

Transcription by Gillian Dooley (Special Collections Librarian, Flinders University) of manuscripts in the Borrow Collection, (File reference Finnis, Boyle Travers, 20-21)

To the Editor of the S. Australian Register,¹

Dear Sir,

I venture to place before you an account of events which came under my notice as one of the original settlers in South Australia.

My family have partly induced me to offer these pages to you for insertion in your open column but others have largely influenced me in taking this step by repeated solicitations. It is not often that a man of my advanced age trusts to his memory to secure the record of the principal period of his life but I have kept no journal and I feel very sure that as far as actions are concerned my recollections of past events are correct, whilst spoken words may not be so true in their description. My chief difficulty has been to avoid recording anything to the prejudice of any one, even when I thought I had reasons for so doing. Thus I have omitted many events in which the actors disagreed with me and have only given names where I could urge nothing in serious disparagement of the individuals. My memory, in the order of Nature, must soon cease to be of use to me, or to others, and the founders of a new Colony already a Province of the Empire, and soon to be a federation of autonomous States, may well look back with pride and self satisfaction to the risks and trials they encountered, and may well hope that certain passages in their careers may amuse, if not instruct, their descendants.

Accordingly I, as one of the founders of South Australia who gave up a good position in the Military Service of H.M. King William IV, with an assured income, prompted by the very novelty of the scheme and its promising future, am content to incur the charge of egotism by writing an account of my acts and deeds, although now embracing more than fifty years of the past. The narrative I send you is continuous, and probably too long for a single insertion, but I suggest that it should be published in parts all of which are now rendered complete so that no delay need occur in continuing the recital. Should you deem the publication befitting your columns I shall feel obliged by the insertion and remain yours B.T. Finnis, once Premier of the first South Australian Ministry.

Recollections of long past occurrences

¹ Undated. '1882' is written in pencil in KT Borrow's hand. However, the narrative itself several times states that it is written in 1892. BT Finnis lived from 1807 to 1893.

Some Early Recollections by the Hon B.T. Finniss

On the 11th of September 1836, the Barque Cygnet, of 239 tons register, having on board the Surveying Staff of the Colonisation Commissions for South Australia, arrived in Nepean Bay, Kangaroo Island. The total number of passengers amounted to 84 souls. This vessel left Gravesend on Thursday March 24th 1836, and her passengers engaged in England to survey the lands sold by the Colonisation Commissioners under land orders, as authorised by an Act of Parliament 4th and 5th William 4th Cap. 95, were placed under the orders of Mr George Strickland Kingston the Deputy Surveyor General.

This expedition was the nucleus of a New Colony called South Australia proclaimed a British Province on the 28th Dec^r following by Captain John Hindmarsh R.N., appointed Governor of the New Province before the expedition left England.

We, for the writer of these lines was amongst the passengers as Assistant Surveyor, celebrated our safe arrival, after a long unpleasant voyage of nearly six months duration, by firing a 'feu de joie' in Military fashion for which purpose the firelocks, purchased at the Tower of London, were brought on deck. These muskets were of a light description, constructed for the troops engaged in the American War of Independence; & some of them were supplied for the use of the Cadets of the R.M. College at Sandhurst. They were no improvement on the 'brown bess', as the flint musket in use in the British Army was called, except in the condition of lightness; and they were, on this account, admirably suited for the Cadets whose average age was about thirteen years. I had commenced my Military instruction, including surveying in all its branches, at this Institution; and, having won a commission in the Army in the year 1825, I served for ten years on garrison duty, and finally sold out of the army as a seven years Lieutenant on the 24th Oct. 1835, for the purpose of becoming a settler in the New Colony of South Australia, attracted by the description given in the London Press of the proceedings of a society called 'The South Australian Association' which held its meeting in the Adelphi Terrace, London. I threw all my available capital into this undertaking and entered enthusiastically into the proceedings of the Association, purchasing 270 acres of land which included two acres in the City of Adelaide, then not named.

I have gone thus far into my own career in connexion with South Australia in order to explain how it was that I became an Assistant Surveyor to Colonel Light, appointed Surveyor General by the Colonisation Commissioners; and how the portion of the Surveying Expedition, under Mr Kingston, came to celebrate their arrival at Kangaroo Island in so military a fashion. The Commissioners had, before leaving England, asked me to teach the men of the party the use of arms in order that they might be able to defend themselves in case of conflict with the Aboriginal natives who were known to be numerous and warlike in the neighbourhood of the River Murray. The whole of the passengers joyfully joined in the instruction which preceded the 'feu de joie', and then commenced the work of settlement. I was landed with twelve men to form the first encampment at Cygnet River flowing into Nepean Bay. The pitching of the tents was not so easy as we had expected from our first view of the Camping ground – the tent pegs would not hold in the sandy soil on which we had to place them and we had accordingly to cut long picquets to replace them. They were the small bell tents of the British

Army, and formed a very insufficient shelter at that season – a drizzling rain, or dewy mist, soon saturated them with moisture, whilst heavy frosts at night froze the drops of moisture inside the walls of the tents & rendered them very cold and comfortless – There were married ladies & women and children attached to the expedition, and their health and comfort had to be attended to. Hence I erected a few huts for them, thatched with the foliage of the ti tree scrub, which grew abundantly all around us. I had learnt the art of thatching with this material at the Mauritius, where, in the Quarter Master General's department, I had control of upwards of 100 Indian convicts, who constructed roads and bridges under my directions – A large hut was soon built in this manner and Mr Kingston with the Storekeeper (Mr Thomas Gilbert) commenced unloading the 'Cygnet' to some extent – the Surveyor General in command of the 'Rapid' a brig of 162 tons arrived in Antechamber Bay, Kangaroo Island, on the 19th; or, as some have reported, on the 21st of August; and finding that the 'Cygnet', which had left England before the 'Rapid' had sailed, had not then arrived, Colonel Light, after making a chart of Nepean Bay sailed to examine the Gulfs for a suitable place for settlement. After proper enquiry of one of the Sealers, whom he found on Kangaroo Island and took with him, so as to avail himself of all the local knowledge he could obtain, he formed a camp at Rapid Bay, and had intercourse with a tribe of Natives who were soon made very friendly by judicious treatment and presents, amongst which were soldiers red coats and trousers, brought from England. Colonel Light then sent Lieutenant Field R.N. with the 'Rapid' to move some of the party to Rapid Bay whilst he ordered the 'Cygnet' to move the whole of her stores and the main body of the party, under charge of Mr Kingston, to Holdfast Bay, ordering me with a party of about fifteen souls, to join him at Rapid Bay. After landing my party there, the Colonel departed in the 'Rapid'. – Colonel Light's own printed journal will give a detailed account of his proceedings. It remains for me to explain how we passed our time at Nepean Bay during the few weeks we remained there.

The expedition under the Command of Mr G.S. Kingston, deputy Surveyor General, remained some weeks at Nepean Bay but nothing was done to forward the surveys as their locâle was not then determined. However not to be altogether idle I made a traverse of Cygnet River for some miles inland, and in one of my walks came across a small cultivated patch of ground occupied by a sealer whose name, I think, was John Day. He was very civil and gave me all the information he could respecting the nature of the country inland and the habits of his companions located there. It seems there were six men on the Island who had arrived there previously in a boat on a sealing venture. The names of some were Wally, Thompson and John Day. I cannot recollect the names of the others. Day told me that they sometimes made a voyage to the main land and had in this way provided themselves with women – whether by purchase or violence he did not say. He described the Island as almost destitute of fresh water, very flat and covered with a dense scrubby growth of vegetation; a few large gum trees were to be found on the course of the Cygnet River, and elsewhere – there were no kangaroos but a profusion of Wallaby on which the sealers depended for their supply of fresh meat. The Wallaby were trapped by the women who were very clever and successful in their capture. The sealers supplied Mr Kingston's camp with fresh meat in this manner and when baked and piqued with small bits of ship's pork they formed a very enticing dish, which the sealers showed us how to cook. They also taught us to make damper which was, in short, unleavened bread baked in the ashes, and was very sweet, especially when leavened by causing the paste to rise by adding a small portion of a previous baking to the dough. We found Point Nepean occupied by some of the

S.A. Company's Officers and servants who called this first settlement 'Kingscote'. Mr Beale, & Mr Samuel Stephens, were amongst the dwellers in Kingscote. Day related to me that when Mr Samuel Stephens first landed and took a short walk to look at his domain he met one of the sealers coming towards him dressed in kangaroo skin vestments, with cap and moccasins of the same material. Mr Stephens hailed the strange figure with the exclamation – 'Who are you?' The reply of the sealer was promptly 'a man', for he seems to have thought of the possibility of being taken for a wild animal and perhaps devoted to destruction² then and there. I frequently took walks inland intending ultimately to cross the Island and gain the Southern shore. Sometimes Mr John Cannon, a young surveyor, who was very fond of shooting game, accompanied me and we shot some Cape Barren geese, and many ducks up the River, which added agreeably to our supplies of food; but we found it necessary to keep on opposite sides of the river as the ducks, when shot, invariably got out of reach by floating to the side opposite the sportsman. On one occasion I found my way to Prospect Hill, so called in Flinders chart. To do this I had to pass the settlement of Kingscote, then to wade an inlet of the sea up to my waist in water, and, afterwards, to force my way through a thick scrub. When within a mile of Prospect Hill, I found the ground covered with dead trees, about the size of Mallee which had fallen under the influence of the fires of the sealers or from the effects of hurricanes. I literally walked to Prospect Hill treading on dead timber and not touching the ground with my feet. The journey took me longer than I expected and it was night before I reached my tent. One thing struck my attention. In walking up the Hill I heard a most extraordinary sound like that produced by a woodsman's axe in felling a large tree. I fully expected at first to meet some human being employed in this way, but, on careful examination, I found the sound proceeded from a large bull frog which inhabited the River Cygnet. After the tents were pitched, and three or four huts erected for the married officers, there was nothing to do in Camp but seek amusement. Before I had the luxury of a hut my wife and I occupied a round bell tent twelve feet across. Mr Cannon, who was, as I have said, fond of his gun, on one occasion amused himself rather too close to my tent and a charge of small shot broke through the tent much to our consternation. Captain Lipson, Commander R.N. was accommodated with the first hut built. He was one of Nelson's veterans who had fought under the great admiral in one of the great naval engagements which signalled those days, when the French had possession of Egypt. Captain Lipson had his wife, two sons, and four daughters with him. The sons died, I believe, in Tasmania; the daughters all married in South Australia. The eldest daughter to Mr George Kingston; the second to a squatter, but she died early; the third daughter married Mr Inman, chief of the first Police of S.A., and son of Professor Inman of the Naval College. They both went home to England. Later on, the fourth daughter was married to Mr James Hawker. Then, besides these settlers, Dr and Mrs Wright formed an addition to our social circle, which was added to by Mr Thomas Gilbert, the Colonial Storekeeper. Mr Kingston lived to earn the honor of being knighted and to serve his country as speaker of the House of Assembly, during a few years of his career. Sir John Morphett also formed one of the Kangaroo Island party; and he also was president of the Legislative Council and subsequently took a very prominent part in our Colonial politics. I cannot attempt to enunciate all the events that occurred in the first settlement, and I have left out many names of individuals who, in after times, made a name for themselves, and braved the trials, dangers, and inconveniences attending the formation of a new Colony. The small party at

² This phrase appears in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Part IV, Chapter X.

