History and the Landscape in Central Australia

A Study of the Material Evidence of European Culture and Settlement

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PREFACE

The origins of this book go back to my period as Director of the National Trust in the Northern Territory between 1981 and 1983. During those years I travelled extensively in Central Australia and developed a special interest in its history and cultural landscape. My concern with the region has continued since then as has a continuing involvement with the National Trust, particularly in my capacity of Chairman of its Cultural Heritage Committee and, more recently, as President.

There are many people and institutions who assisted me in the research and writing of this book. In Alice Springs, Reverend Graeme Bucknall, Mrs Pat Fleming, the late Bob Gregory, Dr Kate Holmes, Dick Kimber and, in particular, the late Reverend Tom Fleming all provided advice, information or encouragement. Similar assistance in Tennant Creek came from Mrs Judith Church, the late Peter Dixon, Bill and Marjorie Fullwood, Michael Hester, Mrs Joan Maclean and Mrs Hilda Tuxworth. Gus Williams, President of the Ntaria Council, initiated my interest in Hermannsburg. A number of my colleagues at the Darwin Institute of Technology, the University College of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory University must be thanked, especially Dr Jim Cameron, Professor Alan Powell and Mrs Helen Wilson. Much of the manuscript was expertly typed by Donna Duke. The Northern Territory Government provided financial assistance in the form of a History Grant as did the University College of the Northern Territory with a research grant. Research work was undertaken in various libraries, including the State Reference Library of the Northern Territory, the Special Collection at the Northern Territory University and the National Library of Australia. I must thank staff members at those institutions for their help. I must also thank staff at the Australian Heritage Commission in Canberra for allowing me to make use of some of its information. The book could not have been written at all without access to the very comprehensive site files and other materials held at the Darwin Office of the National Trust and I must express special gratitude to the Trust's Director, Mrs Penny Cook, for allowing me to use these. Last, but certainly not least, I must acknowledge the splendid encouragement and assistance received from staff at the Australian National University's North Australia Research Unit, in particular, Peter Jull, Professor David Lea, Ann Webb, Nicki Hanssen and Yvonne Paynter. Ann deserves special thanks for turning a messy manuscript into a handsome production.

I have decided in this book against the use of references. This is partly because of my hope that it will appeal to more than just an academic audience but also, and more importantly, because much of the text is based not just on a variety of written sources but on my own visits to and impressions of the places discussed. A list of the sources used for each chapter can be found at the end of the book.
INTRODUCTION

Australian historians have over the past several years experienced growing interest in
the role of their discipline within the community at large. During the 1980s there was
an impressive range of research and publications in Australian local and regional
historical studies. These covered various parts of the country and a diversity of topics.
Only a minority, nevertheless, indicated a particular concern with the ways in which
localities could be studied through reference to material evidence in addition to
written and oral sources of information. As the Committee to Review Australian
Studies in Tertiary Education found in its History and Cultural Resources Project of
1986, most Australian historians were not used to analysing artefacts or historic sites.
Their training was for the most part concerned with written texts rather than objects or
places. As a consequence not many historians in Australia have been especially
interested in the links between the settlement process and the contemporary cultural
landscape.

Not all historians, of course, can be so criticised. Some, both in Australia and other
parts of the world, have always believed that research and writing based on documents
alone are inadequate. The Annales school of French historians placed emphasis over
forty years ago on the need to observe and explain landscapes as a means of
explaining the past. In Australia some historians and historical geographers,
particularly those interested in the historical conservation movement, have since the
late 1970s examined carefully the ways in which sites can provide evidence for
interpretive models. Chris McConville, in his article '"In Trust"? Heritage and
History', has argued that sites can provide information on working class and minority
group experiences. Gregory Young, in Environmental Conservation, has concluded
that historians interested in the interpretation of landscapes can give ideological
impetus, popular awareness and professional expertise to the conservation cause.
Graeme Davison, in his article 'The use and abuse of Australian history', has attempted
to interpret some of the contemporary uses of history in Australia which manifest
themselves in visual rather than literary form.

Such approaches are of importance to this study of the links between the history of
European settlement and the landscape in the Central Australia region of Australia's
Northern Territory. Comprising all that part of the Territory lying south of a straight
line immediately north of the settlement of Renner Springs and extending to the
Territory's eastern and western borders, the area has a population of less than 40,000,
which makes it one of the most sparsely settled in Australia. Despite that, for over a
century it has had a clear physical, economic and cultural identity which distinguishes
it from the Territory's 'Top End'. My concern with Central Australia originated in
1981 when I became professionally involved with the management of some of its
historic sites, which were then or are today often the subjects of controversy. I found
that within the region arguments over 'heritage' were based on very different ideas about the past. It was partly in the hope that such disputes could be better understood that this short book started to be written.

The framework adapted is to some extent based on a multidisciplinary approach. In particular I have found that geographers, archaeologists and anthropologists have provided theoretical notions which are of great relevance to an historical understanding of Central Australia.

William Norton's *Historical Analysis in Geography* has concisely outlined how geographers can analyse the ways in which contemporary landscapes reveal the characters of past landscapes. Their 'retrogressive' method allows the reconstruction of history through proceeding from the relatively well known present to the less known past. Present cultural landscape forms are, he states, a consequence of the interaction of culture, time and the physical environment. Some geographers argue that the degree to which early cultural landscapes are retained is a function of both the amount of commercialisation and the ties which hold ethnic groups together.

David Lowenthal, a geographer by training but now a practitioner of many other disciplines, in his voluminous *The Past is a Foreign Country* argues that the techniques of geography, when combined with those of other disciplines, reveal perceptions of the past moulded by selective erosion, oblivion and invention and partly based on a cumulative body of relics and historical recognitions. DN Jeans, one of Australia's best known historical geographers, has demonstrated in various publications, most notably *Australian Historical Landscapes* and *The Open Air Museum*, how a range of today's Australian landscapes must be viewed as the products of identifiable historical forces.

Archaeology contributes much to an understanding of remote regions such as Central Australia. Kenneth Hudson, a British industrial archaeologist, has emphasised the means by which the international industrial revolution which commenced in Britain during the late nineteenth century had social and economic consequences which can only be properly appreciated when material evidence is considered in addition to documentary sources. His *World Industrial Archaeology* argues that processes associated with mining, food, beverages, construction, metal processing, transport and the generation of power spread all over the world, including sparsely populated and remote areas caught up in the process of European imperial expansion. Techniques in historical archaeology can assist the reconstruction of working conditions and ways of life for which few, if any, written sources of information survive. The Australian archaeologist Graham Connah's *Of the Hut I Builted* has shown how the enquiries of archaeologists have revealed new and direct pictures of the public and private lives of Australia's people, at home and at work.
While my book focuses on the story of white settlement in Central Australia, this can not be understood without almost constant awareness of the first inhabitants, the Aborigines. It is here that anthropological research is so vital in clarifying the differences between Aboriginal and European concepts of the land. WEH Stanner first argued in a 1965 article 'Aboriginal Territorial Organisation' that Aboriginal people had rights to particular areas of land which were linked through common descent. These areas he and other anthropologists described as 'estates', which were centred on groups' base camps. Estates took their names from prominent natural features or water holes and though the boundaries, particularly in Central Australia, were inexact, there is a clear relationship between estates and scared sites. Estates were connected with vital economic activities in that water holes were very important to group survival. From a spiritual perspective, each estate contained sections of two or more dreaming tracks. Robert Layton's _Uluru_ gives a variety of specific instances on how in Central Australia subsistence patterns and land ownership form part of a living culture which can be explained through reference to the estate concept.

Analysis of Central Australia's evolving cultural landscape must be grounded in a knowledge of the physical landscape and human responses to it. The region is characterised by extremes of temperature, terrain and climate which always made settlement difficult. Yet all settlers, from the Aborigines onwards, modified the landscape and integrated ideas about it into their cultural perspectives. For Aboriginal people sources of food and water were often very limited and frequent travel was thus essential. As in other parts of the continent, fire was used so that over a long period new plant foods developed. Perhaps the most obvious marks on the landscape as a result of Aboriginal occupation are rock paintings and engravings. Europeans from the late nineteenth century onwards gradually moved into the region but their numbers remained low. Even today people of Aboriginal descent constitute at least a quarter of the population. Evidence of non-Aboriginal settlement includes introduced plant and animal species, transport routes and facilities, pastoral stations, mines, towns and a variety of other features. For Aborigines the land provided the focus of religion while for Europeans an ideology of exploiting one of Australia's last frontiers was preached with almost religious fervour. Europeans had little regard for Central Australia's Aborigines, often claiming that rights to the land were based only on permanent occupation. After the passing of the 1976 _Commonwealth Land Rights Act_ these different notions formed the basis of a continuing and often bitter debate.

Few professional historians have written much about Central Australia and none has published a comprehensive study of the region. Alan Powell's _Far Country_, the best general historical survey of the Northern Territory, emphasises the 'Top End' for it was there that most Territorians lived and administration was based. Peter Donovan's two volume history of the Territory _A Land Full of Possibilities_ and _At the Other End of Australia_, takes a similar approach. Donovan has, however, also written the very useful _Alice Springs_ for the Alice Springs Town Council. More has been done in the sphere of specialist studies, especially on race relations. One of the best of these

Most historians writing about the region have used orthodox historical sources, that is primarily written materials and, to a lesser extent, oral testimonies. Probably the only notable exception is DJ Mulvaney whose *Encounters in Place* combines meticulous documentary research with field observation to examine several Central Australian Aboriginal-European 'contact sites'. It has been left to conservation organisations, particularly the National Trust, through their consultants' reports funded by government heritage grants to provide the wider perspective which comes from a study of material evidence. Of special importance here are Howard Pearce's excellent works on Central Australian homesteads and the Tennant Creek District, Robin Radford's report on Hermannsburg, AN Wilson's report on the Overland Telegraph Line, Patricia Davison's now published work on Phillip Creek, the work of Peter Forrest and Kate Holmes on Arltunga and the various reports prepared by the Alice Springs consultancy group Service Enterprises. Their findings demonstrate that a study of the landscape is necessary for a full appreciation of historical forces which had an impact on Central Australia.

In 1983 Tim Rowse concluded in his article 'Liberalising the Frontier' that Central Australia was part of Australia's least successful colonised political unit, the Northern Territory, and one that contains two very different civilisations based on land use and economic organisation. This book selectively examines certain aspects of those civilisations that are more fully assessed when material evidence is known and understood. It also examines how more recent arguments about the 'future of the past' in Central Australia can be most effectively viewed when elements which have not traditionally been a part of Australian historical scholarship are taken into account.
CHAPTER ONE

A SETTING AND ITS STORY

Central Australia is located at the heart of the Australian continent. It is vast and largely arid with an ancient landscape that has evolved over a very long period. Predominant physical features include usually dry river systems, deserts, salt lakes and several mountain ranges.

Normally unclouded skies and low rainfall characterise the region's climate. Conditions are very arid. Except in June and July, most days have high temperatures but the nights are generally much cooler. In winter, particularly in the southern part of the region, there are often frosts. The rainfall, when it occurs, mainly falls in summer as a consequence of southward moving rain depressions from the tropics. Yet while rainfall can be very heavy, water is absorbed quickly into the ground surface.

Much of Central Australia comprises sandy and stony plains. But there are also rocky outcrops, hills, mountain ranges and sand dunes. Extensive flat zones are the main features and they extend over huge areas. Often they are bordered with plateaux, escarpments and sand dunes. Many of the plains are largely covered with sand which has been spread by wind action. Unlike the moving sands of deserts in some other parts of the world, Central Australia's sand dunes are mostly stabilised on the sides with vegetation. Much of the landscape is of a reddish brown colour. This is because of the widespread presence of iron oxide. Among the most interesting rock forms are mesas which often rise prominently above the surrounding flat country. They are remnants of prehistoric times when the land was much higher above sea level. Mount Connor and Chambers Pillar are excellent examples of this process. Also very striking is the huge Uluru, or Ayers Rock, the world's biggest monolith which is formed of a mixture of quartz and felspar. Nearby Katajuta, or the Olgas, comprises conspicuous rounded rock formations with valleys in between.

As mentioned earlier, there are various mountain ranges. Best known are the MacDonnell Ranges which extend for about four hundred kilometres between their eastern and western edges and have a maximum width of approximately one hundred kilometres from north to south. Other significant groups of mountains are in the south and the west. Mount Liebig, the highest mountain in Central Australia, is 1524 metres above sea level. Most of the ranges are broken up with numerous valleys and gorges, which make them places of great beauty and, in recent years, well known tourist attractions. North of the MacDonnell are several groups of low ranges which form the southern border of a large plain. To the south and the west are rocky
outcrops such as the Granites. The Davenport and Murchison ranges in the north west include the unique Devil's Marbles, a collection of huge, rounded, granite boulders.

In most parts of Central Australia there are low lying and shallow depressions in drainage basins and plains commonly known as clay pans, salt pans or salt lakes. The south eastern corner of the region lies in the Great Artesian Basin. It provides water which can be obtained through drilling bores but because of the high salt content is undrinkable for humans. It is, though, suitable for animals. Most of the drainage basins are entirely devoid of any surface water at all. The Amadeus Basin, for instance, has extensive sand plains and sand dunes and moves westwards into two salt lakes, Lake Amadeus and Lake Neale. There are no continually flowing rivers. Most of the time the water courses are just dry channels, although some of them contain waterholes fed by springs. When there is a lot of rain the rivers flood quickly and dramatically and then almost as quickly subside again. Along the banks and on the banks of many watercourses are trees and shrubs, including the often majestic ghost gums which make use of the underground moisture. The most significant water course is that of the Finke River which commences in the eastern MacDonnell Ranges. It includes quite a large number of spring fed permanent waterholes. The Todd, Hale, Plenty and Hay Rivers which start in the eastern MacDonnells are mostly dry channels. The Sandover River, also mostly dry, rises from the northern side of the MacDonnell, flowing eastwards towards Queensland.

The vegetation of Central Australia is well adapted to the arid climate. Leaves have their edges exposed to the sunlight and are often very tough. Some plants have the ability to die back to the roots and stay in that condition until rain falls. The nature of the soil has a considerable influence on plant life: it holds moisture well, it does not crack when dry and it is susceptible to regular flooding. Gullies and valleys provide environments less harsh for flora than more open areas. Botanists have identified a range of vegetation types. There are many different trees, flowers, vegetables, grasses, weeds and ferns. Some of these are annual and others perennial. There are also introduced exotic species.

There is a wealth of fauna ranging from the large red kangaroos to many small nocturnal species. In addition there are introduced species which have established themselves as feral animals. Among mammals native to Central Australia are kangaroos, wallabies, dingoes, small marsupials and rodents. Feral or wild introduced mammals include cats, donkeys, horses and camels. Over two hundred different sorts of birds have been identified, although their numbers vary within the season, availability of food and water and especially the time of year. They range in size from large bustards, brolgas and emus to the tiny spinifex pigeons. There are reptiles such as geckos, goannas and snakes and insects like ants, flies, grasshoppers, spiders and scorpions. Among the aquatic life forms are fish, frogs and crustacea.
Figure 1  Central Australia, south of Barrow Creek
The influence of the physical environment on settlement has clearly been profound. The climate and soil types have made the growing of crops difficult. The major urban centre, Alice Springs, owes its location and growth to a strategic site where there is a gap in the mountains. Some of the best cattle country is in the higher areas where the mountains provide natural barriers. The more desolate zones with their scarcity of water remain little settled. The scenery in most of Central Australia is, however, spectacular with its bold rock outcrops and vivid colours. It is hardly surprising that since the 1950s the region has attracted growing numbers of tourists. There has also been considerable mineral exploration, the geologic structure containing wolfram, copper, gold and natural gas.

The first known human inhabitants of Central Australia were the Aborigines. Most historians and prehistorians still argue that the Aborigines originally came to the Australian continent from somewhere else, probably Southeast Asia, at least 45,000 years ago. Aborigines themselves, however, often contend that they are part of the land and their first ancestors originated in Australia, a view that most non-Aboriginal scholars are reluctant to share. Aboriginal people generally lived as hunter gatherers in small groups. It is unlikely that the Aboriginal population of the region in the early nineteenth century was more than about 15,000. In some of the more arid parts of Central Australia there was only one Aboriginal person to approximately every 90 sq km. Aborigines moved over considerable distances in order to find food, normally in the form of plants and game.

