

Travels in time: the Barossa Valley in the 1850s, around 1900, and in the 1940s

Susan Marsden

South Australia's Barossa region is a richly layered historical landscape. What better way to sample it than taking a series of time tours of at significant times in the Barossa's history?¹

1. The Barossa in the 1850s

By 1850 the colony of South Australia was well established and quite prosperous. Despite the unaccustomed heat, the isolation and the usual dangers and discomforts of pioneering, many colonists were hopeful of reward from the promising lands, towns and mines. Pastoralists herded sheep and cattle as far out as the northern Flinders Ranges but the human population was concentrated in and near Adelaide, and only as far north as the Barossa and the copper towns of Kapunda and Burra. Up to 1850, the pattern of land sales demonstrated an orderly expansion from Adelaide.

The fertile soils of the Adelaide Plains and Southern Vales, the loams along the Gawler River and the valleys and basins of the eastern Mount Lofty Ranges were the logical places for pioneer agriculture.

These areas formed the 'nursery' for South Australian grain farming where adjustments to European farm practices were made through experiment ... [and] Vine cultivation was established.²

By 1850 the Lower North region was on the way to becoming the heartland of South Australia's agricultural productivity, which it remains even today.

What would we see if we took a trip to the Barossa around the year 1850? Travellers' tales of the time sketch a landscape part wild woodland and part homely scenes of farmhouses amidst cornfields, with some local mines operating more on hope than profit. Main roads were merely rough bullock tracks and most other conveniences, such as the wayside inns, were also primitive. But these were seen as temporary stages in pioneering a land full of potential. There were several 'rising' towns and they were surrounded by a rapidly increasing population of farming families.

Such are the impressions of a writer signing himself simply as 'Old Colonist'. In 1851 he published a series of articles in the *South Australian Register* describing the settled districts as he travelled about them. In January he and a companion took the road to the north. They passed through Gawler Town and continued towards Lyndoch Valley through heavily timbered country.

The route from Gawler was much the same as that taken by the Surveyor-General Colonel William Light when he became the first European to discover and name Lynedoch Valley and the Barrosa Range (both were later misspelled. The term 'Barossa Valley' was not used for many years, if at all in the nineteenth century). Colonel Light hoped to find a useful pass across the Mount Lofty Ranges to the River Murray by this north eastern route. That is why the main streets of Gawler and the

Barossa towns are all named Murray Street and there is a settlement called Light Pass (although this is in the wrong place as the actual pass is further north).³

The 'Old Colonist' found this well-travelled road to Lyndoch Valley was heavy and sandy, and detoured along a better track through 'groves of silver wattles bursting into bloom'.⁴ Soon, he saw enclosures and fields of wheat, 'with farmhouses and barns scattered in every direction'.

The travellers rested at a simple inn, called the 'Lord Lyndoch'. They were told that a township had been laid out, although the only buildings to mark the site of Lyndoch besides the inn were the blacksmith and a general store cum post office. Further down the road was a chapel and a school.

Lyndoch Valley appeared to be cultivated in every part which we had opportunity to visit. At the base of the ranges the corn land extends along the whole flat intersected by roads from Gawler Town and Bethany, and from the river to the Enterprise Mine, and the soil appears favourable to wheat, although in some places the crops yielded scantily.⁵

By then the valley had been cultivated for upwards of ten years. So great were expectations of wheat yields that the first flour mill north of Adelaide was built here. This picturesque windmill was described by Daniel Brock in his diary of 1843:

I found the valleys through which I passed very beautiful, especially Lyndoch Valley. Cultivation to a very great extent is here carried on. The scenery in this valley is very much heightened by a mill, which stands very boldly in the midst of cornfields.⁶

Two artists' views of Lyndoch Valley in the 1840s include that same windmill. John Skinner Prout, 'Barossa Ranges' c1843, shows both the mill and another typical scene, that of a family travelling with their high-sided German wagon hauled by bullocks while the family plods alongside. George Fife Angas, 'Lyndoch Valley towards Barossa Range, 1846' depicts a shepherd and his dogs and sheep - in the days before wire fencing enclosed the flocks - with the windmill shown on the far left. Not surprisingly, as Angas was a son of the region's largest landowner George Fife Angas, he described the country around Lyndoch Valley and the Barossa Range as 'of a very superior character', with well-watered valleys, and gentle hills 'covered with good grass'.⁷

In the few short years since Prout's painting the Angas view shows how many more of the original blue gums (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*), peppermint gums (*Eucalyptus odorata*) and wattles have been cleared from the valley floor leaving some few individual trees and river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) strung along the rivers and creeks.

The 'Old Colonist' did not notice a flour mill in 1851, so it must have already failed because of the unreliable winds. He did record plans to build a steam mill at Lyndoch, and this started operations in 1853.⁸

There were both English and German settlers here, as represented in the different styles of early houses in and around Lyndoch. However, despite the short distance between Lyndoch and Tanunda (about seven miles) the writer made no mention of Germans until setting off from Lyndoch Valley 'to explore the regions of German industry in the thickly populated settlements distributed through an extensive tract of country around Tanunda, Bethany, and Langmeil, chiefly the freehold domain of Mr Angus [sic].'⁹

By then the first Lutheran settlement had been planted in the Lyndoch Valley. This was Hoffnungsthal (Hope Valley). A colony of about 30 families from Posen in Germany rented a few hundred acres from the South Australian Company about a lagoon in 1847. Each family worked blocks of 10 to 12 acres and built cottages and a church. Pastor Meyer of Bethany founded the congregation.

In 1850 there were also Aboriginal residents in the valley, the Peramangk. Many outside groups also camped there, the Ngadjuri on long hunting trips from their lands near Port Wakefield and Murray tribes on their way to get rations in Adelaide. Peramangk numbers were already dwindling, mainly in this area because of the loss of native animals and deaths from disease, but they often helped the new settlers, for instance by harvesting wheat.

Their understanding of the natural environment was far greater than that of the newcomers. This is revealed by the fate of Hoffnungsthal. The settlers did not heed the Aborigines' advice against flood-prone land and in 1853 the lagoon flooded the area. The settlement was abandoned. Now, only the recent monument on the site of the church, some scattered foundations and the lagoon-itself mark the site.¹⁰

In February 1851 on his way from the Lyndoch Valley to Tanunda, the 'Old Colonist' passed Jacob's Creek. He described a substantial farmhouse and barn which belonged to William Jacob. Another solid stone building was erected at about the same time at Jacob's Creek by Johann Gramp, showing how the more prosperous settlers were building to last. Gramp was one of the first to plant vines in the district, in 1847. The first wine was produced in 1850. This was the origins of Orlando Winery but that takes us well beyond 1850.

The geologist Johann Menge, who also lived at Jacob's Creek in 1850, predicted that vineyards, orchards and corn would flourish in 'new Silesia'. In the 1850s, the Barossa was best-known for its pastures, wheatfields, orchards, and the productive gardens of German folk. Grapes were grown for family use and by some few British and German landowners in small commercial quantities, but vine-growing and wine production on a large scale did not begin until the 1890s.¹¹

Like the 'Old Colonist' of 1851 we shall pass 'several neat German cottages, with... a few acres of land allotted to each', and find ourselves in Tanunda. There were then about 60 buildings with all the 'usual tradesmen, Germans'. The district at that time was named after the town. Although the township was small the writer observed:

...undoubtedly the surrounding neighbourhood, with the villages of Bethany to the east, and Langmeil to the west, has a very large number of inhabitants; larger than is perhaps supposed. The district was quoted to us... as containing

5000 souls. Whether that number included the inhabitants of the country extending to the Light Pass, we could not make out; but this tract is thickly populated with Germans from one end to the other.¹²

The best way to see this for yourself is to climb Mengler's Hill and look out over the Barossa, across Bethany and the dense patchwork of fields, clusters of native scrub, towns and church steeples. This scene expresses the enduring impact of those pioneering German farmers and villagers.

Some remnants of the traditional *waldhufendorf* (forest farm village) layout of Bethany can also be seen from Mengler's Hill. Two heritage assessments of German-settled areas in South Australia, the *Barossa Survey* and the *Hahndorf Survey*, describe the historical development of village forms in Germany and their reproduction in the colonised lands of northeast Germany and then in remote colonial settings such as South Australia.