Kangaroo Island without police, or any defensive force, had no panic of the aborigines and avoided unseemly disputes amongst themselves. This was because they were well fed and were buoyed up with high hopes in the future, and had nothing to do but amuse themselves.

In the early part of this paper I mentioned that after a few weeks of this happy and pleasing life, the settlement of Kangaroo Island, as far as concerned the government, was broken up. I was detached to Rapid Bay having with me my wife. Feeling that every step possible had been taken for our health and comfort, Colonel Light left us in his surveying vessel, the 'Rapid'. Health being assured by the presence of Dr Woodforde in whom we all had the confidence which his subsequent career justified. A few sheep and some potatoes, purchased from a cutter trading from Tasmania, and ample stores, were placed at our disposal by Colonel Light. When he had planted his party safely at Rapid Bay, he left us to settle the important question the site of the Capital himself. Colonel Light sailed from Holdfast Bay, so called from the tenacious character of the anchorage in the roadstead when the Rapid encountered a heavy gale, & he then examined the Gulf St Vincent sending Mr Pullen, afterwards Admiral Pullen, to survey Port Adelaide – then known as Jones's harbor – and leaving Mr Kingston to explore the country inland. The Rapid sailed up the Gulf until in view of the coast line to the Northward, and the shoaling of the water, convinced the Surveyor General that there was no hope of finding a harbour in that direction. He then proceeded to Port Lincoln which he found unsuitable for a first settlement for many reasons. It did not enable him to fulfil the instructions which he received from the Commissioners which were to direct special attention to the eastern shores of Gulf St Vincent, in order, if possible, and the intervening country suitable, to secure connexion with the River Murray, the great attraction for settlement. Colonel Light found the country at the back of Port Lincoln unfit for agriculture, and fresh water was found only on the beach below high water mark. I do not attempt to go into the question of the eligibility of Port Lincoln as a site for the Capital, so earnestly desired by the Governor. Suffice it to say Colonel Light's instructions, a copy of which had been furnished to me in England, laid special stress on the value of a site on the east side of the Gulf St Vincent and the necessity of the Capital being located in the midst of an abundant supply of agricultural land. Port Lincoln no doubt is, as Colonel Light found it, as extensive and secure a harbour as that of Rio de Janeiro. Indeed Mr Stevenson, in the account which he subsequently gave of its advantages, felt no difficulty in giving the preference to Port Lincoln. However Colonel Light, for reasons unconnected with the superior shipping accommodation at Port Lincoln, returned to Holdfast Bay, impressed with the view that he had found a suitable site for the Capital of a New Colony in conjunction with a less imposing harbor, but yet one sufficient for the purposes of commerce and capable of future improvement. Mr Kingston had made good use of his time on shore during the nautical examination of Colonel Light, and amongst the discoveries had crossed an insignificant stream of good fresh water, now called the River Torrens, after the name of Col. Torrens. R.M. the chairman of the Colonisation Commissioners. No land surveys were however attempted since it was important that the site of the capital should be first settled, in order that agricultural lands might be surveyed in as close proximity to the City as practicable. This long digression has taken me away from Rapid Bay and the little detachment under my orders. For the reasons just stated it was not considered judicious to lay out sections at Rapid Bay, and I was, accordingly, ordered to examine the country inland in the direction of Encounter Bay, and Yankallyilla (*sic*) to the north of my encampment. Not being partial to a life of idleness I took walks

into the country with generally two men, and one or two black fellows, who were useful as guides in finding water and in keeping us 'en rapport' with strange natives. My two sable friends (one of whom always attended me) were called, respectively, Jim and Peter. Jim was an athletic young man who had recently abducted a pretty young girl from the Encounter Bay tribe for which act of violence he lost his life soon after in a fight with another tribe. His lubra always accompanied him, and their affection for each other was quite romantic. Peter had also a lubra, rather an old woman, with a half caste child – on one occasion at Yankallyilla I encamped for the night near Peters wurley, for it was his district, and my black friend awoke me in the night by walking up & down carrying the infant (who was screaming as only babies can scream). He rocked her in his arms and tried to soothe her by singing – 'hush' – 'hush' – with all the tenderness of a practised mother, while his better half was sleeping comfortably in their wurley, tired out probably by the restlessness of the child. I was much amused and gratified by this display of human feeling in a blackfellow. During my stay at Rapid Bay, which lasted until about the 10th January 1837, I employed myself in making a topographical survey of Rapid Bay and the country to the north as far as Yankallyilla, and the valley of the Inman. It should be here stated that we had no horses, or donkeys, and that therefore all our excursions were on foot during the hottest period of the year. I saw a fine kangaroo and many wallaby but did not succeed in shooting any. My black friend Jim was a splendid sportsman and kept himself in food while he was with us. He would stop suddenly when passing a gum tree and examine the bush very minutely to find traces of an opussum (*sic*) – as soon as he discovered any he proceeded to climb the tree chopping footsteps in the bark sufficiently deep to receive his big toe. He made these steps the distance measured by his hip, and then gradually reached the nest of an opussum. Poking his waddy into the hole in which the opussum generally concealed itself, he carefully examined and smelt the front of the waddy by which I presume he ascertained that a live opussum was there, and, perhaps, killed by the poke of the waddy. He then descended with his victim and in this way supplied himself and 'Allauri' which was the euphonious name of his young bride whom he had stolen from her tribe, evidently with her own connivance, whilst in the camp, and, perhaps, under our protection from hostile reprisals. I found the tribe exceedingly kind and friendly. They assisted me in building a hut for my wife by cutting the reeds and long grass, and when my first child (Fanny Lipson Finnis) was born, just after midnight of the 31 Dec. 1836, they used to take great care of her, nursing the baby with all the care of a practised nurse. One young boy who had acquired the name of Nathaniel was blind of one eye, but he was a useful and constant attendant upon the baby – for the married women of the camp rather shunned attendance upon any one under any circumstances. Some of them, or their descendants, may be yet living and I should, therefore, be sorry to make any statements regarding them, or mention names.

The friendliness of the blacks was evinced in various ways. They took post on the cliffs when my men were bathing and warned them of the approach of sharks in time, thus allowing the men to bahe with the confidence of safety.

When Colonel Light was in Port Lincoln he sent Mr Pullen in his hatch boat with two sailors to meet me at Rapid Bay. The passage was a very boisterous and dangerous one, and when Pullen arrived and anchored, about a quarter of a mile from the shore, he made signs to me, as I had been watching his approach. Not having a dingy the boat party determined to land at all hazards and Pullen leaped into the water for a swim followed by his crew of two men. One of these could not

swim but, encouraged by the presence of some twenty natives whom I had summoned to my assistance, he nevertheless plunged into the sea. They were cold and wet poor fellows and any fate was preferable to perishing of wet and cold. The blacks assembled at my summons with incredible rapidity, and, on my instructing them as to what I wanted, they plunged in like seals diving under the rollers which were coming in high, and thick, and reached Pullen in a few moments. Pullen had put up his hand in distress when he saw me with the blacks, and he was immediately succoured. The other two men were in a similar way promptly assisted – a black fellow swimming on each side of the men, helping them with one hand. These blacks assisted my party in carrying the tents and stores to the beach ready for shipment. I closely questioned this tribe and their religious views but could not make up my mind as to their opinions. They spoke of some living thing coming at night and killing them, giving it a name, which I have forgotten. They described it as though it were a bird making signs of his ascending, as though it had wings, and could fly; but I never clearly made out what their belief was; but it seemed to be made up of fear.

The Rapid Bay Natives, as well as other tribes, disposed of their dead by exposing the bodies to the air on a sort of platform of branches the face looking upwards. The Shea Oak tree seemed to be selected for these burials, if they may be so termed. I heard that the body soon after death was dried over a fire, but never saw the process myself.

Cooking

The natives had a very excellent way of cooking fish and birds. A large fire was made of dead branches until a large heap of embers was produced. Over those hot embers the fur and feathers were singed off, generally by the lubra (women), and the flesh was then buried in the embers and carefully watched. A large schnapper I saw cooked in this way was laid on the bare glowing embers and then covered with a quantity of green grass over which embers were heaped; this prevented the burning of the fish which, when considered properly baked, was uncovered and the intestines taken out. This style of cooking kept the juice in the meat and with quail, as I myself afterwards tried, was preferable to frying, or stewing, after removal of the intestines – a similar method obtains in England with respect to the woodcock the trail of which is, however, eaten as a delicacy.

Fauna

The animals I saw, consisted chiefly of kangaroos, emus, wallabies, kangaroo rats, opossums, owls, parrots in great variety, cockatoos, black and white native companions (a large bustard) eagles, hawks, and small birds too numerous to mention. Deaf (*sic*) adders, and other venomous snakes – the flesh flies and common house fly were exceedingly numerous and troublesome. I found great difficulty in eating my dinner (consisting of ship's pork and biscuit) to keep off the flesh flies which were rabid; and, unless I kept one hand continually at work to brush them away, would drop their living larvae upon the food before it could reach my mouth. I found these flies bred in the long grass. On one occasion I found an Emu's egg exposed at the end of a hillock without any appearance of a nest. This bird evidently left its eggs to be hatched by the heat of the sun alone; and it was hot enough for the purpose.

I was several weeks stationed in Rapid Bay. But during the first week of January the 'Cygnet' arrived to remove my party to Glenelg. Mr Jickling, then a Magistrate, was sent in the 'Cygnet' to expedite, I suppose, the removal, which we commenced at once. Our friends the blacks assisted us in moving a large array of goods to the beach and in the evening I amused Mr Jickling by getting up a corroboree for which the blacks collected as many of their number as were obtainable. One cause of delay seemed to be looming. One of my party named Joe Finch contrived to wander away from the camp and lost himself. In trying to find his way back he followed the coast line to the South and East which would have taken him, ultimately, to Encounter Bay. Fortunately the blacks followed his tracks and brought him back safely. [He had subsisted on wattle gum and water which were plentiful at this season.]³ I met this tribe afterwards on the banks of the Torrens where, with the Encounter Bay tribe, they went to fight the Northern blacks who had assembled from a long distance to attack them. An account of the fight under the generalship of my friend Peter will be given amongst the events afterwards described in Adelaide. The whole party now being embarked we sailed for Adelaide and arrived at Holdfast Bay about the 10th Jan 1837. I kept no record of dates hence this may not be the exact date of arrival. My wife within ten days after her confinement was constrained to accompany us and the removal caused her much subsequent illness and discomfort as she caught a cold which settled in the breast and rendered a surgical operation necessary soon after her arrival at Glenelg. – Arrived at Glenelg we saw the beach covered with a long line of stores landed just above high water mark; and this proof that goods cannot be properly preserved without houses and wharves was rendered the more evident when the stores of my party added to the apparent confusion. Some tents were pitched where the town of Glenelg now stands revealed; amongst others, I saw the Colonial Treasurer Mr Osmond Gilles sitting like a Pasha under a large tent surrounded by all the luxuries which are usually displayed in a restaurant. He was without shoes and stockings, adopting the costume of the Dutch settlers in Java, where both ladies and gentlemen consider shoes and stockings in the house a useless addition to the heat. Mr Gilles resided in Holland previous to his connexion with this Province, and brought some capital with him. This he turned to account in S.A. and on this occasion he did a lucrative business disposing of cigars, and other goods, obtainable in a restaurant. It was part of the system followed by the Colonization Commissioners to reward those gentlemen who bought land at the Adelphi in London, to start this New Colony, to reward speculators with corresponding civil appointments and salaries. It must be understood, that all civil appointments, and the management and sale of the crown lands, were vested, by Act of Parliament, in the Commission; although all powers of legislation and executive government, necessary to law and order, required the intervention of the Royal Authority. There was some complexity in the arrangement, however, which led to disputed powers between Governor Hindmarsh and Mr James Hurtle Fisher, the Resident Commissioner – Amongst these sources of discord was the selection of the site of the Capital City – of which more hereafter.

