlands WA, 1971) 50, 84.

<sup>15</sup> Robert H. W. Reece and R. Pascoe, *A Place of Consequence: A Pictorial History of Fremantle*. (Fremantle WA: 1983) 35.

St John's Church opened in 1870, its matching residence ready for the pastor and his family in 1876. The Baptists completed their church in 1884.

Construction began on St Mary's Catholic Church, Williamstown, in 1858 but was not completed until November 1872.<sup>16</sup> Church of England services were held in an iron church imported from England until Holy Trinity was built on the same site in 1874. A local corps of the Salvation Army was established in November 1883 with much opposition to their cause. One of the few Welsh churches in Australia was built at Williamstown in 1886 and eisteddfods were conducted there for three years.<sup>17</sup> Most of the first churches, of simple construction in all three ports, were replaced by more permanent architecturally-designed buildings as the economy of the towns progressed.

The Church of England was part of Port Adelaide from 1840. The Reverend Charles Beaumont Howard, the colonial chaplain, and the Reverend James Farrell, who arrived in the colony in September 1840, alternately held services 'in the shed next to the Custom-house, at the New Port, every Sunday afternoon'.<sup>18</sup> The early colonial ministry presented many difficulties for the clergy, none more so than travelling around

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<sup>16</sup> Ada Ackerly, 'A Walk in Old Williamstown', History Leaflet 11 for Williamstown City Library, 1987. The long delay began in 1859 when Bishop Goold directed that all church efforts should be channelled into building St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. The walls of St Mary's, several feet high, remained so for over a decade.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson P. Evans, *Port of Many Prows*. (Melbourne, 1969) 174-175.

<sup>18</sup> *The Register*, 11 June 1842.

their large areas of responsibility. Howard, his gown over his arm, walked the seven miles from Adelaide and returned in time for the evening service at Trinity Church on North Terrace. He later rode a horse to Port Adelaide and to Gawler and Mount Barker where he also conducted services.<sup>19</sup>

Two colonial officials, Captain Lipson and Dr Handasyde Duncan, were involved with the early Church of England, and in the building of the timber St Paul's-on-the-Piles which opened on 16 May 1841. Duncan also represented Port Adelaide at the synod of the Church of England in South Australia for many years.

George Cobb Newenham, a deacon, arrived from Tasmania in 1846 and became the first resident clergyman at Port Adelaide. Described by a parishioner as 'a tall, genteel, and rather frail-looking young man',<sup>20</sup> he was priested by the first Anglican bishop, the Right Reverend Dr Augustus Short, who arrived in the colony in 1847. In 1849 Newenham was appointed to St James' Church at Blakiston and Edward Bayfield, a newly ordained minister, became incumbent at St Paul's. Bayfield arrived in the colony on board *Emily* in August 1849 with his wife Harriet and young family.

At a service in October 1850, gale force winds shook the walls of St

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<sup>19</sup> *The Register*, 27 June 1929 mentioned Howard's horse 'Luther'. See also Charles Fenner et al (eds), *The Centenary History of South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1936) 297.

<sup>20</sup> 'Reminiscences of a Contemporary Parishioner', *Port Adelaide News*, 20 December 1895.

Paul's-on-the-Piles so violently that the congregation ran outside, concerned that the fragile structure would collapse. *The Register* reported that Bayfield 'was obliged to terminate his discourse, but first sent round the collection plate for subscriptions to the new stone church soon to be erected'.<sup>21</sup> He argued that a new church was not so much for the safety of the congregation but because Bishop Short had expressed his concern that Port Adelaide's best building was a public-house while the worst was a church.<sup>22</sup> To men of religion, the competing forces of pubs and pulpit were ever-present in the colony.

Land reclamation on the site made a new church possible and on 3 April 1851 Short laid the foundation stone for a Romanesque-style stone church designed by Adelaide architect Henry Stuckey.<sup>23</sup> The old timber church was wrecked by a swollen tide two months later. For over eight months the congregation met in the customs house until the new church, costing £910 and holding 500 people, was opened on 14 March 1852. Sited east to west parallel with St Vincent Street, the building had unbleached calico stretched over its arched windows and unfinished interior plastering for another five years. The church was consecrated by Short in 1864 when it was finally debt free and, with later extensions, it served the congregation for another forty years.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Port Adelaide since 1856: 125th Anniversary*. (1981) 23.

<sup>22</sup> Russell Smith, *1850: A very good year in the Colony of South Australia*. (Sydney, 1973) 96.

<sup>23</sup> Michael F. Page, *Sculptors in Space: South Australian Architects 1836-1986*. (Adelaide, 1986) 53.

<sup>24</sup> *Port Adelaide since 1856*, 23.

Bayfield died at the Alberton rectory on 14 August 1857, aged 42, and was succeeded by Bishop Short's nephew and former Etonian, the Reverend Charles Marryat, who had arrived in New South Wales from Queen's College, Oxford in 1853.<sup>25</sup> In August 1854 Marryat married Grace Montgomery Howard, the eldest daughter of the Reverend Charles Howard.<sup>26</sup>

In England during the 1860s the 'Anglo-Catholics' had a strong mission to the poor. On a visit to England, Short had commended work being done by the clergy in the London slums and cholera ridden 'sinks of iniquity and dens of blasphemy'.<sup>27</sup> This Anglican charity however was not widely seen at Port Adelaide. Marryat, as part of the colony's social elite,<sup>28</sup> appeared to be more interested in church politics and expansion than in pastoral care and a wharfside ministry during his decade in the town.<sup>29</sup> However in early 1861 a member of the Port church acknowledged some responsibility to the needy, along with an ecclesiastical commitment to visiting seamen, as reasons to enlarge the

<sup>25</sup> John Blasket, *History of South Australia: A Romantic and Successful Experiment in Colonization*. (Adelaide, 1911) 374. See also George Herbert Jose, *The Church of England in South Australia, II: 1856-1881*. (North Adelaide SA, 1954) 9. Marryat's mother, Caroline, was Short's sister.

<sup>26</sup> Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent: South Australia 1829-1857*. (Second edition, Carlton Vic, 1967) 254-255. See also John Whitehead, *Adelaide, City of Churches*. (Magill SA, 1986) 48. Howard died in 1843 and James Farrell married Grace's mother in November 1845. Farrell was appointed the first Dean of Adelaide, from 1849 to 1869. The Marryats had ten children, three of whom died in childhood. Marryat's sister married Sir Henry Edward Fox Young, governor of South Australia from August 1848 to December 1854.

<sup>27</sup> Janet Scarfe, 'Bridge of Polished Steel as Fine as a Hair: The Oxford Movement in South Australia, 1836-1881', M.A. Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1974, 287. See also *The Register*, 19 October 1867.

<sup>28</sup> Dirk Van Dissel, 'The Adelaide Gentry, 1850-1920', in Eric Richards (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*. (Netley SA, 1986) 346. Marryat and his architect son, Charles Howard Marryat, are listed as 'Old Gentry'.

<sup>29</sup> David Hilliard, *Godliness and Good Order: A History of the Anglican Church in South Australia*. (Netley SA, 1986) 32-33.

church. At a meeting of pew holders, the merchant Edward Gascoyne Collinson moved for extensions 'in order to satisfy the actual and prospective demands for seats, as well as to provide proper accommodation for the Sunday-school children and poor of the district, for the captains, officers, and sailors belonging to the vessels in port, for immigrants and other strangers'.<sup>30</sup>

In the 1860s St Paul's was doubled in size by the construction of a nave on the southern side, at right angles to the existing church which then became the choir and transepts.<sup>31</sup> Annie Duncan's reminiscences of her life at the Port included a description of the completed building.

As I remember the Church it was T-shaped, the head of the "T" faced the street, and on a raised platform in the middle of it stood the altar, the prayer-desk and the pulpit, at the west-end stood the font; a gallery contained the pipe-organ, and was tenanted by the Choir....Later on, the organ was removed to the apse at the south side of the Church which also contained the vestry.<sup>32</sup>

In 1868 the Reverend Samuel Green, married to Bayfield's daughter, Ellen, replaced Marryat as rector at St Paul's. Annie Duncan described Green and the effect his different style had on some church members.

He was the son of a Wesleyan Minister in England but took Holy Orders and was a very high churchman. He was a very genial witty man, of a very pleasant temper, very popular and a very good preacher. He was appointed to St. Paul's, and when he began to expound his views, a mighty uproar took place, and a few people left the Church. At this time the 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' were introduced, and various changes in the services were made.<sup>33</sup>

The rector travelled around the town on a three-wheeled cycle, riding

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<sup>30</sup> *The Register*, 12 February 1861, in Brian J. Samuels, "'Community' in the Port Adelaide District 1861-1901", B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1972, 36.

<sup>31</sup> Patterson, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Reminiscences of Annie J. Duncan in Alfred Austin Lendon, *Handasyde Duncan, M.D. (1839-1878) and Early Port Adelaide*. 1932, 46, Mortlock Library of South Australia, PRG 128/12/4.

<sup>33</sup> 'Reminiscences of Miss Annie J. Duncan', Book 1, 1934, 51, Mortlock Library of South Australia, PRG 532.

slowly 'and with dignity'.<sup>34</sup> Unlike the Marryat's large family at the parsonage, the Greens had no children but Duncan wrote that Mrs Green's 'unfortunate imbecile brother Arthur Bayfield lived with them'.<sup>35</sup>

Green established a day school at St Paul's,<sup>36</sup> and in 1878 stood for parliament to protest against the constitutional exclusion of ministers of religion. 'Backed by local clergy', the local newspaper wrote, 'he had an enthusiastic response when 800 port electors attended a meeting to hear him and declare him a fit candidate. Proclaiming his principle vindicated, he stepped down before polling day'.<sup>37</sup> Known for his 'high church' practices, he was mentioned in July 1879 as one of 'the high dignitaries of the Church' who supported the bishop's chaplain, the Reverend C. C. Elcum, in 'ritualistic belief and practices'.<sup>38</sup> In the same month Green wrote on 'Auricular Confession' in the local press alongside an article by Canon Farr on 'Absolution'.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast to his serious theological writings, Green was described by the local paper as 'probably the best and wittiest speaker in Port Adelaide and one of the most popular and humorous lecturers in the

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<sup>34</sup> Patterson, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Duncan, Book 1, 93. Arthur, an epileptic, died of tuberculosis in his early twenties.

<sup>36</sup> Patterson, 6. The school, in a hall with class-rooms on the church property, was conducted until 1928 when it closed due to the economic difficulties of the depression years.

<sup>37</sup> Bede Nairn et al (eds), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Vol. 4: 1851-1890. (Carlton Vic, 1979) 289.

<sup>38</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 July 1879. Mentioned by Mr Moulden.

<sup>39</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 July 1879.



colony'; the flamboyant Green was regularly in the local news.<sup>40</sup>

In August 1881 Green planned a visit to Europe and held an auction at the Alberton parsonage. He listed for sale, household furniture, a 'splendid organ (Smith's American)', and a 'buggy, horse and harness', possibly for funds to enable him to travel.<sup>41</sup> The unstable soil of the church site continued to cause problems and expense. While Green was away the Reverend J. Orchard, the *locum tenens*, supervised the underpinning of the church foundations which were 'being removed piecemeal, and replaced by stone'.<sup>42</sup>

The Greens returned in September 1882 and in November Green preached a sermon on the lumpers' strike but 'steered a non-committal course'.<sup>43</sup> He possibly felt more comfortable in December when he delivered a lecture 'Head over Heels', which described his trip to England. As was frequently the case with Green's lectures, the venue for the evening was the Port town hall with proceeds in aid of St Paul's.<sup>44</sup>

Samuel Green's contemporary throughout the 1880s and early 1890s was Joseph Kirby, the Congregational minister, and the two men matched

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<sup>40</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 July 1886. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 13 July 1878 advertising Green's lecture in aid of the 'Funds of St. Paul's Church', and 5 August 1881, when his lecture 'in aid of the building fund of the new Masonic Hall' was reported. The *Port Adelaide News*, 24 April 1885, mentioned his 'humorous lecture' on 'Marriage' the previous evening. See also Northey, 89, who referred to 'a lecture on "Courtship" by Canon Samuel Green, a native of Rutland celebrated for his talents as a comic'. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Vol. 4, 289, described his lecture on courtship as 'popularly acclaimed a masterpiece'.

<sup>41</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 August 1881.

<sup>42</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 November 1881.

<sup>43</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 September, 21 November 1882.

<sup>44</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 December 1882.

wits over a number of ecclesiastical issues for 13 years. Their fiery debates, carried out as a series of sermons or controversial comments from their individual pulpits, could be followed in the local press. In November 1885 Green caused a town controversy when he expressed pious ideas 'as to the way in which the administration of the Lord's Supper should be performed'.<sup>45</sup> His suggestions of mixing water with wine and the placement of candles were described as being 'wrapped in the skirts of Rome'.<sup>46</sup> Kirby spoke on the issue with a sermon entitled 'Holy Candlesticks' which included comments on the 'Schismatic Power of Symbols' and 'Catholicism of the Christian religion'.<sup>47</sup> The Congregationalist modified his pronouncements when he spoke on the need to accept differences in the various denominations: 'Let us learn to recognise the plurality of Christian earthly churches. Let us...learn to rejoice that there are many distinct and outwardly separate Christian organizations or Churches in the vast unity of the kingdom of heaven on earth'.<sup>48</sup>

The title of Green's sermon on the following Sunday night was 'Minding One's Own Business'.<sup>49</sup> Many Portonians entered the debate on ritual and the use of candles with a number of comments appearing in the open column of the newspaper.<sup>50</sup> At the Port piety could arouse as much

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<sup>45</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 November 1885.

<sup>46</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 November 1885.

<sup>47</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 November 1885.

<sup>48</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 November 1885.

<sup>49</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 November 1885.

<sup>50</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 November 1885 and 20 November 1885.

fervent feeling and discussion as pubs and temperance. As described by George Jose, Green's persuasive oratory skills, 'the incisive exposition of his arguments, the polish and brilliancy of his language, his never failing courtesy and good humour, matched with much strength of purpose',<sup>51</sup> were welcomed at mass meetings or around the negotiation table. A parish typescript on Green commented on his ability to 'begin negotiations in several...minor stoppages at the Port'.<sup>52</sup>

His worthy clerical opponent, Kirby, challenged him again in 1887 with comments made in an address regarding 'The Church of England versus Protestantism'.<sup>53</sup> The two men were soon in another heated verbal confrontation with the *Port Adelaide News* featuring Green's sermon of reply, entitled 'The two religions - that of Protestant Dissenters and that of the Church of Christ'. Green took umbrage at Kirby's statement that 'the greatest enemy of Christ is the Church'.<sup>54</sup> Assuming that the paper would be in touch with the interests of its readers, as in today's 'market research', the fact that this debate was announced on the front page and show-cased as an article gives a window to a large group of Portonian society. The issue was further inflamed by the paper's front page announcement that Kirby was 'going to *correct* the errors in Canon Green's sermon on Sunday evening next'.<sup>55</sup> The paper warned that

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<sup>51</sup> Jose, *The Church of England in South Australia, III: 1882-1905*. (North Adelaide SA, 1955) 16-17.

<sup>52</sup> Typescript (1972) held by the then minister, Reverend Graham Cooling, cited in Samuels, 74.

<sup>53</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 May 1887.

<sup>54</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 May 1887.

<sup>55</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 May 1887. Italics are used in the original.

a tree is known by its fruits. A system, or society, or church is judged by its results.... We expect that 'our witty Canon' will not have discharged his powder and shot without arousing the garrison of the Congregational Church. We understand that under the generalship of the Rev. J. C. Kirby ( a man of war) the battery will return fire on next Sunday evening. The Surgeon General will have the Port Adelaide Ambulance Corps under orders, to remove the wounded and to cover up the dead.<sup>56</sup>

Going ahead with his corrections, Kirby commented 'Canon Green seems to think he is not a Protestant. He is a Protestant'.<sup>57</sup>

In 1890 Green spent time 'in a neighbouring colony' convalescing from asthma. On his return St Paul's congregation welcomed him 'back to his charge' at a function held in the Dale Street music hall.<sup>58</sup> He resigned from the incumbency in March 1893 and 'accepted the call' to St Peter's Church at Glenelg where in 1895 his 'inflexibility of attitude' was commented on by a reporter in *Quiz and the Lantern*.<sup>59</sup> The Reverend Frederick William Samwell from St Michael's Church at Mitcham was asked to fill the vacancy at the Port.<sup>60</sup> Farewell functions were arranged for the Greens including an evening 'Valedictory Social' on Monday 29 May, when the Odd Fellows' Hall was 'crowded to the fullest extent' and gifts were presented from various groups in the parish.<sup>61</sup> For 25 years the townspeople had difficulty understanding the character of the enigmatic Green but no Portonian doubted his brilliance of mind.

<sup>56</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 May 1887.

<sup>57</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 May 1887.

<sup>58</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 May 1890.

<sup>59</sup> *Quiz and the Lantern*, 5 September 1895, 8, cited in Hilliard, 61.

<sup>60</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 March 1893.

<sup>61</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 2 June 1893. Ellen Green was given a 'handsome silver tea service and a set of silver spoons' from the ladies of the congregation and a 'very pretty bamboo and wicker afternoon tea table' from the 'teachers and scholars' of St George's at Alberton. Green was presented with a 'handsome secretaire' from the congregation, a study chair from the various Sunday Schools in the parish, a festival stole and cassock girdle from the Guild of Perseverance and a 'framed photograph of themselves' from the choir boys.

A fortnight later Archdeacon Samwell's reception and welcome social were held in the Odd Fellows' Hall.<sup>62</sup> Samwell was inducted as rector the following Sunday. With the help of an assistant curate, Frederick Wilkinson, Samwell had four parish churches to serve apart from St Paul's: a mission hall in Canning Street, Rosewater (later St Barnabas' Church), St Andrew's Mission Church, Wells Street, Birkenhead, St Nicholas' Mission Church, Carlisle Street, Glanville, and St George's, St George's Square, Alberton.<sup>63</sup> By 1899 the busy Port parish supported Samwell and three curates.<sup>64</sup>

In 1895 Samwell was described in a newspaper article 'By the Unobserved Observer', a self-styled church critic. The writer, 'a dissenter', delivered dissembling comments on the Church of England minister and service, and used the opportunity to air some brief personal views on the working man and democracy. The article, one of a series on each of the local churches, is evidence of what interested *Port Adelaide News* readers.<sup>65</sup>

The sermon was on 'Rejoicing in Hope'....The matter was good, and the language employed told that the Rev. F. W. Samwell is a man of culture. Occasionally he waxed poetic, and throughout his diction was graceful and eloquent....The sermon lasted about ten minutes, and was not quite equal to the subject. The subject gives unlimited scope for the display of rhetoric, dramatic ability, and for inculcating good sound wholesome teaching. I was somewhat disappointed with Mr. Samwell's discourse on 'Hope,' for I had hoped for better things....

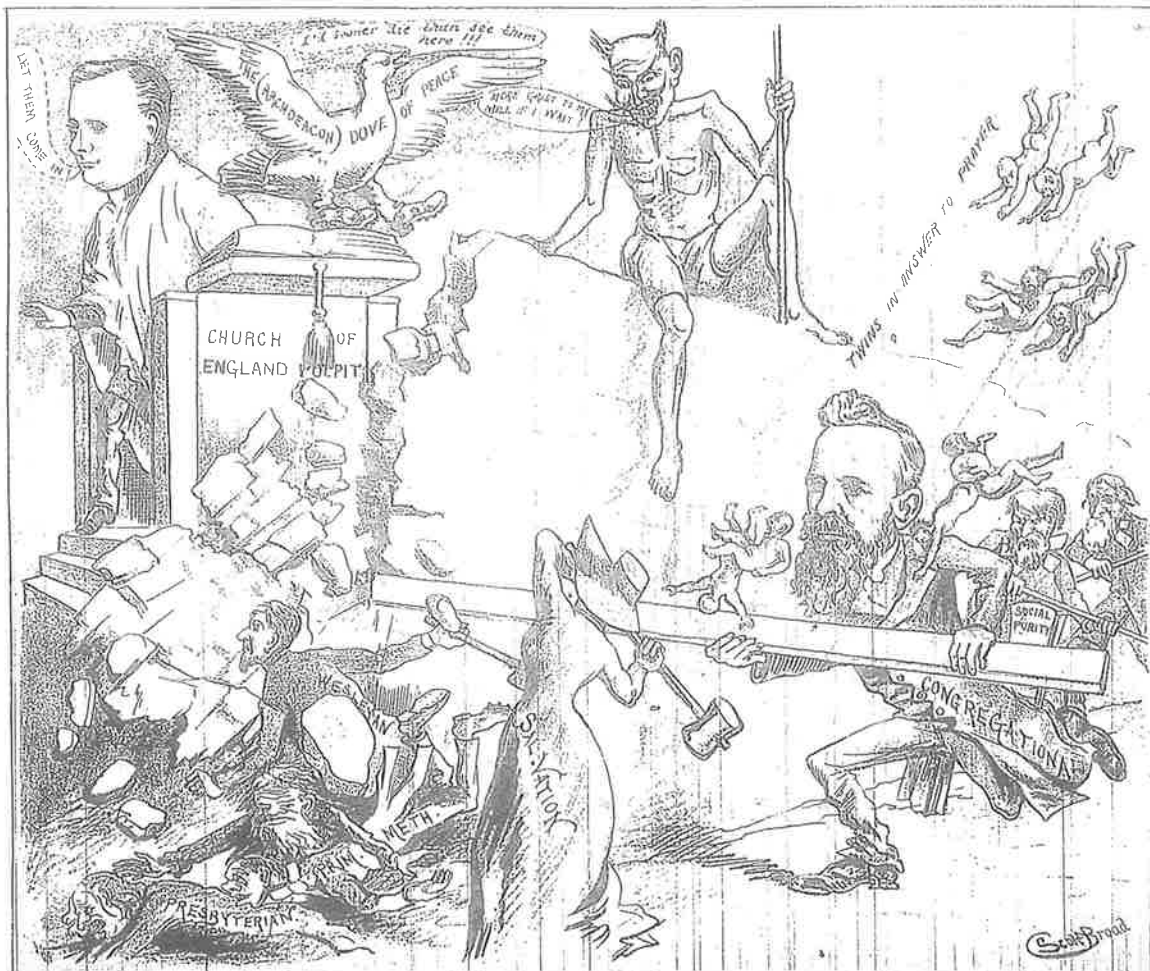
Although unaccustomed to the Anglican service, I cannot but admire it. There is something intensely reverent and yet beautiful about it, if you regard it in a reverent spirit; if you treat it with levity it immediately presents a ludicrous side that inclines one to merriment. There is the sacredness of age, too, which to the reflective mind,

<sup>62</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 June 1893.

<sup>63</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 June 1893. St George's was a 'Mission Church' until 1 June 1915.

<sup>64</sup> Hilliard, 74. The curates were the Reverends R. A. Bryant, L. T. Maund and E. H. Bleby.

<sup>65</sup> 'A Church I visited last Sunday', *Port Adelaide News*, 22 February 1895.



### Illustration 18

'Theological Campaign', 1886.

Non-conformist churches of Port Adelaide, including the Salvation Army, battering at the Church of England with Samuel Green in the pulpit. Joseph Kirby rams the wall with a plank.

Supplement to *Port Adelaide News*, 2 July 1886.

enshrines it with a rich, mellow glory, as of an old painting. The prayers for the Queen and the Royal family, and the prayers for the nation strike the mind nurtured in Democratic ideas with something of a freshness, as of grand old customs revived into sudden activity and life....The listless formality which generally characterises the worshippers, suggests that age has brought decay as well as mellowness....The rough, rude man, whose features and form are shaped and invigorated by incessant contact with the elements, is a grander and stronger man than he whose features and form reflect refinement and culture. There is more power with the rude man. So with dissenting churches and the Church of England. With refinement and culture, the latter has lost much of the vigor and life which belongs to the former.

The press continued reporting the activities of the parish during Samwell's eight years at Port Adelaide. In July 1895 the members of the St Paul's Men's Society formed 'The Model Parliament' with Samwell as speaker, and the next month 'Mr. E. Jennings gave a lecture on "Reminiscences of the American Civil War," before a large and appreciative audience'.<sup>66</sup> The support for such evenings perhaps demonstrates the interest of the public at that time in issues such as the ideals of parliament, democracy, and civil war.

In 1897 Samwell, by then Canon Samwell, organised a 'large-scale parochial mission which was then quite a novelty in South Australia' particularly outside the non-conformist churches.<sup>67</sup> The mission was conducted over ten days by the Reverend W. I. Carr Smith, vicar of St James' Church, Sydney, and P. W. C. Wise, newly arrived from England. It featured

special services for children, men and women, daily services of intercession, lunch-time meetings at the biggest factories for workers, and each evening an outdoor procession through the streets of Port Adelaide, led by crucifer, robed choir, clergy

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<sup>66</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 July, 9 August 1895. See also Robert Nicol, 'The Port Adelaide and Suburban Cemetery (Cheltenham)', *Portonian*, March 1993, 6. Jennings, a veteran of the Union Army, served in the Second Pennsylvania Light Artillery. He is buried at Cheltenham Cemetery and his grave marked by a United States government headstone.

<sup>67</sup> Hilliard, 73.

and lay helpers, to attract onlookers to the main mission service....At the end of the mission ninety-nine people registered 'solemn resolutions' either 'to correct personal bad habits' or to engage in church work; twenty-eight asked to be prepared for confirmation.<sup>68</sup>

To commemorate the occasion a brass plaque was placed on the wall of the church, inscribed 'In recognition of Blessings received at the Parochial Mission July 1897'.

Samwell became involved in town affairs as a prominent citizen. He was 'president of the Port Adelaide Athletic and Rowing Club, Institute Literary Society and Orpheus Society, and honorary curator of the local museum and art gallery'.<sup>69</sup> This involvement was a convergence of middle-class interests and the church. In 1901 Archdeacon Charles Soward Hornabrook succeeded Samwell and served until 1905.<sup>70</sup>

By the end of the century St Paul's was in urgent need of repairs. However before the planning of necessary renovations began, the gift of a new church was announced. The benefactor, Samuel Tyzack, baptised in the second St Paul's in the late 1850s, was the only son of the late Mary Ann and William Tyzack, a shipwright who had lived at Exeter on Lefevre Peninsula. Tyzack had returned to England to claim an inheritance from his uncle which included ship building yards in Newcastle-on-Tyne.<sup>71</sup> Told about the poor condition of the old stone church in 1904, he donated £4000 to build a new St Paul's, dedicated 'to

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<sup>68</sup> Hilliard, 73, 76.

<sup>69</sup> Hilliard, 76.

<sup>70</sup> Eugene Lumbers, *Centenary History of Port Adelaide 1856-1956*. (Adelaide, 1956) 77.

<sup>71</sup> Duncan in Lendon, 96.



the glory of God and in memory of his parents',<sup>72</sup> and included in his gift six stained glass windows at a cost of £300 each.<sup>73</sup> Tyzack joined the number of philanthropists with connections to the Port who offered something back to the town after financial success.

George Klewitz Soward designed the new church,<sup>74</sup> and Tyzack's sister, Mrs Mary Ann McFarlane of Largs Bay, laid the foundation stone in May 1905. The opening of the church took place on 1 November, All Saint's Day, the same year.<sup>75</sup>

To complement the new church, a decision was made in September 1904 to replace the stone parish hall with one of brick in memory of Canon Green who had died on 23 July at Glenelg.<sup>76</sup> The project was delayed, with changes to the incumbency in 1906 when Dean Young was appointed rector and in 1908 when Reverend Matthew Williams took over the parish. The foundation stone of the memorial hall was laid 'with Masonic honours' by Sir Samuel J. Way on 19 March 1910 and opened by Governor Bosanquet on 20 July.<sup>77</sup>

During Williams' incumbency two additions were made to St

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<sup>72</sup> Christopher Halls, *Port Adelaide Sketchbook*. (Adelaide, 1972) 60.

<sup>73</sup> Peter Donovan and June Donovan, *A Guide to the Stained Glass Windows in and about Adelaide*. (Blackwood SA, 1983) 71. The gothic-style arched windows are the largest examples of the work of Percy Bacon Brothers of London to be found in greater Adelaide where many fine examples of the work of the firm were installed.

<sup>74</sup> McDougall and Vines, 168. Soward and Thomas English were partners in the architectural firm English and Soward. Walter Charles Torode was the successful building contractor and also demolished the old church for £96.

<sup>75</sup> 'Opening of the Church', *Parish Paper*, December 1905, in Patterson, 10.

<sup>76</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10 September 1904.

<sup>77</sup> 'New Parish Hall', *Parish Paper*, cited in Patterson, 11. Lady Bosanquet, the bishop, dean and Mayor William T. Rofe were present for the occasion.

Paul's.<sup>78</sup> A new reredos, or ornamental screen behind the altar, was installed in 1913,<sup>79</sup> and a 'Lady Chapel' extension, designed for small services, was dedicated on 8 December 1905. Five months earlier the *Port Adelaide News* reported the death of Samuel Tyzack in Barwythe near Dunstable, England.<sup>80</sup> It was perhaps fitting that his church received its finishing touch that year.

The Congregationalists conducted services from the Port's earliest days, with services held in Bayly's sail loft in the early 1840s. After the church was officially formed on 4 November 1849 with 26 members, a small stone chapel was built among the mangroves (later the corner of Lipson and St Vincent Streets) with a narrow embankment footpath to Port Road.<sup>81</sup> The congregation 'represented many different churches and parts of the United Kingdom with sprinklings of Foreigners and Jews'.<sup>82</sup>

In September 1849 a Congregational minister, Reverend Matthew Hodge, was *en route* to Port Phillip on the *John Munn* with his wife, daughter and three sons when the barque called into Port Adelaide. On Sunday, 23 September he preached for Stow in the Freeman Street Chapel in Adelaide and the following Sunday at the Port, in Bayly's sail loft.

<sup>78</sup> Williams remained at St Paul's until 1921.

<sup>79</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 September 1913. The reredos was carved and polished in blackwood by Mr Unger to a design by architects English and Soward. George Hudd of Adelaide opened the reredos in memory of the late Mr and Mrs Charles Walter of The Parade, Norwood.

<sup>80</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 July 1915.

<sup>81</sup> Berry Polomka Riches Gilbert, *Uniting Church in Australia, Port Adelaide: Conservation Plan*. (1984) 2, File 11189, Heritage South Australia. The chapel was 'built for...£212-16-0 by Builders William Galway (Junior) and James Miller'.

<sup>82</sup> George Payne Hodge, *An Early Narrative Sketch of the Foundation and Early History of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church*. (c.1899) 5.

Hodge's son George wrote that 'an influential deputation' from the Port waited on Hodge and 'induced him to terminate his voyage, to cast his lot with them and form a church'.<sup>83</sup> Being unable to find a house, Hodge and his family stayed with Henry Giles 'for some weeks' until suitable accommodation was available.<sup>84</sup>

The timber Hen and Chickens Hotel on North Parade had catered for the waterfront trade from May 1841 until its closure in 1846 and was used as a sailors' boarding house until 1849 when it became vacant.<sup>85</sup> The Hodge family moved into the former hotel,<sup>86</sup> setting up a manse in rooms which had once rung with the noise of seamen. In 1882 Mayor Henry Thompson spoke about Hodge's early work and his attempts 'to seek a congregation', on one occasion going into the street and inviting a group of sailors to the service. The men answered that they 'did not belong to the Church, they were able-bodied seamen'.<sup>87</sup> In the late 1890s George Hodge described the early church and its people. Non-conformist church members along with shore-leave seamen and ships' officers attended the services and frequently filled the building.

The population at the Port - Church and chapel goers, represented numerous countries, churches and creeds. The little church became a home for Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Wesleyans and a few churchmen - and consequently was generally crowded. In addition to the settlers there were Captains, officers and crews and frequently passengers of vessels lying in the

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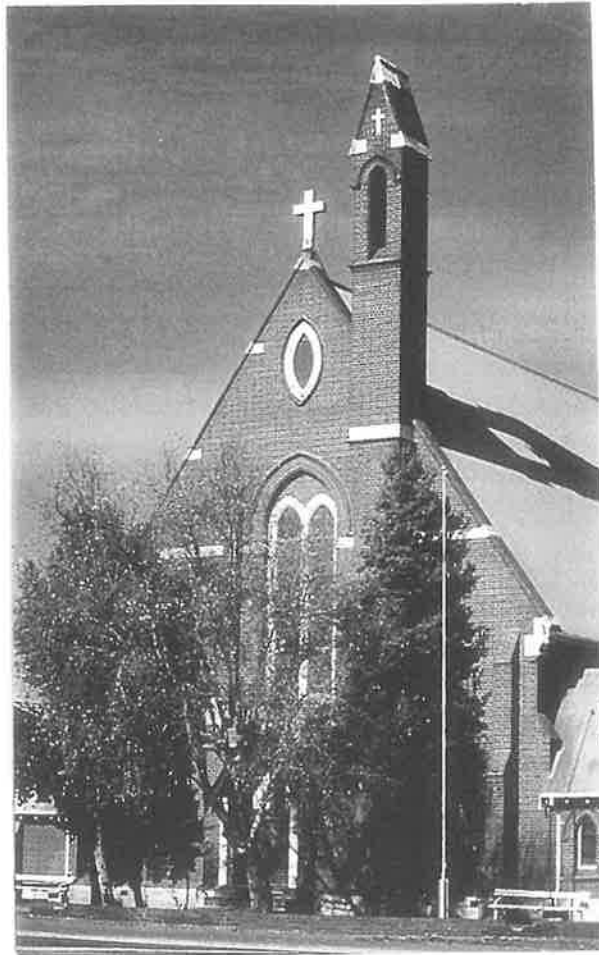
<sup>83</sup> Hodge, 5.

<sup>84</sup> Hodge, 5.

<sup>85</sup> A watercolour in the Art Gallery of South Australia by Samuel Thomas Gill, 'Port Adelaide looking east along North Parade 1846', shows the Hen and Chickens Hotel (AGSA 0.1181, gift of B. W. Bagenal, 1941). See Ron Appleyard et al, *S. T. Gill: The South Australian Years 1839-1852*. (Adelaide, 1986) 68.

<sup>86</sup> Hodge, 5.

<sup>87</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 March 1882.



**Illustration 19**

St Paul's Anglican Church, St Vincent Street, Port Adelaide (1905).

The church was constructed of red brick with an unusual narrow, square bell tower on the west side of the façade. A pointed oval opening (*vesica piscis* or 'fish bladder' shaped) slatted for ventilation, was featured high in each gable. The window facing south-east behind the high altar consists of three panels depicting 'Christ and his Saints' including a flaming torch of gold glass 'which glows even on the dullest day'. The window in the north-west wall facing St Vincent Street consists of two panels which depict the nativity scene; a lantern in this window gleams in a similar fashion to the torch. The church features an organ built in 1864 by William Christmas Mack, of Great Yarmouth, England, which was installed in the second St Paul's in 1865. The organ was enlarged with the addition of a swell and pedal division in 1887 by Fincham and Hobday, a firm operating in South Australia from 1882 to 1894. In 1905 it was moved to the present church and modified by J. E. Dodd of Adelaide.

