

South Australian
Heritage Act 1978-80:

HERITAGE SURVEY

REGION 6 :
SOUTH EAST

ITEM IDENTIFICATION SHEET

Item No. : LAC:060

ITEM NAME: Homestead, "Bowaka" and Stone Walls
Former or other names:

LOCATION:

Address: Reedy Creek,
via Kingston S.E.

Allotment:

Section : 39

Hundred : Bowaka

County : Robe

L.G.A. : Lacepede

S.H.P. Region: 6

A.M.G., Ref. Z: 54 N: 5908275
E: 414275

TYPE OF ITEM:

Description: Homestead

Subject: 4.01

Period: 1850-1860

Date: 1851

Architect:

Builder:

Condition: Well Kept

STATUS State Heritage List: Registered
National Estate : Listed
National Trust : Classified

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

RECOMMENDATION: State

Description:

White painted random rubble stonework with flat sheet galvanized iron gable ended roof. Main roof extends into the verandah and has a timber tracery fascia board. Double hung sash windows along front facade with low sills (used to be French doors). Central French door with "M" above the door. Casement windows at the rear. Stone chimney part of wall structure. Symmetrical front elevation. Asbestos cement addition at rear of building.

Station founded in 1847 or before by John Hindmarsh and Henry Morris. They were joined by Thomas Morris, who took over in 1850 or 1851. Homestead built in fashionable U-plan. Government regulations encouraged Thomas Morris to sell the station in 1875 to the Hutchison and Dunn empire.

Report Text:

REFERENCES: R. Cockburn, "Pastoral Pioneers" Vol. II pp. 240, 241
M. Dunn, "A Man's Reach" pp. 21, 29, 30, 108

Verbal:

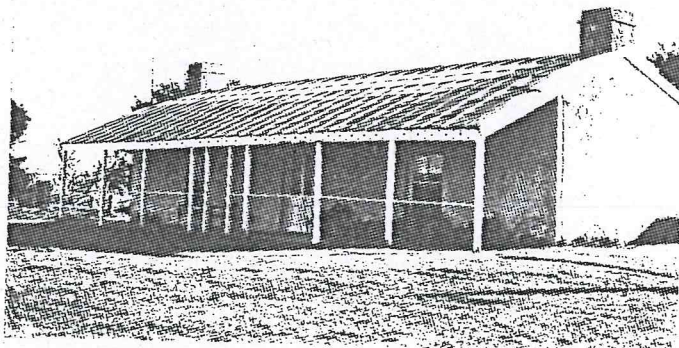
PHOTOGRAPHS:

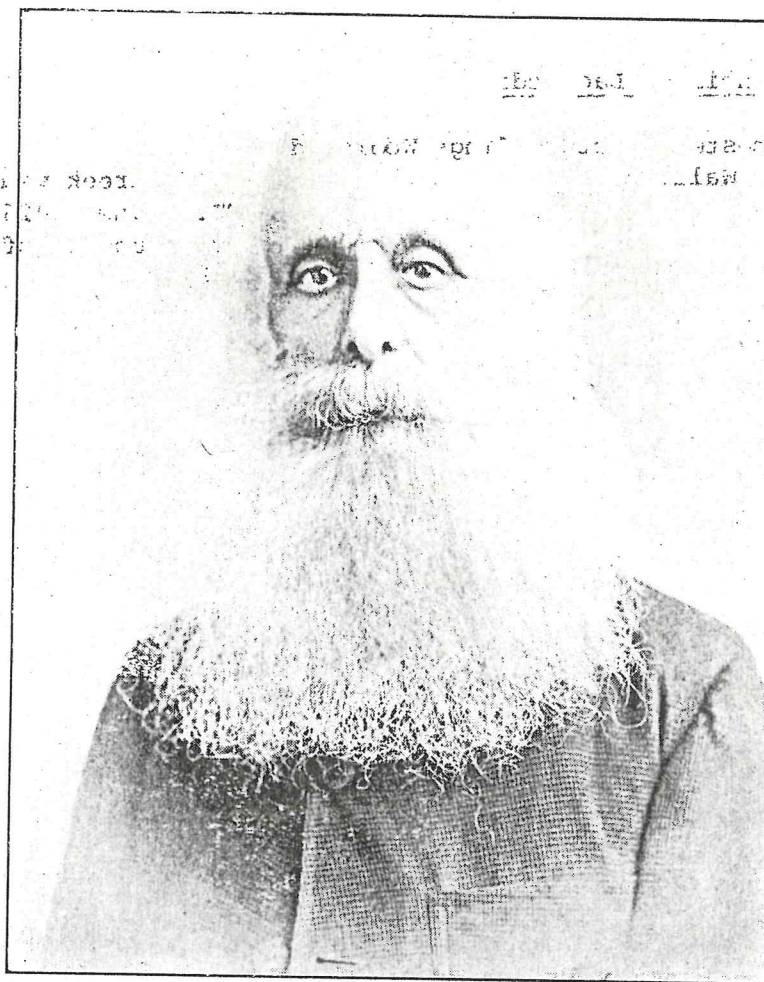
Slide No : 10/59

Film No : 14

Negative No: 36

Archival No:





THOMAS MORRIS.

THE credit of being the founder of Bowaka station, west of Guichen Bay, has often been given to Thomas Morris; as a matter of fact the distinction belonged to his brother, Henry T. Morris, for many years manager at Anlaby. They were nephews of the first Governor of South Australia, Sir John Hindmarsh. There is also a die-hard story that His Excellency had claims to be numbered among the pastoral pioneers of the province he ruled over. A misapprehension on the point arose probably from the fact that for several years after the opening of the south-east to pastoral occupation the name of John Hindmarsh was bracketed with that of Henry T. Morris in the ownership of the Guichen Bay run. That John Hindmarsh was a son of the Governor, and he remained in South Australia after his father's recall in 1838. The only land ownership in the province, outside of Adelaide town acres, that one can trace to His Excellency is what was designated the "country section" of

134 acres which was laid out later as the town of Hindmarsh. He paid 11/ an acre for it—one shilling less than the minimum price per acre fixed in the South Australian Act—and sold it for a total sum of £1,000. Official correspondence belonging to the period when Mr. G. Milner Stephen was Administrator shows that when the Hindmarsh section was re-surveyed privately it was found that nine acres too much had been allotted to its distinguished owner without his knowledge, and entirely through the fault of the Government surveyors. The latter "openly professed" the practice of giving more than was paid for "in order to be on the safe side," but declared that the average excess was less than two acres. Happy days of land speculation!

Concerning the Morris family, reference is rarely made to any member besides Henry, whose speech in response to the toast of the pioneers was for many years a feature of the Glenelg banquet on Commemoration Day. His

earlier position as Chief Inspector of Sheep also tended to keep him in the limelight. Three brothers, however, followed him to South Australia from their native county of Kent—Thomas, Owen and William. Owen subsequently settled in Victoria. Henry Morris came out with his vice-regal uncle in H.M.S. Buffalo, which arrived at Glenelg on December 28, 1836. Thomas, the subject of this sketch, appeared in 1840. It is idle to claim that Governor Hindmarsh had any practical pastoral partnership with his nephews. Henry Morris was only in his fourteenth year when he landed, and was still at school under the Rev. T. Q. Stow when his uncle finally left South Australia on July 14, 1838. There were no thoughts of Bowaka station then. Stephen George Henty, the absolute stock pioneer of the south east, did not take his cattle to Mount Gambier until 1841, and the rest of the vast district remained practically unknown until the expedition of 1844 was undertaken

by Governor Grey. The line of route followed by overland parties had passed through country for the most part of an unpromising character, and it was generally imagined that the south-east offered little inducement to settlement. Henry Morris, with whom his brother Thomas was associated, and John Hindmarsh, Junr., were drawn well into the boom which followed Sir George Grey's rosy report on the discoveries he had made, and it was in the late forties, nearly ten years after the departure of Governor Hindmarsh, that Bowaka was taken up.