I now return to my Rapid Bay party. Mr Kingston was supreme at Glenelg, and my men accordingly fell under his orders except Capt. James and Mrs Hoare. No surveying was done but such as was preliminary to the Survey of one thousand acres in acre allotments for the choice Preliminary land order holders. Mr Kingston commenced the measurement of the town acres at a point which now

³ Inserted in pencil and then overwritten in another hand.

forms the N.W. corner of the City of Adelaide, opposite to where the Cattle Market is now held, while I was left for a few days at Glenelg. My accommodation for self wife and child was a round bell tent about 12 feet in diameter. I had no servant Mrs Hoare having her baby boy to nurse as there were but few single girls, and the married women declined service, generally, although some had been officially given a passage to the Colony under engagement. We had no horses or carts at first and I walked to Adelaide whenever I had to see Colonel Light. Returning one afternoon I found my wife in a pitiable state from the great heat and weakness. The heat however of a January sun was almost insupportable and I found Doctor Woodford had himself thrown buckets of water on the outside of the tent to cool the atmosphere within. I soon made her comfortable and hearing of a large tent for sale I immediately purch[as]ed it for £17 – and took steps at once to have it removed to Adelaide and pitched on the banks of the Torrens near where Government House was subsequently erected. My furniture was taken up to Adelaide in a wheelbarrow which I had brought from England. My wife and infant were removed in a wicker boat placed on wheels. It was about seven feet long and was one of two which belonged to the Survey Establishment. I placed my wife on a mattress in this boat and hired a young man for ten shillings to draw the carriage up to Adelaide, the survey of which was now proceeding under Mr Kingston. Colonel Light was encamped about half way between the Port and the City. Mrs Howard (the wife of a clergyman of the Church of England who by the Act was a necessary feature in the constitution of S.A.) was very kind to us. She came out to S.A. with her husband in the ‘Buffalo’ troop ship and was of considerable service and assistance to us, as she evinced by sending a young girl to act as nurse for the baby; whose name I forget. She was very useful and attentive to Mrs F. And soon afterwards married a Mr Parsons of whom I heard the best of accounts. She died not many years ago. This young girl carried the baby up to Adelaide from Glenelg and followed the light carriage containing the mother. I was now located in Adelaide, and soon selected my town acres which comprised the two acres fronting on King William Street and extending from Hindley St corner, where the Monster Clothing Establishment forms the north boundary, and the Bank of Australasia, Currie Street, the southern boundary. As soon as I had established my little family in our newly acquired tent *Mrs F. Engaged a woman to wash the clothes of the voyage which amounted to a very serious heap. Walking as far as the line of North Terrace Mrs F. To her great surprise found all our linen which had been fresh purchased for the voyage lying wet and exposed near the dwelling of the woman who had engaged to wash it. It was becoming mildewed. On seeing this Mrs F had it sent back to our tent and had it washed at home while the servant attended to the baby.*⁴ At this juncture Colonel Light visited my tent and seeing the condition of my wife expressed his sorrow and sympathy [at the hardship she had to endure]⁵, and leaving immediately, sent a young man named Sladden to our assistance together with the gift of a case of Port Wine and a cask of bottled porter supplied by Captain Rolls, the Master of the ‘Cygnet’. At this time my health was giving way owing to the fatigues of the

⁴ There is a fair copy of this page, and this passage has been replaced by: ‘made the best arrangements she could for having washing &c done – Few persons can at the present time imagine the discomforts to which the early colonists were subjected. The ladies, especially, were put to great inconvenience, and had to undertake nearly all the arduous duties appertaining to domestic life in tents or huts.’

⁵ This passage included only in fair copy.

survey. I took up Mr Kingston's survey at a point where the west line of King William Street and the line of North Terrace intersect and worked to the eastward as far as East Terrace. The intense heat of the sun was causing nausea and weakness, induced probably by the salt diet on which we were subsisting at the time. Dr Woodforde attended us and ordered me to get fresh meat from the store a privilege in which I had not hitherto participated. The sole fresh meat I could get for my sick wife was obtained by my gun. About 3 o'clock every day I observed that the large mountain parrots settled in the gum tree close to my tent when they came to drink. I generally shot two or three every day and my wife made an excellent white stew with which she regaled herself. This was before I had the order for fresh meat which was very scarce and supplied only to the Seniors of the⁶ expedition and the hard working men. Under this nourishing food and stimulating wines, my wife and I speedily recovered our strength. But we had both borne up through all trials and never felt despondency or regretted the adventure on which we had engaged so strong in our minds was the hope of the future.

It is fit that here I should state the outfit I had brought from England. It consisted of twelve months provisions in meat and small stores, a wooden house of two rooms, the walls and roof being made up of feather edged boards. The stores consisted of a cask of Irish pork, tea, sugar, &c., and preserved meats of Gamble's manufacture. This included roast beef, horseradish, and plum pudding for our first Christmas dinner; and last but not least, a case of the best champagne. There were also carpenter's tools – a scotch plough with spare shares, a drill plough, wheel barrow, cart wheels and axle, and a twenty five gallon cask of seed wheat [also the furniture of a dairy]⁷ – In short, I shipped on board the 'Tam O Shanter' sufficient plant and provisions for all the purposes of a farmer during his first year of settlement. Of weapons, I brought a rifle, a double gun, and a pair of rifle barrelled pistols, to carry a ball of the same calibre as the gun – also fifty pounds of fine powder in canister, a supply of small shot, and spare lead. The 'Tam O Shanter' took the ground in Light's passage, and my goods were detained for some time. This obliged me to put up a hut which I caused to be constructed of reeds cut from the banks of the Torrens.

On the 17th of August 1837, I believe this is the true date, the plan of the City of Adelaide being complete, the preliminary purchasers of land made their first selection of their allotments, and the extra lots were sold by auction. I made my selection of the two acres which I had purchased fronting on King William St and forming about one of the most favoured situations in Adelaide. The numbers of these allotments I do not remember, but they stood together and were bounded on the north and south by Hindley Street and Currie Street.

As soon as I had made my selection I left the meeting and with my survey party of four men proceeded to find my newly acquired property, and then set the men to work cutting reeds and thatching a hut fifteen feet by twelve, to consist of two rooms. This hut was erected very quickly, as there was no surveying going on at that date, and the men worked with a will. I ought to have

⁶ At the bottom of the page is written in pencil: 'Note This page has been rewritten by his son WCM Finnis / ?ommissions by TCB.'

⁷ Added in pencil.

recorded their names, but I have forgotten them. I now moved my wife with servant and all my furniture to my first permanent shelter in South Australia and sold my tent for what it cost me.

And now I have to record what portended disaster. The city being surveyed it was found impossible to proceed with the country surveys. There were no draught cattle, or carts, no horses and so provisions and tents had to be carried by hand. The Surveyors brought from England were young men who had a great deal to learn and the men became dissatisfied as soon as the 'Coromandel' emigrant ship arrived with carefully selected passengers. But these men were free to name their own wages whereas the Survey men had been engaged in London for a wage of two shillings a day, and food and shelter. The 'Coromandel' people incited our party to strike for higher wages calling them two shilling slaves, and naming four shillings a day as proper payment. All progress with the settlement now ceased for a time, and a violent controversy arose, as many of the settlers impugned Colonel Light's choice of a site for the Capital City, and there was much agitation. Two parties were formed – the Government party, and the Resident Commissioner's party. A more extended examination of the coast was demanded. The Governor, his private secretary, and all those settlers who held office under the Governor, or expected favors, ranged themselves in opposition to the party of the Commissioners – which consisted of Mr James Hurtle Fisher the Resident Commissioner who, by the Act constituting the Colony as representing the Commissioners in London, exercised complete control of the sale and survey of public land, over immigration, and over the finance arising out of land sales. Mr John Morphett, now Sir John Morphett, Mr John Brown, immigration agent, and all officers and men, who owed their appointments to the Commissioners, as well as the main body of the settlers who held land orders, sided against the Governor's party; and, to add to the confusion, the Commissioners, not satisfied with the progress of the surveys, made overtures to the Royal Engineer Officers in England to obtain a report, and assistance, in the surveys of country lands. Colonel Light in the interim had sent the 'Rapid' under Lieut. Field R. N., Chief Officer under him, to Sydney to obtain surveyors, instruments, and horses. The 'Rapid' made a speedy voyage bringing back Mr McDougall [*sic*] Stuart subsequently distinguished as a great explorer, and other surveyors. Vessels also arrived from Tasmania with horses and bullocks, purchased by him at the Cape of Good Hope. These bullocks were sold to an energetic settler named Mr James Chambers who soon started a carrying trade, whilst Mr Fishers sons introduced from fine draught horses from Tasmania with which they opened a carrying trade between Adelaide and the Port. In this manner I obtained delivery of my wooden house and other stores – But other events of a startling nature occupied the attention of the Government, and the colonists. The squatters of N.S. Wales formed parties, and following the course of the River Murray, brought horses, horned cattle, and sheep, in large droves to gladden the hearts of the pioneers of settlement. Captain Sturt, the discoverer of the course of the Murray, Mr Milner Stephen – Mr Hawdon – the McFarlanes – the Duttons – a family of the name of Finnis – Mr George Hamilton, afterwards Commissioner of Police, Mr Charles Bonney, subsequently Commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr Eyre, and many other adventurous gentlemen arrived with stock during the years 1837 and 1838, and formed the nucleus of the cattle great and small that subsequently built up the fortunes of many South Australian capitalists. All this rush of men and cattle brought the commencement of prosperity to South Australia, but the earliest settlers had sunk their capital resources in the cost of living when labour was ten shillings a day, bread eighteen pence the 2lb loaf, and fresh meat proportionally dear. The cattle were purchased by some

few gentlemen who, assisted by the Banks, acquired a firm basis for their fortunes – But the overlanders were not quite satisfied with the results of their speculation. I was told by some of them that they had to start butcher's shops to aid in realizing their venture.

