Do landscapes migrate? A metaphorical conceptualisation of the early settlement landscapes of the Mount Lofty Ranges

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Abstract

The question ‘Do Landscapes Migrate?’ was posed at a Knowledge Café session in the Culture-Nature Journey stream of the 19th ICOMOS General Assembly and Scientific Symposium in Delhi. Building on that initial intercultural dialogue, this paper explores the metaphorical concept of migrating landscapes through the early settlement landscapes of the Mount Lofty Ranges region in South Australia.

Research informing the Mount Lofty Ranges national, and potential World Heritage nominations concludes that the settlement landscapes of the region are the tangible product of a transformational shift in European migration history in the second half of the second millennium. Along with the survey and layout of Adelaide itself, the ‘Preliminary District’ and ‘Special Survey’ areas of the Mount Lofty Ranges present the earliest and most enduring evidence of the adoption and subsequent adaption of Edward Gibbon Wakefield’s inspired contribution to the systematic colonisation movement of the 1820s (Marsden 2017; Richards 2018).

Wakefield’s theoretical framework for establishing a self-supporting agrarian society was most clearly manifested in the implementation of a hierarchical survey system that enabled the migration of real and imagined British and European rural landscape typologies that were subsequently adapted to local conditions by the colonial administrators, and the migrants themselves.

Introduction

The implementation of Edward Gibbon Wakefield’s colonisation system in South Australia from 1836 created a historical inflection point in global migration well ahead of the Australian and Californian gold rushes of the mid-nineteenth century. The successful adoption and pragmatic adaption of the Wakefield model can be measured in the spectacular diversion of tens of thousands of young, free emigrants in a way that would have appeared inconceivable in prior decades. This brought Australia into the big league of European emigrant destinations and engineered a revolution in human capital, as the colony received extraordinarily high quality migrants, and in the process designed its own demography as no other society had ever done before (Richards 2018).

In addition, the settlement process, religious freedom and social ideals associated with the colonisation system fostered the rapid establishment of culturally distinct townships and rural communities of British, German and Polish origin that are seminal and enduring elements of the contemporary cultural landscape (Marsden 2017). The natural features of the landscape and the spatial elements of the survey system interacted with the social ideals of the colonists and
the cultural responses of the migrants to form a distinctive bio-cultural heritage that continues to evolve and adapt over time (Bardsley & Palazzo 2018).

The survey and settlement of the ‘Preliminary Districts’ and ‘Special Surveys’ of the Adelaide Plains and adjacent Mount Lofty Ranges between 1836 and 1850 corresponds with the second main wave of Australia’s non-Indigenous settlement history, when the focus shifted from penal colonies to agricultural development through free settlers. With a few isolated exceptions located on the River Murray, the defined survey areas follow the key agricultural areas of the southern Mount Lofty Ranges, extending southwards from Adelaide to McLaren Vale and the Fleurieu Peninsula, and northwards along the Onkaparinga Valley through the Adelaide Hills to the Barossa and Clare Valleys (Figure 1).

The Wakefield Plan

At once controversial and visionary, Edward Gibbon Wakefield played a key role in the settlement of Australia, New Zealand and Canada through the development and implementation of his colonisation theory (Temple 2002). The second of nine children, Edward Gibbon was born on 20 March 1796 in London, and educated at Westminster and Edinburgh High School. He derived a substantial life income as a result of the early death of his first wife Eliza following the birth of their second child (Pretty 1967). That first marriage was by elopement, and his subsequent abduction of another young heiress (15 year-old Ellen Turner), caused a scandal and landed him in Newgate Prison. That three year internment led to Wakefield’s critical study of emigration, and his proposed remedy, systematic colonisation. This in turn aroused an interest in Australasia, and the anonymous ‘Sketch of a Proposal for Colonizing Australasia’
was first published in June 1829, while Wakefield was still in prison (Wakefield 1962). The text was reprinted later that year as ‘A Letter from Sydney, the Principal Town of Australasia’ with Robert Gouger as editor.

