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THE ABORIGINES LOCATION IN ADELAIDE: SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S FIRST "MISSION" TO THE ABORIGINES

Robert Foster

Introduction

This paper examines the brief history of the 'Aborigines Location' in Adelaide, an establishment that might best be described as a "government mission". Though short-lived, the Aborigines Location is of great interest as it represents South Australia's first organised attempt to "civilize and Christianize" the Aborigines. The Location began as a general enterprise to instruct the Aborigines in the "habits of civilized life" and the virtues of Christianity but, as the indifference of the adults to these efforts became increasingly apparent, the focus gradually shifted toward the instruction of the children alone. The effective end of the Aborigines Location, as a government mission, came when the 'Native School' was shifted in an attempt to separate the children from the influence of their elders. After the Native School was moved the government made some efforts to concentrate the adults in the vicinity of the Location by maintaining some huts in the area, but after the shift of the school it was never more than a camp-site. The actual site of the Aborigines Location, and the small settlement within its boundaries, has hitherto been little discussed. For this reason I have thought it appropriate to include a brief discussion on the subject in an appendix to this paper.

Establishment

The notion of concentrating the Aborigines on a defined portion of land and there converting them from their nomadic habits into useful members of the industrial classes was one of the most fundamental policies of the colonial government. It was essential to the concept of civilization and Christianization and, in one form or another, dominated the official treatment of Aborigines into the next century. The first report of the South Australian Colonization
Commission, produced prior to settlement, had suggested the establishment of 'asylums' in settled districts where the Aborigines would be sheltered, clothed and fed. Here they would be trained in "habits of useful industry", and perhaps form a valuable addition to the labour market. Stevenson, the first interim Protector, repeated these ideas in a plan submitted to the Governor in December 1838.

Central to his plan was a call for an extensive system of reserves:

> At a distance of a few miles from the Capital and near every other town a section of land (640 acres) ought to be reserved - not only for a farm and gardens, but eventually for the erection of dwelling places for such of the natives as choose to make the neighbourhood of the station their permanent place of residence.

He also called for the construction of a dwelling place for the Protector, a schoolhouse, farm buildings, carpenter and blacksmith shops and houses for the Aborigines. After an initial outlay of £2000 the system could be maintained, Stevenson argued, with the aid of a small levy on the sale of land, at a cost of £1200 per annum. Stevenson had no doubt that the Aborigines would willingly abandon their 'erratic habits' for the benefits of European civilization:

> The exchange we have to offer the poor savage for his fertile, but to him unproductive plains, is to instruct him in the Arts of Cultivation - to take away his waddy and his spear, and to put in his hands the hoe and the sickle - to bring him step by step within the range and influence of civilization; but above all to rouse him from the brutish condition in which he now sleeps...

Similar plans were outlined, and tentatively commenced, when Captain Walter Bromley was appointed as the second interim Protector of Aborigines in April 1837. The Resident Commissioner gave Captain Bromley permission to occupy an area along the River Torrens which had been reserved for the first Botanical Gardens. Within a few weeks of his residence in town Bromley moved his tent about a mile down river "to a place chosen by the natives". Here he built himself a hut and supervised the Aborigines in the construction of half a dozen "commodious wigwams", as he called them. Very little was achieved at the Location during Bromley's term, indeed, just three months after his appointment Bromley was invited to resign for reasons of "physical and mental imbecility."

It was not until William Wyatt's term as interim Protector that the Aborigines Location began to take shape. In outlining his plans, Wyatt asked that the "piece of ground now occupied by Captain Bromley", be enclosed as a garden and that the gentleman's residence be purchased and used as a school and storehouse.
February 1838, Wyatt was able to report that the Location would be ready for occupation before the end of the following month. An acre of land had already been fenced, containing a store house, school house and a residence for the interpreter. Twelve huts, nine metres square, were being constructed for the Aborigines and Bromley, engaged as a teacher at the establishment, was to continue living in his nearby hut.\textsuperscript{11} The \textit{Register} reported these events with some satisfaction but was scathing in its criticism of Bromley's appointment as "superintendent of the young natives", observing that "a more injudicious appointment could not be made."\textsuperscript{12}

Just as Bromley's fortunes appeared to be turning for the better, they turned again, with fatal results. On the 7 May 1838 Bromley was found drowned in a pool of the River Torrens near his hut. A tin kettle belonging to Bromley was found floating nearby and conjecture was that he had fallen into the river while drawing water.\textsuperscript{13} In one of his most melancholy letters to the Colonial Secretary, written in July 1837, Bromley had made mention of his family's opposition to his move to South Australia; the omens were unpropitious, they thought. They told him, so he recorded, that "they had a deep impression on their mind that they would never see me in this world again."\textsuperscript{14} How fateful an observation it proved to be.

Wyatt's report, for the second quarter of 1838, announced that the twelve huts erected for the Aborigines were now being occupied and the new interpreter, Walter Cronk, had taken up residence. Rations of biscuit were being distributed twice daily, sugar and rice being occasionally supplied. The simplistic notion that the Aborigines would willingly discard all their traditions for a few biscuits and an impractical roof over their heads began to be exposed when theory gave way to practice. Wyatt, while noting that the children picked up English very quickly, went on to observe:

... their general indifference to whatever is valued by civilized man, whether it be clothing, the luxuries of food and comfortable habitations, or the more worthy gratifications of the intellect, makes it no easy matter to stimulate them to that degree of industry necessary in acquiring such advantages, and the salubrious climate of their native land predisposes very considerably to this indolent condition of mind and body.\textsuperscript{15}

Viewing this as the "grand obstacle to their civilization", Wyatt proceeded to argue that inculcating them with the "simple and sublime doctrines of
Christianity" was a necessary first step in the process of civilization. For this reason, wrote Wyatt, he looked forward to the arrival of a "special missionary to the Aborigines."  

