

A Heritage Survey Carried out by the Heritage Conservation Branch, October, 1984.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1981, the Department of Environment and Planning prepared an the <u>Assessment Report of the Environmental Impact Statement</u> produced for the Olympic Dam Project. This report did not identify any items of European heritage under threat in the mining area, but it did note a number of heritage items in the surrounding area. These included pastoral dwellings or buildings associated with outback stations, the Birdsville Track, Strangways Springs Repeater Station and locations along the proposed Woomera-Andamooka-Farina ring route, north of Lake Torrens. The report anticipated that increased population in the area would have a detrimental effect on these remote sites.

In an attempt to protect these sites and associated structures, the Heritage Conservation Branch is currently undertaking a programme to identify and record heritage items in the Far North region of the State, and to initiate management and development controls. This report has therefore been prepared to identify heritage items within the Andamooka township.

Andamooka lies 25 kms north-east of Olympic Dam and is already experiencing some of the effects of increased population in the area. The amenities and life style at Andamooka it seems are preferred by some to those provided at Olympic Dam Village, and thus housing and building sites in Andamooka are in great demand. As a result, there has been land speculation in the town, and a number of potential heritage items along the main street have been demolished to make way for commercial development.

Members from the Heritage Conservation Branch visited Andamooka in October 1984 to initiate a broad-brush survey of the town. This was done in close liaison with the Andamooka Progress Association, and only those items which had the owner's full cooperation were investigated and prepared for registration. Other items considered to be of local heritage importance were photographically recorded and the extent of their distribution within the township can be seen on the Andamooka Township Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) It is recommended that the Historic Reserve and Dick Clark's Residence be placed on the Register of State Heritage Items (see separate reports for each item).
- (b) Any funds allocated to the Andamooka Progress and Opal Miners' Association be used for work on items on the Register of State Heritage Items.
- (c) Future landscaping of the Historic Reserve should reflect the conditions experienced by the original inhabitants of the cottages.
- (d) Roadworks along the Main Street should take into consideration the proper drainage of the historic site as the effects of seasonal flooding will have an irreversible and destructive effect upon the fragile structures in the Historic Reserve.

ANDAMOOKA - A BRIEF OUTLINE

The opal mining township of Andamooka, 610km north of Adelaide, is one of the world's major sources of precious opal. Opal is obtained from a narrow opal bearing boulder which is usually found between 8-40 feet in the ground. This opal zone consists of layers of hard white clay and blocks of ancient quartz which have been encrusted with a silica bearing solution, which in time has accumulated and formed a translucent stone which is highly prized for its bright spectral colours.

The commercial value of opal depends on its colour, clarity, effects and size. Andamooka opal is highly regarded by buyers as it is considered to be stronger and of better quality than Coober Pedy opal. The opal is usually sold to buyers who visit the field for varying lengths of time and they buy direct from the miners for cash. The buyers then negotiate with overseas buyers whose orders are largely for uncut stone, the bulk of which is exported to the U.S., Hong Kong, Japan and Germany, where it is cut and polished and sold throughout the world. A small spare time trade is carried out on the field making doublets and specimens and these are generally sold through local tourist outlets.

Andamooka has an arid climate, with a low rainfall averaging about 140mm per year. Floods are infrequent, but when they do occur, create havoc as the main street of Andamooka is the course of the Opal Creek. Temperatures vary enormously with frosts falling during winter nights and summer maximums often exceeding 37 C.

The topography of the area is basically that of a dissected tableland. Andamooka sits approximately 130m above sea level and is part of the Stuart Range Plateau which extends northward from the town towards the Stuart Range.

Throughout the opal fields, well defined creek channels drain eastwards into Lake Torrens, and in the interdunal areas, claypans, saltpans and swamps provide the only other means of drainage. Sandunes cover much of the area, and the tablelands are scattered with gibber and outcrops of limestone. The region supports a variety of vegetation including steppe grasses, saltbush, mulga scrub, acacias, native pine, tea tree, casuarinas, ephemerals and bluebush.