In South Australia the British and the German settlers reproduced two basic types of European rural settlements: the Celtic or isolated farmstead placed on its own block-field system and the nucleated, with all farmsteads grouped at the centre of the village lands. A characteristic village form throughout Germany was the irregular clustered village, *hufendorf*. This was surrounded by meadows, common pastureland and strips of arable land called *hufen*, the cultivation of which was regulated by each village community.

The *hufendorf* settlement was used by the Franks as early as the 9th century A.D Later, it was used by German colonists on their eastward movement and, finally, the Prussian Government of the 18th century laid out numerous *hufen* villages...

Two basic *hufen* village forms emerged: [in] the forest farm village *waldhufendorf* ... two rows of farmhouses were ranged along both sides of a stream, separated from it by roads. The farmhouses were situated on their farm strip *hufe*, which stretched from the river bed to the forest ... The separate *hufen* lay side by side, and the continuous village thus formed closely followed the river bed and was often several kilometres long.¹³

Bethany was clearly defined as a *waldhufendorf*. In the English sense, it was not really a village at all but a group of farmhouses, and that is evident even today. There were few features such as at service towns like Angaston or Tanunda which were more typical of rural South Australia. There were, for example, no public buildings at Bethany apart from the all-important Lutheran church and school, and few commercial or industrial structures, other than the mill, 'Pop' Tscharke's blacksmith shop and Keil's butchery. Most goods and services were self-produced or bartered between families, provided by itinerant traders or bought from Tanunda.

Bethany had a variety of small and larger farmlets around 1850. Most houses and the farmland were on the northern side of the Government Road, which was the southern limit of Angas' land. Narrow strips of farmland stretched back across Tanunda Creek with the houses and farm buildings placed close to the road. The numerous buildings reflect the mixed farming practices of the settlers.

The Germans never depended on one crop, unlike the British farmers who soon concentrated on wheat alone. While many British farms had a high turnover of owners when bad seasons or poor world prices forced them to sell, the semi-subsistence German farms tended to stay in the same family for generations. This remains a characteristic of the Barossa today.¹⁴

The best examples of early farm buildings at Bethany are the red gum slab sided implement store and the adjacent mud and stone barn which has been strengthened with red gum corner posts. The use of structural timbers reveals the imported cultural attitudes of the settlers. Such building techniques were only one step removed from the traditional complete timber framing. These people came from the heavily forested regions of Silesia, Brandenburg and Posen where building traditions related to the use of timber. Brick and stone were suspect, yet stone was readily available in the Barossa and was soon used in conjunction with timber. High gabled timber roof structures can be seen here and on German descendants' farms and town blocks throughout the valley. Most now have galvanised iron roofs replacing the original thatch or timber shingle covering.¹⁵

The faithful reproduction of such cultural forms as these building types lasted for about twenty years only. Even by the early 1850s change was evident, for example in the use of stone, in the addition of rear lean-to's and of the 'Australian' verandahs. Although the residents of Bethany and their descendants lived very modest lives, their houses were progressively enlarged and modernised. It is as well to remember that even buildings dating from the 1840s and 1850s reflect 130 years of continuous use and alteration.

These changes are obvious when we compare Bethany today with the often-reproduced view by J.W. Giles, 'Bethany, a village of German settlers 1847'. After the expenses of emigration, purchase of land, seed, stock and implements there was no money left to build more than these very simple one-roomed dwellings. By around 1850 many were enlarged but most remained small and exhibited the plan forms of the old Prussian farmhouses. The Keil House at Bethany is one of the best-preserved examples.

The village common by the creek on the opposite side of the road was part of a large common grazing ground extending into the Barossa Range. A cowherd was employed to take the cattle to and from the common each day. His house was one of the few built during the 1840s on that side of the road. The poverty of his family and descendants is obvious in the tiny dimensions of the building which was later called the Landhaus.

The present church is obviously of much later date than 1850 (it dates from 1883). The original church and school were built in the 1840s as soon as the labour could be spared. These stood beside the old cemetery. The Lutheran church and German-speaking Lutheran school were essential to the existence of a community such as Bethany. They were the basis for the close-knit and socially docile nature of these rural communities and reinforced the continuing use of German language and customs well after the time these might have given way to the majority British culture.

What was life really like in Bethany in the 1850s? Perhaps poor Otto, begging for his supper by composing poems for special occasions, can tell in his own words. These verses are from his 'Song of praise for Bethanien' (in translation):

To Bethanien, to Bethanien
I will make my way,
Where broken cottages are standing,
All the children go barefeet.
Cowsheds and pigstys smell dreadfully,
People sink down in the mud.
Where it is dark all round,
For that place my heart is longing very much.

In Bethanien, in Bethanien,
Where the children, the red-cheeked,
Are hurrying to school,
On the way have many fights,
Where Mister Topp swings the cane,
That it stings through the pants.
Sounds of sorrow become loud,
When he tans the skin...
In the evening after a long time
Every woman comes from the garden,
High their aprons are filled with grass and cabbage,
Calling loudly for their cows,
Hearing happily the cries of the calves.
Pigs grunt, chickens cackle,
Until the sun is waving blood red,
Sinking into the floods of the ocean...

In Bethanien, in Bethanien,
Pious people come together,
After church the brothers march
Singing many thousand pious songs.
The women also join in
Beautifully adorned without affectation
And from the spire bim, bam, bim
The bells are ringing loudly.
Ah, Mister Pastor, oh Klapastor,
Don't trip up on the cobblestones.
Stones, water puddles, dung
Do give us a lot of trouble and want,
While the 'soul-shepherd's voice'
Proclaims soon with loud fury
Blusteringly from the pulpit,
What kind of man he is...

Around Bethanien, around Bethanien
Lie villages of many names,
Krondorf, Langmeil, Schreiberbau.

Stop, I am getting weak,
Bring me wines from the cellars,
Fetch the bottles and pour out.
The Bethaniens should live
And their wives as well ... ¹⁶

There is a direct cultural link between the Barossa German settlements of the 1850s and now. The people of these areas, in Ian Harmstorf's words, 'remain the sole custodians of the early culture... still primarily due to the traditions laid down by the Lutheran Church'.¹⁷

The role of the Lutheran pastors and schoolteachers was crucial. Pastors such as August Kavel were responsible for arranging emigration and negotiating with landagents or landlords such as Angas. The 28 founding families of Bethany came to 'New Silesia' in 1842 with Pastor Gotthard Fritzche. The first resident minister was Pastor Heinrich Meyer, from 1846 to 1862. He lies buried at Bethany Pioneer Cemetery.

Both Kavel and Fritzche ministered at Bethany until Kavel founded Langmeil in 1843 (this remains distinctive but is now a suburb of Tanunda). In 1846 at a Synod at Bethany there was a schism between the two pastors which would split the Lutheran Church in Australia for 119 years. So, by the early 1850s, already several opposition Lutheran churches were being built, all within close proximity. They can be seen everywhere in the Barossa today.

If we proceed to Light Pass, like the 'Old Colonist' on tour in 1851, we find a settlement no bigger than it was then, but with the two churches of the original separate Lutheran congregations. There are several very good examples of houses and farm buildings built around this time.

As we climb towards Angaston the physical and the cultural landscapes begin to change. In 1846 when George French Angas praised the fine pastureland of the Barossa Range, he described the Lyndoch Valley region as a rich agricultural tract producing some of the finest wheat in the world. This distinction between the pasturelands of the ranges and the farmlands of the valley floor has persisted. It was reinforced from Angas' time, and with the active involvement of his family, by a profound cultural separation which kept the parochial German farmers and tradespeople in the Barossa Valley and the mainly English and Scottish pastoralists with their State-wide interests, based in homesteads on large holdings in the ranges.

Angaston itself was a meeting point between the two. Around 1850 Angaston was merely a small collection of buildings. The 'Old Colonist' got lost on the uncertain track and had to ask the way of a shepherd lad. He was kind to 'Angastown', calling it a 'rising township' with about 22 houses, a store, post office, the Angaston Hotel and a chapel of the Independents (the Union Chapel at Penrice). This is now one of the oldest church buildings standing in the Barossa. In accordance with the strong religious and community-minded principles of the Angas family, it was built in 1844 as a Free Chapel for the use of all settlers.¹⁸

The 'Old Colonist' aptly commented, 'Under the fostering care of Mr Angas, this god-child of his may become a favourite spot in a very short time'.¹⁹ It was already favoured by his artist son who painted a fine view of 'Angaston evening' in the 1840s.