At the time Moorhouse became Protector of the Aborigines, the Aborigines Location consisted of about 14 acres upon which a small settlement was beginning to grow. The schoolmaster, William Oldham, and the two German missionaries, Teichelmann and Schurmann, had houses already erected. The construction of three houses for the Aborigines was underway - new houses that would eventually replace the dozen huts they had previously occupied. The schoolmaster was awarded the contract to build these pisé-style houses, but the Aborigines did some of the work themselves. The location of this settlement was on the northern bank of the Torrens, opposite the Adelaide Gaol and near the first bridge across the river (Figure 1). The Aboriginal name for the place was Piltawodli. Although the etymology of the word is not given, Teichelmann and Schurmann's vocabulary defines wodli as a "hut" or "house", whilst pilta is defined as meaning either "opposum", "hip" or "side".

It was the intention of Moorhouse "to make the whole location a garden" and not long after his entry to office he got the Aborigines to start digging the ground in preparation for the planting of potatoes, turnips, carrots and cabbages. He allotted plots of the garden to 20 different people, hoping that their efforts, and eventual reward, would encourage the others to become involved. Moorhouse claimed that little had been done with the children to this point in time, largely because there had been no accommodation for them, and he put forward a plan for a school, which included two wings intended as hospitals. Like Bromley, and Wyatt before him, his main complaint was the difficulty in establishing an influence over the people because of the settlers' habits of liberally and gratuitously giving people food better than could be supplied at the Location - to this end, he asked the Governor to issue an order banning the settlers giving food away.

By January 1840, Moorhouse reported that five houses of "superior construction" had been built for the Aborigines, four of which, while in a fit state to occupy, were little used, while a fifth was used as a school room. Including the houses occupied by officers of the Aborigines Department, there were a total of thirteen buildings on the Aborigines Location at this time.
Figure 1

The Aborigines Location and environs, after Kingston's 1842 Map of Adelaide.
The Aboriginal response

The early efforts of the new Protector, closely following the instructions issued by the government, focussed equally on the adults and children; the former being instructed in the "civilized arts" of industry and cultivation, while the latter were educated at the school and everyone was evangelised. The community did take some part in the activities at the Location, occasionally tilling the ground and helping to erect houses and fences, as well as listening to the preaching of the missionaries. However, the official reports of the Protector do not give a clear picture of what was happening at the Location; indeed they tend to disguise Aboriginal attitudes toward the place. One of the few observers of this early period to record Aboriginal views in any detail was Christian Teichelmann, the Dresden missionary who had accompanied Clamor Schurmann to the colony. 24 Teichelmann’s picture of life in Adelaide and at the Location, during the early 1840s, gives an insight into Aboriginal attitudes which was conspicuously absent from the official reports - attitudes that explain later shifts in government policy.

According to Teichelmann, the Europeans were perceived as "providers" who "had taken or driven away their food, and aught now to give them other food."25 He complained that the missionaries and Protectors worked for the Aborigines like "day labourers and yet they could hardly get any assistance and were after all ridiculed; it is their opinion, that Missionaries and Protector must build them houses, give them provisions and be completely their servants."26 He related as typical a story of an Aborigine travelling 30 to 40 miles into town and then demanding that he have provisions brought to his hut, and medicines because he was unwell. Teichelmann blamed this attitude on the influence of "a class of persons, who delight in opposing our operations amongst the natives" and while this may have been to some extent true, the deeper answer lay in Aboriginal notions of reciprocity.27 However involuntary the cession of lands might have been, the Adelaide people clearly believed that the houses being built for them and the provisions supplied were compensation, however inadequate, for their losses. Teichelmann brings this point home in an article published in the Southern Australian in January 1841. Explaining the Aborigines' indifference to labouring at the Location, we writes:

Only when they had no other opportunity to supply their necessities they worked, or when the unfavourable weather was pressing upon them, or a desire to live like Europeans, or to please them, they gave their assistance in
preparing for their own conveniences; of course motives which after they had ceased could have no more effect upon their industry. It is not a mere assertion, but a fact which we experience every day, that they say - why do you give us no food, no clothing? why do you not build us houses? when will you till our ground? and whenever it occurred that Europeans wrought for their comforts, they ridiculed them, and refused to assist, though they should get provisions. 28

Moorhouse's early optimism that Aborigines would adopt the settled life of the agriculturalist at the Location appears to have been wishful thinking. While Moorhouse constantly produced facts and figures regarding the education of the children, there were no equivalent measures presented of the agricultural efforts of the adults. The reason is simple: there were no efforts of any significance. In October 1841 a visitor to the Location wrote of the garden:

It has been two years under cultivation of the natives, and the care of those who "work with them;" it is one entire spread of bare brown soil, and it is now the season of the fullness of the spring - corn is in rich bloom all over the country. 29

In February of the following year Moorhouse wrote that he was unable to convince the adults "that their supplies would be much more certain and more creditable, if produced by cultivation from their own ground."30 In a rare but telling anecdote, Teichelmann gives us an insight into the Aborigines' attitude toward labouring for the Europeans. He relates the story of a young girl who was taken into a European household, where she was expected, like the daughter of the house, to undertake domestic work. On the evening of her first day she went home claiming illness. On the following day, wrote Teichelmann, she failed to return but a young Aboriginal woman called on the family and asked, "why shall this girl live with you? is she perhaps to wash your plates, and clean your knives and forks? no, that would be bad."31 In these early days of the colony the Protector had no coercive powers, he could not force the Aborigines to work. For their part, the Aborigines could still earn an independent subsistence from hunting and gathering, occasional government rations, odd jobs, or begging and they had little interest in what the Europeans described as "habits of useful industry".

