

# AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE PLACES INVENTORY

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## Aurichts Printing Office (former)

**Identifier:** 7353

**Location:** 14 Murray St, Tanunda

**Local Government:** Barossa District (Current)

**State:** SA

**Statement of Significance:** Believed to be one of the oldest printing operations still being carried out in the original building in South Australia. Associated with Pastor Kavel, the founder of Lutheranism in Australia, the printing operation began beside the Langmeil Lutheran Church. The building is important in the Murray Street precinct, the facade is largely unchanged. Began by Pastor Johann Auricht.

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(The Commission is in the process of developing and/or upgrading official statements for places listed prior to 1991. The above data was mainly provided by the nominator and has not yet been revised by the Commission.)  
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**Description:** Auricht's Printing Office is a stone building in good repair. It is reported to be one of the earliest country printing offices in South Australia. Constructed of random rubble and brick and seems to be constructed in two sections as evidenced by differing proportions of casement windows. Windows to east are larger than those to west. Possibly erected as residence and shop combined, retains central black oven. Main body consists of three rooms with cellar under two rooms. Casements in west retain timber internal shutters. Main body of building simply gabled with wall surfaces being rendered and incised joints giving impression of rustification.

**Source:** Register of the National Estate

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Report produced : 23/10/2002

AHPI URL : <http://www.heritage.gov.au/ahpi/search.html>

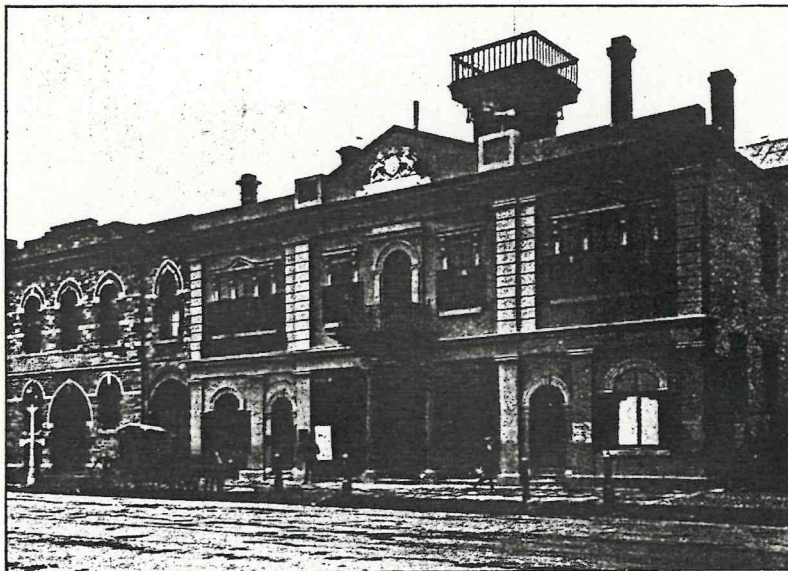


## The South Australian Press.

The "Fourth Estate" of South Australia had a good start over the second and third, for though there was a King there were neither Lords nor Commons, so far as the new province was concerned, when the first newspaper appeared. The date of this initial issue was June 18, 1836—six months before Governor Hindmarsh landed at Glenelg—and its title the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register*. Its leading article, in an opening sentence of prodigious length, referred to the first number of the paper being published "in the capital of the civilized world, with the intention of publishing its second number in a city of the wilderness, of which the site is yet unknown." The plant was brought out in the "Africaine," and used at Glenelg to print the "proclamation," but the promised second number of the newspaper did not appear until June 3, 1837. In the meantime Adelaide had been surveyed and sold. A few buildings were in progress, and in one of the first to be completed, a rather stylish mud hut situated in Hindley Street, the printing-office of Robert Thomas & Co. was established. Difficulties were numerous. The printing-plant was none too large, and part of it was sent on by mistake to Van Diemen's Land. The staff was weakened by the untimely fate of the printer, Osborne, who with five companions rashly landed from the "Africaine" to walk across Kangaroo Island to Nepean Bay, and only four of the party were rescued. Accordingly, the third number was not published until five weeks after the second, and the issues up to number nine appeared at irregular intervals. It was intended to be a weekly publication at first, but, according to an indignant editorial remark, the one compositor was tampered with "in a most scandalous manner," and eight weeks intervened between numbers nine and ten. After that the staff was strengthened, and regularity became possible.