By the early 1850s the Angas family was beginning to prosper from its investments in South Australia. George French Angas, a brother John Howard Angas, and a married sister, Sarah Evans, were sent out in 1843, John to superintend his father's interests. The three stations established by them during these years were Lindsay Park, Tarrawatta, where John first lived in a portable shepherd's box, and Collingrove.

John was a tireless and determined worker. He soon accommodated himself to the heat, discomfort and toil associated with pioneering pastoralism. He rehabilitated the family fortunes sufficiently to convince his parents that they should also move to South Australia. George Fife was heartened by the rents received from his German tenants, and he encouraged others to join their relatives in South Australia.

John was not nearly so impressed with the Germans and wrote asking his father not to send out any more. He considered the women to be admirable workers but found the men stubborn and tradition-bound. He struggled to impart concepts of modern animal husbandry (he became a famous stock breeder) and to get across his capitalist ethos to the German farmers. They expected a more feudal role, for example resisting the concept of 'halves'. John was himself a relentless worker, often overbearing and highly moralistic. In the ranges his views prevailed. It is said that by 1850 the Angas family had decided that the Germans would be kept separate on the valley floor. Even today there are no German place names and relatively few families of German origin to be found in the ranges.²⁰

George Fife and Rosetta Angas arrived to an enthusiastic South Australian welcome in 1851. They moved to Lindsay House and shortly afterwards gave John some money to build a small home for his new English bride, Suzanne. The new homestead was designed by Sarah's husband, Henry Evans, and was built in about 1856. This was called Collingrove after Suzanne's maiden name.²¹ Collingrove is now owned by the National Trust of South Australia, and so can be visited on our tour.

Like other station homesteads of the period there was a complex of buildings at Collingrove. They included the coach-house, stables, workshop and workers' accommodation and further afield, the usual spacious woolshed and a family church.

The homestead itself, once described as a 'glorified villa', was continuously added to and upgraded, not gaining its present 22 rooms nor appearance until the 1920s. So, what we see at 'around 1850' is a grand homestead-in-the-making. Within it, we shall find much of the history of the Angas family members who were of such importance in the history of the whole Barossa.

2: The Barossa around 1900

In 1908 the government published a *Handbook of South Australia*, a now-familiar style of promotional book on the progress and opportunities of the State as a guide for immigrants, tourists and settlers. The author, D.J. Gordon, could not but help mention the disastrous decade of the 1890s when an Australia-wide depression combined with local drought (even in the favoured Barossa) to close farms, cause the loss of jobs and

businesses and the emigration of thousands of South Australians. Gordon wrote that production was maintained and South Australians weathered the crisis to vote on becoming a State and member of the new Commonwealth of Australia.

The seventh decade in the history of ... the Central State of United Australia opened full of promise. Confidence was restored in financial and commercial circles, trade moved on the upgrade, and the outlook for rural producers was never brighter ... The public revenue is buoyant ... and in all directions there is a strong demand for land and a growing disposition to develop the natural resources of the country ... Wool and wheat have been the two great staple products from the first. In later years wine has come rapidly to the front.²²

Gordon's enthusiasm was justified in the early 1900s, no more so than in the Barossa, as will be seen when we return to that time and place for another visit. Keep in mind that we shall see a place which is the culmination of all the changes in cultural practice and landuse since 1850.

South Australians of the time were also caught up in a far-off war which did more to emphasise their fervent loyalty to the British Empire than to promote a sense of nationhood as Australians. The war between Britain and the Boers in South Africa lasted for three years from 1899. More than 1,500 men were sent to the war from South Australia. Such ardour for an imperial war was repeated in 1914 at the onset of the 'Great War'. A dark side to that imperialistic mood appeared first during the Boer War, and would resurface after 1914 with dreadful consequences for South Australia's Germans.

In 1899 and again in 1900 their newspaper, *Australische Zeitung*, questioned why British Australians could criticise the war but German Australians could not, without being called traitors. The paper suggested that, although they were citizens who had made contributions in agriculture, wine-making and craftsmanship, Germans were still seen as foreigners: 'we are only tolerated here as long as we are humble, diffident and grateful, suppress our views and feelings, keep our place, and don't get ideas above our station in life.'²³

This was also precisely what the Lutheran Church preached to its mostly working class and farming congregations. Now displayed in the local museum is a wall blessing of the period - such as commonly hung in Lutheran homes - with the peculiarly apt inscription, which translates, 'In every storm and time of need may the faithful God protect you'.

The leaders of the German community believed that they could be both loyal British subjects and 'bound to our German Fatherland in our hearts and feelings'. The use of 'Fatherland' shows that South Australia's Germans were also affected by the new national imperialism, in their case, that of Germany. Before the unification of Germany in 1871, there was no such place as one nation. The pioneers' identity rested more in their Lutheranism than their 'German-ness'. They were often, more correctly, called Prussians. In 1900 South Australia's Germans, ignoring the warning of the Boer War tensions, believed: 'It is certainly a proud feeling to be a German, also for us as good Australians'.²⁴

This dual loyalty, this exuberance of a youthful Australia and an optimistic faith in the family feeling between Britain and Germany, is vividly expressed in a poster of about 1900. Two happy children march towards the future, the girl holding a British flag and the boy with German helmet, gun and sword.

Just as South Australians in general became more critical of the persistence of the local German culture, the German community was becoming anglicised. Middle class Germans and almost all who lived in Adelaide had lost most traces of their Germanness, even their use of the language. Country Germans still clung to their customs but, as an official visitor observed in 1913, the 'good German way of doing things is being swallowed by the superficial Australian way'. As for the Lutheran Church, 'even when it spoke and felt German one could no longer speak of a German Church'.

Photographs taken in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries illustrate a strongly-defined hybrid German-Australian culture in that heartland, the Barossa. This was expressed also in the local dialect, *Barossa Deutsch*. By the late nineteenth century in the Barossa the already old-fashioned German language was mixed with English words and Australian phrases. By about 1920 this was completely different to the 'high Deutsch' spoken by someone recently from Germany. The unique dialect is still spoken by some people today and it colours the accents of many others. It has been described by the locally-born author Colin Thiele as 'that quaintly inbred and hybrid language evolved from a century of linguistic isolation'.²⁵

Gottlieb Falkenberg and his family were photographed with their wagon in about 1870. Well into the 1900s, families travelled in these distinctive German wagons which were an archaic form even when the original colonists left Prussia. Anna Graetz married Philip Tate in 1888 at St. John's Church, Tanunda. To please both her German family and pastor and her husband's English family, Anna was photographed both in the traditional German black wedding dress and in white. However, even in the early 1900s more than 85% of German Lutherans continued to marry other Lutherans within their own communities.²⁶

The traditional participation in community and family entertainment was carried on in Australia. By the late nineteenth century such entertainment had been adapted for popular use even beyond the German settlements. Music was very popular. Families taught boys to play brass instruments and girls to play piano. In the early years bandsmen accompanied the singing during church services. It has been suggested that brass instruments were used because the emigrants from Germany could not afford the effort or expense of bringing organs. Later, local brass bands and Liedertafel (male choirs) were formed. The Adelaide Liedertafel was formed in 1858 and the Tanunda Liedertafel in 1861. Around 1900 most of the music played and sung were the familiar folk songs and Lutheran hymns: the old Breslau hymnbook (widely used until about 1900) held 1,929 hymns.²⁷

Housing clearly expressed this amalgam of German tradition, adaption to local circumstances and the emerging Australian idiom. By 1900 many new houses in the Barossa were being built not by family members but by tradesmen who commonly used the 'villa' style which was typical in South Australia at large. On the farms such modern houses were often built beside the original homes, barns, stables and sheds

adding to the neatly defined courtyard which derived from the courtyard arrangements common in old Europe. The old farm buildings themselves were still put to good use, sometimes, as happens even today, with an extra covering of straw thrown over the thatched roof.

At the same time, many families still had to build their own homes. In marginal scrublands such as the Murray Flat only a few miles from the Barossa, second and third generations used mallee and native pine with pug and stone to build houses as primitive as their ancestors'. The great out-migration from the old German settlements in South Australia began as early as the 1860s. By 1900 there was a significant German presence in far places and there were more German farmers in Queensland than in South Australia.

In the Barossa itself, German descendants continued to raise families of ten or more children in the old homes. Mr and Mrs Fietze and their many children posed for the photographer in about 1890 at their home at Neu Mecklenberg (Gomersal).

