
Administration Building, Yatala Labour Prison

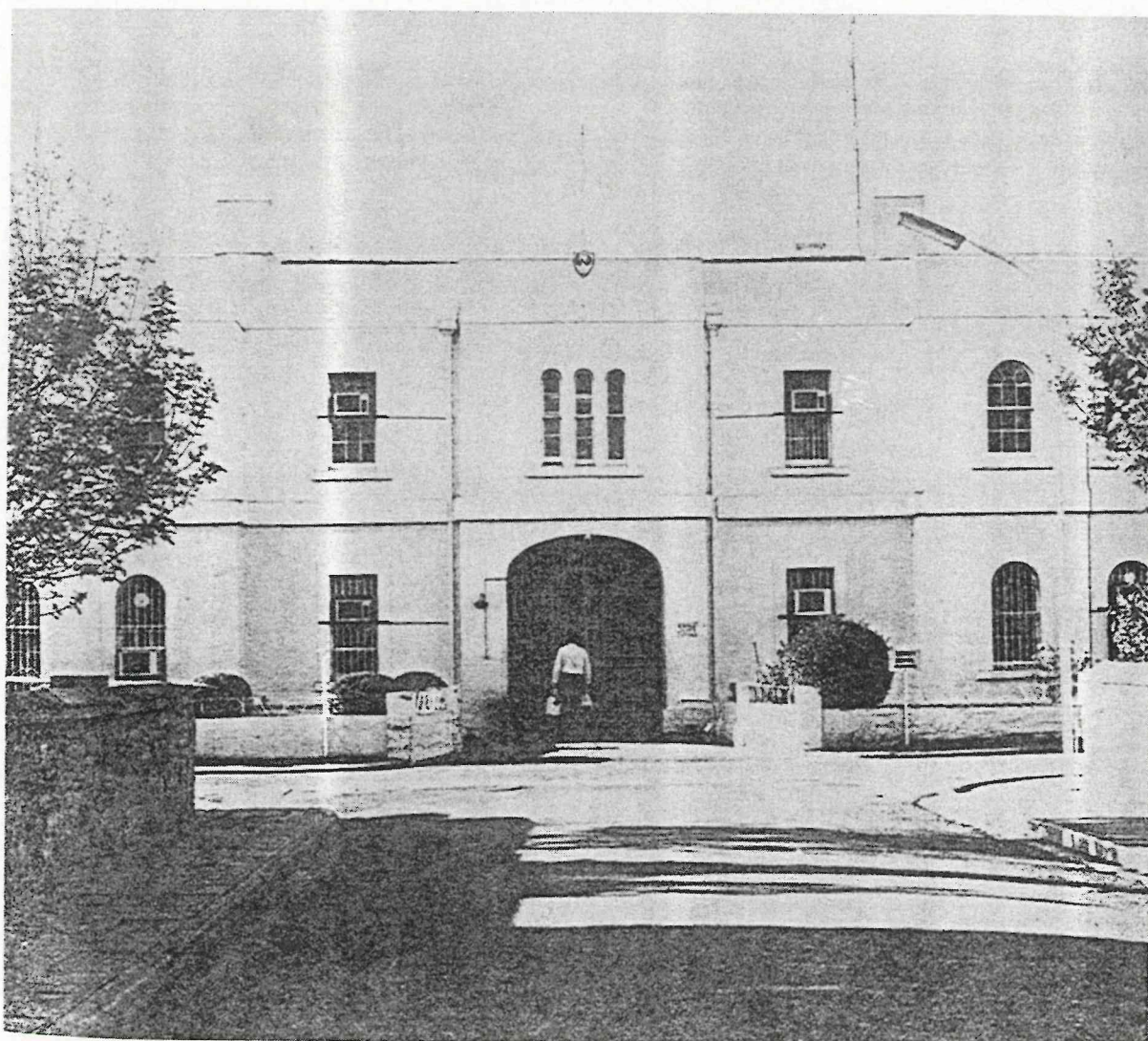
NOR:005**LOCATION**

Address Grand Junction Road
Suburb NORTHFIELD 5085
Owners Department of Correctional Services, c/- Director, Department for the Environment,
GPO Box 1747, Adelaide SA 5001
Allotment No -
Section Pt 3038
CT
Hundred Yatala

State Heritage Status Registered, 24 July 1980
Other Assessments National Trust of SA, Classified, File No. 1952
Register of the National Estate, Registered

SHR No 6628-10711

Film/Neg No taken from State Heritage Branch files



Administration Building, Yatala Labour Prison

DESCRIPTION

Refer to State Heritage Branch Files

HISTORY

Information is not available from State Heritage Branch Files

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

Information is not available from State Heritage Branch Files

References

- Enfield & District Historical Society Inc, 1985, *Enfield, Memories of Yester Year*, Enfield & District Historical Society Inc, p. 24-27
Herman, M. & Thompson, D. 1993, *Enfield: 1993 - A Heritage Listing*, City of Enfield, LEAP, p. 17
Robinson, D. 1991, *Enfield: Notes of Historical Interest*, Enfield and District Historical Society Inc
State Heritage Branch Files, File No. 6628-10711

desperate adventures in which he was engaged, to which further allusion is unnecessary. He rose to be Inspector, and rendered excellent service in checking the lawless careers of many criminals who chose South Australia as their hunting-ground.