Wakefield’s theory rejected prevailing colonisation strategies involving the forced migration of prisoners and low-income, mostly unemployed male settlers with a revolutionary approach that aimed for the establishment of a self-sustaining, prosperous agricultural economy settled by young, working and middle-class couples operating commercially viable farms concentrated close to urban markets. His proposal was debated, shaped, influenced and promoted by the Philosophical Radicals, an enormously influential group of nineteenth century politicians, social scientists and philosophers. Through the London-based National Colonization Society, and the subsequent South Australian Association, they articulated a progressive political economy model for the new South Australian province that became known as the ‘Wakefield Plan’. The model encompassed Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarianism, Adam Smith’s economics, John Austin’s jurisprudence and John Stuart Mill’s rationale for democracy and universal suffrage, ideas that evolved from the Enlightenment and that are central to the concept of modern democratic societies (Pike 1967; Stringer 2017).

Mill (1891 [1848]) and Bentham (2018 [1832]) commented on and contributed directly to the development of the Wakefield model:

… the planting of colonies should be conducted, not with an exclusive view to the private interests of the first founders, but with a deliberate regard to the permanent welfare of the nations afterwards… none is comparable in advantage to that which was first suggested, and so ably and perseveringly advocated, by Mr Wakefield… (Mill 1891, pp. 540-560)

Bentham (2018) reinstated the principle of containment of settlement to the Colonization Society’s proposal with his ‘Vicinity-maximizing or Dispersion-preventing’ principle. His commentary on the proposal also introduced the Utilitarian principle of ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number’:

Giving to the immigrants into Australasia not merely the means of existence… but through means of education, the means of well-being in all time to come, as well in respect of the [body], as in respect of the mind. (Bentham 2018, p. 6)

Wakefield and his followers thus advocated an agriculture-based unregulated market economy founded on the planned migration of free settlers selected according to demographic profile, and the carefully managed survey and sale of town and country landholdings. Over time the model was developed on principles of a secular, self-governing democratic society that recognised the legal rights of Aboriginal people with purposefully designed policies to encourage long-term income equality (Stringer 2017).

Wakefield’s innovative model for providing access to agricultural land, and for regulating land markets influenced global debates and global practice for more than a century:

Before the adoption of the Wakefield system, the early years of all new colonies were full of hardship and difficulty… In all subsequent colonisation, the Wakefield principle has been acted upon, though imperfectly… yet wherever it has been introduced at all, as in South Australia, Victoria, and New Zealand, the restraint put upon the dispersion of the settlers, and the influx of capital caused by the assurance of being able to obtain hired labour, has, in spite of many difficulties and much mismanagement, produced a suddenness and rapidity of prosperity more like fable than reality. (Mill 1891, pp. 540-560)

Chapter 33 of Karl Marx’s Capital focuses on Wakefield’s colonisation theory (Marx 1887 [1867]). The model was a direct and powerful influence on new societies in Darwin, New Zealand and Canada and shaped land laws and development policies elsewhere in Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, India, New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and the United States (Ballantyne 2014).
The central role played by land administrators in the new colony led to the innovation of the Torrens Title, a land registration system adopted in countries across Asia, North America, Russia and Europe, while the practice of assisted migration influenced the development of Australia and New Zealand through to the mid-twentieth century. But it was the survey system itself that created the ‘first, the greatest, and probably the most enduring imprint’ of migrants on the land (Williams 1974, p. 67).

**Elements of the migrating landscape**

The theoretical planning of the South Australian colony was implemented through a survey system based on existing, imagined and idealised British and European landscape typologies that were adapted to the geomorphology, climatic conditions and socio-economic realities of the new colony. Michael Williams’ seminal work *The Making of the South Australian Landscape* documents those adaptive planning processes, and details how the survey and sale of the land formed the basis on which the Wakefieldian ideal was built:

…the survey system, besides being the conscious embodiment of and vehicle for the implementation of the ideals of the new society, also had a definite geographical expression. On the face of the land there was imposed a deliberately created design; an intricate pattern of roads, fences, paddocks, towns, and, eventually farm boundaries and administrative areas, which formed the framework for all subsequent geographical activity. (Williams 1974, p. 65)

**Survey elements at the landscape scale**

Ongoing experimentation by Surveyor-General Colonel William Light and subsequent administrators saw a hierarchy of survey elements employed within the highly prescriptive theoretical framework of Wakefield’s plan, which was essentially enshrined in the British government’s South Australia Act of 1834 and the associated rules and regulations (Dickey & Howell 1986).