The first Europeans to enter Central Australia only did so in the mid nineteenth century, over two decades after the earliest British settlements on the northern coast line. In 1860 the Scottish-born explorer John McDouall Stuart set out from South Australia on the first of the expeditions which took him through the region. He reached the bed of the dry Finke River and named the MacDonnell Ranges after the Governor of South Australia. He got as far as Attack Creek, where a clash with Warramungu Aborigines forced him to retire. He returned to the region in 1861 but was again unsuccessful in his attempts to go further north. Finally, on a third expedition in 1862, he reached the swampy shoreline of Van Diemen Gulf on 24 July. He wrote in glowing praise of the Central Australian landscape which he believed held out excellent prospects for pastoral development.

In July 1863 what is now the Northern Territory was transferred from the control of New South Wales to that of South Australia. The case made for South Australia’s annexation of this huge area was very much based on Stuart’s observations. Alan Powell has argued that more than anything else South Australia politicians viewed the Northern Territory as a ‘vast field of future speculation and settlement’. An Act of the South Australian parliament regulated Territory settlement, providing for self-financing systematic colonisation. Land sales opened simultaneously in London and Adelaide in March 1864, much of the land being purchased by speculators.
In October 1870 the South Australian government decided to build a telegraph line spanning the entire Australian continent from Port Darwin to Port Augusta. At Port Darwin it would be linked with a submarine cable joining Australia with Great Britain. The work was under the supervision of Charles Todd, an English-born astronomer turned surveyor. While private contractors completed the northern and southern sections of the line, the middle section, including Central Australia, was the work of government parties. During 1871 and 1872, members of these teams, most notably John Ross, Alfred Giles and WW Mills, explored the route the line would follow. New telegraph stations were set up at Charlotte Waters, Alice Springs, Barrow Creek, Tennant Creek and Powell Creek. The last section of the line was joined in August 1872, some six hundred and seventy-six kilometres south of Darwin. The line linked Australia with a worldwide communications network. So far as Central Australia was concerned, it meant that Europeans 'discovered' areas hitherto unknown to them. In August 1872 Ernest Giles and a party ventured from Charlotte Waters to the Kirchauff Range, Lake Amadeus and Mount Olga. A year later in 1873, WC Gosse saw and named Ayers Rock after the South Australian Premier, Sir Henry Ayers. Also in 1873 PE Warburton travelled north west from Alice Springs to the Indian Ocean. None of these explorers found the rich country they sought. On the contrary, much of what they discovered was arid desert.

It was hardly surprising that the first pastoral occupation was slow and hesitant. Drovers heading further north pushed through the region in the early 1870s. It was only in the 1880s that some of the pastoral leases in the Centre were stocked. Among the first to be so were Glen Helen, Tempe Downs, Bond Springs, Barrow Creek and Crown Point. The economic depression which affected much of Australia in the early 1890s caused a setback with recovery being very slow. The country was poor for both sheep and cattle, white labour was always in short supply and the local market was almost non-existent.

Urbanisation started when the present town of Alice Springs was proclaimed in 1888. It was first named Stuart after the great explorer. It was close to the Alice Springs Telegraph Station and just north of Heavitree Gap, through which the normally dry bed of the Todd River passed. In 1889 Stuart acquired its first hotel and by the early 1890s there were a few houses and stores.

From the very start relations between the white settlers and Aboriginal people were uncertain and frequently violent. Aborigines attacked those whom they saw as invaders of their traditional lands. The whites in turn were responsible for the death or injury of many Aboriginal people. Constant Aboriginal attacks on pastoral outposts on occasion resulted in setbacks for the whites. In the late 1890s, for instance, Tempe Downs Station was abandoned for this reason. Much Aboriginal resentment was due to white abductions of black women. There were frequent sexual liaisons between male whites and female blacks which resulted before the turn of the century in a growing part-Aboriginal population. White women were very few in number. In
February 1874 a group of Kaititja men attacked Barrow Creek Telegraph Station, killing two of the staff. White retribution was savage with police parties shooting Aborigines on sight; at least fifty were killed.

There were, though, some whites who took a different approach. Baldwin Spencer, Professor of Biology at Melbourne University, commenced his lengthy and important anthropological work among Central Australian Aborigines in 1894. He subsequently joined forces with the Postmaster at Alice Springs Telegraph Station, FJ Gillen, to undertake pioneering research which resulted in several important publications. Both were highly paternalistic in their attitudes to Aboriginal people but they did believe in their protection. In 1877 German Lutheran missionaries from South Australia founded the Hermannsburg Mission on the Finke River west of Alice Springs. Fifteen years later the founders left in some despair, selling the site to another Lutheran group. At Hermannsburg the missionaries were not only faced with an inhospitable location but clashes with the pastoralists, who believed that Christianisation of Aborigines was a waste of time.

On 2 January 1911 the Northern Territory was transferred from South Australia to the Commonwealth. In 1911 the white population of Central Australia was less than one thousand. Successive South Australian governments had, despite good intentions, done little for the Territory. The Commonwealth record for many years, nevertheless, was little better. Many of the early economic initiatives were concentrated in the 'Top End'. But a positive change did ultimately come in August 1929 with the completion of a railway, the Ghan, which linked Alice Springs with South Australia; it was named after the Afghan camel drivers who had previously followed the line's route. Stock could now be sent on the trains to Adelaide and sold for much higher prices.

In January 1926 the Commonwealth government, following Sir George Buchanan's 1925 report on the Northern Territory's development, brought down legislation to divide the Territory at the parallel of 20° south latitude, near Tennant Creek. Two separate territories of North Australia and Central Australia were created, each with a Government Resident and an elected advisory council. The system was neither an economic nor a political success with the Territory returning to its old form of control in 1931.

The 1930s witnessed mining in the region on a much bigger scale than ever before. The Airltunga goldfield in the MacDonnell Ranges had been 'rushed' in 1887 but had not produced long-term riches. The government battery there lost money steadily and by the early 1920s there was only occasional prospecting. The Granites to the northwest of Alice Springs had a short-lived rush in 1932. But in that same year extensive gold deposits were discovered at Tennant Creek. A year later what was to become the important Peko Mine was pegged there. By 1935 there were some six hundred people
on the field, many of them refugees from Australia's Depression affected towns and cities. In 1937 Tennant Creek's gold production was valued at £85,000. Working and living conditions were harsh yet prospectors in many cases laboured with great tenacity.

It was also in the 1930s that the two main towns started to develop. Alice Springs, so renamed after the use of 'Stuart' was discontinued in 1933, was obviously boosted by the railway. At the end of 1939 it had a population of nine hundred and fifty. Tennant Creek grew as a town which served the needs of the surrounding mining district.

There was, though, continuing conflict between whites and Aborigines. On 7 August 1928 Aborigines killed a dingo hunter on Coniston Station to the north west of Alice Springs after he had interfered with Aboriginal women from the Walpiri group. Police parties retaliated by murdering about seventy Aborigines. Even today Walpiri people speak of the attacks being the 'killing times'. A public outcry in urban Australia resulted in the Commonwealth government appointing a three man commission of inquiry which quickly decided that the police action was justified. Violence in other parts of the region indicated that the 'Coniston Massacre' was not unusual. Police and pastoralists were responsible for hundreds of Aboriginal deaths in the period before the Second World War.

Life for the whites in Central Australia was eased during the 1920s and 1930s with dramatic advances in communications technology. The introduction of the pedal radio made a profound impact. So too did the work of the Reverend John Flynn, 'Flynn of the Inland', and his Australian Inland Mission. Flynn's concept of the 'mantle of safety' for white outback people involved the establishment of nursing homes and aerial medical services throughout Australia's most remote areas. Alice Springs's first hospital, known today as Adelaide House, was completed as an AIM nursing home in 1926.

The Second World War had profound significance. In 1940 a gravel road linked Tennant Creek with Larrimah. In 1942 a sealed highway connected Tennant Creek with Mount Isa and by October 1943 the sealed Stuart Highway was completed all the way from Alice Springs to Darwin thus allowing easy movements of military vehicle convoys. In March 1942, following the Japanese bombing attack on Darwin, the whole Northern Territory from Alice Springs north was placed under military control. Alice Springs itself became a large military base. Civilians were pressed to leave, although a number in Central Australia stayed on. Pastoralists for the first time had a large local market for their beef and a number of contractors supplied Central Australia's many military establishments. In Alice Springs the Army operated its own piggery. Aborigines were enlisted into the Army's workforce. When the war ended in 1945 it not only left behind a new highway but also a long-distance telephone network, improved electricity, better water supplies and a variety of building
materials. For some Aboriginal people the war provided the first experience of working for reasonable wages.

The Central Australian pastoral industry emerged from the war in a far more prosperous condition than it had ever before experienced. Cattle could be hauled from all parts of the region to the rail heads in Mount Isa and Alice Springs. By the 1960s, due to the continuing expansion of sealed 'beef roads' following the war, the long-distance drover on his horse became almost extinct. But the natural hazards of pastoralism remained. A long drought between 1959 and 1965 more than halved cattle numbers. Returns on capital invested in the beef industry remained low, mainly due to the poor carrying capacity of the land. Many pastoral properties were poorly managed.

Mining had rather mixed fortunes in the postwar period. At Tennant Creek copper, bismuth and silver joined gold among the minerals produced. By 1979 the town's population had reached 2500. In the early 1980s, however, the world price of copper declined and the town faced a less buoyant future. Also in the late 1970s natural gas was found in the Amadeus Basin. In 1986 a pipeline was completed between the Basin and a new power station in Darwin so that the Territory's capital could end its dependence on oil-fired electricity production.

The postwar growth of Alice Springs has been dramatic. 'The Alice' expanded from the small service centre of 1945 to a small city in the 1980s. Its population grew from 4648 in the 1961 Census to 11 179 in the 1971 Census and 17 885 in the 1981 Census. Government expenditure, particularly the expansion of the Public Service, accounted for a lot of the growth. So did the establishment of the American communications base at Pine Gap and the evolution of Central Australia into an internationally known tourist area.

Since 1978 the Northern Territory has been self-governing, with rights in Australia's federal system which mean that in constitutional and political terms it is not quite a State. Central Australians have been sometimes notable in Territory and national politics. Sam Calder and Bernie Kilgariff, both from Alice Springs, represented the Territory in the Commonwealth parliament. Between 1984 and 1986 Ian Tuxworth from Tennant Creek served as Chief Minister.

The demands and problems of the region's Aboriginal population attained unprecedented national attention. Until the early 1970s the 'assimilation' policy prevailed, with Aboriginal people being ultimately expected to adopt the same lifestyles as whites. Before this could happen their rights were restricted. Many were confined to pastoral stations, missions and reserves. In 1958 there was an uproar when the well known Aranda artist from Hermannsburg, Albert Namatjira, who had been granted full citizenship rights, was jailed for supplying liquor to friends and relatives who were wards of the State. By the 1960s the long decline in the
Aboriginal population was being reversed. Infant mortality, however, remained high and many Aboriginal people were living in depressed conditions in Alice Springs fringe camps and in settlements such as Papunya and Yuendumu. During the 1960s Aborigines received voting rights and the contentious regulations restricting their liberties were removed. In 1973, with the Whitlam Labor government in power in Canberra, Justice Woodward conducted a judicial inquiry as a first step towards Aboriginal land rights. In 1976 an Aboriginal Land Rights Act was passed which allowed Aboriginal people to regain reserves or vacant crown land under inalienable title. The Central Land Council, based in Alice Springs, was established to make claims and assist Aboriginal people in the administration of the Act.
1. Overland Telegraph Station, Charlotte Waters, 1921

2. Overland Telegraph Station, Barrow Creek, [1880s]
3. Mt Stirling Homestead, c1927

4. Sam Nicker, his wife and family taken at Ryan's Well north of Alice Springs 1927
5. Government Battery area at Arltunga

6. Alice Springs, Central Australia

Alice Springs, 1931
7. Alice Springs AIM Hospital, 1927

8. Eldorado Mine, Tennant Creek, 1960
CHAPTER TWO

BEFORE THE EUROPEANS

No study of the development of the historical landscape in Central Australia can be placed in its proper perspective without some consideration being given to the impact of Aboriginal people. Central Australia contains a large number of places which have been and are of ceremonial and sacred significance to Aborigines. Some estimates put the precontact population of the region at about fifteen thousand, a figure which was only recently surpassed by non-Aborigines. Aborigines lived throughout Central Australia, though their association with the more desolate areas was, for obvious reasons, not as great as for more fertile areas. Places important to the Aborigines are being increasingly well documented as land claims are made and sacred sites registered. There are natural features of the environment which have spiritual significance and other places that contain evidence of occupation.

For the Aborigines of Central Australia all features of the natural landscape originated in the Dreaming, a term which refers to the creative epoch in which the country emerged. The Dreaming links people and places. The place from which a person's spirit comes is his or her Dreaming-place, and the person becomes the incarnation of the ancestor who made that place. This relationship is the basis for 'owning' a sacred site and living in a particular area. Aboriginal discussions of the landscape are filled with descriptions of what took place in the Dreaming. Every important geographical feature is believed to result from Dreaming events.

An excellent example of such a feature is Ewenper-Atwaye in the Sadadeen Valley very close to Alice Springs. This is a discrete area with small creeks draining towards the Todd River floor. It contains shrubs and low trees, all of which are indigenous. There are a few low rock outcrops and low hills obscure entry into the valley. The area is of great significance as a place for Aboriginal rituals. It is one of the few sites in the Alice Springs vicinity still being used for corroborees and initiations and is the main ground for local traditional owner families. The valley is sacred Yipirinya ground, associated with the caterpillar dreaming. It also contains a sacred cave.

Another well known area of spiritual value to Aborigines consists of the 'Devils Marbles', now a Conservation Reserve about ninety-seven kilometres south of Tennant Creek. This is sparsely timbered and arid country which includes impressive geological monuments. Large granite boulders are sometimes balanced precariously on top of others and are also in scattered heaps in a wide shallow valley. The boulders figured in Aboriginal legends of the Dreaming. They were seen as being eggs laid by the Rainbow Snake.
Most famous of all is the country now within the boundaries of Uluru National Park. Its two dominant features are the huge red Uluru (Ayers Rock) and the rock domes of Katajuta (the Olgas). These are made up of enormous residuals of sedimentary rock which are the sole remains of ancient mountain ranges. Both are of great beauty. Aborigines have resided in their vicinity for thousands of years with both Uluru and Katajuta playing a most important role in their lives. The Aboriginal conception of Uluru is that at the end of the Dreaming era it arose out of a large flat sand hill. Ten individual totemic beings created Uluru's topography. Every feature of both Uluru and Katajuta has an Aboriginal name and explanation. Much of Uluru's southern face was the consequence of a battle between poisonous snakes and carpet snakes. Hare wallaby people brought the northern face into being while caves on the western side were the work of the marsupial mole.

RG Kimber's studies of resource use and management in Central Australia have demonstrated that the landscape of today is partly a consequence of Aboriginal cultivation techniques. Like Aborigines in other parts of Australia, those in Central Australia encouraged certain plants through the use of fire. They were probably responsible for the introduction of several alien plant species in at least some areas. Through fire and the deliberate broadcasting of seeds, a seed-producing plant, button grass, and fruit, were all probably introduced. In the Simpson Desert the scars of fires can still be observed.

Evidence of Aboriginal occupation is quite widespread. At Cleland Hills, some three hundred and twenty-two kilometres to the west of Alice Springs, are low and stony ridges which Aboriginal people frequently visited. They camped in the area at Gill Creek and Ullila Waterhole and in both places there are paintings and rock engravings. There is much archaeological evidence of human presence. Some of the paintings and engravings are quite remarkable. Over three hundred in number, they include tracks, circles and human faces.

At Emily Gap and Jessie Gap, both quite close to Alice Springs, the rock faces of the MacDonnell Ranges are decorated with impressive, striped caterpillar figures, painted in red and yellow ochre. They depict the Caterpillar Dreaming and are still of significance to local Aboriginal people.

At N'Dhala Gorge, ninety-eight kilometres from Alice Springs, is a particularly extensive art gallery. Over 5900 engraved motifs have been recorded there, most of which were made with a pecking technique. Just over a third of the engravings represent the tracks of birds and macropods while about a fifth are circles. In addition there are some big engravings of human figures wearing headdress. Most of the engravings are of considerable antiquity.

Uluru, discussed earlier in another context, also contains hundreds of paintings, mostly in caves. These principally represent the secular side of Aboriginal life.
Subjects from everyday life are painted on the walls of rock shelters which were often used as camping places. Although rock painting and repainting were being continued until the 1930s, they have now ceased and the existing paintings are becoming fainter. There are a dozen places around the base of Uluru with paintings, particularly on the southern and north-western sides. They are of red and yellow ochres, white pipe-clay and black powdered charcoal. When ground-up these paints were applied to the rock with a forefinger or bark brush. The designs are quite simple and often abstract and symbolic. Characteristic motifs are concentric circles, sometimes in a linked chain, animal, bird and human tracks and tree or 'feather' designs.