Letter from L. F. Torbuck, Parish Assistant, to South Australian Heritage Committee concerning conservation of the windows, 28 April 1986. Also 'Historical notes and specifications of St Paul's Organ', compiled by Sandra Sears, Phyl Fackender, and organist William Scott. File 11893, Heritage South Australia, Department of Environment, Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs.

Photograph, Y. Potter, 1997.

stream - no means of getting to Adelaide at night the Port became the home of shipboard folk - people en route...vessels remained for weeks in Port....It was not very long before the Wesleyan friends started a cause of their own and the Baptists were not long after ere they also left to hold services of their own, although it was some years before they built a church - not withstanding these defections...it was decided to erect a larger building - the adjacent site - on the western side was secured and the Chapel...was commenced. The contractor was Mr. Walter Smith...the material limestone from the North Adelaide hills...and a shingle roof - dimensions inside 60 x 40 ft. - the ground floor was a schoolroom - height about 11 ft.

Hodge's view that the denominations leaving the combined congregation were 'defecting' shows the strength of the earlier co-operation between non-conformist Christians in the town. The Congregationalists, Methodists and some Presbyterians united in Australia in June 1977, well over a century after such early ecumenism in Port Adelaide. Hodges' account outlines how in late 1850 the building of a bigger church was delayed by the loss of Portonians to the Victorian goldfields and resumed when many returned after two years.

The foundation stone was laid when the height of the schoolroom was reached, and then all work was stopped at the end of 1851 by the news of Gold discovery in Port Phillip. Many at once left for the scene and within the first or second month of 1852 there was a general stampede. Lawyers, Merchants, Agents, Wharfingers, Clerks, Mechanics and laborers left their business and work in feverish haste....Mr. Hodge went with a party...and worked during the week, on Sundays holding services in various parts. Beyond his living the minister got no gold - but during his stay on the diggings and in Melbourne...he collected £1000 for the Church....Hundreds of people never came back to Adelaide. The personel [sic] of the Chapel was consequently quite changed. Towards the latter part of 1852 and the first half of 1853 things began to settle down, and altho' after that for a year or two there was a pretty steady stream of immigration and emigration going on, folks were calming down to regular occupation and the Port's population was being augmented.

During the first half of 1853 building operations were resumed...and the place was ready for use and opened the latter part of August 1853....Soon after we moved into the new, and to us, large building, the Presbyterians swarmed away and as they were numerically strong and financially healthy, the defection was a serious blow at a critical time.<sup>88</sup>

The Congregationalists lost their second 'very comfortable but not

<sup>88</sup> Hodge, 5-8. See also Port Adelaide Historical Society and Port Adelaide United Parish (Cong. Meth.), *Port Adelaide Festival of History*. (1974) 4. The chapel, in St Vincent Street, west of the original site, seated 500 people.

over-elegant' chapel in St Vincent Street on 30 April 1866 when the timber shingles on the roof caught fire from wind-blown chimney sparks.<sup>89</sup> Captain John Bickers had rebuilt the first stone chapel to use as a store but it was not available for reuse and after a few weeks in William Blackler's 'new and substantial warehouse',<sup>90</sup> on the corner of Calton Street, Congregational services were held in temporary places of worship around the town for the next two and a half years. The large assembly rooms of the numerous hotels, so convenient for other groups, could not be considered as a suitable venue. Hodge explained the events which led to building the Congregationalists' third place of worship.

We were left chapelless....Our Scotch friends kindly gave us the use of their (first) Chapel....The late Mr. William Blackler generously offered us the use of his store...and Services were conducted there for some weeks, until we moved into the Town Hall, which had only recently been built, and there we stayed for about 6 months, when it was thought a saving would be effected by transferring the Services to the Oddfellows Hall, also then a newly completed building.... Shortly before the fire the committee had unfortunately reduced the amount of insurance on the building to £600 about half its value. The Company 'The Sth. Australian' behaved very handsomely paying the amount without delay, and gave us the walls and what fittings were saved. Just about this time the land between the Port road and the Railway fence was submitted to auctions - the sale was attended by Capt. Bickers and Mr. Stow and on their authority they bought the lots now forming the Church property.<sup>91</sup>

The new site purchased from the Port Land Company in the 1860s was considered on the outskirts of town. Hodge recalled, 'Many folks said what's the use of going out of the Port to build a church'.<sup>92</sup> The Port's expansion along Port Road towards Alberton where so many of the merchants and townsmen lived was a natural progression. The location

<sup>89</sup> *The Register*, 17 July 1867. See also A. T. Saunders cited in *Portonian*, September 1984, 15. The seating and pulpit were saved and used in the Wesleyan church at Exeter.

<sup>90</sup> *Port Adelaide Festival of History*, 5.

<sup>91</sup> Hodge, 11. See also *The Adelaide Observer*, 5 May 1866, which carried a full account of the fire.

<sup>92</sup> Hodge, 11.

proved to be convenient for members of the congregation from both Port Adelaide and Alberton.

James Macgeorge, the entrepreneurial architect and engineer who had connected the first telegraph line to the Port from Adelaide, designed a church to seat about 750 people.<sup>93</sup> At the opening on 12 December 1868 there were at least 800 attending the morning and afternoon services and 1000 present for the evening service.<sup>94</sup> Even allowing for out-of-town guests and visitors, the large numbers present at the services illustrates the significance of the church in the lives of so many Portonians. The Adelaide papers reported the event and gave readers some idea of the imposing new building at the entrance to the Port.

From the Port a good broadside view of the church is obtained, and being 135 feet long by 60 feet high it is a prominent feature in the view. Its high gables, ornamented roof, and pointed windows give it an extremely pleasing contour.... The principal front, which faces the Port-road, is approached by a broad flight of steps, and the entrance is protected by an elegant porch of three arches, over which in the high gable is a handsome traceried window of rose form....

There are handsomely carved wall-posts and hammer beams, between which and the principals are carved cherubs....The platform and pulpit are in front of a recess under the apse, which is ornamental with four handsome pillars having moulded bases and enriched caps....The reading-desk and pulpit are of carved cedar....Throughout the building the windows are filled with ground and stained glass.<sup>95</sup>

The church's large debt was of concern to the Congregationalists,

'Notwithstanding all our efforts by the time the final payments were due

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<sup>93</sup> Berry Polomka Riches Gilbert, 3. Frank Reynolds was successful with his tender of £3500 and began building at the Port Road site with his foreman Mr Tomsett in charge. Former buildings in Adelaide designed by Macgeorge included the Savings Bank of South Australia in King William Street, St Peter's Presbyterian Church in Wakefield Street, and Maughan Church in Franklin Street which was finally demolished in 1963 after being badly damaged in the 1954 earthquake. See also *The Register*, 17 July 1867, the foundation stone was laid by Thomas Graves on 16 July 1867.

<sup>94</sup> *Port Adelaide Festival of History*, 5.

<sup>95</sup> *The Adelaide Observer*, 12 December 1868. See also *The Register*, 7 December 1868. Dean Eland and Vivien Counsell, *History of a Port Adelaide Church: "Honouring the Past....Anticipating the Future"*. (Port Adelaide, 1992) 34, noted that the Congregational Church was electrically lit on 5 December 1900.

we were £1800 short for which we got a loan at 8% - and for eight years there was £144 interest to be met, besides current expenses'. The amount was finally raised through the efforts of twelve church members who took up as many building shares, or weekly payments, to help pay off the loan. The Congregationalist James Grosse, a local ships' chandler, died on 13 September 1874 bequeathing £500 to the church with another £500 for a hospital, 'should one be built within 12 months of his death'. The condition regarding the hospital was 'not complied with and the amount reverted to the Church'. With the £1800 repaid, the church committee raised the pastor's salary to £250.<sup>96</sup> A month after announcing a debt-free church in November 1876, Matthew Hodge became ill with typhoid fever and died on 13 January 1877.

At the time of Hodge's death, the Reverend Michael MacKinnon Dick was at Hawthorn, 'on probation for a month with a view to a call to the Congregational Church there....he at once telegraphed...to ascertain whether there was a chance of his getting the Church'.<sup>97</sup> Dick was successful but 'in delicate health' and had 'to resign the pastorate' on 6 February 1880.<sup>98</sup> He died of consumption four days later.<sup>99</sup>

The church committee decided 'not to do things in such a hurry'<sup>100</sup> in

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The 'carved cherubs' were removed over a century ago. A head and a number of wings were discovered under the organ in 1999.

<sup>96</sup> Hodge, 12. Underlining in the original. See also Eland and Counsell, 36.

<sup>97</sup> Hodge, 12-13.

<sup>98</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 14 February 1880.

<sup>99</sup> Eland and Counsell, 12.

<sup>100</sup> Hodge, 13.



the selection of another pastor and for nine months 'various ministers and lay preachers' delivered the Sunday sermons.<sup>101</sup> The hesitation of the church committee led to a seminal and historically significant decision. It was arranged that during July 'the Rev. Mr. Kirby, of Sydney', would occupy the pulpit.<sup>102</sup>

Joseph Kirby was invited to fill the vacancy, and from November 1880 brought energy, enthusiasm and an individual style of leadership to the Port Congregational Church. At the second anniversary of the Sunday School Band of Hope in August 1881, Joseph Vardon summed up the feeling of the congregation when he said that Kirby had 'stimulated us to fresh exertions'.<sup>103</sup>

As well as numerous clubs and societies for the church's many interest groups, Kirby inspired initiatives for improving the church building including alterations to the ventilation, lowering the height of the gaseliers and the purchase of a new organ.<sup>104</sup> All this activity had a cost and on 16 September 1881 a notice in the local press announced a meeting to discuss the best means of eliminating the church's new debt.<sup>105</sup> Two weeks later Kirby conducted a 'Special James Garfield Memorial

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<sup>101</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 June 1880.

<sup>102</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 June 1880.

<sup>103</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 August 1881.

<sup>104</sup> 'Minutes of Church and Deacons Meetings', 1 June 1881, 29 November 1882, in Eland and Counsell, 12. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 20 June 1884 which announced the 'Opening of the New Organ', with W. B. Chinner as organist. The work was carried out by Fincham and Hobday of Adelaide and the red pine case and seating for the choir cost 'about £500'.

<sup>105</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 September 1881.

Service'.<sup>106</sup> The American consul was present at the service at Port Adelaide on 2 October and afterwards 'thanked the Pastor in the Vestry on behalf of the American nation'.<sup>107</sup> This was Kirby's style.

It was also Kirby's style to pursue his local battle with Canon Green through the colonial press, which continued to provide fertile ground for arguments to be aired. It was reported that on 6 June 1886 'both these men preached on church unity',<sup>108</sup> although it was elements of denominational rivalry which stirred the debate. Green had spoken on unity at the Church of England Synod the previous week, stating that the Church of England had 'a feeling of deep responsibility about recovering those who were gone from her'. Unity was dependent on dissenters returning to the fold. Kirby began his sermon alluding to the 'very kindly speeches towards those who don't believe in prelates and sacramental salvation'.<sup>109</sup> Kirby's view that the Church of England isolated itself from the mainstream of Christianity was reported in *The Advertiser*.

It never surprised him...to hear Wesleyans and Presbyterians speak well of each other, but when an Anglican does this it demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is working. For the Presbyterians, Wesleyans and Congregationalists did actually show visible unity; it was the Anglicans who were the separatists. It was their notion about baptism, orders and prelates that made a high wall which separated them from the mass of Christians.<sup>110</sup>

The obvious wealth of the Portonian Congregationalists in particular,

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<sup>106</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 30 September 1881. The service commemorated the life of James Abram Garfield, twentieth president of the United States of America, who was shot by Charles Guiteau on 2 July and died on 19 September 1881.

<sup>107</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 October 1881.

<sup>108</sup> *The Advertiser and The Register*, 7 June 1886, in Northey, 92.

<sup>109</sup> *The Advertiser*, 7 June 1886, in Northey, 92.

<sup>110</sup> *The Advertiser*, 7 June 1886, in Northey, 92.

helped them remain independent and confident in their non-conformity. The 'Unobserved Observer', visiting the Congregationalists in February 1895, and noted this attitude in his report for the *Port Adelaide News*.

The Congregational Church, as a building, is a credit to Port Adelaide....As you scan the congregation you perceive many frock-coated impressive looking husbands, with their well dressed and highly proper wives, who lean comfortably back in their seats, and listen to the preacher with an air, which, if it found expression in words, would say - 'We pay this man to preach to us; this is *our* church; let us sit in ease and listen to the sermon and the singing.' There are also sons and daughters, who, however, do not exhibit the same self-satisfied dignity, but all have an air of opulence and ease, which at once give the observer the impression that the Congregational people, if not wealthy, are at least, most of them, fairly well-to-do.<sup>111</sup>

Kirby, with aspirations to be a significant religious leader, may have accepted as praise the report's comparison of his bearing with that of the highest prelate of the Church of England. The visitor's impression of his manner with the congregation, however, was of Kirby being extremely condescending and formidable.

If you were not aware this man was the Rev. J. C. Kirby, on looking at his impressive head you would never think of placing him anywhere below the Archbishop of Canterbury. He has a manner too, which gives one the idea that the pastor of the Congregational Church has an inclination to look upon humanity as a very erring and foolish animal....I should imagine that he was a man of great mental power, of great spiritual experience and wide reading; but possessed with a peculiar idea that the members of his congregation were strangely deficient in intellectual grasp, and that extreme simplicity with a spice of humour must be resorted to in order that his meaning might pierce their dull brains.<sup>112</sup>

A detailed study of the life and work of Kirby is covered in the following chapter. He remained as pastor until his retirement in 1908 and was responsible for the selection of his successor, Lionel Fletcher, a

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<sup>111</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 February 1895. See Eland and Counsell, viii and 37, in which comment is made about the values and outlook of the Congregation leaders in May 1920 when a girl who turned up for Sunday School without shoes was sent around to the Methodists who admitted bare-footed children. Families were expected to clothe their children sufficiently well to attend the Congregational Sunday School.

<sup>112</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 February 1895.

young minister then at Kurri Kurri in New South Wales. Fletcher recalled Kirby's persistence in inviting him to visit Port Adelaide for a month's holiday to 'preach in his church' and to consider becoming the next incumbent.

When I accepted this invitation he wrote revealing to me his plan that I should become his successor, and saying that if the people at Port Adelaide agreed to this after they had heard me, a call would certainly follow....I felt that the thing was impossible, and instantly sent him a telegram cancelling the engagement...as I could not leave my work so soon....Promptly came his reply urging me to come....And so I made my first visit to Port Adelaide.<sup>113</sup>

Fletcher, after arriving at the Port, delivered only two sermons before hurrying back to his family when a son died. Shortly afterwards he received 'the unanimous call from Port Adelaide' and shifted to his new parish in early 1909.<sup>114</sup> Kirby continued to be an influence within the church and each Sunday took a prominent seat alongside the new pastor, a difficult situation but one Fletcher must have expected from his earlier contacts with his predecessor. Dean Eland, a recent pastor, wrote,

one large comfortable chair which sits in the old central pulpit was presented to J C Kirby on his retirement. He was made honorary pastor and his successor Lionel Fletcher had to contend with 'JC' going to sleep in the chair next to him in the pulpit even during his hell-fire sermons.<sup>115</sup>

A visiting preacher, Reverend A. C. Stevens, also remembered this uneasy experience.

Sometimes as I preach to this day I half-turn to see him sitting beside me, as his custom was in his special chair, with the mien of a martinet at the Spanish inquisition. If the sermon were orthodox he would wind his thumbs until he yielded to his besetting weakness of falling asleep. But he was always as sniff for heresy, and would keep himself awake if the sermon were at all dangerous.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Lionel Fletcher, 'Rev. J. C. Kirby as I Knew Him', *Australian Christian World*, 29 August 1924, 4.

<sup>114</sup> Fletcher, 4.

<sup>115</sup> Eland and Counsell, vi.

<sup>116</sup> A. C. Stevens, 'Book review for *An Australian Apostle*', in *The News*, 4 February 1920.

On comments that his task of working with Kirby alongside would be difficult, Fletcher wrote non-committally:

there were many who predicted that it would be impossible for me to work there with Mr. Kirby still attached to the Church. For 27 years he had been the pastor. He was masterful, and was beloved by everyone, while I was young, untried and inexperienced. I was told that I would either break my heart, or the Church would divide into two groups and the place would be ruined.<sup>117</sup>

However the church remained united and Fletcher, another man of zeal and energy, continued Kirby's work, particularly in temperance.<sup>118</sup> He was more evangelical in his approach and initiated special services. On one occasion, *The Register* recalled, 'he filled the church with men',<sup>119</sup> and in August 1913, 'Sunday Morning was for women only...700-800 attended with not a vacant seat.'<sup>120</sup>

*The Register* stated that Fletcher's 'previous experiences as a midshipman, a shearing rouseabout, a miner, and sub-editor of a newspaper',<sup>121</sup> prepared him well for service in a busy port town and, gave him

a fund of anecdote, and a gift of humour which, combined with a peculiar power of presenting the Gospel, enabled him to exercise a wonderful influence over his hearers. From the outset he attracted large congregations, and the membership of the church greatly increased. During his ministry, branch churches were formed at Ottoway, Cheltenham, and a kindergarten room was added to the Sunday School at Port Adelaide....He fought strenuously for the closing of hotels at 6 pm. His gifts as an evangelist were known throughout the State, and he received many invitations to conduct services for other denominations.<sup>122</sup>

After seven years Fletcher resigned his post in May 1915 to take up evangelical work throughout South Australia 'under the auspices of the

<sup>117</sup> Fletcher, 4.

<sup>118</sup> Kiek, 170.

<sup>119</sup> *The Register*, 2 February 1924.

<sup>120</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 August 1913.

<sup>121</sup> *The Register*, 2 February 1924.

<sup>122</sup> *The Register*, 2 February 1924.

Council of Churches'.<sup>123</sup> A public farewell was held for him at the town hall.<sup>124</sup> Kirby presided at the induction of the scholarly Reverend David Taylor Whalley in February 1916.<sup>125</sup>

Before the union of Methodist churches in 1900,<sup>126</sup> there were six different 'Methodist' churches in South Australia: the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion from May 1837, the Primitive Methodist Connexion from July 1840, the United Free Methodist Church from 1878 (discontinued in 1894), the Methodist New Connexion from December 1862 and the Bible Christian Church from 1850 which amalgamated in 1888, and the Methodist Lay Church which met in Port Adelaide for a short period in the early 1880s.<sup>127</sup> Only the United Free Methodist Church of South Australia failed to establish itself at the Port.<sup>128</sup>

The first Methodist services were held in the home of local merchant C. H. Goldsmith in Lipson Street. These home gatherings supported Arnold Hunt's view that in South Australia, as in other Australian colonies, 'Methodism grew because in almost every settlement there was a home in which a class could meet and where a layman could lead worship

<sup>123</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 7 May 1915.

<sup>124</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 June 1915. Fletcher left Australia for South Wales at the end of 1915. See also C. W. Malcolm, *'Twelve Hours in the Day': The Life and Work of Rev. Lionel B. Fletcher D.D.* (London, 1956) 84. In mid-1924 Fletcher left the Wood Street Church in Cardiff, 'the largest Congregational Church in the British Empire', and returned to Australasia to the Beresford Street Church in Auckland, New Zealand.

<sup>125</sup> Kiek, 171. Whalley resigned in 1921 to move to Surrey Hills, Melbourne, but died before leaving Port Adelaide. Kirby gave the address at his funeral.

<sup>126</sup> 'Methodist' as used in this study refers to the whole Wesleyan movement in South Australia. See also The Corporation of the City of Port Adelaide Editorial Committee for the 150 Year Souvenir Booklet, *Mudflats to Metropolis 1836-1986*. (1986) 45. In 1900 affiliation of the Methodist churches was in South Australia only; 'Methodist Union' throughout the rest of Australia took place in 1902.

<sup>127</sup> Jack Vincent Morgan, *Morgan's Colonial Methodism in South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1973) 9.

<sup>128</sup> Morgan, 8.

and preach a sermon'.<sup>129</sup>

In 1851 the foundation stone for a Wesleyan Methodist chapel in Quebec Street was laid after a grant of £100 was received from the Wesleyan Church Missionary Society.<sup>130</sup> Reverend James Haslam was appointed as the first Wesleyan minister to the Port and took charge of the chapel which opened on 5 October 1851 at a morning service conducted by the Reverend Daniel James Draper.<sup>131</sup> The entrance to the building was 'about 12 feet back from the street alignment. The porch was at the front of the church, and the choir was on a raised platform as you entered the church on the left hand side'.<sup>132</sup> In 1863 a large church facing St Vincent Street was built on the adjoining block and opened on 2 November.<sup>133</sup> Thomas King, who had previously rented the schoolroom under the old Congregational Church, took over the old chapel as a school until his retirement in 1879.<sup>134</sup>

John Ottaway, a member of the church, frequently acted as a lay preacher, as did Mayor Theodore Hack.<sup>135</sup> In January 1879 the Port

<sup>129</sup> Arnold D. Hunt, *This Side of Heaven: A History of Methodism in South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1985) 32.

<sup>130</sup> Dickey and Martin, 21, cited *The Register*, 23 January 1851. See also *The Adelaide Observer*, 25 January 1851.

<sup>131</sup> *The Adelaide Observer*, 11 October 1851. See also Hunt, 38. Draper was the second Wesleyan minister for South Australia, arriving from New South Wales in 1846 and consolidating the church with a building program until his move to Melbourne in 1855.

<sup>132</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 March 1914.

<sup>133</sup> *The Adelaide Observer*, 11 April 1863. The corner stone was laid by John Colton, M.P., on Tuesday 7 April 1863. The new church, centrally placed in the Port opposite the site for the new town hall, was designed by Wright in the 'Early English style' to sit 390 people, at a cost of £1550.

<sup>134</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 March 1914.

<sup>135</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 February, 15 March 1879, 6 March 1914.

Adelaide circuit provided for an additional minister.<sup>136</sup> In April 1879 the Port Wesleyans welcomed the Reverends C. Lane and Albert Stubbs, both recently appointed to the 'Circuit'.<sup>137</sup> Stubbs lived in Dale Street, Port Adelaide and Lane, the superintendent of the Circuit, at Semaphore in Penny Street, Clifton. Stubbs was concerned with drawing the congregation back together and in his sermon he particularly addressed those connected with 'the local Presbyterian and Congregational Schools', presumably encouraging the Wesleyan Methodists to support their own facilities.<sup>138</sup>

The centrally-placed church in the main street was a major feature of Port Adelaide and had a large group of adherents. The Sunday school, with Ottaway in charge, had 210 scholars with 22 possible teachers to call on.<sup>139</sup> After a month Stubbs had initiated a 'New Bible Class' to be held on Wednesday evenings, a proposal 'taken up energetically' with 'about sixty persons' attending the first meeting.<sup>140</sup> He later entered the debate on ritual with his lecture 'Ritualism in Adelaide and Schism at the Port'.<sup>141</sup> The temperance cause was also embraced. In January 1881 a special temperance service was advertised with Stubbs to speak on 'The Present

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<sup>136</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 January 1879. See Ross Anderson, 'A Heritage Database for Methodist Church Buildings (1836-1900) in the Adelaide and Moonta Districts', B.A. Honours Thesis, The Flinders University of South Australia, 1989, which stated that all church records of the Port Adelaide Wesleyan Methodist Church have been lost.

<sup>137</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 April 1879. The term 'circuit' was used by the Methodist Church to describe an administrative unit of a group of churches with one or two ministers.

<sup>138</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 March 1879.

<sup>139</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 26 April 1879. A new organ was purchased for £300.

<sup>140</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3, 10 May 1879.

<sup>141</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 July 1879.



Battle Ground of the Temperance Reformation; or, is Moderate Drinking better than Total Abstinence?' The newspaper announced that 'Arrangements will be made for signing the pledge at the close of the service'.<sup>142</sup>

The Reverend Thomas Edmeades was appointed incumbent at the Port church for a time. In April 1882 he left for Gumeracha and the Reverend James Bickford arrived from Burra to take up duties, which included presiding over the 'Wesleyan Band of Hope'.<sup>143</sup> Methodism, considered by David Hilliard and Arnold Hunt to be the 'most potent religious movement in nineteenth century South Australia',<sup>144</sup> was well established at the Port, but after 18 years the church building was showing signs of age.<sup>145</sup>

The Port Wesleyans decided to move from the main street and the valuable central property was eagerly sought as a business site. In June 1884 it was reported that 'Messrs. Murray and Townsend, drapers, have arranged purchase of lease of land on which the Wesleyan Church Port Adelaide stands, and will shortly erect large business premises there in the most approved style of architecture'.<sup>146</sup> Tenders to erect a 'Wesleyan Church, School, Class Rooms, Caretaker's Cottage &c.' fronting Dale

<sup>142</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 January 1881.

<sup>143</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4, 14, 25 April 1882.

<sup>144</sup> David Hilliard and Arnold D. Hunt, 'Strands in the Social Fabric: Religion', in Richards, 204.

<sup>145</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 January 1881. In 1881 two bricks from the belfry fell and struck John Bennett on the shoulder as he was 'ascending the staircase leading from the street to the Church-entrance'. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 14 May 1881, 'It was decided to remove the dangerous bell tower and finish off the gable with an ornamental finial'.

<sup>146</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 June 1884.

Street were called the following month.<sup>147</sup>

The new gothic-style church was constructed of 'beautiful light grey' stone from 'Wilke's Port Adelaide Railway Quarry' at Dry Creek, with entrance steps of Kapunda marble.<sup>148</sup> A 'lecture-hall', presumably the school and class rooms, was located in Lucas Street. The Port Wesleyans moved into their new accommodation on 6 March 1885. The Reverends Robert Kelly and Hugh Henwood Teague remained in the Port Adelaide circuit until 1886. Unlike in other denominations there was a rapid turnover of Wesleyan ministers, most working a two-year term.

The non-conformist ministers helped each other when needed. During the absence of the Reverend Walter Hardy Hanton in August 1893, Kirby the Congregational pastor formally opened a tennis court completed by the Wesleyan young men at the rear of their lecture hall. Kirby gave a short history of lawn tennis, two club members photographed the group and several games were played to mark the occasion.<sup>149</sup>

The Wesleyan Church was visited by the 'Unobserved Observer' on 24 February 1895 who made comparisons with the Church of England and commented on Hanton's preaching style.

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<sup>147</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 July 1884. See also Dickey and Martin, 'The History of Port Adelaide Central Mission', 1998 draft, 11. The income from the lease of the St Vincent Street property enabled the church to repay the interest on the new project which included buying a two-storey house further along Dale Street for use as a manse.

<sup>148</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 11 July, 26 September 1884. The church was demolished in 1974.

<sup>149</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 August 1893.

The Port Wesleyans give a stranger the impression that they are a very conservative folk; given to shrinking up very much within themselves; jealous of old institutions, and very slow to recognise virtue in anything new. The congregation was mostly composed of the choir. The church is large, plain, and roomy. Wesleyans don't go in for much adornment, in fact I could not help being struck by the complete contrast which the whole service showed to that of the Anglican church....Each form of worship has its virtues; each lacks something which the other has. Each has a tendency to deteriorate into some fault or vice, perhaps with the Anglicans it is insincerity, perhaps with the Methodists, it is cant or fanaticism....

The preacher spoke fluently and in graceful language, there was an air of freedom about his style and delivery, and freshness and originality in his treatment of his subject, which always puts the preacher on a level with his hearers, and makes the latter feel that a friend is speaking to him....He appeals to the intellect, but he doesn't forget to appeal to the emotions.<sup>150</sup>

Hanton left to take up the ministry at Parkside in April 1896 and his place was filled by the Reverend Thomas Lames from Port Pirie.

On 1 December 1877 the Primitive Methodists watched Miss Winwood lay the foundation stone for a small chapel on the east side of Church Street between Quebec and Cannon Streets, and held their first service there on 27 January the following year.<sup>151</sup> At the anniversary service on 2 February 1879 the minister of the circuit, the Reverend Samuel Raymond, gave details of the church's progress. The original congregation of six people had grown after a year to an 'average of about fifty' with 20 on the Sunday school class list instructed by ten teachers.<sup>152</sup> Eight months later mention of 'the building fund of the Port Primitive Methodist Church' indicated that it was still in debt.<sup>153</sup>

Ministers connected with the church included the Reverends William Diment in 1880, William Jenkin in 1881 (when there were 78

<sup>150</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 1 March 1895.

<sup>151</sup> *South Australian Methodist Record*, April 1878, 215.

<sup>152</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 February 1879.

<sup>153</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 October 1879.

worshippers listed in that year's Census) and John Lightfoot in 1895.<sup>154</sup>

The 'Unobserved Observer' visited the chapel in March 1895 at a service led by a lay preacher in the absence of Lightfoot.

The preacher on this occasion was a layman...he looked like a bootmaker, but he gave a capital address, containing sound practical Gospel teaching.... though ill-arranged it might have been, strange as its delivery was, it had real grit in it....The little mission chapel in which this homely address was given is used by the Primitive Methodists....There were about a score of persons present, but strength does not always lie in numbers.<sup>155</sup>

In 1878 services for the Bible Christians were at times conducted by a woman, Mrs Lake, and 'spoken of generally in terms of high praise. Her friends may always count on large audiences for her on any occasion when she may be able to assist them'.<sup>156</sup> This assistance may have continued after the Reverend R. Kelley was appointed in March 1879 and J. A. Burns became minister in March 1882, as a local journalist commented that he had 'heard some splendid sermons from lady preachers, and many of them are highly talented'.<sup>157</sup> The Port Bible Christians, numbering 67 in the 1881 Census, held services in the Working Men's Association Hall in Dale Street.

A Port Methodist break-away group, the Methodist Lay Church, met for the first time at the Working Men's Association Hall on 27 February 1881.<sup>158</sup> The members did not believe in a paid ministry,<sup>159</sup> promised 'No Collections', and gave scriptural references in the local press to support

<sup>154</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 January 1880, 1 June 1881 and 15 March 1895. See also Census Returns, 1881.

<sup>155</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 March 1895.

<sup>156</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 28 September 1878.

<sup>157</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 March 1879. See also 7 March, 16 June 1882.

<sup>158</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 2 March 1881.

<sup>159</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 17 March 1882.

their beliefs.

'The poor have the Gospel preached to them.'      Matthew XI, Verse 5.  
 Divine Service In connection with the Methodist Lay Church....

Working Men's Association Hall  
 Dale-street Port Adelaide.  
 NO COLLECTIONS!

'Ho! everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money;  
 come ye, buy and eat; Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without  
 price.'      Isaiah LV, Verse I. 160

By July 1882 the congregation had rejoined the Wesleyan Methodists and the lay church was dissolved.<sup>161</sup>

In its early days the Church of Scotland used St Paul's-on-the-Piles for their worship with the Reverend Robert Haining sharing responsibility with James Farrell from the Church of England.<sup>162</sup> From 1849 another denominational group, the United Presbyterians, occasionally conducted services at the home of Captain Hugh Quin in St Vincent Street led by the Adelaide-based Reverend Ralph Drummond and other available lay preachers. When additional accommodation was needed for the growing number of worshippers, services were held in the old Mechanics' Institute.<sup>163</sup>

In July 1855 the Reverend Peter Mercer arrived in South Australia from Scotland as assistant minister for the United Presbyterian Church and took over 'special responsibility for the Port Adelaide

<sup>160</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 12 March, 11 June 1881.

<sup>161</sup> *Methodist Journal*, July 1882.

<sup>162</sup> Fenner et al, 297. Haining's horse 'Badger' was as well known as Howard's 'Luther'.

<sup>163</sup> Robert J. Scrimgeour, *Some Scots were Here: A History of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia, 1839-1877*. (Adelaide, 1986) 41.

congregation'.<sup>164</sup> After he was admitted as a minister in the Free Presbyterian Church of South Australia, a breakaway group from the Church of Scotland, the Port congregation joined the Free Church, Robert Scrimgeour stated, in order to have Mercer as incumbent.<sup>165</sup> He was inducted as the first Presbyterian minister at Port Adelaide on 14 February 1856.

In the same year, land was bought for £350 at the north-west corner of Marryatt and Leadenhall Streets and the foundation stone of a church was laid on 21 August by Thomas Elder.<sup>166</sup> The external simplicity of the building expressed the austerity of the Port Presbyterians in both philosophy and finances at that time. The church opened for worship on 22 February 1857.<sup>167</sup>

Mercer left for Victoria in 1861 where he later became a Doctor of Divinity and first Acting Principal of Ormond College at The University

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<sup>164</sup> Scrimgeour, 42. See also *Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church Jubilee Souvenir*. (1932) 9. A petition was sent from Port Adelaide requesting that a minister be sent to them. As a result the Rev. James Lyaal came out from Scotland to take charge of the congregation but Mercer was already serving at Port Adelaide. The three forms of Presbyterianism in South Australia were the Church of Scotland, the United Presbyterian Church (sometimes known as 'The United Secession Church', made up of various small congregations which seceded before the March 1843 'Disruption of the Established Church of Scotland' and which united in 1847) and the Free Church of Scotland; the latter two supported the voluntary principle and rejected government assistance (state aid) to religious bodies. The tenet of the Free Church, or Free Kirk, stressed spiritual independence and freedom for the congregation to choose its own minister. In 1865 the churches united to form the Presbyterian Church of South Australia, with the exception of the Presbyterian churches in the South-East which affiliated with Victoria and did not join South Australia until 1950.

<sup>165</sup> Scrimgeour, 13, 29-32, 156, 220.

<sup>166</sup> *Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church Jubilee Souvenir*, 10-11. See also McDougall and Vines, 140. The church is one of two extant church building from the 1850s, the other is St Mary's Catholic Church built in 1858. In 1918 the present outer walls were constructed to enlarge the former church into a warehouse for wholesale grocers Henry Berry & Company. The building underwent extensive alterations as a warehouse over the years and in 1918 was incorporated into the present building. The interior of the warehouse was redesigned in 1984 and the building reopened as a medical centre in 1986. The date stone, below the original front gable facing Marryatt Street, is still in place.

<sup>167</sup> Lumbers, 81.

of Melbourne.<sup>168</sup> He was succeeded by Thomas Smellie who was sent to South Australia by the Free Church of Scotland 'and ordained and inducted on 16 December 1861'.<sup>169</sup> Smellie resigned before the union of Presbyterian churches in 1865 but stayed until another minister was appointed.<sup>170</sup>

Reverend James Henderson was inducted as minister at the Port on 18 April 1867 and stayed until 1871 when he accepted the Adelaide pastorate of St Andrew's in Wakefield Street. His successor at Port Adelaide was Reverend Peter Maclaren who came to the warmer climate of Australia from Crieff in Scotland for health reasons and commenced work in October 1871. Maclaren, 'an eloquent preacher', was inducted in February 1872 and in addition to his pastoral duties wrote a text-book entitled *Seven Topics of the Christian Faith*, taught Latin and lectured in 'Systematic Theology' at Union College.<sup>171</sup> His popularity as a preacher 'did much to create the necessity' for a bigger church at Port Adelaide.<sup>172</sup>

On 14 May 1878 Maclaren, 'in delicate health', left on the S.S. *Garonne* for England.<sup>173</sup> He was granted six months leave to receive his degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Edinburgh but died on board ship on 31 May, aged 52.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Scrimgeour, 42.

<sup>169</sup> Scrimgeour, 42.

<sup>170</sup> Scrimgeour, 42.

<sup>171</sup> Scrimgeour, 42-43.