**Preliminary Districts and Special Surveys**

The Preliminary Districts and Special Surveys were large-scale subdivisions that identified the areas within which detailed survey was to proceed over the first period of settlement between 1836 and 1850. Preliminary Land Orders initially linked the survey and sale of 1042 town acres to the sale of (mostly) 80 acre country sections contained within the Preliminary Districts, a series of six large survey areas (A to F) that extended from the Adelaide Plains southwards along the Fleurieu Peninsula.

The use of the Special Surveys (which enabled sales of larger acreages in the Mount Lofty Ranges at a reduced price for a limited period of time) arose from the failure of the colonisation administrators in London to sell sufficient land at the specified one pound an acre to raise the necessary 35,000 pounds for the South Australian Act to come into operation. This was the first necessary adaption of the original colonisation scheme to economic reality, and resulted in Wakefield abandoning the South Australian project to turn his attention to the establishment of similar schemes in New Zealand and elsewhere.

The Preliminary Districts and Special Surveys never-the-less enforced the principle of containment of settlement, and enabled preliminary purchasers to select enough land to meet the requirements of the Act.

**Counties**

Light was initially instructed to survey the rural areas into townships and counties, the origins of which go back to the unification of England in the 10th century, when it became necessary to divide the country into administrative areas reporting to a central monarchy. These larger subdivisions however failed to play a prominent part in the early rollout of South Australia’s survey system, and were ‘probably no more than the unthinking repetition of an old formula applied to countries of British expansion elsewhere’ (Williams 1974, p. 72). The counties of
Adelaide, Hindmarsh and Light were never-the-less defined as large contiguous survey units overlapping the Preliminary District and Special Survey areas, and the county became more important in the second phase of expansion of the colony, after 1850.

It was the smaller units known as hundreds, and, even more importantly, the 80 acre rural sections surveyed within them, which were to become the hallmark of the Wakefield Plan as it was implemented and adapted in the Adelaide Plains and Mount Lofty Ranges region.

The Hundred

The hundred is evident in the early survey maps and endures in the boundaries and title descriptions in existence in the South Australian land title system today. It is a more obscure and ancient concept than the county, going back to Saxon times:

However it is not certain what a hundred really means – a hundred families, a hundred miles of land, a hundred fighting men, a hundred monetary units? Whatever the origin of the word, it can be used for an administrative area created for the purpose of justice, taxation and the defence of the realm. (Parker cited in Young et al. 1977, p. 57)

In the early period of settlement in South Australia, the hundred was commonly around one hundred square miles, and likely related to the promise of commonage made to land buyers at the rate of two square miles for every 80 acre section purchased (Williams 1974).

The 80 acre section

The 80 acre section was identified by Wakefield (1831) as the appropriate rural land unit and was initially tied to the preliminary sales of single town acres in the hundred of Adelaide, thus enshrining the agricultural responsibilities of the founding investors in the colony. That stipulation found its way into the rules and regulations for the initial disposal of land in the colony (South Australian Commission 1835), and the 80 acre section became the dominant and most enduring survey unit of the colonisation plan as implemented in the Mount Lofty Ranges region:

A considerable extent of waste land in every part of the Colony in which it is probable settlers may wish to obtain grants shall at all times be surveyed in advance, and divided into lots of not less than 80 acres each. (Wakefield 1831, p. 4)

All lands before they are offered for sale, shall be accurately surveyed, divided according to the natural boundaries wherever they will serve the purpose, into counties, townships, and subdivided as far as practicable, into 80 acres each. (South Australian Colonization Commission 1835, in Dickey & Howell 1986, p. 56)

Surveyed lands shall be divided as nearly as may be into sections of eighty acres each, with the exception of the site of the first town, which shall be divided into acre sections. (New Colony in South Australia 1835, in Dickey & Howell 1986, p. 67).