At nearby Katajuta there are some engravings which are pecked out in the rock; they are mostly circles, triangles and bird, animal and reptile tracks. According to Aboriginal people these were not the work of humans but were created by spirit ancestors during the Dreaming.

It is only recently that at least some Europeans have become aware of the extent to which the Central Australian landscape could be associated with long-term Aboriginal settlement. The first European explorers during the 1860s, 70s and 80s encountered Aboriginal people but believed that they were no more than 'stone age' hunters and gatherers. Ernest Giles, for example, was unaware of passing by the Dreaming trails of the Honey-Ant and the Emus when travelling near the Ehrenberg Range in 1872. Colonel PE Warburton in June 1873 found marked stone slabs, in fact Walpiri sacred objects, but considered their 'scrawls' to be unintelligible and later threw them away. WK Tietkens in 1889 climbed the Kintore Range. He saw numerous signs of Aboriginal camping but did not meet any Aboriginal people and reported 'a strange wild panorama of desolation'. This perception was to be of great significances in the development of Central Australia from the late nineteenth century onwards.
CHAPTER THREE

THE OVERLAND TELEGRAPH LINE

The first Europeans to make a significant impact on the Central Australian landscape were involved in the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line. They completed the line in 1871-1872 and its remains are still found in parts of the region. Most obvious of these are the three surviving telegraph repeater stations at Tennant Creek, Barrow Creek and Alice Springs but there is also a variety of other evidence. The Overland Telegraph Line represented the advent in Central Australia of modern transport and communications. It was very much the result of technological advances which came when the international Industrial Revolution found its way to Australia and the need to use those advances in the economic exploitation of remote areas.

The Tennant Creek Telegraph Station had a vital role. It served as a first contact point between Aboriginal people and Europeans in the Tennant Creek district and was part of a national communication system. The Telegraph Station consists of a number of structures scattered over a square kilometre. There are two homestead buildings with a courtyard in between. These have stone and plastered walls, timber and corrugated galvanised iron roofs and concrete floors. The surrounding verandahs are of timber and corrugated galvanised iron. There is a nearby storehouse, with two rooms added later of stone construction. The complex also includes a blacksmith's shop, beef and smoke houses, a laundry and a bathroom and toilets. The buildings were constructed in 1874. Their location was due to a reliable nearby water supply. The Telegraph Station originally comprised two stone buildings of three rooms each, a men's hut, a cart shed, a harness room, a blacksmith's shop, a stockyard and a well. Staff at the station transmitted messages, maintained equipment and checked the Overland Telegraph Line. Some of the staff, such as 'Cock' Martin, who was there in the 1920s and early 1930s, were colourful, larger than life figures. Martin left behind a number of part-Aboriginal descendants. The Telegraph Station became a post office in 1915 but this moved to the new town of Tennant Creek in 1935. The buildings were subsequently used for storage and as a pastoral property homestead. From the 1870s onwards Aboriginal people camped near the Station from which they obtained rations until they were removed to 'The Six Mile' in 1933 and 1934.

Further south, the Barrow Creek Telegraph Station is still in an excellent state of preservation. It was erected in 1871 and 1872 and, like Tennant Creek Telegraph Station, was an important communications link. Of further significance was its role in race relations. Subjected to an Aboriginal attack on 23 February 1874, white retaliation in the following months resulted in the deaths of most Aboriginal people in the surrounding district. The main building at the Telegraph Station originally contained repeater equipment, a post office and residential accommodation. There are
also outbuildings comprising a store, stables, blacksmith's shop and plant room. All are constructed of local stone, bush timber and corrugated galvanised iron. The complex of buildings is enclosed on three sides by a stone wall. Just inside the wall is a grave in memory of the two Overland Telegraph Line staff members, James Stapleton and John Franks, who were killed in the 1874 attack. Unlike Tennant Creek Telegraph Station, the Barrow Creek buildings continued to be used for communications purposes until very recently. The Stuart Highway which was constructed during the Second World War went right past the Station. Barrow Creek was the site for a sizeable army camp during the war. In 1944 one of those at the camp was the famous cartoonist Eric Gurney and he drew a large 'Bluey and Curley' cartoon which can still be seen on the wall of the Telegraph Station kitchen.

The complex of buildings at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station together with other structures on the site are typical of many in the Central Australian region but their grouping as a homestead complex gives them added interest. Like the stations at Tennant Creek and Barrow Creek, Alice Springs Telegraph Station was of importance to Australia's links with other countries. The first station structures were completed in 1872 and the soon became a focal point for explorers and pastoralists. As the earliest buildings erected in the Alice Springs district they became the place of first contact between Aboriginals and Europeans. The Telegraph Station buildings are numerous and constructed at different times. Most are single storey structures with thick stone walls and verandahs. Included are accommodation buildings, a post and telegraph office, a small cemetery, stock yards, shoeing yards and evaporation tanks. The buildings have been restored and are now open to the public. The site for the Telegraph Station was chosen because of the nearby waterhole and alluvial flat, both of which are visible today. The buildings were constructed mainly of local materials. They were thatch roofed at first but the thatch was later replaced with corrugated galvanised iron. The original design was to allow for protection against Aboriginal attack but the local Aboriginal people were much friendlier than in some other areas. Station staff included station masters, operators and linesmen. From the late nineteenth century there were stockmen, gardeners and governesses to look after young white children, such as Doris Bradshaw, who later wrote a moving book about her experiences (Alice on the Line, Blackwell D & Lockwood D, 1965). A high degree of self sufficiency was required so the small settlement at the Telegraph Station acquired the appearance of a well established farm. The establishment of a town near the station in 1888 ultimately resulted in significant changes. New post and telegraph facilities were set up in the town in 1932 and the Telegraph Station closed in the same year. In December 1932 it became an Aboriginal reserve and home for the maintenance and education of part-Aboriginal children. This was continued until 1962 when the Telegraph Station was dedicated as a national park.

All that remains of the Charlotte Waters Telegraph Station are ruins and archaeological materials. But these are of significance for much the same reasons as the more substantial evidence of the other surviving stations. Located twelve hundred
kilometres north of Adelaide and not far from the Northern Territory-South Australia border, the Telegraph Station remains include scatters of broken piles of rubble, a yard, an iron dump, pole stubs and two tanks. Construction of the buildings started in 1870. The main structure was of stone with eight rooms and a tank stand. In addition there was a blacksmith's shop, a cart shed and harness room, a paddock, a stockyard and a large tank. The Station continued to be used for telegraphic purposes until 1930, when it was closed due to the construction of a new telegraph line beside the recently opened railway line to Alice Springs. From 1930 to 1938 a policeman was stationed at Charlotte Waters. After then the Station was dismantled with most of the materials being reused on Crown Point Station.

It is not practical here to describe all the other evidence associated with the Overland Telegraph Line in Central Australia. Instead attention will be given to one section of the Line, that between Alice Springs and Charlotte Waters, using AN Wilson's survey work completed for the National Trust in 1986. Other sections of the Line also contain a variety of relics which tell historians much about its use.

South of Alice Springs parts of the track which followed the Telegraph Line can still be viewed. There are places where the positions of original telegraph poles can be determined and poles still remain. One hundred and seventy-six kilometres south of the Alice Springs Telegraph Station is the well preserved grave of Carl Kraegen, who died during construction of the line in December 1871. At Alice Well, two hundred and twenty-one kilometres south of the Alice Springs Station, can be found an old stone tank on the banks of the Hugh River, long disused machinery, a bucket pulley for a horse 'whip' and part of a building, probably the police station. There are in this vicinity a number of iron telegraph poles, some with insulators. At Horseshoe Bend there is a pastoral station homestead and nearby the graves of Edwin Sargeant and Carl Strehlow, a Lutheran missionary from Hermannsburg who died while being taken south for urgent medical attention. His son, the noted anthropologist TGH Strehlow, later described this trip in his powerful book Journey to Horseshoe Bend. Two hundred and ninety-seven kilometres south of the Alice Springs Station is a well at Crown Point close to some more surviving poles. Thirty-four kilometres north of Charlotte Waters is another grave marking the resting place of James McFarlane who shot himself near the Line in 1881.

Wilson's research and field work helped illustrate the Overland Telegraph Line's wider implications. It not only provided Australia's only communications link with the rest of the world but was also a route for travellers and, as a later chapter will explain, the movement of stock. Until the 1880s most white settlement in Central Australia was associated with the Overland Telegraph line and it was only from the late nineteenth century onwards that significant numbers of Europeans arrived for other purposes.
CHAPTER FOUR

ABORIGINES AND EUROPEANS AT HERMANNNSBURG

There is much evidence in Central Australia of Aboriginal-European contacts. The region has a variety of places which are associated with these contacts but none is of more significance than the group of buildings and other structures which constitute Hermannsburg Mission some one hundred and twenty kilometres south-west of Alice Springs.

Established by German Lutherans in 1877 to provide protection to the Aranda people, the Mission is now under Aboriginal control. Its built environment demonstrates a range of ingenious vernacular techniques. Dating from the 1880s, some of the buildings are of local stone while others are of many different materials including flattened forty-four gallon drums. They provide evidence of the ways in which white pastoral expansion and police action combined with persuasion from the missionaries brought many Aranda from their traditional territories to the protective but authoritarian confines of a mission settlement. At one level, the physical evidence of Hermannsburg indicates Aboriginal involvement in the Lutheran attempt to create a settled rural village economy in Central Australia. At another level, Aboriginal use of the buildings and other structures shows that significant elements of their traditional culture were always retained.

The oldest building still standing at Hermannsburg is now known as 'the smithy'. Constructed in 1882 of mortar and local sandstone, it is today a room within a larger building and only the rear wall can be seen from the outside. The smithy had a most important role. It was the place where many building materials and fittings were manufactured and a repair shop for the bullock and horse drawn wagons and other general blacksmithing.

The oldest surviving home at Hermannsburg is the 'old colonists' residence'. It was built in 1885 for married lay-workers or 'colonists' and has altered little since the explorer Charles Winnecke described it in detail in 1896. A front verandah was added in 1917. It is a substantially constructed stone house of seven rooms and sandstone walls. Some of the rooms still have exposed ceilings of locally cut desert oak, a species of timber which was used widely in Central Australia as it was easily available, resistant to white ants and not difficult to trim.

The 'missionary house' or 'manse' was completed in 1888 but has been much altered since then. The home of some of the first Lutheran pastors, it was originally a substantial stone structure with a thatch roof and verandah. A bake house and wash house have been added and the whole building has been much modified. The central
Figure 4  Hermannsburg Mission  
Source: adapted from National Trust of Australia (NT)

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living room, though, still has its original desert oak ceiling and flagstone floors. The buildings has remained the residence for pastors and teachers.

A small mud and sandstone 'meat house' is obviously one of the earliest structures at Hermannsburg but there is no clear indication of when it was built. It is now in a poor state of repair. Originally it was the place where camel trains stopped to unload their cargoes.

The 'old school house' or 'school room' was completed in 1896, constructed of sandstone and lime concrete with an iron roof. It has changed little since then. There is a door at one end, a chimney, a small fire place and four windows, which provide the interior with excellent light. The ceiling is of calico. Until 1953 Aboriginal children at the school learned reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, singing and drawing. The school played a most crucial role in Hermannsburg's life. The teacher was responsible for the children both in and out of class hours. In addition to their classes, the children attended daily religious services and were taught practical skills such as gardening and carpentry for boys and needlework and washing for girls.

A small sandstone and lime mortar structure to the east of the old school still has a large chimney at the western end and was at first a kitchen. Between 1904 and the mid-1920s it was used as a 'utility room' and then became a school room where white children did correspondence lessons under the supervision of a governess.

One of the better known surviving homes is 'Strehlow's house'. Largely completed in 1897, it was built of sandstone, lime mortar and desert oak timber. Altered quite substantially over the years, its first occupants were Pastor Carl Strehlow and his family. Part of the building remained a family home until the 1960s.

Perhaps the most physically attractive of the mission buildings is the old church, situated quite deliberately at the centre of the settlement. Completed in 1897, it was constructed of sandstone, lime concrete, undressed desert oak and local eucalyptus. Its bell originally came from a ship and hangs from an iron bar between two eucalyptus poles. Outside the church are two commemorative stones with German, Aranda and English inscriptions. Every Sunday the church was used for services, in Aranda for the Aboriginal worshippers and in English or German for the Europeans. It held about one hundred and fifty people. In 1964 it was used for the ordination of Australia's first Aboriginal Lutheran pastors, with over six hundred people crowded inside and outside to witness the ceremony. For a long time the only church in Central Australia, its primary purpose was to provide services for Aborigines. The last service was held there in September 1966 and it is now a museum where displays on the history of Hermannsburg can be viewed.

The 'esshaus' or 'old messhouse', a large mess room for Aborigines constructed of sandstone and lime concrete, was completed in 1903. It was a place where children,
the aged and the infirm were fed and was both extended and remodelled at various stages. It was also used for the storage and distribution of rations.

A small sandstone building nearby was a boys' dormitory. Its date of construction is not recorded but this probably took place in the early 1900s. Still surviving are the original thick walls made of rendered whitewash sandstone and lime mortar.

The 'old wagon shed' is only marked today by one of its exterior stone walls, probably being built before 1920. Housed in it was a buggy which was used for the very long overland journeys to and from the rail head at Oodnadatta in South Australia. In 1963 it was incorporated into a large new tannery shed.

The 'stockmen's residence' was constructed in 1911 of sandstone and lime concrete with a galvanised iron roof. It had a kitchen, a cellar and three other rooms and these are now surrounded with enclosed verandahs. The ceilings are blackened with smoke.

There is much evidence at Hermannsburg of the search for an adequate and reliable water supply. Initially water came from wells dug into the normally dry bed of the Finke River. During the early 1900s iron roofs were put on all the houses and galvanised iron tanks were placed close to them. In addition wells were sunk. In the late 1920s five underground tanks were dug and in the 1930s a reticulation system was constructed. Today water is obtained from bores with a storage tank located on a hill northwest of the mission. Much of the evidence of the various attempts to find and provide water can still be located and, in the absence of complete documentary records, is the main source for the history of the mission's water supply system.

The Hermannsburg tannery was completed in 1941. Housing eight cement tanks for the treatment of skins, it also contained workshops and storage space. Tanning commenced in the 1930s as a means of providing both work and income for Aboriginal people using the large local supply of cattle hides and kangaroo skins. Also manufactured at the mission were fur rugs, boots, moccasins, leather straps and ropes. In 1962 the tannery was expanded and two years later was completely renovated. It closed down in the late 1960s following problems in replacing a supervisor.

In 1947 and 1948 a bakehouse, mess and kitchen building was constructed. Aboriginal workers provided the necessary labour. It is a cyclone frame structure, with an asbestos roof and walls made out of flattened forty-four gallon drums. The building was also used for showing films and as a general meeting place.

A new school was opened in 1953 to cater for the growing population of Aboriginal children. It contained two large classrooms, a craft room, a teachers' room and two enclosed porches. The walls are of cement bricks with large louvred windows for
ventilation. In 1961 new classrooms were completed, with the older rooms later housing a kindergarten, a white children's school and a trade school.

The complex of structures which comprise the Carl Strehlow Memorial Hospital was completed in 1960. Included are a main building, a maternity block, a laundry and a nurses' home. A wide enclosed verandah surrounds the main building. At the time of the hospital's opening the design was regarded as both modern and well adapted to the climate.

The present church was completed in 1966. Known as the Bethlehem Church, it is built around a steel A-frame with a pinnacle bell tower, and has walls of locally quarried stone and tiled floors. The ground plan is in the shape of a sacred tjurunga. A cross outside is illuminated at night. The church now serves as the spiritual centre for Hermannsburg's large Christian community.

Near the hospital a cash store carries a wide variety of goods on sale. It was erected in 1964 and replaced earlier stores in other parts of the mission precinct. It is constructed of cement bricks with much of the work done by Aborigines.

One of Hermannsburg's best known residents was Albert Namatjira who won an international reputation with his paintings of Central Australian landscapes. He lived in several houses at Hermannsburg but the one with which he is most closely associated is a two roomed cottage which he built in 1945 on the south bank of the Finke River. Constructed of local sandstone, it was roofed with galvanised iron. He did not live there for long as soon after moving in one of his children died in the house. Following Aboriginal custom, he and his family left this place of death.

There are two cemeteries at Hermannsburg. One is near the centre of the present settlement. Many of its grave stones are, unfortunately, in poor repair. But there is a very imposing sandstone memorial to the blind Aboriginal evangelist, Moses Uraiakuraia, 'inspiring leader and teacher, folklore historian, bible translator and travelling evangelist'.