<sup>172</sup> *Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church Jubilee Souvenir*, 12.

<sup>173</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 May 1878.

<sup>174</sup> Scrimgeour, 43. See also *Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church Jubilee Souvenir*, 13. Maclaren's widow remained at Port Adelaide until her death in June 1901.

The Presbyterians at the Port were 'greatly inconvenienced through lack of a pastor' and for 12 months Professor John Davidson 'supplied the pulpit', with occasional relief by Ottaway, the local Wesleyan lay preacher.<sup>175</sup> In May 1879 the congregation, assembled in the town hall, welcomed the Reverend John Hall Angus to Port Adelaide. Angus was 'locally trained', a fact which it was felt necessary to mention during the proceedings.<sup>176</sup> The *Port Adelaide News* took up the point.

The welcoming meeting of the Presbyterian Church on Wednesday night must have greatly cheered the heart of the new minister, even though it was admitted he was only 'a colonial product'. For our part we do not understand why the 'home-made' minister may not be the best-made; there is, so far as we know, nothing to prevent a colonial being as useful, as energetic, as gifted and as successful as any old-country bred and educated man.<sup>177</sup>

The *Jubilee Souvenir* of the church in 1932 stated that 'the fact...throws some light on the progress of Presbyterianism in the colony'.<sup>178</sup> With the maturing colonial-born generation, South Australia was beginning to shed its umbilical cord to the mother country.

Angus continued the building plans begun by Maclaren and in February the following year presided over the awarding of prizes in a design competition for a new church.<sup>179</sup> A block of land was acquired for £1700 in St Vincent Street to the west of the town centre.<sup>180</sup> On 31 July

<sup>175</sup> Scrimgeour, 43. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 8 March 1879.

<sup>176</sup> *Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church Jubilee Souvenir*, 14.

<sup>177</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 24 May 1879.

<sup>178</sup> *Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church Jubilee Souvenir*, 14.

<sup>179</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 7 February 1880. Selected from eight entries, the first prize, with 60 votes, was awarded to Alex Anderson of Adelaide for his design 'Spero'. James Haslam's design 'Fides et Justitia' came second with 54 votes.

<sup>180</sup> *Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church Jubilee Souvenir*, 14.



1880 the architect called tenders for the construction of the church,<sup>181</sup> which, the local paper commented, would 'prove a very desirable addition to the prominent and improving features of our street architecture'.<sup>182</sup>

The existing church and land were advertised for sale,<sup>183</sup> and the foundation stone of the new church laid 'with Masonic honours' by David Murray, of D. & W. Murray, a large Port Adelaide store, on the afternoon of Saturday 26 March 1881.<sup>184</sup> In December 1881 a 'magnificent memorial window', in honour of Maclaren, was installed in the new construction and in January 1882 the last service was held in the old church.<sup>185</sup>

On Sunday 5 February 1882, the Presbyterians opened their new church.<sup>186</sup> The new building, 'the stone work finely finished', included seating for 500 people, classrooms and a basement hall.<sup>187</sup> The old premises did not sell and were eventually rented in 1882 by the newly

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<sup>181</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 July 1880, 19 January 1881. See also *Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church Jubilee Souvenir*, 14. Williams & Cleave received the contract to build the church which cost almost £4000.

<sup>182</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 2 February 1881.

<sup>183</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 2 February 1881.

<sup>184</sup> Scrimgeour, 43.

<sup>185</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 December 1881, 31 January 1882. On the last Sunday in the old church the Reverend James Lyall preached at the morning service, Kirby in the afternoon and Angus in the evening.

<sup>186</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 7 February 1881.

<sup>187</sup> *The Register*, 26 January 1924. The church in St Vincent Street closed on the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977 and became Quin's marine chandlery store until its demolition in 1994. Outward bowing walls made its condition unstable after 112 years. Members of the Quin family have been connected with the Port Presbyterian Church from the first gathering in the 1840s. Captain Hugh Quin's grandson, also Hugh, founded a sailmaking and ships' rigging business in 1921 which has grown into a chandlery and boat sales yard, 'Quin's of Port Adelaide', owned in 1999 by his grandson Stan.



### Illustration 20

The first Presbyterian Church, Marryatt Street, Port Adelaide, c.1860. The church, designed by George Sands, was built in 1857 by Cleave & Hardy at a cost of £1660. It seated 300 people. The exterior featured a wide, red brick band below the slated roof, and red brick surrounds to the semi-circular arched windows. Simple, restrained decorative features included a small bell tower above the front gable, a low decorative pediment over the porch and squared, red brick pilasters which defined the corners of the rectangular building and the entrance porch.

Photograph B7714, Mortlock Library of South Australia.

arrived Salvation Army for use as their first citadel in the town.

Angus resigned in 1889 to take the pastorate at Goodwood,<sup>188</sup> and after a six month vacancy the Reverend Alexander Cook Sutherland, a classical scholar with an extensive knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew was appointed to Port Adelaide. Seemingly out of place in an industrial port, Sutherland managed to steer the church through a time of severe industrial and economic depression and substantially reduced the debt on the church building which was 'eventually cleared with assistance from Sir Thomas Elder and the Twentieth Century Fund'.<sup>189</sup> In 1895 the 'Unobserved Observer' attended an evening service and reported his impressions of worship at the Port Presbyterian Church.

A large, severely plain church, with a sparse, sedate solemn-visaged congregation; a congregation of Scotchmen and Scotchwomen. Every action and posture denotes that dignity, amounting to stiffness and reverence approaching to severity, as well as that decent respectability, which always characterises 'the releeigion,' of decent, douce [sic], respectable Scotch folk. Nothing is hurried; nothing is animated; there is neither the display of the Anglican nor the enthusiasm of the Methodist. The Scotch folk, I take it, go to church, not for pleasure or enjoyment, but they look upon it as a duty.

The writer continued his account displaying an insight into the dour Scottish temperament in comparison with the emerging easy-going colonial culture.

The service was essentially Scotch, and the Scotch form of worship is not likely to take among colonials, and the fault lies, not so much in the form of worship but in the composition of the latter, which includes far too much frivolity and gaiety to appreciate Scotch services or Scotch sermons.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 29 March 1889. 'Farewell of the Rev. J. H. Angus at Port Adelaide who has severed his connection with the Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church....discord in congregation.'

<sup>189</sup> Scrimgeour, 43.

<sup>190</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 1 February 1895.

After 16 years at the Port, the 67-year old Sutherland retired from the ministry on 31 May 1905 due to ill health. The congregation was without a minister for 15 months before Reverend Thomas Shanks moved from Portland and was inducted on 12 September 1906. Shanks, a 'forceful preacher',<sup>191</sup> was Moderator of the State Presbyterian Assembly in 1911-1912 and 1913. He finally replaced the old harmonium at the port church with a pipe organ and Angus, then Moderator, returned to his former church to perform the dedication.<sup>192</sup> Hymn singing and organs had been rigorously excluded as unscriptural until after Presbyterian church union when, Walter Phillips argued, the various presbyteries installed organs and introduced hymns to prevent their congregations from 'going to other churches'.<sup>193</sup> Shanks remained in the Port Adelaide pastorate for 11 years and in 1918 resigned to take charge of the Presbyterian Church in Suva, Fiji, later returning to Scotland.

Catholicism in South Australia was associated particularly with the Irish working classes who arrived after the first wave of migration to the colony.<sup>194</sup> The early Catholic Church in South Australia struggled financially and at Port Adelaide this was reflected in the fact that the first church was not built until 18 years after settlement began. Even then the financial restraints of the parish resulted in a simplicity of design in the

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<sup>191</sup> Scrimgeour, 44.

<sup>192</sup> *Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church Jubilee Souvenir*, 15.

<sup>193</sup> Walter W. Phillips, 'The Social Composition of the Religious Denominations in late Nineteenth Century Australia', *Church Heritage*. Vol. 4, No. 2, September 1985, 86.

<sup>194</sup> Eric Richards, 'Irish life and progress in colonial South Australia', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 27, May 1991, 216-218.

church and in the school-room built alongside in 1869.

At first the people at the Port who wished to worship in a Catholic church travelled to St Patrick's in Grote Street, Adelaide, opened in 1846. Later, mass was occasionally celebrated at the Port by the Very Reverend John Smyth, the vicar-general. Smyth was the first priest to work in the town and travelled from Bishop's House on West Terrace in Adelaide, the head office of the Catholic Church in South Australia. The dynamic Very Reverend Julian Edmund Tenison Woods also frequently attended to affairs in the Port.<sup>195</sup>

In 1855 Bishop Francis Murphy purchased land on the north-west corner of Marryatt and Dale Streets but it was another three years before a church was built on the site.<sup>196</sup> Smyth earlier used the Mechanics' Institute to conduct mass. The destruction of the Institute in the 1857 fire<sup>197</sup> emphasised the need for the Catholic Church to move ahead with its plans for a resident priest and church building at the Port. Progress for the Catholics was slow and although the building was completed in 1858, the church was administered from Bishop's House for the next decade.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Margaret M. Press, *Julian Tenison Woods: 'Father Founder'*. (North Blackburn Vic, 1994). Woods, a geologist, naturalist and historian, was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the Linnaean Society in London. He was ordained deacon in St Patrick's Church Adelaide in December 1856 and as priest in January 1857.

<sup>196</sup> Information from the South Australian Land Titles Office notes that the land was originally granted to John Hill in 1841 (Application Number 23646, dated 15 July 1898). In March 1856 it was conveyed by Messrs. Neales and others to Reverend Francis Murphy and others (Book 116, No. 250). The Certificate of Title, Volume 645 Folio 62, dated 2 May 1903 is for 'Allotment 94 of the subdivision of Section 2112, Hundred of Port Adelaide' with The Catholic Church Endowment Society Incorporated listed as owner. On 2 May 1903 the property was transferred to The Carmelite Fathers Incorporated.

<sup>197</sup> F. E. Meleng, *Fifty Years of the Port Adelaide Institute*. (Adelaide, 1902) 15.

<sup>198</sup> *The Southern Cross Newspaper*, 24 August 1978, 7.

Murphy opened the church on the Feast of the Assumption, 15 August 1858 with *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald* describing it as a 'handsome Gothic building, without tower...and very handsomely appointed inside. Accommodation for about 500'.<sup>199</sup> Officially named the Church of the Immaculate Conception, it has been known as St Mary's from the time of its construction. The church was built of Glen Osmond stone and 'partly vitrified building stone from Melbourne'.<sup>200</sup> *The Adelaide Observer* commented that it made 'a beautiful addition to the architectural appearance of the Port'.<sup>201</sup>

On 23 June 1867 the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart arrived at Port Adelaide on board *Penola*,<sup>202</sup> with some of the group staying in the district to conduct schools at Port Adelaide and nearby Queenstown.<sup>203</sup> Among those welcomed at the Port were Mary Helen MacKillop and Rose Cunningham, who travelled on to Adelaide to set up their first convent at the rented 'Pelham Cottage' in Grote Street and open a school in a hall beside St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Wakefield Street.<sup>204</sup> *The Adelaide Observer* recorded the Port Adelaide welcome to the group which was on

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<sup>199</sup> *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 30 October 1869, 399. St Mary's is the earliest Port church still in use as a church.

<sup>200</sup> *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 30 October 1869, 399.

<sup>201</sup> *The Adelaide Observer*, 21 August 1858.

<sup>202</sup> Margaret Press, *South Australian Catholics 1836 to 1905*. (Adelaide, 1986) 158. In 1867 the Sisters of St Joseph had not yet received official status but were known to everyone as such. See also William Modystack, *Mary MacKillop: A Woman Before Her Time*. (Adelaide, 1982) 273-274. Bishop Sheil approved the Rule on 17 December 1868. Mary MacKillop took her final vows on 8 December 1869.

<sup>203</sup> *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 20 October 1868, 211. The boys were then taught at the town hall.

<sup>204</sup> Modystack, 272. See also Frank O'Grady, 'Mary McKillop [sic] and the Teaching Order of Saint Joseph', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 61, March 1975, 44.

the threshold of expanding its service to Catholic education in the colony and throughout the continent.<sup>205</sup> The Josephite Sisters were the first entirely Australian order of nuns, founded in Penola under the leadership of Mary MacKillop and Woods, then director-general of South Australian Catholic schools.<sup>206</sup>

After a decade St Mary's Church was still struggling to become properly established with Smyth and Woods attending to the parish between other duties. Finally, in October 1868 the Reverend Father James Ambrose Nowlan, of the Order of the Hermits of St Augustine, left Kapunda and became the first resident Catholic priest at the Port.<sup>207</sup> A house was purchased near the church and renovated for use as a presbytery.<sup>208</sup>

Woods had made plans to enlarge the church and on 1 March 1868 Smyth laid the foundation stone for a chancel. *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald* reported that the additions would cost 'about £560. Of this sum there is rather more than £200 now in hand, and it is hoped not to leave the debt more than £250 at the time of the opening'.<sup>209</sup> In 1868 a sacristy, chancel and organ gallery were added to the northern end of the church and blessed and opened by Bishop Laurence Bonaventure Shiel.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> *The Adelaide Observer*, 29 June 1867, in Press, 158-159.

<sup>206</sup> The Sisters of St Joseph ran the school at Port Adelaide from 1868 until 1871 when Mary MacKillop was temporarily excommunicated for 22 weeks. The school reopened in 1878 and the Sisters continued their teaching at the Port until 1965.

<sup>207</sup> *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 20 October 1868, 211.

<sup>208</sup> *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 20 October 1868, 211.

<sup>209</sup> *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 20 March 1868, 98.

<sup>210</sup> McDougall and Vines, 81. The additions were possibly also designed by Kingston.

The internal decorative elements mainly relate to the arched opening of this later chancel area enclosing an ornately carved altar and reredos, altar rails and stained glass windows.

Nowlan was left to find the rest of the funds to pay for the improvements and to build a school which was Woods' next project for the Port Adelaide parish. Fundraising activities included a concert at which Mayor John Sinclair presided. It was reported as 'a most successful affair, there being a very large audience, who seemed much delighted with the performance of the Port Adelaide Amateur Christy Minstrels....The Rev. J. E. Tenison Woods also gave his highly entertaining and instructive lecture of "Ten Years in the Bush," which was listened to with great attention, and at its close rewarded with loud applause'.<sup>211</sup> Funds were still deficient after the concert and a bazaar was advertised in March 1869 'to help to PAY OFF THE DEBTS incurred in beautifying the Port Church, and also to supply funds to BUILD A SCHOOLROOM'.<sup>212</sup>

The school-room known as the 'Nuns' School',<sup>213</sup> now St Mary's hall, was built shortly after the church additions. Disagreements among the congregation over priorities given to education, and the debt caused by

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<sup>211</sup> *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 20 August 1868. This contrasts with a request from the Congregational Church Young Men's Society to a meeting of Congregational deacons in June 1895 for the use of the hall under their church to hold a concert. The request was rejected because it was unacceptable for some of the performers to have 'blackened faces'. See also Eland and Counsell, 25.

<sup>212</sup> *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 20 March 1869, 298.

<sup>213</sup> Heather Hartshorne and Josie Wilkinson, *The Carmelite Priests and Brothers in South Australia: 1881 to 1999, (1902 to 1999, Port Adelaide/Pennington)*. 1999, 3.



**Illustration 21**

St Mary's Catholic Church  
Dale Street, Port Adelaide,  
1858.

The rectangular church with its high gabled roof was designed by George Strickland Kingston and constructed by Charles Farr. The rendered façade features a triple pointed-arched window (trinity window) below high hood moulding. The buttressed and gabled entrance porch has a statue recess above arched double doors. This view is of a doorway in a side porch.

**Illustration 22**

St Mary's Hall, 1869.

The hall (56 feet by 28 feet, and 16 feet high) was originally built as a double schoolroom alongside the church. The foundations were constructed of concrete three feet thick with 'Swan River and jarrah timber'. Designed by architects, Wright, Woods & Hamilton, it was built in seven weeks by J. Gowling at a cost of £400. It was reported as having 'a very neat appearance, white brick dressing of colonial manufacture being used in the elevation'. The builders innovatively used hollow brick walls to counteract the problems of the soft soil and rising damp, and create air-flow to reduce heat during summer.

*The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald,*  
25 September, 30 October 1869.



the improvements to the property, led to a court case in which the first resident priest was involved.<sup>214</sup>

In 1879 the church commenced construction of a stone presbytery with 12 rooms on the corner of Port Road and Cleave Street, with the local press commenting that the church was 'keeping pace with the times'.<sup>215</sup> Once the project was underway, fundraising began with advertisements for activities such as 'entertainment of a popular and attractive character in the Town Hall, Port Adelaide...with a view to supplement the funds of the Catholic Presbytery'.<sup>216</sup> Six years later attempts were still being made to reduce the debt with a town hall concert on Boxing Night 'in aid of the Catholic Presbytery Debt Fund' which attracted only 'moderate attendance'.<sup>217</sup>

During their time at Port Adelaide Reverend Father Ryan, the Very Reverend George Williams and Reverend J. A. Cornes were well respected throughout the district. In 1896 the vicar-general, Archdeacon Russell, prepared a report on the parish activities which included a detailed inventory of the furniture, vestments and altar items such as candlesticks, vases and chalices, and a statement on the condition of the buildings, including the presbytery which had deteriorated after 18 years.

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<sup>214</sup> *The Southern Cross and Catholic Herald*, 20 February 1869, 273.

<sup>215</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9, 16 August 1879.

<sup>216</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 September 1879.

<sup>217</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 December 1885.

Schools - There is but one Catholic School in the District conducted by the Sisters of St Joseph. Seven in number, there are 270 children on the rolls....

State of Buildings - The Church is 50 feet in length [sic] by 30, with a good sized Sanctuary & Sacristy. The walls are of stone and well built, the Church is in good repair, but there is a damp rising on the outside which in time would injure the building. Sittings for 350.

The School room is next to the Church it is 53 feet by 25 the building of brick with iron roof, there is a class room at the back of iron and match board lining. The School is in good repair and well furnished.

The presbytery is a very large one there being 14 rooms, it is not a first class building the walls are very much cracked, but secured by iron girders.<sup>218</sup>

In March 1882 the *Port Adelaide News* reported the 'Sisters of St. Joseph doing great work' at their local school teaching children 'of Protestant parents as well as Catholics'. The report added, 'Can anything be done to incite a Protestant zeal as large and as practical?'<sup>219</sup> The schools were run by a group of nuns under a vow of poverty but they needed money to run their schools and fundraising continued in the town. In October 1884 a theatre group of 'lady and gentlemen amateurs', The Yorrick Dramatic Club', provided 'Entertainment...in aid of Sisters of St. Joseph in their praiseworthy educational purposes'.<sup>220</sup>

The nuns had a significant influence in the Port through their teaching and their social work amongst the poor. When Sister Mary Ephrem Howard died at St Joseph's Convent in Dale Street on 31 March 1896, the town came to pay its respects, 'a large number of people visited the church to witness the solemn and imposing ceremony made in honour of the dead sister's good works'.<sup>221</sup> In December 1897 the nuns named

<sup>218</sup> 'Visitation of Districts and Churches by Archdeacon Russell V.G. from September 29th 1896', File 12609, Heritage South Australia.

<sup>219</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 March 1882.

<sup>220</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 October 1884.

<sup>221</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 April 1896.

their second convent 'Howard House' in her memory when they purchased a property at 87 Dale Street. In 1904 a new convent and school building were erected in Quebec Street and opened by the archbishop.<sup>222</sup>

The Augustinian Order continued to supply priests to the parish, while in 1897 Archbishop John O'Reilly invited the Marist Brothers to conduct a school in the Port district. In 1902 O'Reilly asked the Carmelite Fathers from Gawler 'to minister in the district', which at that time included Semaphore.<sup>223</sup>

The Catholic bishop of Adelaide, the Most Reverend Christopher A. Reynolds, took his own steps for the temperance movement. In late October 1881 Reynolds confirmed 104 of his flock at St Mary's Church, at the same time enrolling them as total abstainers, the local paper reported, 'according to the Bishop's praiseworthy custom'.<sup>224</sup>

The Baptists in the Port District built their churches near their homes in Alberton in 1862 and Semaphore in 1878. In 1882 the Semaphore congregation replaced their wooden church in Turton Street with a large stone building in Semaphore Road. In the Port, the Strict or Particular Baptists, numbering 67 in 1881,<sup>225</sup> met for divine service every Sunday in the Odd Fellows' hall. Their doctrine was Calvinistic and the term 'Particular' referred to their belief in a 'particular, individual or

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<sup>222</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 May 1904. See also Hartshorne and Wilkinson, 5.

<sup>223</sup> *The Southern Cross Newspaper*, 24 August 1978.

<sup>224</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 1 November 1881.

<sup>225</sup> Census Returns, 1881.

restricted atonement confined to the elect'.<sup>226</sup>

The Reverend J. W. Bamber visited Port Adelaide in March 1877 and two months later the church invited him to work as their pastor. He arrived to take up the appointment in June 1877.<sup>227</sup> In 1893 the congregation purchased a block of land in Quebec Street near Church Place at the rear of St Paul's and built the Salem Strict Baptist Church.<sup>228</sup>

There is little evidence that the Port churches endeavoured to help the destitute poor on a personal level until the Port Adelaide Salvation Army Corps, the third in Australia, was established in 1882.<sup>229</sup> The committed officers targeted the poor and needy, alcoholics and those on the criminal fringe, convinced they could make a difference in the lives of those they ministered to each day. They did not flinch from helping someone in the gutter who smelt of stale drink, urine and vomit. To catch the attention of Portonians and make their cause and activities known, the Salvationists 'attired in a sort of second-hand livery costume',<sup>230</sup> conducted street theatre with brass band, street processions and fervent spruikers to stir reactions and feelings in their 'rough-and-ready sympathisers'.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Pike, 125.

<sup>227</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 July 1889.

<sup>228</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 11 August 1893. See *Sands & McDougall Directory*, 1901, 64.

<sup>229</sup> Barbara Bolton, *Booth's Drum: The Salvation Army in Australia 1880-1980*. (Sydney, 1980) 12-14. Thomas Sutherland and his wife Adelaide (known in London before her marriage as 'hot Milner' for her religious fervour), were the first corps officers appointed by William Booth in Australia and arrived in South Australia on the *Aconcagua* in 1881. Based in Adelaide they set about establishing corps in various areas including Port Adelaide.

<sup>230</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 June 1882.

<sup>231</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 December 1883.

In June 1882 the Army put on a parade and an evening service to announce their presence in the town which the local paper described.

The Port contingent marched by torchlight to the railway station, where they effected a junction with reinforcements from Adelaide and Hindmarsh. The troops were then marched to the Ferry steps, where their comrades addressed a few words of exhortation to them, and they were then led to the Barracks. Here there was a tremendous crush, and the building was soon literally packed, standing and sitting room. There must have been a couple of hundred persons outside who could not gain admission, so that the gathering altogether numbered probably close to a thousand people. The congregation was very orderly during the services....The Salvation Army....went among the gutters and purlieus of the city, and took by the hand the fallen, whom the decent, nice, respectable folks, did not like to come in contact with. It was not pleasant to take by the hand the fallen, reeking with the mire and filth of sin....They could not lay their hands upon a soldier of the Salvation Army and say that what he did was for lucre.

The newspaper went on to observe that it was the Salvation Army who most actively ministered to the poor and downtrodden and that there was indeed a want for such activity in the Port.

We believe that the Salvation Army have a large field of work open to them. Their labors, it cannot be denied, are directed into a groove which is penetrated by no other evangelic efforts....There can be no doubt that the majority of those who attend these services are actuated by motives of curiosity, but there is no reason why many who attend from such motives, may not receive much higher benefit than they sought....We think that the Army may with some show of justice lay claim to a little credit for the fact that not a single case was brought before the police court this morning. It is far from improbable that some of the members of their large congregation last night had they not been at the services would have been inmates of a police cell.<sup>232</sup>

There was an amount of resistance to the Army, including complaints about the long meetings encouraging the young to stay out too late: 'Salvation Army creating new evil in Port Adelaide - services held to very late hour and parents are complaining that young people insisting on attending these meetings are stopping out till very unseemly times'.<sup>233</sup>

During a discussion on social purity in the House of Assembly in

<sup>232</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 June 1882. The Salvation Army did 'have a large field of work open to them'. In 1919, the Port Adelaide Methodist Mission was established to also help the town's needy.

<sup>233</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 January 1883.

September 1883 one speaker cited the Salvation Army's late night meetings amongst his varied list of causes of social ills: 'he did not doubt there were other sinners about, and always would be so long as there were tent-fights, late night meetings of the Salvation Army, promiscuous dances, factory-girls, domestic servants, barmaids, ballet-dancing, and - scoundrels ready to lay traps for the unwary'.<sup>234</sup>

Colonel James Bray described the first year he was in charge of the Port Salvation Army during 1883: 'we had some tough battles. The Hall was entered by enemies one night, who destroyed more than £30 worth of brass instruments and tore up the Flag and the Bible. This turned folks to our aid and eventually did us more good than harm'.<sup>235</sup> Port Adelaide did not experience the severe reactions reported in some other towns and cities, where police intervention had been necessary. It would appear that the Port police were well in control of the street at this time.

The fact that there has never been any necessity for active interference by the authorities since the advent of the Salvation Army either to stop street processions or to hinder counter-demonstrations, is something very creditable to Port Adelaideans....In Newcastle, New South Wales, and Melbourne suburbs excited opposition led to serious disturbances....Iarrikin element attempted every kind of obstruction up to the point of physical violence.<sup>236</sup>

In late 1883 the old Presbyterian Church was finally sold. The paper reported 'the Salvation Army that has occupied the old Scotch Church knows not whither to go, or what to do now that the building is sold'.<sup>237</sup>

<sup>234</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 7 September 1883.

<sup>235</sup> Cited in Lumbers, 84. Keeping to the military analogy, Bray referred to those who vandalised the hall as 'enemies'.

<sup>236</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 25 January 1884.

<sup>237</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4 December 1883.

For some time the Port Salvationists rented space in a shed, the former McCauley's Bag Factory,<sup>238</sup> and in 1888 took 'premises next to the Post Office, North-parade...where they intend holding their meetings'.<sup>239</sup> From a newspaper report in June 1895 it appeared that, as well as his mission around the waterside and town, the new adjutant had problems with his flock who were 'fighting each other rather than waging wars against sins of us poor benighted mudholians, boatmen, fishermen, lumpers, coal-heavers, wharfingers etc'.<sup>240</sup>

In 1913 the Port Salvation Army moved into a newly-built citadel hall and staff quarters in Dale Street and continued their work in the town from this centre. The Port Adelaide citadel was 'built to a design which, with minor variations, was used as a format' for Salvation Army halls during the early years of the twentieth century throughout Australia.<sup>241</sup>

Katrina McDougall and Elizabeth Vines described the building.

The form of the hall was a simple rectangular open area with a gallery and speakers platform at the opposite end to the entrance. The utilitarian form of interior of the building befitted the nature of the religious ceremonies which were undertaken by the Salvation Army and a formula based on member numbers was used to determine the amount of funds expended.

Early photos of the Salvation Army Hall indicate that it was constructed originally in unpainted brick with render detail, large timber doors and multi-paned round headed windows.<sup>242</sup>

The hall was closed in 1979 when the Port Salvationists became part of the Semaphore Corps.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>238</sup> McDougall and Vines, 89.

<sup>239</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 March 1888.

<sup>240</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 June 1895.

<sup>241</sup> McDougall and Vines, 89.

<sup>242</sup> McDougall and Vines, 89.

<sup>243</sup> In 1999 the well-maintained former citadel is occupied by printers, Powerhouse Press.



The Hebrew congregation had an early presence in South Australia with the Levi, Hyams (Hains), Lee and Lazar families having business interests at Port Adelaide. There is mention of Jews attending services at the Congregational Church in 1849.<sup>244</sup> In Adelaide a Hebrew congregation was established in 1848 and a synagogue founded in 1850. An Adelaide Hebrew Philanthropic Society established in 1852 assisted needy Hebrew congregation members for many decades.<sup>245</sup> In 1872 a new synagogue was built alongside the original one with the congregation mainly drawn from traders who lived above their shops in Rundle and Hindley Streets. In the 1880s the small group in South Australia, including 67 Jews in the Port,<sup>246</sup> endeavoured to maintain its identity but growth was curtailed by migration to the larger Jewish communities in Sydney and Melbourne and some assimilation into Christian society.<sup>247</sup>

While the Hebrew worshippers did not flourish to the extent that might have led to the establishment of their own synagogue at the Port, there was concern for Jewish youth. In December 1892 at a gathering in the town hall of the local Jewish congregation attended by the Metropolitan Rabbi, Abraham Tobias Boas, it was decided to form a local 'Sunday School'.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Hodge, 5.

<sup>245</sup> Derek Whitelock, *Adelaide From Colony to Jubilee: A Sense of Difference*. (Adelaide, 1985) 193.

<sup>246</sup> Census Returns, 1881.

<sup>247</sup> Bernard Hyams, 'Struggle to survive - the Jewish community in South Australia', paper given at the State History Conference, Adelaide, 21 September 1996.

<sup>248</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 2 December 1892.

By the 1890s the town's non-conformist churchmen were reaching out from their own domains and uniting for a more dominant role in town affairs. A ban on 'Sunday amusements' which included playing cards and billiards was one of their proposals

A few weeks ago a number of zealous Port Adelaide pastors met in solemn conclave, and unanimously decided that the permissal of Sunday amusements was detrimental to the spiritual welfare of the town, and accordingly drew up a petition which they sent to the Government, requesting that the discontinuance of the practice be insisted upon.<sup>249</sup>

Local clergy were also strongly connected through an ecumenical Sunday School Union organised by church representatives from the Port and Glanville Presbyterians, Port Congregationalists, Semaphore, Glanville and Alberton Baptists, Portland Estate and Glanville Bible Christians and Semaphore Wesleyans.<sup>250</sup> In July 1881 the Union was inaugurated with the editor of *Port Adelaide News*, Edwin Derrington, in the chair. The president was John Angus the Presbyterian minister who was supported by the ecumenical committee.<sup>251</sup> The following month a competitive two-hour scripture examination was devised for the scholars.<sup>252</sup> Results were published in the paper, giving the names and denomination of each student. A further list of placegetters in order of denomination was also published. The presentation of certificates took place at 'a mass meeting of scholars and teachers'.<sup>253</sup> The examination was

<sup>249</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 July 1894.

<sup>250</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 August 1881. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 16 August 1881. The committee included W. Neill, vice president and treasurer, Kirby (Congregational), Burns (Bible Christian), M. Lloyd (Baptist), Derrington, and C. J. Stevens (secretary).

<sup>251</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 July 1881.

<sup>252</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 August 1881.

<sup>253</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 August 1881.

both a competition between students (and perhaps their various teachers) and between churches.

Dissenters enjoyed discussing preachers and their messages in much the same way as they would comment on public speakers or politicians and their speeches. They followed their favourite ecclesiastic orators whose reputations as influential leaders were much compared.<sup>254</sup> A good preacher appealed to the puritan spirit of the non-conformists. Perhaps in the austerity of their chapels the colour was provided by the assertive lone actor on stage in the pulpit. In comparison the Church of England and Catholic religious services were a stimulation of theatre-set and music, and adherents were more conservative and organised in their liturgy and traditional order of services.

From the time of settlement the Port churches experienced rapid growth and influence. From makeshift shelters to fine stone buildings; from preachers on the wharf to churchmen who took their messages of social and moral reform to the colonial government. From the comfortable mores, Sunday dress, ceremony and song of middle-class worship to the Salvationists contending with stale odours and abuse from the derelict in the gutter. There were vigorous debates between the clergymen but also at times strong local ecumenism.

Many ministers travelled widely, both in Australia and overseas, and

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<sup>254</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 5 February 1881.

returned to the Port with new ideas which they introduced to their congregations. As educated and scholarly men they were intellectual leaders in the town interested in the education of the young and involved in town and colonial affairs. They practised religion in a port where the streets were lined with hotels and the impious. Kirby, the Congregational pastor, set about seeking to reduce the problems of alcohol and bring moral improvement to the town and the colony.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE REVEREND JOSEPH COLES KIRBY AND SOCIAL REFORM

From 1882 until 1915 Port Adelaide became a crucible of social reform in South Australia. The main protagonist for many reform causes during this period was Joseph Coles Kirby, the town's Congregational pastor. He was a leader in the social purity movement which rallied against prostitution, an avowed prohibitionist against alcohol, a significant activist in the women's suffrage movement and an exponent of the eugenics principle.

Kirby's fervour for the betterment of society led him to study reform movements overseas, and to clarify his ideas in the diverse climate of the Port where he lived and worked for 44 years. His experiences, both in England and in his early career in Sydney and outlying areas of Queensland, prepared him for his work in Port Adelaide. The strong influences of his formative years developed his later zeal for social and

moral reform. Edward Kiek, who wrote Kirby's biography in 1926,<sup>1</sup> contended that 'if heredity and environment combine to determine the outlook and destiny of a man, Kirby could not avoid becoming deeply religious'.<sup>2</sup>

The early influences on his thinking give an insight into Kirby's life. *The Advertiser* stated: 'he was bred in an atmosphere of fighting for good causes. He carried on the family tradition, for no matter what the opposing odds, he was always in the forefront when a campaign was started to bring about social reform'.<sup>3</sup>

Joseph Coles Kirby was born at Castle Mills, Buckinghamshire, England, on 10 June 1837, the son of John and Mary Bevan Kirby. On 28 June he was baptised at the Independent's Meeting House, Buckingham, by T. W. Bridge, 'Protestant Dissenting Minister'.<sup>4</sup> The 18-year old Queen Victoria had reigned for eight days. From mediæval times Buckinghamshire had a reputation as a nursery for independent thought, 'a hot bed of heresy and dissent'.<sup>5</sup> Kiek argued that Kirby's radicalism was 'indeed rooted in the soil of the county'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Rev. J. C. Kirby at Eighty-seven', newspaper cutting, Grace Kirby Album, Brian Samuels Collection, it is reported that as his strength avails Mr. Kirby is engaged in preparing his autobiography for publication in collaboration with Rev. E. S. Kiek, M.A., B.D., the able and widely-respected principal of Parkin Congregational (Theological) College, Adelaide'. Another cutting stated, 'the material of the book is derived largely from Mr. Kirby's own reminiscences'.

<sup>2</sup> Edward S. Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia. The Life and Reminiscences of Joseph Coles Kirby, Christian Pioneer and Social Reformer*. (London, 1927) 18.

<sup>3</sup> *The Advertiser*, 2 August 1924.

<sup>4</sup> Baptism certificate of Joseph Coles Kirby, Kirby Family Papers, David Kirby Collection.

<sup>5</sup> Kiek, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Kiek, 19.