The rationale behind Wakefield’s promotion and the colonial administrators’ adoption of the 80 acre section is not so easy to ascertain. Williams (1974) concludes that the unit (tied to a fixed price) was likely based on the size of the annual repayment that a small landholder would be able to make over a number of years, thereby preventing farm labourers from becoming landowners too quickly, and so creating a reliable labour supply, a core tenet of the Wakefield Plan.

Being the eighth part of a square mile, eighty acres was also easily measured, and was already the established minimum size of a land grant of the US Congressional Lands Settlement Act of 1820 (Nye & Morpurgo cited in Young et al. 1977, p. 56). Four 80 acre blocks also fitted neatly into the square road grid, providing access to all blocks.

Finally, 80 acres represented a viable area of land in the context of English farming at the time, and so would have appealed to the aspirations and imaginations of the yeoman farmer settlers the colonisation scheme was aiming to attract. Whatever the rationale behind the 80 acre section, its success was measured in the result that, ‘the original Wakefieldian ideal of a self-supporting society of agriculturalists on freehold farms, worked by a sturdy middle-class yeomanry, was all but achieved in these early years’. (Williams 1974, p. 28)
British and German typologies at the village and farm scale

The concept of migrating landscapes can also be applied at the village and farm scale, where a different set of imported typologies come into play. Marsden (1989) identifies two fundamental types of rural settlement reproduced by British and German settlers that were developed within the 80 acre survey template: the Celtic or isolated farmstead placed in its own block field system, and the nucleated settlement, with farmsteads grouped at the centre of a village. The two typologies are found throughout the rural settlements of the Mount Lofty Ranges and reflect cultural distinctions between different settler groups:

This distinction between the pastureland 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 parochial German farmers and tradespeople in the Barossa Valley and the mainly English and Scottish pastoralists and their State-wide interests based in homesteads on large landholdings in the ranges. (Marsden 1989, p. 7)

Thus, the wealthier pastoralists tended to amass contiguous 80 acre sections into larger landholdings around a central homestead settlement, while German tenant farmers subdivided the 80 acre sections into narrow strips known as ‘hufendorfen’ in order to establish more intensive subsistence farming hamlets around a common watercourse.

Idealised and imagined landscapes

Young et al. (1977) identify the likely influences of idealised English rural landscapes that came about as a result of the Enclosure Acts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, where larger country estates were enclosed with hedges or fences, and set within carefully designed parkland settings that reflected the social status of their gentleman owners. Skinner (2018) and Williams (1974) explore how those imagined typologies were referenced by the promoters of the new settlement, appealing to shared notions of an ideal country life. Gammage (2012) highlights the Aboriginal land management story behind such references. Writing on behalf of the South Australian Company, Capper was among many proponents of the colonisation scheme who wrote pamphlets, books and letters preparing settlers for a rural life as self-sufficient yeoman farmers:

A previous acquaintance with agricultural affairs, the breeding and rearing of cattle etc. would certainly be desirable, but the principle requisite to a settler is a taste and fondness for a country life and occupations. (Capper 1838, p. 53).

Idealised landscapes and notions of country life in turn influenced the way new British settlers set about establishing English-style farm estates, complete with coach-house, stables, workshops and workers’ quarters as well as gardens, hedges and exotic perimeter plantings. Collingrove in the Barossa, one of five early farm estates associated with the Angas family, exemplifies how that prominent pastoral dynasty adapted and expanded such an ensemble of homestead, outbuildings, garden and family chapel to suit their needs over successive generations. A newspaper description of the estate not long after its establishment noted ‘its neat white gates and enclosures, and its sloping garden. The effect of the house, which is on arches at the back, and the surrounding park-like domain, is quite English, and there is a gentlemanly air about the whole…’ (Old Colonist extract cited in Ioannou 1997, p. 81). Similarly, the Oliver family’s White Hill and Taranga farms and the Kay family Amery estate in McLaren Vale provide early colonial examples of the isolated farmstead typology that is still serving the needs of subsequent generations of those respective families (Figure 3).