There are various other buildings which will not be described in detail here but all contribute to evidence of Hermannsburg's past. These include a meat house, staff residences, rows of Aboriginal housing, a garage, workshops, a power house, an administration office and post office.

The mission still retains the format as set out by its founders over a century ago. These were German Lutherans who had been trained and sponsored by the Hermannsburg Institute in Hanover and who had accepted an offer from the South Australian government of a special lease in Central Australia. The pioneers were Pastors AH Kempe and WF Schwarz who with a small party and some livestock reached the mission site on 8 June 1877. Permanent staff reinforcements from
Germany followed over the next few years. The missionaries foresaw a permanent settlement and built structures which would provide comfort in an extreme climate and would be durable. Despite expansion and alterations, the first mission compound remains the functional and visual centre of the community reflecting what Robin Radford described in her excellent study of Hermannsburg, 'An atmosphere of harmony, solidity and age'. The missionaries not only utilised local building materials but established gardens and raised stock. Their contacts with the Aranda were less than successful initially but eventually a considerable number of Aborigines lived at Hermannsburg and adopted Christianity. Hermannsburg was a notable exception in the early history of European settlement in the Northern Territory, which was not characterised by much missionary involvement. Before long the Lutherans at Hermannsburg came into conflict with white pastoralists and police who for the most part believed that the Aborigines should be removed from the region as soon as possible.

The pioneers at Hermannsburg had all left by late 1891 and, after a period of uncertainty, in October 1894 Pastor Carl Strehlow arrived to take charge. He and his staff worked hard to develop fruitful contacts with the Aranda and he made an intensive study of the Aranda language and customs. During the First World War he had to deal with considerable hostility and suspicion from the Commonwealth government. Unjustly suspected of being a German spy, he was unable to prevent the government from discontinuing its subsidy to Hermannsburg. He encouraged Aborigines to take part in a variety of activities at the mission and to receive education and religious instruction.

Strehlow died in tragic circumstances discussed earlier in 1922 and Pastor FW Albrecht took charge in 1926. He established closer contacts with the semi-nomadic people northwest of Hermannsburg and established industries at the mission. During his long period in charge, which extended until 1947, Hermannsburg's isolation was gradually broken down. Vehicles appeared at the mission, a wireless set was acquired, the railway reached Alice Springs and airplanes started landing at Hermannsburg. During the Second World War the mission provided meat for troops based in Alice Springs.

Hermannsburg grew rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s. Aboriginal people there took on more responsible and decision making roles. Aboriginal pastors were appointed and Aboriginal committees advised on a variety of social, educational and economic matters. But the increasing use of alcohol became a worrying problem and the 1970s saw a reversal of the earlier expansion. Land rights emerged as a crucial issue with some Hermannsburg Aborigines leaving the mission to move back to their traditional territories. Many facilities at the mission became redundant. The Lutherans ultimately decided to hand over Hermannsburg to its Aboriginal residents. This took place on 2 June 1982 with the mission buildings coming under the control of the Ntaria Council.
Visitors to Hermannsburg now find an attractive settlement where the older, solid stone, white-washed buildings are arranged to form an enclosure around the old church. The mission, the archaeologist Anne Blackwell recently observed, produces 'a sensation rather like the undefined feeling one gets when entering a cathedral'. The placement of the early buildings provides, as the first missionaries intended, a barrier against the isolation of a culturally and physically harsh environment. It was here that the painter Albert Namatjira grew up, both a Lutheran and an Aranda aware of the 'country' to which he belonged. His paintings of the country around Hermannsburg are in many respects a reflection of Hermannsburg's 'two worlds'.

During the 1980s a strong feeling of nostalgia for the old buildings and the life that was associated with them developed among Hermannsburg's Aboriginal residents. The Ntaria Council initiated a major conservation program which was completed as a Bicentennial project in 1988. In conserving the early mission buildings as display areas and craft workshops, the Aranda at Hermannsburg hoped to develop a viable tourist industry which would provide them with income and jobs. But even more important, as the President of the Ntaria Council, Gus Williams, explained, they wanted 'to fix up Hermannsburg like it was before, because Hermannsburg is very special to us'.

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1. Mount Sonder, West MacDonnell Ranges

2. Landscape near the South Australian border
7. The Alice Springs Telegraph Station
8. The Old Colonists' Residence, Hermannsburg
9. The 1897 Church, Hermannsburg
10. The Manga Manda Mission, Phillip Creek
19. Adelaide House, Alice Springs

20. Hartley Street School, Alice Springs
CHAPTER FIVE

ABORIGINES AND EUROPEANS AT PHILLIP CREEK

Of much more recent origin than Hermannsburg but still of considerable significance in the history of Aboriginal-European relations in Central Australia is the Manga Manda settlement at Phillip Creek, some forty-five kilometres north of Tennant Creek. Now abandoned, its remains include adobe ruins, other building remnants, camp sites and areas where food was gathered and prepared. The settlement was founded in 1945 and abandoned in 1956, its original purpose being a ration depot for the Walpiri people following their flight after the Coniston Massacre of 1928 and their dispossession as a consequence of gold discoveries at Tennant Creek during the 1930s. The settlement today provides some fascinating evidence of government policies and Aboriginal adaptation and resistance.

The settlement site has been exposed to the elements without any maintenance or conservation for over thirty years and its structures are now in poor condition. Yet enough remains for the ground plan of the settlement to be visible. The settlement was also the subject of Patricia Davison's impressive archaeological assessment undertaken in 1979. Still identifiable are concrete floors, adobe walls, Aboriginal bush shelters which are spread out in a radius of about ten kilometres from the main buildings, a graveyard and some surface artefacts. Davison's report identified a number of features most of which were still visible some nine years later.

There are several buildings for staff at the settlement. The superintendent's house has a rectangular concrete floor with a concrete wall on an outer perimeter. Also present are floors for the bathroom and kitchen. The teacher's house has a rectangular concrete floor, concrete wall and two extensions with adobe walling. The office is also an adobe structure which has now almost completely disintegrated. The staff lavatory has adobe walls on a concrete floor and is now very badly eroded. On the site of the missionary's 'Sydney Williams hut' is a compacted ant bed floor, a bitumen path, four tin drums used as a tank stand and a number of fence posts.

Several of the remaining structures were facilities for the Phillip Creek community. Three posts are what is left of a tank stand while nearby is the concrete floor of a lavatory. The truck shed has two low adobe walls with a gravel floor. The original floor of the store is now badly broken and raised because of the roots and its adobe walls are much fragmented. The only remaining evidence of the meat house is a concrete floor covered with earth. The laundry has adobe walls built on top of a concrete floor. The newer of the two clinics at the settlement, which was also used for a time as a guest house, is on an ant bed floor with partly collapsed adobe walls. All that is left of the dispensary and older clinic is the concrete floor with embedded
holding-down bolts. The ablution block has adobe walls on a concrete base. It is divided in half by a central wall. One of the best preserved buildings is the dining room and kitchen complex which is T shaped in design with the usual adobe walls. The dining room, two kitchens and a pantry are situated at right angles to each other with mainly concrete floors. There is an unwalled extension which was extension which was used for dish washing. About four hundred metres to the south east of the outlying buildings is a graveyard with at least twenty-six wooden grave posts which Davison identified.

A number of buildings were used as Aboriginal accommodation. The boys' dormitory, used until 1951, has a concrete floor with galvanised iron capping around the perimeter while the dormitory for part-Aboriginal children, also unused after 1951, has a concrete floor with wooden base plates of the original structure still attached. A structure which was a girls' dormitory has a rectangular concrete floor. An adobe building with an ant bed floor compresses what are left of unfinished quarters for single men. Also present are several adobe shelters and a bush camp, identified by posts, hearths, clearings, iron, flattened drums, billy cans and other surface artefacts.

The surface artefacts tell us a good deal about life at Phillip Creek. Davison collected and identified many of these which when I viewed them were located at the headquarters of the Tennant Creek Branch of the National Trust. Much of the extensive collection is of artefacts which seem to have been made using traditional techniques. Eleanor Crosby wrote an archaeological description of these and reached some useful conclusions. A number of the stone and glass specimens collected were grindstones, many of which were reused. She suggested that this reuse might reflect 'making the best' of a situation by people unable to use the rocks which had in traditional society provided grindstones. The existence of so many grindstones on the site indicates that despite the issue of rations, traditional methods of food preparation had continued. The presence at Phillip Creek of flaked tools such as scrapers, knives and adze flakes suggested that traditional stone-working technology was applied to glass once this became readily available. Some wooden artefacts collected were probably parts of boomerangs while others appear to have been bull-roarers, clapsticks and digging sticks. Almost half of Davison's collection comprises non-traditional artefacts. These include many factory-made products, some of which were modified for use in bush camps. Among items viewed and collected were tin containers, cooking equipment, military buttons, pennies, bottles, locks, billy cans, horseshoes, an axe, a hammer, a chisel, a spanner, tin match boxes, lids, mugs, cutlery and a school bell made in Birmingham.

The material evidence discussed so far assumes special significance when related to Phillip Creek's documented history. Because of severe drought in Central Australia during the late 1920s many Walpiri people left their traditional country to the south of Tennant Creek to camp near the Telegraph Station where a ration depot had been established. The influx was also due to the notorious Coniston Massacre of 1928,
Figure 5  Manga Manda Settlement, Phillip Creek
Source: adapted from the National Trust of Australia (NT)
described in an earlier chapter. Following the punitive police raids on them, many Walpiri fled from their traditional territory and ended up in Tennant Creek seeking work and rations. These Aborigines soon became accustomed to new material goods and in many cases had no wish to return to their previous nomadic way of life. The Tennant Creek gold rush during the 1930s resulted in further pressures on the Walpiri. In 1940 some moved to a new ration depot near Tennant Creek but this, known as 'The Six Mile', soon proved unsuitable. Eventually in 1945 officers from the Native Affairs Branch of the Northern Territory Administration investigated the area around Phillip Creek with the Manga Manda waterhole being considered a suitable site for a new Aboriginal settlement.

The settlement at Phillip Creek was officially regarded as a temporary depot and therefore was not seen as justifying investment of much capital. Throughout Australia, moreover, building materials were in short supply. Many of the materials used at Phillip Creek came initially from demolished buildings in and near Tennant Creek. The first structures were completed towards the end of 1945 and included the superintendent's house, the teacher's house, a store, two dormitories for school children, a dormitory for part-Aboriginal children, a dispensary, a kitchen and dining room complex and an ablution block. The first superintendent, who exercised responsibility on behalf of the Native Affairs Branch, was Arnold Long, a missionary from the Aborigines' Inland Mission. The total Aboriginal population in August 1945 was two hundred and fifteen: forty men, eighty women and ninety-five children. In the early years all Aborigines except for the school children lived in wind break shelters.

Although they depended on rations, the people in the bush camps had the freedom to move about the surrounding country. School children, though, were kept within the confines of the settlement in a deliberate attempt to disrupt their natural socialisation process within their own culture. By the middle of 1946 the Aboriginal population had risen to two hundred and seventy-five and there was some inter-marriage between the Walpiri and the Warramungu, whose territory surrounded the settlement.

Life at Phillip Creek was based on the structured settlement within a fence and the bush camps beyond that fence. The main official function was the issue of rations. Also important was the provision of schooling for children, training of adults in skills such as cooking and truck driving and the provision of basic health services. In the bush camps corroborees were held from time to time and, as mentioned earlier, there was continued use of some traditional artefacts.

Nineteen fifty-two was a key year in the settlement's history. Early that year the Native Affairs Branch took over direct control and there was growing concern about the poor condition of many of the structures. The dormitory system was abolished so that children could again live with their parents. There was also increasing worry about the uncertain water supply. Mud bricks (adobe) started to be used for the
construction of new buildings and alterations to old ones. This, it was believed, would reduce construction costs and help develop local building skills. The anthropologist JA Meggitt later observed that the Walpiri preferred adobe houses to those made of galvanised iron. The mud bricks, he pointed out, were 'well suited to the extremes of temperature in the desert'.

In 1954 the Commonwealth government decided that the settlement should be abandoned because of its water supply difficulties. The inhabitants were moved over the next two years to Warrabri (now Ali Curring) south of Tennant Creek and by mid-1956 Phillip Creek's last inhabitants had left, taking with them a lot of building materials. Intended to become a model Aboriginal settlement, Warrabri in many respects proved a disaster.

The material record of Phillip Creek's history provides a valuable insight into one aspect of Aboriginal response to contact with Europeans in Central Australia. While it might have been assumed that the dispossessed Walpiri would have lost most of their traditional skills, evidence discovered in and around the settlement indicates that this was not the case. Davison also found in her research at Phillip Creek that the most rewarding oral accounts of its history came when former inhabitants were recorded while visiting the site. The lay out of the settlement was anything but random and reflected the priorities and attitudes of those in charge. The fences around the 'structured part' of the settlement, to use Davison's terminology, were a dividing line between two very different behaviour settlings. The staff residence area was a place for exclusively white interaction. To the authorities the spatial configuration of Phillip Creek's structures meant order and control. To most of the Aborigines, however, this was an alien and inflexible environment. The use of adobe at the settlement is noteworthy in that while this form of construction was chosen because of its low costs, it proved acceptable to both Aboriginal and whites. The surface remains at Phillip Creek, while lacking the beauty of the structures at Hermansburg, still provide a most useful contribution to our knowledge of black-white relations.
CHAPTER SIX

PASTORAL HOMESTEADS IN THE ALICE SPRINGS DISTRICT

Pastoralism left a clear and visible impact on the Central Australian landscape. The pastoral industry commenced in the region at a very early stage of its European history and has continued until the present as one of the relatively few forms of viable economic activity. Its historic evidence includes camp yards, fences, wells, tracks and, most visibly, homesteads. This chapter will examine some examples of homesteads in the vicinity of the town of Alice Springs. The next chapter will deal with rather different evidence of pastoralism to be found in some other parts of the region.

The remains of the oldest whole homestead grouping in Central Australia are at Mount Burrell Station, some 98 kilometres south of Alice Springs. Constructed between 1879 and 1881, the surviving evidence indicates building methods which quite strikingly reflect the vernacular architecture of the region at the time of its first white settlement. The station was also the location of the earliest large scale attempt at sheep breeding in Central Australia. The principal buildings were on the homestead site. The main surviving elements comprise two stone rubble fire places and chimneys, the larger of which was probably used for cooking in a kitchen. The surrounding floor contains pieces of a flagstone surface near the fireplace with an earth surface at the other end showing that there were two rooms. The smaller fireplace with its chimney were probably for living quarters, which were in a small drop slab hut. Remnants of its flagstone floor are also visible. There are two other flagstone floor surfaces which were almost certainly for drop slab huts. The location of a blacksmith's shed is indicated by a stone rubble forge hearth and scattered scrap iron. A group of large timber humps is most likely what is left of a meathouse. The country around the homestead was first used for pastoralism in late 1879 when George Gilmore arrived with a mob of cattle. Sheep were brought there in 1882 but their introduction was not a success and the survivors were taken away two years later. Mount Burrell's subsequent history was chequered. Under various owners there were problems with drought and isolation and in the early 1900s the homestead was only used sporadically as an outstation and by musters. The buildings were finally abandoned in 1915.

The oldest known surviving example of a drop slab building in Central Australia with all its detailing and original elements intact is the old kitchen at Idracowra Station, 143 kilometres south of Alice Springs. While no information exists which accurately determines the structure's age, Howard Pearce's careful research indicates that it was
probably built in 1905 to 1906. The building is quite small and is timber framed and panelled. It has flagstone floors with an applied concrete filling in some places. At the rear are a stone fire place and flanking walls. There are timber rafters and corrugated iron sheeting on the roof. On the east and west walls are concrete additions. Idracowra Station was established in 1876 and, like so many other Central Australian pastoral holdings, uncertainty marked its early history. From the early 1900s it was run as an outstation of Henbury Station next door, a situation which extended until the early 1950s. The kitchen was part of a complex of structures, including living quarters and a meathouse both since removed, which were probably erected at the time Idracowra became an outstation.