Andamooka was first sighted in 1858 by John McDouall Stuart and he named the area after a native designation meaning 'large waterhole'. Between 1839-1862, a large number of explorers and surveyors visited the far north of the state and their favourable reports led to an expansion of pastoral activity in the region. In 1872, a pastoral lease was taken out for Andamooka Station, and 58 years later, in 1930, two boundary riders, Sam Brookes and Roy Shepperd, found opal floaters at a site now known as Treloars Hill. The discovery was not generally made known but news of major finds leaked out and brought miners to the field. Their numbers fluctuated over the years with peak production and population occuring during the late 1960's. The early miners worked in shafts ranging from 2-24 feet in depth, but with the introduction of machinery (the Yorke Hoist, backhoe, bulldozer and blower) more financially intensive and systematic large scale mining came into operation during the 1950-60's.

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Today, Andamooka is a sprawling township spread out over an area of about 6 square kilometres. It is set in the hollow of an otherwise deadflat desert, and as one enters the town, one is struck by the profusion of white mullock heaps and the randomness of its layout. Roads and paths wind down eroded inclines, and houses have been built wherever it has taken the owner's fancy.

Temporary, make-do accommodation has always been a fact of life at Andamooka. Where once tents, dugouts, corrugated iron humpies and stone shelters were the only type of housing on the field, today many houses consist of prefabricated structures and transportable houses locally known as "Woomera Huts". Despite the fact that Andamooka has been in existence for 50 years an air of semi-permanence still pervades the place. Great wealth has been discovered underground but the town seems to have benefited little from these discoveries. Public buildings, always an indicator of a town's prosperity and confidence, are often built in the same manner and style as that of private dwellings. For example, the Andamooka Town Hall and Andamooka Community Church are unpainted galvanised iron buildings.

Government regulations have had little effect over the lives of people living at Andamooka, it not being an incorporated town. However, it is subject to Planning Commission control. For this reason, the inhabitants appear to take some pride in the fact that "you can do whatever you like up here", reflecting the basic tenet of the Andamooka lifestyle - the freedom to derive ones income, and to live as one wishes. Nonetheless, the Andamooka Progress Association (established before 1960) is a semi-official form of local government, and it has done much to improve amenities on the field, such as supplying water to homes at minimal cost and building recreational facilities. The Progress Association has also played an important role in preserving the Miners Dugouts in the Historic Reserve.

Calls for the organized development of Andamooka has always met with opposition. The majority of the population is made up of intinerant workers, and historically this group has had little interest in securing annual licences to cover residential sites, or to freehold titles for land on which dwellings have been built. This attitude contrasts strongly with that of the small static section of the community which have settled in the town and have acquired business interests and properties which they are keen to safeguard.

The question of land tenure is being considered at the moment, as are questions about the establishment of some form of local government. A cadastral survey of Andamooka was undertaken in the early 1970's and the town boundary was declared in 1976. Since then a number of freehold titles have been issued, and today the Department of Lands is responsible for the building standards of the town and land controls operating within its boundaries.

The Andamooka Heritage Survey was undertaken with the assistance of a number of people, and we wish in particular to thank Bill Giles of the Andamooka Special Rural School, Ian and Karla Kimber of the Andamooka Progress Association and Parry Kostaglou for his assistance in the field. Mrs. May Perry, Anne Pitt and Dick Clark were invaluable sources of oral history and this report could not have been prepared without their help. A complete list of written sources if provided at the end of the report. CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