When Governor Hindmarsh left the colony—and with him went his marine guard—the peace-loving citizens complained that they had no adequate protection. The numerical strength of the police force was affected by the financial fluctuations of the times, and at certain periods the strain upon it was very severe. Its officers, however, always maintained a high ideal, and when the need for special services came upon it in 1852 the police force was equal to the emergency. If there was tragedy in the pursuit and capture of bushrangers, the gold escort was a veritable romance. Organized and led by Captain Tolmer, the Commissioner of Police, a body of mounted troopers, month after month, performed the journey from the Victorian goldfields, through hundreds of miles of wilderness, plunging through swamps, fording rivers, traversing rugged ranges, and at times with the greedy eyes of notorious robbers fixed upon them and the treasure in their charge. Frequently a ton of gold was thus conveyed—the gold brought by one party was worth close on £200,000—and in all £2,000,000 worth of the precious metal was brought from the goldfields to Adelaide.

The wide territory over which police supervision has

to be exercised, and the multifarious calls on the representative of law and order, often impose extremely arduous duties upon them in outlying stations. Journeys of hundreds of miles are taken as "all in the day's work," and much genuine exploring work has been done by the force. Latterly, moreover, the tendency has been to impose duties on policemen that differ very widely from those of guardians of the public safety. Thus, they are in turn sometimes inspectors, clerks, registrars, census collectors, and the like. In his latest report the Commissioner states that the duties performed by the police are still increasing in number. Five police prisons were established during the previous year, and the officers in charge of police stations at those places were appointed keepers. The work is also increased by the cutting up of large estates for closer settlement.

The present Commissioner, Coloney Madley, and the present Secretary, who has also been Acting-Commissioner, have held their positions for the last ten years. The force (mounted and foot) consists of 2 Inspectors, 5 Sub-Inspectors, 15 Sergeants, 17 Corporals, and 330 constables. There are 18 native policemen, 2 camels, 252 horses, and 50 bicycles. The conduct of the force is exemplary, and physically a finer body of men it would be extremely difficult to find. The monthly parade through the main street of the city is always a sight worth seeing.

GAOLS AND PRISONS.

Near the north-west angle of the City of Adelaide there stands a massive stone structure, which is familiar to all travellers by railway, and needs no advertisement of its character. It is situated close to the point where the lines from the north and those from the south converge, and whence the trains have a straight run into the Adelaide Station. As it lies between these routes it irresistibly attracts the attention of visitors to the city, and its rounded towers at the corners of the lofty, windowless walls, with the tiers of loose bricks between them, proclaim its purpose. An olive plantation, which is bisected by the southern line of railway, forms part of its grounds, neat garden plots are also in sight, and there are other evidences of industry, but no one could possibly mistake it for a private mansion or a manufactory, or, indeed, for anything else but a gaol.

This building is a reminder of bygone times. It was commenced in the days when Colonel Gawler was Governor of South Australia. He found himself under a supposed necessity of providing employment for a large number of emigrants who could not otherwise obtain support for themselves and their families, and the expenditure he incurred in its erection formed a count in the indictment that was brought against him for reckless extravagance. Possibly a smaller and less costly edifice might

have served the purpose for the time, but it is doubtful if it would have been more economical in the end, and there were considerations present to the Governor's mind which should not be overlooked. Members of the criminal class were being attracted to South Australia, and could not be excluded; many of them were desperate characters, and it was necessary to provide for their secure custody when apprehended; the population was increasing; the existing accommodation for prisoners was inadequate, thirty persons being thrust into a building that was only designed for eight, and its insecurity was proved by outbreaks and escapes. It should be understood, moreover, that the building then erected was only a part of the present gaol, which has been added to from time to time, and now contains separate cells for 200 prisoners, and accommodation for 360 where more than one prisoner sleeps in a single cell.