Another pastoral property which has acquired historical significance due to its direct connection with the beginnings of European settlement in Central Australia is Old Owen Springs. Its homestead is 54 kilometres south west of Alice Springs, located in a beautiful setting on the banks of the Hugh River at the entrance to Lawrence Gorge. The homestead site includes some very useful examples of early buildings in the Alice Springs district. They were erected in 1886 and 1887. The living quarters at the site comprise a two room building of local stone, to which entrance was obtained through a protected passageway enclosed by a free-standing exterior wall. Additional walls were later attached to form a kitchen. The floors are all of flagstone with recently added concrete in the living quarters. The walls are made of local stone rubble while the window and door frames are of sawn timber. Also of local stone is a harness and saddle shed. This building has an intact bush timber frame roof which is covered with reed thatch remnants fastened with fine gauge wire. There is an earth floor. The first European to see the homestead site was the explorer Stuart in 1860 and he used it as an overnight camp on several occasions during the next couple of years. During 1871 the Milner brothers chose a stretch of river nearby as a temporary sheep camp. William Gilbert occupied the station more permanently when he arrived there with cattle and horses in April 1873. Thomas Elder purchased Owen Springs in 1886 and it is probable that the surviving stone buildings were constructed during the next two years. There were later several owners and also periods when the whole station was virtually abandoned. The old homestead stopped being used in 1919.

At Loves Creek Homestead, located 64 kilometres east north east of Alice Springs, there are two buildings which were erected between 1900 and 1925. They demonstrate the adaption of the more common Australian homestead vernacular to the particularly extreme climatic conditions which the early European settlers found in Central Australia. They are of interest as the walls are constructed of both earth and stone. The buildings have acquired further importance through their association with a number of well known Central Australian families and their current use as part of a tourist resort. One of the buildings is of stone and has walls of rubble construction with a large stone cooking fire place at one end. Now containing three rooms and much altered over the years, it was originally erected as a one room hut. The first end wall is still visible in the mid section of the present roof line. Floors are flagstone
with areas of applied concrete. The principal and first room has no ceiling with the roof frame being made of bush timber. The other building is of earth construction and now is a ruin. A stone rubble fire place, however, is still intact. The first white occupant of Loves Creek Station was William Benstead in August 1877. Albert Wallis took control at the turn of the century and was responsible for constructing the stone house in the homestead area, which was originally intended as a kitchen and cook's quarters. Louis Bloomfield acquired Loves Creek in 1910, using the property for horse breeding to service the Indian remount trade. It was during this period of control that local builder Bill Ludgate erected the adobe house beside the early stone structure. In recent years Loves Creek Homestead has become better known as the tourist resort, Ross River. The stone building has been adapted and altered for dining and accommodation while removal of the roof of the earth building caused it to collapse in the mid 1970s.

Bond Springs Homestead, 19 kilometres north east of Alice Springs, warrants attention as it contains a well preserved group of pastoral outbuildings, some of which appeared between 1910 and 1918. They now represent an intact example of typical use of and construction with locally available materials. There are several early buildings still in excellent condition at the homestead. One is a stone rubble blacksmith's shed with a stone forge hearth, earth floor, stone rubble walls and bush timber roof clad with corrugated galvanised iron sheeting. Next door is a harness or saddle shed made of close set mulga uprights and a bush timber roof frame with corrugated galvanised iron sheeting. Inside this building are timber racks for saddles. Nearby is another small building made of close set mulga upright construction. It was probably used as a store room. Its several timber benches could have been used for the storage above ground of flour bags. A two room stone rubble structure containing a cement floor and corrugated galvanised iron roof was most likely erected to serve as quarters, later being used as an office or storeroom. Bond Springs was occupied and stocked with horses and cattle in 1881. Until the early 1900s its homestead buildings were particularly primitive. In 1910 Sidney Kidman, the famous 'cattle king', acquired the station through one of his companies; some of the surviving buildings were erected during the next eight years. The company, however, did not adequately manage Bond Springs and came under criticism for its failure to make improvements. In the late 1940s, under new ownership, a large house was built and the surviving older buildings were properly maintained.

One of the oldest slab timber buildings in Central Australia and one located at the site of an early pastoral homestead is at Henbury Station, 110 kilometres south west of Alice Springs. Most of the buildings at Henbury are of comparatively recent origin but the old kitchen was probably constructed in 1905 or 1906. It is a single room structure with a surrounding verandah and a recent stone parapet wall on three sides. The floors are mainly of flagstone over which concrete has been applied. The walls include heavy desert oak uprights which have been mortised to accommodate desert oak drop slab panels. Desert oak beams support the roof and there are also more
recent sawn timber rafters. The roof itself is of corrugated galvanised iron with capping to the crests and ridges. The kitchen is the sole survivor of about eight structures built before 1910. Henbury Station was first stocked in 1877. Nothing remains of its first structures other than a small area of flagstone surface and some fallen posts from a stockyard. Abandoned during the 1890s, the station was restocked in 1905. It was then that a new group of homestead buildings, including the kitchen, was erected. Henbury has continued as a significant cattle property since that time with a number of improvements being made in the post-Second World War period.

At Old Hamilton Downs Homestead, some 70 kilometres north west of Alice Springs, there is an outstanding collection of vernacular buildings illustrating the use of a wide range of techniques and materials in a remote location. The site and structures have long historical and social ties with the Central Australian region. These include the explorer Stuart's naming the site, the settlement of the first pastoralists, the construction of the homestead precinct between 1913 and 1926 and the changing nature of the pastoral industry. The homestead includes a vertical pole shed with a corrugated galvanised iron roof, attached horse yards constructed of bush timber, a grass thatch, timber and iron meat house, a bush timber and ripple iron house, an adobe kitchen and mess, a stone house and a steel radio mast. The buildings are most picturesquely situated on the north side of a creek with the towering MacDonnell Ranges to their south. The meat house is of particular interest and was the subject of a special archaeological study. It was vital in an age before there was no refrigeration on isolated properties where daily killing for meat was not warranted. It was designed to prolong the life of butchered beef by keeping this as cool as possible. Stuart passed by the homestead twice in 1860 and named it 'Hamilton Springs', later changed to Hamilton Downs. Although stocked by the late 1880s, Hamilton Downs did not have a distinct homestead until 1913. It was then that the adobe structure later used as a kitchen and the meat house seem to have been built. Timber used came from the surrounding hills. Jack Williams, a well known Alice Springs stone mason, built the stone house some time between 1923 and 1926 and it is likely that other stone structures also appeared then. Local stone and lime, which was burnt nearby, were abundant. Hamilton Downs was stocked with cattle and had some well known owners, including the two Sid Stanes (father and son), Ted Harris, Sidney Kidman and Damian Miller. The old homestead was abandoned in 1948 but in 1978, following some restoration, became a youth camp designed to show young people something of the outback.

Mount Riddock Homestead, 112 kilometres north east of Alice Springs, contains two well preserved buildings erected between 1928 and 1930 which are of note as they display both vertical and horizontal slit drop slabs which are seated in mortised timber uprights. There are two rooms divided by a drop slab partition wall. A stone alcove at one end is also of slab construction. The floor is made of flagstone with areas of concrete. The roof frame is of bush timber covered with ripple iron and corrugated galvanised iron sheeting. The other building is of similar construction but with walls
of vertical timber uprights. Neither structure contains a ceiling. Mount Riddock was taken up as a pastoral block in 1910. It was originally stocked with sheep but in the 1930s cattle gradually took over. Ben Webb erected one of the two homestead buildings in 1928 as a kitchen and store and the second year later as sleeping quarters. From the 1940s onwards the buildings were used for storage purposes.

Mount Riddock and the other homesteads discussed so far all provide physical evidence which enhances historians' understanding of the early and crucial stages of development of pastoral settlement in Central Australia. The homesteads, in some ways, are a peculiarly Australian building type yet their construction still owed much to techniques developed outside Australia. They contain buildings which served a variety of different functions and reflect today the social, geographical and economic forces which resulted in their establishment and subsequent use.
CHAPTER SEVEN

WELLS ON THE NORTH-SOUTH STOCK ROUTE

One of the most significant influences which the white pastoralists had on the Central Australian landscape was the development of a network of stock routes. Although many of these have fallen into disuse with the coming of rail and road transport, they can still sometimes be traced. One, to the north of the region, went from Newcastle Waters to Longreach in Queensland. It was used for the 'last great cattle drive' which formed part of Australia's Bicentennial activities in 1988. Another, which will form the focus for this chapter, fairly closely followed the route of the Overland Telegraph Line. Stock needed a lot of water while they were travelling which posed a considerable problem in a region as dry as Central Australia could be. To overcome the problem numerous wells were constructed along the stock route and in many locations they remain the only human made structures in otherwise empty locations.

One of the earliest such structures was Kelly Well located on Kelly Creek some 35 kilometres south of Tennant Creek. It is worth attention as the site of an early soakage and for the remains of the original well construction. It testifies to the technical expertise required in obtaining water in an arid environment and does much to demonstrate the functions and processes of the well during its period of use. Kelly Well now contains a timbered shaft, two large corroded circular iron water tanks and a large circular concrete water tank. At the top of the shaft is a section of stone work from an earlier period of construction, above and around which is a large concrete collar of about two metres in height and extending to the surface. The well head is closed off with a heavy steel pipe grid. Kelly Creek is the first important watercourse south of Tennant Creek. It is thus likely that a soakage well was established there during construction of the Overland Telegraph Line in 1871 and 1872, although there is no firm evidence for this. The well itself was sunk in 1875 and was the first of four stock wells put down on a route which followed the Overland Telegraph Line between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek in the 1870s. It appears that both the well and the creek were named after Pat Kelly, a member of Goyder's 1869 Palmerston (Darwin) survey party who later worked as a labourer on telegraph construction. The well became a well known stopping point for travellers along the stock route. It was able to produce 2275 litres of good water for stock every 24 hours and was equipped with what was known as a 'whip' head frame in the early 1900s. This had a mechanism which allowed an animal or animals to bring water out of the well by means of a pulley system. It continued to be used until the late 1950s and a government cattle dip was set up nearby in 1927. At the same time the well was equipped with a new 91 000 litre tank and a comet windmill to pump the water.
Bonney Well is further south, 88 kilometres from Tennant Creek and just to one side of the present Stuart Highway. With the first construction taking place between 1880 and 1883, it was, like Kelly Creek, one of a number of watering points on the north-south stock route. Its stone work is still intact and with its surrounding structures it provides a good example of stock well construction in the nineteenth century. The site includes a large stone structure, known as a 'dump', at the top of the well and above this the remnants of a timber head frame. One large timber leg remains in its original situation but is very insecure. The stone foundations of the first tank stand are located a couple of metres from the dump. About 20 metres away are the corroded remains of a large circular iron tank with a bore, windmill and more recent concrete tank nearby. A bull wheel and a bigger idler wheel have both been removed for safe keeping at a nearby station. The explorer Stuart founded Bonney Creek in June 1860 and named it after Charles Bonney, a former Commissioner of Crown Lands for South Australia. Several reliable waterholes a short distance from the well site were used by Stuart and the Overland Telegraph Line construction teams as temporary depots.

During 1878 and 1879 a large mob of stock under the control of AT Woods and the brothers Alfred and Arthur Giles reached Bonney Creek and because of the dry conditions started to sink a well there. But rain came in early 1879 and the well was unfinished. Well sinkers built the present well between 1880 and 1883. They were employed under contract by the South Australian Telegraph Department. The Department had annual allocations of £1000 to £1200 for well sinking along the Overland Telegraph Line to help the movement of stock into the Northern Territory. In 1892 a two metre high stone dump with a timber head frame and a whip were installed. At this time the well was much used and was able to produce fresh water at the rate of 4550 litres a day. During the early 1930s the colourful missionary Annie Lock established a camp near the well. From there she regularly distributed food to groups of Aborigines, some of whom sought her assistance during a period of extreme drought. The well was extensively refitted in the 1920s when modern concrete and iron strappings were installed. Finally in the late 1930s a bore sank nearby replaced the well. Today it is under the control of the National Trust.

Situated 11 kilometres north of Tennant Creek is the Tennant Creek Stock Well. This site contains material evidence associated with the production of the only permanent supply of portable water in the Tennant Creek locality until 1935. The well site includes a variety of elements. There is a timbered stock well with a slightly raised concrete slab which contains a series of sawn-off steel rods which were probably associated with the frame of a former windmill. A heavy steel grid seals the well head with a 91 000 litre circular metal tank situated alongside. The tank is seated on concrete footings and is now rather corroded. About 200 metres away from the well to the south are the remnants of a bore. The well is located very close to the Tennant Creek Telegraph Station and an earlier well was sunk not long after the station's establishment. The present stock well was probably built between 1880 and 1883 for the same reasons and by the same people who were responsible for the construction of Bonney Well. The well was completed in 1884 at the latest and was able then to
supply 4550 litres of water a day. During the early 1890s a two metre high stone dump together with a heavy timber head frame and whip were installed. In the 1920s a camel operated the whip. During the initial stages of the Tennant Creek gold rush the well provided the only permanent water for the entire goldfield. It was clearly inadequate for this purpose and the federal government commenced a partially successful search for alternative water supplies in 1934. The pressures on the water supply from the well combined with the effects of drought sometimes caused the well to dry up altogether for short periods. In 1935 a directive was issued that stock could no longer use the well. During the same year a windmill and pumping plant were installed there and a new overhead tank was erected. The bore to the south of the well was sunk in October 1935, providing an initial flow of 63 700 litres a day. It provided the first alternative source of drinking water for the goldfield. After then the well was used much less frequently.

Ryan's Well is located 128 kilometres north of Alice Springs and is now part of a Conservation Commission Reserve. Like the other wells described so far, it was built very close to the stock route during the 1880s. What makes it unique is that its stone and timber remains are so comprehensive and in such good condition that the well's mechanism can still be easily understood. The position of the whip, the timber trough, the tank stand and other elements are still very obvious. The well has a stone dump about two metres high. The top of the shaft is timbered and above is a timber head frame with two metal pulley wheels. Adze marks can be seen on the timber beams. Nearby are the foundation walls for a tank which has now disappeared. A little further away are a windmill and two large tanks not associated with the original well. Ryan's Well was first sunk as a government stock well in 1889. It consisted then of a 29 metre deep shaft, being equipped at the surface with a heavy stone dump and timber head frame containing a double horse whip with two buckets, a hand windlass and an iron tank with 29 metres of troughing. From 1919 until 1929 Sam Nicker and his family, who lived at nearby Glen Maggie Homestead, supervised the well and, in particular, were involved in the operation and upkeep of the whip system. It seems that the well stopped being used in the 1930s.

The most recent of the wells discussed here is Gilbert Well situated 64 kilometres south of Tennant Creek and on the west bank of Gilbert Creek. It was one of a number of wells used for the watering of cattle and the only stock well on the main route where most of the timber whip posts and railings have survived. The site of the well is now marked with an earth crater from which four forged metal feet of the original head frame protrude. No evidence is left of the former earth dump which probably fell in when the well head collapsed. The concrete foundations of a larger circular tank stand are, though, still intact. Three guide posts of diminishing height show where the whip path extended from the well. The posts are attached for support to a partly intact post and rail fence which once served to keep stock away from the whip system. At the end of the whip path is a bull wheel which is secured between two heavy posts set at an angle of 45°. The casing of an abandoned bore head is
alongside the collapsed well head. Gilbert Well was almost certainly the last timbered shaft well to be constructed on the stock route. Bill Foster of McLaren Creek advised Howard Pearce in 1983 that he had dug the well in about 1929 but Pearce believes that this could have taken place as early as 1918. The well head was provided with an earth dump instead of the more normal stone and timber structure. It was apparently abandoned in the 1930s when a bore was installed nearby.

Wells like Gilbert Well are among the most tangible forms of evidence of the early Central Australian pastoral industry. In many seasons the wells provided the only sources of water for thousands of head of sheep and cattle. They were and are also important landmarks for both Europeans and Aborigines. But in the long term they proved inadequate for the demands placed on them. The sources of water on which they relied were insufficient and sparsely distributed. By the 1930s the wells are being replaced with drilled bores which were set out along the stock route in a systematic and uniform fashion.
CHAPTER EIGHT

MINING AT ARLTUNGA

Arltunga is probably one of Australia's least known and most remote goldfields. Located in the eastern MacDonnell Ranges, it was active between 1887 and 1916. Arltunga is a derivation of the Aboriginal name for Paddy's Rockhole where the first gold was found. Today the most outstanding feature of the area is the variety of ruined structures, principally buildings, which illustrate the struggle of miners to establish shelters and other facilities in a difficult and harsh environment. These range from low semi-circular stone arrangements through to huts of local stone and more sophisticated structures in the area where the government set up a battery. Much of Arltunga is now under the control of the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory and is gradually attracting the attention of both scholars and tourists. They are interested in the considerable evidence of settlement at the former goldfield and the integrity of that evidence.

The remains at Arltunga are of various types. First, there are relatively formal and traditional arrangements of cottages at the site of the government battery. Second, there is a far more basic and crudely constructed building type scattered about the goldfield's settlement areas. Here there appear to be a great variety of plan forms and stone walling techniques. Third, there are the remains of shafts and diggings, wells and machinery such as stampers and boilers. Fourth, there are two cemeteries with surviving head stones or timber memorials and surrounds. Fifth, there is much archaeological evidence in the form of artefacts.