In his later years Kirby recalled family tales of his great-grandfather William Kirby sheltering the crusading preacher John Wesley 'from the fury of a mob' in his own home, and of his grandfather dying while at a Methodist prayer meeting.<sup>7</sup> The Kirbys were staunch Calvinists and Independents but the early contact with the Wesleyan ministry left some influence on the family.<sup>8</sup> His biographer wrote, 'some of us thought that, in his old age, Kirby was more than half a Methodist'.<sup>9</sup>

His mother's family, the Coles, were Quakers. Kirby's maternal grandmother Joanna Bevan, born in 1771, joined the Society of Friends after leaving the Church of England when her parish vicar failed to comfort her during a period of spiritual distress.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to her sheltered childhood in the Manor House of Drayton Parslow in Bedford, she became a 'recorded minister' and an evangelist for social justice.<sup>11</sup> She worked for the abolition of British slavery in the West Indies which was finally effected in 1833 and, as a close friend and associate of Elizabeth Fry, campaigned for prison reform.<sup>12</sup> In her last years she lived with the

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<sup>7</sup> 'Benjamin Kirby', 3. Kirby Family Papers, David Kirby Collection. Kirby's grandfather Joseph was a deacon of the Independents' Meeting House in Buckingham. See also Kiek, 19.

<sup>8</sup> The strict teachings of the French protestant theologian, John Calvin (1509-1564), influenced the British puritans and reformed churches (other than the Lutheran). The Methodists followed a more moderate doctrine espoused by the brothers the Reverends Charles and John Wesley, ministers in the Church of England who were influenced by the Dutch reformed theologian Jacob Harmensen, known as Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609).

<sup>9</sup> Kiek, 17.

<sup>10</sup> Kiek, 21.

<sup>11</sup> 'The coming of the Quakers into the family of Kirby and how Joseph Coles started as our first Quaker ancestor', undated, 1-2. Kirby Family Papers, David Kirby Collection. See also Kiek, 22.

<sup>12</sup> 'The coming of the Quakers', 4. 'J. C. K. and his sister were always proud to tell how the sainted Elizabeth Fry when visiting the Kirby home would cradle them in her arms'. Joanna Martha was a year younger than her brother Joseph.

Kirby family and left a considerable impression on her young grandson Joseph, who was eight when she died.<sup>13</sup>

Kirby was educated in a boarding school run by the Society of Friends at Sibford Ferris near Banbury, Oxfordshire, and at 13 left to enter his father's business, Castle Flour Mills.<sup>14</sup> The water mill had been owned for 400 years by his mother's family and acquired by his father through his marriage.<sup>15</sup> Joseph learnt book keeping, judging the quality of wheat for purchase, and blending the many wheat varieties to produce different grades of flour. His father lacked an aptitude for business which was exacerbated after the repeal of the corn laws in 1846, when the consequent agricultural depression caused a decline in the milling industry.<sup>16</sup> Financial problems worsened at the mill and the family faced the disgrace of bankruptcy when Joseph was 17.<sup>17</sup> In the small, strict community the guilt and shame of leaving unpaid debts were almost too great to bear. Central to the traditions of British Calvinism or puritanism were the spirit of independence, the worthiness of thrift and the horror of debt. Bankruptcy was regarded not only as financial mismanagement or misfortune, it could be grounds for excommunication in some churches.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 'The coming of the Quakers', 2-3, 'her dynamic force was another gift to him' and she 'exercised a potent and spiritual influence on J. C. K. and his sister.' See also Kiek, 22.

<sup>14</sup> 'The coming of the Quakers', 6. 'Castle Mills had existed from the time of William the Conqueror'. The family also owned Padbury Mills.

<sup>15</sup> Kiek, 19.

<sup>16</sup> Kiek, 35.

<sup>17</sup> 'The coming of the Quakers', 6. 'We think that had John Kirby been a man of business affairs like his father and his father-in-law, the Castle Mills held for centuries should not have passed out of the family'. See also Kiek, 35-36.

<sup>18</sup> Walter W. Phillips, 'The Influence of Congregationalism in South Australia 1837-1915'. B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1957, 10.



The family home alongside the flour mill was sold and in the face of their catastrophe John and Mary Kirby decided to emigrate to Australia with their children. John's mother and sister raised the money for the second-class fare on board the Royal Mail clipper *Marco Polo* from Liverpool to Sydney. They were just one family among the 700 emigrants on the 1854 passage who were pinning their hopes on opportunities to be found in the Antipodes.

Joseph, an adventurous 17-year old, left the ship in Melbourne and travelled overland to Sydney, meeting up with his family at the end of their voyage. He found work sampling wheat in Paddy Haynes' flour mill in Elizabeth Street for 12/- a day. For £2 a week the Kirbys rented a large room over a stationer's shop in Parramatta Street, later George Street West.<sup>19</sup>

The family endeavoured to give their lives a new beginning and became regular attenders at the Congregational Church (also known as the Independent Chapel) in Pitt Street. This large church, designed to accommodate 1000 worshippers, was described by Joseph Fowles in 1848 as 'the handsomest building of the kind in Sydney, or indeed in any of these Colonies'.<sup>20</sup>

At an impressionable age Joseph listened to the preaching of the

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<sup>19</sup> Kiek, 40-41.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Fowles, *Sydney in 1848*. (Sydney, 1848) 39.

young pastor, William Cuthbertson, and other Calvinist firebrand evangelists who passed through the Pitt Street parish. Church discipline was taken seriously and compulsory church attendance, cross examinations on matters of faith and regular prayer-meetings were expected and enforced.<sup>21</sup> Admission to the church required three months' preparation. Kirby visited the home of newspaperman John Fairfax once a week where Fairfax, as a deacon of the church, instructed and examined him for membership.<sup>22</sup>

Kirby was invited to start a temperance group, a Band of Hope, in connection with the Sunday school and was soon in demand as a speaker at other Bands of Hope which spread throughout Sydney. He was 'delighted' that about this time his father 'abandoned beer in favour of tea'.<sup>23</sup>

With the strict church discipline of the 1850s it might be assumed that an abhorrence of alcohol was mandatory, but teetotalism was often regarded with disfavour and even ministers viewed total abstinence as unnatural. During Kirby's boyhood it was common for non-conformist preachers to retire to the vestry for a glass of wine during the hymn before the sermon.<sup>24</sup> Kirby's obituary referred to him as 'ever a teetotaller' when in fact as a boy he had been given half a pint of home-brewed beer before going to bed and was occasionally allowed to drink

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<sup>21</sup> Kiek, 52.

<sup>22</sup> Kiek, 55.

<sup>23</sup> Kiek, 44.

<sup>24</sup> Kiek, 34.

wine.<sup>25</sup> His parents, following the practices of the period, believed that a moderate use of alcohol was beneficial to health.<sup>26</sup>

Another major influence on Kirby during his boyhood in England was James Cadbury of chocolate fame, a Sibford school committee member and family friend who was one of the pioneers of the total abstinence movement.<sup>27</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century Cadbury and many fellow English Quakers withdrew from all brewing and malting concerns, convinced that dividends from such investments were tainted even though this action led to considerable financial loss.<sup>28</sup> At the age of 11 Kirby had made his own decision on teetotalism and 'signed the pledge'.<sup>29</sup> The Band of Hope at Pitt Street was based on his youthful experience in England where he had organised a similar group. Kiek stated that Kirby's teetotal conviction was strengthened in Sydney by his observation of drunken behaviour around the numerous public houses which were open at all hours.<sup>30</sup>

In 1858 the Reverend Joseph Beazley from Redfern heard Kirby give an address at the annual meeting of the Sydney City Mission Band of

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<sup>25</sup> 'A genealogical monograph of the family and the collateral and allied families of Coles, Bevan, Box, Boothroyd and Burnet', 4. Kirby Family Papers, David Kirby Collection. See also Kiek, 34.

<sup>26</sup> Kiek, 34.

<sup>27</sup> 'The coming of the Quakers', 3, 11. The Kirbys knew 'the Cadburys, the Frys, the Rowntrees and other noted Quakers'. Cadbury lived 'in style and dignity....was a frequent visitor to the Blue Coat School and always displayed a friendly interest in the Kirby boy'.

<sup>28</sup> Kiek, 33.

<sup>29</sup> Kiek, 34.

<sup>30</sup> Kiek, 44.

Hope. Impressed by his gift of oratory, Beazley offered the young man private tuition which he hoped would encourage Kirby to consider a calling to the ministry. During 1859 Kirby studied with Beazley two evenings a week while working during the day at the flour mill. The subjects Beazley tutored were logic and rhetoric, mental and moral philosophy, and Latin, and he encouraged his pupil to present written sermons for criticism and taught him 'to love clear expression'.<sup>31</sup>

Kirby received a small legacy from a distant relative at this time and was able to leave the mill and dedicate himself to uninterrupted study. A committee was selected to hear him preach a trial sermon and decide whether he should be accepted as a candidate for the ministry. Kirby chose a hell-fire topic based on a text from Psalms, 'the wicked shall be turned into hell, even all the nations that forget God'.<sup>32</sup>

The panel, which met at the home of Randolph Nott, comprised a number of laymen, including Fairfax and David Jones, a leading draper in Sydney's George Street and another Pitt Street deacon. Also on the panel were several leading ministers, Reverend Dr Ross, pastor at Pitt Street when the Kirbys first arrived, Reverend Aaron Buzacott, and Reverend John West who had joined the staff of Fairfax's *Sydney Morning Herald* and later became editor.<sup>33</sup> West presented Kirby with Liddell and Scott's

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<sup>31</sup> Kiek, 57-58.

<sup>32</sup> *The Bible*, Psalm 9:17.

<sup>33</sup> T. Roseby, 'Rev. J. C. Kirby of Port Adelaide', *The Australasian Independent*, 15 January 1892, 2.

*Greek Lexicon*.<sup>34</sup> In a short period of time the young man had acquired a strong network of influential contacts in Sydney circles of business and learning. His sermon on the 'terrors of the Law' and the 'torments of the lost' impressed his examiners and he was accepted in 1855 as a candidate for the ministry at the newly opened Camden College in Sydney, being the second student to enter the college.<sup>35</sup> Kirby realised that a great opportunity for study and success in his vocation lay ahead and looked forward to continuing his education after Camden at Sydney University which had opened in 1851. At home, the strain of his father's misfortunes took its toll. After two years as an invalid, John Kirby died on 29 June 1857.<sup>36</sup> Kirby's determination to succeed strengthened, but the vagaries of fate intervened. He was about to be exposed to a wide range of colonial experiences which took him beyond the city life of Sydney. Kirby would eventually serve in three of the Australian colonies.

In the 1860s there was a shortage of ministers of all denominations across Australia, and churches were impatient for theology students to complete their courses.<sup>37</sup> In Ipswich, Queensland, the serious illness of the Congregational minister, the Reverend J. William C. Drane, necessitated urgent assistance in the parish. It was decided to send Kirby to

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<sup>34</sup> Kiek, 58-59.

<sup>35</sup> Kiek, 59-60. The first student accepted was John Jacob Halley, the son of Robert Halley, principal of New College, London.

<sup>36</sup> Kiek, 60-61.

<sup>37</sup> Kiek, 61-62.

Queensland after finishing two years of his course but before completing it, which he always felt to be 'an unexpected and cruel abridgment'.<sup>38</sup>

At the beginning of 1863 Kirby travelled to Ipswich on the understanding that Drane, a specialist in Old Testament studies, would continue Kirby's tutoring and training. He was to supervise Kirby's further reading until confident that his student was ready for full accreditation as a Congregational minister. Kirby's duties were to assist Drane with running the church and to preach once on Sundays.<sup>39</sup>

On his arrival Kirby found Drane too ill to continue duties and took over almost the entire load of church work. Kirby lived at the home of Dr Henry Challinor, the Member for West Moreton in the Queensland parliament and a well known 'protagonist of land-law reform' who influenced the young man's developing interest in politics.<sup>40</sup>

Drane 'was inclined to measure the soundness of a man's Christianity by the rigidness of his Calvinism',<sup>41</sup> and Kirby's more moderate views almost jeopardised his acceptance by the congregation and more importantly, Drane's approval.<sup>42</sup> At the end of a difficult and busy 12 months Kirby was persuaded by the Reverend Edward Griffith, 'the father of Queensland Congregationalism', to make a horseback tour

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<sup>38</sup> Kiek, 61.

<sup>39</sup> Kiek, 64-66.

<sup>40</sup> Kiek, 68.

<sup>41</sup> Kiek, 67.

<sup>42</sup> Kiek, 65-68.

through the Darling Downs.<sup>43</sup> Griffith, aware of the delicate situation which existed at Ipswich and 'satisfied about his orthodoxy', encouraged Kirby to seek out opportunities for service while preaching to the many small communities.<sup>44</sup>

Kirby travelled to Warwick, Toowoomba and finally Dalby, gathering Congregational families together for Sunday services. At Dalby a 'ramshackle' theatre clad in flattened kerosene tins was hired and an 'American organ' borrowed for the accompanying music.<sup>45</sup> Dalby churchgoers were impressed by Kirby's energy and evangelical style and on 18 January 1864 invited him to become their pastor.

Kirby informed the church administration of his decision to move to Dalby and ordination was approved. The occasion, at the Ipswich church, was presided over by the ailing Drane on 3 February 1864, with Griffith and the local Wesleyan Methodist minister, the Reverend Theophilus Beazley, assisting with the service.<sup>46</sup> David Jones sent a pulpit gown to be presented to Kirby, who followed the puritan tradition of wearing a gown from that time. In June 1864 Drane retired and died from tuberculosis six months later.<sup>47</sup>

When Kirby returned to Dalby to take up his first ministry, he drew

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<sup>43</sup> Kiek, 70.

<sup>44</sup> Kiek, 70.

<sup>45</sup> Kiek, 72-73.

<sup>46</sup> Kiek, 73.

<sup>47</sup> Kiek, 68.

a large crowd to the tin theatre every Sunday evening. A town of approximately one thousand people, it was an important centre for the young pastor, being the terminus of the western railway of Queensland and having no other 'non-episcopal' church within a day's travel at that time. Dalby was a frontier town in an agricultural region far removed from the civilities of Sydney. Kirby wrote: 'no where in the Empire is there blasphemy, drunkenness, and lasciviousness to beat what prevails here'.<sup>48</sup>

Kirby maintained good relations with his Church of England and Catholic colleagues in the town, the Reverend Edmund George Moberly, the French priest, Father Le Bean and later his successor Father Larkin.<sup>49</sup> Kirby remembered Larkin as 'a witty Irishman....utterly untroubled about theological matter: his great delight was to get into a bar parlour with...a laughing company gathered around'. On one such occasion Kirby recalled joining the group for 'one of the merriest afternoons that he ever spent' listening to the priest's 'irresistible' stories.<sup>50</sup>

A Congregational church was soon erected and Kirby's mother came from Sydney to care for him in his new timber home.<sup>51</sup> Amongst the newcomers to Dalby was Margaretta Hall who arrived from England to

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<sup>48</sup> 'Dalby Centenary 1863-1963: From Swamp to City', 1-2, Kirby Family Papers, David Kirby Collection.

<sup>49</sup> Kiek, 80.

<sup>50</sup> Kiek, 80.

<sup>51</sup> Kiek, 74-75.



live with her brother, Henry, the local telegraph operator. The minister and his mother visited the Halls to welcome her to the town.

Margaretta was the daughter of the late Henry Wait Hall, an English barrister, and had another brother, Montagu, in the British Army.<sup>52</sup> Brought up in the traditions of the Church of England, she had Methodist associations through her maternal grandfather, the Reverend Charles Toase, the minister at the Methodist Church in Paris for 30 years. Some of her early years had been spent in Paris and she was 'very much at home in the French language'.<sup>53</sup> On 12 December 1865 Joseph and Margaretta were married by Moberly at the Church of England in Dalby. Kirby later wrote, 'from the moment I beheld her pleasant countenance and graceful manners, and listened to her piquant conversation, I became entranced, and so remained all the days of my life'.<sup>54</sup>

A son, John Montagu, and a daughter, Margaretta (Ettie), were born at Dalby and life settled down for the family. Kirby became involved in various causes including, with Thomas Slaughter, a deacon of the church and later member of the Queensland parliament, the struggle against the

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<sup>52</sup> 'Hall', 2, Kirby Family Papers, David Kirby Collection. Colonel Montagu Hall fought in 'Burmah and India' and commanded the 101<sup>st</sup> Royal Bengal and 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Munster Fusiliers.

<sup>53</sup> Kiek, 82-83.

<sup>54</sup> Kiek, 83.

use of indentured Kanaka labour in Queensland.<sup>55</sup> Kiek stated that Kirby's pastoral challenge was to reduce alcoholism in the town, which included being the agent for the monthly remittance to Mrs Raffles, an 'intermittent inebriate' who lived in Dalby, the grand-daughter of French philosopher and author Jean Jacques Rousseau.<sup>56</sup> Each month Kirby paid her bills before handing over the balance of her allowance but was unable to help her control her addiction.<sup>57</sup> In 1869 Kirby sent a report on his work to the Colonial Missionary Society, describing the town as 'the High Place of Satan'.

Public houses and sly-grog shops abound. Most of the settlers are dissolute young members of good British families who have been sent out here that they may no longer disgrace their friends and in the expectation that they will drink themselves to death....Adventurers are here from every country under the sun.<sup>58</sup>

In late 1870 Griffith invited Kirby by telegram to spend a month preaching at the Ocean Street Congregational Church at Woollahra in Sydney. After fulfilling this engagement Kirby was asked to consider the incumbency which he accepted in April 1871.

Unlike the pioneering challenge of Dalby, Woollahra was a thriving residential suburb with the church on a prosperous footing. Four

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<sup>55</sup> Kiek, 83-87. The Polynesian word *kanaka*, meaning 'man', was used in Queensland to refer to peoples of the South Pacific Islands. Manpower in Queensland, particularly for the labour-intensive sugar industry, was expensive and from 1863 Kanakas were indentured as workers. Exploitation of the Islanders was common and the cheap labour scheme caused resentment from unemployed Queenslanders. After an extensive campaign in which Kirby was involved, an Act was passed in 1868 which sought to ensure that the contract of indenture was voluntary for the recruited workers, then numbering over 2000. It did not succeed.

<sup>56</sup> Kiek, 89. She married the son of the Reverend Thomas Raffles, pastor at Great George Street Congregational Church in Liverpool, but was sent to Australia when she became an alcoholic.

<sup>57</sup> Kiek, 89.

<sup>58</sup> 'Dalby Centenary 1863-1963: From Swamp to City', 1-2, Kirby Family Papers, David Kirby Collection.

daughters were born there: Mary Maud, Aimée Coles, Grace Mildred, and Gertrude who died in infancy.<sup>59</sup> Kirby renewed his friendship with Fairfax and David Jones, 'a deacon of outstanding piety and worth'.<sup>60</sup> Church attendance rose and plans were made to enlarge the building at a cost of £1300 which was fully paid after eight years.<sup>61</sup> During this time Kirby continued his crusade against alcoholism, developed a 'vigorous Band of Hope' at the church,<sup>62</sup> and helped form the New South Wales Public Schools League, touring rural areas to stir interest in primary school education which was 'National, Secular, Compulsory and Free'.<sup>63</sup>

In 1877 Kirby 'made an important addition to his large circle of ministerial friends' when the Reverend James Jefferis moved from Adelaide where he had 'exercised a commanding influence' for 18 years.<sup>64</sup> Jefferis' legacies to South Australia were increased community interest in the field of public welfare, the promotion of higher education, a broader ecumenism and in 1860-1861 building the imposing 'Venetian-Corinthian' style Brougham Place Church at North Adelaide. In its early years the Brougham Place Church was 'a resort for enquiring minds, professing different creeds, or having no settled belief', where Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Roman Catholics and Jews joined in

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<sup>59</sup> 'Hall', 2, Kirby Family Papers, David Kirby Collection.

<sup>60</sup> Kiek, 104.

<sup>61</sup> Kiek, 93.

<sup>62</sup> Kiek, 93.

<sup>63</sup> Kiek, 108. The League defined 'secular' as 'unsectarian' and was not seeking to exclude all religious instruction from schools.

<sup>64</sup> Kiek, 122.

worship in response to the progressive theology taught by Jefferis.<sup>65</sup> He was active in organising Union College which was established by representatives of the Baptist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches to educate young men to a level acceptable for training for the ministry.<sup>66</sup> Union College closed but was a forerunner to Parkin Congregational College, first established in 1910 at 'Wavertree', a large house on North Terrace in Kent Town.<sup>67</sup>

Jefferis took up the ministry at the Pitt Street Church in Sydney where he stayed for the next 12 years.<sup>68</sup> He continued to exert a strong social influence, advocating national rather than denominational education and acquired a position in the New South Wales Congregation Union which formed in 1866.

The Congregationalist Church had a long tradition of individual churches having pastoral independence but many Congregationalists, including Kirby, advocated some form of union recognising the unsuitability of the old English system in the sprawling conditions of nineteenth-century Australia. Kirby wanted the various congregations to use unification to develop initiatives to expand and strengthen the church. Kiek stated that 'Kirby was continually urging on his colleagues and on

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<sup>65</sup> 'Historical Sketch - The First Fifty Years of North Adelaide Congregational Church 1859-1909', *Historic Records of the North Adelaide Congregational Church together with lectures on the Commonwealth by Dr Jefferis and an essay on the life of the times by the Reverend Alfred Gifford.* (Adelaide, 1909) 8.

<sup>66</sup> Kiek, 122.

<sup>67</sup> Parkin College became Parkin-Wesley College of the Uniting Church and was later located in King William Road, Wayville.

<sup>68</sup> Kiek, 122.

the Union the need for a more energetic and aggressive policy: he was ever lamenting the short-sightedness and incompetence which allowed golden opportunities to pass unimproved'.<sup>69</sup>

Jefferis recognised Kirby's ability and contribution to the New South Wales Congregational Union. In 1877 Kirby was offered the post of 'General Home Mission Agent' of the Union with special responsibility for church outreach.<sup>70</sup> The family moved to Ashfield, and Kirby began the extensive travelling that the job demanded. He was away from home so frequently that Margaretta felt 'she might as well have married a sailor'.<sup>71</sup> His only connection with nautical matters at this time was to assist in a campaign to persuade the Australian Steam Navigation Company to abandon the employment of Chinese labour during the seamen's strike of 1878-1879. The campaign failed.<sup>72</sup>

As a militant temperance advocate he impressed Sir Henry Parkes, the New South Wales premier.<sup>73</sup> His publications on the subject of liquor reform helped persuade Parkes to formulate the 1881 *Liquor Traffic Act* which established the principle of 'local option'.<sup>74</sup> This meant that

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<sup>69</sup> Kiek, 124.

<sup>70</sup> Kiek, 124.

<sup>71</sup> Kiek, 126.

<sup>72</sup> Kiek, 115-116.

<sup>73</sup> The post of premier in New South Wales was then known as 'prime minister'.

<sup>74</sup> *The Advertiser*, 2 August 1924. In Kirby's obituary he was quoted as saying, 'I was greatly interested in temperance work at Sydney, and, at the request of the Congregational Union, I made an investigation into the liquor laws of New South Wales, which I may say were in a state of chaos. I read a paper at the convention as the result of my investigations. It came under the notice of Sir Henry Parkes, who sent for me, and practically translated the paper into law'. The obituary noted that Kirby was a great admirer of Parkes. 'He remembered the statesman when he kept a toyshop, and later when he became the proprietor and editor of *The Empire*.'

ratepayers were to be the arbiters of any proposal to establish a public house in their district.<sup>75</sup> This was a far-sighted experiment in participative democracy.

During 1879 Kirby expanded the Congregational cause by establishing new churches at three centres, Camperdown, Pyrmont, and Croydon on a site which his friendship with Anthony Horden helped to secure. Horden, from a Congregational family in Brackley, Northamptonshire, established a large drapery business in Sydney and was another man of the city in Kirby's circle of acquaintances.<sup>76</sup>

The successful Congregational merchants of New South Wales were an interesting parallel to similar men of wealth and industry who settled in South Australia. From dissenting protestant backgrounds and denied admission to professional studies such as law and medicine, they developed technical and management skills at a time of rapid mercantile and industrial expansion. Adelaide business houses were dominated by Congregational laymen including John Martin, J. Miller Anderson, W. T. Flint and Charles Birks, the latter retaining his Congregational network after joining the Baptist Church in 1863.<sup>77</sup>

The Congregational Church worked 'almost exclusively among the educated middle class' and neglected the poor, a philosophy which was

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<sup>75</sup> A. W. Martin, *Henry Parkes: a biography*. (Melbourne, 1980) 317.

<sup>76</sup> Kiek, 131. Kiek stated, 'Kirby and Horden were great friends'.

<sup>77</sup> John Cameron, *In Stow's Footsteps: A Chronological History of the Congregational churches in S. A.* (Port Adelaide SA, 1987) 62.

viewed by many, including Kirby, as isolationist and 'unchristian'.<sup>78</sup> In November 1889 Jefferis spoke from the Pitt Street pulpit on 'The Alienation of the Working Classes' admitting that the churches had 'lost much of their hold' on those who worked with their hands.<sup>79</sup>

During his work as home mission agent Kirby had often found difficulty in securing suitable sites for his numerous schemes of church extension. He maintained, Kiek wrote, that 'waste' lands were 'a gift of God' and could not accept the fundamentalists' cry of 'no State aid to religion' applied to grants of these lands to the various denominations.<sup>80</sup> After 12 months as home mission agent Kirby was elected to succeed Jefferis as chairman of the New South Wales Congregational Union, taking office on 21 October 1879. Kirby's proposals to the union assembly to accept the land grants offered by the government were turned down and he angrily reacted by declaring that they had 'sentenced Congregationalism to perpetual littleness'.<sup>81</sup>

The strained situation resulted in Kirby's resolve to resign and find a new pastorate, preferably away from New South Wales. During June 1880 Kirby fulfilled an engagement at the Collins Street Independent Church in Melbourne, and while there was approached by the Congregationalists at Port Adelaide to extend his journey and spend July

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<sup>78</sup> Kiek, 134.

<sup>79</sup> Phillips, 'The Social Composition of the Religious Denominations in late Nineteenth Century Australia', *Church Heritage*, September 1985, 77.

<sup>80</sup> Kiek, 136.

<sup>81</sup> Kiek, 137.

visiting and preaching at their church. The church committee was anxious to please Kirby during his short stay 'to supply pulpit for July' and suggested 'a conveyance be hired to take Mr. Kirby around the Adelaide Hills to show him some scenes as that would favourably impress him much more than the scenery and people about Port Adelaide'.<sup>82</sup> The middle-class committee did not exhibit the Portonian workers' pride in their town.

The incumbency at Port Adelaide was vacant due to the death of Michael Dick, and it was to the bustling major port of the colony of South Australia that Kirby made his next move. George Hodge, a member of the church and the son of the first minister, recorded the circumstances of Kirby's appointment.

About that time our old friend Mr Jefferis mentioned a certain Rev. J. C. Kirby of New South Wales and suggested that he be invited to supply for four weeks. The Secretary was instructed to invite the Rev. gentleman for the time mentioned, but to be very careful not to commit the church in any way - such a letter was sent - Mr Kirby came over and I suppose like Joshua thought the land was fair to see.<sup>83</sup>

In August 1880 Kirby was approached to accept the vacant pastorate for £300 the first year with an increase of £50 in his second year and a further £50 for the family's moving expenses from Sydney. Kirby telegrammed his acceptance.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Dean Eland and Vivien Counsell, *History of a Port Adelaide Church: "Honouring the Past...Anticipating the Future"*. (Port Adelaide, 1992) 12.

<sup>83</sup> George P. Hodge, *An Early Narrative Sketch of the Foundation and Early History of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church*. (c.1899) 13.

<sup>84</sup> 'Minutes of Church and Deacons Meetings', 12 August and 1 September 1880, in Eland and Counsell, 12.



His friendship with Jefferis, who was held in such high regard in South Australia, had helped to open the door of opportunity in a new environment and Kirby was formally inducted at Port Adelaide on 16 November 1880. Jefferis returned to North Adelaide in 1895 and renewed his association with Kirby, often recalling with satisfaction the part he played in promoting Kirby's appointment at the Port.<sup>85</sup>

Port Adelaide in 1880, with its rapidly increasing population, was also an increasingly busy port with close to 400 vessels arriving annually in this period. The Congregationalist Kiek, principal of Parkin Theological College, reflected that in 'a seaport like Port Adelaide the lure of intoxicating drink is particularly apparent and disastrous' and that there was 'plenty of evidence of the appalling results of alcoholic excess'.<sup>86</sup> Reminiscent of his experiences at Dalby, Kirby again chose to lure people away from the use of intoxicating liquor. He regarded 'total abstinence propaganda as an integral part of the work of a Christian church'.<sup>87</sup>

In the Port there was little entertainment for merchant seamen other than drinking, fighting and rendezvousing with prostitutes. Amusement could also be found at a well organised religious crusade even when a fiery reform message was expected as part of the program.<sup>88</sup> Kirby's

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<sup>85</sup> Kiek, 140-141.

<sup>86</sup> Kiek, 156, 203.

<sup>87</sup> Kiek, 155-156.

<sup>88</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 19 April 1879.

arrival in the town coincided with the month of 'great mass meetings' for temperance being held by Matthew Burnett.<sup>89</sup> The seeds for Kirby's future work in the same field were well and truly sown even as he arrived but he appeared to be more concerned in his first month with impressing the town with his preaching skills: 'On Sunday the Rev. J. C. Kirby will preach, in the morning, on the Doctrine of 'A Christ'. Evening, 'The Chinese in the Light of History, Conscience, and Scripture'.<sup>90</sup> The choice for his evening sermon was perhaps meant to convey to the congregation the depth of his knowledge of the world and his scholarship rather than giving comfort for the week ahead or revealing the personal principles of their new incumbent.

Once settled into his ministry Kirby preached more instructional sermons. Kiek described him as 'an arresting and unconventional preacher, with a gift for homely illustration and practical application....he spoke to the everyday needs of everyday people'.<sup>91</sup> In February 1881 the local press commented that Kirby 'does not lose sight - as do so many of the "cloth" - of the practical element in preaching' and praised his raising the issues of the virtue of life insurance, making a will and the need for businesses to keep books in a good state. The report concluded that 'this

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<sup>89</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 November 1880.

<sup>90</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 November 1880.

<sup>91</sup> Kiek, 148-149.

practical sort of sermonising is rare but very useful'.<sup>92</sup> It also aimed at the mercantile middle class.

Kirby was ever ready with some lateral thinking on how to solve society's problems. In his concern that Port bread-winners depleted their wages in the pubs on Saturday, his sermon on 18 December 1881 offered the suggestion that pay day could simply be changed to Monday. Kirby reasoned that this would encourage the working man to take home more of his pay and discourage spending the money on beer at the end of the working week.<sup>93</sup>

The new minister was getting to know his congregation and drove around town every afternoon in a little phaeton which Portonians referred to as 'the Gospel Chariot'.<sup>94</sup> The Reverend A. C. Stevens recalled his appearance.

For many to think of Kirby is to visualise that dear old basket chariot in which he used to drive, behind that super-funereal horse, meanwhile contriving to look something like Major Seagrave touching 200 with his speedometer, as he sat bolt upright, clad in stiff ecclesiastical broadcloth, with fearsome appurtenances of tiger hunter helmet, outsized goggles and, to crown all, a pair of half-mittens which looked as if they had been slyly purloined from a quiet old lady's workbasket.<sup>95</sup>

Kirby's pastoral philosophy that 'a home-going pastor makes a church-going people' was building the congregation into a close-knit group with an emphasis on education.<sup>96</sup> His pastoral rounds were not mere

<sup>92</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 9 February 1881.

<sup>93</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 December 1881.

<sup>94</sup> Kiek, 150.

<sup>95</sup> A. C. Stevens, 'Book review for *An Apostle in Australia*', *The News*, 4 February 1920.

<sup>96</sup> Kiek, 149.

social calls: there was a structure and a purpose to his visits. At each home he read from the Bible, delivered a message and encouraged the family to send their sons and daughters for systematic instruction or 'catechising'.<sup>97</sup> Much of Kirby's success in maintaining a large congregation was attributed 'to his enthusiasm for work among children and young people'.<sup>98</sup> He believed that thorough instruction of the young was the best foundation for the church's work.<sup>99</sup>

A 'vigorous' Sunday school was developed at the church under the leadership of a superintendent and a capable group of teachers.<sup>100</sup> Kirby arranged for youth groups to gather regularly in private homes, the young men in the evenings and the young women in the afternoons. He compiled a brief catechism of 26 questions and answers on the major 'truths' of the Bible, and had thousands of copies printed mainly at his own expense.<sup>101</sup> Kirby believed that this method helped a young person to retain the essential messages of the church.<sup>102</sup> Three questions and answers had to be memorised and mastered for each meeting. The catechumen was expected to stand cross-examination and to know the scriptural source to substantiate each statement of belief. As part of the

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<sup>97</sup> Kiek, 149-150, 275.

<sup>98</sup> Kiek, 150.

<sup>99</sup> Kiek, 150.

<sup>100</sup> Kiek, 151. During Kirby's pastorate the superintendents were W. F. Fennell, James Murray, John Caire, Thomas Todd junior, George Williams, Walter Hutley, and Ernest James Stacy, a journalist on *The Register* whom Kirby later encouraged to enter the ministry.

<sup>101</sup> 'Catechism for Evangelical Churches compiled by J.C.K.', Mortlock Library of South Australia, PRG 110/4/8. The headings were The Law of God; Points about Sin; The Three Parts of Salvation; Doctrines of the Church; Doctrines of Sacraments; Glorification; and Our Response to the Grace of God.

<sup>102</sup> Kiek, 152.

program the pastor lectured on 'personal decision, dedication and discipleship' once the study of the catechism was completed.<sup>103</sup> A steady stream of young people from the Sunday school and catechism classes strengthened the church. The classes alone provided from 20 to 30 new church members every year of Kirby's pastorate.<sup>104</sup> He later regretted not having time to use the catechetical method in the instruction of adults, as 'the old Puritans' had done.<sup>105</sup>

The church at Port Adelaide had established a Band of Hope in August 1879, over which Kirby presided, encouraging the members to continue the work of the group.<sup>106</sup> Early in his Port ministry, Kirby established a Young Christians' Union,<sup>107</sup> and a Young Men's Christian Society, which he saw as 'a stepping-stone to the church for young men leaving the Sunday school'.<sup>108</sup> The latter group met on Sunday afternoons, which were devoted to 'the reading of papers and the discussion of worthwhile subjects'.<sup>109</sup> Meetings of the society were initially held in the church vestry but with large attendances of up to 40 people, a separate hall was built for the group in 1901.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Kiek, 153.

<sup>104</sup> Kiek, 153.

<sup>105</sup> Kiek, 153.

<sup>106</sup> Kiek, 155-156. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 31 December 1880. 'The President Rev. J. C. Kirby exhorted members to take greater interest in the working of the Society'.

<sup>107</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 18 November 1881. 'The Young Christian's Union was now in working order'.

<sup>108</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 31 March 1882.

<sup>109</sup> Kiek, 154.

<sup>110</sup> *The Register*, 2 February 1924. 'In 1901 a fine brick-and-stone hall, with a seating capacity of about 100, was built at the rear of the church at Port Adelaide, being used by the Young Men's Christian Society on Sunday and for literary and other meetings during the week.'