The second gaol to be erected in South Australia was at the township of Redruth, near the famous Burra Burra Mine. For many years this was the only establishment of its kind in the north, and received offenders against the law from many and distant places. Its usefulness for that purpose was superseded when the Gladstone and Port Augusta gaols were built, and it may be regarded as a testimony to the law-abiding character of

the local population that for considerable periods the officials exceeded in number the persons under their charge. Such being the case the wise course was adopted of utilizing the premises with more advantage in another way, and they are now employed as a Girls' Reformatory in connection with the State Children's Department.

Second in size and extent of accommodation to the Adelaide Gaol is that at Gladstone, which was erected about the year 1888. It contains provision for 62 prisoners in separate cells, and for 186 persons where more than one person slept in a single cell, but happily only a comparatively small percentage of these numbers has ever been under confinement at one time.

The Port Augusta Gaol is less than half the size of the Gladstone establishment, having 30 cells and accommodation for 42 prisoners all told. The Mount Gambier Gaol is still smaller, for, though it has provision for an equal number of persons, on an emergency, there are only 14 separate cells. In the Wallaroo Gaol there are 7 separate cells, and in the gaol at Port Lincoln only 4. The country gaols, therefore, are by no means extensive in their provision, and it is satisfactory to observe that they are more than adequate to the demands made upon them.

An Act of Parliament was passed during the session of 1905 to provide for the establishment of police prisons. It made provision for the appointment of any police station as a police prison, and power was given to any properly constituted Court, when awarding imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month, to direct that the sentence should take effect at the nearest police prison in lieu of the nearest gaol. The intention was not to appoint many such police prisons, but only to proclaim outlying places, where police stations are situated, and where the police officers could be gaolers. The policy was that offenders who were sentenced to imprisonment for drunkenness and minor offences, or for short periods of imprisonment in default of payment of small fines, should serve their sentences in police prisons. It was expected that considerable saving would be effected by doing away with transport and escort expenses, and that not much additional accommodation would be required. Under the provisions of the Act police prisons have been established at Tarcoola, Fowler Bay, Streaky Bay, Renmark, and Kingscote.

The Yatala Labour Prison occupies an excellent site a few miles to the north of Adelaide, overlooking the plains and the gulf, and is connected with the city by a railway which branches off the north line at Dry Creek. It was formerly known as the Stockade, and the term was at first sufficiently descriptive, but in the course of years the buildings have been enlarged and adapted in harmony with modern penological architecture. Provision is made for 409 prisoners in separate cells and for 20 in wards or cells adapted for more than one prisoner,

and it is a comfort to know that the prison is rarely much more than a quarter full. As to the labour performed, the majority of the prisoners are employed in the quarries raising and breaking stone, and work is found for a limited number as carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, laundrymen, etc., etc.

During the history of the prison numerous attempts to escape have been made by the convicts, the most serious and determined of which occurred in March, 1904. Nine notorious prisoners, most of whom were in irons, made a simultaneous dash for liberty from three separate quarries. There is no doubt that the plan was pre-arranged and so carefully concealed that the prison officials were taken entirely by surprise. The would-be escapees promptly scattered so as to divide and distract their pursuers. The Adelaide police were promptly summoned, but their services were not required. The prison officials were so smart and active that within two hours they had captured the whole of the nine without external assistance. During the intervening hunt rifles and revolvers were freely used, but by a miracle of bad marksmanship not a man was hit. The Sheriff frankly regretted the ineffective shooting, believing that if some of the prisoners had been disabled other attempts to escape would have been discouraged, and he promptly arranged for the guards to have rifle and revolver practice at a target. Magazine rifles were subsequently issued to the guards, and a regular weekly practice is kept up.

The principal outdoor work performed at the Labour Prison is in quarrying stone and preparing it for delivery. It is said to be rough at first on persons whose hands are soft, and who have never engaged in any manual employment, but they soon become accustomed to it, and perform their allotted tasks with as much cheerfulness as can be expected. The output, in terms of both measurement and weight, in the year 1905 included 8,634 yards of stone, and in addition about 6,661 tons. Much of this was supplied to the Outer Harbour works, a portion for buildings at Port Adelaide and adjacent towns, and the remainder for the maintenance of district roads.

The indoor work is of a miscellaneous character, and much of it consists in making or mending articles required for prison use, which would otherwise have to be purchased. The list includes 146 pairs of boots made and 569 pairs of boots repaired, 633 flannels and drawers made and 2,535 repaired, 910 trousers and 1,330 shirts repaired. Besides these are a host of articles required in such an establishment, besides painting, whitewashing, etc. The total indicates that the prison maintains its right to be known by its distinguishing name.