The various huts and houses built at the Location were used by the Aborigines, but they were used in a way that conformed to a familiar cultural framework. Wattewattepina, a neighbour of the missionary Clamor Schurmann, is said to have taken part in the construction of one of the houses at the Location.
Wattewattepinna and his family occupied the house for a few weeks but, with the arrival of spring, they all returned to the bush. After their departure Moorhouse claimed they were only using the house as a "repository for spears, shields, etc." Moorhouse was more confident about the children’s attitude towards the houses although, from his own description, it seems that they treated the dwellings as deluxe cubby-houses:

The children, I am glad to witness, appear much fonder of the houses than the adults. If they have food they will sometimes leave their parents for a day together; and a number of 20 to 30 meet in one of the tenements to eat and enjoy themselves. I have some hope of them inhabiting substantial dwellings, if we can keep them from the influence of their parents.

In August 1839 a man died and the Location was abandoned for a short period and, on the Aborigines' return, a new hut was built to replace the one used by the deceased. Rather than concentrating their attention on cultivating the ground, much of the time was spent entertaining or fighting other clans who came to visit. Many different clans visited the Location over December 1839 and January 1840 and initiations were held - an event that suggests that the site itself had important ceremonial associations. In early January 1840 Schurmann, the first teacher at the school, reported that all the children had left with their parents:

Today all the South (Putpameyunna) people invited most of the Forest Men (Wirrameyunna) to go hunting, which meant that my school was empty. I have a lot of joy in seeing the more progressive ones learning their letters and enjoying the tales from the gospels, but I sometimes fear that the wild life may make them forget.

During the early years of its operation, the Location was a convenience: the Aborigines could camp there, receive rations and use the huts, but they did so at their own discretion. Europeans undoubtedly exerted an influence over the Aborigines at the Location, but very little control.

The efforts of the Dresden missionaries, Teichelmann and Schurmann, to reform the spiritual character of the Aborigines met with even less success than the corresponding endeavours to reform their temporal habits. Both men lived at the Location in the early years of its operation. Schurmann was largely silent on the Aboriginal response to his preaching, very occasionally recording hostility, but preferring to grasp any evidence that his message was getting through. Teichelmann on the other hand was more open in recording the Aboriginal response. In his own estimation, it ranged from indifference to contempt and
anger. Teichelmann recorded that he assembled the Aborigines with great difficulty, but once that was achieved and he began to lecture them on their vices, they drifted away. On those occasions that they remained they showed contempt in sarcastic and ironic responses to what they clearly perceived to be his badgering:

In conversations on scriptural subjects they are either quite indifferent, asking for nothing but food, or ridicule us, or behave offensively, or reply: We are wicked, we shall be thrown into the firepit; we do not believe Jehovah's word; we will not obey, and so on. ³⁷

At other times the Aborigines showed a degree of tolerance, but were driven to anger by the missionaries' intolerance. Teichelmann told the story of how he cornered two recently initiated men and told them that they should fear Jehovah and not the "red kangaroo" (the red kangaroo, or Tandanya, being the principal Dreaming of the region). One of the Aboriginal men became very angry and replied:

why do you charge us with a lie, i.e., reject our opinion, we do not charge you with lies; what you believe and speak of Jehovah is good, and what we believe is good. We replied that only on one side the truth would be, and that side was ours. Very well, he answered, then I am a liar, and you speak the truth, I shall not speak another word, you may now speak. ³⁸

In explaining the inaccessibility of the adults to religious instruction, Teichelmann observed, "they are naturally proud and wise in their own estimation, and express themselves perfectly satisfied with the tradition of their forefathers."³⁹ In the same report from June 1842, he reported that while some of the children attended the Sabbath, the adults were often entirely absent. Given the hostility toward their teaching among the adults, the missionaries focussed their efforts more towards the children, much to the disgust of the elders. Teichelmann claimed that "they frequently met with scorn, anger and opposition, more particularly as soon as the elder aborigines perceived that their children gave ear to the religious instruction, and became disinclined to their ways."⁴⁰ Once again in the battle for hearts and minds it was the children who were made hostage.

The precedent of failure

In both theory and practice, the work undertaken at the Aborigines Location conformed to a pattern already established in other Australian colonies. The most significant influences were those of the Church Missionary Society in New South Wales, particularly Threlkeld's mission, and Robinson's establishment on Flinders
Island. In 1825 Lancelot Threlkeld established a mission on the shores of Lake Macquarie. Threlkeld spent much of his energy in the early years acquiring the language of his adopted people, to be used as a tool of both evangelism and education. The people on the mission were encouraged to cultivate the ground, rations being given only to those who "mixed their labour with the earth". His general approach to the process is summarised in the following passage:

first obtain the language, then preach the Gospel, then urge from gospel
motives to be industrious, at the same time becoming a servant to them to win
them to that which is right.\textsuperscript{42}

These were very much the principles adopted by Matthew Moorhouse and the missionaries in Adelaide during their early years at the Location.\textsuperscript{43} Threlkeld's work was far from successful: when his mission closed in 1841 there was no evidence of any converts to Christianity and most of the population over whom he had spiritual and material charge had died before he could put his knowledge of their language to any effect.\textsuperscript{44} As early as 1838, Threlkeld despairingly wrote, "The present Mission is the most unpromising of any in the world."\textsuperscript{45}