The population of Arltunga was always quite low, being based on small claims and syndicates rather than company operated deep mines. Miners and business people at Arltunga believed for the most part that they would only be there temporarily and were therefore not inclined to construct permanent and elaborate buildings. Hardly surprisingly the remaining structural evidence reveals few buildings of a sophisticated character. Those which are were usually government constructed or business premises which needed more shelter and security. The historian Peter Forrest, in his preliminary analysis of 1981 of over 200 structural sites identified at Arltunga, classified the extant structures into different categories.

First, there are buildings with full height walls, windows and door openings. All but one are near the battery and former police station. While the buildings are quite modest in their dimensions, they are extravagant in their use of lime, mortar and rendering on the walls compared with the goldfield's other structures. Some have several rooms with evidence of verandahs but most are two roomed cottages.
A second category of buildings is related quite closely to the first but whole walls of them are completely missing with no above ground evidence of stone construction. Some of the structures include no more than a chimney and evidence of a floor. The relatively elaborate construction of the surviving masonry, though, sets them apart from similar plan forms.

Another type of structure is based on a far less elaborate structural form and construction technique. The stone work is simple and there is very little evidence of lining to doors and windows. Floors are flagstone or earth, sometimes with minor paved areas around doorways and hearths. There is a great variety of stone walling techniques ranging from very crude to carefully formed random rubble work. Most of the structures exhibit at least some skill and knowledge in stone working. They include buildings with at least four walls and defined doorways, low stone walls, free standing chimneys, oven foundations, more intact ovens, dugouts and small semi-circular stone arrangements which may have been used, Forrest speculates, to anchor tents.

A further type is non-residential. It includes yards for the enclosure of stock, cemeteries, isolated graves and burial sites, wells, a network of former roads, and, of course, the mines, stamp batteries and cyanide works.

Within Forrest's basic construction types there are many techniques to be found in the details of the stone work. Though almost all structures are made of red quartz and schistose, both of which were easily available in the region of the goldfield; the ways in which the stone was gathered and made into walls greatly varied. Most of the stone appears to have been obtained from nearby outcrops with the choice of construction techniques being related to the availability of materials. In some structures quite big blocks of stone were used while in others the blocks are a lot smaller. Most walls are laid out in two skins with transverse pieces at regular intervals being used to tie the walls together. The mortar used ranges from mud mortar to a gravelly mixture which could have been applied while dry. Dry stone walling is much less common.

Given the large number of structures at Arltunga, it is only possible here to discuss some selected examples which have been at least partly documented. There are other significant structures about which much less is known.

One interesting structure is a wagon shed, built of large pieces of stone without any mortar. As a consequence it has decayed very badly and only a small part of the original wall is at its first height. But the collapsed walls have kept their original form as they lie on the ground. Also at the site of the shed are some original timber posts and the remains of an iron oven within an attached residential section. One rectangular hut is unique among the buildings at Arltunga as it uses river pebbles as a building material together with the more normal schist and quartz. The wall thickness
is about 100 mm greater than at other buildings. Another unique structure is a chimney cut into a cliff, being carved directly into the rock face. Little is left of the surrounding building but the chimney itself is worth special attention.

The most important of the cemeteries at Arltunga is in the area known as White Range. It provides evidence of the death and burial of some of the goldfield's better known inhabitants and also contains some particularly impressive wooden crosses and grave surrounds. As there is very little use of wood as a building material at Arltunga it is of interest that the cemetery includes so much intact wooden material. The crosses exhibit good quality joinery with Roman numerals marked on interlocking pieces. These show either prefabrication at another site or special care with joints.

At the site of the government battery separate buildings appear to be carefully arranged and disposed. This locality also contains a wide range of building types, such as houses, a store, a toilet and walls. Some of the walls have rounded corners and doorways formed by curving the stone work.

Although buildings like those just described are the most obvious evidence of mining at Arltunga, in most instances very little is known of their histories. The documentary records have no direct references to buildings at miners' camps and even the more 'official' buildings were only mentioned when some problems, such as repairs being needed, arose. The only structures described in some detail were those near the battery and cyanide works. It is only when detailed study is made of particular structures and archaeological evidence is examined that a more complete picture emerges. Kate Holmes has undertaken such work and her findings show that while research on the history of Arltunga is full of difficulties, worthwhile results can be obtained.

An example of Holmes's approach concerns a store site at White Range which Patrick O'Neil and his wife occupied in the early 1900s. Through a combination of excavation and artefact collection at the site with research of archival records, Holmes identified the purposes and found out something about the use of the various structures there. One, a well finished stone building with a chimney, was a dwelling. Nearby were buildings possibly used as a kitchen, a forge fireplace, a workshed, a kitchen or storeroom, an ash pit and, perhaps of most interest, a billiard room. Among the excavated artefacts were objects manufactured in Paris, New York and Lincoln in England, revealing that the baggage of western culture reached some of the most remote parts of the Australian inland.

Holmes has also undertaken other important archaeological research at Arltunga concerned with artefacts. There are various locations in the Arltunga area which have a diverse range of objects on or near the ground surface. At the sites of the wagon shed, blacksmith's shop and huts complex at White Range, Holmes was able to locate, collect, describe and label objects which were then stored at the office of the
Conservation Commission in Alice Springs. These included pieces of glass and pottery and a number of metal artefacts such as tins, mugs, nuts and bolts, nails and wire.

Some other artefacts believed to be from Arltunga were moved to Alice Springs Pitchi Richi Sanctuary. These include a two head stamper battery, a tap and hammer stone, an engine, copper plates, an iron bedstead, a cart, a bread oven and a safe. At other locations were a rabbit trap, a dog trap, a carbide lamp, an axe, a tin cup, a tailor's yoke, a leather knife protector, a scythe, picks, a jug, a wash tub, a machinery wheel, harness pieces, an axe head, a saw, barrel hoops, a basin, saddle pads, a tin billy, part of an axle, a low basin, a ladle, a windlass and a pit saw.

Joseph Helle and Isaac Smith first found gold in the alluvial bed of Paddy's Rockhole Creek in April 1887. There was a steady demand for rights to mine but the field was never able to support a large population, despite numerous claims being worked. Miners had to travel great distances through rugged country to get there and once at the field found other difficulties, most notably a shortage of water. Even in good years they could not venture far from known supplies. Yet the field slowly grew, crushing mills were erected, several stores were set up, a warden's office was established in 1895 and a police camp in 1899. New gold finds were made at White Range during 1897. In 1898 the government provided a ten head stamp battery and a cyanide works. Further gold discoveries took place at Winnecke's Depot in October 1902 which received widespread national publicity. In April of the following year the white population of Arltunga was almost 400. The rush ended in March 1903 when it was found that many of the mines contained little ore. Disappointed miners left the field and it slowly died. The government battery closed down in 1916.

According to MC Hartwig, the influence of mining at Arltunga was considerable. Small as it was, the gold rush there brought Central Australia to national attention to an extent not previously achieved; it forced the South Australian government to upgrade mail services to the region and brought an immediate improvement to Central Australia's transport services; it directly resulted in the establishment of the town of Stuart (now Alice Springs) in 1888; pastoralists were encouraged to invest in Central Australia on the assumption that Arltunga would attract a large permanent population; mining brought to the region many families who later became prominent; it led to much greater contacts between whites and Aborigines and directly resulted in other mineral discoveries such as that of mica at Harts Range.

Arltunga was remote and the climate difficult. The field ultimately failed because it was not rich enough to underwrite the large capital expenditure required to overcome these adverse circumstances. The miners' eventually unsuccessful responses to their environment are evident today in the remains at Arltunga. These, especially the buildings, have great historical worth because, in contrast with many other Australian goldfields, Arltunga never had any industry other than mining. Evidence can thus be
found there of techniques and methods of construction and lifestyles common to other fields but highlighted at Arltunga due to its prevailing conditions. Although the material evidence has certainly deteriorated over the years, it has been little disturbed. Within Arltunga is a variety of plan forms and structural types.
CHAPTER NINE

MINING AT TENNANT CREEK

The area with which this chapter is concerned is the small town of Tennant Creek, located at the twentieth parallel of latitude, and a surrounding district of approximately 100 sq km. Although Aborigines have lived in the district for thousands of years and the first Europeans arrived over a century ago, it did not become a focus for European economic activities until the 1930s when the last Australian 'gold rush' took place. The rush was shortlived but it resulted in extraction of various minerals which has continued until the present. The record of European settlement in the Tennant Creek district is well explained in a range of sites and structures, all of which are associated with one another by a continuity of economic and social history.

This chapter is principally concerned with the phase in the district's development which extended from the early 1930s until the early 1950s, a period which witnessed the rush of individual prospectors to Tennant Creek against the background of an economic depression and the later replacement of the prospectors by larger mining operations in which most work was undertaken by company employees. The physical evidence of the period takes two general forms. First, there are mining remains in the area surrounding the town which demonstrate important technological, economic and social factors. Second, there are buildings in the town which provide insights into living conditions, the provision of services and the establishment of forms of social control.

One of the first mines in the Tennant Creek goldfield to be worked was the Great Northern, situated some three kilometres north of the town in the McDouall Range. The remains of the mine workings are on top of a mesa type hill which affords a magnificent view of the surrounding area. The workings still display the very basic nature of the initial operation with little evidence of mine machinery. There are only two shafts, both of which are filled with drums, and a long mullock heap. In 1931 HJ Udall discovered rich ore there a few feet below the surface. Udall's success created interest in the field throughout Australia. Many unemployed people travelled enormous distances to Tennant Creek in the hope of achieving a more secure economic future. By August 1933 the gold rush had started.

The first public crushing facility was Fazal Deen's Battery, which commenced operations in 1934 and remained in use until the late 1930s. It owed its location to its proximity to a government water bore and the newly established town of Tennant Creek, which was only a kilometre away to the north. The remains of the Battery site include double battery boxes, cam shafts, a jaw crusher, a gas producer and several car bodies of the 1920s vintage. To the south of the Battery are three concrete cyanide
vats. The remnants just described are a curious mixture of importation and improvisation. They show the need to make do with what was available and the difficulties in obtaining anything more than basic equipment to Tennant Creek during the early years. In 1935 the output of the battery was doubled. Fazal Deen was an 'Afghan', that is from the northern part of today's Pakistan, and one of a small but conspicuous Asian minority in the Tennant Creek area. A controversial figure, he was often accused of not paying his employees properly.

The Eldorado Mine, located five kilometres to the south of Tennant Creek, presents a dramatic contrast. It was for many years the largest producer of gold on the field and today contains an impressive assemblage of abandoned workings and equipment. The remains now include parts of the main haulage shaft, a jaw crusher, a gold treatment plant, a cyanidation plant and the original haulage cage. There is an array of abandoned buildings and equipment, all in a deteriorated condition but of considerable visual impact. Gold deposits were discovered at Eldorado in 1932 and large scale production commenced in 1934. Eldorado Pty Ltd was formed in 1938. The lode was prospected by shallow shafts arranged on a grid pattern. It was the only Tennant Creek mine to operate right through the Second World War and remained the largest gold producer in the district until the lode was exhausted in 1958 when the mine closed. The evidence of mining at Eldorado shows the changes which came when companies replaced individual prospectors. Expensive equipment was introduced and improvisation became less necessary. A somewhat fluid social structure was replaced by one which involved a hierarchy of positions from mine manager to unskilled labourer.

Another site associated with changes in mining is that of the Number Three Government Battery, located two kilometres east of Tennant Creek. It was for many years the only government battery in the region and it demonstrates a variety of mining techniques. The site includes a corrugated galvanised iron battery housing building which is connected by a chute to a hopper and primary crushing equipment. There are also a weighbridge station, a tank, several houses and storage sheds, an office block, a walk in concrete vault, an explosive magazine driven into the side of a hill and modern visitor facilities. All but the last of these structures were erected before the late 1950s. Established in 1941, the Battery originally consisted of a ten head stamp battery and associated equipment. It closed in 1942 because of a scarcity of fuel, re-opened in 1946 and has been expanded and improved since then. The Battery complex extends over a large area and indicates a steadily increasing sophistication in mining technology with which only the larger companies were able to cope.

In common with many other Australian mining areas, Tennant Creek very quickly acquired the apparatus of social control. One of the town's earliest surviving buildings is the police lock up cell, now displayed at the National Trust Museum. This demountable structure is one of two of its kind which survive in the town and was
erected in 1934. The cell is a small, rectangular, timber framed and corrugated iron clad structure with a curved roof. There are small barred windows at the bottom of each corner and a heavy mesh door. Prisoners found conditions inside almost unbearable during the summer months when the temperatures often exceeded 40°C yet is was typical of the small cells used in many parts of the Northern Territory. The structure reflects the sometimes brutal implementation of law and order which continued in frontier areas until quite recently. New and more spacious cell accommodation in Tennant Creek was not constructed until the early 1960s following representations from the normally conservative Country Women's Association about the poor conditions for prisoners.

Social control of a more humane variety was associated with the Australian Inland Mission hostel constructed in 1935 to 1936. It was the first building in Tennant Creek to provide some welfare services for the white population. It was used for both social activities and a variety of church work. The building is constructed of corrugated galvanised iron. There are long flywire windows and metal drop blinds with the interior being partitioned into rooms. The design and construction are of interest for two reasons. First, the use of corrugated iron was an almost universal practice in remote mining areas, particularly in those where timber was unavailable or unsuitable or white ants were prevalent. The iron was relatively inexpensive and quite easy to transport. Second, the adaptations to cope with the climate were basic yet in some respects inadequate. Conditions inside the building were very hot in summer and sometimes cold at night in winter. The building was the result of a recommendation by the Reverend Kingsley Partridge, the Mission's Central Patrol Padre. It contained a library, a writing room, a coffee bar and a recreation room used by all denominations for church services. Miners and their families were encouraged to come to the building for showers and the preparation of meals but in the early years at least Aborigines were rigidly excluded.

Another religious structure showing the consequences of isolation and remoteness is the Catholic Church of Christ the King. First constructed in the mining town of Pine Creek in 1911, it was dismantled and moved to Tennant Creek in 1936 following a decision that Pine Creek's dwindling population no longer justified a church building and that money could be saved by moving an existing structure to Tennant Creek rather than building a new one there. So many parts of the building fell off during the move that it became known as 'the longest church in Australia'. Originally the building was timber framed, clad with corrugated galvanised iron and stood on iron piers. There was a short square corrugated iron steeple with a wooden cross attached to a gable near the entrance of the building. Soon after construction in Pine Creek two corrugated iron awnings were erected on both sides to shade the windows. On removal to Tennant Creek these awnings were taken away, a slightly higher spire was added in flat iron and other additions included a covered entrance and a large attached presbytery wing. Most of the new materials came from Adelaide. The church was prominent during the Second World War when it served as a social centre for
thousands of troops. The building reveals the large number of Catholics who were part of the Tennant Creek population before the Second World War and the anxiety of the Catholic Church to ensure that its presence was firmly established as quickly as possible. The building was for a number of years one of the most substantial in Tennant Creek and is still in regular use.

The first separate bank structure was that of the English, Scottish and Australian Bank. Constructed in 1936, it provided a vital service to miners as it disposed of practically all the gold produced. It still stands and is of about four metres by seven metres. It is timber framed and clad with corrugated galvanised iron. Other and more substantial banks were later established in the years after the Second World War and the building ceased to be used for banking purposes during the 1950s.

Retail facilities came at much the same time as banking. One of the oldest surviving shops is 'Kittle's Building' in the town's principal street. Built in 1937, it was used for many years as a bakery and cafe. It became a supermarket in the late 1950s and is now subdivided into three shops. It is a rectangular fibro and corrugated galvanised iron structure with a wide front verandah shading a wall clad with imitation brick work, which is an original feature of the building. The shop was conspicuous by its relative ostentation when it was first erected and its proprietors were among the more prosperous members of the town's small population. A surviving photograph taken in the late 1930s reveals a structure of very solid construction with wooden seats on the verandah, an awning and a large clearly painted sign. The sign included the information that shop was 'Phone 1, Box 1'. Even today the building is still a prominent part of the streetscape.

Almost all of Tennant Creek's early residences have disappeared, which is not surprising given that most of the first miners lived in tents or in very flimsy structures put together with whatever materials were available. Probably the oldest surviving house is that built for the teacher in charge of the Tennant Creek Government School in the late 1930s. It is a fibro and corrugated galvanised iron structure on metal stumps with an enclosed verandah and louvres on all sides. It is an example of the type of construction designed to accommodate one of the town's few public servants in a relatively comfortable style and still make use of limited building materials. Although moved from its original site and altered, enough remains of the original house to show a simple but very roomy residence which must have been in stark contrast to the living conditions of most Tennant Creek residents.