A number of these young men, known as 'Kirby's Boys', who received training through the meetings and through producing their monthly magazine, later attained distinction in politics, journalism, business and the ministry.<sup>111</sup> After the 1914-1918 War, Kirby hand-wrote on a 1913 newspaper cutting about the group and their outstanding contribution to society: 'The bloody War killed the class their members are many buried on the fields of battle. JCK.'<sup>112</sup>

Preaching, pastoral care, education and social reform were only part of Kirby's wide ranging interests. He enjoyed the challenges and stated 'I have always driven my chariots furiously, like Jehu, the son of Nimshi'.<sup>113</sup> He was described as 'almost as much a journalist as he was an evangelist and an educationalist' and used the press as a forum for his ideas.<sup>114</sup> The editor of *Port Adelaide News*, Edwin Derrington, was a member of the Port Congregational Church, on the committee of the Port Adelaide District Sunday School Union with Kirby, and the publisher of many of Kirby's lectures and pamphlets. The Port church later produced its own bulletin, *The Congregational Herald*, with the first issue in September 1903.

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<sup>111</sup> Cameron, 61. See also Kiek, 154, 272. 'It would be interesting to know how many churches in the Homeland have sent sixteen men to college in the course of less than half a century'.

<sup>112</sup> "'Kirby's Young Men." Some interesting reminiscences. Public men in their early days', *The Mail*, April 1913, Kirby Family Papers, David Kirby Collection.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Kirby, 'Eighty Years in the Wilderness, Rev. J. C. Kirby Looks Backward', c. 1912, Grace Kirby Album, Brian Samuels Collection. The biblical quote, from 2 Kings 9:20, refers to Jehu, king of Israel c.814-840 B.C., son of Jehoshaphat and grandson of Nimshi.

<sup>114</sup> Kiek, 174. See also *Port Adelaide News*, 12 July 1889, 'The Rev. J. C. Kirby has always been considered as an exception to his brethren. He has, or is said to have, a hand in every movement affecting Port Adelaide. It is well known that he has a voice in every paper throughout South Australia when advocating any moral reform'.

The main outlet for Kirby's writing was the monthly *South Australian Congregationalist*. Having declared it a 'dull and depressing production', Kirby was invited to be editor in March 1881.<sup>115</sup> He took on the job in his enthusiastic style and in the first month set about to 'enliven' the magazine.<sup>116</sup> His reformist articles caused comment and some criticism in the secular press.<sup>117</sup> During this period Kirby advocated greater recognition of the work of women in the churches and suggested the formation of an order of deaconesses. He also argued yet again that the Congregational polity needed modification to suit Australian conditions and that the public schools should have religious subjects in the curricula. This was anathema to the traditional Congregationalists who upheld the principle of complete separation of church and state and believed it was the duty of the churches alone to provide scriptural instruction.<sup>118</sup> The executive of the magazine received objections to the controversial subject matter and in October 1881, after seven months as editor, Kirby 'resigned in dudgeon'.<sup>119</sup> The comment was made by Kiek that Kirby was 'a really able contributor' but 'lacked the temperament of an ideal editor'.<sup>120</sup>

Kirby's busy pastoral program apparently still allowed time for involvement in wider social issues and he had no hesitation in broadening his field of involvement. In the early 1880s the question of state-regulated

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<sup>115</sup> Kiek, 175.

<sup>116</sup> Kiek, 175.

<sup>117</sup> Kiek, 175.

<sup>118</sup> Kiek, 177.

<sup>119</sup> Kiek, 175.

<sup>120</sup> Kiek, 175.

or licensed brothels was being debated in England, with the French system of 'brothels controlled by contagious diseases legislation' being seriously considered there.<sup>121</sup> The issue arose in Adelaide in October 1881 when a house-fire inquest revealed that a 16-year old girl had rented the house for 'immoral purposes'.<sup>122</sup> The tragedy caused 'a great deal of shock and concern to the community at large, revealing what really did 'exist beneath the comparatively fair exterior of society".<sup>123</sup>

In their editorials on 25 October 1881, the major newspapers urged that action be taken.<sup>124</sup> It was the call to duty for those citizens advocating moral progress towards a better society. Kirby saw the opportunity for reform. He had received copies of *The Friend* from England in which the details of the French system were reported.<sup>125</sup> Convinced he should take a public stand on 'this delicate and distasteful subject', he later admitted it cost him 'a Gethsemane' to do so.<sup>126</sup> He threw himself into the new challenge.

During February 1882 Kirby wrote a number of letters to the press on legislation and 'the social evil', including comparative studies with other countries on regulations of prostitution.<sup>127</sup> In July at the Wesleyan

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<sup>121</sup> Kiek, 194-195.

<sup>122</sup> Minutes of Congregational Union of South Australia, 3 October 1881, 2, in Cheryl L. McCann, 'Guardians of Virtue, South Australia 1836-1894', B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1979, 6-7.

<sup>123</sup> McCann, 6-7.

<sup>124</sup> *The Register* and *The Advertiser*, 25 October 1881.

<sup>125</sup> Kiek, 195.

<sup>126</sup> Kiek, 195.

<sup>127</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10, 14, 17, 21 February 1882.



Church lecture hall in Pirie Street, Adelaide, he delivered addresses with the overall title, 'Three Lectures concerning the Social Evil: Its Causes, Effects and Remedies'.<sup>128</sup> One thousand copies sold for one shilling each. Kirby wrote, 'I make no pretence to originality in the...lectures. I want to fight an evil and do a good', and acknowledged that the original idea came from the Council for the Protection of Women and Morals in England.<sup>129</sup>

At the conclusion of the lectures he called South Australia to the fight to uphold social purity and suggested an organised campaign along the lines adopted in Great Britain and Belgium.

My idea is a central society in Adelaide with branches all over the country....that by petitions and by the pressure of opinion we stir the Parliament....South Australia showed a lead to Australasia and to the whole British Empire in the renowned Torrens' Land Act. Let South Australia show a lead resolute and effective in dealing with the Social Evil and in a righteous and honourable battle for Social Purity.<sup>130</sup>

Kirby wrote in the preface of the published lectures, 'may they be of use to our country'.<sup>131</sup> The pastor was certainly aiming to influence the wider stage and extended his campaign for social reform to the other colonies. Late the following month, he was 'absent in Sydney' and was welcomed home with an evening of 'musical items' at which he was then 'called upon for an account of his peregrinations' which he gave briefly.<sup>132</sup>

The lecture he gave in Sydney received great support and a strong Social Purity Society was formed in New South Wales. In Melbourne

<sup>128</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 4, 18 July, 1 August 1882.

<sup>129</sup> J. C. Kirby, 'Three Lectures concerning the Social Evil: Its Causes, Effects and Remedies', 1882, Preface. Mortlock Library of South Australia, PRG 1110/4.

<sup>130</sup> J. C. Kirby, 'The Social Evil: Remedies', (Third Lecture, 1882) 17-18.

<sup>131</sup> J. C. Kirby, 'Three Lectures concerning the Social Evil: Its Causes, Effects and Remedies', 1882, Preface.

<sup>132</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 August, 22 September 1882.

Kirby lectured to a large audience of women which set 'agitation' in motion in Victoria.<sup>133</sup> These efforts eventually led to a series of Acts across the Australian colonies designed to protect young girls from prostitution. His endeavours also extended to Queensland where a friend, Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, premier from 1883 to 1888 and later from 1890 to 1893, 'passed a strong Act on lines suggested by Kirby'.<sup>134</sup>

At the end of the third lecture a *pro tempore* committee framed the constitution for the Social Purity Society of South Australia with the aim of securing legislative support for 'the enforcement of morals'.<sup>135</sup> The elected committee included the Honourable David Murray, a member of the Legislative Council (M.L.C.), the Honourables John Colton, William Gilbert and David Bower, members of the House of Assembly (M.H.A.), Charles Henry Goode a former member for East Torrens 1863-1866, the Reverends Allan Webb, J. McEwin, W. B. Andrews, J. C. Woods, Green, Lyall and Stephenson, Doctors Curtis and Hayward, Colonel Downes, R. G. Wilkinson, Theodore Hack who was a M.H.A. from 1890 to 1893, Edwin Derrington and Kirby, joint secretaries.<sup>136</sup> Other members were Messrs Adamson, Dempster, Howard, Nock, Searle and Stuckey. Colton

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<sup>133</sup> *The Advertiser*, 2 August 1924. Kirby's obituary stated, 'he opened up negotiations with Sir Graham Berry, who caused the first Victorian Social Purity Bill to be framed, which, mainly owing to the work of Mr. George Coppin, formerly of Port Adelaide, was eventually passed'.

<sup>134</sup> Kiek, 198-199. Kiek stated that, 'Similar measures were passed in Tasmania and New Zealand, and another in Western Australia, though with this last Kirby had personally no concern'.

<sup>135</sup> Jim Jose, 'Legislating for Social Purity, 1883-1885: The Reverend Joseph Coles Kirby and the Social Purity Society', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, Number 18, 1990, 119.

<sup>136</sup> Interview with Ron Tilby, 2 May 1994. Tilby, a former governor of Parkin College, attended the Port Adelaide Congregational Church when a boy and talked of Kirby's influential network among parliamentarians. 'When something needed to be done Kirby would say "I'll see to it. I'll see the government immediately"'.

became president with Murray and Goode vice-presidents and Wilkinson treasurer. A later assessment stated that 'these men were filled with a prophetic passion for social righteousness' and believed that legislation could raise the moral standards of the people and 'purify' society.<sup>137</sup>

Three of these prominent citizens had presided over the lecture evenings. Colton (Wesleyan), a leading merchant, had been premier from 1876 to 1877. He became premier again in 1884 and 1885 and was knighted in 1892. Murray (Presbyterian) was one of the founders of the store, D. & W. Murray. Goode (Baptist), a philanthropist with a prosperous general soft-goods business in North Adelaide, Goode, Durrant & Company, was knighted in January 1912.<sup>138</sup>

The aims of the society were,

- (a) to endeavour to bring about such amendments of the law as will best promote the reforms suggested;
- (b) to secure the just and equitable administration of the law which have reference to the relations of the sexes;
- (c) to promote the foundation of a sound public opinion upon the proposed reforms;
- (d) to encourage and support every effort for the protection of young women from evil influences, and promote the successful working of institutions designed for the reclamation of the fallen.<sup>139</sup>

Kirby included a 'Purity Pledge' in his printed lectures,

SOCIAL PURITY SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.  
(Established 1882.)  
MORAL SUASION DEPARTMENT.  
*PURITY PLEDGE.*

I PROMISE BY THE HELP OF GOD-

- 1 To protect, so far as I have the opportunity, all women and children from degradation.
- 2 To discountenance all coarse jests and conversation, and behaviour derogatory to women.
- 3 To maintain the equal obligation of the law of purity on men and women alike.

<sup>137</sup> Phillips, 'The Influence of Congregationalism', 2, 30.

<sup>138</sup> Bede Nairn, et al (eds), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Vol. 4: 1851-1890. (Carlton Vic, 1979) 262. Goode, Durrant & Company later merged with D. & W. Murray to become Goode, Durrant & Murray (Australia). See also Jose, 121-123.

<sup>139</sup> *The Adelaide Observer*, 7 October 1882, in Jones, 25.

- 4 To endeavor to spread these principles among my companions, and to help by counsel and warning my younger brothers.  
 5 To use all possible means to fulfil the apostolic injunction, 'Keep thyself pure'.

Name.....

Witness.....

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It was a difficult subject to discuss and debate in open forum but in October 1882, at the meeting of the South Australian Congregational Union at Kapunda, Kirby's address raised the issue of social purity in which problems relating to prostitution and alcohol were focal points.<sup>141</sup>

Kirby was one of a deputation of 30 'leading citizens' in late 1882 who asked Dr George Bollen to stand as the next mayor of Port Adelaide.<sup>142</sup> Bollen was successfully elected for the 1882-1883 term. Now recognised as a prominent townsman, Kirby moved his social purity campaign to the Port. In January 1883 a meeting at the Presbyterian Church schoolroom, which attracted 'a large attendance', formed a Port Adelaide branch of the Social Purity Society. Chairing the meeting, Canon Green remarked that the problem 'would require all the best love and thought and Christian feeling to combat it. The work might be said to be already commenced in Port Adelaide, as the Rev. J. C. Kirby and Mr. Derrington (as hon. secretaries), Dr. Curtis, Mr. T. Hack, and Mr. D. Bower M.P. were associated with the original movement'.<sup>143</sup> In his speech Kirby agreed with a statement by Green that prostitution was more

<sup>140</sup> J. C. Kirby, 'The Social Evil: Remedies', (Third Lecture, 1882) 17.

<sup>141</sup> Kiek, 178.

<sup>142</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 13 October 1882.

<sup>143</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 January 1883.

prevalent in Adelaide than the Port and argued that 'it was an evil of far greater moment than intemperance, and he said that as a teetotaler of 33 years' standing. This evil abounded where the curse of drink was not known'. He reiterated the broad aims of the society and the need to establish branch groups.

The society did not set itself the special object of reclaiming the fallen. They did not purpose harriving the unfortunates - quite the contrary; but the motto that prevention is better than cure was one which the society adopted for inscription on its banner, and it constituted the fundamental principle upon which they based their operations....There were excellences and defects in the present laws and it was sought to amend the defects, for the protection of the rights of women as women. It was the custom to belittle women. The principle of society was to regard woman as inferior to man, but Christianity recognized her equal rights.... Finally the society...[desired] to educate the people, and especially the youth, by disseminating literature to forward its aims. They wished to show on eminent authority that there was no justice in the contention that impurity was necessary. All these aims could be achieved by the voice of the country supporting the Society's efforts, and therefore it was desired to establish branches throughout the country.<sup>144</sup>

Mayor Bollen moved 'that a branch of the society for the promotion of social purity be formed in Port Adelaide'. He hoped 'the aim of the society might be accomplished and the young be kept pure....He believed there were bright signs of the times, and that the world would get better'.<sup>145</sup> Other speakers included W. Neill, Pastor Bamber, Dr Curtis and Derrington, who 'dissented from those who thought by closing their eyes they could ignore the presence of a great social cancer' and urged 'patient and persevering work rather than a sudden enthusiastic outburst'.<sup>146</sup> The resolution was unanimously carried and 'votes of thanks

<sup>144</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 January 1883.

<sup>145</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 January 1883.

<sup>146</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 January 1883.

were accorded to the Rev. J. H. Angus for the use of the schoolroom, to Mr. Kirby, and to the Chairman, and the meeting closed with singing the National Anthem'.<sup>147</sup>

Kirby prepared a petition of recommendations formulated by the Social Purity Society for amendments to the laws relating to social morality which was presented in the House of Assembly on 24 September 1885. In an Act passed on 21 December 1885 the age of consent was raised from 13 to 15 years and the age at which it was punishable to take girls into brothels was raised from 17 to 18 years. The society saw these amendments as only an initial victory and continued their efforts with a campaign for further improvements to the law.<sup>148</sup> Kirby's work increased and in October 1885 he sent an apology for a meeting of the Congregational Union, stating: 'I find that the pressure of work upon me just now in connection with the Social Purity Association which is going on in several colonies at once is so great that I cannot attend the Union Committees'.<sup>149</sup>

When Charles Cameron Kingston became premier in 1893, he invited Kirby to make further suggestions to increase the protection of women and children. Kirby urged that the law in affiliation cases should be reviewed. His aim was to have paternity proved before the birth of an

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<sup>147</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 January 1883.

<sup>148</sup> Phillips, 'The Influence of Congregationalism', 58.

<sup>149</sup> Letter to Rev. J. C. McMichael, 19 October 1885, Mortlock Library of Australiana, PRG 1110/1/6.

illegitimate child so the father was liable for medical and other expenses in connection with the child's birth as well as for subsequent maintenance. An Act with this in view was passed in 1898 although the method to be used to determine paternity was unclear.<sup>150</sup>

The women on the female refuge committee in Adelaide formed a ladies' division of the Social Purity Society in March 1883. The members included Mary Colton, wife of the president, Rosetta (Rose) Birks, wife of Charles Birks the retail draper, and Mary Lee a dynamic worker for social reform in the colony.<sup>151</sup> The group held meetings for women, corresponded with similar bodies in other colonies including New Zealand, distributed literature, collected subscriptions and organised petitions. It was an excellent training ground and out of the work on social purity grew the campaign for women's suffrage.<sup>152</sup>

In October 1885 Kirby mourned the death of his mother Mary who had moved to Port Adelaide with the family. Her obituary in the *Port Adelaide News* stated 'Mrs. Kirby was a very old colonist and had won the respect of all with whom she had come in contact. Her remains were interred in the Woodville Cemetary [sic] on Sunday afternoon'.<sup>153</sup> Kirby had been surrounded with capable, independent women since his birth and

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<sup>150</sup> Kiek, 198.

<sup>151</sup> Vivien Stewart, 'Guardian of Female Virtue: the Adelaide Y.M.C.A., 1879-1939', *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, No. 16, 1988, 114. Mary Colton, a leading member of the Pirie Street Wesleyan Methodist Church, was the prime instigator in the establishment of the Young Woman's Christian Association in 1879 'to protect the moral welfare of young women'.

<sup>152</sup> Helen Jones, *In Her Own Name*. (Netley SA, 1986) 25-26.

<sup>153</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 16 October 1885.

the philosophy of the Society of Friends on the equality of men and women had substantially influenced his actions on behalf of women's rights. He was an ardent believer in higher education for women and rights for women was a cause he was passionate in proclaiming.<sup>154</sup>

He followed up a call by Dr Edward Charles Stirling in the South Australian parliament and in 1887 organised a meeting at his Semaphore home for the formation of a Women's Suffrage League.<sup>155</sup> Its membership was largely that of the Social Purity Society, which disbanded following the 1885 legislation, having fulfilled its main aims.<sup>156</sup> Stirling became president of the league with Mary Lee and Hector McLennan (one of Port Adelaide's deacons) as joint-secretaries and Lady Mary Colton and Hannah Chewings on the committee. Other prominent members were Elizabeth Webb Nicolls, Serena Thorne Lake and Augusta Zadow. Catherine Helen Spence also gave her support to the group and was vice-president in 1892.<sup>157</sup> The financial burden was largely borne by Birks, with *The Register* also lending support. In 1888 the aim of the group was 'to urge by every legitimate means the course of woman's suffrage in this colony'.<sup>158</sup>

At the Port Congregational Church on 14 December 1890 Kirby

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<sup>154</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15, 19 June 1883.

<sup>155</sup> *The Advertiser*, 27 April 1896.

<sup>156</sup> Jones, 85.

<sup>157</sup> Christine Finnimore, 'Votes for South Australian Women', an 'It Happened Here' leaflet, History Trust of South Australia (1986) 2.

<sup>158</sup> Jones, 85.



gave an evening sermon on the equality of men and women entitled, 'Woman created and redeemed to be a Queen-Regnant'.<sup>159</sup> He argued that it was 'not God's purpose, but man's folly', which had 'deprived woman of her rightful status as a queen-regnant' or reigning as an equal.<sup>160</sup>

The denial of the rights of the woman to co-equal dominion is a dishonour to the divine image which God has implanted in his daughter....To deny woman a full half-share in the dominion of the world is not simply denying her rights. What is of more importance, it disables her from doing the duty the Lord her God has laid upon her shoulders.<sup>161</sup>

Kiek suggested that 'the whole argument is worth perusal as an example of Kirby's logic and lucidity'.<sup>162</sup> The sermon was printed as a broadsheet in Adelaide and later published by 'The Moral Reform Union' in London as 'Woman: A Queen-Regnant', and sold for one penny.<sup>163</sup> The printing was arranged during Kirby's first visit back to England after an absence of 37 years.

Kirby and Henry Eames, a deacon at the Port church, were asked by the South Australian Congregational Union to represent the union as delegates at the first International Congregational Congress in London in July 1891.<sup>164</sup> The Union made a grant towards expenses which were supplemented by £150 presented by the Port Adelaide Church committee before Kirby's departure on R.M.S. *Ormuz*.<sup>165</sup> There were other colonial

<sup>159</sup> J. C. Kirby, 'Woman: A Queen-Regnant'. (London, 1891). A pamphlet of the discourse was published by the Colonist Office in Pirie Street Adelaide (1890), The Moral Reform Union (London, 1891) and Christian World (Sydney, 1898). Kirby preached the sermon again on 14 August 1898 at the Bourke Street Congregational Church in Sydney.

<sup>160</sup> Kiek, 201.

<sup>161</sup> Kirby, 'Woman: A Queen-Regnant', 1-8.

<sup>162</sup> Kiek, 201.

<sup>163</sup> Kirby, 'Woman: A Queen-Regnant', 8.

<sup>164</sup> Kiek, 226.

<sup>165</sup> Eland and Counsell, 13. The money was presented to Kirby on 7 April 1891.

delegates on board and on landing at Naples the group toured Italy and Switzerland then travelled down the River Rhine to Cologne where they witnessed the Ascension Day 'festa'. The Australians were 'profoundly touched' by the experience and Kirby revised his opinion on the worth of sacred drama and song.<sup>166</sup>

In London the Notting Hill home of Margaretta's cousin and her husband the Reverend Samuel Fisher became Kirby's base.<sup>167</sup> He renewed acquaintance with an aunt in Buckinghamshire; another, with whom he had corresponded over the years, died aged 81 a few weeks before his visit.<sup>168</sup> At the 'ancient meeting-house' of the Independents he 'lectured in the schoolroom on his experiences in Australia'.<sup>169</sup>

The 300 delegates at the London congress met in the King's Weigh House Church in Grosvenor Square: a third each from Great Britain, the United States, and 'the Colonies and elsewhere'.<sup>170</sup> Kirby took action when officials of the English Union 'seemed to regard the ministerial members of the Australian delegation as hardly fit for any but insignificant preaching appointments' and subsequently preached in many centres.<sup>171</sup> He visited his former school at Sibford, and met old friends, including his Sydney mentor, Beazley, who had retired to Blackheath in Greenwich.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Kiek, 227.

<sup>167</sup> Grace Kirby Album, Brian Samuels Collection.

<sup>168</sup> Kiek, 229.

<sup>169</sup> Kiek, 229-230.

<sup>170</sup> Kiek, 231.

<sup>171</sup> Kiek, 231.

<sup>172</sup> Kiek, 236, 239.

The Rechabites of South Australia had asked Kirby to attend the triennial council of the order held in Cardiff, Wales, which gave him a first-hand opportunity to study and discuss the temperance movement in Britain. His observation was that problems were much worse in the 'Homeland', in particular the number of women 'thronging the bars of public-houses'.<sup>173</sup> In late September 1891 Kirby landed at Bombay and 'travelled widely and observed closely' in India.<sup>174</sup> He visited missions and mission schools, preached in the Presbyterian Church in Allahabad and witnessed a counter-demonstration by the Lucknow Christians during the annual procession of 'devil-worshippers' in the city.<sup>175</sup> The Lucknow visit was 'timed to coincide with the holding of a great anti-opium convention' in the former palace of the kings of Oudh.<sup>176</sup> Kirby addressed an audience of 'some fifteen hundred people....He had had a part in anti-opium agitation in Australia, and now spoke with passion on the harm wrought both in India and China by a traffic in which the bodies and souls of millions were sacrificed for no other purpose than to make profit for unscrupulous capitalists....The great audience passed the condemnatory resolution in a silence more impressive than applause'. Kirby described it as 'the grandest meeting he ever attended'.<sup>177</sup>

On Kirby's return after seven months, Captain Bickers, a deacon at

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<sup>173</sup> Kiek, 238.

<sup>174</sup> Kiek, 240.

<sup>175</sup> Kiek, 246-247.

<sup>176</sup> Kiek, 247.

<sup>177</sup> Kiek, 247-248.

the church, took Mrs Kirby and the children, along with a great crowd of church people, on his tug *Stanley* to meet the liner at the Semaphore anchorage on 13 November 1891. Kirby was transferred to the *Stanley* and 'returned in triumph to Port Adelaide'.<sup>178</sup>

In July 1894 Kirby gave a sermon on 'The Duty of Christians to take precautions against Tuberculosis', which echoed tragically ten years later when his daughter Aimée died from the lung disease. In 1894 the family may already have known of her condition and the sermon and subsequent report in the local press were more than a pastor's concern about public health issues.

In August 1894, as part of an autobiographical series by local identities in the *Port Adelaide News*, Kirby wrote with egoistic aplomb expressing some of his views on society. Addressing the article to a 'young man', he stated an admiration for the system of government in Switzerland, his belief in women's suffrage and his 'staunch' advocacy of temperance reform. He appeared self-centred, 'it is remarked that I don't carry heaven in my face, and that I never look cheerful and happy....If I haven't got heaven on earth, I have charity, which is the essence of holiness'. He was intent on his image, 'I have lived in Port Adelaide for many years, and you may imagine that I don't go down the street without meeting an acquaintance...have you never noticed a gentleman...you might possibly take for a relic of the Elizabethan period, wearing a clerical hat

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<sup>178</sup> Kiek, 255-256. See also Eland and Counsell, 31.

and coat and traversing the streets of this benighted town with "bowed head, sad and thoughtful." Did you notice how melancholy he looked - as if he were communing with St. Augustine or some such other doubtful character - as he walked with mittened hands clasped unconsciously behind his back? That was "Holy Joseph," as some irreverently name me. I *am* a thoughtful man, and thoughtful men...are as rare as virtuous men, who are met with about as often as miracles are performed'. He was proud, 'I'm what political economists term an "unproductive labourer."' Notwithstanding that fact, however, the work I accomplish is enormous...I have been called a faddist. I take it as a compliment. The world invariably terms a man who has a little more energy and insight than common humanity, either a faddist or a fool'. And he was paternalistic towards his parish and the Port, 'it was an assembly of Congregationalists that is in a measure responsible for the advent to Mudholia of your now well-known townsman. He grew and flourished (figuratively), and finally spread himself like a green bay tree over the celestial city of Port Adelaide. I am in plain terms the leader of an assembly of sinners (we are all sinners) who *congregate* in a large edifice on Commercial-road, which somewhat resembles the common description of Noah's ark, the said assembly being likewise composed of all sorts and conditions, from a Mayor and ex-Mayors down to a regular little army of common newspaper reporters...I have had a hand in developing the

characters of many young Portonians'.<sup>179</sup> His contribution to the newspaper revealed much of the man and his thoughts.

Kirby's dress was another of his well-remembered characteristics. He wrote 'some say that although I do not attach much importance to personal appearance as a means of winning respect, I never look so well as when, attired in my official robes, I discourse on multifarious themes from the pulpit. I can therefore flatter myself that I look well at least twice a week in almost every week in the year - a record which everybody is not able to lay claim to'.<sup>180</sup> Ron Tilby, a former member of the church, recalled his childhood impression of Kirby's pulpit clothes as 'restrained but distinctive clerical garb with an arrangement of buttons and braids unlike that worn by other pastors'.<sup>181</sup> The following description by Kiek of his 'extraordinary' street attire was similar to that of Stevens cited previously. 'He generally wore a rather ancient-looking frock-coat, an Indian topee (sun-helmet), motor goggles, mittens, and a knotted cream silk handkerchief around his neck: the season of the year made little difference to this *tout ensemble*'.<sup>182</sup>

Eccentricity of dress however did not hamper his contribution 'by voice and pen' to the Women's Suffrage League.<sup>183</sup> On 18 December 1894 the *Constitution Act Amendment Act* was carried in the South Australian

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<sup>179</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10 August 1894.

<sup>180</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 10 August 1894.

<sup>181</sup> Interview with Ron Tilby, 2 May 1994.

<sup>182</sup> Kiek, 294.

<sup>183</sup> Kiek, 198.

House of Assembly. South Australian women were the first in Australia to receive the right to vote on the same terms as men and the right to stand for parliament.<sup>184</sup> In 1895 Kirby wrote four newspaper articles on women's rights, entitled 'Rights of Women and Children', 'Wife's Right of Maintenance', 'The Social Purity Act' and 'Official Positions', in which he argued that women should be appointed to the Destitute Board and Hospital Board, as official visitors to the gaol and as inspectors of schools.<sup>185</sup>

When women voted for the first time in the general elections of 1896, Kirby's wife Margaretta and his adult daughters became the first women to record their votes in South Australia and therefore in Australia. This was arranged in recognition of Kirby's initiative in the establishment of the movement.<sup>186</sup>

The children of Joseph and Margaretta were articulate and intelligent and contributed a variety of service to the church and district. Ettie, the eldest daughter, lived with her parents and worked for the church in a

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<sup>184</sup> The first woman to stand for election in South Australia was Jeanne Young in 1918, 24 years after the enabling legislation. Joyce Steele and Jessie Cooper were the first women to enter parliament in 1959. In the other colonies, subsequently states, there was a delay between the right to vote and the right to stand for parliament; Western Australia 1899 and 1920; New South Wales 1902 and 1918; Tasmania 1903 and 1921; Queensland 1905 and 1915; Victoria 1908 and 1923. Women were given the right to a federal vote after the *Electoral Act of 1902*.

<sup>185</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 27 September, 4, 11, 18 October 1895.

<sup>186</sup> Kiek, 201, also information from interview with Dr David Kirby, 1993. See also *The Advertiser*, 27 April 1896, 'the first votes actually recorded were those of ladies, namely Mrs. Kirby and the Misses Kirby. This was only an appropriate order of things for the campaign for adult suffrage had its origin in Mr. Kirby's house at the Semaphore nine years ago, when the lines of the reform were debated with Mrs. Mary Lee'. See also *The Register*, 27 April 1896, 'At Port Adelaide, the chief polling-place, Mrs. J. C. Kirby was the first to make the magic cross. Mrs. Kirby is the wife of the Rev. J. C. Kirby, who was among the founders and earliest workers of the Women's Suffrage League of this colony'.

number of capacities.<sup>187</sup> Three daughters, Grace, Aimée and Mary, became teachers. Mary began study at The University of Adelaide in 1887 as one of the first women students and graduated in 1890 with the degree of Bachelor of Science with Honours, in physiology.<sup>188</sup> Mary managed a school in Woodville, with kindergarten, intermediate and advanced classes for both boys and girls. In 1898 Aimée was principal at the same school which was then a private high school.

Bevan, the youngest child of the family, was born at Lipson Street, Port Adelaide in 1881 and attended Thomas Caterer's Collegiate School at Semaphore. He graduated from the University of Sydney with first-class honours in pharmacy and returned to Adelaide where for a short time he was acting-dispenser at Adelaide Hospital.<sup>189</sup> In 1903 he opened a pharmacy in St Vincent Street, Port Adelaide. The Kirbys' eldest son, Montagu (Monty),<sup>190</sup> became a journalist with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, perhaps continuing Kirby's acquaintance with the Fairfax family.<sup>191</sup> Distressingly for himself and his family, 'alcohol destroyed his career'.<sup>192</sup>

In his crusade for moral and social improvement Kirby turned to literature censorship in his protection of young female readers and in

<sup>187</sup> Kiek, 281-282.

<sup>188</sup> Kirby Family Papers, David Kirby Collection.

<sup>189</sup> H. T. Burgess (ed.), *The Cyclopaedia of South Australia*. Vol. 2. (Adelaide, 1909) 149-150.

<sup>190</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 August 1924.

<sup>191</sup> John Fairfax died in 1877 while the Kirbys were still living in Sydney but the Fairfax family continued ownership of the newspaper for over a century.

<sup>192</sup> Interview in 1995 with Dr David Kirby, Bevan Kirby's son.



1895 claimed 'the credit of obtaining the prohibition of the sale of Zola's works in the colony'.<sup>193</sup> Émile Zola, a French novelist (1840-1902), was fervently interested in social reform but his novels which described the seamy aspects of life in Paris were often regarded as sordid. Kirby argued 'physiology will teach young girls all they require to know about what has been termed "the shady side of life"'.<sup>194</sup> During 1895 Kirby was also busy planning and closely following the construction of a new privately-owned family home in Jagoe Street, Semaphore.<sup>195</sup> His numerous activities left him exhausted.

In September 1896 a letter to Kirby from the church deacons at the Port expressed regret at his ill health and enforced holiday.<sup>196</sup> The annual report of the church for that year stated that Kirby was absent for six weeks.<sup>197</sup> In 1899, the jubilee year of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church, Kirby donated a portion of his Semaphore property for a branch church, known as Jubilee Hall.<sup>198</sup>

Kirby was ill again in January 1903 when he requested three months leave, 'on advice from Dr. Bollen' as his voice 'had broken down with

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<sup>193</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 February 1895.

<sup>194</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 8 February 1895.

<sup>195</sup> Kiek, 285-287. In 1999 the stone house on the corner of Nelson and Jagoe Streets remains but is crowded on one allotment, its former side garden and tennis court subdivided as an adjoining allotment and built on in the late 1920s. The widening of Jagoe Street has reduced the front garden to a small area behind a high metal fence and the 1895 dwelling has undergone substantial alterations and additions.

<sup>196</sup> Eland and Counsell, 44.

<sup>197</sup> Eland and Counsell, 44.

<sup>198</sup> *Portside Messenger*, 16 February 1994. In his declining years Kirby walked next door to services at Jubilee Hall. The building was later purchased by the Assembly of God Church. In the 1990s it was converted to a dwelling.



**Illustration 23**

The Kirby family, *c.*1888.

Left to right, standing: Mary, Montagu, Margareta  
Seated: Mrs Margareta Kirby, Reverend Joseph Coles Kirby  
In front: Grace, Bevan, Aimée.

Photograph, David Kirby Collection.

"Clergyman's Throat".<sup>199</sup> He decided to convalesce in Hawaii and *The Register* reported his farewell.<sup>200</sup> Kirby continued correspondence with the church throughout his travels. In Sydney he stayed with his sister Joanna, the widow of a Sydney schoolmaster, Samuel Young Burnet, and met up with old friends and other relatives before boarding the Oceanic Steamer Company's S.S. *Ventura* on Monday 2 March 1903 for Honolulu.<sup>201</sup> He wrote to the church secretary, Walter Hutley, describing visits to Pango Pango and Fanning Island,<sup>202</sup> and a month later on his return journey, reflecting on the work of the Port church and his competitive observations on the missionary activities of the Catholic church in the region. 'You may say that it is always summer at Honolulu - Ever since it was settled that I should take this trip I feel like one in a marvellous dream - I see more clearly than I ever did the immense value of the work being done at the Port Church....Rome is making great efforts to acquire the dominion of the myriad islands of the Pacific - We must not therefore slack our hands but be steadfast and immoveable in the

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<sup>199</sup> Eland and Counsell, 44.

<sup>200</sup> *The Register*, 10 February 1903. See also Kirby's letter to Walter Hutley, church secretary, dated 27 February 1903 (Mortlock Library of South Australiana, SRG 95/166) when he refers to 'the farewell meeting in the Guild Hall of the Young Men', the hall built for the Young Men's Christian Society in 1901, and writes, 'the kindly affection of that meeting is a precious possession & to be cherished forevermore'.

<sup>201</sup> Letter from Kirby to Hutley, 27 February 1903.

<sup>202</sup> Letter from Kirby to Hutley, at sea, S.S. *Ventura*, 16 March 1903, Mortlock Library of South Australiana, SRG 95/166.

work'. He decided in relaxed fashion to stay in New Zealand for three weeks, 'to take the baths as they are so strongly recommended'.<sup>203</sup>

On his return to the Port, Kirby had new material and new issues to bring to his sermons and lectures. At the morning service on 24 May his subject was 'Congregationalism in Honolulu',<sup>204</sup> and on 22 June 'gave an interesting chat at the Port Adelaide Congregational Young Men's Hall on the ethical, industrial, political, and strategic conditions of Honolulu and Hawaii'.<sup>205</sup> Both speeches were lengthily recorded in *The Register* and included interesting information regarding Hawaii at that time, which Kirby termed, 'the Gibraltar of the Pacific'.