It was fully two years before matters began to settle down and peace and good order came to be established. Much angry feeling was displayed by the rival political parties, and vituperative language disturbed the harmony of public meetings. I had to listen to the angry declamation of some who felt themselves injured either by the Governor's party or the inelegant oratory of some violent partisans. On a few occasions I was driven to take serious steps to stay the torrent of insulting language. One such occasion that occurred at Kangaroo Island when I was accosted by a high official in terms which obliged me to send him a hostile message by a young surveyor who undertook to act as my second in the event of a duel. The affair ended peaceably ~~but was followed by inconvenient and to be lamented family disagreement.~~

Some of the gentlemen, heads of departments, and even in the Executive Council had recourse to personal contests. One of these gentlemen whom I will call X called at my dwelling after I had erected it – and, in the presence of my wife, began a torrent of abuse against Mr Morphett, whom he asserted was the leader of disaffection, and exclaimed loudly, 'Here's Morphett and all his gang I'll shoot them like a flock of opussoms.' On which I retorted, 'but Mr X you must know that I am one of this flock of opussoms and you will have to shoot me also.' On this Mr X who was excited by having imbibed rather too freely – put on the air of a madman – rose hastily from his seat – drew a sword from a sword case which he carried, and pointed it within six inches of my face saying 'you Mr Finniss! I never thought so badly of you.' The situation was serious as he was evidently in a dangerous state of phrenzy. I therefore, without moving, said calmly, 'Mr X, put up that sword immediately, or I'll call a constable.' At that moment our servant opened the back door, and Mr X, evidently thinking I had a constable within call, turned his head suddenly round to look at the intruder, at the same time sheathing his weapon. He then continued his conversation in a more expostulatory tone, but broke out again into the utterance of words which were insulting to me in my own hearing and highly indecorous in the presence of my wife. I rose up instantly, when he did the same and gave me the opportunity of getting behind him – with my left hand grasping the back of his collar, and my right applied behind, I forced him out of the door when he fell on his face while I slammed the door. He lay on the ground a few moments and arose exclaiming – 'Oh! That's all you can do'. The language he had used was ungentlemanly and insulting, that I felt very much annoyed. Under these circumstances I sent Dr Woodforde to him with a message demanding immediate satisfaction. Dr Woodforde returned afterwards with an ample written apology which I reserved for publication in case he should cause me any further annoyance. But he carefully avoided me ever after. In consequence of the resignation of the Surveyors, one of them made reference to me in very insulting terms – Dr Woodforde again befriended me and I obtained a written apology from this gentleman also. But I was not the only person who, in these times of angry passions, had occasion to resort to the duel. Mr D– And Mr C–, both overlanders, called at my house one day and asked me for the loan of my pistols without explaining for what purpose. I, of course, declined. Mr Fisher called on me that night and laid a legal information before me (I being then Commissioner of Police, and Police Magistrate.) In consequence of this information I prepared a warrant and sent for Mr Gordon and paid a visit to Mr James who was with his wife in their sitting room. I am not aware of any

connexion between this gentleman and the request for the loan of my pistols. Mr James was quite content when he saw the warrant and I at once bound him over to keep the peace which he promised to maintain without giving me any further trouble. I heard that shots were exchanged between two other overlanders without effect, but I did not ascertain this of my own knowledge, though I think it highly probably. About this time a man named Pegler, who had gone to stay the night in a black encampment on the north bank of the Torrens, was found murdered; and another man, a shepherd, was discovered murdered at a sheep station on Gilles Plains. Other outrages by the blacks were reported but no steps were taken by the government to pacify and protect the settlers. On one occasion a tall powerful blackfellow named Rodney visited my hut during my absence on the survey and seeing my wife engaged in making preparations for our dinner, demanded food for himself. As she refused he raised his waddy near her head and decamped with the food which he coveted.

At this time I was witness of a fight on the banks of the Torrens in front of Morphett Street. Seeing a number of blacks assembling at that point I repaired to the spot and was met by my old friend Peter of Rapid Bay and his tribe. The tribe were in their war paint each man carrying shield and spear. Peter endeavour[ed] to explain to me that they came to prevent the northern blacks entering their territory which seems to have been bounded by the R. Torrens. However, Captain Jack of northern celebrity had already, with the northern tribes, crossed the River and were engaged in various tactical movements which threatened war. There must have been at least 100 blacks preparing for the fight. I saw Captain Jack spear in hand capering up and down the river flat in front of his myrmidons talking very loudly and gesticulating violently. Captain Peter retorted in language which I did not comprehend – at last Captain Jack shook his spear, not at any one, but at a pretended foe and after a few exclamations threw his spear into the ground apparently in a great Rage and the spear quivered in the ground. This seemed the signal for combat. Captain Peter warned me to retire as he said the enemy was about to throw their spears. A few spears came. I stood out of the way of the combatants and watched the result. My friend Peter was Captain of the Southern host evidently the chosen warrior of his tribe. He rushed to the front and threw himself on one knee covering himself with his shield in the left hand and balancing his spear at arm's length in the right hand. His warriors followed his example and ranged themselves on his right and left receding so as to form a wedge of which Peter was the front and apex. It recalled to mind my school boy recollections of the Grecian Phalanx described in Polybius and the Greek wedge formation. A shower of spears came from Captain Jacks party and the wedge grew restive. I could not see if any fell in this short contest but I presume the northern tribes yielded to their fear of the southern prowess and began to disperse while Peter rose up with his warriors and again entered into conversation with me the result being that he was the victor. The Northern blacks were tall lanky figures very lean and covered with white scales of a scorbutic appearance. I cannot say that they carried shield or that they fought like practised warriors. They were but a mob while Peters army were powerful well fed blacks armed with shield and spear and apparently well trained to use them. I have given this account of the fight between the northern and southern blacks because it happened at a time when the northern blacks were very troublesome.

The excitement amongst the settlers was getting formidable when a public meeting was called in a tent where Governor Hindmarsh in full naval uniform took the chair. At this meeting the Sheriff Mr

Smart attended, there were also present the Revd. C. B. Howard Colonial Chaplain – Dr William Wyatt protector of Aborigines and myself. Captain Hindmarsh in the course of a speech which he addressed to the crowd outside urged them to take no reprisals and informed the settlers that they were British subjects under protection of British law and he finished by saying that he would hang up every white man who shot a black. This address only intensified the excitement caused by the murder of Pegler. Even the amiable Mr Howard could not help exclaiming ‘then your Excellence it will be up white down black’. I made a few remarks in reply to what the Governor had said when Captain Hindmarsh got so exasperated that he turned to me and laid his hand on his sword. There were then present as the sheriff told me afterwards who were ready to protect me from violence. The meeting ended – nothing was done at the time and the feud with the blacks was settled by some means or other. Hostile encounters occurred on the River Murray subsequently between the overlanders and the blacks who attempted to bar their passage and many of the blacks perished in these unequal contests.

Captain Hindmarsh was recalled on the 16 July 1838 and the Home government sent out Capt Gawler an old Peninsular Officer who had fought at Waterloo. Mr Fisher was ordered to resign all his powers as Residential Commissioner and the new Governor was appointed to the office thus combining powers which had previously been executed by two separate individuals. This dual authority had led no doubt to the formation of rival parties each ambitious of having the right to select the Capital. I have already stated that this question was settled when the Town lands were selected on the 17th March 1837; but the surveys of country lands were yet incomplete when Col. Light despatched Mr Kingston to England in the surveying brig Rapid to report the condition of the new settlement.

The rule of Governor Hindmarsh RN which covered the period from the 28. Dec. 1836 to 16 July 1838 though short was full of incident yet not of a political nature. His action was limited by the Act of Parliament which established a New Colony on the southern shores of Australia. A dual government was created under which the most important part of the government devolved upon the Colonization Commissioners. – I have stated the confusion and dissatisfaction which arose owing to the delays in the country surveys and the controversies engendered by the Selection of the Capital by the Surveyor General. Public meetings were held and the Press put forth its opinions through the publication of a paper called the ‘South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register’ edited by Mr George Stevenson, but owned by Mr Robert Thomas, who established a printing office in Hindley St not far from the intersection of Morphett St. – Colonel Light was ruthlessly and energetically attacked for his assumed want of judgement in the selection of the site of Adelaide. In reply to one of these attacks supported by the signature of Mr Edward Stephens Manager of the Bank of South Australia I forwarded a letter to Mr Jacob Montefiore one of the Commissioners which was published in the London ‘Spectator’. Captain Hindmarsh himself appears to have favoured Port Lincoln on account of its magnificent harbour which was compared to Rio de Janeiro harbour. Others considered Encounter bay or Victor Harbour as the most eligible site, while some assumed that a site superior to any other could be found if the River Murray were found open to sea navigation. Sir John Jeffcott, Judge of the Supreme Court, made an attempt to prove the River safe for mercantile purposes by venturing in a whale boat accompanied by Captain Blenkinsop to brave the rollers which baffled others and among them Captain Sturt who had waited for days and hours to find a

favourable chance of entering the mouth of the River. Sir John Jeffcott & Captain Blenkinsop perished in their attempt, and for a time opposition to the site of Adelaide ceased. His Majesty's Sloop of War Victor and a Captain Crozier who afterwards perished with Captain Franklin in the North Polar seas, made an examination of the anchorage under Granite Island which he named Port Victor. In his report he marked off a site for a town on the left bank of the Hindmarsh River and for a time public expectation was again aroused. Colonel Light sent me accompanied by an old Sandhurst friend, Nixon, adjutant of the 96th Regt to report upon the whole question of the Murray navigation and the suitability of Victor Harbor as a site for the capital. On proceeding to Encounter Bay I found a whaling party encamped there and some wooden buildings erected. I made a survey of the coast from Rosetta Head to the mouth of the River Murray, laying down at the same time the River Hindmarsh. I found the water at the Goolwa salt, and therefore I could not recommend a township there suitable for a capital. My full report was published in an independent newspaper called the South Australian, edited by Mr John Brown and the Advocate General Mr Charles Mann. As I have no copy I cannot give the particulars of the report. The whaling establishment after the death of Captain Blenkinsop was carried on by a company which included in those interested Mr John Baker afterwards of Morialta and Captain J Hart. In travelling to Encounter Bay I passed over a spur of the Mount Lofty Range which I called Mt Terrible from the difficulty I experienced in getting a bullock dray across the range ; while labouring to gain the summit, the dray rolled over and scattered tents and stores on the steep sloping ground. On this journey I was much interested in witnessing the skill of the bullock driver in crossing a narrow saddle of the range. It had rained all the morning and the necks of the pole bullocks got chafed which rendered them impatient of the yoke. There was nothing for it but to change the bullocks. In a narrow pass wide enough only for the dray to travel once he stopped his team and then and there changed the leaders into polers with scarcely room for a bullock to turn; yet he succeeded by dint of the skill and temper in effecting his object. After reloading one dray with its scattered cargo he descended into the beautiful vale of the Myponga; and travelled onwards through a stringy bark forest. In passing through a scrubby part of the road we met a whole tribe of blacks moving towards Adelaide. I recognised my young friend Jim amongst them and asked immediately for Allauri. He smiled and pointed to a bush about thirty yards before me; and there she appeared stepping out from her concealment with all the shyness of a white woman. She was not afraid to approach us now that she was assured we were old friends, and after a short conversation each party resumed its march in opposite directions, Jim's tribe moving on towards Adelaide.