While the colony of South Australia was being established, George Augustus Robinson was Commandant of an establishment on Flinders Island for the remnants of the Tasmanian Aboriginal population. It was hoped that this isolated settlement would enable the principles of Christianity and civilization to be effectively imparted. A report produced by Robinson in June 1837 suggested that he was being spectacularly successful. Robinson argued that the intention of the establishment was to protect the Aborigines, to provide them with the comforts of civilized life and to bring them to a knowledge of God. Of his civilizing efforts, the Commandant reported that "industry" among the Aborigines was "becoming habitual", the men were employed building roads, gardening, fencing and shepherding flocks, while the women collected grass for thatching and birds for general consumption.\textsuperscript{46} It was also claimed that a small Aboriginal police force operated on the island and the domestic arts were being taught. Robinson also reported that a coinage had been introduced to instruct the Aborigines in the operation of a monetary system. The money they earned was purportedly used to buy fittings for their houses. Such practice, Robinson thought, would teach them the value of their dwellings and encourage the Aborigines to take greater care of them. An Aboriginal newspaper was even published. The report concluded with an account of the people's progress in education and in their knowledge of the principles of Christianity.
Compared to Threlkeld's work at Lake Macquarie, Robinson's work was considered a stunning achievement. It was held up as an example of the success of civilization and Christianity among the Aborigines and details were forwarded to Colonial Governors as a guide for their future attempts at civilizing the Aborigines.\textsuperscript{47} It is difficult to assess the impact of the "Flinders Island experiment" on the development of policy in South Australia, but it is likely that Governor Gawler and the early Protectors were aware of Robinson's work through Colonial Office dispatches, and discussions of Aboriginal policy in the press. It is interesting to note that in April 1842 a proposal was made to establish a Native School on Kangaroo Island.\textsuperscript{48} Although the Kangaroo Island School was never established, the notion of separating the Aborigines from the 'corrupting influence' of white society became a powerful theme in Aboriginal policy and was the idea behind the eventual establishment of the Poonindie Training Institution near Port Lincoln in 1850.\textsuperscript{49}

As Rae-Ellis points out in her biography of Robinson, the Protector's report on the Flinders Island Establishment was fraudulent. The only serious efforts made by Robinson were in the months preceding a visit by the new Governor - the man who so warmly recommended Robinson's efforts to the Colonial Office. The fraud was discovered, but not until Robinson was confirmed in his new position as Chief Protector at Port Phillip, largely on the strength of the favourable impression his report had on Lord Glenelg.\textsuperscript{49}

Knowing of Threlkeld's failure at Lake Macquarie and Robinson's failure, as revealed by the Board of Inquiry in Van Dieman's Land in 1839, and daily witnessing the Aborigines' indifference to the efforts of himself and his missionaries, it is no wonder that Moorhouse quickly abandoned the notion of "civilizing and Christianizing" the Aborigines at a central location and instead shifted his attention to the children. This shift of focus was noted by Schurmann as early as December 1839. Schurmann noted a conversation with Moorhouse in which they discussed the "claims and hopes" of the Aborigines, especially the older ones:

It is an old story that he cannot or does not want to comprehend the legitimate claims of the natives, but I have never before heard him express his despair at ever being able to educate them. He has abandoned any hope of making useful people of the older natives. I asked if that was his earnest conviction? He repeated it, so I asked for what reason a protector would be necessary? He
said to protect them from insult. When I said that the police could do that just as well, he said that they are hostile to the natives. He tried to justify his views, but it seems to me that a man with such principles could never answer his conscience to be protector of the natives. In the course of our conversation we agreed that I would try to teach all the new born, on condition that food must be available for them. 51

This conversation took place less than six months after Moorhouse took up his post and, true to his word, from this time onwards Moorhouse concentrated his efforts on the children, effectively giving up his efforts to "civilize" the adults. The Native School, which had begun operation at the Native Location in December 1839 continued to operate there until the middle of 1845, when it was shifted to the former Sappers and Miners Barracks on Kintore Avenue.

Support for this shift in focus also came from the Colonial Office in England. Late in 1840 the Colonial Secretary, Lord John Russell, sent a dispatch to Governor Gipps in New South Wales which proffered advice on Aboriginal policy. The dispatch, which was forwarded to other colonial Governors, including Grey, also contained a report by the Church Missionary Society on their efforts in New South Wales. The dispatch was written in September 1840 and published in the Southern Australian during July the following year. 52 One of the six recommendations read:

The best chance of preserving the unfortunate race of New Holland, lies in the means employed for training children. 53

This process was to include teaching them to read and write and "the fundamental truths of the Christian Religion", as well as instructing them in agricultural practices, trades and the domestic arts. "Thus early trained," wrote Lord Russell, "the capacity of the race for the duties and employments of civilized life, would be fairly developed." 54 Perhaps reflecting on the reports of 'civilizing efforts' undertaken in other colonies, as much as his own endeavours, Moorhouse observed in February 1842 that "none of the other schemes to improve the New Hollander, have hitherto been prominently successful." 55 In his estimation, the reasons were plain:

The parents are great hinderances to the improvement of the children, and will continue to be so for several generations unless some decisive measures are adopted, to separate in a degree, the one from the other. 56

Concentrating the 'civilizing effort' on the children and removing them from the influence of their elders became a priority of the Protector's Office.
Educating the Children

The first school for the Aboriginal children of Adelaide was officially commenced at the Location on the 23 December 1840. The school house, which included two hospital wings, was situated at the centre of the Location and was capable of accommodating up to a hundred children. William Oldham, who had been engaged as the first school master, departed to take up a post at the new British School just as the school house was being completed. His duties were taken over by the Dresden Missionaries, Schurmann, in particular, taking on the teaching.

In February 1841 Moorhouse was able to report on the system of instruction that had been introduced. At nine o'clock in the morning the children were assembled, washed and led in the singing of hymns, prayers and the recitation of the Ten Commandments. They were then arranged into classes for lessons in reading and writing. They were again addressed on religious subjects before being discharged at lunchtime. They were assembled again in the afternoon and were "occupied in translating their language into English." The average attendance in the first year was ten, a fifth of the total number of children in town.