The gaols and prisons are included in the Department of the Sheriff, Mr. Otto Heinrich Schomburgk, who is Comptroller of the Labour Prison. The Super-

intendent of that establishment is Mr. Thomas Farrell, who was formerly keeper of the Adelaide Gaol. The present keeper of the Adelaide Gaol is Mr. George W. H. Norcock, who previously served in the same capacity at Palmerston. The keepers of the country gaols are as follows:—Gladstone, Mr. Robert McDonald; Port Augusta, Mr. Frederick S. Becker; Mount Gambier, Mr. Samuel R. Criddle; Wallaroo, Mr. Charles W. Hardy; Port Lincoln, Mr. Alfred Kelly, Sergeant of Police.

The annual reports of the Sheriff contain internal evidence, apart from specific statements, that the management of the penal establishments is humane and intelligent. The general health of the inmates of the Labour Prison indicates that the sanitation, food supply, etc., are satisfactory. Discipline is maintained, but there are weekly visits paid by visiting justices, when opportunity is given for complaints to be made, and is a safeguard against any continued injustice being perpetrated. Prisoners can hardly be expected to be pampered, and it is significant that when they were dissatisfied with the quality of their potatoes and their supply of tobacco, arrangements were immediately made to obtain a better sample of the one and a different brand of the other.

In reference to the moral welfare of the prisoners, and their opportunity for making a fresh start when their sentences have expired, the latest report of the Sheriff contains the following paragraph:—"Ministers of the various denominations attend the prison regularly. Three services are held on each Sunday, and visits for moral instruction are paid twice a week. Once in each month the Prisoners' Aid Association visits the prison, and provides an excellent entertainment, consisting of vocal and instrumental music. These visits are eagerly looked forward to, and are much appreciated by the prisoners. The Association also renders valuable assistance to prisoners on discharge, by providing them with clothing, and on the recommendation of the indefatigable Secretary, Mr. George Crase, railway passes are supplied to each prisoner on discharge, should he desire to proceed into the country in order to obtain employment. Several prisoners have during the year been provided by the Association with remunerative employment on board ships sailing for England; others have been assisted with money and passes to other States. A list of prisoners due for discharge is regularly furnished

to the Salvation Army, and an officer of that organization attends and interviews the prisoners, with a view to rendering them assistance on their discharge.

The total expenditure for gaols and prisons during the year 1905, including everything, from salaries and supervision to tools, gratuities to prisoners on discharge, and other incidentals, was £14,916. The total amount of cash received and paid into the Treasury for the same term was £1,973. No account is taken or credit allowed for the estimated value of the labour by which economies are effected, and when the cash income is deducted from the total expenditure, it is found that the average annual cost per prisoner is £48 14s. 8d. Every prisoner, therefore, costs the State nearly a pound a week, which is a point to be noted by students of penology.

Those who are interested in this particular science may find abundant material for useful consideration in the tables which are issued with the Sheriff's annual report. On December 31, 1905, there were confined in the Yatala Labour Prison 117 prisoners, and in the Adelaide and country gaols 142, making a total of 259, of whom 29 were females, which was a decrease of 8 as compared with the number on December 31, 1904. The manner in which the habit of criminality operates when once formed is clearly shown by the records of admission. During the year the number of distinct and separate persons admitted was 888 males and 143 females, but some of them returned to custody so often that the gross number of admissions, instead of being 1,031, rose to 1,556. One female was received thirteen separate times, one 11, and one 9, while one male came back 11 times, two 10 times each, and many others several times.

As to the growth or decrease of crime, the fact may be observed that while the daily average for 1905 was 265·60, the number in confinement on the last day of the year was 259. On that date the estimated population of the State was 374,398. Mr. Schomburgk remarks that if the number of persons in the prisons and gaols be compared with the total population, "it will be seen that the proportion of prisoners to each 1,000 of the estimated population was '069, or, in other words, that out of every 1,446 of the general population one was in prison. This is probably the lowest record for any State in the Commonwealth."

FACTORIES AND EARLY-CLOSING.

The industrial legislation of South Australia includes provision for conciliation in cases of dispute; for the inspection and regulation of factories, and the constitution of Wages Boards and for early closing of shops.

The State Board of Conciliation consists of a President—His Honor Mr. J. G. Russell, I.S.O., S.M.—and six members. Mr. Alexander Buchanan, S.M., is

the Registrar. An account of its proceedings and the action of its President in settling industrial disputes is given in another part of this work.

The Chief Inspector of Factories is Mr. John Bannigan, who was appointed on September 2, 1896. The other officers are a male and a female inspector, and a junior clerk. Much interesting information is supplied



FILM 115
NO 10

MAIN ENTRANCE & ADMINISTRATION, YATALA
LABOUR PRISON FROM SOUTH

YATALA
20-8-79



FILM 115
NO 6

NORTH WALL MAIN ENTRANCE & ADMINISTRATION
YATALA LABOUR PRISON

YATALA
20-8-79