Perhaps more appropriate to the reality of the climate and geomorphology of the Mount Lofty Ranges, ideal or imagined Mediterranean landscapes are also evoked in early documents promoting the potential of the landscape for agriculture, and continue to be referenced in descriptions of the Barossa, Adelaide Hills and McLaren Vale through to the present (Ioannou 1997; Santich 1998; Skinner 2018).

The Colonization Commissioners in London noted that ‘numerous voyagers in describing this part of Australia as containing much fertile soil, and as possessing a genial climate resembling
that of South Europe’ (Dickey & Howell 1986, p. 66). In correspondence with the George Fife Angas, chairperson of the London-based South Australian Company, the geologist Johannes Menge referred to the potential of the Barossa to support ‘vineyards and orchards and immense fields of corn’ and to ‘furnish the province with such a quantity of wine that we shall drink it as cheap as in Cape Town’ (Ioannou 1997, p. 101). Similarly, William Cawthorne, on arrival from the Cape of Good Hope in 1841, declared that the Mount Lofty Ranges had a large portion of land ‘particularly well adapted for the culture of the almond and vine’, while John Morphett reported in 1836:

The climate appears to me to bear such a resemblance to Syria, and other countries in the Mediterranean, that I have sanguine hopes we might raise such valuable products as wine, olive oil, figs, maize, flax, silk, rice, indigo and tobacco. (Morphett cited in Santich 1998, p. 31)

Indeed, the Barossa Valley, with a subsequent miss-spelling, was named after the Barrosa Ridge in the ‘terra rossa’ (red soil) sherry-producing region of Andalusia where Surveyor General Colonel Light had fought in the Peninsula Wars of 1811 (Richardson 2007).

**Case study 1: the 100 of Willunga and adaption of the 80 acre template**

The 100 of Willunga was surveyed in 1840, in the early days of the colony, by John McLaren. A geometrical grid was used to subdivide the land into the 80 acre sections prescribed by the colony’s administrators, virtually regardless of the landscape’s topography (Figures 2a & 2b). Wakefield’s theoretical ideas were thus transformed and materialised on site by the first settlers.

![Figure 2a: 1933 map of the 100 of Willunga and 80 acre sections based on John McLaren’s 1839 survey. (South Australian Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure)](image-url)
following the rules and regulations of the South Australian Commission (Dickey & Howell 1986), which aimed to contain settlement through the sale of contiguous surveys, and to discourage land speculation and pastoralism in favour of agricultural uses of the land.

Despite the imposed geometry of the systematic survey and related road systems, natural features such as watercourses, native vegetation and the geomorphology of the landscape influenced the location of farms, cottages and outbuildings on each 80 acre section, thus creating settlement patterns influenced by water access, shade from riparian vegetation, fertile soils and access to roads.

Bardsley and Palazzo (2018) have documented how adaption to the natural environment within the systematic colonisation framework, under the influence of European social ideals, has resulted in a distinctive bio-cultural landscape heritage that continues to evolve over time (Figure 3):
The resulting colonial agrarian landscape has evolved over time with specific local landscape features and liberal social development processes. In other words, the decisions that individuals or associations of landholders have made have generated a distinctive regional landscape pattern linking agriculture, water-courses and native vegetation, and that landscape has significant heritage and aesthetic values (Bardsley & Palazzo 2018, p. 88).

**White Hill Farm**

There are local anecdotes around a requirement for new settlers to build a permanent dwelling on each section as evidence of a true intention to work the land, and the Oliver family in McLaren Vale tell the story of how their settler ancestor William Oliver got around that by placing a worker and family in a worker’s cottage or ‘Shepherds Hut’ on each 80 acre section purchased (Oliver et al. 2014). An examination of South Australia’s foundation documents is yet to provide substantiation of such a rule, however the existing historic buildings at White Hill show how Oliver established a farm settlement with outbuildings and a worker’s cottage across two adjacent 80 acre sections along a watercourse (Sections 85 and 95 in Figures 2a & 2b).