The missionaries and Protector made considerable efforts to study the language of the Aboriginal people in the settled districts of the colony and by as early as 1840 Teichelmann and Schurmann had completed and published a vocabulary and grammar of the local language. The missionaries placed great store upon learning the language of the people and, with the agreement of the Governor and Moorhouse, decided that it would be the principal language of communication in the school. In his report on the school, printed in March 1843, Moorhouse argued that it was not only a valuable technique to impart learning, but was an inducement for students to attend the school: "teaching the English language was tried, but the children found it so much more difficult, that the school had a repulsive effect, rather than an attractive one." While the average attendance at the school, during the first three years, hovered between 10 and 13 children, most of the children in Adelaide appear to have spent some time at the school during that period. Moorhouse gave the following indication of the children's scholastic progress for the year 1842:
41 children know the alphabet.
25 " can read monosyllables.
18 " " polysyllables.
15 " can write upon the slate and paper.
14 " are acquainted with addition.
11 " " subtraction.
9 " " multiplication.
5 " " compound addition. 62

These would appear to be encouraging results, given the experience of other mission establishments in the colonies. With Robinson's fraudulent reports from Flinders Island in mind, one might question the accuracy of the report but, unlike Robinson's establishment which was conducted on an isolated settlement, the Location was in the heart of the city under the constant scrutiny of the Governor, the bureaucrats and the press.

Moorhouse's constant complaint was the trouble he had in getting the children to attend the school and, once he had them there, keeping them there. In June 1843 the school adopted a plan of providing board and lodging for the children. The seven boys and eight girls who initially attended were provided with separate sleeping quarters and a matron was appointed to superintend the arrangements. Edward Eyre described the school building being used at this time as "a plain, low cottage, containing a school room, a sleeping room for the male children, another for the female, and apartments for the master and mistress." 63 Prior to this time the children had been tutored during the day and in the evenings they were provided with food to take home to huts where they slept with their parents. The same report that described these new arrangements also gave an indication of the range of influence that the school was having, Moorhouse wrote:

There is not a child between the age of five and ten years, sixty miles to the North or sixty miles to the South, with an average breadth from east to west of ten miles, that does not know the alphabet, & some are advanced in reading and arithmetic. 64

Moorhouse's report, for the last quarter of 1843, suggests that the parents had been generally hostile toward the children being kept at the school but that this attitude may have been changing:

Four fresh children were received in December; they were voluntarily sent by their parents, and allowed to remain during the night as well as the day. We regard this as an improvement on the past, for all the children that had previously been received had to be taken almost in direct opposition to the wish of the parents. 65
Edward Eyre describes how the masters at the school went around the "native encampments" and collected the children against their wishes. The parents, he claimed, tacitly submitted to this indignity but when they moved camp word was got to the children and they would run away from the school and rejoin their parents. In defence of the parents, Eyre points out that the absence of the children greatly hampered the hunting and gathering capacity of the family. Eyre sums up the attitude of the parents in a passage where he records an old Aboriginal man's thoughts on what would happen if the roles were reversed:

I have often heard the parents complain indignantly of their children being thus taken; and one old man who had been so treated, but whose children had run away and joined him again, used vehemently to declare, that if taken any more, he would steal some European children instead, and take them into the bush and teach them; he said he could learn them something useful, to make weapons and nets, to hunt, or to fish, but what good did the Europeans communicate to his children?66

During the first 10 months of the school's operation, the classes were taught by Schurmann, but when he departed for Port Lincoln in September 1840, Reverend Klose, who had arrived only a few months before, took over the teaching duties. According to a report published in December 1844, Klose applied himself diligently to the task of learning the language and as a consequence of his efforts he had "presented encouraging proofs of the mental capacity of the children. 67 Teichelmann's efforts in recording the Adelaide language were important in the early days of the school but, apart from occasional Sunday services, he seems to have drifted into general pastoral duties.68 From 1841, a Wesleyan Ladies Committee regularly attended the school to teach the girls sewing and other domestic skills.

The steady progress of the Location and the school, gave rise to discussion in the press, the Register sneering at the enterprise and the Southern Australian coming to its defense. In February 1841 the Southern Australian published some selections from the School's visitors' book as evidence of the progress being made. In December 1840, the following comment was entered by Frederick Nainby:

In visiting the Aborigines' School, I was much gratified in hearing them sing a hymn in their native language, and observing their quick and intelligent countenances; indicating - and that, too, at no distant day - that they are fully capable of being civilized, and becoming useful citizens of the world.69
In October 1841, a certain Dr Haygarth spent a fortnight in Adelaide on his way to Van Dieman's Land. While critical of the 'civilizing efforts' of the Protector and missionaries at the Location, he had a high opinion of the students at the school. He wrote:

So clever are the children - these half-dozen that are there altogether - that they will write as well as the children of an English parish school, on the whole average, of the same age.  

He was impressed by their ability to do mental arithmetic and to understand and speak the English language and to use needle and thread to make their own clothing - all this the product of less than two years at the school.

The establishment of a Sub-Protector at Moorundie on the River Murray in 1841 had the unforeseen consequence of initiating an annual winter migration of the River people to Adelaide. Moorhouse, with Governor Grey's encouragements, wished to include these newcomers in his plans, but the antipathy between the Adelaide and Moorundie people caused continual problems. During what appears to have been the Moorundie people's first visit in the summer of 1842-43 Moorhouse reported that the school was virtually deserted because the Adelaide people had fled the city. In his report for the first quarter of 1843, the Protector pointed out that this new social mix not only made it difficult to persuade the newcomers to attend, but also to maintain control over the existing students:

Unless there can be something done to keep the Murray Natives from Town, I am afraid the school will make little progress for the future. The Adelaide Natives dare not live here regularly because the Murray people are becoming so numerous as to be completely master of the territory. We find it almost impossible to assemble the children speaking different languages in one school; if we persuade the Murray children to attend, the Adelaide children will not attend with them, and if the Murray children are kept in a separate room, they are abused by the Adelaide adults, and accused of obtaining food in a territory to which they have no hereditary right.  