- 1839 Edward John Eyre sighted and named Lake Torrens from Mount Eyre.
- 1842 The explorer, C. Dutton, disappeared while attempting to follow Eyre's tracks around the head of Spencer Gult.
- 1846 The explorer, J.F. Horrocks, was killed by the accidental discharge of a gun while endeavouring to reach the interior of the continent by a route to the west of Lake Torrens. Horrocks penetrated country to the west of Beda Hill and reached Lake Dutton.
- 1858 B.H. Babbage led a Government sponsored party to explore country at the head of Spencer Gulf and to the north-west between Lake Gardiner and Lake Torrens.
- 1858 John McDouall Stuart and William Finke penetrated 240m north-west of Babbages Camp and travelled up through Andamooka to the Stuart Range. Andamooka was named by Stuart after an Aboriginal designation meaning "large waterhole".
- 1859 Assistant Surveyor-General, W.G. Goyder, explored the Lake Torrens district and described it as "a stockholders paradise in winter".
- 1862 Stuart travelled through the Lake Torrens district on his expedition across the continent to the Gulf of Carpentaria. At about this time Charles Swindon, accompanied by an Aboriginal, brought back specimens of gold allegedly discovered near Andamooka.
- 1868 James Bowman and Phillip Hiern took out a lease on behalf of H.J. Richman for 200 square miles of land on Pernatty Creek. ("Pernatty Station" was stocked with sheep in 1871).
- 1869 A pastoral lease was taken out for Yeltacowie Station.
- 1872 A pastoral lease was taken out for Andamooka Station.
- 1874 Monalena Station lease taken up.
- 1874 Chances Swamp (later Roxby Downs Station) lease taken up.

Arcoona Station lease taken up.

- 1875 Joseph Brookes undertook the first Government trigonometrical survey of the area.
- 1876 Ernest Giles travelled westwards from Pernatty Lagoon on his expedition to Perth.
- 1878 Camels first used as transport by Sir Thomas Elder during a period of well sinking, and fencing in the area west of Lake Torrens.
- 1888 Pastoral expansion in the area reached a peak in 1888. By the late 1890's, all of the original north-west leases had expired.
- 1898 Copper mining operations commence near Pernatty Lagoon.
- 1908 First discovery of opal at Charlies Swamp (later Stuart Creek Opal Field).
- 1912 Commencement of construction of the Transcontinental railway line at Port Augusta.
- 1930 Opal first discovered at Andamooka by two boundary riders, Sam Brookes and Roy Shepperd, on the hillside of what is now known as Treloars Hill. It was identified as precious opal by Mr. Bruce Foulis, Manager of Andamooka Station on 29 August, 1930.
- 1933 The first gougers, R. Treloar and P. Evans worked at Andamooka for several months and obtained opal to the value of 962 pounds before the discovery was generally made known.

First opal miners arrive at Andamooka.

- 1931 Systematic study of the vegetation of the plateau west of Lake Torrens made by Murray.
- 1934 Opal to the value of 656 pounds produced during the year.
- 1935 At 30/6/35, 14 opal miners were working on the Andamooka field.

Workings consisted of shallow shafts ranging from 2-24 ft in depth.

Major claims were One Tree Hill, Teloars Claim, Middle Hill, Boundary Riders Hill, Stevens Gully and German Gully. Living conditions were rough and primitive and the majority of miners lived in tents or semi-dugouts.

Opal to the value of 1,049 pounds produced during the year.

- 1939 R.W. Segnit in a survey described the geological features of the region (between Andamooka, Roxby Downs and Parakylia Stations) as Lower Cambrian.
- 1940 Opal to the value of 9,022 pounds produced during the year.
- 1942 First general store and butcher shop established by Reg Absolom.

1946 30 resident miners working on field.

First well sunk in Opal Creek and dams established at Andamooka Station.

A record price of 50 pounds was paid for an ounce of opal.

Mr. H. Rathman, the mail contractor, offered to extend the Pimba -Roxby Downs service to Andamooka, and a free bag was established with mail arriving every Thursday.

A telephone line from Andamooka to Andamooka Station was erected by volunteer labour.

The Andamooka School ("The Log Cabin") was built by volunteer labour.

Lieut-Gen. J.F. Evetts visited Australia to select a site for the establishment of a guided weapons testing range.

1947 150 adults living on field.

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Workings consisted of shafts ranging from 0-40 feet.

The Andamooka School was officially opened, with the first teacher being Mr. R.J. Bills.

Local residents built a Post Office, and Miss M.D. Berrington was the first post mistress.

Commencement of Weapons Research Establishment at Woomera.

1948 58 miners working on field.

Radio telephone installed in the dugout of Mr. and Mrs. S. Brookes.

Visit of the first flying doctor to Andamooka (Dr. Woods).

1949 60 miners working on field.

First Aid Centre established.