The want of a Police Force became manifest. Many old convicts accompanied the overlanders in their journeys down the Murray and several acts of violence with cattle stealing obliged Captain Hindmarsh to appoint a few constables but they had no Police Act to guide them in their dangerous duties. Another friend lately deceased named Harry Alford was one of the first sworn in to preserve the peace. I have described in my constitutional history of South Australian one incident in connexion with the overland convicts. I therein related the story of Jack Foley who loving a wild life in the bush at Encounter Bay was despatched to Adelaide by the Manager of the whaling station to represent the want of supplies by the whaling party. Jack Foley encountered the Superintendent of the new police force in Adelaide and was captured by him somewhat against the law of 'honor bright' which the bushranger invoked before he would undertake the risk. I need not quote the

account given in my political history. More serious events however marked the presence of bushrangers in Adelaide. Mr J. Smart a gentlemen lately from N.S. Wales had been appointed Sheriff of this Province. He and his wife had located themselves in a slab hut on their own land in the southern part of the City of Adelaide at a distance from other settlers and they were quietly seated in their only room when Mr Smart heard the door opened and saw the muzzle of a gun ominously protruding into his sanctum and a man suddenly presented the gun at him. The smallness of the room brought the man so close to Mr Smart that he made a dash at him and seized the weapon. Mr Smart was a man somewhat past his prime but of immense strength and activity and by the suddenness and activity of his movement diverted the course of the bullet which passed his whisker and lodged in the wall of the hut without inflicting injury on anyone. The motive for this atrocious attempt at murder was probably due to the fact that Mr Smart had become acquainted with many convicts in N.S. Wales and his presence in Adelaide was dangerous to the fraternity of bushrangers. However, the intention to murder was manifest and this man whose name I cannot remember was captured by the Police and hanged. Some few other men of the same stamp met a similar fate during the rule of Captain Hindmarsh and his successor Colonel George Gawler. Startling occurrences of a similar nature kept the Police well employed and some very brave and sensational captures of criminals all from the adjoining colony contributed to give renown to our Police and security to the Colonists. Our police subsequently acquired a name for efficiency which was evinced by the governments of Victoria and New Zealand applying for information as to the constitution of our force and the regulations under which they were managed.

Preliminary Surveys

I cannot omit from the period during which Captain Hindmarsh governed this colony a more detailed account of the surveys of purchased land than has yet been made public except in the reports of the Colonization Commissioners which are difficult of attainment being limited in number and deposited generally in the Public Offices to which few persons have access, whilst public interest is absorbed in other questions of more immediate importance in connexion with the progress of settlement. I may appear to place myself too prominently forward in the conduct of these surveys before they fell into the hands of Captains Frome and Freeling of the Royal Engineers who followed Col. Light in the direction of the Survey department. I may lay claim to be an authority in such matters when I mention the following facts, which are authenticated by letters from Sir Charles Colville governor of Mauritius when I was stationed there with my regiment in the years 1831, 2 & 3. Also from Colonel Staveley deputy quarter Master General & from Sir Willoughby Gordon, Quarter Master General at the Horse Guards. Col. Staveley wrote as follows to his chief Sir W. Gordon: 'I trust you will excuse my taking the liberty of introducing Lt. Finnis of the 82nd Rgt; but he is an officer who has made himself so very useful in the department under my direction that I consider it a duty to the Service to make him known to you. He was to have been the bearer of a plan of the Island (Mauritius) drawn by himself from the best materials I could collect corrected by personal reconnaissance; but Sir Chalres Colville having lost his own copy was desirous of presenting the plan to you himself and took it with him for that purpose.' (NB. The plan lost by Sir C. Colville must have been acquired and published by an officer whose name appears on the map in the year 1855, as it contains sketching and surveys of parts made by me in 1832-3 (as for instance the site of a bridge over the river Poste named Pont Colville erected by convicts under my direction on a design by Col. Staveley whose office was

subsequently held by Major F.A. Makenzie (*sic*) Fraser H.P. unattached). The plan taken to England by Sir C. Colville and presented to Sir W. Gordon was an exact copy made by me of the lost plan which had also been prepared by me. Colonel Stavelys letter to Sir W. Gordon gives me credit for the preparation of the plan with improvements on the original detailed map of the Island surveyed and constructed by the Abbé la Caille under the French occupation. I have the published plan before me here to this list of testimonials I now give an extract from Sir Charles Colvilles letter to me dated 3rd August 1835. It runs thus.

Dear Sir – when I arrived from Mauritius I did not fail to take an early opportunity of showing your copy of the map of that Island (and which I believe comprises several approved alterations from your own actual surveys) to the Quarter Master General who sent it as a study for the Cadets at Sandhurst. It has altogether been very well thought of and along with what I was enabled to say otherwise would I dare say have procured for you some proof of Sir Willoughby's patronage and favour but for the very few opportunities he has at present of exercising the former' xxxx 'I remain dear Sir, very truly yours C. Colville, L.G.

From the above explanations it will be clear why I took so prominent a part in the arrangements by which the preliminary purchasers of land in S. Australia made their selections. I had been educated in contour sketching, trigonometrical surveying and military drawing by Mr Burn professor at the R.M. College and accompanied him in the field with an advanced class. I was well trained in details and took to the study with enthusiasm. On leaving the College, I took every opportunity of indulging my taste for this occupation; and it was this bent which led me to make myself so useful to Colonel Staveley C.B. Deputy Quarter Master General that he took me on his staff and employed me to improve their topographical surveys. When I joined the expedition to found the Colony of South Australia on new principles advocated by Mr Gibbon Wakefield it was prompted greatly, not by a desire to speculate in land, but by a love of adventure and a desire to exercise my skill in the exploration and delineation of new country. To return now to the surveys of preliminary sections in South Australia – I made surveys wherever I went without waiting for special orders; and as I saw that much delay must occur before the lands sold by the Commissioners I at once, when the City had been selected and surveyed, started with a trigonometrical survey measuring my base from the N.W. corner of South Adelaide towards Glenelg. During this time there was little progress made in marking out the boundaries of country sections for the reasons I have stated previously and from the discouragement occasioned by the disputes as to the choice of the Capital involving also the locality of the rural surveys. Other causes operated to produce this result. We had no cattle or other means of conveyance whilst water had to be carried by the men as well as provisions for their daily wants. Coln. Light at once sent the Rapid to Sydney to obtain horses amongst other requisites; and at last finding matters getting worse, he sent Mr Kingston in the Rapid to London to report the state of the expedition to the Commissioners. The Commissioners happily approved of Colonel Lights selection of the site of Adelaide, but took other steps with regard to the surveys which led to his resignation. They sought assistance from the Royal Engineers and endeavoured to obtain the completion of the preliminary surveys by contract, settling a limit as to time. Captain Dawson R.E. proposed what he called a running survey which was to be effected by running lines north and south intersected at right angles by other lines running east and west so as to divide the country into parallelograms within which the preliminary lands called sections of eighty acres and one hundred

and thirty four acres respectively with roads were included. But the system of running survey did not profess to mark out on the ground the boundary lines of sections. These were to be ascertained by the occupiers of sections by referring to certain points in the general construction lines which followed and formed the centres of occupation roads. This system was not adopted by Captain Frome R.E. when he assumed the direction of the surveys for very good reasons viz; Captain Frome found that on the retirement of Colonel Light many country sections were already laid out on the plan executed by me which was adopted by the holders of land orders who made their selections from that plan. In that plan two roads were laid down one to Glenelg and the other to Port Adelaide and instead of a series of rectangular boundaries which the running survey system required the lands were made to front on these roads and on the river Torrens. Mr Kingston on his return from England undertook to complete the preliminary surveys on the system which was then proceeding and had been adopted by the purchasers. The Colonization Commissioners sent specific orders to Colonel Light by which he was to retain his position as Surveyor General only on condition that he undertook to complete the surveys of preliminary sections within a certain time fixed by them and for a fixed sum. If he should decline (as it was quite evident he must do) Colonel Light was to hand over the conduct of the Surveys to Mr Kingston whilst he himself devoted his energies to surveys of the coast and harbours. In the mean time Captain Hindmarsh was superseded by Colonel Gawler but during the interregnum which occurred Mr George Milner Stephen assumed the reins of government and held the post from the 16 July to 12 Oct. 1838. During his term of office he nominated Captain Sturt who had recently arrived from N.S. Wales to act as Surveyor General thus displacing Mr Kingston, but was himself displaced by the Colonization Commissioners who had arranged with Captain Frome of the Royal Engineers to complete the surveys with the aid of surveyors from the corps of Royal Sappers and Miners. The instructions issued to Colonel Light were too insulting to be accepted and he resigned accordingly, leaving Mr Kingston to proceed with the measurement of the land which he carried out in accordance with the plan prepared originally by me. The resignation of Colonel Light was followed by that of all the Surveyors except Mr Kingston. Captain Frome soon finished the preliminary surveys with the aid of Maclaren, Forest, Gardiner, and other experienced surveyors, from the Royal Sappers and Miners, and he was recalled on his promotion in His Majesty's Service, his place being taken by Captain afterwards Col^l Freeling R.E.

On the retirement of Col^l Light I joined him as a surveying firm with Mr William Jacob, and Mr Nixon late adjutant of the 96th Regiment. The designation of the firm was 'Light Finniss and Co'. Mr George⁸ Thomas and Mr Nixon doing the plan drawing of the firm. It was during this period that I became intimate with Colonel Light and we often rode out together to select Special Surveys, and sites of towns. During these country excursions he gave me a complete history of his extraordinary career. His health soon began to fail and the direction of the affairs of the firm devolved on me.

Mr Kingston while acting as Surveyor General after the resignation of Col^l Light was proceeding to measure off the boundaries of preliminary land sections in accordance with the diagrams which I marked off on the plan I had constructed showing the features of the country. This plan had been suggested to the purchasers of land and they had made their selections according to the numbering

⁸ 'Robert' added in pencil before 'George' in different handwriting (possibly Keith Borrow's).

of allotments the order of choice having been previously determined by lot. Some of the land order holders withheld their choice reserving power to select from future surveys in distant localities. To enable them to do this the country south of Adelaide was divided according to lines of latitude into provincial surveys within which the reserved selections were to be exercised when those districts came to be surveyed. These selectors at the general meeting at which the order of choice was determined merely declared the provincial survey for which they reserved their power of selection.

As I have stated Mr Kingston on his arrival from England with the recent orders of Commissioners address (*sic*) to Colonel Light instead of proceeding with the Surveys in accordance with instructions was compelled by the state of the Surveys when he assumed their direction to follow out the system adopted at a public meeting and proceeded to lay out the preliminary sections following the diagrams as I had laid them out on my plan which was in fact the plan of the selection. Mr Kingston was succeeded in the post of Surveyor General by Captain Sturt appointed by the Acting Governor Mr Milne Stephen late Colonial Secretary. Captain Sturt later on offered me the post of Deputy Surveyor General which on the salary being made suitable I accepted. But this was not to be. The Commissioners sent out Captain Frome with a party of the Royal Sappers and Miners to supersede Captain Sturt and shortly afterwards Mr Burr arrived from England as Deputy Surveyor General. But I am anticipating events which occurred after the arrival of Colonel Gawler as Governor.