Medical services during the early years were of a rudimentary nature. The original hospital was not built until 1937 and has since been demolished. Still surviving, however, is the former Outpatients' Department, now restored for use as headquarters for the Tennant Creek Branch of the National Trust. This was constructed next to the original hospital by the Commonwealth Government as 55 Army Camp Hospital in 1942. At the time there was a large number of military personnel in Tennant Creek.
which resulted in a pressing need for improved health services. It was extended after
the war and served the town's population until 1978. The building has concrete floors
with a gently pitched corrugated galvanised iron roof. It has seven interior rooms. It
is one of very few surviving military structures in the Tennant Creek district and
provided a most important community service.

The sites and structures in and around Tennant Creek can contribute to both an
understanding of the history of the area and a more general appraisal of European
history in the remote parts of Australia. Tennant Creek is an artefact of Australia's
gold mining history, spanning mining technology from the primitive to the ultra-
modem. The town and its immediate vicinity possess a rich and varied range of
places which can be viewed as significant items of historical evidence.
CHAPTER TEN

URBANISATION IN ALICE SPRINGS

Urban growth is less significant in Central Australia than in more densely populated regions. The only centre approaching city status is Alice Springs with a population in 1989 of about twenty-three thousand. However for some time it has provided vital service functions and a regional headquarters for administrative agencies. Perhaps of even more importance, its isolation, remoteness and colourful past have made it far better known than many larger cities. It has been seen as a frontier town and a magnet for overlanders and adventurers. Despite rapid growth since the late 1960s, Alice Springs still possesses a variety of older places and structures which will assist understanding of the dynamics of its evolving political, economic and social characteristics.

From its origins Alice Springs was a regional centre for the administration of Central Australia and there are many places associated with this role. Most of the older evidence is concerned with the implementation of law and order and the imposition of political authority.

One of the earliest European structures in Alice Springs is the former Heavitree Gap Police Station. Constructed in 1889, it is a good example of simple stone design adapted to arid conditions. The original building is still intact and it was the location for the administration and operations of the first white police in the Alice Springs district. The station is built of local stone with a timber frame and galvanised iron roof. Rectangular in plan, it has a verandah which almost completely surrounds it. It was constructed for and used as the Alice Springs Police Station from 1888 until 1909, with additions being made in 1905. After 1909 it provided living quarters for junior constables and for a stock inspector. Unoccupied during the 1930s, in recent years it has been occupied by staff of the Conservation Commission.

The former Stuart Town Gaol was built in 1908. It is built of local materials in an architectural vernacular style. Being the first official building near the centre of the town, it had a most important role in Alice Springs's early development. The gaol's floor plan and fittings, moreover, reflect the harsh and discriminatory treatment of Aboriginal people during the time of its use. Rectangular in plan with three main areas, the gaol has limestone rubble walls with sand and lime joints. The walls were rendered in lime mortar leaving the main stone face exposed. Timbers used throughout were cut from local bloodwood or mulga. The roof is of corrugated galvanised iron. There are two cells, one for European and the other for Aboriginal inmates, the latter cell being about three times the size of the former. Both have benches and iron floor rings. Fresh air comes through three vents in the roof. An
exercise yard occupies the southern third of the building. The gaol's builder was Jack Williams, who quarried the stone used for its construction from the nearby MacDonnell Ranges. It was used as a prison until 1938 and was eventually closed because the increase in Alice Springs's population during the 1930s required a larger place of confinement. It is now under the control of the National Trust and has been restored and opened to the public.

The most imposing of the official structures built before the Second World War is the Residency which was completed in 1927. A fine example of 'arid architecture', between 1927 and 1931 it was the home of the Government Resident of Central Australia and for some time after then housed senior Commonwealth officers. The building sits close to the ground and is constructed from concrete block work with a corrugated galvanised steel roof. It features a central breezeway between a quite large and complex floor plan. Its present use as a museum and gallery, however, has required alterations including the installation of unsightly air conditioning units. As the home of Government Residents and other persons holding important positions, the Residency occupied a vital role in Alice Springs until 1974 when it came under the control of the Museums and Art Galleries Board of the Northern Territory. Many prominent visitors to the town stayed there including in 1963, Queen Elizabeth II. It is now open to members of the public.

Opposite the Residency is the former Court House which was built in 1928. It is thus also associated with the period in which Central Australia existed as a separate entity. Another example of government architecture suitable for an arid climate, most people find its proportions are aesthetically pleasing. Its role as a court house was significant in the imposition of legal controls in Central Australia. The building is single-storey and constructed of concrete blocks. It is partly surrounded by an open verandah. Between 1928 and 1936 it was used as both a Government meeting room and a mining warden's court. From 1936 until 1980 it was Alice Springs' general court house. It later housed offices of the Northern Territory Department of Law.

Like most of Australia's regional centres, Alice Springs gradually provided an increasing range of services for both its own growing population and residents of its hinterland. While in some cases they were typical of those to be found in other towns, others reflected in a graphic way Alice Springs's very remote location and the problems which that caused.

The oldest evidence of a community service is to be found at the Stuart Memorial Cemetery which was established in 1888. The cemetery today provides an invaluable historic record of the early residents of Alice Springs and its region. Aspects of social history are revealed through its inscriptions and other evidence. Containing some fine examples of nineteenth century cemetery furniture, its imported cast-iron markers, marble headstones and its locally fashioned timber pieces combine to result in an unusual setting. The cemetery includes cast-iron and marble headstones manufactured.
in Adelaide and carefully detailed timber crosses and fences. A fence of precast concrete posts and wire surrounds the site. Some of the grave markers are, unfortunately, in poor condition. David Lindsay surveyed the cemetery in 1888 along with the first town streets. Between then and 1933, when the cemetery closed, it is likely that 71 persons were buried there but only seven of the graves can now be identified.

The first hospital in Central Australia, Adelaide House, was built in 1926. Its historic value comes from its origins as a project of the Australian Inland Mission under the supervision of the famous Reverend John Flynn. One of the few buildings of the 1920s remaining in central Alice Springs, it is also an early example of 'design for climate' in the town. Its plan recognises the need to modify extremes of climate through use of verandahs and the provision of a roof top room and a ducted cool air system. The building's present form is quite close to that of 1926. It is a two-storey structure with a timber frame and thick stone walls around the ground floor, which is surrounded with a wide verandah. There is a unique passive air conditioning system, an original feature of the design, which uses an airflow through the cellar, past wet sacking and up through the ground floor by means of convection. Behind the main building is a stone shed, at one stage used as a radio hut. Jack Williams built Adelaide House with local stone and timber carted from Oodnadatta in South Australia on pack camels. Graeme Bucknall's careful research in Flynn's Mantle of Safety reveals that Flynn played a major part in both its design and the supervision of its construction, seeing a hospital in Alice Springs as a vital part of the 'safety net' which he hoped the Australian Inland Mission would provide for all of inland Australia. It served Alice Springs and Central Australia until the first government hospital was opened in the town in 1939, a period of considerable economic and social change. The radio hut was the location for the first radio transmission in inland Australia; this took place in 1926 and was a message sent to Hermannsburg. After Adelaide House closed as a hospital it became a hostel for 'bush mothers' and their children. Today it is a museum commemorating the work of Flynn and the Australian Inland Mission.

The first official school in Alice Springs, the Hartley Street School, was constructed in 1929 with additions taking place in 1946. The oldest part of the school was erected during a period of rapid population growth and many of Alice Springs's older residents received their education there. The school today encompasses two distinct architectural styles and periods. The 1929 section was constructed in an arid-climate 'homestead' style, relying on verandahs for shade. The 1946 section, in contrast, has a range of other features designed to mitigate local climatic conditions. The first and oldest section runs parallel to the street frontage. It consists of two rooms surrounded by partly enclosed verandahs. A third room was later added. The newer section is an octagonal classroom with high windows and wide eaves. Both sections are constructed in concrete blocks and have timber framed, corrugated iron roofing. Used as a school from 1929 until 1965, the buildings were for some years after then
government offices. They have recently been carefully restored for the National Trust and now house a Trust centre and offices for other community groups.

Of great significance in reducing the isolation of Central Australia was the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Its base for the region was constructed in 1939. From the very start it provided the home for a much needed medical service and a vehicle for communications. Situated at a T-junction behind a park, the buildings, together with a boundary hedge, have a striking visual impact. They are an eloquent expression of 1930s architectural style with pilasters and pediments. The base is given added interest through its association with Flynn, who both conceptualised and founded the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It consists of two one-storey buildings, one a radio building and the other an operators' quarters. Both are masonry and have cement rendered exterior walls. The pitched roofs are clad in corrugated galvanised iron. At the front are two entrances, both with heavy grooved columns and with a parapet above which has the insignia of the service.

One of the oldest surviving shops in Alice Springs is Tunk's Store, built in about 1940. One of the very few 'old style' retail outlets in the town, its corner position enhances its visual impact on the surrounding area. As a long-standing general store it has played a part in the town's economic development. It is rusticated cement block built with a corrugated galvanised iron roof which extends into a wide verandah. This in turn overhangs the footpaths of both Hartley Street and Stott Terrace. Used as a general store between 1940 and 1979, it has altered very little and is now a car rental office.

The earliest surviving cinema building in the town is the former Pioneer Theatre. Partly built in 1941 and 1942, it is the last example in Alice Springs of the 'great era' of film in the 1940s and 1950s, a period when the cinema provided one of the main forms of organised entertainment. It is also one of the last open air cinemas in Australia. Architecturally, the cinema is distinguished by its light tower, ticket box and entry door, all of which have a considerable impact on the adjoining streetscape. The theatre during the period of its operation was an important meeting place for Alice Springs residents. It is constructed of cement rendered concrete blocks, the roof is timber framed with corrugated galvanised iron and most of the theatre is open to the elements. The light tower and ticket box were added in about 1950 and the screen was enlarged after then. Until 1973 it was owned by the Kenna family, who fought a losing battle in the early 1970s against the impact of television. Since then it has had a variety of uses including a market for tourists and in 1988 was taken over by the Youth Hostels Association.

The former Country Women's Association Building was constructed in 1943 on Todd Street. Used as a women's recreational hut during the Second World War, the CWA took it over in 1947. For some years it thus served the needs of one of rural Australia's most important community organisations. It is a timber framed structure
with a corrugated galvanised iron roof. There are enclosed verandahs, louvred glass windows, a stone fireplace and chimney, timber and glass double doors and a flagged stone path outside. As the CWA headquarters in Alice Springs, the building had many purposes including a kindergarten, a preschool centre, a meeting area, a venue for social functions and a selling point for handicrafts. It is no longer used by the CWA and is now a youth hostel.

Since the 1920s Alice Springs has played a vital part in the development of modern transport and communications in Central Australia. Of particular interest here have been rail and air transport. The Ghan railway reached Alice Springs in 1929 and the town remains an important railway centre. Air transport made an impact from the 1930s, linking Alice Springs with both other parts of its region and the rest of Australia.

There still remains some evidence of the original 1929 railyard. This is significant due to its associations with the arrival of the first trains in Alice Springs. The site once included the railway track, a railway station and shed and a fettler's cottage. Today, however, only a portion of the track is left, with the rest of the yard's structures having been demolished to make way for a realignment of the Stuart Highway.

In much better condition are four cottages built between 1929 and 1944 for railway employees. They are good examples of the modest dwellings which the Commonwealth provided for its railway staff and are associated with both the construction of the railway to Alice Springs and the major impact this had on the town. The four identical cottages are constructed from cement bricks and are single storey with timber frame roofs clad in corrugated galvanised iron. There is a central entrance hall and corridor in each, casement windows and small front verandahs. The original external toilets still survive. Oleander hedges run along the front fences. Two of the cottages were built in 1929 and are thus the only evidence for the arrival of the railway in the centre of Alice Springs. The other two were built between 1942 and 1944 when Alice Springs became a major military site. Despite the difference in the time of construction, the same house plan appears to have been used. The cottages are now leased to members of the general public.

The structure most prominently related to the early history of air transport is the former Connellan Hangar, built in 1939. It marks the site of the first Alice Springs airport and was the focal point for Connair's Territory-wide mail, passenger and medical services. The founder of Connair was EJ Connellan who dominated civil aviation in the Northern Territory until the late 1970s. The hangar is one of the two original prefabricated structures which Connellan purchased in 1939 and erected in Alice Springs in the same year. The structure has a steel frame and roof trusses, being clad in corrugated galvanised iron. Its side walls are of masonry rock. Large sliding doors are located at the front. Attached office spaces on either side of the main hangar were used as a radio room, operations base and the airport terminal. After the Alice
Springs airport moved to its present site in 1968, the structure was allowed to deteriorate. In the late 1970s however, it was restored to its 1939 condition and is now used as an aviation museum.

Alice Springs contains a number of houses which tell historians a good deal about living conditions and changing architectural styles. Some, the homes of the 'well-to-do' are quite impressive in scale and design while others are much more functional or were built with fairly minimal expense.

The former postmaster's residence was constructed in 1932. It is one of the few examples of early administrative architecture in Alice Springs which used rusticated masonry. The home of postmasters from 1932 to 1977, it was built with day labour during the Depression period following a decision to relocate the post office from the telegraph station to the town centre. It is a single-storey, masonry block, three bedroom dwelling which originally had four verandahs with a detached toilet, storage and laundry block. It has a timber framed pitched roof clad with corrugated galvanised iron. Although altered over the years, much of the original building remains. Since 1977 it has had a variety of occupants and uses.

On Hartley Street there is a precinct of seven houses all constructed in the late 1930s, which provides a fine example of early domestic architecture in the town. The houses are well suited to the climate and provide pleasant although not airconditioned spaces. They are representative of some aspects of the late 1930s lifestyle in Alice Springs. The houses all feature timbered internal floors and concrete floored verandahs, which are flywired to allow ventilation while offering protection against insects. The walls are of concrete block construction. All of the homes are roughly square in shape. The houses were originally constructed for senior public servants. Their present use is quite varied including residential, offices for Aboriginal organisations and an export agency.

Another interesting example of domestic architecture is Les Hansen House, constructed in 1942. It has wide enclosed verandahs and a simple roof line. Both the house and its outbuildings have been restored to their original condition. Named after a well known local resident, the house was designed by the prominent Territory architect BCG Burnett. It is a two bedroom, concrete brick bungalow with wide verandahs on three sides and, including the enclosed verandahs is approximately square. The simple roof is centrally pitched and is clad with corrugated galvanised iron. Wide eaves with no gutters surround the house. Two outbuildings are situated at the rear. For many years the home of public servants, the house is now a National Trust property and from time to time is open to the public.

A significant private dwelling is the Miller residence. Built in 1958, it is in original condition. Its owner since construction has been Damian Miller, a prominent pastoralist, aviator and businessman well known for his active involvement in
community affairs. The house is long and narrow, located across its block. There are timber framed, horizontal bands of windows, timber flooring and compressed straw ceilings. An entrance and office space are at one end of the house while the remainder is composed of the living room, bedrooms and service areas.

The structures described in this chapter all can be viewed as part of the evidence for the development of Alice Springs from a small service and administration centre to a far more complex community which evolved after the Second World War. They provide information and examples for historians on such aspects of Alice Springs's experience as its occupational structure, its social values, its economic base and its relationship with the surrounding region. Alice Springs today, it must be conceded, also has a character which probably is the consequence of many factors not discussed in this chapter. In recent years some of its more distinctive qualities have been lessened as a result of the demolition of older buildings, particularly in the central business district, to make way for structures which differ very little from those to be found in other urban areas all over Australia. Yet the surviving examples of its cultural landscape as it existed before the 1960s help constitute a sense of individuality which requires special analysis and appreciation. Like many other urban areas, Alice Springs cannot be properly understood simply in terms of its present generally modern appearances and its current economic role. It has in the past developed its own specific character which is perhaps impossible to define but which its surviving historic places clearly help illustrate.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

A FUTURE FOR THE PAST

Cultural resource management is an American term now being used increasingly in Australia. It covers the investigation, recording, conservation and interpretation of both historical and prehistoric places, especially at an official level. The term is concerned with scarce, non-renewable resources worthy of conservation and in some cases total preservation. The management of cultural resources involves determining the least loss of information covering past ways of life. The emphasis is on planning, research and ultimately balanced conservation policies which encourage the use of human-made materials important to a community's heritage.