By 1903, perhaps as a follow-on to Kirby's visits to the island missions, a London Missionary Society group was meeting at the Port church. A wide range of fellowship and interest groups had also been newly formed including the Young Men's Debating Society, the Shakespeare Society and the Ladies' Sewing Meeting.<sup>206</sup>

Kirby was finding his load too demanding and, after four months of discussion at church meetings, a proposal to appoint deaconesses for pastoral visiting was finally accepted on 30 November 1903. Nine deaconesses were elected in February 1904 and worked throughout the

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<sup>203</sup> Letter from Kirby to Hutley, at sea, S.S. *Ventura*, 15 April 1903, Mortlock Library of South Australiana, SRG 95/166. See also Kiek, 239. Kirby 'was ever a fervent Protestant with an old-fashioned detestation for Rome and all her works'.

<sup>204</sup> *The Register*, 25 May 1903.

<sup>205</sup> *The Register*, 23 June 1903.

<sup>206</sup> *The Congregational Herald*, 5 September 1903.

pastorate in Port Adelaide, Woodville, Alberton, Queenstown and Rosewater, and Semaphore, Glanville and Birkenhead.<sup>207</sup> By June the same year there were 14 deaconesses and they 'were reported to have done splendid work'.<sup>208</sup>

In August 1904 the Kirbys' youngest daughter Aimée, aged 27, died at the family home in Semaphore.<sup>209</sup> Margaretta's health worsened from the time of Aimée's death and she relinquished many of her church activities, which her daughter Ettie endeavoured to continue.<sup>210</sup> In February 1906 Kirby, in his busy abbreviating style, wrote to Frank Cockington and the church committee explaining his need for further assistance in the work of the parish and his willingness to pay for this out of his own stipend. He recommended the Reverend J. Beukers who assisted Kirby in 1906 and was appointed 'Junior Pastor'.<sup>211</sup>

The appointment of the deaconesses and Beukers were signs that Kirby was finding pastoral duties tiring, but he continued to pursue his other causes and roles. In 1906 he was chairman of the South Australian Congregational Union for the second time, the first being in 1886, and involved in the movement which led to local voting on options to close hotels in South Australia. In April 1907 he was elected president of the

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<sup>207</sup> Eland and Counsell, 5.

<sup>208</sup> Eland and Counsell, 6.

<sup>209</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 September 1904.

<sup>210</sup> *The Register*, 18 November 1908.

<sup>211</sup> Letter from Kirby to Cockington, church secretary, February 1906, Mortlock Library of South Australia, SRG 95/166. See also Eland and Counsell, 45.

Congregational Union of Australasia at the third triennial assembly in Sydney, 'the crowning honour of Kirby's ministry, so far as the Congregational denomination was concerned'.<sup>212</sup>

About 1907 Kirby was influenced by Robert Reid Rentoul's book *Race Culture or Race Suicide*.<sup>213</sup> As did many social reformers of the time, he studied extensively the literature on the science of eugenics which advocated the production of excellent offspring by improving their inherited qualities. Kirby promoted the prevention of parentage for the 'feeble-minded'. He also advocated 'vasectomy' for 'social perverts' believing that their derangement was physiological or psychological rather than moral.<sup>214</sup> Kiek stated that 'Kirby's interest in Eugenics became almost a passion'.<sup>215</sup> He was convinced 'that Darwinism in its original form overrated the factor of environment and underrated the factor of heredity' and that 'disastrous consequences...might flow from dysgenic marriages'.<sup>216</sup>

Kirby had become interested in social engineering as an extension of social reform and advocated exerting controls to eliminate detrimental effects in later generations and piously viewed Darwin's eugenics as inferior to eugenics for the improvement of the human race. He was also alarmed by statistics from the American War Secretariat which recorded

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<sup>212</sup> Kiek, 189-190.

<sup>213</sup> Kiek, 216-219.

<sup>214</sup> Kiek, 217.

<sup>215</sup> Kiek, 218.

<sup>216</sup> Kiek, 218.

the poor physical and mental conditions of men drafted for war service.<sup>217</sup>

Kiek appeared to be in agreement with his colleague when he wrote that Kirby's 'last years were largely occupied with calling public attention to these disquieting facts and urging the need for a fuller recognition and application of eugenic principles'.<sup>218</sup>

In the second half of 1908 change was rapid at the Port Congregational Church. Beukers resigned on 1 June 1908 to take up a pastorate at Kalgoorlie in Western Australia.<sup>219</sup> Two months later Kirby forwarded his resignation and his retirement from the ministry was announced.<sup>220</sup> Senator Joseph Vardon, a former member of the congregation, was invited from Melbourne to preside at a public farewell held at the church on Tuesday evening, 17 November 1908.<sup>221</sup> Letters were read from the chief justice of South Australia, Sir Samuel Way, Premier Thomas Price, the chairman of the Congregational Unions of New South Wales and Victoria, and 'the venerable Dr. Jefferis'.<sup>222</sup> Vardon's speech included a vignette summary of Kirby's career.

He was a man with a character and had done a man's work in the city. As a preacher he had been original; he had not aped or copied other men, but had gone about his preaching in his own way, and had invariably expressed his views in a determined and impressive manner. He had always been powerful in the expression of truth as he had understood it....He was also known as a social reformer, the temperance movement had always had a great place in his heart...he had always been a staunch advocate of woman's franchise...and a worker for social purity in its highest and best sense. He had handled this most difficult subject with marked

<sup>217</sup> Kiek, 218-219.

<sup>218</sup> Kiek, 219.

<sup>219</sup> Eland and Counsell, 7.

<sup>220</sup> Eland and Counsell, 7.

<sup>221</sup> Howard Coxon et al, *Biographical Register of the South Australian Parliament 1857-1957*. (Netley SA, 1985) 229. Vardon was also chairman of the Congregational Union of South Australia, 1892-1893. He was a senator from 1906 until 1913.

<sup>222</sup> Kiek, 169.

delicacy. There was no movement for the advancement of the community which he had not helped along. He was known also as a politician. Some people did not like the political parson....But Mr. Kirby had never been a party man, and had always been on the side of liberal and progressive legislation for forwarding the best interests of the community. He had always stood up for good citizenship, for making the best men, and bringing forward the best men to take up public positions....He had been a guide to young men, and he had a special record in this direction.<sup>223</sup>

No doubt these words of testimony on such an occasion pleased Joseph Kirby. Alderman Morris, a deacon of the church, added his view that 'Mr. Kirby would have been a success in any walk of life. Had he been a politician he believed Mr. Kirby ere now would have been Prime Minister of the Commonwealth'.<sup>224</sup>

Kirby came to the end of his ministry with a farewell sermon at the Port Adelaide Congregational Church on 15 November 1908, but officiated as acting pastor until a new incumbent was appointed. He chaired his last church meeting on 1 February 1909. Lionel Fletcher, was inducted on 28 February with Kirby chairing the occasion.

The Kirbys had little chance to enjoy retirement and the fruits of their labours together. On 21 April 1909 Margaretta died at home while Kirby was in Western Australia 'fulfilling a series of engagements'.<sup>225</sup> he was unable to attend her funeral as Fletcher later explained.

The funeral was delayed until his arrival, but on the day on which Mrs. Kirby was to be buried, Mr. Kirby was kept in the Gulf by a terrible storm which made it impossible for him to land. The church was crowded...and Dr. Jefferis preached the funeral sermon....Next day the old man came ashore and went quietly to the Church.<sup>226</sup>

<sup>223</sup> *The Register*, 18 November 1908.

<sup>224</sup> *The Advertiser*, 18 November 1908.

<sup>225</sup> Kiek, 271.

<sup>226</sup> Lionel Fletcher, 'Rev. J. C. Kirby as I Knew Him', *Australian Christian World*, 29 August 1924, 4.



On her mother's death Ettie took over the care of her father, becoming 'the good angel of his declining years'.<sup>227</sup> He continued a demanding schedule of work as president of the Congregational Union of Australasia and gave his presidential address at the fourth assembly of the union, at Hobart in January 1910. The address, 'First Things in Training Efficient Ministers and Pastors', stressed 'the importance of a good mathematical and classical grounding as a preliminary to theological studies'. It was described by Kiek as showing 'Kirby at his best'.<sup>228</sup>

During his retirement Kirby's interest in education led him to be an advocate of the Italian educationalist and physician Dr Maria Montessori. He visited the Infant Department of the Blackfriar School in Sydney where a modified Montessori classroom was established by the New South Wales government in 1912.<sup>229</sup> Kirby gave a lecture on the principles of Montessori psychology and pedagogy at the Clayton Congregational Church at Beulah Park, which led to the Montessori principles being adopted in the religious training of the children at the church.

He advised the Woman's Christian Temperance Union on the same subject and printed a thousand copies of the lecture as well as writing numerous letters on the subject for the religious and secular press. Largely through Kirby's tenacious pressure, the Education Department of

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<sup>227</sup> Kiek, 271.

<sup>228</sup> Kiek, 189-191.

<sup>229</sup> Kiek, 223. See also 'History of the Blackfriar Montessori School', notes from the Montessori Association of Australia Incorporated, August 1996.

South Australia sent a teacher, Miss Lydia Longmore, to Sydney to study under Miss Simpson. This led to the establishment of several Montessori infant schools in Adelaide and suburbs.<sup>230</sup>

Kirby had a further triumph for the temperance cause in his South Australian campaign for six o'clock closing of hotel bars, which was implemented on 27 March 1916. Fletcher stated that

the liquor traffic and other allied traffics, hated him, and their hatred was the highest compliment they could bestow upon him. He kept in touch with social reform all through the world, and woe betide anyone who dared challenge him to a newspaper controversy on any subject which he had made his special study.<sup>231</sup>

Kirby's wish to live to see prohibition in Australia, as in the United States, was not realised, but, his biographer claimed, he was recognised as the 'embodiment' of the nonconformist conscience in Australia in his work for temperance and 'early closing'.<sup>232</sup> In 1917 Kirby, under a photograph caption entitled 'The Grand Old Man of Temperance Reform', published a message to South Australian temperance workers in *The Patriot*, official organ of the South Australian Temperance Alliance.

Up, Temperance Comrades! Come to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Buckle on the Prohibition armor and drive alcoholic liquor of all kinds out of fair South Australia forever. Do so for the glory of God and for the good of the country, and the happiness, purity, and health of the home.<sup>233</sup>

A special service to celebrate Kirby's eightieth birthday was held at the church on Monday evening, 28 May 1917, with a birthday social the

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<sup>230</sup> Kiek, 223.

<sup>231</sup> Fletcher, 4.

<sup>232</sup> Kiek, 211.

<sup>233</sup> *The Patriot*, June 1917, in S. E. Close, 'Social Attitudes to Liquor and Liquor Legislation in South Australia 1876-1917', B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1961, opposite 59.

following night. William Sowden, then editor of *The Register*, wrote a congratulatory and analogical poem to Kirby, the first verse reading:

EIGHTY NOT OUT! and going strong;  
The game well played, the cricket true!  
The innings may kind fate prolong  
at least until the century's through.<sup>234</sup>

During his eighties Kirby continued to write. His last campaign, 'conducted by means of press correspondence', was to encourage interest in assistance for the Aborigines. He advocated 'placing the natives on the land on holdings of their own' and suggested Arnhem Land as a suitable location for such a reserve.<sup>235</sup> In one of his final conversations with Walter Hutley, then president of the Congregational Union and senior deacon at the Port church, Kirby stated: 'if I am spared for another year I will do something for the Aborigines. It is one of my great regrets that during my life I have not devoted my attention to that as I ought to have done'.<sup>236</sup>

Kirby spent much of his time collecting his papers together and writing notes and memoirs which Kiek drew on for his biography.<sup>237</sup> Until shortly before his death, Kirby was still actively engaged with

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<sup>234</sup> 'Memo from the Editor', 10 June 1917, Grace Kirby Album, Brian Samuels Collection.

<sup>235</sup> *The Advertiser*, 2 August 1924. See also Kiek, 221.

<sup>236</sup> *The Advertiser*, 2 August 1924.

<sup>237</sup> Kiek, 289. See also 294 for Kiek's description of Kirby's 'little study' which he visited 'half a dozen' times after Kirby's death. 'At first it seemed like chaos, with books, magazines, newspapers, and all kinds of pamphlets and other memoranda strewn around, but it was soon obvious that the owner knew where to put his hand on anything: if there was confusion, it was "ordered confusion".'

affairs of the church and accepted invitations to participate in services.<sup>238</sup>

On Friday 1 August 1924, Kirby died in his sleep at his home at Semaphore, aged 87.

The flags at Port Adelaide were at half-mast as Kirby was laid to rest the next day, following a service at the Port Adelaide Congregational Church led by the pastor, Reverend Ernest W. Weymouth. Hutley gave the address, commenting, 'his view was statesmanlike. He looked at everything with the larger vision'.<sup>239</sup> At a later memorial service held for Kirby at the Port church, the Honourable David J. Gordon, M.L.C., a former Portonian and member of the congregation, stated, 'no one could fail to realise that his voice and pen were always available in the cause of humanity and that the full weight of his influence were on the side of public morality, social uplift and communal welfare'.<sup>240</sup> Three months later a three-panel memorial window to Kirby, depicting 'The Good Shepherd', was unveiled in the sanctuary of the Port church during the seventy-seventh anniversary celebrations.

The Kirby family grave stone at Cheltenham Cemetery is inscribed for Kirby with a clock face, the hands permanently set at six o'clock, which Kiek hailed as 'a reminder of the great reform which he did so

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<sup>238</sup> Kiek, 288. Kiek mentioned Kirby's last official engagement as participating in the opening of 'The Temple', a new Congregational church at Henley Beach. The opening however took place on 5 August 1923, so it was possibly the first anniversary celebrations which Kirby attended 'within a month of his death'.

<sup>239</sup> *The Advertiser*, 2 August 1924.

<sup>240</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 August 1924. The memorial service was held on Sunday 10 August 1924.

much to win'.<sup>241</sup> The white marble pedestal monument, reads on the eastern face,

<p style="text-align: center;">IN LOVING MEMORY of OUR DEAR FATHER &amp; MOTHER JOSEPH COLES KIRBY 1837-1924. <i>FOR 28 YEARS PASTOR OF PORT ADELAIDE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.</i> MARGARETTA KIRBY. 1837-1909.</p>
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Fletcher, residing in Auckland, New Zealand, in 1924 wrote 'a long and eloquent tribute' to Kirby,<sup>242</sup> describing him as 'one of the last of the old Puritans in spirit and in ideals.... He was one of the greatest, grandest men who ever filled an Australian pulpit, and the life of our Commonwealth is richer and purer and nobler because J. C. Kirby was called of God to minister in these southern lands'.<sup>243</sup> Fletcher's words would have pleased Kirby who committed himself to a lifetime mission to improve society's values and actions. The mention of Kirby's work on the broader Australian scene was echoed in February 1927 when the Reverend Ernest Stacy, one of 'Kirby's boys' and then secretary of the Congregational Union and Home Office of South Australia, observed that Kirby 'did so much to mould the personal and collective life of our country'.<sup>244</sup>

<sup>241</sup> Kiek, 290. The grave is located on Driveway B, Path 38 at the Cheltenham Cemetery.

<sup>242</sup> Kiek, 291-292.

<sup>243</sup> Fletcher, 4.

<sup>244</sup> Letter to Miss Kirby from E. J. Stacy, 9 February 1927, Grace Kirby Album, Brian Samuels Collection. Alice, Kirby's niece, the daughter of Joanna and Samuel Burnet, married Ernest Stacy on 26 September 1895.

Settlement at Port Adelaide had prepared the stage for a social and moral reformer. The social circumstances at the Port were consolidating by the time Kirby arrived there to begin his ministry; the port was changing from its rough seafront character to a civil and more permanent society. It created the circumstances where a leader working to civilise society had a fertile field in which to enlighten, refine and educate. Edward Kiek suggested that 'the importance of the place as a strategic centre of religious work' was out of all proportion to its size.<sup>245</sup> The Methodists at the Port were never as numerous or as dominant a denomination as might be expected from their work in many other areas of the colony. They also lacked a dynamic local leader when the time was right for a strong crusader. The Congregational pastor stepped into the role.

The part Kirby and his compatriots from the Port played in movements for temperance, social purity and women's suffrage would not have been possible without other significant social and political forces in South Australia such as the rise of democracy and utopian feelings for a new enlightened society which included the right of women to vote. Members of Kirby's congregation were town leaders and colonial parliamentarians, men who knew how to fight for a cause. Kirby's forward thinking in initiating an educational element to church life trained young Portonian men to continue such crusades.

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<sup>245</sup> Kiek, 144.

Kirby's congregation allowed him to move on the wider stage while managing a heavy pastoral load and to be a town spokesman for non-conformist principles on occasions such as his liturgical debates with Green. To restrict hotel trading was perhaps Kirby's hardest fought battle. At the time this was one element in the move toward what he saw as a civil society at Port Adelaide and a marker of the gradual ascendancy at that time of progress and piety over the business of public houses.

## CHAPTER NINE

### PIETY'S PROGRESS: LOCAL OPTION AND THE TRIUMPH OF SIX O'CLOCK CLOSING

From 1880 Port Adelaide was the base from which Kirby involved himself in various social and moral reform movements. Hotel trading was an anathema to him and to other South Australian temperance campaigners. Restricting public house business through reducing the number of hotels and their hours of bar trade became their major goal and focus. Kirby played a significant role in a number of related campaigns in the latter decades of the nineteenth century.

The temperance movement and abstinence societies in South Australia date from earliest European settlement with the chief concern of such groups being the practice of Sunday trading by hotels.<sup>1</sup> The movement gained momentum and during the mid-1870s several unsuccessful attempts were made by parliamentary temperance advocates, George William Cole, John Darling and the Honourable John Carr, to control an

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<sup>1</sup> Edward S. Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia. The Life and Reminiscences of Joseph Coles Kirby, Christian Pioneer and Social Reformer.* (London, 1927) 202. See also S. E. Close, 'Social Attitudes to Liquor and Liquor Legislation in South Australia 1876-1917', B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1961, 27.



increase in hotel and wine store licences.<sup>2</sup>

For the next 40 years Christian temperance workers both inside and outside parliament sought to change three main areas of liquor legislation: to close liquor bars on Sundays, Christmas Day and Good Friday, to shorten the hours of evening trading, and to decrease the number of licensed premises. A related purpose was to restrict employment of women as barmaids. The first partial victory for the temperance movement was the passing in November 1876 of what became popularly known as 'Nock's Act'.<sup>3</sup>

In mid 1876 David Nock, a Kapunda storekeeper, wheatbuyer and former mayor, started measures to restrict the number of outlets selling alcohol in South Australia. Nock, M.L.C. for the District of Light for one term of parliament (February 1875-March 1878), introduced a Bill to amend the second *Licensed Victuallers Act, 1869*.<sup>4</sup> The Bill proposed that new licences could only be granted after the assent of local ratepayers, the

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<sup>2</sup> *Debates in the Houses of Legislature during the Third Session of the Eighth Parliament of South Australia from May 26, 1876 to November 17, 1876*. (Adelaide, 1876) 2 August 1876, Column 630. See also J. L. Hoad, *Hotels and Publicans in South Australia 1836-1984*. (Adelaide, 1986) Part 1, 1-2. The first *Licensed Victuallers Act* in 1839 allowed three classes of liquor licence and the following annual licence fee:

General Publican's Licence	£25
Wine, Ale, Beer and other Malt Liquors	£12
Storekeeper's Licence	£5.

Diluting or adulterating liquor was an offence and bull baiting, dog or cock fighting, gambling or any other disturbance was not permitted on the premises. Penalties were imposed for breaches with fines for a first offence 5/- to £5, a second offence 10/- to £10, and a third offence £1 to £20.

<sup>3</sup> Arnold D. Hunt, *This Side of Heaven: A History of Methodism in South Australia*. (Adelaide, 1985) 193.

<sup>4</sup> David Hilliard and Arnold D. Hunt, 'Strands in the Social Fabric: Religion', in Eric Richards (ed.), *The Flinders History of South Australia: Social History*. (Netley SA, 1986) 223.

'local option'. It was tabled in the House of Assembly on 12 July. At its second reading on 2 August Nock stated that 'the main object of the Bill was to lessen drunkenness and consequently crime'.<sup>5</sup> To make his argument more persuasive he quoted Queen Victoria's commendation of Bishop Wilberforce in his work on alcohol-related problems in Britain: 'it is impossible for the Queen not to be grateful to those who endeavour to mitigate an evil of such magnitude as the widely-spread intemperance which unfortunately prevails'.<sup>6</sup>

Publicans at the Port, as elsewhere in the colony, would have been aware of Nock's progress. His Bill was strict. No publican or wine licence could be granted if a memorial (petition) opposing the licence was signed by at least two-thirds of the adult ratepayers in the immediate neighbourhood of a public house and presented to the Licensing Bench. The memorialists (the petitioners) were to be persons whose names appeared on the council rate assessment books and who resided (if a city, town, or village) 'within a radius of two hundred yards from the front door of such house'.<sup>7</sup>

Nock, a pious 'old-fashioned Methodist',<sup>8</sup> was convinced his case was just and argued:

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<sup>5</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 2 August 1876, Column 630.

<sup>6</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 2 August 1876, Column 630.

<sup>7</sup> *South Australian Acts of Parliament 1876*, No. 52. If beyond the boundaries of a city or village the ratepayer should live 'not more than one mile from the front door of such house'. A 'Schedule' form was appended to the Act showing the correct format for a memorial.

<sup>8</sup> Kiek, 203.

the question of intemperance affected not only the material interests of the community, but something very much more important - the happiness and well being of the colonists at large. It was one of their important duties as legislators to do all in their power to diminish intemperance and its evils. Drunkenness extended in exactly the same proportions as the facilities for getting drunk were increased....As public-houses increased drunkenness and other evils connected with it would necessarily increase also. On the other hand, if public-houses were diminished, drunkenness and crime would diminish in the same ratio.<sup>9</sup>

William Townsend's comments in the parliamentary debate opposed the heavy testimonials for temperance. He questioned the argument that only teetotallers were good and productive citizens.

He knew that drink had proved a fearful curse to many people; so had other things, but he would point out to the hon. member some of the finest sermons, the best speeches, political or otherwise, had frequently been produced when the brain was stimulated by drink, and some of the best workmen in the world, and men who possessed the finest intellects, were addicted to drink. He would ask the hon. member to point out where there was a Good Templar who had ever become a brilliant statesman, politician, historian, or poet. He thought he could not.<sup>10</sup>

Townsend commented that 'it was impossible that men could be made non-drinkers by Act of Parliament any more than that the same means could be adopted to make them religious'.<sup>11</sup> On 6 September, John Carr responded to Townsend's stand: 'he was told that men could not be made sober by Act of Parliament, and would grant that. But they patronised the liquor traffic, they gave certain persons a monopoly of it, they exercised more care over it than they did over any branch of trade whatever'.<sup>12</sup> Carr was losing heart. In parliament he recalled a friend saying 'it's no use; beer is king' and expressed 'something of the sense of comparative hopelessness in the struggle; that after all the licensed victuallers were a very respectable body, and supported by the brewers, who were a wealthy

<sup>9</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 2 August 1876, Column 630.

<sup>10</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 2 August 1876, Columns 637-638.

<sup>11</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 2 August 1876, Columns 638-639.

<sup>12</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 6 September 1876, Column 1035.

class, and that in the struggle the teetotallers were at a disadvantage'.<sup>13</sup>

The attorney-general, the Honourable John Cox Bray, believed that the Bill as it stood 'would be thoroughly unworkable if it were made law....For instance, it was not defined what a resident in a neighbourhood was, and the provision could be easily evaded'.<sup>14</sup> John Ingleby, the member for Victoria district, thought this attempt 'to dethrone King Beer - if it was true that he was as powerful as was said - would only result in augmenting the number of public-houses instead of diminishing them'.<sup>15</sup>

A debate on the good and evil of drink continued until William Rodolph Wigley drew attention to the fact that 'the essence of the Bill was the granting of licences on memorial or petition' and after listening 'with pleasure and interest to the exhaustive lectures...delivered upon total abstinence...would submit that...they had...no reference to the Bill before the house'.<sup>16</sup> Nock argued 'that he did not bring the Bill forward as a total abstinence question, but as one which affected the well being and interests of the whole community'.<sup>17</sup>

The Bill was presented to a select committee where it was further debated during late September and early October 1876. The fact that female ratepayers were to be permitted to vote promoted a lengthy

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<sup>13</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 6 September 1876, Column 1036.

<sup>14</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 20 September 1876, Column 1240.

<sup>15</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 20 September 1876, Column 1240.

<sup>16</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 20 September 1876, Columns 1230-1231.

<sup>17</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 20 September 1876, Column 1242.

discussion about the effect of their vote on the predominantly male domain of drinking. The Honourable Sir Arthur Blyth stated that he was 'not at all afraid to trust the ladies, and he felt that their intents, feelings and comforts were as much mixed up with the matter as those of the men'.<sup>18</sup> On 11 October the Bill was read a third time and passed with victory for the temperance supporters, 'Ayes 20, Noes 11'.<sup>19</sup> *The Licensed Victuallers Amendment Act, 1876* had every chance of being effective, but after its assent on 17 November the wheels of law turned slowly.

At the Port three years later, 'Nock's Act' was still a topic of conversation. Indeed the prohibitive aspects of the law were cited in a newspaper vignette as a reason for rebellious behaviour:

young girls should not get drunk - whatever old girls may do. There was one this week, aged about twenty, who was seen reeling about a public house, having been a little 'overtaken'. 'Oh', said a red-nosed man close by, 'What a curse that Nock's Act has been, to be sure! See, this here young girl a-rollin' about. If Parliament hadn't said people mustn't drink, she'd be sober up to now'.<sup>20</sup>

In 1880 minor amendments to the Act included a change to the required period for compulsory lodgement of plans of proposed premises.<sup>21</sup> A decade later, *The Licensed Victuallers Amendment Act, 1891* resulted in some major changes to the law including complete Sunday closing.<sup>22</sup> Other changes provided mechanisms to regulate, by a

<sup>18</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 27 September 1876, Column 1316.

<sup>19</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 11 October 1876, Column 1521.

<sup>20</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 August 1879.

<sup>21</sup> *The Licensed Victuallers Act, 1880*. No 191.

<sup>22</sup> Close, 54.

local poll, the number of licences within a prescribed council area.<sup>23</sup> The area within which a poll might be taken on the number of licences 'was enlarged from that of a ward to that of a municipality corporation or district council'.<sup>24</sup> The 1891 Act stipulated that in the future every new licence 'should be issued for a year only', and that the 'withholding of it should not entitle any one to compensation'.<sup>25</sup> In regard to existing licences and their renewal the Act 'made liberal provision for compensation in the case of licences which might be refused during the ensuing 15 years'.<sup>26</sup> The time limit of 15 years meant that such hotels and wine stores could make compensation claims for the period up to 1906. Compensation was to be settled by arbitration and calculated as set out in the Act.<sup>27</sup>

Further amendments to the Act allowed that at any time one-tenth of the number of enrolled ratepayers resident in the district could petition for a poll to determine:

- I. Whether any new publicans', wine, or storekeepers' colonial wine licences in respect of premises not previously licensed shall be granted in such Local Option District:
- II. Whether the number of publicans', wine, or storekeepers' colonial wine licences in such Local Option District shall be decreased to any number below the then existing number or not.<sup>28</sup>

A Bill to amend the Act in 1896 gave temperance workers, licensed

<sup>23</sup> This is an expanded proposition to that of 'Nock's Act' which referred to a single licence in relation to a defined local perimeter.

<sup>24</sup> Hunt, 193.

<sup>25</sup> *The Licensed Victuallers Act, 1891*. No 540.

<sup>26</sup> *The Register*, 20 February 1906.

<sup>27</sup> *The Licensed Victuallers Act, 1891*. No 540.

<sup>28</sup> *The Licensed Victuallers Act, 1891*. No 540.

victuallers and brewers the opportunity to prepare petitions for a poll for their own advantage.<sup>29</sup> A clause for the progressive abolition of barmaids was rejected.<sup>30</sup> *The Licensed Victuallers Further Amendment Act 1896* changed the local option districts from local government to House of Assembly electoral districts (which could be divided into no more than three), with a majority vote to decide the issue.<sup>31</sup> After a lengthy debate the intent of the existing section that 'every determination...shall continue in force for three years' remained. The 1896 Act also demanded forfeiture of licence after three offences against the 1891 provision for complete Sunday closure of hotel trading.<sup>32</sup>

In 1904 the Act was amended to include clubs, so that voting covered five classes of licence: publicans', wine, storekeepers' colonial wine, storekeepers' general, and club. However 28 years after the passing of 'Nock's Act', no local option vote had been held in South Australia.

In 1883 a group of temperance workers, including Kirby, formed the South Australian Temperance Alliance which united all the temperance societies in South Australia and aimed 'to concern itself with political measures'.<sup>33</sup> David Nock was the first president and remained on the executive until his death in 1909. Kiek stated that Kirby 'had great

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<sup>29</sup> Close, 80.

<sup>30</sup> Close, 46.

<sup>31</sup> *The Licensed Victuallers Further Amendment Act, 1896*. No 666.

<sup>32</sup> Close, 54.

<sup>33</sup> Close, 68. 'To accommodate the moderates whose support it wanted to enlist, the Alliance was forced to change its constitution to remove the statement that prohibition was its ultimate aim'. See also Close, 60, and Kiek, 203. In 1914 the Alliance was reconstituted as the 'Prohibition League'.

respect' for Nock and 'was closely associated' with him.<sup>34</sup> The Alliance renewed the debate on the well used adage, quoting the Bishop of Guildford in their handbook: 'I think it is time we heard the last of the stereo-typed cry, "You can't make men sober by Act of Parliament". We have made men inebriates by Act of Parliament'.<sup>35</sup>

A catechism prepared by the Alliance asked the question 'Why have existing licenses not been dealt with?' and answered, 'Because the Act of 1891 says that if they are closed before 1906, then cash compensation shall be paid out of the treasury'.<sup>36</sup> Another Alliance pamphlet, 'What is meant by the Power to Vote No-Licence?', supported the notion of placing 'the power where it ought to be, in the hands of the people' which 'cannot be logically denied by any supporter of democratic government', and argued that 'hotels could still conduct the true hotel business without the bar, which is not at all an essential part of a hotel'.<sup>37</sup> Kirby later stated 'we have no down on the publican nor on the public house. We believe there must be social centres, but think there is no necessity to be associated with liquor....In that degree the habits of the people will not be interfered with'.<sup>38</sup> It was unlikely that any publican agreed with the Alliance or Kirby's view.

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<sup>34</sup> Kiek, 203.

<sup>35</sup> South Australian Temperance Alliance, *Reduction of Liquor Licences Campaign Organizers' and Workers' Handbook*, November 1905, Mortlock Library of South Australiana.

<sup>36</sup> South Australian Temperance Alliance, 'Catechism on Local Option and Compensation', 1 January 1905.

<sup>37</sup> South Australian Temperance Alliance pamphlet, 'What is meant by the Power to Vote No-Licence?', no date (c.1906). Mortlock Library of South Australiana.

<sup>38</sup> *The Mail*, 25 March 1915.



When the time limit for compensation expired, polls of the electors were planned for six districts, to be followed by polls in a further 24 districts in 1910. Port Adelaide was one of the districts selected for 1906; the others were Adelaide, North Adelaide, West Torrens, East Torrens and Wallaroo. Polling was set for 17 February 1906 and advertisements appeared in the newspapers announcing public meetings by temperance groups such as the Liquor Licences Reduction League and by the opposing liquor trade associations such as the Liquor Trades Defence Union.<sup>39</sup>

The polling system was complicated and public notices were necessary to explain it to electors. Electors could only vote at the polling places where their names were registered and were disallowed the option of 'No License' which gave the right to refuse all licences and create a 'prohibition area'.<sup>40</sup> A later commentator attributed the omission of this option to a possible 'fear of South Australian legislators that the people of a wine-exporting community would not allow such final legislation, or to the substantial brewing and liquor trade interests in a colony where it was possible to grow malting barley quite readily'.<sup>41</sup> When later analysing this period, Kiek supported this view with his comments:

in South Australia, as elsewhere, 'the Trade' is a powerful vested interest - all the more so because South Australia is a vine-growing country and boasts much the largest wine industry in Australia. This vested interest had, and unhappily still has, strong ramifications in political circles (without respect of party), and even in religious circles. Yet there were devoted and self-sacrificing men and women in

<sup>39</sup> *The Advertiser*, 15 February 1906 and *The Register*, 16 February 1906.

<sup>40</sup> Close, 65.

<sup>41</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, 1896, 482, in Close, 65.

South Australia determined that the State should control 'the Trade' rather than 'the Trade' should control the State.<sup>42</sup>

The four options on which voting for each class of licence would occur can be summarised as:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Resolution 1 | that licences be reduced by one-third [the aim of the temperance party].   |
| Resolution 2 | that licences be reduced by one-sixth.   |
| Resolution 3 | that the number of licences be not increased or reduced [leaving the number of licences as they were: the option favoured by the licensed victuallers' party]. |
| Resolution 4 | that new licences be granted at the discretion of the Licensing Bench. <sup>43</sup>   |

Information on methods for calculating the vote was publicised through newspapers. If there were six or more licences in any class, all four propositions would appear on the voting paper. However, if there were fewer than six licences, but more than two in any class, only questions 1, 3 and 4 would be options. If there were fewer than three licences, even if none, questions 3 and 4 would be presented for the decision of voters. Only one vote was to be marked on each paper.<sup>44</sup> Votes could be aggregated for the first three questions; if those cast in favour of Resolution 1 did not comprise a majority, they would be added to those of Resolution 2 and if these together did not give a sufficient number, they were to be added to those of Resolution 3. An absolute majority was

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<sup>42</sup> Kiek, 203. See also *The Daily Herald*, 18 April 1910, in Close 92-93, where similar sentiments were made in relation to later polls in other districts. 'The result of the local option poll is likely to have a considerable bearing upon the viticultural industry, which is decidedly sensitive to any matter affecting its welfare...an enormous amount of capital has been invested in wineries, storage cellars and distilleries'.

<sup>43</sup> *The Advertiser* and *The Adelaide Chronicle*, 17 February 1906. A reduction by one-third was the maximum reduction available under the law. The long term aim of the temperance party was for a greater reduction.

<sup>44</sup> *The Advertiser*, 15 February 1906.

required to give effect to Resolution 4.<sup>45</sup>

In the Port Adelaide district, with its 58 existing licences, possible outcomes of the three main options for the five categories were:

	RESOLUTION 1 REDUCE BY A THIRD	RESOLUTION 2 REDUCE BY A SIXTH	RESOLUTION 3 (NO CHANGE)	RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED FOR VOTE
Publicans	30	38	45	all 4
Wine	2	3	3	1, 3 and 4
Storekeepers'				
Colonial Wine	6	7	8	all 4
Storekeepers' General	1	1	1	3 and 4
Club	1	1	1	3 and 4

In Adelaide on the Wednesday evening before the poll, after a procession from Victoria Square, a mass meeting to support a reduction in licences was held at the bandstand rotunda near the River Torrens. Trains to Adelaide operated from all suburbs at special excursion rates which further encouraged a large crowd of supporters to attend. Led by banner-bearers and bands, the procession included groups from the Juvenile Rechabite Tents, Cadets of Temperance, Bands of Hope, the Salvation Army, Sons of Temperance, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Independent Order of Good Templars, with the Port Adelaide Temperance Band at the head.<sup>47</sup>

At the rotunda approximately 25 000 people gathered to hear the speakers. Mr S. Mauger, a Victorian member of the federal House of

<sup>45</sup> *The Advertiser*, 17 February 1906.