Oliver purchased land regularly from 1844 until 1873, and the current White Hill Estate property (in 6th generation hands) comprises 420 acres, stretching from Seaview Road northwards to the Onkaparinga Gorge. The assemblage of stone buildings located on the watercourse includes the 1870s family homestead with farm workshops, a chaff shed, blacksmith’s shop, granary, winery, dairy and worker’s cottage all dating back to the 1850s. Many of these buildings are in the process of being incorporated into the family’s contemporary wedding venue and hospitality enterprise, while another branch of the family (at Oliver’s Taranga Winery) has restored the worker’s cottage on Section 95 across the road as a cellar door and small museum.

There are also notable stone ruins of former ‘shepherds huts’ on each 80 acre section of the White Hill and Taranga estates.

Similar Celtic or isolated farmstead settlements on extant and former 80 acre properties can be found throughout the Willunga basin, often providing infrastructure for modern wineries and cellar doors incorporating historic cottages, homesteads and farm buildings as relict or standing features. Paxton’s Winery (Landcross Farm on Section 102), the old Seaview Winery (formerly Hope Farm, and later Benelan on Section 519), Samuel’s Gorge Winery (formerly Seaview Farm

![Figure 4: The Amery farm buildings on Section 415 at Kay Brothers Winery are an example of the Celtic or isolated farmstead settlement. (Courtesy of Kay Brothers Winery)](image-url)
on Section 60), Coriole Vineyards (on Section 78), D’Arenberg (formerly Bundarra on Sections 108 and 118) and Kay Brothers Winery (formerly Amery on Sections 415, 515, 516 and 740) are a few such examples.

**Kay Brothers Winery at Amery**

Named after the English birthplace of its first owner Richard Aldersey, Amery Farm originally spanned four 80 acre sections of hilly land about six kilometres north of the villages of Bellvue and Gloucester (now combined in the township of McLaren Vale). Before he died in 1857, Aldersey built a solid eight-roomed homestead out of ironstone found on the property which sustained cattle, sheep, cereal crops, soft fruit, vegetables and the occasional vineyard through to the end of the 19th century (Kay 2015). Amery was bought by Bert and Fred Kay in 1890, and the current ensemble of homestead (incorporating the original ironstone cottage), vintage house, barn and stables, pigsty, fermenting and storage cellars, tank and crusher houses, vats, barrels, basket press and hillside vineyard (dating from 1892) sit on the remaining single 80 acre section of the property, reflecting the activities of successive generations of this pioneering wine family (Figure 4).

**Case study 2: Prussian adpations of the 80 acre template**

Nucleated settlement forms established by German pioneers in the Adelaide Hills and the Barossa were a continuation of Prussian colonisation typologies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, employed for empire expansion and the planned settlement of the peasantry within Europe (Young et al. 1977; Young 1985). These were in turn based on medieval Prussian colonisation forms, and even earlier (9th Century) Frank and Roman archetypes, as described in this late eighteenth century text:

> The villages should be laid out in such a manner that the homesteads are built in two opposite rows and somewhat separated from each other with houses for cottagers and crofters between them and that a continuous street runs through the whole of the village. Behind the houses should be the gardens and the fields and all the other land of each peasant who would therefore be in a better position to manage his farm and to get immediate help from his neighbour in case of fire, burglary or any other misfortune (Stieglitz 1750, cited in Young et al. 1977, p. 58).

Three well-tried forms were used by the Prussian authorities in their eighteenth century colonisation programs: the ‘strassendorf’ (street village), ‘angerdorf’ (long green village), and the widely used ‘hufendorf’ or farmlet village (Figure 5a). While early settlements at Klemzig and Hahndorf followed the ‘strassendorf’ typology, other settlements in the Adelaide Hills and Barossa were laid out as ‘hufendorfen’. These included Lobethal in the Onkaparinga Valley, and Langmeil and Bethany, located at Tanunda in the Barossa (Young 1985).

**The settlement of Bethany**

Prussian settlement patterns are still clearly evident in the contemporary layout of the Adelaide Hills townships, albeit now absorbed into subsequent housing subdivisions. At Bethany however, the original subdivision patterns and rural land uses remain, often under the custodianship of descendants of the original settlers, and plainly visible as a row of colloquially-named ‘spaghetti blocks’. These narrow strips of farmland extend across Tanunda Creek to Basedow Road behind a series of twelve extant German settler cottages facing the main street, an original government road.