The problem was a serious one. On the 23 December 1842 the Encounter Bay people, allies of the Adelaide people, fought a pitched battle with the interlopers from the Murray, killing one person and wounding seven others. Another such contest was narrowly avoided in April 1843 when the police intervened to keep the parties separate. During this period the total population of the Adelaide tribe was 150, and the total of the Murray people visiting Adelaide was 200. At this time, the Protector's response was to recommend that Eyre at Moorundie make an effort to keep the people in that district away from Adelaide, to warn the people that if they came down to Adelaide again they would be escorted back to their
own country by the police. The government had a change of heart and decided to treat this new situation as an opportunity rather than a setback, by arranging to establish a new Native School specifically for the Murray people at Walkerville.

Opened in the middle of April 1844, the Walkerville School was run along similar lines to the Adelaide School and, at its inception, catered for about 70 children. During the same winter the Adelaide Native School recorded an increased attendance, averaging 45 pupils. The School was conducted in a building leased from John Morphett for £12 per annum and, from the very outset, proved inadequate. Within a month the roof leaked so badly the boys' sleeping room was unusable on rainy nights. In October of the same year the floor boards were said to be in need of repairs and by January 1845 the walls were described as "falling outwards". In early 1845, with the Walkerville School threatening to fall down, and in the light of Moorhouse's constant complaints about the influence of the adults, especially at the Location, it was decided to combine the schools and relocate them in the building occupied by the Royal Sappers and Miners; the Sappers and Miners, in turn, taking over the buildings at the Native Location. Plans for the establishment of a "Central School" at the Sappers and Miners Barracks had been in existence since 1843 but had apparently been shelved when the Walkerville School was set up.

After alterations and additions, the Native School Establishment, as it was known, was ready for occupation in January 1846. Reverend Klose disagreed with the government on the method of instruction to be adopted at the new school, arguing that his Society expected him to continue teaching as he had done previously. The government could not agree and the missionary resigned. Eyre suggests that the principal bone of contention was the practice of teaching the children in their own language, something that most colonists were opposed to, believing that only confirmed the children in their "original feelings and prejudices". The teacher at Walkerville took charge of the new school and from this time forward not only was the school attended by Adelaide and Murray children, but by children from throughout the settled districts of the colony. This mixture of different tribal groups at the same school, each speaking their own language or dialect, made instruction in anything but English quite impractical.
The later years

With the separation of the school, the Aborigines Location effectively ceased to operate as an administered 'government mission', that focus having shifted to the new Native School Establishment at its Kintore Avenue site. The few references to the Aborigines Location after 1845 suggest that it was still 'reserved' as a recognised place for Aborigines to camp in Adelaide - but it was little more.

Early in 1846, Moorhouse, in response to an inquiry by the Commissioner of Police concerning the rights of the Aborigines in the Parklands, replied:

The Adults have for nearly six years been allowed to locate on a plot of Park Land between the South side of the Port Road and the Torrens and extending to the Eastward and Westward of the old location some 400 yards. The trees on this portion of ground are very much cut, and do not yield branches sufficient for a native encampment; the consequence is that the natives do not locate there except a few weeks in the summer season. They prefer moving from place to place along the banks of the Torrens and it is almost impossible to prevent their doing so. 80

Moorhouse proposed that huts be erected at two locations - "as one becomes filthy and dirty after six weeks occupancy" - and tentatively suggested the parklands near the North Adelaide Hill as a suitable site. 81 Moorhouse did get two locations but not quite as he had envisaged. In July 1846 it was reported that eight of ten sheds, to be erected as accommodation for the Aborigines in Adelaide, had been laid out. Following advice from Reverend Klose regarding the positioning of the sheds, the Colonial Engineer suggested that "it would be advisable to have three or four of these separate from the main body as the Adelaide Natives who being the weaker party would be turned out by the Murray and Encounter Bay tribes." 82 Seven sheds were placed on the right bank of the Torrens (the northern side) and three sheds, presumably for the Adelaide tribe, on the opposite bank. Moorhouse was able to report in September 1846 that "sheds intended for the Natives at the old location appear to be ready for occupation." 83 Reverend Klose, trying to maintain some missionary activity in the area, requested that the government apportion him some land in the area of the old Location so that he might employ the adults in cultivating the ground. The request was denied on the basis that the garden had already been taken over by the Sappers and Miners and it would be too expensive to enclose a new area. 84 Not only were the adult Aborigines no longer the subject of active 'civilizing' efforts, they were increasingly perceived as
a nuisance. This is apparent in March and April 1847 in reference to a stricter enforcement of vagrancy laws against the Aborigines. Moorhouse described the operation of the new regime in a letter to Sub-Protector Scott at Moorundie, advising him to tell the Aborigines of his district not to come to Adelaide or they would face punishment as vagrants:

After 1st April next, the natives will not be allowed to wander and beg in the streets of Adelaide; and provided there be not sufficient employment for them amongst the inhabitants, the government will require them to work upon the streets and pay them at a rate of 1/- hour. If they persist in begging the adults will be treated as vagrants, by being sent to gaol and the children will be sent to school... 85

With the introduction of this new Vagrant Act the Police Commissioner wrote to Moorhouse asking him to clearly mark the boundaries of the Location "with posts or a ploughed furrow" so that he could begin policing the Act. Moorhouse, in turn, asked for advice about the employment of Aborigines by the Town Surveyor - a suggested field of labour that would be "constantly open so that there would be 'no excuse for practising vagrancy'." 86

