

# **SPORT, SOCIETY AND SPACE: THE CHANGING GEOGRAPHY OF COUNTRY CRICKET IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA 1836-1914**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Cricket was an integral part of life in South Australia from the earliest days of colonial settlement. The Adelaide Cricket Club was founded in 1839.<sup>40</sup><sup>1</sup> and other clubs based in the capital city soon followed. Then, as agricultural settlement expanded and mining towns grew up, cricket spread into the country areas of the state as one of the most important social institutions of the majority of newly-evolving communities.<sup>2</sup> But before even the most informal of cricket matches could take place some classic problems in applied geography had to be solved. The minimum requirement for a genuine match, then as now, was that approximately twenty-two relatively able-bodied players should be capable of assembling at some suitable location. Even this could present severe problems in sparsely populated areas with primitive means of transport. And if one team wished to play against another, then an organised opposition had to be found within feasible travelling distance. If a team aspired to have a series of different opponents, the geographical problems were compounded. Many local histories tell us when individual cricket clubs and other sporting organisations were founded and give some idea of the teams against which they played. But no attempt has been made to study, in general, how rural communities in South Australia dealt with the problems of the geographical organisation of sport as settlement spread and as population distribution and transport technology underwent significant changes.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the changing geography of cricket in non-metropolitan South Australia<sup>3</sup> during the period before the First World War, in order to show how the location of clubs, the patterns of fixtures and the development of formal leagues and associations reflected changes in transport technology, population distribution and economic development. Local newspapers,

which gave generous coverage to cricket and other sports from the colony's earliest years onwards, constitute the main source of data. Three sample years were selected: 1875, 1890 and 1914. An examination was undertaken of all the South Australian newspapers published in those years of which copies have survived in the State Library.<sup>4</sup> Each cricket match reported in the newspapers was noted, together with details of the venue, date, participants, result, and anything known about methods of transport and accompanying social events. Runs of some newspapers for intervening years were then examined to establish significant events such as the founding or lapsing of a cricket association or major club. The set of data is no doubt incomplete, but, together with the few contemporary accounts and club records that have survived, it provides the best available starting point for studying where, and how, country cricket was played.

#### COUNTRY CRICKET IN 1875:

South Australia in 1875 was in the midst of a period of rapid expansion of agricultural settlement and accompanying transport systems, and the mood of the colony was one of prosperity and optimism.<sup>5</sup> Cricket was firmly established as an important element in the life of the community. The first intercolonial match had been played and W.G. Grace's All England team had played matches in Adelaide and Kadina the previous year amidst great excitement and controversy.<sup>6</sup> At the other end of the spectrum informal cricket matches were part of most holiday picnics and celebrations. The South Australian Cricketing Association had been formed in 1871 to encourage the playing of club cricket on a regular, formalised basis in Adelaide and its rapidly growing suburbs and to develop the Adelaide Oval as a first-class playing arena for club and representative matches.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the seven clubs belonging to the Association, many others existed in Adelaide based upon a suburb, a place of work, a common interest or birthplace.

Outside the Adelaide area approximately 90 clubs were reported in contemporary newspapers as having played at least one fixture during 1875. No doubt others existed but escaped notice and others still had been founded earlier and had temporarily or permanently ceased activity. Figure 1, based on the newspaper evidence, repre-