Since 1850 there had been other changes in the Barossa. Doctrinal discord had again torn apart congregations who promptly erected new churches. Between about 1880 and 1910 several impressive churches were built and old churches were demolished or enlarged. These included the Tabor Church in Tanunda and the churches at Bethany, Langmeil and Gnadenfrei (Marananga).

At harvest time all the valley's churches celebrated *Erntedankfest*, Harvest Thanksgiving, when the first fruits of the harvest were offered to God. Possibly around 1900 this tradition of harvest festivals influenced the increasing numbers of Barossa wineries, grape growers and pickers to celebrate the end of each year's vintage. The celebrations at Seppeltsfield were renowned. On the night the last wagonload of grapes rolled in the pickers, growers and work-hands gathered in the winery's big dining hall. As the Seppelt family history recorded,

...the fiddlers scraped until their arms were ready to drop off, the accordion players stretched their bellows and tapped time with their feet, and there was music, merriment and song far into the night.²⁸

Mention of the wineries is a reminder of another major change in the Barossa since the 1850s. Until the 1870s this was predominantly a wheat growing region. The traditional practice of intensive tilling contributed to declining soil fertility. Together with the opening up of new wheat growing areas in the colony's mallee country this resulted in a marked decline in the Barossa production. By 1900 cereal crops were grown in only small quantities.

Acreages of orchards, olive groves and gardens increased but by far the biggest increase was in vineyards. By 1900 the South Australian acreage was more than three times greater than it was in 1890. Even by 1900 the Barossa did not dominate South Australian wine production as it does today: the Adelaide and McLaren Vale districts were the main wine areas. However, there was a great expansion in vineyards and wine making in the Barossa and grapes and wine became the major income earner for the local German inhabitants.²⁹

The stimulus for such a remarkably rapid increase lay outside the state. In the 1890s the disease *phylloxera* destroyed vineyards in Victoria and New South Wales. Large plantings of *phylloxera*-free vines were made in the Barossa, bearing fruit in time to take advantage of the British government's abolished preference to South African wines.

New wineries were set up, such as Cleland and Co.'s Chateau Tanunda and Tolley, Scott and Tolley's Angas Park Distillery. The old wineries, such as Orlando, Seppelts and Gramps, were greatly expanded. Winery buildings of a massive scale and elaborate style were built, starting a trend in the valley. They include such showpieces as Seppeltsfield, Yalumba and Chateau Tanunda. Besides the confidence and prosperity of the times, buildings such as these also demonstrate the skilled design and craftsmanship which put to good use high quality building stones which were available in the district, including bluestone (a form of slate), ironstone (a conglomerate coloured by the iron content) and marble. The two storey winery at Yalumba is built of blue marble quarried near Angaston.

One of the cultural features of the Barossa persisted: few of the German families could afford the enormous capital expense such wineries represented. With some notable exceptions (such as Seppelts and Orlando) most of the big wineries were established either by local British descendants or, in this period, by Adelaide-based firms. The Germans provided the crucial workforce; growers, pickers, coopers, wine-makers, carriers, building on their traditional skills and interests.

The foundation of the industry had been well and truly set, and the qualities of hard work, knowledge and grape husbandry peculiar to the first settlers were to remain a characteristic of the vigneron of the Barossa.³⁰

We shall visit four main sites in the Barossa which demonstrate the diversity in landuse and variety of living conditions in the early 1900s.

First, we'll join the throng of curious onlookers at the Barossa Reservoir. In 1900 this was under construction by the Engineer-in-Chief's Department as the highest dam in Australia and one of the first true thin wall arch dams in the world. Four hundred workmen and their families were camped at the site. The reservoir was completed in 1902 and served the area between here and Port Wakefield. Most visitors are more interested in the 'Whispering Wall', which passes the slightest sound along the curved face from one end to the other.³¹

Living conditions were almost as rough at the nearby Barossa Goldfields. Alluvial gold was struck in Spike Gulley in 1868 and within the month 4,000 miners had rushed to the new Eldorado. With them came the 'camp followers', the grog suppliers and prostitutes. Twelve hotels opened their doors to a roaring trade, but only one permanent building ruin stands today.

Soon, there were as many as 7,000 residents: Australian, English, Irish, German and Chinese, each nationality digging its own type of rounded or square shafts, as can be seen. Within four years 50,000 ounces (1,550 kg) of gold was recovered and over the life of the field (to the 1930s) twice that amount was won, ranking the Barossa field as South Australia's second largest producer.³²

What was there by 1900? Four stamp batteries were erected on the field during the 1890s and about 600 men were employed by the companies concerned. The remains of the Excelsior Mine is most evident with its large mounds and a stone and cement base where the hoppers stood.

Most of the miners lived in tents or in small wattle and daub cottages with massive stone chimneys. Two such houses (dating from the 1860s) still stand further up the road today. One of these was owned by Thomas Barritt, the shopkeeper who supplied stores to the miners. There was also a public school (opened in 1878 and now a private house), hotels, butchers and a Church of England.

So the township of Barossa was still quite active in 1900 but its life was nearly at an end. At 200 feet water was struck and the pumps of that era could not remove it. The mines were flooded and then the war brought the abandonment of the field, although a few hopefuls continued to eke a living there.³³

Now we travel into the valley proper, through Lyndoch and Tanunda, which was described at the time of our tour as follows:

The town is well laid out with wide streets and good footpaths. It is well situated on the North Para River ... and having from the first been occupied by a thrifty and industrious class bears unmistakable evidence of the prosperity which accompanies those characteristics. It was originally the home of German immigrants, who exhibited their love for the Fatherland by reproducing it, as far as possible, in the new country, and the effect has been permanent. It is to be seen in the names on the signboards, in the architecture of the dwellings, the vehicles and implements in use on the farms, the tools of workmen..., and the method of working. German is the language in constant use, though English is spoken also ... Some degree of blending and adaption is, of course, inevitable, and the institutions of Tanunda in many particulars resemble those of other country towns.³⁴

We continue through 'the important township' of Nuriootpa with its 400 residents in 1909 and then climb again into hillier country at Angaston. All visitors admired Angaston's setting in a pleasant valley enclosed by hills. Another traveller of our time, May Vivienne, wrote in 1908:

A few miles farther brought me to the pretty and progressive little town of Angaston, which is surrounded by prolific wheatfields, orchards, and vineyards... The scenery around Angaston is simply lovely... Angaston is a town with about 1,000 inhabitants with the usual banks, hotels, churches, and an extra good library in the fine institute, mostly built of the splendid stone for which Angaston is noted. There is a fine park, showground, up-to-date tennis courts, and ... a special and beautiful playground for children in a most delightful spot ... It appears to be an ideal little town.³⁵

The district's natural endowments contributed to the town's evident prosperity and even its physical appearance as the town was built literally on marble. From the 1870s 'an inexhaustible supply of pure crystalline marble' of all colours was quarried at

Angaston Marble Quarries by James and William Sibley. This was used to great effect in almost all the principal buildings of town and district, as we can see. Further afield, the marble was used in thousands of gravestones and after the First World War in soldiers' memorials in dozens of towns and in Adelaide.³⁶

We'll take a walk along Murray Street, Angaston's main street. The buildings lining this pleasant road seem little changed from the early years of this century. At that time one could see evidence both of the town's 50 years of development and of a recent spurt of growth. Several of the early cottages and shops still stand, most of them built away from the river on the southern side of Murray Street towards the western end of the town.

Despite a run of poor seasons in the 1890s, when drought followed flood followed by drought again, the spread of orchards, studs, vineyards, and mixed farms all contributed to a rebuilding and expansion in the town. Then in 1911 the railway arrived at Angaston, the Barossa being 60 years behind Kapunda, to the north, and Gawler to the south, in being connected by rail to Adelaide. As you read the foundation stones on the buildings or refer to Barry Chinner's book on *Angaston Stores*, you will notice how many of the grand new or enlarged buildings date from around 1912 as a result of local productivity and the impetus of the new railway.³⁷

There is an early twentieth century photograph looking along Murray Street to the east that shows a fine, solid bank, built in 1912 as a branch of the National Bank. In the same year Mrs Elizabeth McDonald enlarged the Commercial Hotel (now Barossa Brauhaus Hotel) which can be seen in the same view.