1950 Opal to the value of 3,119 pounds produced during the year.

1955 The Andamooka Community Church was built after 1,000 pounds had been raised by local people.

Opal to the value of 34,120 pounds produced during the year.

Mr. Frank Schulten installs pneumatic earth moving equipment and a new era of mining operations begin.

An estimated 100 people living on field (40-50 actively engaged in opal mining).

1957 "The Tuckerbox Restaurant" opened.

A 20' x 20' school room was built. (Facilities were further extended in 1964 and 1971, and the school became known as the Andamooka Area School).

In 1957 there were 28 pupils at the school.

- 1958 An estimated 220 people living on the field, including 100 Aboriginals.
- 1959 An estimated 300 people living on the field, including 100 Aboriginals.
- 1960 Opal to the value of 183,459 pounds produced during the year.

1962 The Andamooka Community Hall was built.

Beginning of the worst drought in Andamooka's history, (1962-67). Andamooka Cooperative Store built and managed by a local committee. Opal to the value of 377,086 pounds produced during the year. An estimated 800 miners working on field.

1963 The Opal Restaurant (later the Opal Hotel) built by Mr. Anderson. "Opal Air" commences operations.

1964 "Far North Supplies" built by Mr. John Lyons.

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Estimated population of 1,000 people living on field, including 150 Aboriginals.

- 1955 Australian Inland Mission Hospital opened. The first nurses appointed were Sister Margaret Burrows and Sister Amelia Howden.
- 1966 Appointment of the first resident police officer on the field.
- 1968 A bus service between Andamooka and Adelaide was established by Lewis Bros.

Andamooka's first bakery opened by Kenet Bros.

200 pounds was paid for an ounce of uncut stone.

1970 Mr. Peter Vlack, a local resident donates funds to build a school swimming pool.

Andamooka Kindergarten commenced operation with an enrollment of 28 pupils. Two instructors appointed - Mrs. D. Tolcher and Mrs. J. Newman.

1972 Start in decline of opal production (1972-76) and decrease in population.

Mr. Bela Sido, a professional glass blower, built "The Bottle House".

- 1974 A commercial 240v power supply established by Mr. John Lyons. Andamooka Township proclaimed 20 June, 1974.
- 1975 Andamooka Progress Association Hall burnt down.
- 1976 220 registered claims at Andamooka.

Population estimated at 500 people.

The Department of Mines sponsored a geological survey of the Andamooka area and began a subsidized mining programme.

Andamooka Town Boundary gazetted 16/12/76.

- 1978 A severe storm hit Andamooka and caused an estimated \$80,000 worth of damage.
- 1979 Official opening of Andamooka Progress and Opal Miners Association Hall.

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ANDAMOOKA HISTORIC AREA

In the early 1930's when miners first came to Andamooka their living conditions were rough and primitive. Many lived in tents, humpies and dugouts, and these were built on the sides of ridges and hills and along the banks of Opal Creek.

The Macquarie Dictionary describes a dugout as being "a rough shelter or dwelling formed by an excavation in the ground or in the face of a bank".

Unlike the Coober Pedy dugouts, - where some are voluminous enough to accommodate a swimming pool or even a truck - the Andamooka dugouts are not excavated caves in the ground and in general are much smaller. The reason for this according to local tradition, is because the soil at Andamooka has a much higher clay content than Coober Pedy soil, making it unsafe for large volumes to be excavated.



coober pedy dugout



andamooka semi-dugout

Instead, the Andamooka dwellings are conventionally built of stone, timber or a combination of the two and a portion set into, or against excavated ground. The roof of the Andamooka semi-dugout is (in all cases observed so far) of the conventional built-up type, either skillion or gable.

Construction techniques and materials for the semi-dugouts varied widely, and often a combination of techniques and materials were applied to one building.

Where stone was used for walling, it was either bedded onto mud based mortar or laid dry. Where upright native pine saplings were used, the builders applied a variation on the traditional wattle and daub walling technique, the end result being a smooth, mud rendered wall surface.

The traditional Andamooka roof consisted of a series of closely spaced saplings, pitched between a central ridge - itself being supported by intermediate posts - and outer wall.