Such were the difficult beginnings of the first organ of public opinion to be established in South Australia, and they were followed by fluctuations so various and troubles so severe that the wonder is it survived. During the long period of fifteen years it underwent vicissitudes of almost all kinds. It parted with its gazette business and title, remaining only the *South Australian Register*, as which it is one of the three oldest papers in the Southern Hemisphere. The public quarrelling cost the firm its contract for Government printing. There were changes of locality and changes of proprietorship,

it absorbed other papers, increased its size and circulation, and the frequency of its issues, till on January 1, 1850, it became an established daily. It had to defend itself against libel actions without number, often had the bailiff on its premises, and at one time its plant was seized and removed under distraint for debts incurred through heavy law costs. During a single sessions of



"THE REGISTER" OFFICES, GRENFELL STREET, ADELAIDE.

the Supreme Court in 1849 seven libel actions were tried; the damages claimed amounted to £12,950, the awards to thirteen pence, and the costs to £840. *The Observer* was founded in July, 1843, by Mr. John Stephens, who subsequently became proprietor of *The Register*. After his death the two papers were purchased by a syndicate consisting of Messrs. Anthony Forster, E. W. Andrews, W. Kyffin Thomas, and Joseph Fisher, who removed the business in 1854 to the premises in Grenfell Street, which are still occupied.

During the period thus rapidly covered literary activity was a pronounced characteristic of South Australian life. There was much to stimulate and foster it. A new country, experimental colonization, a novel constitution, administrative mismanagement, official squabbling, reform agitation, and so on. The men of the time were of a high intellectual average: keen, eager, and



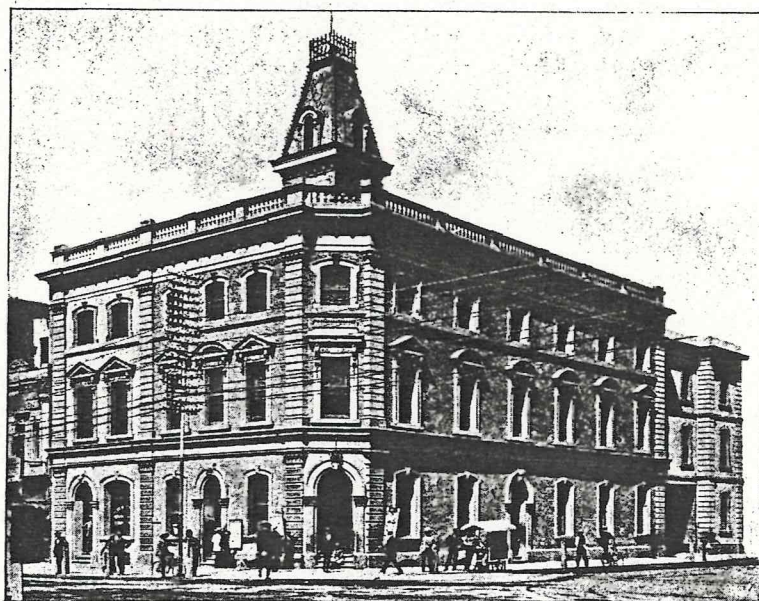
alert. They held strong and divergent opinions, and were at no loss for forcible expression. An organ through which they might expound their ideas and impress the public mind was in many cases an imperative necessity. All this is attested by the number of literary ventures that were launched. In 1839 the *Adelaide Guardian* was started, which was discontinued in six months. There followed, in 1840, the *Southern Australian*, the *Adelaide Chronicle*, which was taken over by the *Register*, and the *Adelaide General Advertiser and Port Lincoln Herald*. The following year saw the birth of the *Adelaide Independent and Cabinet of Amusement*, of the *Adelaide Free Press*, and of the *Adelaide Examiner*. The *South Australian Reformer* and the *Southern Star* were added to the list in 1842. An ambitious but short-lived monthly, the *South Australian Magazine*, was commenced in 1841. Among other long-extinct publications begun during the decade were the *Adelaide Mercury and Sporting Chronicle*, the *Adelaide Times*, the *Weekly Dispatch* (started by Mr. James Allen), a German paper, the *German - Australian Post*, the *Oddfellows' Magazine*, the *South Australian Vignerons and Gardeners' Manual*, and *Australiana*. This record proves that the Press was recognized as a power in the land.