Angaston marble was used to extend the handsome Angaston Hotel in 1914 although the original single storey hotel of 1846 can still be seen alongside, facing Murray Street, with its stables at the back. Behind the hotel stone walls mark the site of the public pound where straying stock were locked up, the residents, at around the time of our visit, complaining bitterly of the bellowing of the cattle.

Nearby, Angaston marble has been put to dramatic effect in the town's pride and joy, the new Institute of 1911, beyond which can be seen the beautiful Congregational Church of 1878. Both buildings, and many other institutions in Angaston, were strongly supported by the Angas family, who also subsidised the original Institute which stands in Murray Street.

In other ways, the character of the street is now very different. Twentieth century 'tidying up' has destroyed town orchards, old gardens, cottages and shops, paved the dirt road and removed the straying cows, the mobs of sheep jostling and crying, the great teams of horses which hauled wagon loads of crated fruit to market before the railway was opened. Hill and Co. coaches no longer start from the old post office with their precarious balance of passengers, *Barossa Deutsch* is rarely heard at street corners or along the bar at the 'bottom pub' (Angaston Hotel) and the Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, when members rang a set of English bells given by J.H. Angas are no more. But for the cars the town is quieter now, partly because of these changes in its street life and partly because economic activity and the pervading sense of progress reached a peak all those years ago, between the time of our visit and the 1920s.

The same might be said of our final destination on this trip: Seppeltsfield. In the early 1900s Seppeltsfield was miraculous to behold, for this huge and decorative winery complex was also one of the state's busiest rural industries, run as a benevolent empire by the large Seppelt family, who lived and worked there alongside the dozens of workers.

In 1851 Joseph Seppelt, a well-off Silesian immigrant, bought 300 acres here, bringing with him from home his family, several workers and skills in the tobacco business. A homestead was built which occupies pride of place at the centre of the winery complex, near the offices. This original homestead was still occupied by Seppelts in 1900 and by descendants until 1960.

Seppelt planned to grow tobacco but soon found that it was unsuited to the climate while vines flourished. He made his first wine in Mrs Seppelt's dairy in 1855. There were two sons and a daughter in the family. Benno was the only one who took an interest in the business but he proved to have a genius for it. He and his father built the first substantial winery in 1867. This three storey bluestone structure was on a sloping site to take advantage of the gravity system of passing the juice from one tank to the next. This building is now part of the main cellar complex.

Changes in technique and Benno's ambitious building programme soon vastly expanded the cellars and created a surrounding industrial and residential village. Joseph died in 1868 and Benno took charge. He married in 1870. Over the next 40 years, while Mrs. Seppelt gave birth to 16 children (three died in childhood) and supervised the house, gardens, pigs and hens, Benno oversaw a building programme which, by about 1910 had produced most of the massive complex still admired by visitors today.³⁸

In turn, four sons, the eldest of them Oscar, worked in the business. The names of all the children are painted on barrels in the blending cellar. In the early years of the twentieth century Benno and his sons expanded production at home and interstate, taking over other wineries within the Barossa (including Chateau Tanunda and Dorrien), in Victoria and New South Wales, and setting up branches in the other capital cities.

The centrally placed cellars and offices were built as an extension of the 1867 winery and above the original cellars between 1876 and 1901. During the same period separate buildings for a vinegar works, distillery, bondstore and maturing sheds and an innovative new winery were constructed either in stone or galvanised iron.

The immense iron winery was carefully sited on a slope to allow for an efficient gravity feed system. At vintage time thousands of tons of grapes were crushed at the top then the juice passed in stages down through the 120 fermenting tanks in six double rows in terraces. Grape crushing was carried on here until 1986. Above the now-empty slate tanks in the vast winery building hangs a sign in German which reads (in translation): 'Drink, drink brothers, drink and leave your sorrows at home'.

May Vivienne ³⁹was amazed by this building, the largest winery in the world, by the imposing interior view and the great tube which carried the wine nearly a quarter of a

mile to the cellars. Over one million gallons of wine could be stored in the spacious cellars.

Of equal interest to the wine-making and winery buildings was the daily life of Seppeltsfield. As Burgess observed in 1909:

The Seppeltsfield works are extensive enough in themselves to constitute a village, and afford enough work for its population. During the vintage season upwards of a hundred men are engaged, who sit down to meals in the big dining-room; but the grapes handled in the crushing- and fermenting-works are drawn from vineyards in places within a radius of several miles, and for the work of picking alone from 1,500 to 2,000 pairs of hands are required... Between Mr. Benno Seppelt and his employees the most cordial relations exist. The hospitality of the house is proverbial, and in vintage time a hundred persons are provided for in the large dining-hall, while it is not uncommon thing for twenty or thirty to sit down at the family table. At such times six sheep are killed every day, and sixty loaves of bread baked daily.⁴⁰

May Vivienne remarked that the Seppeltsfield pickers were mainly young girls: a present employee, Gertrude Wutke, has lived and worked at Seppeltsfield for more than 65 years, having started picking as a five year old with her parents. In 1908 Mrs Vivienne noticed with approval that 'Many of the girls are good-looking types of the maidens of Australia, and in their neat print dresses, shady hats or sunbonnets, look very tidy.'

The young men tended to do the heavier work of treating the grapes at the winery. Crushing goes on at the same time as picking so that there is little moisture loss. Out of vintage season there were fewer workers as cellaring took far fewer men. However, Vivienne watched workers at the blacksmith, the vinegar factory and the cooperage, 'where eleven men were busily engaged at work turning out the innumerable casks required for the wine and vinegar trade'.

Most permanent workers lived at Seppeltsfield. The married men rental-purchased cottages (the size of the house depending on their position in the organisation) and single men bunked down in one of the maturing sheds. Two houses opposite the weighbridge were for the licensing agents.

In quiet seasons or when there was a general downturn in business, the Seppelts avoided laying off their permanent workers by giving them other jobs about the place. It is well-known that during the 1930s depression Oscar kept the men employed planting the impressive rows of palms alongside the long entrance road.

Mrs. Vivienne described Benno Seppelt as very popular and looked on as the benefactor of the district. She said that he was certainly acting on 'the maxim that it is the duty of every man to leave the world a little better than he found it by being the guide, philosopher and friend to his employees'.⁴¹

It seems appropriate that, as we leave Seppeltsfield, we pass the family mausoleum. Although this was not built until 1927 the building and its beautiful situation

overlooking Seppeltsfield and the whole Barossa, provide a fitting conclusion to the tour. As Colin Thiele wrote:

Air, earth, and water; light and skyline, grass and furrow, orchard and vineyard, the dip and swing of the hills, and the mauve-blue haze of distance ... It is all there at one's feet, half Streeton, half Gruner. The forefathers of the Seppelts must sleep well in such a spot.⁴²

3. The Barossa in the 1940s

Colin Thiele's novel *Labourers in the vineyard* is set in the Barossa Valley in the late 1930s, in a community of German farmers surrounding a township transparently disguised by the name Gonunda (Tanunda). The story opens at church, with the tolling bell summoning the *Gemeinde* (congregation), 'Out of the past, out of Silesian history, out-of Lutheran conviction, out of the dark soil like wine'. Dressed in their Sunday black men and women separately fill the pews 'with the same steady regularity that had marked every Sunday for three generations'.⁴³

This Barossa is not just a colourful setting. The book works best in describing the people's lives and contrasting their rural attitudes and German traditions with the quick mind and insecurities of the city-bred newcomer, Kurt Neilson. Neilson finds them peasants, 'simple, honest and God-fearing, but primitive and intellectually cloddish'. Their work, dress, speech and behaviour was that of their ancestors in Germany a century before; 'as far as the outside world was concerned they were narrow, unsophisticated simpletons... Slow to change, slow to accept improvements, they lived, worked, and died with the horizons of the animals they tended'.⁴⁴

Sharing the same existence, Neilson also learns the strengths of that culture: the spiritual bond between people and place, between body and soul. Here, the two were made one - simple faith and simple friendship, the happiness and sorrows of life as of summer and winter, in the inevitable cycle of seasons. 'Solidarity and faith: a deep community of spirit. That was what gave these people their strength'.⁴⁵

Thiele describes a culture which he believes had changed little from that of the German ancestors. Yet we have already seen that this life, once so isolated and self-supporting, was by 1900 a distinctive Australian-German culture, as expressed by *Barossa Deutsch*.