Hessian, tin or some other water resistant material was then laid atop the saplings upon which a layer of compacted soil was placed.

Finally, the internal and external walls and ceilings were sometimes whitewashed, the floor remained compacted earth or was flagged, and doors and windows, with the appropriate fittings were either made on site or imported from elsewhere. Early opal miners led a mobile and transient life. They followed the vagaries of rumour and inclination, fossicked and pegged claims and built temporary living quarters as they went. Given the itinerant nature of their lives, the dugouts suited the Andamooka miners very well. Dugouts were probably built with a short life in mind, and it is interesting to note that once built they found constant use with a succession of temporary occupants living in them (see the history of Percy Wards Dugout).

Alluvial miners build very little and what is built is usually primitive and hastily constructed. The Andamooka dugouts are simple, functional and non-elaborate, and show use of materials found to hand. In form and structure they are reminiscent of the earlier, more flimsy tent structures. At Andamooka, labour and prefabricated building supplies were expensive and transport costs precluded the purchase of most manufactured materials from Adelaide or Port Augusta, and thus the builders resorted to their surroundings for the things needed as well as their ingenuity in the manufacture of their homes.

The Andamooka Progress and Opal Miners' Association has recently established a Historic Reserve on the northern side of the main street on allotments 186, 188 and 189 in the central area of town. The small reserve contains the following 5 historic sites.

- 1. Mr. Albertoni's House
- 2. Percy Ward's Dugout
- 3. Tom Brady's Hut
- 4. Mrs. Perry's Kitchen
- 5. Absaloms Dugout

These dwellings provide an excellent vantage point from which the social history of Andamooka can be viewed. Mrs. May Parry who lived at Andamooka for about 30 years was able to provide much information about the early life of the settlement and this was invaluable in the preparation of the Heritage Survey.





Site No. 1 Albertoni's House

Lot 189

This house was one of the first to be built on the Andamooka Opal field. It was begun in 1931, at the time of the first discoveries of opal at Andamooka and has seen little alteration or structural change since the time of its construction.

The house was built by Mr. Frank Albertoni on Section 189 opposite the main area of town and is set on the banks of the Opal Creek. Frank Albertoni (1883-1977) came to Andamooka with his brother Andrew from Blinman in 1931. Together they worked as opal gougers in the German Gully area. Andrew Albertoni died in 1942 and Frank spent the rest of his life living and working at Andamooka. Accordinging to those who knew him, Frank Albertoni was a small energetic man who had a knack for improvising and making do and his house bears witness to this. The house was built on 3 levels and included a living room at the lower level, workshop in the central room and a sleepout on the upper level. The living room and workshop were built in 1931 and the sleepout was built in 1943.

The walls are a combination of building techniques, including wattle and daub and dry laid stone construction. Native pine roof members and rafters support a hessian bag and canvas ceiling. The house has been white-washed throughout and the floors have - in part - been paved with flagstones. An opal safe has been set into the south wall of the living room and on the opposite wall there is a large stone fireplace, the external flue having been manufactured from kerosene tins. The three rooms are not interconnected, and access is gained through external doors, the lower one of which is 'protected' by a pine and brush verandah. Interconnecting openings through the gable walls provide adequate ventilation.





Site No. 2

Percy Ward's Dugout

Lot 188

This dugout was built by George Molycha for Bob Cutzow in 1941. Both men were miners and the dwelling shows evidence of its rough make-do origins. Over the years it has seen a succession of temporary owners and occupants and it has remained in a similar condition to that of when it was first built.

This dugout is a typical semi-dugout with a native pine, earth covered roof structure and a combination of stone, wattle and daub and lath and plaster wall finishes.

The excavated portion of the room has a limestone surround and the entrance area has been roughly covered with branches and lengths of bush timber. It was given added support with discarded ladders and bed frames.

The present owner Mr. Percy Ward is a part-time prospector from Port Augusta who spends the winter months working at Andamooka.

Site No. 3.