When the *Register* and *Observer* were finally located in Grenfell Street, the dislocation caused by the exodus to the Victorian goldfields had come and gone. The colony was enjoying a period of great prosperity, and the papers had the field of daily and weekly journalism practically to themselves. The editorial treatment of public matters was less provocative than in "the libel era," and perhaps received less provocation to attack. The business management was energetic and enterprising. Mechanical improvements were introduced as they became available. Manual labour in working the machines was displaced by steam-power in 1854, and steam was, in its turn, superseded by gas and electricity. An evening paper, the *Journal*, was added in due course, and illustrations to reinforce the attractions of the letterpress were introduced when that became the fashion. Within the past half-century many changes have taken place, both in the proprietary and

the editorial staff, but the name of W. K. Thomas and Co. still appears in the imprint, and there has been no "solution of continuity" in the literary life. Throughout its career the *Register* has avowedly regarded the influence it has wielded as a public trust.

The *Register* has, of course, had many red-letter days in its history, when its progress has been reviewed. The latest of these was its seventieth birthday, January 18, 1906, and the following account of the mechanical improvements that have been introduced was published on that date:—"When the *Register* was originally printed in South Australia the plant practically consisted of a Stanhope hand-press—which is still preserved in this office as a valued relic and an exceedingly interesting link with the past—a primitive wooden press, and half a ton of newspaper type, with a supply of various jobbing letters. What was regarded as a wonderful

advance was made in 1840, when two new Columbian presses were brought into operation. These produced in an hour 250 four-page copies of the paper. Some years later the *Register* was printed on an intermittent feed machine, worked after the fashion of a mangle, with a wheel turned by hand. Soon afterwards another was imported, but in 1854 the increased and constantly in-



"THE ADVERTISER" OFFICES, KING WILLIAM STREET, ADELAIDE.

creasing circulation demanded still more adequate apparatus; and a larger machine, of the Wharfedale pattern, was obtained from Scotland. An extra large double-cylinder machine was introduced in 1869, but before it had been in use for a year an entirely new departure in the method of printing was rendered necessary. Accordingly on January 1, 1870, a four-feeder Hoe press was laid down, and 10 years later this was duplicated. The need of increasing mechanical power was, however, persistently apparent. Another revolution in processes of printing was signalized in 1892, when the system of taking impressions from separate type was discarded in favour of a machine in which stereotypes, or metal casts of the type-forme, were employed; and this rendered possible a greatly enhanced speed. But this apparatus, known as the "Knickerbocker," which turned out 12,000 eight-page papers an hour, and was a marvel of effi-



ency, had to be supplemented later by the wonderful three-roll Hoe press which is now in use, and the amazingly rapid and almost perfect work of which has evoked the admiration of many representative Australians. This machine, which is one of the latest developments of the mechanical genius of a remarkable firm of manufacturers, who have long enjoyed a world-wide celebrity, carries 24 miles of paper, and is capable of printing 36,000 12-page papers in an hour. The time will doubtless come when it, too, will have to make way, as its predecessors did in their day, for a still more advanced example of the application of science to mechanics; for with a progressive newspaper there is no standing still."

The first South Australian Parliament assembled in April, 1857. Thenceforward political controversy took on a new form which was the natural and direct result of the establishment of representative institutions. The two-party system, with other things, was imported from England, and, having been introduced into the Legislature, there seemed to be a necessity as well as a kind of propriety in its being reflected by the Press. Accordingly, a strong company was formed, mainly by the efforts of the Hon. J. H. Barrow, for the establishment of a second daily paper. Sir Henry Ayers became Chairman of the Board of Directors, and by the articles of association Mr. Barrow was given absolute control over the editorial department, the prospectus being extremely explicit on that point. The first number of the *Advertiser* was issued on Monday, July 12, 1858, and the *Chronicle* on the following Saturday. The jubilee of these papers is, therefore, not far distant. On Wednesday, July 21, of the same year, telegraphic communication with Melbourne was opened, and from that time dates the extension of the telegraph system throughout Australia, revolutionizing the methods of news-gathering. The altered conditions probably suggested the issue and title of *The Telegraph*, an evening paper published at a penny, and absolutely the pioneer penny daily paper of Australia. Shortly afterwards the proprietors of the *Advertiser* started the *Express* as an evening paper, and, ultimately, in 1867, they purchased *The Telegraph* and its associated weekly, *The Weekly Mail*. The double title of the *Express and Telegraph* is reminiscent of the enterprise of the proprietary and of their early adoption of what has become the general policy of the newspaper world—to secure increased circulation by reduction in price.

