

Captain Sweet's Colonial Imagination:
The Ideals of Modernity in South Australian Views Photography 1866 - 1886

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Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Art History
School of History and Politics
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DECLARATION

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Errata

Correction to image acknowledgements for images reproduced in the PhD thesis *Captain Sweet's colonial imagination: the ideals of modernity in south Australian views photography 1866 - 1886*.

I would like to acknowledge that all images in the collection of the State Library of South Australia are reproduced with their kind permission.

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ABSTRACT

Captain Samuel Sweet worked as an outdoor photographer in South Australia (including the Northern Territory) between 1866 and 1886. In Australian public libraries, museums and archives his photographs are consulted as objective visual documents. Their more recent appearance in public art galleries ascribes to them the status of art, obscuring the fact that Sweet was a commercial photographer whose subjects and style were directed by the colonial market.

This thesis documents the extent and nature of Sweet's oeuvre, and examines his photographs within the original context of their creation, including Sweet's photography business, photographic practices, the photography market, the man himself and the colonial context in which (and for which) his photographs were created. It analyses his photographs as both images and as material objects, utilising scientific testing.

It argues that, as a commercial photographer, an Englishman and a colonist participating in the creation of a new world, Sweet did not photograph colonial South Australia, but rather the ideal that was being sought in its creation. It identifies Sweet's as the largest visual record of the South Australian colonial process and boom-time, and pinpoints the pitfalls awaiting researchers and viewers who mistake his photographs as simple objective documents or aesthetic objects. It argues that if we are to make better use of Sweet's photographs today – as art objects or research sources – we must first understand them within the full context of their creation.

It concludes that Sweet's photographs mapped an ideal of modernity, rather than reality, onto photographic paper, and that when his work is approached from this perspective, we not only achieve a deeper insight into his work, but also into the world he was picturing.

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Most especially, I am indebted to Lauren Tomczak for entering data into the Captain Sweet Database, audio typing transcripts of primary documents, and for her unfailing support and encouragement. My deepest thanks goes to my partner Simone Tippet who helped with formatting images and text, and who sustained me and the thesis with patience, encouragement and an income.

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- Plate 143 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Gover Street*, c.1877, North Adelaide, SLSA B 9171.
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- Plate 145 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Adelaide & Suburban Tramway Co. Terminus at O'Connell Street [aka O'Connell Street]*, c.1879 (1878-80), North Adelaide, NLA nla.pic-an10608594-86.
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- Plate 148 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Second Fall, Waterfall Gully*, 1866-85, Waterfall Gully, SLSA B 11500.
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- Plate 152 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Woman with an umbrella, Mitcham*, 1872-82, Torrens Park, Mitcham, SLSA B 43108.
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- Plate 159 Unknown photographer, *The Post Office Strathalbyn and native encampment*, 1865, Strathalbyn, 12.8 x 19.8 cm, Strathalbyn National Trust Museum. Source: Julie Robinson, assisted by Maria Zagala, *A Century In Focus: South Australian Photography, 1840s-1940s*, AGSA, Adelaide, 2007, p.109.
- Plate 160 JH Nixon, *Residents of Mount Gambier - Aboriginal Camp*, c.1870, Anlaby, SLSA B3063.

- Plate 161 Fred Kruger, *Aboriginal natives of Victoria fishing at the reservation*, c.1880, Badger's Creek, Coranderrk, 26.0 x 37.0 cm, NLA nla.pic-an10608594-97.
- Plate 162 Bernard Goode, *Aboriginal men in front of wurley*, 1866-67, Point McLeay, SAM. Source: Philip Jones, *Ochre and Rust: artefacts and encounters on Australian frontiers*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2006, p.56.
- Plate 163 Bernard Goode, *Aboriginal men in front of wurley*, 1866-67, Point McLeay, carte-de-visite, 6.2 x 9.2 cm, AGSA 200111Ph16.33.
- Plate 164 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Blacks' warfare*, 1878, Point McLeay, NLA nla.pic-an23419637.
- Plate 165 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Pullami with other Ngarrindjeri elders at Taplin's graveside*, 2 November 1880, Point McLeay, SAM.
- Plate 166 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Peter Campbell [Pullami]*, 1880, Point McLeay, AGSA 20041RJN374.3.
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- Plate 172 Saul Soloman / The Adelaide School of Photography, *South Australian Aboriginal & child*, 1874-1879, Adelaide, carte-de-visite, 9.1 x 5.9 cm., NLA nla.pic-an24652976.
- Plate 173 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Mr Satow taken with the school children outside the Church, Poonindie Mission*, May 1884, Poonindie, AGSA 20063Ph3.
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- Plate 175 Townsend Duryea (1823-1888), 3 panels from *Panorama of Adelaide*, 1865, Adelaide, 15 albumen silver photographs assembled into a panorama, SLSA B 5099/3, SLSA B 5099/4, SLSA B 5099/5.