In 1850 Henry Morris threw up his south-eastern interests in order to try his luck on the Californian goldfields, and Thomas Morris acquired from him and his partner the lease of Bowaka. In view of the success which attended subsequent occupation of this country the casual reader may find it difficult to understand why a man should prefer the gold quest to sheep farming in a safe district, but a knowledge of the conditions that prevailed at the time in question solves the puzzle. Mutton was then down to one penny to threepence a pound, and beef was fetching threepence to fourpence. Boiling down was being spoken of as the salvation of the stock-breeding industry. At the time Morris and Hindmarsh were battling at Bowaka, the Royal South Australian Almanack published a paragraph, under the heading "Pastoral Pursuits," which makes curious reading to-day. It was as follows:—"These truly patriarchal pursuits are being followed with most gratifying success by many of our leading colonists, the natural grasses of the country being well adapted to the fattening of stock, and the hills and valleys of the interior affording extensive means of depasturing sheep and cattle. . . . Several individual flock owners have from 20,000 to 30,000 sheep upon their runs, besides large numbers of cattle. Unless the numbers are greatly reduced it will be impossible in a few years to find room for the annual increase. We observe with much pleasure that a boiling down establishment has been formed by Messrs. Reid and Develin at Gawler Town, and that another on a more extensive scale is contemplated by Messrs. Elder and Wark at Port Adelaide. Many of the sheep owners intend also to have private furnaces at their own stations. These establishments, fixing upon sheep a minimum value, will become the safety valves of sheep farming." About the same time Comung station at Biscuit Flat, of which W. H. Taylor and

John Blagg were early lessees, had been sold for £50, its area having been 17 square miles. Furnaces and footrot, with high rents and low prices, did not offer an alluring prospect, but Thomas Morris persevered and succeeded at Bowaka where his brother had been discouraged. The original area was 49 square miles, for which a rental of 10/ a mile was paid. The assessment for sheep was at one time at the rate of 190 per square mile, and the total rent and assessment came to £102 1/8 a year. Originally the run was five miles wide and stretched right down the plain, and, in order to make the property more square, Henry Morris had exchanged some of his country for a part of Conmurra, which was then owned by Frederick Vaughan, who afterwards went to Queensland, and was appointed magistrate at Blackall. One-third of the property consisted of rough, heathly hills, and nearly one-half was covered with water during the winter in pre-drainage days. A six-roomed house of stone, with a verandah, was erected. The wool was carted about 25 miles to Robe over roads that were bad in all seasons. Sixty-five thousand sheep used to pass through Bowaka in the first three months of the year on the overland route from Mount Gambier and Victoria. When Goyder made his re-valuations the improvements was set down as being worth £2,250, and it was declared that the property had been considerably over-assessed. In the sixties Thomas Morris added Avenue Flat to his holding, acquiring it from Charles Stewart, the name of whose family is perpetuated at a railway station on the Naracoorte-Kingston line. Avenue Flat was only seven square miles smaller in area than Bowaka, and on the entire block Mr. Morris carried nearly 30,000 sheep, besides a fair number of cattle. He knew the time when he had to depend upon the boiling down works at Robe for the disposal of some of his surplus stock.