From the first the *Advertiser* and its associated papers met with public approval, they escaped the difficulties under which many predecessors in the field of South Australian journalism succumbed, and their history is one of unbroken prosperity and success. Eight years after the Company was formed the property was taken over by a syndicate, consisting of Messrs. J. H. Barrow, Thomas King, C. H. Goode, T. Graves, J.

Counsell, W. Parkin, R. Stuckey, and G. W. Chinner. In the same year (1864) the present sole proprietor, Sir J. Langdon Bonython, left school, and became a member of the literary staff. While the editorial department was under the control of Mr. Barrow, the business management was in charge of Mr. Thomas King, and in 1871 these two gentlemen acquired the proprietary. Three years later Mr. Barrow died; in 1879 Mr. King purchased his widow's interest in the concern, and took into partnership her son, Mr. J. P. Burden, who was connected with the business department, and Sir Langdon Bonython, who had risen to be sub-editor, and practically exercised literary control. Mr. King retired from the firm in 1884, and Mr. Burden in 1893, their interests passing into Sir Langdon's hands, upon whom thenceforward devolved the business management as well as editorial responsibility.

The combination of literary ability and business capacity which made the *Advertiser* group of papers a success from the outset has been continued all the way through. The *Advertiser* has been enlarged from time to time, until it is now three and sometimes four or even five times its original size. In the meantime its price has been reduced in two stages from fourpence to a penny, the latest alteration in this respect taking effect on New Year's Day, 1884. Scarcely anything is more suggestive of the improvements wrought by invention and applied science than a large up-to-date newspaper office. The contrast between "case" typesetting and the linotype, between a hand-press and a three-reel Hoe machine, between oil-lamps and the electric-light, and between manual labour as a motive-power and electricity—all these are to be seen in the mechanical department of the *Advertiser*, and they have their counterpart in the arrangements and operations of the literary staff.

The *Advertiser* management has always been keenly alive to the advantages offered by improvements in printing machinery, and eager to avail itself of appliances for producing an enlarged paper at a reduced cost. At first a small press, printing one side of the paper at a time, at the rate of 1,500 impressions an hour, had to serve its purpose; but was soon superseded by a two-feeder Wharfedale machine. This was followed in 1876 by a four-feeder Hoe, equal to turning out 8,000 sheets an hour. A Prestonian perfecting machine, capable of producing and folding 10,000 complete copies of the paper per hour, was set in motion by Governor Jervois in 1881; and in 1892 His Excellency the Earl of Kintore started a Marinoni machine, with stereotyping plant. Four years later Governor Buxton set a new and complete Hoe machine in operation, and again in 1900 Lord Tennyson performed a similar act by turning the power on to a magnificent three-reel mammoth, which embodied all the latest improvements, and is able to print and fold 24,000 copies of the *Advertiser* in an hour. While the develop-



ents in the machine-room have succeeded in keeping at department up to date, there has been similar advance elsewhere. Linotype machines, steam, gas, and electricity are all pressed into service, and all appliances are of the latest and most approved character.

Reference has been made to the number of periodicals that were started in Adelaide during the earlier years, most of which had only a brief existence, and the list might be considerably lengthened. It would include so-called "society" papers, sporting papers, periodicals devoted to special interests, and publications that relied mainly on their wit and humour for their circulation. Not all of these merit commendatory mention, but some of them evinced ability of a high order. "Pasquin," conducted by Mr. Eustace Reveley Mitford, a near relative of Miss Mitford, the famous authoress, took for its special mission the exposure of alleged abuses, and executed its task with an incisiveness of sarcasm, keenness of irony, and wealth of invective that have rarely been equalled. Without further referring to papers that are extinct, the *Critic* may be mentioned as one of the most favourably known of current weeklies, both on account of its literary merit and the general excellence of its artistic productions. The *Garden and Field* is an exceedingly well-conducted journal, invaluable to the producers, for whose benefit it exists, by its information and suggestions on farming, horticulture, dairying, poultry-farming, etc. The patriarch of religious papers is *The Australian Christian Commonwealth*, which, as the *Methodist Journal*, was first published in July, 1874, and, while changing its name, has continued its character and the regularity of its appearance ever since. *The Church Commonwealth* is the organ of the Anglican, and *The Southern Cross* that of the Roman Catholic Church. Besides these, there is a host of weekly and monthly publications having special constituencies. *Faulding's Medical and Home Journal* has an interstate reputation, the *Herald* is the organ of the Labour Party, the name of the *Alliance and Temperance News* (now *The Patriot*) indicates its object, as also do those of the sporting papers, and the South Australian *Deutsche Zeitung* has an established position among the German population, being printed in the language of the Fatherland.