The novel alerts us to further changes since 1900, most of them due to technology. There were wagons and horse-drawn ploughs still at work, and farmhouses lit only by candles and lamps, but cars, tractors and telephones were common and everyone was so accustomed to the railway that the community's annual train trip to the beach was one of the great festivals of the calendar along with Easter, Christmas, the Vintage and the Royal Show. The Lutheran pastor tells Neilson, 'Physical changes, yes-new machinery, new chemicals, new methods ... But still spiritual peace'.⁴⁶ But such changes eroded the valley's isolation, which - together with the continuing Lutheran faith - had sustained the simple German habits.

The other hereditary group in the valley is portrayed by Thiele as the 'vintage aristocracy'. These families were mostly of British rather than German descent and (unlike the Germans) had always been as much involved in business affairs, social life

and politics beyond the Barossa as within it. Despite the depression of the early 1930s, many of them had greatly profited from an enormous expansion in the wine trade since the 1900s.

After Federation in 1901 elimination of the trade barriers between States presented the Barossa wine-makers with a large national market. Britain granted preference to Imperial products in the mid twenties and Australia became the 'Empire's Vineyard'. The South Australian government provided subsidies and legislated that only grape spirit could be used in fortified wine production. Between 1906 and 1930 the Barossa industry expanded from 300 to 860 growers (about the same number as today) and from 4,790 acres to over 13,000 acres of vines. The region came to produce 60% of Australia's wine.⁴⁷

Even growers 'profited' from the experiences of the depression when a small group of them formed the Barossa Cooperative in the early 1930s and later built the impressive Kaiser Stuhl winery at Nuriootpa. The general expansion encouraged Barossa wine-makers to introduce further changes to work methods, production techniques and promotion, which had an inevitable impact on the valley's German growers, workforce and ways of life.

In the State's centenary year of 1936, the *Civic Record of South Australia* called Tanunda 'one of the most important districts in the State, vine-growing being extensively carried on within a small area. There are nearly 20 wineries producing millions of gallons of wine annually'.⁴⁸

By the late 1930s the combination of advertising by an energetic wine industry and use of fast motor transport was boosting tourist numbers. This encouraged a more self-conscious presentation of the Barossa's people and practices. In Thiele's novel, Bert Lindner, whose farm lies along a flat eastern ledge of the valley above the green sweep of vineyards, called visitors from Adelaide *narren* (fools) because 'dey t'ink a winery in every backyard dere must always be. Farmers ve are, for wheat and sheeps!'.⁴⁹

Fiction isn't history and Thiele introduces some crucial changes, such as an expanded, market-based Vintage Festival and the replacement of German in church services with English which didn't occur until just after the Second World War. Change was more gradual than the requirements of fiction and the author's nostalgia will allow.

A German Historical Society of South Australia was formed to organise celebrations for the State's centenary in 1936 as well as the centenary in 1938 of the arrival of the first German Lutherans. Descendants of the German pioneers were keen to make contact with relatives in Germany during this time of remembrance and many visited the original villages back in Europe.

A Tanunda printer, Bert Schulz, went to Germany in 1936 and visited Thiemendorf, which his grandparents had left in 1881. He wrote to his father, Johann, how moved he was to enter the ancient church and the two-roomed *hof* (house), where an old woman baked *deutscher kuchen* just as his great-great-grandmother had done. 'Everything was just as it had been throughout the generations'. Bert was also asked

to write articles on the new Germany for the South Australian newspaper, the *Advertiser*.

Most Australians were keenly interested in Germany during the 1930s and many were impressed with Adolf Hitler as he assumed power, 'restored' law and order and hosted the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. But when Britain (and so Australia) declared war on Germany three years later, such innocent contacts between South Australian Germans and the Europeans were considered highly suspect.⁵⁰

As Thiele writes in *Labourers in the vineyard*, events in the outside world such as these seemed suddenly to break apart the old Barossa community of spirit, faith and farmwork. As Hitler rampaged over land and air in South Australia eyes of suspicion once more turned towards the German-speaking villages.

The life of the Valley was breaking up...more and more of the young men were leaving to join the Army and the Airforce, or were being lured to the city. The girls were going too-joining the women's services, taking up nursing, becoming posties or conductresses or munition workers at nearby Salisbury. Soon, it seemed, only the old and the middle-aged would remain. It was the end of an era. For three generations the tight community life of the Valley had gone on unchanged: pruning and vintage, sowing and harvest, birth and marriage and death. Language, customs, worship, recipes and dress had been passed on undiluted from mother to daughter, father to son: the cones of the steeples had dotted the landscape of the heart as well as the eye, and the note of the bells had brimmed each person's years from infancy to age. But now the old stabilities were crumbling. War, speed, and the forces of mass spiritual subversion were breaking the unity of communal life; change was becoming the only truth.⁵¹

This was the Barossa Valley at the start of the Second World War in 1939. We might expect that a visit during the 1940s would reveal a Barossa steeped in tradition and yet ripe with change, a people directly threatened by the Australian response to another war with Germany but proud of the family connections, and enjoying a prosperity derived from the skills and honest work of their German ancestors.

We approach the Barossa Valley (as it was called by the 1940s) through Sandy Creek. In Thiele's novel, as another 'world war' approached there was talk of a big army depot on the valley's outer fringes at 'Gravel Creek' (Sandy Creek) and of ammunition dumps and airfields in the surrounding countryside. The Commonwealth government did establish an army camp at Sandy Creek during the war. One of the iron camp buildings stands in a paddock near the reserve which was once the campsite for thousands of soldiers.

In 1942 Australian soldiers were recalled from the Middle East for the more urgent defence of Australia from the Japanese and passed through the camp to billets in the valley itself. A few months later there was an invasion in reality when thousands of American soldiers of two divisions arrived at Sandy Creek.⁵²

Like many of the American soldiers (who roared along in jeeps, annoying the local boys who must ride bikes) we drive through Cockatoo Valley, Lyndoch and Rowland

Flat to Tanunda. We shall spend the day walking around the town as it was during the years of war.

Tanunda was the heart of the valley and the hub of German speakers. The *Civic Record* in 1936 ranked the township with the best in South Australia.

The population mostly of German origin-numbers 2,300 persons, and the unmistakable evidence of prosperity which exists is characteristic of the race. As a Centenary drive a committee of townspeople has decided to beautify the southern approach to the town by converting a long earth cutting into a rockery, which is to be planted with suitable shrubs and rockery plants.' ...The present Council is Messrs. F. Homburg (Chairman), B.H. Teusner, H.W. Hoffmann, H.A. Jantke, H.B. Lindner, and C. Goers (District Clerk).⁵³

The townspeople could take credit for the amenities at the large recreation park and their Institute Memorial Hall. The *Civic Record* praised councillors for having planted the fine trees which we can see along Murray Street, and mention was made of the many fine residences in the town.

All of those places and several of the councillors mentioned in 1936 play a part in our tour of Tanunda during the 1940s. We start walking at the centenary arch and cutting. This entrance to Murray Street was Tanunda's pride in 1937, created mainly by voluntary labour.

Tanunda's housing is unusual in South Australian country towns as there are houses of substance and dignity in every age since foundation; from the 1850s and 1860s ironstone farmhouses of Langmeil and the cottages about Goat Square (Tanunda's original town centre) to the big Federation-era houses and the comfortable bungalows of the twenties and thirties. As small towns generally enjoyed only one or two short bursts of growth their houses are mostly of a particular age and style. They are usually concentrated in one area, often along the main street, whereas Tanunda's well-established character is as evident in the back streets as in Murray Street.

This is revealed as we walk through the town, first, up above the cutting past an 1860s house (the home of the Heilamann sisters in the 1940s), and then down along Murray Street. Handsome turn-of-the-century villas at number 4 and number 6 were the residences of a retired farmer and the Doctors Juttner, senior and junior. Smaller cottages from an earlier period line the road further along. Then we come to Auricht's Printing Office which dates from the 1850s.