Before I accepted office as Deputy Surveyor General I was amply employed making selections of special surveys and in advising purchasers of land at a more recent date in making their selections. The Barossa Survey taken up by Mr Joseph Gilbert and named by him Pusey [note in pencil: 'Pewsey'] Vale was one of the Special Surveys which it fell to my lot to select for him. The Gawler Special Survey was another, the plan of the town being also designed by me and surveyed by Mr William Jacob afterwards of Moorooroo. Travelling with Colonel Light on one occasion before the selection of the Gawler Survey we encamped at the Gawler River and whilst resting there we were surprised to find a dead man buried in an upright position and plastered with clay. No part of the body was visible except the toes. The wild dogs had evidently discovered the corpse and had somewhat mangled the feet. It was evidently a white man's burial place from the clothes. The story which was circulated in Adelaide as to the cause of the death of the unfortunate man originated with a party under the charge of W Bernhard. It was stated that travelling to the North having a dray with them on nearing the ford at the Gawler River a man in a distracted state rushed from the scrub west of the line of sand and fell down in an exhausted state perishing for want of food and water. He was taken every care of but died very soon after meeting this party which preceded ours in [its] way to the North. They had buried him in the tree and plastered him in to save the body from the wild dogs. We afterwards called the tree 'dead mans tree' a large hollow gum tree. The dead man was supposed to have been a sailor escaped from some ship off Port Gawler who had lost himself in the scrub in his endeavour to reach Adelaide and thus perished miserably.

After passing Gawler Colonel Light and party proceeded towards the Barossa peak to the west of which a beautiful plain presented itself and here we pitched our tent for the night. At this point of our journey a fit of gout attacked the Colonel and while he was lying writhing on the ground I remarked to him by way of consolation as I thought – 'look Colonel, they say when a man gets gout he takes a new lease of his life.' The reply was 'Yes, but a lease at a rack rent'. I had been requested

by Mr Giles the first manager of the land company of South Australia to select a special survey for the company at Mt Barker and was proceeding there to mark out the boundaries taking in some of the branches of the Onkaparinga for which I should have received on behalf of the firm a large fee. Finding Colonel Light quite helpless and suffering very much I abandoned this excursion to Mt Barker. On another occasion Mr Samuel Stevens [changed to 'Stephens' in pencil] accompanied us and was very desirous of securing a special survey on the Wakefield. With some difficulty I persuaded him to make a selection nearer the capital. He held the idea that the farther off from the Capital the more likely he was to find superior land. However he at least began to find he was wrong in his judgement.

After our northern trip was over I rode to Mount Lofty with Colonel Light and there we had a very extensive view of the country to the Eastward. Amongst other sights we saw Mt Barker and the sandhills on the east of the Murray Mouth where Captain Barker was speared by the Natives.

X Colonel Light's History! [written at top of page]

As I was now much with Colonel Light he told me the principal events in his adventurous career. That his father was master of a free trader to India and that he became acquainted with the King of Quedah the king of the Malacca Territory and married the king's daughter having Penang (now called Prince of Wales's Island)⁹ as her dower. On his father's death young Light inherited this vast estate which he presented to the Prince of Wales. Light was made much of at Carlton House and made a large circle of influential friends through some of whom he received a commission in the 4th Light Dragoons then doing duty in the army of Lord Wellington in Spain. He had lived for some time in India and became well practised in all the superb feats of Indian horsemanship and had moreover been well educated in England speaking several languages fluently. Hence he soon obtained notice in the Peninsular War and was placed on the Quarter Master Generals Staff in the intelligence department. He described to me that he visited the homes of the Spanish nobility in this character and being of a dark complexion and speaking French well he had many narrow escapes of being discovered as a spy. Being fond of music he amused the Spanish ladies with songs and guitar accompaniment which secured for him the good offices of his hosts, and enabled him to obtain reports of the movements of the French armies which forwarded to head quarters assisted the British Commander in Chief in his strategical movements. At a future time I shall relate more of the Colonel's history but I shall not omit one adventure which gained him much credit. It was during Wellington's retreat along the Douro that Lt. Light happened to sight a large column of French moving towards the River, near to which the British army was encamped. Sir Willoughby Gordon the British Quarter Master General was in a large tent giving orders to the orderly serjeants where to bivouac their corps. One of the divisions was appointed to proceed to a village some miles down the river. When Lt. Light heard the order he said to Sir Willoughby if you send that division to the village you mentioned it will be cut off, for I saw a French Column in full march towards a ford in the River which lays between this and the destination of the division you named. 'And who are you?' the Quarter Master General exclaimed. 'Why Sir, I am Lt. Light, the scout of the army; and I certainly saw

⁹ Parentheses added in pencil, 'now' crossed out and rewritten in pencil above in KTB's hand.

the French column marching evidently to reach the ford over the River with which I am well acquainted. Sir Willoughby was at length convinced and gave the Division a different route. Colonel Light had previously reported this to Wellington who observed it is only an advanced guard that you saw by Lt. Light was certain he had seen part of the main body of the French. The Duke then said 'come and dine with me,' but Light remarked he was too much engaged then. The Duke then said, 'Go to Gordon' which of course he did, with the result just mentioned.

In giving these anecdotes and notes referring to Col., afterwards General Staveley father of Sir Charles Staveley of Abyssinian celebrity, I may rescue from oblivion an adventure related to me by Col. Staveley respecting Waterloo. He was then a Lieutenant in the Staff Corps present at Waterloo. The Duke of Wellington at a particular crisis of the battle found his staff dispersed or disabled and being anxious about the arrival of Blucher who had promised to aid him with his whole army. The Duke not seeing any of his staff at hand exclaimed, 'who will carry a message for me to Blucher?' Some officer present said immediately, 'here is Staveley, he will do.' The Duke then gave his orders to Lt. Staveley to ride to Blucher and rind out when he would open fire. Staveley said, 'Where shall I find him'. 'Near that hill to the left,' the Duke replied. Staveley told me that in order to be certain as to his message he looked at his watch which stood at 3 o'clock and in order to reach the spot indicated Staveley had to pass either in rear of the British line, or to face the French fire. He felt so elated with the mission assigned to him, that he thought it would seem degrading to pass by the rear of the English fire and therefore he at once galloped in front of the troops encountering the fire of the French at a distance. Arrived at a field which surrounded the hill on which the Prussian Staff was assembled, Staveley was stopped by a hedge. Riding along the hedge to find an opening where he could cross, he was recognised by General Gneisenau the celebrated Quarter Master General of the Prussian Army who rode down to him and showed him a gap in the fence. Gneisenau led him to General Blucher whom Staveley addressed in English. Gneisenau immediately interrupted Staveley and said, 'Blucher does not understand you let me have your message. Blucher joined in, and exclaimed in broken English 'May fight de French'. Staveley then again had recourse to his watch and asked 'what time should he state to Wellington for the opening of the Prussian attack?' Gneisenau said, 'about 4 o'clock.' Staveley then galloped back to the British position and found the Duke preparing to enter a square to receive a charge of the French cuirassiers. In his haste to deliver his message Staveley rode against the Duke, who disturbed in this rough way exclaimed, 'G-d D—n you Sir, get out of my way.' One of the Duke's staff then told Staveley to wait till the Duke was ready to hear him. The charge of Cavalry was repelled and then Staveley delivered his message. The Duke watched the hill on which the Prussian advance was posted, and Staveley watched the time, which he found was gaining on 5 o'clock. At length the Prussian fire opened on the right of the French army and the British army received the order which it had long been expecting, to advance. The battle of Waterloo was won; Staveley found himself gazetted as Captain in the next publication, and he subsequently rose through the rank of Colonel and General.

After this long digression i must return to Adelaide and the surveys – Captain Frome with his sappers soon finished the preliminary surveys by marking off on the ground the diagrams of sections of 134 acres each, as shown on my plan and this put an end to all disputes and complaints on the subject of the country lots. I had been appointed Deputy Surveyor-General with a salary of £400 a year, and

the use of a horse. This post had been offered me by Captain Sturt and was ratified by the Governor, Coln. Gawler, who had recently arrived to take on himself the duties of Resident Commissioner as well as Governor of the Colony. He landed at Glenelg and was met by twenty or thirty of the settlers amongst whom I rose, and was conducted by us to the hut of reeds which then formed the palace of the Governor of South Australia. The government surveys being in safe hands the firm of Light, Finniss Co 'found full employment for their energies in selecting special surveys and marking out sites of towns. Gawler and Glenelg were surveyed by them, and I had been tempted to rejoin the Survey Department as I have just stated, a very unwise step on my part, as the firm was doing well, and I should in time have accumulated the greatest part of the land agency of the Colony instead of wasting my energies in the Civil Service of the Province, to be subsequently shelved on the passing of the Constitution Act in October 1856 when in the prime of life and replete with mental and physical energy. Before my acceptance of the Office of D.S. General Mr William Jacob had finished the survey of Gawler Town, and Glenelg was also marked out into allotments. On one of my excursions to the north I met with the Rose Colored Cockatoo in the scrubs of the River Light and I also discovered a shrub growing in the same scrub resembling the English holly bush. Its leaves were armed with spines and it had all the appearance of the holly although I was not botanist enough to pronounce if it belonged to that class of flora. I met with no kangaroos in the north; only wild dogs. Their general color was tawny but I saw one of a large breed, black like the cattle dogs of the herdsman.

I have mentioned the necessity for the formation of a police force and have stated that Captain Hindmarsh commenced the enrolment of such a force. These men at first were placed under the command of Mr Inman an officer lately in the senior corps called the Spanish legion. The mounted Police had not then sprung into existence, nor was a Police Act enacted until October 1839 after the retirement of Governor Hindmarsh.

The protective force of the Colony was at first limited to a detachment of the Royal Marines forming part of the complement of the troop ship 'Buffaloo' under the command of Captain Hindmarsh, the sailing master being Mr Eastow – the 'Buffaloo' was withdrawn when Captain Hindmarsh surrendered his Governorship, and a strong detachment of his companies of the 96th and 99th Regiments was despatched from Sydney the former under the command of Captain Butler, the latter in charge of Captain Webster with whom I had been familiar in the Mauritius, when the 99th and 82nd Regiments formed part of the garrison. Captain Webster informed me that the troops reached the Colony by way of Encounter Bay – arrived in site of Granite Island it became a question with the Captain of the transport by what route they could best secure the anchorage at what is now called Port Victor. The Master at first hesitated to pass between the Seal rock south of Granite Island and Granite Island, the channel being very narrow and dangerous. On appealing to the map of Encounter Bay which as I have stated I prepared when sent there by Colonel Light, a channel was laid down between the two Islands since I had carefully copied and adapted the soundings and coastline given in Flinders's chart of that locality. Captain Webster, who as I said knew me intimately at Mauritius, as a surveyor on the staff of Coln. Stavelly, at once dispelled the Master's doubts as to the existence of a safe passage, by telling him that the map, or plan, which he was consulting being prepared by me, he might rely on its correctness. The Master took his advice and steered boldly and

safely through the dangerous passage. The detachment subsequently arrived safely in Adelaide. The officers of this little band amongst whom was Mr Delisle Surgeon to the detachment, contributed much to the society of Adelaide. Mr Delisle brought a horse with him highly bred, and he took a lively part in the races then first commenced on what is now called the old race course on the East Park Lands. The Fishers, sons of the Resident Commissioner, entered eagerly into the sport, and introduced a few horses of good character, to assist the undertaking the young men riding their own horses, and performing the duties of jockeys in perfection. Mr Charles Fisher was a splendid rider one of the winners. Mr George Hamilton late Commissioner of Police was also one of the gentleman riders. I omit the names of many gentlemen who figured on the turf not intentionally but from imperfect recollection.