Wherever an English-speaking community is established, a newspaper seems to be regarded as a condition of life, and generally as soon as the necessary support can be obtained it manages to have at least one of its own. This has proved to be the case in South Australia, and with the expansion of settlement there was accompanied an extension of the provincial press. Though the Adelaide dailies and their weekly issues circulate all over the State, and provide the bulk of this kind of current literature, there are in at least twenty-five towns local newspapers, in some of them more than one, published weekly as a rule, but in a

few cases twice a week. There is nothing stereotyped about the titles of these papers, little that is original, and only one with a strictly Australian flavour—the *Gawler Bunyip*, founded in 1862 as the organ of the Anti-humbug Society. Clare has its *Northern Argus* and Strathalbyn its *Southern Argus*, Gladstone publishes an *Areas Express*, and Jamestown, its neighbour, a *Star* on Thursday and an *Agriculturist and Review* on Saturday. Kadina, Millicent, Palmerston, and Petersburg have each their own *Times*, and Kadina a *Plain Dealer* also. Kapunda and Narracoorte have their individual *Heralds*. Moonta and Port Pirie have each a local *Advertiser*, the former a *People's Weekly* and the latter a *Recorder* also. A *Pioneer* is issued at Renmark, and another at Yorketown, which has also a *Clarion*. Koorunga publishes a weekly *Record*, Laura sustains a *Standard*, and Mount Barker runs a *Courier*. Mount Gambier for over forty-five years has kept up its *Border Watch*, and for a considerable part of that time has been illuminated by the *South-Eastern Star*. Woodside has its *Southerner*, Port Lincoln its *Recorder*, Orroroo its *Enterprise*, Quorn its *Mercury*, and Port Augusta its *Despatch*. Besides the German *Zeitung* there is published in Tanunda, on Wednesdays, a *Kirchen and Mission Zeitung* in the same language.

Speaking comprehensively, the South Australian newspaper Press is creditably and well conducted. While there is a fair amount of individuality and freedom in the treatment of current topics, the general tone is moderate and self-respecting. Local interests are naturally advocated by the organs which stand for their protection, and free criticism of both legislation and administration, when they are neglected, is not rare; but there is little if any indulgence in offensive personalities when public men are attacked. Hysterical screaming for effect is practically unknown, and perhaps as a consequence libel actions are few and far between.

The moral tone of both the great Adelaide daily papers has always been excellent, their influence on public morals has undoubtedly been salutary, and it is not difficult to believe that the country Press has perhaps unconsciously adopted the same general line. These papers, moreover, were for so long a period under the direct control of men of high personal character and distinguished literary gifts that in each case an elevated standard was set up, and traditions established which have never ceased to operate.

The value of an organ of public opinion necessarily depends to a great extent on its manipulator, and much of the success of the South Australian Press must be attributed to the services of singularly able men who have used their talents in its service. A degree of continuity has been given to the *Register* by the members of the Thomas family who have been connected with it, whether in the mechanical, commercial, or literary departments. The Hon. Anthony Forster



was a managing proprietor for many years, and it is recorded that his connection with the Press had a permanently beneficial effect on journalism in the colony, raising it to a higher level. Dr. Garrahan, who was editor for some time, proved his prowess in a still wider sphere by editing the *Sydney Morning Herald* for many years with great success. Mr. John Howard Clark brought to his responsible task not only wide culture and a refined literary taste, but an intense—almost passionate—devotion to whatever cause he espoused, deeming it to be right. The Hon. J. H. Barrow, who was a contributor to the one paper before he took a leading part in founding the other, stamped the impress of his personality on the *Advertiser* during its formative period. His mantle fell upon his successor, Mr.