In our time, the proprietor was J.F.W. Schulz. Johann Schulz, known as 'Mons' to the townspeople, started work here as journalist and manager in 1926, after a career as teacher (cut short when he was teaching at Tanunda when all Lutheran schools in South Australia were closed in 1917), and missionary. His parents had been Silesian emigrants and he spoke fluent German, wrote books in a Silesian dialect and kept his Lutheran faith and a keen interest in modern German culture and politics. Indeed, his interests were those of a well-educated, free-thinking man who was not afraid to make his opinions known; he read avidly on all topics, took photographs and films of local events and places of interest (including the visit just before the war of Count Felix

von Luckner) and was the local endorsed A.L.P. candidate for the next State elections.⁵⁴

On Friday 13 December, 1940 Federal military authorities came to his door, questioned on his association with known Nazis in Tanunda, the German publications of Auricht's Printing Office and his son's visit to Germany. They searched his home and office and seized German books and the film of von Luckner. Then they arrested him, giving him brief time to pack a bag and tell his wife and daughter before driving him to the Wayville Detention Centre in Adelaide. Despite being innocent of any crime against the security of the nation, Johann Schulz was interned until January, 1944. He was never told what the charge was against him.

The *National Security Act* of 1939 gave the Commonwealth government powers to seize and intern people who were believed to be friendly toward the enemy or a threat to security. The Act was criticised by some ministers who feared that it would lead to abuses of the rights of people of German descent, as had happened during the First World War. They were right to fear, and Tanunda, as the most German of Australian places, suffered the worst abuse.

Fears of spies and sympathisers were rife and the public was asked to inform on neighbours and acquaintances without having to appear in court themselves. Sadly, the opportunity to pay back old scores with no redress was taken up by many informers, including Tanunda residents. Several other men besides Schulz were searched and interned. During our walk we pass the fine home of the auctioneer and District Council Chairman of 1936, Fritz Homburg. The Homburg family was relatively wealthy and held a very prominent position in South Australian society as well as in the German community. They were obvious targets for the envious and the suspicious. Fritz Homburg was interned at the same time as Schulz. Unlike Schulz, his connections enabled him to find out the charges against him: the von Luckner visit to Tanunda once again. 'Incredibly he was able to argue that he had been asked to invite von Luckner by one of the members of the tribunal sitting in front of him, and that he, Homburg, had refused the latter's request that the Tanunda Council bear the expenses.' He was acquitted and released. His relative, Hermann Homburg, despite being a respected member of State Parliament at the time, was anonymously accused of favourable attitudes towards Germany and was put under house arrest in Victoria for eighteen months.

Fritz Homburg's successor as District Chairman, the solicitor Mr Bert Teusner, said informers similarly turned official suspicion on many residents of Tanunda but most were not arrested.⁵⁵

The Lutheran pastors and German residents who had recently in the town were automatically suspect. The pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church was placed under house arrest. Other people were interned, most notably Dr Johannes Becker who had come to practice in Tanunda in 1927, and lived in Julius Street.

Certainly, some internees were Nazi sympathisers, and the leading Nazi in Australia was the same Dr. Becker! By the mid 1930s Becker was a leader of the Tanunda *Hitlerbund* (Hitler club) and the *Bund des Deutschtums in Australian* which met to discuss German culture in the St John's Lutheran Church hall and showed films to

townsfolk grateful for the free entertainment with money so short. Unknown to them this was a front organisation created as a part of a plan to unify German folk groups abroad.

German Foreign Office files of 1935 identify Becker as the leader of the 77 members of the Nazi Party in Australia, 12 of whom lived in Tanunda. It is not surprising that the authorities dealt so harshly with known associates of Becker such as 'Mons' Schulz, who gradually came to understand the same. As he wrote in his diary in 1941:

My associations with Dr. Becker in the light of present events were unfortunate ... I met him almost daily either at the Post Office or when the train arrived with the evening paper. We had many arguments on political matters. Early in Hitler's career I subscribed to many of his views and actions. I read *Mein Kampf* and this book more than anything helped me to evaluate its author as the schemer he is ... Germany under Hitler is a people without a belief in God ... but with a belief only in force. We must fight an ideology that resolves itself into a pagan worship of force.⁵⁶

A perfectly normal interest in German heritage and politics before the war brought down the whole family, although they kept the business going. 'One day everything was pleasant and normal and the next the whole family was treated as criminal and ostracised, people even walking on the other side of the street.'⁵⁷ 'Mons' took a daily walk to the Post Office (now the Tanunda Museum), with the Tanunda Hotel beyond it, which was run during the 1940s by H.O. Meyer. Even the postmaster was asked to inform and conversations at the bar were distorted or invented by fellow drinkers in reports to the authorities.

Partly because of this hostile attention and partly because the district was deeply conservative and intensely loyal, Tanunda was extraordinarily active in fund-raising and other war-supportive efforts. In September 1945 when public fears of a Nazi uprising were fed by Adelaide News stories about caches of ammunition being held in Tanunda, Bert Teusner called a mass protest meeting at the Tanunda Town Hall. He read out a long account of the district's war efforts. He also went to Canberra to discuss the matter with the Minister for Immigration and Information, Arthur Calwell who told him he believed 'sweeping allegations which include attacks on 1st, 2nd and even 3rd generation born Australians to be without foundation and grossly unfair'.⁵⁸

Despite the unfair treatment of some Tanunda residents, to their credit the Commonwealth authorities seem to have deliberately placed immense public trust in the district. As Mr. Teusner's 1945 speech details, over 1,000 members of the 6th Division Cavalry Regiment from the Middle 'East were billeted in private homes. Mr Teusner said he was paid for the two months this took to arrange. He recalls,

The train arrived in the evening in two lots and all the Tanunda citizens who were offering billets were asked to assemble at the Tanunda Railway Station. Those who didn't have cars marched home, some with as many as six soldiers marching behind them.⁵⁹

Tanunda Railway Station was a very -modest affair tucked away in what had been the showground. We shall visit on our walk the new showground which was the

showpiece mentioned in the Civic Record. Both Australian and American soldiers were marched here, too. ‘‘We warned that the park would get very wet in the wintertime and they suffered’. Huts were placed all around the oval under the trees. One of the galvanised iron huts of that military camp is still in use in the grounds.

The soldiers were not always treated kindly. Brian Schrapel, who was a teenager then, said that the Americans weren’t interested in the valley’s wines but were desperate for spirits. They were sold ‘whiskey’ - cold tea with a dash of the real thing on top, and lemon essence for its high alcohol content. Bethany was known as ‘Little Texas’ for some wild parties, but drinking was forbidden within 300 yards of any place of entertainment.

Both the locals and the soldiers, who came to the Thursday and Friday night dances would slink the required distance for a beer in the dark. These popular dances were held in the ‘Goof’ Hall (the Grand United Order of Oddfellows Lodge Hall).⁶⁰ This 1930s building is now the Band Hall. For anyone who was actually booked, the police station and courthouse was close by, in MacDonnell Street, the courthouse being a venerable structure dating from the 1860s

As we walk about this part of Tanunda we also pass the Tanunda Primary School. There were about 300 children at the school during the war. Addie Neldner (Mrs. Schiller) was one of them, who, like most of the farm children walked to school. She remembers the distance was only three miles but the farm was out in what was called ‘the black country’ to the west near the hills, and the heavy black soils made walking seem an eternity in winter. They always took a spare pair of shoes. As she pointed out, in the war years everyone used to walk a lot or share transport with neighbours because of petrol rationing.

In other respects, it was ‘business as usual’ during the war. The flour and chaff mill in Murray Street kept working; farmers were essential to the war effort and were not conscripted, fruit and vegetable production being stepped up for the army. The wineries continued to produce and trade as normal. At Tanunda, Seppelts’ Chateau Tanunda was in full swing, producing both wine and brandy.

Back on Murray Street alongside the serene old churches the butchers, bakers, cabinetmakers, garages, Goer’s cafe and four big drapery stores were well patronised, despite rationing. The biggest of them all was Schrapel’s. As a small boy during the First World War Bert Teusner had once had his purchases searched when the soldiers came to arrest old Mr. Schrapel. During the second war such suspicions seemed to be at rest and the children suffered only because blackout regulations prevented Schrapel’s from lighting up their usual nativity scenes at Christmas.

E. Schrapel and Sons were general merchants. The massive store provided separate entrances to men’s and women’s clotheswear, a music section, hardware, groceries, a cafeteria and an upstairs hairdresser. Behind, there was a blacksmith, wheelwright and a car yard, together with the powerhouse which supplied the direct current electricity for Tanunda until the supply was taken over by the Adelaide Electric Supply Company.