Young et al. (1977) define Bethany as a ‘waldhufendorf’, or forest ‘hufendorf’. They document how the village was surveyed within the Angas Park special survey originally owned by George Fife Angas, and demonstrate how the ‘hufendorfen’ were fitted into the Wakefield 80 acre module and associated road grids (Figure 5b). Young (1985) suggests that had it not been for the government survey, the ‘hufendorfen’ would likely have followed the line of the creek, ‘thus creating a street village with a stream and farmlets on either side’, in accordance with European practice. Heuzenroeder (2017) describes the successful migration and adaption of Prussian landscape prototype to Bethany, under the influence of the colonial survey system:
Figure 5a: Reconstruction of a hufendorf settlement (image courtesy of Lothar Brasse)

Figure 5b: 1857 plan of Bethany within 80 acre template by C. Von Bertouch (photo by Young et al 1977)

Figure 5c: Map of extant German settler cottages along the main street of Bethany (Bethany Historical Walk brochure, 1992) (reproduced with permission and with the acknowledgement of the assistance of the Royal Geographic Society of Australia (SA Branch) for the rights to use some of the material in their book Explore the Barossa).
The houses were mostly built close to Bethany road with the strips stretching behind them, leading to the creek and beyond. Each strip had a vegetable garden, fruit trees, pasturage, land for a crop and access to water in the creek. A shepherd, whose cottage is still identifiable in the village, took the cattle to graze on common land in the hills and returned them to the owners in the evening with a blast on his horn. (Heuzenroeder 2017, p. 2)

**European vernacular building typologies**

Heuzenroeder (2017) and Young et al. (1977) have undertaken detailed surveys of the extraordinary early farmhouses and farm buildings of Bethany. They record how this unparalleled assemblage of settlers’ buildings retain rare elements of eighteenth century eastern central Europe peasant architecture, ‘adapted to cope with Australian climate extremes and interpreted in Australian timbers, stones and other building materials’ (Heuzenroeder 2017, p. 4). The cottages and farm buildings date from the early 1850s, replacing the single-room structures of the original 1842 settlement that we see in George French Angas’ well-known water colour, although one original single room cottage remains (Figure 6). Stone was readily available in the Barossa and was soon used in conjunction with brick and timber. High gabled timber roof structures can be found throughout the region. Originally thatched or shingled, most of the Bethany examples now have galvanised iron roofs, although a small number of thatched barns remain. The floor plans retain the characteristics of 18th century Prussian farmhouses:

They are two or three rooms wide, with the entrance door opening into the central room, and the earliest examples are one room deep. Those with a “black kitchen” or *Schwarzküche* have the front door opening straight into a room dominated by a masonry wood-fired oven beneath a broad stone chimney lined with rods for hanging the *Würst* (sausages) to be preserved by smoking. Viewed from the outside, such traditional houses have the chimney in the centre of the house. (Heuzenroeder 2017, p. 4)

**Ancestor vines**

Vines were first planted at Bethany as part of the subsistence agriculture of the ‘hufendorf’ blocks (Figure 5a). Johann Fiedler was among the early settlers who developed an interest in winemaking and ‘by the mid-1850s he was growing a surprising range of some 70 varieties of

![Figure 6: ‘Bethany, A Village of German Settlers at the foot of Barossa Hills’, c1846 (Giles, JW after Angas, George French). (Courtesy of the Art Gallery of South Australia)
grapes in his efforts to determine those best for the region’. A portion of Fiedler’s shiraz vines survive as part of the Turkey Flat winery – predating Europe’s Phylloxera epidemic of the late 19th century – which puts them among the oldest of this variety in the world (Ioannou 1997 p. 103).

**Influence of the Lutheran Church**

Lutheran church buildings and associated religious and community infrastructure form a prominent feature of the Barossa cultural landscape to this day. The ‘voluntary principle’ of the British Reformists prescribing religious freedom and the separation of church and state underpinned the foundation of the South Australian colony. Eventually enshrined in the South Australian constitution, the principle attracted religious dissenters from England and Europe who brought with them an enormous diversity of religious institutions. George Fife Angas was himself a dissenter, and the role he played in bringing Lutheran dissenters to the Mount Lofty Ranges region is pivotal to the early South Australian story.