W. Marcus, who, like Mr. Forster, of the *Register*, found time in the intervals of other duties for authorship. Forster's "History" and Marcus's "Handbook of South Australian Resources and Productions" are still valuable for purposes of reference. With regard to both papers, it is a kind of open secret that many of the ablest men in the community have been more or less frequent contributors to their leading columns. In each case the editorial and literary department is efficiently manned. The gentlemen who are now in control were for some time contemporary with predecessors who have been named, and it may truthfully be said of them, as a whole, without attempting the difficult and possibly invidious task of personal discrimination, that, governed by similar ideals, they are achieving corresponding results.

**ROBERT KYFFIN THOMAS**, one of the proprietors of *The Register* and its associated newspapers, was born at Nailsworth, near Adelaide, on August 19, 1851. He is the eldest son of the late Mr. W. Kyffin Thomas, who was also one of the owners of the above-named paper, and grandson of the founder and pioneer of the fourth estate in South Australia, after whom he was named. He is therefore the third in a direct line of the family who has been closely associated with the organ of public opinion which had its birth before the colony was established, shared in the fluctuating experiences of the early settlers, and served as a vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge, and the interchange of sentiments ever since. Mr. Thomas was educated at the Adelaide Educational Institute conducted by the late Mr. J. L. Young, which at that time occupied a foremost position among the academical establishments of South Australia, and immediately after leaving school in 1868 joined the staff of *The Register*. After entering upon his duties at the office of *The Register*, he continued his studies at Union College, which formed the nucleus of the Adelaide University. An account of the history of the paper is given elsewhere in this work, and it will be sufficient here to name some of the principal points. The first issue was printed in England on June 18, 1836, and the second on June 3, 1837, its office being a pisé cottage in Hindley Street West. Number 1 stated that its proprietors were Robert Thomas and George Stevenson, for whom the paper was printed by W. Clowes & Sons, Lambeth; but Number 2 proudly declared that it was "Printed by Robert Thomas and Co., at their printing office."

The "plant" was of an exceedingly primitive character, part of which had previously been used to execute official printing, including the famous proclamation by Governor Hindmarsh, in a temporary shelter at Glenelg. To say that the paper was published irregularly at first is to use an extremely mild expression, inasmuch as at times several weeks intervened between successive issues, but for all that its light never became entirely extinct. There were



Hammer & Co.,

Adelaide.

MR. ROBERT KYFFIN THOMAS.

also several changes in both ownership and location, but in 1854 a permanent settlement was made in Grenfell Street, and the properties were purchased by a syndicate of seven, shortly after reduced to four, Mr. W. K. Thomas being one of the number. When Mr. R. K. Thomas joined the staff in 1868 the proprietary consisted of his father, Mr.

E. W. Andrews, and Mr. John Howard Clark, whose portraits are among the most conspicuous adornments of *The Register* library. In the first instance he became connected with the printing department, but shortly afterwards qualified himself for the position of a stenographer, in due time took his place in the reporters' gallery of the House of Parliament, rose to be Chief of the Staff, and was in charge of the "Hansard" work until he left this particular branch of work in 1882. In 1877 a change in the proprietary was necessitated by the death of Mr. E. W. Andrews, and Mr. Thomas became one of the partners in the concern. The other members of the firm are Messrs. John Harvey Finlayson, W. J. Sowden, and Evan Kyffin Thomas. He devoted himself for many years to the supervision of *The Observer*, but the general management naturally fell largely into his hands, and ultimately he assumed permanent control over the business affairs of the office, for which his experience in the several departments was an excellent qualification. This is not the place to speak of the extensive influence of the paper, its excellent moral tone and high literary character; but the position it holds may fairly be attributed to the sense of responsibility and good judgment manifested by the original founder, his son and grandson, and their coadjutors, who have worthily striven to make it a power for good. Mr. Thomas has taken an active and permanent part in many public enterprises and organizations. He was President of the South Australian branch of the Royal Geographical Society from 1900 to 1903, Vice-President of the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce in 1905, and President in the following year. At the time of