Young Brian Schrapel was told to start work there: at 14 he was paid 17/6 (\$1.75) a week. He recalls a bonus to the grocery round, however. At nearly every farmhouse a glass of wine was left on the table for him!⁶¹

For the Barossa remained a village community despite the strangers and the changes and daily life was enlivened by the ready wine. The children spoke German at home and at church and English at school and cheerfully participated in such traditional events as 'tin kettling' dancing to the accordion and picnicking at Schlinke's Gully. For the young there was much to enjoy in the Barossa in the 1940s.

¹ General references for this history included: Angas Letter Book; Light Papers (both State Library of SA); Ian Harmstorf, *Some information on South Australian German history*, SA College of Advanced Education, Adelaide 1985; R Munchenberg, *Valley of smithys, schools and spires*, Moculta Centenary Book Committee, Moculta 1982; D Pike, *Paradise of dissent*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1957; R Teusner, *A short history of the Barossa Valley*, The Barossa Valley Archives and Historical Trust, Tanunda, 1971.

² T Griffen and M McCaskill, eds, *Atlas of South Australia*, SAGP, Adelaide 1986, p.12.

³ Information provided to author by Dr John Tregenza, 1988. See also J Lienert, *The discovery and exploration of the Barossa Range by Col William Light 1837*, Lyndoch and District Historical Society, Lyndoch 1987.

⁴ The 'Old colonist's' observations are reproduced in EM Yelland, *Colonists, copper and corn in the colony of South Australia 1850-51*, Hawthorn Press, Melbourne 1970, p.116.

⁵ Yelland, p.117.

⁶ Kenneth Peake-Jones, ed, *Recollections of D.G.B., 1843*, Royal Geographical Society of Australasia. South Australian Branch, Adelaide, 1981.

⁷ GF Angas, *Savage life and scenes in Australia and New Zealand*, vol 1, London 1847, pp.215-216.

⁸ B Springbett, 'Wind, water and steam mills in the Lyndoch district c1841-1959', Lyndoch and District Historical Society, 1987, p.3.

⁹ Yelland, p. 122.

¹⁰ Heritage Investigations (John Dallwitz and Susan Marsden), 'Heritage Survey of the Lower North', Report for Department of Environment and Planning, Adelaide 1982, Part 2, DC Barossa, item no 42.

¹¹ G Young, I Harmstorf and D Langmead, *Barossa Survey*, vol 1, SA Institute of Technology and Adelaide College of Advanced Education, Adelaide 1977, p.21.

¹² Yelland, p.125.

¹³ G Young, I Harmstorf, L Brasse and A Marsden, *Hahndorf*, vol 1, Techsearch Inc, Adelaide 1981, pp.31-32.

¹⁴ Ian Harmstorf, 'German settlement in South Australia to 1914', in *Some more information on South Australian German history*, SA College of Advanced Education, Adelaide 1988.

¹⁵ Young, Harmstorf and Langmead, vol 1, pp.80,81,82.

¹⁶ Barossa Valley Archives and Historical Trust (Tanunda), *Barossa Historical Bulletin*, vol 1, no 1, 1969, pp. 17-18. (Literal translation prepared by Mrs L Forsyth).

¹⁷ Harmstorf.

¹⁸ Yelland, p.131.

¹⁹ Yelland, p.132.

²⁰ Information provided to the author by Mr C Collinson, former manager of the National Trust property, Collingrove.

²¹ *Barossa Historical Bulletin*, vol 1, no 5, 1969, pp.4-6 (K Ireland).

²² DJ Gordon, *Handbook of South Australia*, Government Printer, Adelaide 1980, p. 40.

²³ Quoted in Ian Harmstorf, 'True Germans are patriotic South Australian citizens', in *Some more information on South Australian German history*.

²⁴ Harmstorf, 'True Germans...'.

²⁵ Colin Thiele, *Barossa Valley sketchbook*, Rigby, Adelaide 1968, p. 8. See also WP Shemmeld, *Kruger jars 'n fencing wire. Stories about the Barossa Germans, the Barossa Aborigines and local characters*, The author, Nuriootpa [1983], p.74.

²⁶ Harmstorf.

²⁷ From the exhibition at the Tanunda Museum (1988).

²⁸ Quoted in Thiele, p.52.

²⁹ Young, Harmstorf and Langmead, *Barossa Survey*, vol 3, pp.284-85.

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- ³⁰ M Voake, 'The history and future prospects of the Barossa Valley wine industry' [1980], p.3.
- ³¹ Heritage Investigations, *Heritage of the Lower North*, Department of Environment and Planning, Adelaide 1983, p.68; and 'Heritage Survey of the Lower North, 1982, DC Barossa item no 22.
- ³² CM Horn and WP Fradd, 'Gold mining in South Australia: the first fifty years', in J Selby, ed., *South Australia's mining heritage*, Department of Mines and Energy, Adelaide 1987, p.73; R Wells, 'Early mining in the Adelaide Hills', *Journal of the Historical Society of SA*, no 2, 1976, p.57; and information provided by Mrs D Hissey, 1988.
- ³³ TA Hunt-Cooke, 'A history of Lyndoch Valley', Lyndoch CWA Branch, 1951, p.14.
- ³⁴ HT Burgess, *Cyclopedia of South Australia*, vol 2, Adelaide 1909, pp. 320-321.
- ³⁵ May Vivienne, *Sunny South Australia*, Hussey and Gillingham, Adelaide 1908, Facsimile, 1979, pp.222-23.
- ³⁶ *Angaston and Nuriootpa Centenary Souvenir 1936* (from which much of the following information is also obtained); Heritage Investigations, item no 25.
- ³⁷ Barry Chinner, *Angaston Stores. Murray Street past and present*, the author, Angaston, 1986.
- ³⁸ This section on the Seppelt family and the winery buildings is based on information provided by Mr B Pearson at Seppeltsfield, 1988 (including a sketch plan c1936, family tree, notes used by the winery guides and promotional brochures), as well as a guided tour of Seppeltsfield given by Ms Liz Clark, 30 August 1988. Also, Kate McDougall, *Winery buildings of South Australia 1836-1936*, Part 1, the Barossa Region, Department of Architecture, University of Adelaide, 1980, pp.19-30.
- ³⁹ Vivienne, p.219.
- ⁴⁰ Burgess, pp.303,306.
- ⁴¹ Vivienne, p.221.
- ⁴² Thiele, p.48.
- ⁴³ Colin Thiele, *Labourers in the vineyard*, Rigby, Adelaide 1970, pp.2-3.
- ⁴⁴ Thiele, *Labourers in the vineyard*, p.16.
- ⁴⁵ Thiele, *Labourers in the vineyard*, pp.140-41.
- ⁴⁶ Thiele, p.157.
- ⁴⁷ Voake, pp. 3-4; and information provided by Anneley Aeuckens, contributor to the book *Early Barossa Vignerons* (1988).
- ⁴⁸ *The Official Civic Record of South Australia*, Universal Publicity Company, Adelaide 1936, facsimile 1980, p.886.
- ⁴⁹ Thiele, p.10.
- ⁵⁰ Liz Schulz, 'Internment: JFW Schulz 1940-44', Paper given at Australian Historical Association Conference, Adelaide 1986, pp.5-7 (copy provided by Ms Schulz, 1988). This was based on her Bed thesis, 'Guilty until proven innocent', SACAE, Salisbury 1987. See also I Harmstorf, 'South Australia's Germans in World War Two', in *Some more information on South Australian German history*.
- ⁵¹ Thiele, pp.245-46.
- ⁵² Hunt-Cooke, p.29.
- ⁵³ *Civic Record*, pp.886-87.
- ⁵⁴ See L Schulz.
- ⁵⁵ Correspondence relating to Tanunda District Council and Bert Teusner's war efforts(1945-46): copies provided to the authors by Mr Teusner, 1988 [reproduced in *Tourism and Australian multicultural heritage*, Appendices].
- ⁵⁶ L Schulz, p.13.
- ⁵⁷ Ms Liz Schulz, recalling her aunt's comment (20 April 1988).
- ⁵⁸ Telegramme from Arthur Calwell to Bert Teusner, 8 September 1945 (in Mr Teusner's possession).
- ⁵⁹ Mr Bert teusner's recollection (1988).
- ⁶⁰ Information provided by Mr Rex Schiller. He and Mrs Adeline (Addie) Sciller took Clemow and Marsden (the authors) on a guided tour of the places of interest in World War Two (Tanunda, 8 August 1988).
- ⁶¹ Mr Brian Schrapel, recollections (1988).