Before I make a few remarks in connexion with the social conditions of the new settlement, its agricultural capabilities and its flora and fauna, I must pause to record the death of Colonel Light which occurred on the 5th Oct. 1839, Colonel Gawler being then Governor. He was I think consumptive, probably from the wear and tear of constitution during his eventual career in the Peninsular campaigns, but I have no doubt that vexation and annoyance chafed his proud spirit in connexion with the treatment he received in the Colony from the political party who espoused the views of Captain Hindmarsh, in his opposition to the selection of the present site of the Capital City of Adelaide, and subsequently from the treatment he received from the Commissioners in London, who believed they were supporting the judgement of the majority of the land order holders. I saw the Colonel frequently, and on one occasion almost the last, he was lying on a sofa contending with some gentlemen who had called to see him on the subject of his choice of site. He grew much excited and a flush spread over his cheeks showing annoyance and anger, and looking too much of the nature of hectic to be mistaken for a very serious symptom of impending decline. He took to his bed, and the doctors who attended him (Wright and Woodforde) pronounced very unfavourably of his condition. My wife and I called frequently to see him, and she read prayers to him which he listened to with reverent attention. He said to me that he had been suffering much pain with his cough. One day he said 'all pain has now left me, but I feel it is only a fatal symptom: Nature has given up the contest with disease'.¹⁰ I called on the Revd. C. B. Howard our Chaplain of Trinity Church and suggested to him that as the Colonel was evidently dying he might call on him and offer prayer at his bedside. Mr Howard replied, 'It is not the practise of our church to attend to the sick and dying unless they express penitence, and desire the services of the Church'. I afterwards contrasted this with the behaviour of Dr Short, Bishop of Adelaide, who when my first wife was dying and had been suffering much pain met me, and offered to attend to her and endeavour to comfort her. I remarked that as she was insensible I thought his presence would be of no avail which he acknowledged and therefore under the circumstances I thought it advisable to thank him for his kindness but to decline his friendly offer. The Bishop was next neighbour to me at that time and had therefore become acquainted with my wife's condition.

¹⁰ The remainder of this paragraph has been crossed through in pencil, and the page has been re-written without this passage in a different hand.

But to return to Col. Light – On my last visit I found him in bed evidently gasping for breath in articulo mortis as medical men call this stage. Dr Woodforde had just quitted a chair by the bedside of the Colonel, and was moistening his tongue by applying brandy to the open mouth by means of a feather. The Doctor ceased on my approach when I said, ‘Had you not better continue your kind office he seems to like it.’ The Doctor said, ‘Oh, it’s no use he is too far gone to feel pleasure or pain.’ I then continued the administration of the brandy myself, when he turned his eyes towards me and gave me a look expressive of thankfulness. Thus ended the life of one who in his capacity as a soldier had deserved well of his country. His experiences on the battlefield (for he told me he was forty times engaged with the enemy without receiving a wound) in the bivouacs; in preceding and observing the march of divisions in the enemy’s vicinity, his selection of camping ground for the troops all went to form his mind and mature his judgement, as to the necessities of position in meeting the wants of large bodies of men. He was buried in the centre of Light Square and I have a perfect recollection of the long file of pedestrians who followed his corpse to the grave. I subscribed £10.0.0 to the cost of his monument and at various meetings of his friends I was told that thirty gentlemen had subscribed ten pounds each to meet the cost of the monument which had been estimated at upwards of three hundred pounds. Mr Kingston, civil engineer, and architect by profession, undertook and executed the work. Knowing the immense importance which Colonel Light attached to being considered as the sole person to whom the credit of the selection of the site for the Capital of the new province was due, I suggested and strongly urged upon his numerous friends that not only should this fact be recorded on the monument, but that it should be further indicated, in case of future doubt, by placing on his breast, inside the coffin, a plate of copper having engraved on it, ‘Colonel William Light founder of Adelaide’. This I was assured by those who undertook the management of the funeral (amongst whom were Doctor Wright, the surgeon of the first expedition) was actually done, although I did not see it myself. I recollected perfectly well the long procession of men in pairs numbering several hundred persons who filed along North Terrace in front of Trinity Church following the funeral to Light Square.

I have mentioned the arrival of a detachment of her Majesty’s troops and alluded to the social condition of the colony at the period of their arrival. The houses of the settlers consisted originally of log huts or pisé buildings with mud walls. This was of course unfavourable to any sociable amusements of an evening, and, accordingly, there were no such meetings, but society was restricted to pic-nic parties by day, generally carried out by excursions to the hills, to the East of Adelaide, which offered many beautiful and tempting spots for such a mode of enjoyment. On these occasions bullock drays offered the only accommodation for ladies, and there was no lack of such methods of travelling since several of the early settlers had procured drays and bullock teams to commence the work of settlement with. Amongst many kind assistants Mr Henry Jones, and his brother Frederick, with some others, whose names I cannot now call to mind, furnished the bullock drays for pic-nic parties whilst I find amongst the leaders of our early society such names as Fisher, Trimmer, Morphett, Duncan, Wyatt, Nash, Gosse, Cooper, Beck &c. I might name upwards of one hundred gentlemen of substance personally known to me who may be considered as the fathers of the present generation of settlers and founders of the infant province. All of them brought capital with them and many of them lived, and some still live, to build up prosperous and, in some cases, wealthy families to merge in the general population.

As such an array of names might add considerably to the number of pages devoted to the record of my early reminiscences and somewhat interrupt the narrative, I reserve the enumeration to a separate sheet, which I will call an appendix, so as to give those who interest themselves in the progress of settlement an opportunity of recognising their own names, perhaps, as well as those of friends now occupying prominent positions in Society (AD 1892).

It has been stated that in March 1837 I took possession of my two selections in King William Street and erected the first hut on the city lands. Many dwellings of a similar nature were erected on the space in front of North Terrace. Governor Hindmarsh had a large hut erected by the Royal Marines of the 'Buffalo' – Col. Light lodged in a reed hut and most of the early arrivals had tents, or shelters of sails stretched across ropes, on poles. Mr Gouger, the Colonial Secretary, was provided with a [portable] wooden house [placed]¹¹ in front of the spot where Trinity Church now stands. At this period the Church of England Service was carried out in a shed made with branches of gum trees. The Congregationalists were represented by the Rev'd Thomas Quinton Stowe who was lodged in a superb marquee supplied by the sect to which he belonged in London and they were certainly more careful of their pastor than the Colonisation Commissioners of their Governor and his chief officers. Mr Fisher, the Resident Commissioner, however took the immigrants under his special care and erected, I think, about 50 wooden cottages called 'Immigration Square' for their use in the open land west of the prolongation of Hindley Street, which led to that street being the first centre of business as the first printing establishment was erected there and a store wellstocked with useful articles soon sprang up under the auspices of Mr Featherstone. Dr Wyatt and family, and the family of the Revd C.B. Howard, Colonial Chaplain, had their first habitation in tents in front of the west end of North Terrace.

I claim to have erected the first hut on the City Lands, and also the first wooden house where the Union Bank now stands in King Wm St. This house of two rooms, twelve feet square each, was brought to South Australia in the ship 'Tam O'Shanter' and was framed by Mr White, a builder in London, who afterwards, I believe, selected in the Colony, and located himself at the outlet of the Torrens River, where the stream divided into two branches – one forming the head of what is now called the Port River, and the other headed[?] towards Glenelg. Not only did I possess the first hut, and wooden house, but the first brick erection was mine. It consisted of a kitchen, and oven, and cost me fifty pounds. While settled on my land in King William Street I engaged one of the Kangaroo Island sealers named, as well as I can recollect, John Day. I bought of him a hen and four chickens for which I paid him ten shillings, and also a young pig, which in due time grew up to maturity and promised a litter of young. She was however poisoned by a neighbour before the birth of the young, in retaliation, I believe, for the loss of one of his poultry which I shot as it was trespassing on my garden in which I had valuable seeds and plants sent me from Mauritius by my father – another neighbour invaded my garden which was fenced but I presume insufficiently, with a pig imported at a later date. The damage in this case was so serious as I had vegetables fit for the table destroyed, that I brought an action at law against the owner valuing the damage at £300. I cannot recall the issue of my appeal to law. But I was victimised myself on account of a fine large kangaroo greyhound

¹¹ Words in square brackets added in another hand.

which my servant shot dead having caught him in the act of carrying off his rations. I relate these trifling events because they serve, in some degree, to show the state of social system, and the incidents that led to many difficulties and angry demonstrations which befell the pioneers of settlement. I do not give names although I recollect them perfectly as I do not wish to allude to animosities which might pain the families of those who disturbed my proceedings, by recalling events more than fifty years old. As I have mentioned the manner in which the families of the pioneers sought to shelter themselves whilst more permanent buildings were in embryo, I may now give some account of the first buildings erected within the limits of the city. The Southern Cross Hotel was started by Mr Gilles and where it is now but more in the direction of Light Square. The building of the Government Offices was soon effected by Mr Kingston – a Supreme Court House, built by our sole Judge Mr Cooper (late Sir Charles) and rented to the Government. The Bank of South Australia lately defunct had an imposing structure on North Terrace opposite the new Parliament House. Government House arose too on its present site under the Administration of Col. Gawler in 1839; and the Adelaide Gaol, with its imposing towers, was planted where it now (1892) stands – an object to attract the attention of every arrival travelling from the Port to the City. The necessity of this prison was getting startlingly evident when it is recollected that we were invaded by escaped convicts from N.S. Wales who accompanied the overlanders in their journey down the banks of the River Murray. Their first depredations were cattle stealing, which they practised as a mode of obtaining food. Their dwellings were in the stringy bark ranges of Mount Lofty where they built for themselves slap huts, made by splitting the stringy bark trees that grow at an elevation of about 1000 feet above the sea, and form one of the most useful resources for fencing and roofing. These intruders were, however, useful to the pioneers since they alone knew how to split the stately trees ~~which grew on the Mount Lofty Range~~ and showed our settlers, fresh from a high civilisation, the way to build slab houses; and to fence in their gardens and farms. They were expert bullock drivers too whilst our English farm labourers had not yet mastered that accomplishment. A team of bullocks consisted of six oxen, and in a new country such a mode of carriage was necessary as horse teams cannot well force their way through forests of scrub, high grass and sand ridges. In descending the spurs of the Mount Lofty ranges, they, instead of the civilised dray, lashed a small tree to the back of the dray which enabled the driver to overcome slopes which otherwise would precipitate the dray to the bottom of the spur. The tree dragging along the ground caused a friction which at any angle less than forty-five degrees acted as a drag and moderated the speed gathered in the descent.