FILM 100  
NO 8

AURICHT'S PRINTING OFFICE, 14 MURRAY ST.  
FROM SOUTH

TANUNDA  
30-7-79



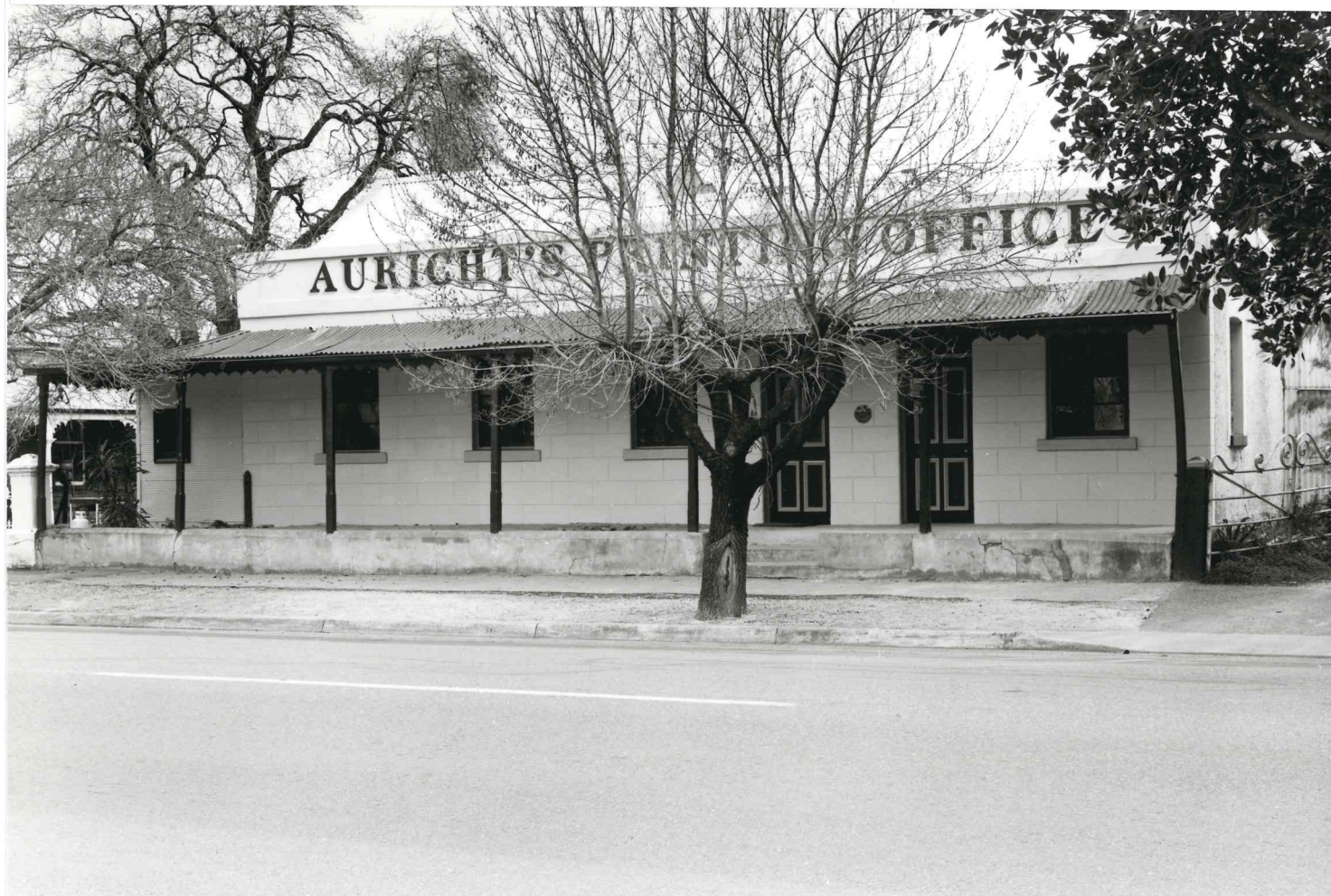




FILM 100  
No 7

VIEW NORTH ALONG MURRAY ST,  
TOWARDS AURICHT'S PRINTING OFFICE

TANUNDA  
30-7-79







FILM 100  
NO 10

VIEW SOUTH UNDER VERANDAH OF  
AURICHT'S PRINTING OFFICE

TANUNDA  
30-7-79