Tom Brady's Dugout

Lot 186

This dugout was built by Mr. Tom Brady, an opal buyer from Sydney. During the late 1930's, Tom Brady occasionally visited Andamooka to buy specimens of precious opal. He would only stay for two or three days and in general conducted his business in a casual and very informal manner. When news of his arrival spread around the field, miners with precious stone to sell would make their way to where he was camped and would proceed to negotiate a suitable price for their stone. In 1940, Brady realized there was a steady supply of opal to be had at Andamooka, and built this hut to accommodate himself on his visits. He carried out his business from these premises for about six years.

The hut was built in the early 1940's on Section 188. Basically, it is a skillion roofed hut which utilizes the ridge behind it as a back wall. The building does not enter into the earth and has three free standing walls. The hut is a small rectangular shaped room with a tin roof sloping toward the front. It has one side door and two shuttered windows made from petrol cases. The central support and rafters are of native pine, and the walls are made of sandstone and mud. Both interior and exterior walls were whitewashed.

In 1946, Mr. Brady gave the hut to an opal miner, Mr. Jim Perry, who with his wife May, had been living in a tent on the lower eastern side of the Opal Creek since 1935. Mr. Perry died in 1951, and from 1951 until 1965 Mrs. Perry used this building as her sleepout. This building should be viewed in conjunction with the house next door (House No. 4) as they make up a unit and are built upon the same allotment.

Site No. 4.

Mrs Perry's Kitchen

Lot 186

The first dwelling on this site was built by Ernie Sherman, an opal buyer in 1934. A rough stone shelter, it fell into disrepair, and was demolished in 1951. In its place, Mr. Frank Albertoni and Mrs. May Perry built a dugout which she used as her kitchen. Perhaps the most stylish of all the dugouts built in the Historic Reserve it is also the best documented as Mrs. Perry is still alive and was able to provide information about its construction and use.

The kitchen is set into the ridge behind it and is a typical semi-dugout. It has a wide pitched exposed frame roof and a return verandah. Native pine provided the structural support to the building, and the walls were made of sandstone covered with a mud plaster. Mr. Albertoni did the excavation, stone masonry and carpentry, while Mrs. Perry pugged and whitewashed the walls, both internally and externally.

The roof was made of timber, cardboard, and bags covered with earth. The sheets of iron covering the verandah were derived from pipe packaging discarded during the laying of the Woomera to Lake Arcoona pipeline. Apart from this, the building shows many other instances of recycling. During the time of Mrs. Perry's residence, she terraced the rocky incline behind the house with steps and planted a variety of trees and shrubs. She was a keen gardener and took pride in the beds of flowers which grew along the front fence and to the side of the verandah.

At this point, it is useful to provide some information about the life of Mrs. Perry for she was not only closely involved with many of the people who lived in the dugouts in the Historic Reserve but her life illustrates something about the way of life at Andamooka during the early days.

Mrs. Perry (nee May Smith) was born in Worcester, England and migrated to Australia in 1920. She arrived in Sydney, and then travelled to South Australia where she variously worked as a cook and station hand at the Oaks, Hallet and Mt. Bryan Stations in the mid-north of the State. She found that the outback life suited her as she enjoyed horse riding and took a keen interest in the environment and her surroundings.

She met her husband James Perry while working at the "Collinsville" Sheep Stud near Burra and they continued to find employment as agricultural workers. However, with the depression of 1929 and large scale unemployment in rural areas, the Perry's moved to Mannum where they established a fishing reach on the River Murray, and Jim found work on the locks, and in the local stone quarries.

While they were living and working at Mannum, the Perry's met Jack Hillman an opal miner from Coober Pedy, and he proposed that they join together and drive up to Coober Pedy and try their luck on the opal fields. They purchased a car in Adelaide, converted it into a buckboard and set off from Cowandilla in 1931. While on their way to Coober Pedy they heard rumours about opal being discovered at Andamooka, and decided to investigate this for themselves. When they arrived at Andamooka, they found only 10 miners working claims, and Mrs. Perry recalls Bill Hallion, Bert Wilson, Miss Berrington and Andy Absalom as being the first people she got to know at Andamooka. The Perry's worked together digging shafts and picking and gouging drives, and though they found some saleable opal, Mrs. Perry describes their labours as being "moderately successful".