I have now to refer to the Police force commenced by Capt. Hindmarsh. Mr Inman, son of the gentleman who managed the institution of the Naval College in England, was made Superintendent of Police, and held the office until he was superseded by Major O'Halloran, of Lizard Lodge. I have given an account of the attempted murder of the Sheriff Mr Smart by an overland convict. I have now to relate an outrage committed by the Blacks. The brig 'Maria' was steering for Adelaide along the coast of Encounter Bay when she ran ashore and was totally wrecked, but many if not all of the passengers were safely landed on the coast not far to the Eastward of the Murray mouth. They commenced their journey along the coast for Adelaide when they were attacked and slaughtered by the Milmamura tribe of aborigines. There were women and children amongst those who fell under the spears of the savages, and the news of the massacre reaching Adelaide, a party of Police under Major O'Halloran, assisted by Mr Tolmer, inspector of mounted police, was despatched with orders

to punish the natives. The Police, having obtained proofs of the participation of some of the blacks, whom they chased and captured, in the murders, by finding the clothes of the women and other articles in their possession, formed a sort of court martial on the spot and hung several of the culprits in the locality of the murders. Major O'Halloran was severely blamed in the columns of the 'South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register' for this infringement of British Law, but the governor and civil authorities considered his conduct justifiable and necessary under the circumstances. The Mounted Police force had been brought into an admirable state of discipline under the training of Mr Tolmer, and obtained great credit for many daring acts. Amongst them Harry Alford frequently distinguished himself by his daring bravery. He indeed seemed to know not fear, and though a little man of no great apparent strength he would coolly face the armed bushranger and arrest him at once. There was an American black named Dwyer amongst the dangerous outlaws who committed outrages in the country districts against whom several patrols proceeded until at length he was captured. A man named Macgrath travelling to the Eastward of the Murray was found murdered by the blacks about this period. A Police patrol succeeded in capturing the murderer who, on native testimony, was said to have attacked Macgrath with a fire brand whilst the unsuspecting victim was asleep. The murderer, tried in the Supreme Court, was found guilty condemned to death, and hanged. These occurrences, and many others with particulars of which I cannot recollect, showed the necessity for a vigorous and effective Police. To Colonel Gawler is due the formation of our mounted police force, which scouring the country in all directions, emulated the steady efforts of the foot police in their arduous duties, and made the distant settlers and squatters, as the pastoral lords were called, satisfied that they were protected by a strong government.

Captain Hindmarsh during his short tenure of office omitted to pass a Police Act. This was reserved for his successor Col. Gawler who, on the 11th Oct 1839, passed an act for raising and organising a police force in the Province of South Australia - afterwards disallowed by the Queen. But Captain Hindmarsh was not idle in his attempts at legislation since the Statute book acquaints us that he passed ten different acts, not acts of Parliament, but ordinances of Council.

The first was called an "Act for the establishment of Courts of general, or quarter, and petty sessions". He also passed on the 31st of May 1837 an Act establishing a Supreme Court; and an Act to establish courts of Resident Magistrates; and, in April of the next year 1838, he passed the first act upon which our revenue is based, viz; an 'Act to impose duties on wines, spirits and tobacco.'" He then sought to provide for the establishment of law and order, and for a revenue, which, from this humble beginning now, in 1892, amounts to upwards of two millions, which I state only as an approximation, under the mark it is true, but sufficient to shew enormous progress from small beginnings –

Colonel Light died in 1839 during the early part of the rule of Colonel Gawler. From this time the surveys proceeded under the guidance of Imperial office. Captain Frome assisted by men of the Royal Sapper and Mines including Mr Maclaren, Forrest, Gardiner, and others, completed the surveys for Preliminary Land Orders.

I may now show how horticulture and farming commenced. The early settlers will recollect the name of 'Birdseye' who was despatched by Mr Lister to purchase a cargo of Timor ponies. This gentleman possessed an acre of the city lands near Mr Thomas's printing offices, somewhat near to where a public house called the 'Royal Oak' now stands. The late Mr James Chambers borrowed of me a Scotch plough which formed part of my farming outfit and with a team of bullocks, brought by Mr I Barton Hack from Tasmania broke the first sod turned up with the plough in South Australia. He was, if I recollected rightly, three days in completing the job probably working only a few hours each day. All that I wish to record is that Mr Birdseye's City acre was the first land subdued by the plough in South Australia, and that this was accomplished with my plough, for the use of which I made no charge. There had been attempts at gardening commenced by Colonel Light who came to the Colony with a garden, and seeds from England. He grew some splendid cabbages in his garden on the park lands between North Terrace and the River. He related to me that Mr Hack entered into conversation with him one day complaining, as many of the pioneers did of the poorness of the soil and the want of running streams of water. Mr Hack mentioned that he had been to the hills in an easterly course and had found no water. Colonel Light suggested to him that instead of proceeding and returning on an easterly course, he should travel along the base of the Hills from South to North. This Mr Hack did and on his return stated that he had found plenty of water. In reply to his complaints of the poorness of the soil, which at that period of the year resembled a brickfield, as it was styled in the daily press, the Colonel showed him his cabbages and convinced him that the soil, apparently dry and barren, would grow any thing in proper season and by careful cultivation.

It has been mentioned that Colonel Light sent the 'Rapid' in command of Lieutenant Field R.N. to Sydney to purchase stores and horses. Lieut. Field brought back with him some orange trees, one of which he gave me, and I planted it in my garden at Finnisbrook, which I had just then purchased from Mr John Cannon forming part of a section of eighty acres having on it a saw mill drawn by water from power. The purchase cost me one thousand pounds. This investment which turned out a failure crippled my financial position, when I found that a dry season rendered the water power ineffective. I had changed the mill from a saw mill into a flour mill the year in which I made the purchase was favoured with a good supply of rain, and the stream which turned the waterwheel was running steady for many months without any indication of failure. The dry season which had set in and the erection of other mills rendered mine a failure.

This digression has taken me away from the subject of cultivation. I must now add that having planted my orange tree at Finnisbrook it still remains there, perhaps, the first orange tree grown in South Australia, unless Lieutenant Field gave others a chance of commencing an orangery as he had done by me. Then about this time a vessel arrived from the Cape of Good Hope – with (arranged in cages) a number of vine cuttings of the choicest varieties. These were purchased and shared equally between Major O'Halloran, then located at Lizard Lodge, and myself; and thrive vigorously in my garden, which was well supplied with water. From the beginning I grew some of the finest grapes that can be produced and afterwards made excellent wine. I also planted out from their cuttings many acres to form a vineyard. But, having unfortunately to sell Finnisbrook in after years, I am unable to say whether or not my vineyard was proceeded with. In the year 1838, or 1837, I sold one

of my two preliminary land orders to Colonel Light.¹² With his, he selected a section afterwards laid out as a township called Thebarton. This, and the profits from our land agency firm, together with the sale of several water colored paintings which he sold to Mr Edward Stephens, enabled the Colonel to eke out an income in place of his former salary of £400 a year. With the proceeds of my sale of the land order, which amounted to £150, I purchased a horse and cart. The horse came from Tasmania and it cost me £90. I paid a driver, who had been a farm servant in England, two guineas a week wages and set him to work with the horse and cart to sell water to the town inhabitants and builders. After a short time he found the business so lucrative that he proposed to purchase a horse from the young Fishers and to carry it on for his own benefit. As this would have defeated the success of my investment I was obliged to hire another driver for my own horse, and to agree to a partnership with him on condition that he would drive my horse, and let my new servant drive his horse and cart. This satisfied him and we soon found work enough for both carts, as there were no others to compete with us, and buildings were being rapidly erected of brick and stone. The brickfields of Hindmarsh were being developed and there was the raw material of building to enable the pioneers of the City to commence substantial dwellings – at the end of the year before this partnership was commenced my receipts from the business of water carting amounted to nearly three hundred pounds, when unfortunately my original driver allowed the new hand to manage my horse preferring naturally to drive his own horse, although contrary to agreement. Through the ill temper of the new man, who did not understand its jibbing propensities, my horse backed the cart into the river and the horse was drowned. At this time I was no longer in the service of the government having resigned my employment as surveyor owing to the treatment of Colonel Light by the commissioners. It was an unlucky day for me when I again entered the Government service as I was in the way of doing a splendid business as head of a firm of land agents. But having been so many years accustomed to the public service I chafed at the position which my independence led me to deem incompatible with my ambition, to rise as a servant of the Imperial government. I had given up my position as an officer in the army where I had attained the rank of a Lieutenant of seven years standing, the pay and emoluments of which were equivalent to two hundred a year; and I sacrificed my title to the grant of twelve hundred acres of land in New South Wales in order to become one of the founders of a new Colony in South Australia. And these sacrifices were entirely voluntary as my correspondence with Sir Charles Colville, Colonel Stavely and the Quarter Master-General Sir Willoughby Gordon (Bart) shows. Lord Fitzroy Somerset, of the Horse Guards, on the 9th Nov 1835 certified to my good repute in a letter to Sir Richard Burke K.C.B., governor of New South Wales and in these words – ‘Mr B.T. Finnis late Lieutenant 82nd Ret, being desirous of becoming a settler in N.S. Wales, under the general order of August 25th 1834 – to which the General Commanding has no objection, I am directed to annex for your information a statement of his services, and to acquaint you that his lordship is able to report favourably of his conduct on all occasions.’ I was rising rapidly in the estimation of Downing Street after I returned to the Service as deputy Surveyor General under Colonel Frome R.E. when the Constitution Act of 1856 destroyed all my chances of progress and of a brilliant future by abolishing the offices of Colonial Secretary to which I had attained and placing me in the political position of Premier and Chief Secretary of a Colonial Ministry dependent for continuance in office on the votes of a Legislature composed of men elected by universal suffrage

¹² Marginal note here: ‘Who was Col. Light’s executor?’ (not in BTF’s hand)

and themselves ambitious of occupying the highest office in the State. I had given myself up enthusiastically and patriotically to pass this Constitution measure having in view, instead of my own interests, the honor and glory of building up for South Australia a government forming an independent Commonwealth free to make its own laws and govern itself in all matters not affecting the rights of the Sovereign and Mother Country. I had hitherto served the Colony as a nominee of the crown under a despotic, although useful and necessary regime, and had thus become obnoxious to all who had extreme democratic, or republican, tendencies and were themselves competitors for the position of Ministers of the Crown – a role for which they were competent in virtue of their business and commercial experiences. They were in no doubt right in their views and justified in stepping into power which the new Constitution placed within their reach. My mistake was in not foreseeing this consummation and remaining in a position which offered the emoluments that might have led to riches which, at all events, would have left me better able to maintain my place in the social system, and to assist the prospects of my family, than my political career has done after fifty five years of arduous struggle.