Ioannou (1997) and Young et al. (1977) describe how early Lutheran congregations, their pastors, schools, newspapers and community organisations directly determined the pattern of settlement and traditional folk life of the Barossa, deliberately preserving their own customs, traditions and ancient ways of life:

> Wherever they took up land the Germans nursed and conserved it. They did not believe that it was something to be exploited, but rather something given in trust by God, something that was to be handed down to one’s children and to their children after them. Nearly all the farming undertaken was of a self-supporting subsistence type. Commercial crops were only grown for additional money to purchase what could not be produced. (Young et al. 1977, p. 46)

Friedrich Gerstacker, that most illustrious and prolific of German travel writers gives us the following description of how the landscape of his home country had migrated to the Antipodes:

> About an hour later, in the midst of friendly little dwellings dotted about to my right and left, I came to a farm that I really had to look inside. From the outside it looked like one of our little German farmsteads with barns, stables and sheds, and I was stopped in my tracks for a minute or two in astonishment. It was as though I was not really in Australia, as though a friendly spirit had transported me back home at the speed of thought, but – those damned gum trees! – of course I was in Australia. (Gerstacker cited in Monteath 2016, p. 125)

Gerstacker goes on to describe German harnesses, wagons and farm implements, and ‘such a faithful and consummate exemplar of an old German farmer’s wife… everything about her was authentic, right down to the pins and shoelaces, and not one English or Australian article, whether it be of dress, underclothing or footwear, had ever touched her body.’ Similarly ‘the stove, chairs, tables, cupboards, footstool, spittoon, earthen dishes, iron pans, cooking pots, the plates engraved with texts, the bowls with verses from the hymn book, the great trunks with green roses and yellow forget-me-nots – in short … if you picked up by the roots an authentic room from a farmhouse in Saxony or Prussia, packed it carefully in cotton-wool, and planted it again here, you could not have preserved its character better (Monteath 2016, p. 126).

> It was a very strange feeling for me to find myself suddenly – in a foreign land and even in an English colony – surrounded by nothing but Germans, and in fact a purely German way of life and doing things. On occasion, especially when I saw little groups of people standing here and there in the street and heard everyone speaking German, I had to stop and think whether I was really in Australia. (Gerstacker cited in Monteath 2016, p. 153).

**Conclusion**

Evidence of landscape migration from Europe to the Antipodes is thus evident in the foundation documents and in the literature promoting the South Australian colony, as well as in the early survey maps, survey markers, grid patterns, section boundaries, land title descriptions and
government road systems which follow the 80-acre sections, hundreds, and county subdivisions originally prescribed by the founders of the South Australian province. These imported English typologies were utilised throughout the Preliminary District and Special Survey areas of the Mount Lofty Ranges region, and provided a template for local adaptations to a landscape already shaped by the land management practices of the original Aboriginal owners. The diverse cultural responses of the migrants then introduced distinct Celtic and Franco-Prussian typologies at the village and farm scale.

The utopian principles on which South Australia was founded are also manifest in the location and layouts of religious, cultural and domestic infrastructure, in the connecting historic roads and cultural routes, and in subdivisions and settlements adapted around watercourses in ways that ensured access for all. Surviving and revitalised rural estates, vernacular architecture and rural infrastructure of British and German influence, along with continuing and evolving Mediterranean-inspired rural land uses all illustrate the systematic adoption and subsequent adaption of real and imagined British and European landscape typologies during the first fifteen years of South Australia’s settlement.

This paper has constrained itself to exploring the Mount Lofty Ranges settlement landscapes through the metaphorical concept of landscape migration. A future comparative analysis of settlement practices, land ownership law and regulation across related Australian, New Zealand and Canadian colonies could help establish the universal exceptionality of the Mount Lofty Ranges landscape in the context of the adoption and subsequent adaption of Edward Gibbon Wakefield’s influential theory of systematic colonisation.

References


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