Their time at Andamooka was interrupted by visits and holidays to Adelaide, and by a stint of work at the Salisbury Munitions factory during the war, and in 1947-48 Mrs. Perry returned to England for a visit. For most of* their early life at Andamooka the Perry's lived in a tent on the lower eastern side of Opal Creek, but in 1946 a dugout became vacant in the central part of town (Tom Brady's Hut) and the Perry's moved into it. In 1951, Jim Perry died and Mrs. Perry uncertain what to do next, decided to stay on at Andamooka.

She was a competant opal gouger, being strong enough to sink shafts by herself and had worked in the Lunatic Hill, Guns Gully and Boundary Rider areas. In addition, she gave correspondence lessons to several children as there was no school at Andamooka. It was a difficult and solitary life which was made easier by the help and kindness of two life long friends, Jim Watson and Harry Vickers. In 1965, Mrs. Perry left Andamooka with Jim Watson and Harry Vickers and they moved to Purnong on the River Murray where they bought a house. Jim Watson died in 1979, and Harry Vickers died recently. (Mrs. Perry now lives at Firle in Adelaide).

Site No. 5

Absalom's House

Lot 186

Mr. Andy Absalom, father of the outback artist Jack Absalom, was one of the pioneers of the Andamooka Opal field and proprietor of the first general store on the field. He built his house in 1942.

His house, built on Section 1864, is a typical semi-dugout with an excavated rear wall set into a stony ridge with gabled roof. The structural components of the roof consist of native pine rafters (Callitris glauca) covered with sheets of iron and earth material derived from the excavation. In addition, layers of cane grass (Eragrostis australasica) have been placed onto the roof, giving it a thatched appearance. This provides adequate protection for the room below, as does the canvas and hessian ceiling attached to the underside of the roof-framing members. These hessian and canvas layers provide protection not only from the rain but also from the fine dust which is a constant menace in Andamooka.

At the front of the house there are two high stone walls, a door and 3 packing case frames set into the wall to function as windows.

The building has been set up as a museum and features some of the original fixtures, including a bed, stool, chair and benches, stove and fireplace. The interior walls of the building have been white washed.

Mr. Absalom lived in his house for eight years, and when Mr. and Mrs. Perry took up residence at House No. 3, Absalom's dugout was vacant and Mrs. Perry used it as her kitchen. After Mr. Albertoni levelled Ernie Sherman's camp and built the kitchen for her (House No. 4) she gave him Absalom's dugout in gratitude for his assistance.

Albertoni sold the dugout to Harry Vickers in 1960, and after his depature from the field, the dugout found a succession of temporary occupants before it fell into disrepair.

FORMER RESIDENTS OF THE DUGOUTS IN THE ANDAMOOKA PROGRESS AND OPAL MINERS ASSOCIATION (APOMA) HISTORICAL RESERVE

This list gives the names of former residents of the Dugouts in the APOMA Historical Reserve, their occupation, period of residency and residential status. Residential status is shown as (0) Owner; (B) Builder; (L) Leasee.

SITE 1	SITE 2	SITE 3	SITE 4	SITE 5
 Frank Albertoni, Opal Miner. 1933-77). (O), (B). Andrew Albertoni, Opal Miner, (1933-77), (O), (B) 	 George Molycha, Opal Miner (1941), (B) Bob Lutzow, Opal Miner (1943-45), (O) Bert Paxton, Opal Miner 1947-48 (L) Unidentified, School Teacher (1955-57) (L) Jim Fogerty, Opal Miner (), (L) Paddy Tierney, Opal Miner (), (L) 4 Unidentified Baltic Miners (), (L) Research team from Australian Museum, Sydney (1960). Unidentified, School Teacher (), (L) Jim Watson, Opal Miner (1961-65), (O) Percy Ward, Opal Miner (1965-84), (O) 	 Tom Brady, Opal Buyer, (1935-46), (0), (B) James Perry, Opal Miner, (1946-51), (0) May Perry, Opal Miner (1952-65), (0) 	 Ernie Shermann, Opal Buyer, (1933-1952) (O), (B) May Perry, Opal Miner, (1952-65), (O), (B) Original house demolished in 1952, and later re- built by May Perry and Frank Albertoni 	 Andy Absalom, Store Owner and opal miner (1942-50), (O), (B) May Perry, Opal Miner (1946-51), (L). Frank Albertoni, Opal Miner, (1952-60), (O). Harry Vickers, Opal Miner, (1960-65), (O).