Reference to the Location occurs again in January 1848, in reference to a proposal to spent £65 on improvements to "the brick huts at the Location" so that water would no longer leak and put out their fires. 87 After this time, however, the Aborigines Location essentially 'disappeared from view'. In a report listing all public building connected with the Aborigines Department, produced in January 1849, no mention is made of the huts at the Aborigines Location, although the many buildings associated with the Native School Establishment are listed. 88

It is evident that from the early 1840s efforts to civilize and Christianize all but the children at the Native Location were given up. For the adults the Location became a refuge in the heart of Adelaide. This was especially so after 1845 when the school, and all the children that could be gathered in, was shifted to the site of the Sappers and Miners Barracks on Kintore Avenue, near the Governor's domain. The Government continued to provide shelter in a section of the old Aborigines Location, but, by this time, the site was little more than a winter camp. 89
Figure 2
Freeling's 1849 Map of Adelaide.
APPENDIX:
A NOTE ON THE SITE OF
THE ABORIGINES LOCATION

Researchers working in the field of Aboriginal history have long known the general area of the Aborigines Location from Kingston’s 1842 map of Adelaide (See Figure 1). Although the map lacks detail, the Location is clearly shown to be on the north side of the River Torrens, opposite Adelaide Gaol. What has been less certain is the site of the settlement itself within those approximate boundaries. As early as December 1840, when a school was established at the Location, the site contained thirteen buildings. It was by no means an insignificant settlement. The best evidence for the actual layout of the settlement comes from Freeling’s 1849 map of Adelaide (See figure 2). The map shows the ten sheds that were erected in July and August of 1846, seven for the Murray and Encounter Bay tribes on the North side of the Torrens and three for the Adelaide tribe on the South side. The huts are clearly labelled on the map: "Native Location". Also shown on the map is a collection of buildings and fenced gardens labelled, in two instances, as "Sappers Quarters." The significance of this is in the fact that, in 1845, the Sappers and Miners took up residence in the buildings at the Native Location on the banks of the River Torrens, while the staff of the Aborigines Department and the children, formally at the Location School and the Walkerville Native School, took over the buildings formerly occupied by the Sappers and Miners in Kintore Avenue. It was a direct swap.

Details of this "exchange" are found in records of the Colonial Secretary’s Office. In July 1846, for instance, the Colonial Secretary approved "repairs and additions to adapt the buildings at the late native local [sic] location for the accommodation of the detachment of Royal Sappers and Miners." Further correspondence on the subject dealt with the sheds constructed near the site of the old Location. In a letter written in September 1846, the Colonial Secretary informed the Protector that the "sheds built for the accommodation of the Aborigines will be handed over to your charge as soon as the paling has been put up around the Sapper’s barracks." It is apparent that the government wanted to maintain a clear distinction between the rapidly shrinking Native Location (now little more than an assembly of huts to be used as winter accommodation) and the Sappers and Miners Quarters. In October 1846, Rev. Klose, formerly the teacher at the
Location school, requested the Government to allow him "a piece of ground at the old Native Location" on which he could employ the Aborigines. The request was turned down because, as the Colonial Secretary informed him, the "old Native Location" was already occupied and cropped by the Sappers and Miners, and it would be too expensive to fence in a small section.\footnote{95}

The significance of Freeling's map is that it records two stages in the history of the Native Location; the first and most important phase of the Location being represented by the buildings and enclosed gardens labelled as "Sappers Quarters", while the second phase, the last years of the Location's existence, is represented by the cluster of ten huts straddling the River Torrens. Freeling's map is also of interest as it shows the site of the "Native School Establishment" on Kintore Avenue, between the Police Barracks and the Government Domain.

In 1983 David Parham produced a booklet entitled *Architecture of the Destitute Asylum: Adelaide*. I draw attention to this work because of the author's references to what he calls the "Native Location Buildings" in the area of the Destitute Asylum. Parham's information on these buildings is quite misleading because of his failure to distinguish between the "Native Location" and the "Native School Establishment": the former being the precinct on the banks of the River Torrens, the subject of this paper; the latter, the headquarters of the Aborigines Department and the location of a School for the Aboriginal children on Kintore Avenue. At one point Parham writes: "The 'Architect-in-Chief's Office, Record Book of Public Buildings' indicates that the 'Native Location' was fenced in 1847 and that alterations and repairs of sheds were completed in the following year."\footnote{96} The information is quite correct, but the passage refers to the "Native Location" on the banks of the Torrens, \textit{not} the "Native School Establishment" on Kintore Avenue - the area of the Destitute Asylum with which he is concerned. The reference to the fencing of the "Native Location" actually arises in connection with a request by the Police Commissioner to suppress what he saw as Aboriginal vagrancy. In a letter to the Protector on the subject, the Colonial Secretary wrote:

\begin{quote}
As it is intended for the future to keep the Natives more strictly to their own location in the Park Lands, the Commissioner of Police requested me to have their boundaries marked off, either by posts or ploughed furrow and as soon as instructions reach him that the boundaries are to be observed by the natives, he will carry out such instructions.\footnote{97}
\end{quote}
The issue of the Aborigines causing damage to the parklands in the vicinity of the old Location had been raised early in 1846, and was the motive for the construction of ten sheds near the banks of the Torrens - the hope was that it would concentrate the Aborigines in one area. It is worth observing that prior to July 1845 all the letters of the Protector of Aborigines are headed "Aborigines Location", while after that date they are generally headed "Native School Establishment" or, more simply "N.S.E.". Parham appears to have been unaware of the distinction. It is unfortunate that Parham was unable to undertake further research on the Native School Establishment as, in its heyday, its size was quite impressive. In 1849 the "Native School building on the Parkland, North Terrace" contained 29 rooms, while the nearby "Native Hospital" contained an additional five.
Endnotes