- Plate 176 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Rundle Street, south side*, 1885, Adelaide, SLSA B 7292.
- Plate 177 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Town Hall, King William Street*, in the album 'Captain Sweet's views of South Australia', 1880-83, Adelaide, NLA nla.pic-an20886593-11.
- Plate 178 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Bank of South Australia, King William Street*, 1878-82, Adelaide, SLSA B 10670.
- Plate 179 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Bank of South Australia, King William Street*, 1878-82, Adelaide, SLSA B 2534.
- Plate 180 Captain Samuel Sweet, *King William Street, looking south*, 1878-82, Adelaide, NLA nla.pic-an20886593-21.
- Plate 181 Captain Samuel Sweet, *King William Street*, 1883-85, Adelaide, SLSA B 7493.
- Plate 182 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Views of South Australia: Grenfell Street*, 1882-85, Adelaide, SLSA B 53306/5.
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- Plate 184 Captain Samuel Sweet, *King William Street*, 1884, Adelaide, in the album 'Views of Adelaide and South Australia' 1882-85, Adelaide, private collection.
- Plate 185 Captain Samuel Sweet, *King William Street*, 1884, Adelaide, Reprinted by Wigg & Son, private collection.
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- Plate 188 Unknown engraver, 1873 *Illustrated London News*.
- Plate 189 Unknown engraver, hand coloured wood engraving, 19.5 x 27.8 cm, after a photograph by Samuel Sweet, NLA BIB ID 1780539, PIC Drawer 5043 #S9497.
- Plate 190 Frank Cork, *Heroes of the Overland Telegraph*, Mail Newspaper clipping, 22/8/1936, SLSA PRG 294/1/2.
- Plate 191 Captain Samuel Sweet, *St Peter's Cathedral*, 1876-85, Adelaide, NLA nla.pic-an20886593-19.
- Plate 192 Unknown printmaker, *St Peter's Cathedral*, 'The New Album of Adelaide Views', c.1890, Adelaide, private collection.
- Plate 193 George F Gregory, *St Peter's Cathedral Adelaide 1886*, 1886, Adelaide, watercolour on paper, 21.7 x 30.5 cm, AGSA 0.1696.
- Plate 194 Samuel Sweet, *Rundle Street*, 1885, Adelaide, SLSA B 8874.

- Plate 195 Edmund Gouldsmith, *Rundle Street, Adelaide 1885*, 1885, Adelaide, watercolour on paper, 39.6 x 54.0 cm, AGSA 0.89.
- Plate 196 Edmund Gouldsmith, *Rundle Street, Adelaide 1885*, reproduced on the dust jacket of S Marsden, P Stark & P Sumerling (eds), *Heritage of the City of Adelaide: An Illustrated Guide*, Corporation of the City of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1990.
- Plate 197 Books illustrated by Sweet's photographs.
- Plate 198 Captain Samuel Sweet, *Saltia Hotel*, 1882, Saltia, near Quorn, SLSA B 10681.
- Plate 199 Karen Magee, *The site of Saltia Hotel*, digital photograph, October 2007, Saltia, near Quorn.

ABBREVIATIONS

Collections

AGNSW	Art Gallery of New South Wales
AGSA	Art Gallery of South Australia
NGA	National Gallery of Australia
NGV	National Gallery of Victoria
NLA	National Library of Australia
NPG	National Portrait Gallery
NTLIS	Northern Territory Library and Information Service
Pitt Rivers	Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford
SAM	South Australian Museum
SAMM	South Australian Maritime Museum
SLNSW	State Library of New South Wales
SLSA	State Library of South Australia
SLT	State Library of Tasmania
SLV	State Library of Victoria

Newspapers & Periodicals

Adelaide Observer

Brisbane Courier

Clare (SA) *Northern Argus*

Gawler (SA) *Bunyip*

Frearson's Monthly Illustrated Adelaide News (Illustrated Adelaide News before 1880)

Frearson's Weekly Illustrated (est. 1878. Subsumed by *Frearson's Monthly* Illustrated Adelaide News from 1884)

Kadina Herald

Hobart *Mercury*

Melbourne *Argus*

Northern Territory Times and Gazette

Port Augusta Dispatch

South Australian *Advertiser*

South Australian *Register*

South Australian Gazette and Colonial *Register*

South Australian Government Gazette

South Australian Weekly *Chronicle*

Southern Argus

Sydney Morning Herald (*SMH*)

Walleroo Times

Archives

ACCA	Adelaide City Council Archives C5 City Treasurer's Department S34 Assessment Books C15 Town Clerk's Department Letterbooks S3 Town Clerk's Dockets C40 Corporation of the City of Adelaide S55 Citizens' Rolls
AGSA	Art Gallery of South Australia (general and archival collections)
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NTL / NTLIS	Northern Territory Library / Northern Territory Library and Information Service
PRO	Public Records Office
PSR	SA Government Public Service Review
SAA	South Australian Archives
SAGHS	South Australian Genealogy and Heraldry Society
SAM	South Australian Museum (general and archival collections)
SCSA	Supreme Court of South Australia
SLNSW	State Library of New South Wales
SLSA	State Library of South Australia
SRANSW	State Records Authority of New South Wales
TNA	The National Archives of the UK

Publications

ADBO	Australian Dictionary of Biography, online version, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, < http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography >.
ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography, print edition, Melbourne University Press, various volumes and editions.
Boothby's	Josiah Boothby, <i>The Adelaide almanac and directory for South Australia</i> , also known as <i>Boothby's directory 1872-1878</i> , <i>Boothby's South Australian directory 1879-1883</i> , printed and published by J. Williams, Stationer, 1872-1883, later titled <i>Sands & McDougall's South Australian directory</i> .