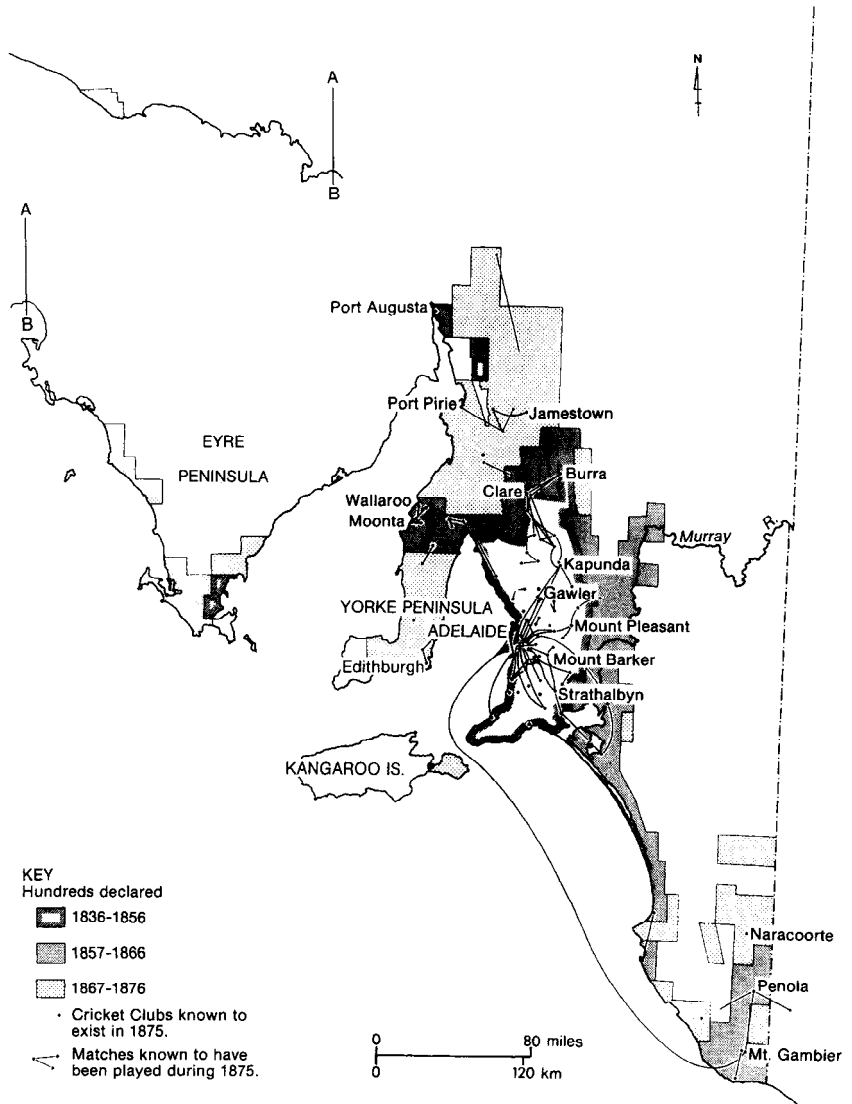


Fig. 1 South Australian Country Cricket: 1875

sents the most accurate reconstruction possible of the geography of cricket at that time. As might be expected, most clubs were located in the oldest-settled and most favourable agricultural areas surrounding Adelaide and extending northwards to Clare. Over 60 clubs lay within the area that had been opened up for agricultural settlement by 1856 by having Hundreds declared and holdings surveyed for sale.<sup>8</sup> Some of the clubs close to Adelaide had been in existence for many years. Moody states that the Morphett Vale club was founded in the 1840s,<sup>9</sup> and an Aldinga club was recorded in 1854. The game was also strongly, though more recently established, on the northern Yorke Peninsula in the copper mining towns of Moonta, Kadina and Wallaroo (7 clubs) and in the South East (7 clubs), and a further 12 clubs were recorded in the newly-settled agricultural areas inland of Port Pirie and on the southern Yorke Peninsula.

In addition to the association between the distribution of cricket clubs and the length of European settlement there was a clear, though not perfect, relationship between the number of inhabitants in a town and the existence of a club. Three country towns, Burra, Kapunda and Mount Gambier, had populations of over 2,000 in 1881<sup>10</sup> and all had at least two clubs in 1875. Of the six towns with populations between 1,000 and 2,000, Clare, Gawler and Moonta all had two or more clubs and Kadina, Wallaroo and Port Augusta apparently each had one. Five of the eight towns with populations between 600 and 1,000 definitely had clubs, but evidence of clubs then becomes scarcer as the size of settlements decreases. However over ten clubs were reported in settlements with populations of below 100.

Three main types of fixture were played. Many clubs began with internal matches: married players versus single, British-born versus Colonials,<sup>11</sup> shopkeepers versus farmers. Such matches remained popular at Christmas, New Year and Easter or when fixtures with other clubs failed to materialise and represented one solution to the problems of distance and isolation. A second solution was to persuade opponents to travel to you. Most country clubs were eager to play against established teams from the capital city and those located within a day's return travelling distance could invite Adelaide clubs out for holiday matches, offering good hospitality as an inducement. Transport by hired stagecoach or horse

KAPUNDA.