1. The "Aborigines Location" was also referred to as the "Native Location"; for the sake of consistency I will use the former title.
4. ibid.
5. South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register, 5 Apr. 1837. (Henceforth referred to as the Register).
6. GRG 24/1, 8 May 1837. SA Public Record Office.
7. CO 13/9, 29 Nov. 1837. Colonial Office Records (Britain). Australian Joint Copying Project.
8. GRG 24/1, 29 Jun. 1839. SA Public Record Office.
10. GRG 35/221/1, 29 Jun. 1838. SA Public Record Office.
11. GRG 24/1, 1 Apr. 183. SA Public Record Office.
12. Register, 17 Mar. 1838.
13. Register, 19 May 1838.
14. GRG 24/1, 26 Jul. 1837. SA Public Record Office.
15. GRG 24/1, 1 Jul. 1838. SA Public Record Office.
16. ibid.
18. C. G. Teichelmann & C. W. Schurmann, Outlines of a grammar, vocabulary, and phraseology of the Aboriginal language of South Australia (Adelaide 1840), p. 75
19. ibid, p. 57 & 39
21. ibid.
23. GRG 24/1/1840/586 a2. SA Public Record Office.
24. Edwin Schurmann, I'd rather dig potatoes (Adelaide 1987), Ch. I & II.
25. C. Teichelmann, Aborigines of South Australia. Illustrative and explanatory note of the manners, customs, habits and superstitions of the Natives of South Australia (Adelaide 1841), p. 6
26. ibid., p. 11
27. ibid.
29. Register, 30 Oct. 1841.
30. GRG 24/6/32/1842. SA Public Record Office.
31. Teichelmann in the Southern Australian, 26 Jan. 1841
33. ibid.
34. Clamor Schurmann, Diary, August 1839. (Typescript edited by E. A. Schurmann, copy held by the Aboriginal Heritage Branch)
35. ibid., various entries for December 1839 and January 1840.
36. ibid., 12 Jan. 1839.
37. Teichelmann, op. cit., p. 12
38. ibid., p. 13
40. ibid.
42. ibid.
43. Moorhouse and the missionaries were familiar with Threlkeld's publications, see, for instance, C. Schurmann, Diary, 17 Sep 1839
44. Woolmington, op. cit., p. 81
48. GRG 52/7/1, 6 Apr. 1842. SA Public Record Office.
50. Rae-Elliss, op. cit., pp. 166-75.
51. C. W. Schurmann, Diary, 16 Dec. 1839.
52. Southern Australian, 27 Jul. 1841.
53. GRG 2/1/14 & 132, 4 Sep. 1840. SA Public Record Office.
54. ibid.
55. GRG 24/6/1842/32. SA Public Record Office.
56. ibid.
58. GRG 24/6/1839/351a. SA Public Record Office.
60. C. Schurmann, Diary, 2 Aug. 1839
62. ibid.
63. E. Eyre, Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia... Including an account of the Manners and Customs of the Aborigines and the State of their Relations with Europeans. (London 1845), p. 433.
64. GRG 24/6/1843/812. SA Public Record Office.
66. Eyre, op. cit. p. 438
67. ibid., 5 Dec. 1844.
68. GRG 52/7/1, 6 Feb. 1845. SA Public Record Office.
70. Register, 30 Oct. 1841.
71. GRG 24/6/1843/495. SA Public Record Office.
72. ibid.
73. GRG 52/7/1, 6 Apr. 1843. SA Public Record Office.
74. GRG 52/7/1, 25 Apr. 1843. SA Public Record Office.
75. GRG 52/7/1, 16 May 1844. SA Public Record Office.
76. GRG 52/7/1, 29 May 1845. SA Public Record Office.
77. GRG 24/90/1843/374. SA Public Record Office.
78. GRG 24/6, 6 Feb. 1846 & 11 Mar. 1846.
80. GRG 52/7/1, 18 Feb. 1846. SA Public Record Office.
81. ibid.
82. GRG 35/2, 27 Jul. 1846. SA Public Record Office.
83. ibid., 25 Sep. 1846.
84. GRG 24/6/1846/1223 & GRG 24/1, 21 Oct. 1846. SA Public Record Office.
85. GRG 52/7/1, 20 Mar. 1847. SA Public Record Office.
86. GRG 52/7/1, 12 Apr. 1847. SA Public Record Office.
87. GRG 52/7/1, 28 Jan. 1848. SA Public Record Office.
88. GRG 52/7/1, 24 Jan. 1849. SA Public Record Office.
89. As a point of interest, it should be noted that the Aborigines Location was never an Aboriginal Reserve, there was never a 'legal title' to the area. The area was always a "Parkland Reserve".
90. GRG 24/1/1840/586, SA Public Record Office.
91. GRG 35/585/41, SA Public Record Office.
93. GRG 24/1/1845/929. SA Public Record Office.
94. GRG 24/1/1846/75. SA Public Record Office.
95. GRG 24/1/1846/127a. SA Public Record Office.
97. GRG 52/7/1, 12 Apr. 1847. SA Public Record Office.
98. GRG 52/7/1, 18 Feb. 1846. SA Public Record Office.
99. See, for instance, the Protector's Letterbook, GRG 52/7/1. It should be noted that after the establishment of the School on Kintore Avenue the Protector initially referred to his new headquarters as the "Aborigines School Establishment", but within the month the description "Native School Establishment" had been settled upon.
100. GRG 52/7/1, 24 Jan. 1849. SA Public Record Office.