<sup>46</sup> Compiled from *The Advertiser*, 15 February 1906. See also *The South Australian Government Gazette*, 22 February 1906, 298.

<sup>47</sup> *The Advertiser*, 15 February 1906.

Representatives, conveyed the fraternal greetings of the men and women of Victoria 'who were watching the great fight'.<sup>48</sup> He commented that as the women of Victoria were not yet privileged to vote, the people of the Commonwealth had their eyes on the women of South Australia. He encouraged all the women present to go to the poll and urged them to give their husbands and sweethearts no peace until they promised to do the same.<sup>49</sup> After encouraging such nagging, Mauger drew allegorical pictures of contrasts in family life, that of a caring, sober working man and that of an irresponsible drinker.

A man who spent 5 shillings in a hotel was receiving no benefit, for the only thing he obtained was a full head and a hob-nailed liver. Besides that, he made his wife and children miserable. But a man who spent 5 shillings on food and clothing brought comfort and happiness into his home. These were simple facts, but they were apt to be forgotten by the thoughtless worker.<sup>50</sup>

The editor of *The Register* stressed the importance of a large turn-out to vote for an equitable result to be obtained.

It would be a great pity if, after the heavy expense incurred by the State to ascertain the people's wishes, the voting today should be confined to members of the temperance organizations and to those financially interested in preserving and strengthening the trade of the liquor vending establishments.<sup>51</sup>

*The Alliance News* viewed Port Adelaide as 'one of the districts overcrowded with public houses'.<sup>52</sup> The local movement to reduce licences campaigned vigorously against the opposition of publicans and their clientele who supported 45 hotels in the area. One difficulty for local temperance campaigners was a shortage of workers 'though a few

<sup>48</sup> *The Advertiser*, 17 February 1906.

<sup>49</sup> *The Advertiser*, 17 February 1906.

<sup>50</sup> *The Advertiser*, 17 February 1906.

<sup>51</sup> Editorial, *The Register*, 17 February 1906.

<sup>52</sup> *The Alliance News*, 1 September 1906, 3.

worked splendidly'.<sup>53</sup> *The Alliance News* recognised that it was difficult 'to alter the votes of some of the men' as a seaport town was 'always a hard place to deal with, and Port Adelaide is no exception to the rule'.<sup>54</sup> A 'crusade' was planned, with Emanuel Hounslow, the seafarers' missionary, as chairman, Mr Boyce, secretary, and Joseph Kirby and others lending support.

On Thursday evening, 15 February 1906, Robert H. Lemon, secretary of the Liquor Trades Defence Union of Victoria, spoke at the Port Adelaide town hall to 'a good attendance', followed by F. A. Chapman, secretary of the Brewers' Association, who traced the history of the local option movement from 1881.<sup>55</sup> In arguing against the churches Lemon suggested 'he did not mean the churches as a whole, as some of them were noted for the fairness with which they considered the question'.<sup>56</sup> The previous evening at Norwood town hall, 'where he dealt chiefly with the same matters',<sup>57</sup> he stated that 'women were controlled to a much larger extent by the parsons of a community than men were. He believed that the women's vote would be essentially a conservative one'.<sup>58</sup> Even Lemon conceded the persuasive power of piety.

At the Port he appealed to women 'to choose men for their husbands

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<sup>53</sup> *The Alliance News*, 1 March 1906, 3

<sup>54</sup> *The Alliance News*, 1 March 1906, 3.

<sup>55</sup> *The Advertiser*, 16 February 1906.

<sup>56</sup> *The Advertiser*, 16 February 1906.

<sup>57</sup> *The Advertiser*, 16 February 1906.

<sup>58</sup> *The Advertiser*, 15 February 1906.

who could fight temptation and overcome it. This was not to be secured by shilly shallying. No man or woman ever became anything by being coddled up'.<sup>59</sup> He observed that '90 per cent of the British people drank in moderation and enjoyed it, while the other 10 per cent either abused drink or did not touch it'. He considered the reduction of licences would mean an increase in the consumption of liquor, as had occurred in New Zealand, and would 'certainly mean a poorer class of liquor'.<sup>60</sup> Being in a port town of with a high proportion of workers, Lemon did not overlook employment issues commenting that 'the statement of the temperance party concerning the employment of labor in connection with the brewing trade was misleading. There was not an article used in it which did not give employment to labor'.<sup>61</sup>

For the week before the poll the Reverend Charles H. Nield, president of the South Australian Temperance Alliance, inserted in the newspapers catchy verses designed to sway the voters.

**M E N A N D W O M E N E L E C T O R S .**

VOTE IN THE TOP SQUARE, for this is the way  
 You are to help your weak brothers who stray;  
 Shrink not from duty, nor stray from the fight,  
 But vote in the top square, and vote for the right.  
 VOTE IN THE TOP SQUARE, VOTE IN THE TOP SQUARE,

Weak ones are calling today;  
 Vote in the top square, vote in the top square,  
 Help us to shield them, we pray.

-----  
 Authorised by C. H. Nield, President S.A. Alliance.

<sup>59</sup> *The Advertiser*, 16 February 1906.

<sup>60</sup> *The Advertiser*, 16 February 1906

<sup>61</sup> *The Advertiser*, 16 February 1906.

<p><b>F A T H E R S   A N D   M O T H E R S .</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>TODAY'S LOCAL OPTION POLLS</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>SEIZE YOUR OPPORTUNITY.</b></p> <p>FOR YOUR BOY'S SAKE AND YOUR GIRL'S SAKE. FOR YOUR HOME'S SAKE AND YOUR COUNTRY'S SAKE.</p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>VOTE IN THE TOP SQUARE</b></p> <p>ON EVERY BALLOT PAPER.</p> <p>Authorised by C. H. NIELD, President, Thos. ADCOCK, Secretary, S.A. Alliance; 62 J. E. ROBINSON, Secretary L.L. Reduction League.</p>
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On Thursday 15 February *The Advertiser* informed the voters of 'an artistic treat in store for them next Saturday, when they enter the polling-booths to record their votes for or against the reduction of liquor licenses'. The system of colour-coded ballot papers was explained.

Five ballot papers will be furnished to each voter, as each form of license is to be separately considered and voted upon, and the various licenses are:- Publicans', wine, club, storekeepers', colonial wine, and the storekeepers' general. To distinguish between the ballot papers each of the five lots has a distinctive colour. That for the publicans' licenses is white, for the wine buff, for the club pink, for the storekeepers' colonial wine green, and for the storekeepers' general blue.<sup>63</sup>

On the eve of polling day further pro-temperance gatherings were held in Adelaide, starting with a 'Half Hour Meeting' for business men in the Pirie Street Methodist Church at 1.15 p.m. to hear federal members Sir Frederick W. Holder and S. Mauger extolling them to vote in Square Number One. The Liquor Licence Reduction League organised four open-air meetings at 8 p.m. from where people marched to the Central Market for a combined mass open-air meeting.<sup>64</sup>

In the six voting districts there were approximately 80 000 names on

<sup>62</sup> *The Register*, 16 February, *The Advertiser*, 17 February 1906.

<sup>63</sup> *The Advertiser*, 15 February 1906.

<sup>64</sup> *The Register*, 16 February 1906.

the roll. Port Adelaide town hall was prepared as the local polling booth which would, as in other booths, be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. for voting. On Saturday 17 February readers opened the morning papers to more advertisements. They clearly showed a divergence of opinion with the temperance adherents urging a vote in the top square.

LOCAL OPTION. TEMPERANCE WORKERS AND CHRISTIAN PEOPLE  
ARE URGED TO  
VOTE IN THE TOP SQUARE  
ON ALL VOTING PAPERS, AND THEREBY ENSURE NO INCREASE OF  
ALL LICENCES.

LOCAL OPTION POLL  
The Executive of the SA ALLGEMEINER  
DEUTSCHER VEREIN, INCP., and the ADELAIDE  
DEMOCRATIC CLUB, INCP., APPEAL to all  
fair minded Electors to PREVENT OUR LIBERTY  
BEING WITHOUT REASON ENDANGERED, to  
VOTE FOR PROPOSITION  
NO. 3 THUS .....[X]  
NO INCREASE NO DECREASE

VOTE ALWAYS IN  
THE TOP SQUARE  
AND YOU'LL ALWAYS BE RIGHT  
VOTE EARLY, THEN RALLY UP  
YOUR NEIGHBOURS.

WANTED, TWENTY THOUSAND YOUNG MEN  
and WOMEN to put their CROSS in the TOP  
SQUARE of all voting papers on SATURDAY,  
so that one-third of the public-houses may be closed.

LOCAL OPTION POLLS.  
SATURDAY, February 17.  
all those OPPOSED to the REDUCTION of  
LIQUOR LICENSES are directed to VOTE on  
EVERY VOTING PAPER in the THIRD square thus:-

1. ....
2. ....
3. .... [X]
4. ....

LOCAL OPTION POLL FIGURES TELEGRAPHED  
ANYWHERE, 2/-, Collect Wire.  
Suburban hotels telephoned progress figures.  
WHITE'S TELEGRAM AGENCY  
Citizen's Building, Adelaide.

<sup>65</sup> *The Advertiser and The Register*, 17 February 1906.



Staff at *The Advertiser* arranged to display progressive figures in each district at the newspaper's office in Waymouth Street on the Saturday evening, with the added feature of 'several powerful electric lights...placed above the board, so that the figures may be seen from a distance'.<sup>66</sup>

The weather was extremely hot and humid across all the electoral districts, making less fervent voters reluctant to travel to polling booths.<sup>67</sup> Outside the newspaper office that evening a member of the crowd expressed an opinion that the muggy weather would influence the vote: "Phew!" he said, as he fanned himself with a "Vote for No. 3" ticket, "how can a man oppose the hotels on a day like this?"<sup>68</sup>

That night counting of votes took place at only four booths, Port Adelaide, Wallaroo, Adelaide, and Norwood. O. H. Schomburgh, the chief returning officer, was in charge of the Adelaide and North Adelaide boxes. Those for West Torrens were sent to Port Adelaide to be counted. John Formby, the Port Adelaide returning officer, began scrutiny of the Port Adelaide box directly after the close of the poll, dealing first with the question of publicans' licences.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *The Advertiser* and *The Register*, 17 February 1906.

<sup>67</sup> *The Register*, 19 February 1906.

<sup>68</sup> *The Register*, 19 February 1906 and 20 February 1906. The weather report commented on 'the sultry and cloudy weather conditions which prevailed over the state during the past few days'. See also *The Adelaide Chronicle*, 24 February 1906, which reported, 'the summer through which South Australia is at present passing is one of the most persistently hot that has been experienced for some years....Until Saturday the weather in Adelaide had not only been hot but had been continuously dry, and even the rain that fell then did little or nothing to increase the comfort of the inhabitants, for within a day or two it came back in steam'.

<sup>69</sup> *The Advertiser*, 17 February 1906.

Well under half the people eligible to vote went to the poll, particularly in the Adelaide district.<sup>70</sup> The *Register* editorial commented on the voters' apathy: 'social reformers', it remarked, 'would much rather encounter open opposition than immovable public lethargy'.<sup>71</sup> The Adelaide result was for a reduction of all licences except those for hotels. The publicans were elated. They had used the opportunity to reduce their rival outlets for liquor sales, such as wine stores, while denying the Adelaide temperance workers the victory they most desired, that of closing a number of city hotels.<sup>72</sup>

*The Register* reported that the fear of women throwing the whole weight of their influence against the liquor trade turned out to be groundless with figures for women voters very low. The final figures for Adelaide showed that of 8188 women electors only 1985 went to the poll - a much smaller proportion than for men. The reporter concluded that the statistics were 'eloquent of the need for an educational crusade on civil rights and obligations'.<sup>73</sup>

Outside Adelaide the temperance campaign was much more successful. It emerged victorious in the residential suburbs of North Adelaide and East Torrens and in the industrial districts of Wallaroo, West Torrens and Port Adelaide. In these districts temperance workers

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<sup>70</sup> *The Register*, 20 February 1906. In Adelaide there were 16 760 House of Assembly electors but only 5318 recorded their vote.

<sup>71</sup> *The Register*, 20 February 1906.

<sup>72</sup> *The Register*, 20 February 1906.

<sup>73</sup> *The Register*, 20 February 1906.

also had the satisfaction of knowing 'that polling in these places was considerably more representative of the population than that in the city'.<sup>74</sup>

In Port Adelaide a clear majority of voters supported Resolution One, to reduce the number of licences by one-third:

LICENCES	QUESTIONS OR RESOLUTIONS				
	NO.1	NO.2	NO.3	NO.4	
Publicans	2240	70	1913	44	
Wine	2399		799	186	
Storekeepers' Colonial Wine	2287	74	881	119	
Storekeepers' General			2667	358	
Club			2686	370	75

The local reformers had a good result from their campaign. The result when related to the actual number of existing licences is shown in Table 6. Eighteen licences would be removed by April 1907; in particular 15 hotels in the Port Adelaide district would have to close.

	EXISTING LICENCES	REDUCED TO	LICENCES NOT TO BE RENEWED AFTER MARCH 1907.	
Publicans	45	30	15	
Wine	3	2	1	
Storekeepers' Colonial Wine	8	6	2	
Storekeepers' General	1	1		
Club	1	1		76

By the following year maintenance was being carried out on many of the Port hotels in the hope that improvements would increase the chance of licence renewal. *The Compass* included the comment: 'is it not rather

<sup>74</sup> *The Register*, 20 February 1906.

<sup>75</sup> *The Alliance News*, 1 March 1906, 4.

<sup>76</sup> *The Alliance News*, 1 March 1906, 4.

significant that since the local option poll was taken the greater number of the hotel properties at the Port have undergone repairs of some kind?<sup>77</sup>

Under the *Consolidated Liquor Act* passed in 1908, a Special Bench was appointed to take evidence for each district and decide which premises were to lose licences. The determinations relating to Port Adelaide were announced in the Adelaide police court on Thursday 11 February 1909. All members of the Bench were present 'as well as a large number of lawyers representing either the owners or licensees of the premises under review'.<sup>78</sup> The chairman, J. Gordon, stipendiary magistrate, 'formally announced that the bench had concluded their labors so far as the Port Adelaide local option district was concerned'.<sup>79</sup> The decision of the Special Bench was final and not open to review. All hotel, wine and spirit licences were to expire at 11 p.m. on 25 March 1909 and the listed premises would have to close on that date or be converted for another use.<sup>80</sup> To many, particularly the hotel owners, this seemed an arbitrary and unfair decision. Most complained, publicly defending their record and the quality of their establishments. The unrenovable licences at Port Adelaide are shown in the following table:

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<sup>77</sup> *The Compass*, Vol. 2, No. 4, September 1907.

<sup>78</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>79</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>80</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

TABLE 7 - PORT ADELAIDE LICENCES NOT RENEWED IN 1909

## HOTEL PUBLICANS' LICENCES

British Standard	Port Road, Alberton	Edward James Symonds
Royal Oak	Paddington	James Julian
Scotch Thistle	Portland	James Hutchison
Paris	Portland	Thomas Adams
*Australia's Pride	Cannon Street	Thomas John Blencowe
*Brunswick Pier	St Vincent Street	Johanna Winslet
*Ship Inn	North Parade	John Lorimer Joyce
*Prince's	North Parade	Robert Jonas
*Duke of Wellington	St Vincent Street	Mrs Christina Parker
Thornton	Glanville	Frederick John Martensen
Kew	Kew	John Henry West
*Jervois	Lipson Street	Mrs Honora Brady
*Dock	Todd Street	Augustine Kluck
*Lass O'Gowrie	St Vincent Street	Henry Goddard
*Sussex	Commercial Road	George Bishop

## WINE LICENCE

*John Joseph Ede	St Vincent Street
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## STOREKEEPERS' COLONIAL WINE LICENCES

George Arnfield	Semaphore
Anton Monte	Glanville

(Those with an asterisk were in the area of central Port Adelaide covered by this study) 81

On 12 February 1909, an article, 'The Doomed Fifteen', in *The Advertiser* recorded a brief history and review of the Port hotels to close six weeks later. The writer suggested that closure of nine hotels in the main area of the town would result in confusion for seafarers on their return to the port. Ordinary mariners, firemen and able-bodied seamen would find the doors of their usual watering-holes shut tight while the better hotels which catered for the officers remained open.<sup>82</sup> The Ship Inn and Prince's Hotel facing the wharves on North Parade had been favourite haunts for over 50 years, the Ship Inn probably having the oldest licence in the Port. In 1909 the publican, John Joyce, had served his patrons for

<sup>81</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>82</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

nearly 20 years and received 'many sympathetic messages of regret' from supporters when the decision to close his premises was announced.<sup>83</sup>

Joyce thought the evidence he had tendered to the Special Bench would be enough to keep the Ship Inn open as 'it had one of the best names in the Port and has always been a landmark'. In his view, the two remaining hotels on North Parade would be 'inadequate to deal with the demand for trade there when the wharves facing the thoroughfare are occupied with passenger steamers'.<sup>84</sup>

Prince's Hotel, at the western end of North Parade on the corner of Mundy Street, was originally erected in 1851 and had been rebuilt at considerable expense in 1874 when approval to put up new premises had been obtained from the South Australian Company. Robert Jonas, the licensee, also expressed surprise at the decision of the Bench: 'I did not think this end of the wharf frontage would be affected'.<sup>85</sup>

In St Vincent Street three hotels were to close, the Duke of Wellington and the Lass O'Gowrie almost opposite each other at the western end, and the Brunswick Pier about 275 metres to the east. The Globe Hotel opposite the Brunswick Pier remained licensed. The proximity of hotels in this vicinity appears to have influenced the decision of the Bench to close three premises. Johanna Winslet had been publican

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<sup>83</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>84</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>85</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

at the Brunswick Pier for 12 years and no complaint about the conduct of the pub had been received. Bevan Kirby later established his chemist business in the former hotel building,<sup>86</sup> a testament to the victorious campaign in which his father had significantly participated. In place of the beer and spirits previously offered in the building, Bevan advertised a budget cordial concentrate to help those with a thirst:

'Gingerline'  
The Great Summer Drink.  
A shilling bottle makes several gallons.<sup>87</sup>

Mrs Christina Parker, licensee of the Duke of Wellington for nine years (previously at the Lass O'Gowrie for 13 years), believed her evidence before the Bench 'had been misconstrued', and the 'alleged rough men who patronised the hotel were "seafarers," a better class than whom never entered the place'.<sup>88</sup> Mrs Parker spoke less favourably of the locals who frequented the hotel, as did Henry Goddard, the Lass O'Gowrie publican.

In Commercial Road, only the Sussex Hotel lost its licence; the Newmarket and Central Hotels, on the same side of the street a short distance away, continued trading.<sup>89</sup> In Cannon Street the Australia's Pride Hotel built in 1861 by John Parsons was to close and the licensee T. J. Blencowe, married to Parsons' grand-daughter, found difficulty in coming to terms with the decision, having taken over as licensee only the

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Dr David Kirby, 1993.

<sup>87</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 6 March 1914.

<sup>88</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>89</sup> The former Sussex Hotel became a furniture store. In 1999 the ground-floor houses a computer shop.

previous year.

It will ruin me. I will go out not worth two pence....the house has always been well conducted. I have lived opposite it from boyhood. I have always tried to keep it in a respectable manner and never at any time allowed any bad characters about the place. It is one of the quietest houses in the Port. I consider a great injustice is being committed in closing it. The hotel has always borne a good name.<sup>90</sup>

In 1910 Australia's Pride became a boarding house.<sup>91</sup> In Portland on the southern edge of the town, the Paris Hotel run by T. Adams was ideally situated to attract local workers walking home. It was also near the railway station and a fire station but even as a 'comparatively recent licensed house' was earmarked for closure.<sup>92</sup>

The decision to close the Jervois Hotel on the corner of Lipson and Russell Streets was a surprise to Mrs Honora Brady. Teamsters and hay-carters had used the hotel for many years.<sup>93</sup> The energetic intrigue and trade war which had ensued when licences were granted for this hotel and the Prince Alfred Hotel opposite in 1878, now favoured no-one.<sup>94</sup>

The Dock Hotel in Todd Street, run by Joseph Hains from 1874 until 1904, had 'a clean record for the whole of the period'.<sup>95</sup> The Dock Hotel closed its doors to the liquor trade and, according to some local information, may have reopened later as a bordello.<sup>96</sup> The local option

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<sup>90</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909. The South Australian Brewing Company owned the hotel. Familiar in seafaring circles, Blencowe was previously employed as wardroom steward on the gunboat *Protector* for 13 years and as chief steward on the steamer *Governor Musgrave* for seven years.

<sup>91</sup> Hoad, Part 3, 29.

<sup>92</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>93</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>94</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>95</sup> *The Advertiser*, 12 February 1909.

<sup>96</sup> A 1995 Port Dock Brewery Hotel brochure stated 'it's been a boarding house, a bordello and a stevedores office'.



vote left vacant buildings with many upstairs bedrooms. The hotel, now the Port Dock Hotel and 'boutique brewery', was relicensed in 1986 with its strongest beer defiantly labelled 'The Old Preacher Ale', featuring an image of the Reverend Kirby.

On 25 March 1909, the final closure of the doors of the listed premises was marked by advertisements in the newspapers: 'Owing to the operation of the local option law all the furniture and effects of the undermentioned hotel will be sold by auction'.<sup>97</sup> A flood of household furniture, bar fittings and especially glasses were offered for sale. The tenants of leased houses were permitted to stay at reduced rents until they could finalise their affairs.

Some former hotels were converted to boarding houses, temperance hotels and refreshment rooms. Others became combined shops and dwellings.<sup>98</sup> Most were advertised for sale: 'social opportunities will thus be afforded to enterprising business men to set up in favourable localities'.<sup>99</sup> Even with the closures of a third of the district's hotels, the Port pubs continued as high-profile businesses in the city. The surviving hotels did not escape completely unscathed from further legislation, and pressure continued from the temperance movement.

The Congregationalist Thomas Smeaton entered parliament in 1905

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<sup>97</sup> *The Advertiser* and *The Register*, 25 March 1909.

<sup>98</sup> *The Register*, 25 March 1909.

<sup>99</sup> *The Advertiser* and *The Register*, 25 March 1909.

and, with William Archibald, introduced several Bills addressing temperance reform in 1906 and 1907 which were rejected.<sup>100</sup> The temperance workers were not deterred. In October 1907 the Congregational Union passed a resolution, framed by Kirby, regarding earlier closing times for pubs and the weekly hours for bar attendants,

that hotels and wine shops should be closed at ten o'clock, and on Good Fridays, and that night permits should be abolished, or not granted any longer than 12 p.m. - that it shall be made illegal to employ a barmaid more than 48 hours and a barman more than 50 hours a week.<sup>101</sup>

Attempts were made by the Australian Brewers' Association to change the image of barmaids and to provide guidelines to the industry.

The skills the employer...was looking for in a barmaid were 'a woman endowed with common sense; virtuous, without being a prude or a shrew; polite to customers; self-respecting; of easy, confident manners; without any fussy consciousness; making everybody feel at home, and creating respect from everybody'. Being called 'Miss' represented this respect.<sup>102</sup>

However the South Australian government responded to the demand for further reform, and introduced a Bill to consolidate and amend the liquor laws. The *Consolidated Liquor Act, 1908* included two changes strongly supported by the temperance lobby; hotels were required to pay a £10 rise in licensing fees and the registration of barmaids was compulsory by 31 March 1909.<sup>103</sup> Bob Hoad provided further information concerning female bar workers in his study of South Australian hotels and publicans.

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<sup>100</sup> Walter W. Phillips, 'The Influence of Congregationalism in South Australia 1837-1915', B.A. Honours Thesis, The University of Adelaide, 1957, 111.

<sup>101</sup> Phillips, 111-112.

<sup>102</sup> *Australian Brewers' Journal*, 20 September 1906, 708, in Diane Kirkby, *Barmaids: A History of Women's Work in Pubs*. (Melbourne, 1997) 51.

<sup>103</sup> Kiek, 205. See also *Consolidated Liquor Act, 1908*, No. 970.

Prior to 1908, females could serve behind bars but in that year legislation was passed prohibiting the employment of females in bars except the wife, mother, daughter, sister or step-daughter of the licensee, plus those who registered within three months after the passing of the Act. It is interesting to note that in 1909 no less than 401 barmaids were registered.<sup>104</sup>

No barmaid was to be employed after eleven at night, unless a relation of the licensee.<sup>105</sup> With support from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Kirby had 'most strenuously contended' for the progressive abolition of barmaids. The theologian Kiek wrote that public opinion was said to be 'convinced that the bar was no place for a young girl, or indeed for women at all' and sweepingly opined that 'it was well known that the whole environment was a strain on the virtue of any woman employee: for many a girl the bar has been a short cut to the gutter. The Act provided for the progressive abolition of barmaids by forbidding any future engagements of such: women already so employed were suffered to continue'.<sup>106</sup> The 1908 Act also prohibited a single woman from holding a publican's or wine licence, excepting those who were then licensees, and in 1915 this was extended to include widows as single women: 'No widow was to receive a license unless the license had been left to her by her husband'.<sup>107</sup>

The second 'temperance reform' of the 1908 Act was the closure of bars on Good Friday and on Christmas Day after 2 p.m. In this Kirby and

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<sup>104</sup> Hoad, Part 1, 4.

<sup>105</sup> Close, 51.

<sup>106</sup> Kiek, 205-206. In 1927 Kiek observed, 'barmaids are now practically an extinct race in South Australia'. See also Hoad, Part 1, 4, 'by early 1935 there were less than twenty registered barmaids'. In 1967 barmaids were again permitted in South Australian hotels.

<sup>107</sup> Hoad, Part 1, 4. See also Act No. 1236 of 1915 in Close, 52.

the temperance movement received the support of the Catholic Church.<sup>108</sup> In the midst of the campaign David Nock, who had worked for 40 years as a temperance reformer, died at Glenelg on 16 June 1909.<sup>109</sup>

The Act, rather than satisfying reformers, 'whetted their appetite for more'.<sup>110</sup> Early closing became the next major objective for South Australian social reformers. Smeaton introduced a bill in 1910 to reduce hours of weekday hotel trading from 5 a.m.-11 p.m. to 6 a.m.-10 p.m.<sup>111</sup> A debate regarding hours of trade for the hotels was cause for alarm among the remaining hotel owners and licensees as any reduction in hours meant a substantial loss of revenue. Smeaton finally withdrew the Bill in favour of one repealing the *bona fide* clauses which 'closed a much abused loop-hole'.<sup>112</sup> In the same year publicans were again concerned for their livelihoods during the campaign prior to a further 24 districts being polled on the local option issue. Mr Klauer, for the Licensed Victuallers' Association, queried the apparent inequity of 'the whole opposition against the liquor trade [being] centred around the distributing and not the manufacturing' with hotelkeepers bearing 'the responsibilities and the burden of legislation' when 'the brewer and the wine and spirit merchants were free. It was not right', he said, 'to carry legislation and let it fall on one section of the trade'.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Kick, 206.

<sup>109</sup> Hilliard and Hunt, 223.

<sup>110</sup> Phillips, 112.

<sup>111</sup> Phillips, 112.

<sup>112</sup> Phillips, 113.

<sup>113</sup> *The Daily Herald*, 9 March 1910, in Close, 85.

Shops had been forced to close at six o'clock since 1900,<sup>114</sup> and Kirby, still a vigorous worker at 74, reopened the campaign in 1911 to bring about hotel closing at the same time if possible. He organised a petition signed by 252 Port Adelaide residents asking that hotels should close at the same hour 'as other places of business under the Early Closing Act'. In his study of the early closing campaign, Walter Phillips suggested that the parliamentarians 'did not take the argument seriously' however the petition inspired some city traders to take further action.

It impressed the shop-keepers of Rundle Street who submitted their own petitions that public houses might be 'compelled to close at the same hour as shops'. Few of the merchants had accepted early closing very willingly and Kirby's argument kindled in them a sense of injustice. Moreover, these men were generally members and even officers of the Protestant churches, and sympathetic to the temperance cause, although not necessarily teetotallers themselves.<sup>115</sup>

Kirby addressed public meetings and expressed the temperance view in the press.<sup>116</sup> He endeavoured to consolidate Methodist opinion through a series of articles he wrote for their magazine, *The Christian Commonwealth*.<sup>117</sup> In June 1911 the *Methodist Spectator* gave support, stating that it was 'a scandal that a civilised - not to say Christian - country should close shops for the sale of bread, and keep open places for the sale of intoxicants until eleven'.<sup>118</sup> At the annual assembly of the Congregational Union in October 1912 Kirby introduced a resolution for

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<sup>114</sup> Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill': The Introduction of Early Closing of Hotel Bars in Australia', *Historical Studies*, October 1980, 253, 'Petitions for the closing of hotels at the same time as 'ordinary shops' were presented to parliament up to 1903'.

<sup>115</sup> Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 257. Phillips, 252, listed the dates when shop closing time of six o'clock was enforced by the Early Closing Acts in other Australian States; Western Australia (before Federation) in 1897, New South Wales and Queensland in 1900, Victoria in 1905 and Tasmania in 1911.

<sup>116</sup> Phillips, 'The Influence of Congregationalism', 114.

<sup>117</sup> Phillips, 'The Influence of Congregationalism', 114.

<sup>118</sup> *Spectator*, 16 June 1911, cited in Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 253.

reduced hours. His proposal accommodated the moderate drinker and his motion was carried. Kirby commented that 'it was not a tee-totaller proposition, but one suited to those foolish people who liked a little liquor in moderation. Those of that persuasion could well support it and prove that their desire was moderation and not excess'.<sup>119</sup> In November 1913 Smeaton moved in parliament that a referendum be held at the next general election to 'fix the hour when liquor bars should be closed'.<sup>120</sup>

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the South Australian Temperance Alliance worked hard. Kiek suggested that 'the brunt of the battle in the Press and on the Platform was borne by Kirby', with Smeaton exerting himself 'nobly in the House of Assembly - a place where Temperance advocacy is never an easy or a popular "line"'.<sup>121</sup> The early closing campaign continued to be a long struggle for the Port Adelaide pastor.

Walter Phillips outlined how, at the Australasian Temperance Conference held in Adelaide in March 1914, some delegates 'showed a preference for seven or eight o'clock closing [and] Kirby was still reluctant to commit himself exclusively to six o'clock', not wanting to lose the referendum by appealing for an hour deemed unreasonable by the public. However, it was finally resolved at the conference, to 'vote

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<sup>119</sup> Phillips, 'The Influence of Congregationalism', 114.

<sup>120</sup> Phillips, 'The Influence of Congregationalism', 116.

<sup>121</sup> Kiek, 207. Smeaton was president of the South Australian Temperance Alliance.

unanimously for 6 o'clock' which became the preferred hotel closing time for the temperance movement.<sup>122</sup> From the time of that decision Kirby campaigned for the six o'clock closure of bars.

In 1914, the Early Closing of Liquor Bars League set up a detailed plan of campaign after Premier Archibald Henry Peake promised that his government would support a referendum.<sup>123</sup> The first petition for a referendum was followed by others. 'At last, in 1914', Kiek stated, 'the necessary "enabling resolution" passed the Legislature'. He wrote that, in the campaign, 'Kirby surpassed himself in the vigour of his exertions and in the passion of his pleading' and that at an open-air demonstration in Botanic Park, Adelaide, 'Kirby was the chief orator'. When the resolution, 'Hands up for Six o'clock', was put to the meeting there was a 'forest of hands'.<sup>124</sup>

The proposed referendum was becoming a contest between six o'clock closing as proposed by the temperance movement, and eleven o'clock closing, the *status quo* supported by the Licensed Victuallers' Association. In fact it was not a choice between early and late closing, as voters could select any hour from six to eleven p.m. in a cumulative ballot for closing time 'the votes for six, if not a clear majority, would be added to seven and perhaps eight, until a clear majority was struck'.

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<sup>122</sup> Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 258-259.

<sup>123</sup> Close, 98.

<sup>124</sup> Kiek, 207-208. The Legislative Council passed the resolution in November 1914.

Phillips outlined how the licensed victuallers' lack of compromise was an error of judgement for the outcome of such a ballot.

This gave the 'teetotal party' a five to one majority, the Licensed Victuallers protested. There was some point in that, but it did not weigh the ballot in favour of six. The compromise hour of nine might have won the day had there been enough to advocate it, but the Licensed Victuallers failed to see that their best defence was in such a compromise. They were out to defend eleven o'clock.<sup>125</sup>

The Church of England was not as radical in its demands as the non-conformists. The fourth Church of England bishop, Arthur Nutter Thomas, himself a teetotaller, preached a sermon advocating 'the middle way' or nine o'clock closing.<sup>126</sup> He stated '9 o'clock is all we are ready for', and dismissed six o'clock, 'like prohibition, of which it is the forerunner', as 'purely negative and destructive'.<sup>127</sup>

The liquor trade, a little late in taking the campaign seriously,<sup>128</sup> recognised the temperance party's campaign as part of a long crusade to keep 'drink from the working classes and the working classes from drink'.<sup>129</sup> The traders organised a number of counter petitions and sponsored a large front page advertisement headed 'Vote 11 o'clock' in the Port newspaper which listed several reasons why it deserved support including the following:

<sup>125</sup> Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 259. The counting procedures which Phillips detailed are in *The South Australian Government Gazette*, 1915, Vol. 1, 485.

<sup>126</sup> Phillips, 'The Influence of Congregationalism', 117.

<sup>127</sup> *The Register*, 22 March 1915, in Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 259.

<sup>128</sup> Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 254.

<sup>129</sup> Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 254.



**Vote 11 o'clock**

**Because** a few weak-minded individuals drink to excess is not sufficient reason for inconveniencing the majority of residents and visitors to this State....

**Because** extremists think you incapable of exercising moderation in your habits.

**Because** the 6 o'clock party deems every drinker a drunkard....

**Because** every vote for '6 o'clock' is a step towards prohibition and prohibition means the substitution of sly grog shops and their attendant evils for existing well-regulated licensed system.

**Because** the Temperance Alliance seeks to make weak men's consciences the standard of conduct for strong men.

**Vote thus: 11 o'clock**

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Before any further action on local issues could be organised, the South Australian campaign was overtaken by world events with the outbreak of war in August 1914. The war, Arnold Hunt argued in his history of South Australian Methodism, provided widespread political support for early closing through the belief that 'liquor hindered the war effort'.<sup>131</sup> A number of Britain's allies expressed concern for the effect drink might have, 'both on the economy and on the effectiveness of the fighting forces'.<sup>132</sup> France and Russia both introduced restraints on alcohol consumption. Limiting the sale of alcohol for the duration of the conflict 'was almost inevitable' and the six o'clock closing of hotel bars was, Phillips stated, 'generally...seen as a war-time measure imposed for patriotic reasons, particularly to protect young soldiers from the devastations of drink'.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Adapted from advertisement, *Port Adelaide News*, 19 March 1915.