While academic analysis of cultural resource management is well advanced in the United States, it has attracted less attention in Australia. This is surprising as over the past decade there has been a lot of thought and work devoted to the protection and preservation of what is often termed Australia's National Estate. The creation of the Australian Heritage Commission in 1975 was followed by the establishment of similar government agencies in some States. Grants programs have distributed millions of dollars for research into aspects of the cultural environment and many people now make a living as consultants to various projects which obtain funding. Associated non-government organisations have proliferated. The largest of these, the National Trust, now has a membership throughout Australia of about eighty thousand, more than twice as many as it had ten years ago.

In common with most of the rest of Australia, until the 1970s cultural resource management in the Territory was not an urgent priority. There was some interest in sites of importance to Aboriginal people but this went alongside a great deal of confusion about Aboriginal culture. Conservation of historic areas was quite accidental. It was not surprising that the Commonwealth government's Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate in 1974 found that places of cultural importance were poorly protected and managed in the Territory. It made a number of recommendations: an urgent detailed review of relevant policies and procedures; a reduction in the number of overlapping authorities; that the conservation and preservation of the Territory's cultural heritage be an overriding objective of government policy; that a National Trust be established in the Territory; that when established the Trust receive adequate financial help and that special attention be given to the interests of Aboriginal people. While some of the Committee's observations are no longer relevant, a number remain surprisingly valid.

There has been a particular need to make those concerned with cultural resource management in other parts of Australia more aware of the Territory's special qualities.
The main national recognition of cultural resources is the Register of the National Estate, an inventory maintained by the Australian Heritage Commission. The Register includes and provides some legislative protection for places important to the natural and human-made environments. It is disturbing that while in 1981 there were 5417 places associated with the European cultural environment on the Register only 25 of these were in the Northern Territory. A number of nominations to the Register from the Territory have since been made but the region is still at the periphery of national consciousness so far as recognition of its cultural significance is concerned.

There are three main reasons for this situation. First, there has been no systematic survey of all historic places in the Territory, although surveys exist for some districts. Second, there is no historic conservation plan or strategy as is the case in some of the Australian States. Third, and perhaps of most importance, is that the Register is still biased towards the period before 1914, which is not the most crucial era in the development of the Territory. It is thus urgent that major local themes be properly identified and reflected in nominations to the Register and that some effective machinery is worked out for translating the findings of survey work into nominations.

Central Australia, as this book has attempted to demonstrate, has a far more diverse and important non-Aboriginal built environment than the Register of the National Estate would indicate. The region has been for over a century the location of vital developments in transport and communications, evidence of which includes the remains of the Overland Telegraph Line, the railway and aviation relics. Pastoralism left obvious marks on the landscape such as homesteads and wells. Mining sites and relics provide especially useful insights into the region's history, with the most interesting being at Tennant Creek and Aultunga. While the main urban centre of Alice Springs lacks many early buildings on a grand scale, some older structures there reflect a continuing struggle to provide basic amenities of life and a slow improvement in living standards. There is a physical record of the responses of succeeding generations of people to an often harsh and remote environment.

Work in documenting and managing Central Australia's built environment has been slow and sporadic. Unlike other parts of Australia many local developers have little appreciation of the economic potentialities of older buildings and precincts as environments of special character and distinction. Effective planning regulations designed to protect historic buildings and precincts now exist in many parts of the world and in some Australian States but not in the Northern Territory. Recommendations made in survey reports have not always formed the basis for further action.

Preservation and interpretation of places important to Aborigines is especially complicated. Land has always been of enormous religious and symbolic importance in Aboriginal culture yet Aboriginal attachment to the land in recent years has been associated with bitter controversies over land rights and sacred sites. Even among
Aborigines themselves there is an argument over whether they alone should determine how their cultural sites are looked after or whether these sites need to be researched, identified and protected under white administrative systems. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has through some very complex procedures attempted to combine the two positions just mentioned but these have also proved controversial. It is hardly surprising that work in recording places of importance to Aboriginal people has been slow and there is confusion about future management objectives.

In 1981 there were 3301 individual Aboriginal sites listed on the Register of the National Estate and of these 821 were in the Northern Territory. The latter figure includes 655 rock painting sites but only 136 natural sites associated with Aboriginal religious beliefs. It is clear that the second category was poorly represented given the values and beliefs of Aboriginal people. Painting sites are, of course, of greater interest to Europeans while details of sacred natural sites are often kept secret. The understandable Aboriginal desire to keep certain sites secret has not always been realistic in the Territory, where unless sites are given some status under the law they will remain very vulnerable to development. The Register of the National Estate also lists a number of places which could be described as Aboriginal-European contact sites. However, some places, such as the Alice Springs Telegraph Station and Hermannsburg Mission, are often presented in terms of their importance to the European history of the Territory rather than places which have also been significant to Aborigines.

The Australian Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites, or ICOMOS, has played a useful role since its foundation. ICOMOS membership is confined to people who are directly engaged in cultural conservation and associated work. One of the organisation's most crucial achievements was the adoption in 1979 of a charter for the conservation of places of cultural significance, usually known as the Burra Charter. Heritage authorities and organisations around Australia have adopted the charter as a basis for their activities. It has been of assistance in Central Australia, particularly as it emphasises the need to leave structures and objects in their original situations. But some questions have been raised about its local relevance. One common criticism is that its definition of restoration is too strict for areas like Central Australia which have severe climatic conditions. It is also sometimes argued that the Burra Charter is better at dealing with historic buildings than with archaeological or Aboriginal sites. There is some opposition to the Charter from the Northern Territory Museum, which is engaged in a collecting program.

A matter of recent discussion in the Territory was the issue of such legislation. In 1979 the Territory's Department of Community Development commissioned a report which reviewed already existing legislation that had some bearing on heritage conservation and control. The report included a detailed appraisal of the legal situation and made a number of recommendations. It argued that a Heritage Act should be passed without delay. The Act would be designed to ensure the protection
of places of cultural significance through the establishment of a Heritage Council. It was mainly concerned with places of non-Aboriginal importance and proposed a series of strict regulations and penalties not unlike those of New South Wales. The report was submitted to the government for consideration but the Minister for Community Development at the time, Marshall Perron, now Chief Minister, made no secret of his belief that the Act was premature. The Territory government and the Australian Heritage Commission funded special seminars in Darwin and Alice Springs on heritage legislation during 1987 and in 1988 the government announced that such legislation would be formulated during the following year. However it was not until August 1991 that the Legislative Assembly passed a Heritage Act which established a Heritage Council and made provision for a register of protected places. Until then a Heritage Advisory Committee existed to help guide the responsible Minister on matters concerned with non-Aboriginal cultural resources. The committee included representatives of government departments and the National Trust. While it was very useful in coordinating various heritage policies, it lacked any legislative teeth. Despite the government's slowness in passing legislation, a feature of recent events in Central Australia is the considerable extent to which 'heritage' has provided a focus for social and political arguments.

So far as the Aboriginal situation is concerned, in recent years the attention of many Australians focused on Uluru and Katajuta which form Uluru National Park. In 1983 the Commonwealth government announced that Uluru would be handed over to traditional Aboriginal owners who would lease the park back to the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. The decision subsequently resulted in bitter argument between the Commonwealth and Territory governments and a sweeping Territory election victory for the Country Liberal Party in December 1983. In September 1985 Territory Chief Minister, Ian Tuxworth, stated that his administration would boycott the ceremony to be held at Uluru on 26 October when the Governor-General handed over title documents to Aboriginal representatives. In early October he embarked on a tour of southern States aimed at highlighting Territory objections. In doing so, he argued that Uluru was just as important in terms of its heritage significance to whites as it was to Aborigines and that the latter group had no legitimate right to ownership of the park.

It was also in late 1985 that the Territory government unsuccessfully tried to dismiss the Director of its own Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority (now the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority) as a consequence of his views on the controversial Warramungu land claim to areas around Tennant Creek. That claim, partly granted in 1988, has presented a dilemma for those concerned with Central Australian cultural resources. The area under claim not only contains Aboriginal sacred sites and occupation sites but also accumulation of mining remains and the evidence of pastoralism. The Territory government in objecting to the claim has contended that access to these places was at risk should the claim be successful.
Debate about buildings came to a head in May 1986 with the demolition of Turner House in Alice Springs, a residence constructed in 1929 and for some years one of the town's best known restaurants. The demolition took place at night without proper authorisation and aroused the outrage of the National Trust and many local residents, who felt that Alice Springs's distinct character was in danger of being lost if the destruction of old buildings continued. Others, including local developers and a Country Liberal Party parliamentarian, only expressed mild disappointment at what had taken place or suggested that the only old structures worthy of preservation were those of aesthetic merit rather than just historic value.

In another case, that of Hartley Street School in Alice Springs, the Territory government engaged in a prolonged dispute with those who believed that the building should be preserved rather than knocked down to make way for a car park. In this case the conservation lobby ultimately triumphed when the force of public opinion made the government in 1985 provide funds for restoration of the building. Funds were also obtained from the private sector.

Management of historic sites in the Northern Territory needs far greater attention. A number of government agencies, community organisations and private individuals look after sites and the most important of these are the Conservation Commission and the National Trust. The Conservation Commission has direct managerial responsibility for places such as the Alice Springs Telegraph Station and Aftunga mining field. Despite enthusiastic and conscientious staff, the Commission suffers through a scarcity of expertise in historic site management techniques. The National Trust manages various properties with historical significance, examples of which are the Stuart Town Gaol and Hartley Street School in Alice Springs. Its greatest difficulty is the need to rely heavily on volunteers to look after properties and the fact that the cost of upkeep cannot be matched by visitor and other revenues.

Funds for cultural resource management come from both the Commonwealth and Territory governments. Since the introduction of the National Estate Grants Program in 1973, a great deal of valuable work has been completed both in the Territory and in other parts of Australia. But the value of the program in real terms has been declining. When the program was introduced it was primarily designed to serve the cultural component of the National Estate alone whereas today it has to provide resources to the natural component as well, an almost impossible task. Before 1982 there were 432 studies associated with the cultural environment funded under the National Estate Program. Of these, ten were in the Northern Territory. Alterations to the program in 1977 resulted in the bulk of decision making being given to the States. In the Territory before 1991 the Heritage Advisory Committee made recommendations for studies and projects to the responsible Minister. The Australian Heritage Commission identifies priorities and then consulted with the Territory officials over suitable projects related to these priorities. Sometimes, though, the Heritage Advisory Committee had already made its recommendations before the views of the Heritage

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Commission have been known. Northern Territory Government heritage grants are determined in much the same way as National Estate grants, the main difference being that the former are generally applied to studies of local rather than national importance.

Both Commonwealth and Territory agencies concerned with grants have been faced with a shortage of skilled staff. The Australian Heritage Commission employs people with the appropriate professional qualifications but until 1988 was so underfunded that they sometimes worked in areas where they had little expertise. The Territory government is in a similar situation. Its staff who administer heritage grants and projects are often conscientious and able, but often without professional expertise in cultural resource management. They are frequently not permitted to devote enough time to their tasks and are hampered by political constraints. Many of the initial Territory grants were given to the National Trust which did not have the human resources to handle all the projects it took on. This resulted in severe administrative and financial problems for the Trust which came to a head in late 1980.

Despite its setback then, the National Trust has fully recovered and remains the only non-government organisation which has an active role in the management of the Territory's cultural resources. The Trust is a community body which was incorporated under an ordinance of the Territory's Legislative Assembly in 1976. It has four main functions, all of equal importance. The first that it owns and manages certain properties. Second, it is developing a classification system for culturally significant places. Third, it is a public advocate and community conscience on environmental issues. Fourth, it has the role of a professional adviser. Because of its small membership the Trust relies heavily on Commonwealth and Territory administrative grants. These are not generous and the Territory grants are to a certain extent dependent upon the Trust not making public criticisms of government policies.

A continuing problem has been the difficulty of assessing community support for issues associated with the cultural environment. How politicians and public servants perceive public issues influences their actions and there is evidence in the Territory that neither group of people believes that the protection of cultural resources is a particularly popular cause for more than a minority of the population. It is hard to know if this view is correct. One measure is support for voluntary conservation bodies which in the Territory are quite small. The largest, the National Trust, had a membership in 1991 of almost seven hundred, of whom about a quarter reside in Central Australia. The situation is, however, complicated by the fact that few Aborigines have adopted white techniques of voluntary organisation to press for specific interests. Yet many Aborigines have a strong and growing concern with the preservation of their own culture. National public opinion surveys suggest uneven popular interest in broad environmental issues but intense interest in specific causes such as the proposed construction of a dam in the south west Tasmanian wilderness.
There is virtually no evidence from the Northern Territory to indicate whether opinions there conform with the national pattern.

Whatever popular feeling might be, it is evident that public education is an urgent task if official attitudes are going to alter. Arguments in favour of the protection and preservation of cultural resources could attract wider support if they were more energetically put forward. Leaving aside the view that reminders of the past provide the foundations of contemporary culture, they can have an economic value. This is particularly the case in Central Australia where the range of viable economic activities is so limited. There is already a widespread realisation of the potential of cultural tourism. Large numbers of tourists are visiting Uluru National Park and the old telegraph station at Alice Springs. There are other areas, such as Tennant Creek, where the tourist industry is starting to realise that an abundance of historic sites can be presented to visitors. Another economic argument concerns the recycling of old buildings. As new building costs have soared, restoration and renovation of existing structures can be cheaper. Examples of successful recycling in the region would include the former Court House and Hartley Street School in Alice Springs.

In 1974 the Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate drew attention to problems in professional education for cultural resource management. There are now many undergraduate courses in environmental science and several higher degree programs. Yet while among historians there is a growing interest in cultural resource management, there are only a few academic programs in Australia which are similar to the imaginative and highly regarded public history courses in many universities in the United States. At least some historians in Australian tertiary institutions are puzzled at the prospect of their discipline becoming vocationally useful. It is a matter for regret that so few of those engaged in the management of Australian's cultural resources are historians as history is without doubt a most important discipline in an understanding of the cultural landscape. Tertiary education in the Territory is still in its early stages. The opportunity exists for professional historians there to lead the way in the provision of courses of study to assist Australians to progress towards a more satisfying reciprocal relationship with their surroundings.
GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

adobe
sun-dried brick

adze
a heavy chisel-like steel tool used to dress timber

artefact
an object made by humans with a view to further use

battery
a set or series of mining machinery and parts

bull wheel
a large metal wheel used for haulage

cap
the top or upper surface

concrete
an artificial stone-like material used for foundations, etc

cyanide
a salt of hydrocyanic acid

cyanidation
a process for extracting gold by dissolving ore in cyanide

drop blinds
blinds lowered into position

flagstone
a flat slab of stone used for paving, etc

frame
the sustaining parts of a structure

galvanised
coated with zinc

haulage
the act of hauling

hump
a rounded protuberance

idler wheel
a cog-wheel placed between two other cog-wheels in order to transfer the motion of one to the other without changing the direction of rotation

insulator
a non-conduction device

jaw crusher
a machine used to break up ore, consisting of a hitched plate and hinged jaw

lime
the oxide of calcium, a white caustic solid used in making mortar and cement

louvres
overlapping boards, slats or the like in an opening so designed as to admit air or exclude rain
masonry | work constructed of brick or stone
---|---
mortised | made fast through formation of a joint
panel | a distinct portion or division or any surface sunk below or raised above the general level or enclosed by a frame or border
parapet | a protective wall or barrier at the edge of a balcony, roof or the like
pediment | a low triangular gable
pilaster | a shallow pier-like projection from a wall
pre cast | to cast concrete parts before putting them into position in a structure
rendered | to cover with a coat of plaster or some other like material
ridge | the horizontal line where the tops of a roof meet
ripple | a gentle wave or undulation on a surface
rubble | rough fragments of broken stone
soakage | a shallow depression holding rain water
stamper battery | a battery designed to crush ore
stub | a short projecting part
thatch | a material used to cover roofs
truss | to tie, bind or fasten
vent | an opening or aperture used as an outlet for air
vernacular | originating in the place of its use
weighbridge | a weighing machine for vehicles

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Central Australia in the Northern Territory is a large yet very sparsely settled area. For over a century it has had a particularly clear physical, economic and cultural identity. Its history of European occupation is of special fascination as it reveals contrasting human responses to the difficulties of life on one of the world’s most remote frontiers. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, this book explains how historic evidence can be found in various sites, artefacts and structures throughout Central Australia, which often provide as much information about and understanding of the past as written and oral sources. Topics covered include relations between Europeans and the Aborigines, the role of communications, the place of pastoralism and mining in economic and social development and the characteristics of the one major urban centre. The book analyses links between the process of European settlement in Central Australia and the region's contemporary cultural landscape and how in recent years very different ideas have emerged about the preservation and interpretation of that landscape.

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