Site No. 6

Dick Clark's Residence.

Lot 174

Mr. Dick Clark came to Andamooka in 1945, and worked as an opal miner and proprietor of the "Purple Pixie" picture theatre. He built a cluster of buildings which make up an interesting residential unit and these include a living room, 2 sleepouts and a workroom.

The first building, the living room was built in 1946 and took a month to build. The sleepouts and workrooms were added in the mid-1950's. The living room and one sleepout were constructed in the typical semi-dugout style, while the workroom and the other sleepout are free standing.

In all cases, native pine saplings, stone and earth were the predominant building materials. For the living room, the ridge and stone walls are loadbearing whereas for the other buildings, a trabeated structural system was used. As if erecting the framework for a tent (perhaps the genesis of this popular construction system) a native pine framework was erected, where ridge and wall plates were supported by posts. Instead of using canvas to protect the internal spaces as in a tent, a more permanent skin such as coursed stonework with appropriate door and window openings was used. The hip or skillion roofs consist of a series of closely spaced saplings, spanning with the pitch.

For the first structure, Mr. Clark evacuated a portion of a hill (Section 174) and proceeded to build the living room in this excavation. He used native pine supports and sandstone as walling materials and rendered a kopi and sand mortar over this to give the walls a smooth finish. (Kopi is a white or pale yellow sandy claystone found in the upper levels of opal diggings at Andamooka).

Lengths of native pine were used in the construction of the roof and the excavated earth placed on top of this. Pieces of broken glass were then scattered over the roof to keep children and dogs from clambering over it.

A water-proof ceiling was made of sewn potato bags soaked in mutton fat and attached to the underside of the roof. The floor was of rammed earth construction and hardened with mutton fat and gypsum ashes.

The building has since seen renovation with the addition of concrete floors and walls, but the external structure remains the same. As can be seen from the photos, this is a well established home with a flourishing garden. Mr. Clark, his wife and 2 sons have lived here for the past 40 years.

SOURCES

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7.	Osterstock, A.	Andamooka Opal, (Hampstead Gardens, S.A., 1976)
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PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



The first miners at Andamooka lived in rough shelters and tents on the banks of Opal Creek, now Andamooka's main street. This photo shows Jim and May Perry's campsite. C.1935. (Private Collection).



Bill Hallion (left) one of the first opal gougers on the field, pictured outside his house. C.1940 (Private Collection).

An early photograph of Andamooka showing, from left, Percy Ward's Dugout (Site 2), Tom Brady's (Site 3) and Ernie Sherman's (demolished 1930's), now occupied by Mrs. Parry's kitchen. C.1940, (Private collection).

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Shoppers at Absalom's Store, the first general store on the Andamooka Opal field. C.1945 (Andamooks Special Area School Collection).



Long time Andamooka residents. Left to right, James Watson, George Molycha, May Perry, Ivy and Len Agnn, Harry Vickers and Jack Wicky, 1964. (Private Collection).



Mr. Albertoni drawing water from well, 1978.

Andamooka School Collection.





Mr. Albertoni's house Andamooka - <u>Site No. 1</u> Film 1047, No. 2-3

Film 1048, No. 5-6

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Site No. 2 B1, 188.



Site Numbers 3 & 4, B1, 186.





Mrs. May Perry sitting in her kitchen, 1955. (Private Collection).

Mrs. Perry's Kitchen October, 1984. Film 1048, No. 5.



May Perry working her claim, Andamooka, 1939. (Private Collection).





Reg Absalom's Dugout - <u>Site No. 5</u>. July, 1983. B1, 186

Oct. 1984. Film 1048, No. 1



Film 1051 No. 2

Dick Clark in front of his semi-dugout



Film No. 1044 No. 12 Dick Clark's Residence



Film No. 1051 No. 1 Inside Dick Clark's Residence