While he was at Bowaka, Thomas Morris married a daughter of Mrs. Hutchison, one of the pluckiest among the women pioneers of Australia. She had landed from Scotland at Port Fairy, Victoria, with a large family. Having heard that very good country had been discovered on the Naracoorte plains, Mrs. Hutchison, who was a widow, set out on foot with all her family to get there. On the way she was warned to keep within the more settled areas because of the hostility of the blacks. Mrs. Hutchison accordingly made for the coast, brought her family

through safely, and eventually built up the Woolmit station. Subsequently she married Mr. Andrew Dunn, and her husband and one of her sons composed the firm of Hutchison and Dunn, one of the biggest combinations ever connected with the pastoral interests of the south-east. At one time the partners owned nearly all the country from Bordertown to Robe, on which between 60,000 and 70,000 sheep were grazed.

Mr. Morris worked up Bowaka to an excellent proposition, and sold it in 1875 to Hutchison and Dunn, from whom he bought the Penola run, established by Alexander Cameron, who also founded the town of Penola. The area of the latter property then was about 40,000 acres, and 15,000 sheep were carried on it. Mr. Morris also took over Kalangadoo from Hutchison and Dunn, and worked it in conjunction with the Penola run, although a considerable strip of Krongart separated the two places. In the nineties Penola was sold to the late Mr. Robert Rymill, and Mr. Morris then concentrated his attention upon Kalangadoo, the early history of which was given in the notice dealing with the five Hunter brothers, which appears in the first volume of these memoirs. This station, in Mr. Morris's time, had been reduced in area from its original 200,000 acres to 19 square miles, other runs having been cut out of it. It was assessed originally at 250 sheep to the square mile and this was reduced to 121 in Goyder's time. The old homestead which the Hunters had erected about 1842 was quite inadequate for Mr. Morris and his family of 12 children, and he built what has been described as a "sumptuous mansion"—a two-story house of twenty rooms.

Towards the end of his well-spent life Mr. Morris was content to sit back, and leave the practical part of stock raising to his energetic sons. He died at Kalangadoo on May 18, 1894, at the age of 67 years. A south-eastern biographer said of him that he "lived a quiet country life, although occasionally he made his influence felt in district council matters." Mrs. Morris followed him to the grave in 1904, and soon afterwards the family sold Kalangadoo to the Government for subdivision. One of the sons, Mr. H. Allan Morris, who is an ex-chairman of the South Australian Tattersall's Club, again acquired most of the plain country comprising the Bowaka run, where he was born, and finally passed it on to Messrs. J. & T. Ryder.

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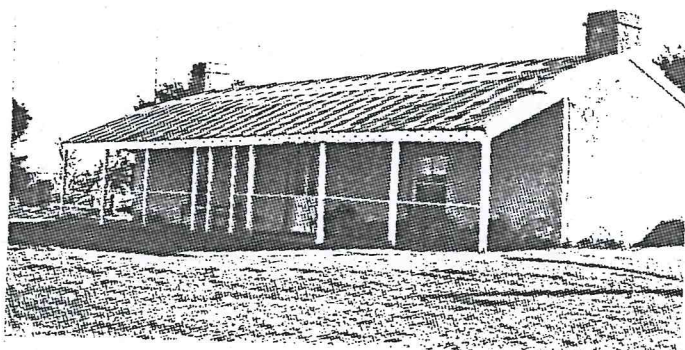
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DANVERS ARCHITECTS Date: 1983





FILM 49
NO 6

"BOWAKA" WOOLSHED FROM NORTH SHOWING
SHEARS IN TREE

REEDY CREEK
19-2-79



FILM 49
No 7

"BOWAKA" WOOLSHED INTERIOR

REEDY CREEK
19-2-79

FILM 48
No 8

FRONT DOOR (EAST ELEVATION)
"BOWAKA"

REEDY CREEK
19-2-79



FILM 49
NO 1

"BOWAKA" BAKEHOUSE, FROM WEST

REEDY CREEK
19-2-79



FILM 49
NO 2

"BOWAKA", BAKEHOUSE CORNER AND
NORTH WALL OF HOMESTEAD

REEDY CREEK
19-2-79



FILM 48
NO 6

"BOWAKA", EAST ELEVATION

REEDY CREEK
19-2-79