<sup>131</sup> Hunt, 281.

<sup>132</sup> Hunt, 281.

<sup>133</sup> Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 251.

By July 1914 Portonian fervour for reform was in full swing with a move for the earlier closing of bars.

Close the Bars.

Enthusiastic Meeting at the Port. An Emphatic Protest....meeting at Port Town Hall [considered] the question of the early closing of liquor bars....What was the objection to the closing of hotel bars at 6 o'clock? Why should the hotels be allowed to remain open longer than the shops? <sup>134</sup>

By 7 August Portonians had other issues to claim their attention. The *Port Adelaide News* reported, 'On Wednesday news reached Port Adelaide that Britain had declared war on Germany'. By October Portonians were leaving for service overseas including local women volunteers such as 'the popular nurse' from the Port Adelaide Casualty Hospital, A. C. McGregor who left as a member of the Second Australian General Hospital Corps. She was farewelled at the Port Adelaide Presbyterian Church, where she had been a member of the church choir for over twelve years.<sup>135</sup> Seven months later the overseas conflict drew closer to home with the announcement of the death of three local men in action in Turkey, Lieutenant R. Hooper, Sergeant MacGillivray and Private Webb, 'fighting for the Empire' in the Dardanelles.<sup>136</sup>

In Britain Horatio Kitchener, newly made an earl and 'Secretary of State for War', called for an army without drink and Prime Minister Lloyd George persuaded King George V to take a pledge of total abstinence for the duration of the war, declaring 'we are fighting

<sup>134</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 3 July 1914.

<sup>135</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 27 November 1914.

<sup>136</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 21 May 1915.

Germany, Austria and drink and the greatest of these deadly foes is drink'.<sup>137</sup> In South Australia a 'Follow the King' pledge campaign was endorsed by the Methodist Church with an appeal to each Methodist family to induce 20 signatories to the pledge.<sup>138</sup> Bishop Thomas urged 'church people' to abstain from alcohol for the duration of the war.<sup>139</sup>

Abstaining was becoming a forced necessity for many of the Port workforce. In January 1915 unemployed men again were standing idle on the wharves. Councillor Cavanagh led a deputation to the commissioner of public works, the Honourable H. Jackson, and explained the situation.

About three weeks or a month ago the wharves at our Port were lined with shipping and large numbers of men who had not earned anything for a considerable time found employment and some ready cash. After that the shipping thinned so that the wharves have been practically bare for the last week or two making the Port look comparatively desolate. This is inevitable. Bad conditions will continue to prevail while the European conflict is pursued, and the situation will be farther accentuated by the unfortunate dragging on of the drought....in the meanwhile thousands of men are walking about the wharves and streets idle; distress and poverty are rampant not only among those out of work on the wharves, but the many men engaged in trades which depend upon shipping for their very existence.<sup>140</sup>

It was an ideal climate to encourage the energetic, delinquent youths into further trouble. The police court heard assault charges relating to 'hooligans' with the local paper observing that the usual parrot-cry, 'you must expect a rough class in every port', was raised whenever there was an 'outbreak of criminality on the part of young or old in Port Adelaide'.<sup>141</sup> By the middle of 1915 hard times left many women of all

<sup>137</sup> Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 251-252. See also Hunt 281-282.

<sup>138</sup> Hunt, 282.

<sup>139</sup> Hilliard, *Godliness & Good Order: A History of the Anglican Church in South Australia*. (Netley SA, 1986) 86.

<sup>140</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 22 January 1915.

<sup>141</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 15 January 1915.

ages little alternative but to turn to prostitution for survival.<sup>142</sup> Charles Hemsley appeared at the court for hitting his sister, Mrs Alice Maud Inkster, a mother of six children, for soliciting while her husband was 'at the front'.<sup>143</sup>

Amidst hard times at the Port and rural areas, the State election was conducted on Saturday 27 March 1915 with the plebiscite for hotel closing time held simultaneously.<sup>144</sup> Voter turnout was high. Seventy per cent of electors voted in the referendum, the approximate results being 93 000 votes for six o'clock, 56 000 for the continuance of eleven o'clock and 12 000 for a time between six and eleven.<sup>145</sup> That night temperance reformers celebrated their victory. Kirby made the post-election comment that 'they might have knocked us if they had not gone for 11 o'clock....They gave us all the game. If they had followed Bishop Thomas's cue for 9 o'clock, having the bishop behind them, I believe they would have knocked us'.<sup>146</sup> His concern throughout the campaign had been on what reasonable hour would win the day. He assessed the temperance movement's success in the same frame of mind.

At Port Adelaide, 62.5 per cent of electors on the district roll voted; 6495 males and 5579 females were issued voting papers with 12 055

<sup>142</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 23 July, 3 September, 5 November 1915.

<sup>143</sup> *Port Adelaide News*, 20 August 1915.

<sup>144</sup> Geoffrey Serle (ed.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Vol. 11: 1891-1939. (Carlton Vic, 1988) 176.

<sup>145</sup> Hunt, 282.

<sup>146</sup> *The News*, 25 March 1915.

ballot papers lodged. The numbers of votes cast in favour of the various closing times were: 6 p.m. (7314), 7 p.m. (34), 8 p.m. (48), 9 p.m. (270), 10 p.m. (57), 11 p.m. (4290) and informal (42).<sup>147</sup> In the Port, as in the rest of the State, the majority supported six p.m. closing but a sizeable number, approximately one-third, would have preferred hotels to remain open until eleven p.m.

Three days after the poll, at the annual meeting of the Licensed Victuallers' Association, the past president, Mr Nitschke, expressed his opinion that the women's vote had carried the referendum in favour of six o'clock and commented that 'if different coloured voting papers had been issued, they would have been able to say where the men stood in the matter'.<sup>148</sup> The unknown gender statistic did not cause Horace Duncan to hesitate in his comments.

Their opponents had put in a lot of miserable representations to the women, who were very susceptible to the parson. He felt that, when some of the women realised that their husbands, sons, or lovers went somewhere worse than hotel bars, and did not come home until after eleven, they would regret their vote for six o'clock.<sup>149</sup>

In her thesis on social attitudes to South Australian liquor legislation, S. E. Close described members of the Victuallers' Association in 1915 as 'a sullen lot in the face of defeat',<sup>150</sup> when they accused the Temperance Alliance of being 'unpatriotic' in translating a pamphlet for the German

<sup>147</sup> 'Referendum-Early Closing of Bar-rooms-1915', No. 39, *Statistical Register of South Australia, 1915 - Population*, 26. The electorate included Semaphore, Largs Bay, Birkenhead, Alberton, Woodville and Kilkenny. There appears to be 19 persons who received voting papers but did not vote.

<sup>148</sup> *The Daily Herald*, 31 March 1915, in Close 105.

<sup>149</sup> *The Daily Herald*, 31 March 1915, in Close 105-106.

<sup>150</sup> Close, 109.

speaking colonists, an initiative of Kirby's.<sup>151</sup> The victuallers also warned that the investments of barley growers, hop gardens and cooperages, all dependent on the beer industry, would be affected by the referendum result.<sup>152</sup> The brewers took the more sanguine attitude that men would continue drinking and that six o'clock closing would lead to increased home drinking.<sup>153</sup>

Kirby, 'Mr Six O'Clock', saw the new law come into operation on 27 March 1916. Kiek described the celebration by temperance advocates that night in Adelaide with Kirby acclaimed as the hero of the campaign.

A monster demonstration was held in the Exhibition Building, at which the victory was fittingly celebrated. The heroes of the struggle - the Rev. J. C. Kirby and Major Smeaton, M.P. - were each presented with a framed memento....Other noble workers might well have claimed a share in the honours of that evening, notably Lady Holder, Commonwealth President of the Women's [sic] Christian Temperance Union, Mrs E. W. Nicholls, J.P., State President of the same organization, and Miss George, the energetic and skilful State Secretary. But all would agree that Kirby was the greatest hero of that famous fight.<sup>154</sup>

The presentations consisted of large framed photographs of the rally held in Botanic Park on 7 March the previous year. Kirby's photograph entitled 'HANDS UP FOR SIX O'CLOCK', still hangs in the vestry at the Port Adelaide Uniting Church.

While the crowd gathered in Adelaide, the evening at the Port was reported as 'quiet'. *The Advertiser* remarked that 'the absence of the

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<sup>151</sup> *The Daily Mail*, 31 March 1915, in Close, 109.

<sup>152</sup> Close, 106.

<sup>153</sup> *The Patriot*, 7 April 1916, in Close, 125a.

<sup>154</sup> Kiek, 208-209.

customary hotel lights made the city dull. There was very little evidence of insobriety'.<sup>155</sup>

Early closing in South Australia was viewed by people and legislators at the time as 'a permanent, not a temporary measure',<sup>156</sup> unlike some other States where the new time of closing was 'a temporary restriction, to be lifted within six months of the return of peace'.<sup>157</sup> When the war ended in 1918, temperance groups in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia hung tenaciously to their victory.

In 1915 Mr Nicholls stated in parliament that 'children of today will look back and wonder how it ever came about that hotel bars were once open at eleven o'clock',<sup>158</sup> and a decade after the law was enacted, Kirby's biographer confidently wrote that 'South Australia will never go back on "Six o'Clock"'.<sup>159</sup> Success for the reformers was difficult to gauge and in the Port, as elsewhere, the rush to accumulate drinks before six o'clock closing created an uncivilised swill which spilled out of the hotel into the streets and did little to reduce the amount of alcohol consumed.<sup>160</sup> The unsociable rush which replaced the unhurried traditional drinking and

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<sup>155</sup> *The Advertiser*, 28 March 1916, in Close, 125.

<sup>156</sup> Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 260.

<sup>157</sup> J. M. Freeland, *The Australian Pub*. (Melbourne, 1966) 174. See also Phillips, 250. 'By the end of 1916 six o'clock closing was in force in New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and in New Zealand. Western Australia had adopted nine o'clock closing, but Queensland retained the old hours until 1923 when it introduced eight o'clock closing of hotel bars'.

<sup>158</sup> *Debates in the Houses*, Vol. 1, 1915, 518, in Close 126.

<sup>159</sup> Kiek, 208.

<sup>160</sup> A. E. Dingle, 'The truly magnificent thirst': an historical survey of Australian drinking habits', *Historical Studies*, October 1980, Appendix, Table B, cited in Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 250-251, 'it was the axiom of the temperance movement that any restriction of the liquor trade would reduce the consumption of liquor'.

talking, meant townsmen returned home earlier but 'once the war was over', Phillips pointed out, 'Australians drank about as much beer as they had before the war, only they drank most of it between five and six o'clock in the evening and the rest from bottles they took home'.<sup>161</sup> For the crusaders this was not an issue. They had reached a zenith and a major temperance battle in South Australia was won.

After fifty years the decision was revoked, and the earlier victory almost forgotten by a later society. The real result in 1916 was that with pubs reduced in number and shutting at six o'clock, the drinking manners of Port Adelaide pub patrons, as elsewhere in the State, were forcibly changed to a rushed uncivilised 'swill'. However at that time the campaigners' press for civility and sobriety over drinking and disorder was regarded by Portonian Joseph Kirby and other reformers as finally making some headway.

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<sup>161</sup> Dingle cited in Phillips, 'Six o'clock Swill', 251.



## CONCLUSION

In the 1830s Europeans discovered a harbour on what became known as the Port Adelaide River in the new British province of South Australia. At the harbour's first landing place of 1837, bar trade and basic hotel accommodation were available from the earliest days and a rustic chapel was built for worship by all denominations of the Christian faith. The pioneers were busy with survival in a new environment and in assessing their choice of options for business and family life in the colony. In October 1840, the settlement of Port Adelaide was relocated two kilometres to the north to its present site on the harbour shores and began its gradual development into a significant port town 15 kilometres from the city of Adelaide.

In the first years at the new site, townspeople worked together as a small community to establish their town and stabilise the low-lying area. They faced many adversities particularly the frequent flooding and outbreaks of fire which devastated large sections of the settlement. The last major tidal inundation occurred in 1865 and by the late 1860s Portonians had progressively constructed more permanent roads and buildings.

From the 1870s Port Adelaide was a bustling port and cosmopolitan urban area. The waterfront pubs were overcrowded with visiting seamen and significantly large groups of waterside and industrial workers. A core of leading citizens involved with business and municipal affairs, established an Institute and supported societies and educational classes for self-improvement for themselves and for working-class Portonians. There was also a number of poor, often destitute people in the town but little tolerance or sympathy for those like Sarah Francisco who were degraded by their alcoholic addiction. In the nineteenth century, community care at the Port had a tendency to be insular and specific and, for the most part, with the exception of the Salvation Army from 1882, local churches reflected this in their primary concern for those within their congregation's midst rather than ministering more widely to the town's needy.

The *Port Adelaide News*, first printed in 1878 and used as a major source for this study, carried weekly reports of life on the Port waterfront: drunken brawling, robbery, riotous behaviour, indecent language and prostitution for which the stipendiary magistrate imposed his fines and sentences. Support for local sporting groups, particularly the football club, helped to divert the energy of the larrikins into spectator fervour and, to some degree, bring Portonian social groups closer together. The attitude of most financially successful townsmen, particularly those not dependent on the custom of seafarers, was to

separate themselves as much as possible from the realities of a port town. They retained their businesses at the Port but moved their family homes to Alberton, Woodville or to Lefevre Peninsula. Many however continued support for the churches they had helped to establish in the town.

The social fabric of Port Adelaide as reflected through the churches showed a complex town where mores and the Christian values brought from former home countries were a constant lifeline for respectability and acceptance by the peer group. It was a great relief for churchgoers to enter a familiar place of worship so like those of 'home' and believe that their god had not been left in the British Isles with their former life. It was time to conform and consolidate and be strong within a group and the churches provided for that need. The dissenters took their beliefs very seriously and readily opined their view of what was 'right'. They unswervingly directed all to conform to their mould of virtuous living, improvement of the mind and spiritual pursuits.

Alcohol was seen by temperance advocates as a major cause of societal breakdown and their main challenge was to halt its retarding effect on mankind's progression and social improvement. The tensions between the temperance stalwarts and the liquor trade in South Australia compelled the abstemious to adopt a careful strategy; to seek changes in the law placing more power in the hands of the local people to effectively reduce the number of licensed premises and, in 1895, to campaign for the

newly acquired women's vote. A major impetus for the campaigns emanated from the Port through the energetic work of the Congregational pastor Joseph Coles Kirby. Unlike Fremantle and Williamstown, also crowded with hotels and familiar with the problems of prostitution and larrikins, the town of Port Adelaide gained a certain recognition as a seat of social reform through the work and high profile of this strong local churchman. Kirby actively participated in other colonial reform movements such as the Social Purity Society and in particular, for the six o'clock closing of hotel bars. As the temperance strategy came into action the hoteliers and liquor factions were forced to react.

There was a degree of conflict between two Port communities. On the one hand the temperance advocates with their roots deep within the dissenter churches and on the other the publicans, along with their bar patrons drawn mainly from seamen and town's workers, anxious to save hotel businesses in the town. The question of whether temperance was a moral responsibility of society or a legitimate issue of personal choice, was argued with opponents polarised from piety to pub. There was little middle ground in the debate but after strong campaigns the social reformers won some immediate victories. The temperance movement in South Australia shook Port Adelaide for half a century. The activists, like their compatriots around the continent and overseas, fought to reduce the effect of alcohol, particularly on the working class.

Citizens in the early twentieth century could argue with certainty that progress had been made at the Port but its form and measurement were less certain. To individual Portonians the nature of progress was recognised in a diversity of forms. A town leader saw progress in land and building development or perhaps even in challenging Adelaide as a major centre. The warehouse owner welcomed increased stores; the shipping agent, more ships in port; the crusaders, social reform; ministers of religion, larger congregations and bigger churches 'to the glory of god', a progress of witness; the medical officer, improved safety conditions on the wharves and a town free from fear of plague; the health inspector a clean town where slums and typhoid were eliminated; publicans, larger or more prominent establishments and increased trade; and editors and journalists, a bigger print run. Progress to Sarah Francisco, on many nights, would be finding a bed of hessian bags in Johnny Allsorts' shed; to dour dissenters, piety in all its manifestations was a progress to heavenly rewards. For some, progress meant more order, for others more liberty.

In late 1914 Portonians, like many other South Australians, gathered at Outer Harbor to wave goodbye to their men boarding crowded troopships. At the mouth of the river the bar was no longer a barrier and man-made revetments, symbolic of the port's progress, reached out into the Gulf where once sand spits had formed. The ships steamed towards Kangaroo Island and turned due west into the head wind of the roaring

westerlies, a course almost impossible with earlier sailpower. At the Port, for both the pious and pub frequenters, greater storm clouds gathered on the horizon as affairs of a distant world began to influence their lives.

By 1915 the temperance movement in South Australia had successfully campaigned for a reduction of liquor licences and trading hours. Even in the port town of Port Adelaide, it seemed in 1915 that sobriety and order had triumphed. The falsity of that assumption became obvious as soon as the new law was implemented in March 1916.

## APPENDIX A

Edward Holthouse, 'Reminiscences of the Old Port, 1838-1839', *Adelaide Observer*, 1, 15 September 1888, *Portonian*, June 1978, 4-6; September 1978, 6-8; December 1978, 5-7 and March 1979, 5-6.

The locality of the Old Port lies about a mile above the Jervois Bridge, and nearly opposite to what is now known as 'Buck's Flat.' It was selected as offering greater facilities to access to hard ground from the river than any other spot in the immediate neighbourhood, the intervening belt of mangrove swamp being scarcely 400 yards through. Across this a ditch was cut in a straight line to the foot of the sandhills, and was piled at this end with pine poles capped with quartering, and backed behind with teatree bush to prevent the sand from falling in. This ditch was about 30 feet wide by 5 feet deep. The silt dug out in its formation was thrown up on one side, which formed an embankment or parapet about ten feet broad by two feet high. This creek was only available for small crafts of light draught, and was so narrow as scarcely to admit of one boat passing another except at high water. At low water it was dry, as also were the mudflats surrounding its entrance.

As there were no mechanical appliances for landing goods onto this strip of a wharf it can readily be imagined what irritation was caused to captains by the delay attending the unloading of their vessels and the fights and scramblings amongst the rival crews to get out of the cutting before being neaped by the ebb. Fortunately for 'Jack,' policemen were scarce and fines with costs an institution not then in vogue. These annoyances to captains and sailors were, however, trifles compared with the losses sustained by shippers and consignees.

At the time I am speaking of a large trade was being carried on with Hobart, Launceston, and Circular Head in flour, bran, oats, and potatoes, and especially in sawn timber, laths, and broad palings. Twofold Bay, Portland and Port Phillip occasionally sent a shipload of bullocks and sheep. Indeed, at times the infant colony was very dependent on these settlements for its food supply. This carrying trade was done by small, smart sailing craft, notably one called the *Lady Emma*, Captain Price. As yet no steamer had disturbed the placid waters of the harbour. These vessels with their cargoes followed one another in such rapid succession that at times the wharf became choked from end to end with stacks of flour, bags of potatoes, and other miscellaneous merchandise, where it remained for days together exposed to the weather till removed by bullock-drays to Adelaide...During these intervals of delay it seemed as if time and tide exercised their traditional prerogative to wait for noone, for the tide would rise foot by foot till the entire wharf lay under water....

After the subsidence of these high tides the narrow footway between the goods stacked on the wharf and the edge of the creek was rendered so slimy and slippery that pedestrians had to hang on to crates and cases to avoid a ducking. The teamsters fared no better, for the only access they had to the goods was by going through the swamp to the rear of the wharf and backing their dray tail on to the embankment....the tug of war came when a start was made with a heavy load on. Here and there a dray might be seen sinking over the feloes and down to the axle in mud....

On approaching the Port from Adelaide two sandhills had to be crossed which could not be avoided. On the second one, facing the river, stood an unpretentious weather-boarded little structure on wooden blocks, with a narrow verandah in front, reached by steps of the same material. This was H. M. Customs House. A short distance in front were two arched corrugated-iron roofs resting on pine blocks. They were about 30 or 40 feet long. These were the bonded stores, which were in charge of a very eccentric and taciturn old landing waiter....Two or three other small wooden buildings scattered here and there comprised all the property belonging to the Government, at the Old Port. The next building of any importance was a weather-boarded hotel kept by William Anthony, which went by his name. To have said that it offered good accommodation for man and beast would have been very wide of the truth, for it was a draughty, comfortless place, leaking sand from roof to floor. The landlord, a bachelor, was not a popular man with his

customers. He had a curious temper, and always appeared to me to consider himself superior to his occupation. It was the property of the South Australian Company, and was built on one of their preliminary sections, abutting on the Government reserve....As far as I know the landlord of the hotel referred to was about the only person who paid a rental....

The only other licenced house was kept by a Highlander, named McBeath, who did a large bar trade, but it was no place of accommodation for quiet people, being very rowdy at times....

Within a few yards of McBeath's was a large tent and small Manning's house belonging to Newman & Co. The former was a general store, where all sorts of small wares could be purchased, from a pound of tobacco to a tallow candle...or if you needed it, a jolting ride in a spring-cart across the plains to Adelaide for the matter of a pound note. Within a stone's throw was a pine hut, where a scraggy sheep was now and then killed by one Lillyman, on which days a crowd would surround the old man's door...and lucky was he who could secure a quivering joint at 1s. a lb. Convenient to butcher Lillyman's was a baker's oven under a lean-to kept by a tall German, who found a ready sale for his bread at 2/6 the 2-lb loaf....

After housing myself and chattels under a tarpaulin for some weeks, doing my cooking and scullery work outside, I was tempted by the offer of a large profit to dispose my stores to the master of a trading schooner....As the winter approached...I purchased a small freehold with a water frontage for £11. It was a tight little broad-paling shanty, about 10 feet by 6, situate on the edge of a swamp on Government ground. My neighbours on either side were Poland the policeman and Adams the night-watchman....Two other shanties of the same size and pattern made a row of five. They were all minus chimneys and windows. For some reason or other this row went by the name of 'Starve-dog-lane'.

What constituted it a lane, I suppose, was a large encampment of German emigrants who had pitched their tents in a parallel line on the opposite side of the row. They were the recent arrivals from Germany by the ships ZEBRA and PRINCE GEORGE....We neighbours were not long in fraternising with our Teuton friends, who were a quiet and very industrious people....

It so happened that about the time of the arrival of the Germans a spring of excellent water was struck a few feet from the surface on the premises of the landlord of the 'Old Halfway House', on the Port-road....When it was ascertained that a supply of excellent water could be obtained from this well sufficient for requirements of the Port, water carting from the Torrens was discontinued excepting by the Government for the use of their officials.

The German emigrants then took up the trade, who with admirable industry and perseverance rigged up extempore sledges out of the forks of sheoak trees, and the young men and girls, yoking themselves together, were to be met at all hours of the day dragging casks of water through the heavy sand from the well to the Port.... I believe all the other dwellings scattered here and there amongst the sandhills at the Old Port, besides those previously mentioned, could have been counted on ten fingers, and the settlement itself comprised within a radius of 400 or 500 yards.



## APPENDIX B

*South Australian Gazette*, 5 December 1838.

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR AND RESIDENT COMMISSIONER** requests the attention of the Colonists of South Australia to the following considerations:-

1. However necessary it might have been, at the first settlement of the Colony, to have fixed the authorised landing place in its present situation, yet, in the now highly advanced and rapidly advancing state of commerce and society that situation has become most inconvenient, discreditable, and injurious to the public interests.

2. About four miles further down the river, at the point at which the Northern Channel joins the main stream, there is a beautiful, very secure, and very commodious Harbour. Ships can beat up either to or from it without danger, and, as the water is deep inshore, cargoes can be discharged at all times of the tide. His Excellency desires, with the unanimous co-operation of the colonists, to establish a new Port near this point.

3. The situation is so peculiarly desirable that it was thought of at a very early period; but the difficulties with regard to the surrounding land were then too great to be encountered.

4. In high tides the ground, to a considerable extent, is covered with water, but the land is almost everywhere solid. It is not properly to be called a swamp. Almost everywhere it will, without any extraordinary precautions, support roads and buildings. A very great number of the most flourishing ports in the world have been erected in much worse situations. There exists no difficulty that the enterprising spirit of our colonists, in the present state and prospects of the colony, is not able to overcome.

5. Individual exertions, however, would be of no avail: combination of effort is absolutely necessary; and his Excellency proposes the following plan, as, in his opinion, the most simple and effectual towards the attainment of this object.

That from 500 to 1000 acres at the proposed situation should be immediately surveyed and put up for sale in accordance with the regulations; and that his Excellency the Resident Commissioner should be allowed to purchase this land, with his own private funds, at the regular price, without any competition on the part of the colonists.

That after the ground shall have been properly laid out into convenient lots for a port town, and due and sufficient notice given, these lots shall be put up singly to auction, and sold to the highest bidders.

That, from the fund thus formed, the Resident Commissioner shall forthwith withdraw the money advanced by him, with bank interest, and place the whole of the residue in the hands of a committee, to be elected by the holders of the port lots.

That, this residue, under the direction of the committee, shall be applied to specific general purposes, essential to the establishment of the Port, such as the making of a great road across the mangrove swamp, the construction of a bridge, the raising embankments, the cutting main drains, &c.

To the holders of the twenty-nine town acres at the present Port, and of sections with road frontage on the present great high road, would be given the option of exchanging their present lots for lots at the new Port, and their present sections for sections on the new line of road.

Up to the period of the concluding sale by auction, no risk would be incurred but by the Resident Commissioner.

That risk his Excellency is quite willing to undertake; having convinced himself, by close examination, that the situation referred to is most peculiarly marked out by nature as the Port, and that, in this free and commercial country, nothing can long prevent it from being there established.

Land Office, Adelaide,  
December 4, 1838.

GEO. M. STEPHEN.  
GEORGE HALL.

## APPENDIX C

Brian J Samuels, 'Community in the Port Adelaide District 1861-1901', B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1972. 107. See also Penny Matthews (ed.), *South Australia: The Civic Record 1836-1986*. (Netley SA, 1986) 460.

The history of the Port Adelaide district council boundaries is complex. Following the incorporation of the Municipal Council of Port Adelaide on 27 December 1855, a number of areas created their own councils. However, with the steady growth of the area, local government became too fragmented to operate with efficiency and by the turn-of-the-century, the smaller bodies were absorbed by the Port Adelaide Corporation which held its last Town Council meeting on 22 November 1900.

With the annexation of the smaller councils completed, the area of Port Adelaide was 13.5 square kilometres and as at 13 November 1900, had 4701 buildings and a population of 18,031. The Governor, Right Honourable the Lord Tennyson, proclaimed Port Adelaide a city on Thursday 23 May 1901.

*The South Australian Government Gazette* published the proclamation of councils and defined the council boundaries. This material is indexed as a separate typescript held in the South Australian Parliamentary Library. Samuels' table does not list all boundary changes and made the point that the areas proclaimed are not necessarily identical in size to the areas annexed by Port Adelaide. In 1996 the Corporation of the City of Port Adelaide and the Corporation of the City of Enfield amalgamated to form the City of Port Adelaide Enfield.

The following information is a brief outline only as this study focuses on the main town of Port Adelaide,

- (a) Portland Estate was proclaimed a separate District Council on 15 September 1859, and rejoined Port Adelaide on 4 December 1884.
- (b) In 1864 John Hart instigated the District Council of Glanville which was finally proclaimed on 11 August after an error in proclamation on 14 July 1864. A portion of Glanville was transferred to Semaphore in 1883 and the remainder to Woodville on 5 January 1888.
- (c) Queenstown and Alberton together formed a District Council on 20 October 1864 which rejoined Port Adelaide on 2 June 1894.
- (d) On 11 April 1872 the District Council of Lefevre Peninsula was proclaimed for the area of the peninsula north of the Glanville District.
- (e) On 22 February 1877 the District Council of Birkenhead was proclaimed after severing from Lefevre Peninsula District Council. It appears that Birkenhead District acquired more of the Lefevre council area when most of Lefevre District was included in Semaphore District in 1883.
- (f) The District Council of Rosewater was proclaimed on 22 March 1877 and was formed from parts of the District Councils of Queenstown and Alberton, Yatala North and Yatala South. It amalgamated with Port Adelaide on 26 January 1899.
- (g) The Municipal Council of Semaphore was proclaimed on 20 December 1883 and was annexed by Port Adelaide on 1 November 1900.

## APPENDIX D

W. J. Purvis, 'Old Port Adelaide, Old Ships, and Old Identities', *The Advertiser*, 2 November 1927.

The Sailors' Home was built, away from civilisation in the middle of the swamp. The North Parade was then the shopping centre. The old Custom House...was afterwards used as the Institute. I was the first assistant librarian in the old building under Mr. Arthur Rose. Next west was the post-office, and then came two shops - Johnson's leather store, and Chas. Downer's pharmacy. At the rear was Lambe & Paqualin's office, facing Mildred-street. Across Mildred-street was Ford's Hotel. Then came Hamilton Brothers' drapery....There was an archway through which was Peter Schourup's photographic studio, Faulding's chemist shop...Jas. Grosse, grocer, A. and A. T. Scarfe, grocers and ironmongers, John Smith, Ship Inn., Lavin, baker, E. H. Butler & Co., bootmakers, T. Blackney, grocer, and Mrs. Blake, fancy goods, on the corner. Across the road, west, was Russell's British Hotel, and next Mrs. Middleton's Furniture Emporium, several small shops, and William Haddy's boot shop, 'Stick Jaw Bird's' toffee shop, and Allen's butcher's shop. Across Hare-street was Mr. Stephen Haddy's cabinetmaker's shop. He was also the leading undertaker for many years....Next to Mr. Haddy's were South Australian Company's cottages on high stumps, and on the corner opposite Hart's Mill was Tom Yeo's Hotel.

Captain Simpson's coal heap was near the Central Ferry steps, and a weighbridge near the...flagstaff. Passing the ferry steps were the old company's gates, with John Newman's store on the corner. In Commercial-road and facing it, was Daniel Goldsmith's store, with its three golden balls as a sign over the door. The Bank of South Australia was on the corner....Across Divett-street was a butcher's shop...Stacey's, tailors....Thos. Jelley, confectioner, E. Rio, bootmaker, Geo. Hills, restaurant....Next to Hill's was David Wald's watchmaker, and...Geo. Sinclair's two drapers' shops and the Royal Admiral Hotel on the corner.

Opposite the...railway-station with its high...belfry, was Phil Hains, fruiterer and poulterer. The galvanised stoop stood high on stumps above the footpath. These...were wire-netted, to keep in the ducks and geese....An Hotel was on the corner of Lipson Street, and at the rear, facing Lipson-street, Captain Bickers had a fine house and garden down in a hollow, a long flight of steps leading to it....Across Lipson-street stood the old Congregational Church, destroyed by fire in 1866....

Crossing Commercial-road were the police-station, the mortuary, boat shed, Dr. Duncan's Residence...vacant land where the Town Hall now stands, a brick house, occupied by Captain Quin, originally by Dr. Chatterly. Across Mildred-street was a two-storied wooden house, occupied by Thwaites, blacksmith. Farther along were small cottages, Peter Wright's boot shop, Mr. Carr, undertaker, and Mr. Lumber's boot shop. Still west was Walton Mead's butcher shop and the Duke of Wellington Hotel. Across a small street we came to Robert Duncan's baker and confectioner, where we lads used to finish up our parade of the Port on Saturday nights by purchasing some of Robert's noted Scotch pies....Farther west was Jacobsen's grocery, and on the corner of Hart-street dear old Dr. Forwood held levee. Still west was Richard Bennett's, sen., residence. His smith's shop was at the rear, next to Schultze, watchmaker. On the extreme west was the Copper Company's smelting works, with its huge chimney and steel bell. This bell could be heard for a long distance, and was of fine tone.

Coming back to the railway-station, across Lipson-street, was Menpes's drapery....Next door lived the late Mr. Jas. Rofe, carrier, and on the corner the much beloved Dr. Gething. His stables were down in a hollow....On the corner of St. Vincent-street and Commercial-road was Captain Tapley's weighbridge presided over by Mr. Joshua Evans....Across Commercial-road was Knapman's White Horse Cellars Hotel, with Mrs. Hakendorf's sailors' boarding-house on its southern side. At the rear...was the brewery....Carter & Bridgman, bootmakers, Mr. Reynolds, old Wesleyan Church, Tulsford's timber yard, Todd the barber, Tom Newmann, draper, Wiese, the barber and local dentist. Geo. Newman, Ironmonger, Globe Hotel, vacant land, Joe Acres, baker,

Geo. Acres, sen., butcher, and Benjamin Hodson, grocer, the old Church of England with school at the rear, with Mr. T. Dallison and his two daughters as teachers, vacant land with Wm. Taylor's Singapore built wooden houses at the rear, the Lass O'Gowrie Hotel, a skittle alley, Hart's store, a shelly bank on which the blacks used to camp and corroboree, Bucknall's Galvanized Iron Hotel and boatsheds, and the remains of an old dock at the rear.

**APPENDIX E**

*Port Adelaide News*, 16 August 1895.

**CORONER'S INQUEST** - On Wednesday morning last, at Whallin's Hotel, the City Coroner (Dr. Whittell) held an enquiry into the circumstances connected with the death of the infant male child of Alice Burgess, which was born on Tuesday morning. Charles Anderson, hostler at the Port Hotel, was at his work about 4.30 a.m. on Tuesday morning, and heard footsteps coming downstairs. Said to her - 'What makes you come down so early,' She said - 'I have been very ill all night, having no sleep,' and went to the back premises. Presently she returned, and went upstairs. Sarah Francisco, servant at the hotel, said that yesterday morning she was informed that Alice Burgess was not well. That was about 7.45. Took her up a cup of tea. Found her partly dressed, and suspected from the appearance of the room that something unusual had happened. Mrs. Whallin next went up, and sent for the girl's mother, leaving witness to take charge of the girl. The girl did not confess anything about the child to witness. Annie Whallin, wife of Mr. Whallin, landlord of the hotel, said that on Tuesday morning she missed the servant girl from the kitchen. Asked Anderson who replied that she was down about 5 a.m. but went back to her room because she was unwell. On learning from Sarah Francisco that something was wrong, sent the hostler for the girl's mother. Went herself into the room, and suspected from the appearance of the room that the girl might have had a mishap. Inquired what was the matter, but received no answer. When the mother came, witness left the room. On learning from the mother that the servant girl had been confined, went into the room and saw the baby under the pillow. From the appearance of the girl's clothes had no doubt that the child was hers. Miss Burgess had been in her employ about a week and after a day or two suspected that something was the matter, but had not said anything.

Sarah Ann Brandon, mother of Alice Burgess, was sent for about eight o'clock on Tuesday morning. On entering the room, asked her daughter what was the matter. She began to cry, and then said 'Well, mother, I've had a baby.' Asked why she didn't tell her the trouble before. Asked where the baby was, and on being informed, lifted it out from underneath the pillow and put it on a chair. It was dead and cold. Noticed that the child had not received proper attention. She told her that she did not hear the baby breathe or cry. She said that she had been 'sillified,' not knowing what to do. Dr. Toll came afterwards. Constable J. W. Baddams gave evidence that Miss Burgess had said to him - 'The baby was born about 7.30 a.m.' From conversation with her, assumed that the child was hers. Told him she didn't know what to do when the child was born.

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