Captain, Mr. J. Scandrett ; Umpire, Mr. J. Windebank.

First innings.	Second innings.
B. Davenport, c Churchman	23 c Ponder ... 15
J. McLaren, run out ... .. 0	b Churchman 0
F. G. Nash, b Hawkins ... 3	hit wicket ... 0
J. Uren, b Hawkins ... .. 7	b Churchman 2
J. Scandrett, run out... .. 0	c Castine ... 3
H. Law, b Churchman ... 7	b Churchman 6
R. Hyde, not out ... .. 10	c Bleechmore 4
C. Rebbeck, b Bleechmore... 0	not out ... 6
H. V. Moyle, l.b.w., do. ... 3	b Hawkins... 4
J. C. Harris, c Smith... .. 0	b Churchman 10
H. E. Perry, b Churchman 0	c Castine ... 0
Sundries ... .. 9	... .. 8
Total ... .. 61	... .. 58

AUBURN.

Captain, Rev. C. W. Hawkins ; Umpire, Mr. T. Moyle.

First innings.	Second innings.
W. Churchman, b Davenport 3	b Davenport 3
J. Smyth, hit wicket ... .. 5	c Moyle ... 0
Rev. C. Hawkins, b McLaren 0	b Davenport 9
A. Bleechmore, b McLaren 5	b Davenport 0
F. Barkla, b Davenport ... 0	c & b McLaren 4
R. Spicer, b McLaren ... 0	b McLaren ... 2
J. W. Castine, run out ... 0	b McLaren ... 0
W. J. Ponder, l.b.w. ... .. 0	b McLaren ... 4
P. Williams, b Davenport... 0	b Davenport 4
F. Baker, b McLaren... .. 0	not out ... 6
W. H. Smith, not out ... 0	run out ... 0
Sundries ... .. 3	... .. 14
Total ... .. 16	... .. 46

Majority for Kapunda, 57.

Fig. 2 A Country Cricket Scorecard: Kapunda Herald 23 Jan. 1874

omnibus was inevitably slow, and one Adelaide club was reported as taking three hours to travel the 42 kilometres to Gawler with a change of horses on the way.<sup>12</sup> But the outings were jolly affairs: 'They would play cricket all day and sup at night and in the early hours of the morning be hoisted into the six-horse bus...'<sup>13</sup> Trains were occasionally used, for example by the Sussex club of Adelaide in visiting the copper mining centre of Kapunda 70 kilometres to the north.<sup>14</sup>

Adelaide clubs sometimes went on tour over the Christmas or Easter holidays, spending a three or four day round trip playing matches against a series of country opponents.<sup>15</sup> But clubs in areas remote from Adelaide such as the South-East found it necessary to raise combined teams to travel to Adelaide themselves, as a Mount Gambier team did in 1875; (Figure 1) when a party travelled by coastal steamship to play against a series of city clubs.<sup>16</sup>

The third and generally most common type of fixture consisted of a match against another nearby country club and in arranging these matches the 'friction of distance' became a major consideration. Travel times by horse-drawn vehicles tended to restrict the choice of opponents to clubs within 20 miles (32 kilometres) and usually much less, though trains could occasionally be used and clubs on the shores of Lakes Albert and Alexandrina at the mouth of the river Murray travelled to some matches by paddle steamer.<sup>17</sup> Starting and finishing times, and therefore also the determination of results, were still largely informal. Playing conditions were generally primitive, consisting of grazed or roughly mown paddocks with the wickets pitched on the most level patch of ground available. In a match at Oaklands on the Yorke Peninsula it was reported that ' . . . the ground was so soft and sandy that the wickets had to be shifted after each innings'.<sup>18</sup> Bowling was underarm or roundarm, with the 'shooter' probably the most common delivery and it is hardly surprising that initially most matches were decided on two innings well within one day, with team scores of over 100 not often attained (Figure 2).

The season of a country cricketer in South Australia in 1875 therefore consisted of a mixture of regular fixtures, less regular club matches, intra-club games and tours (a mixture incidentally familiar to any southern English club cricketer of the 1960s or '70s).

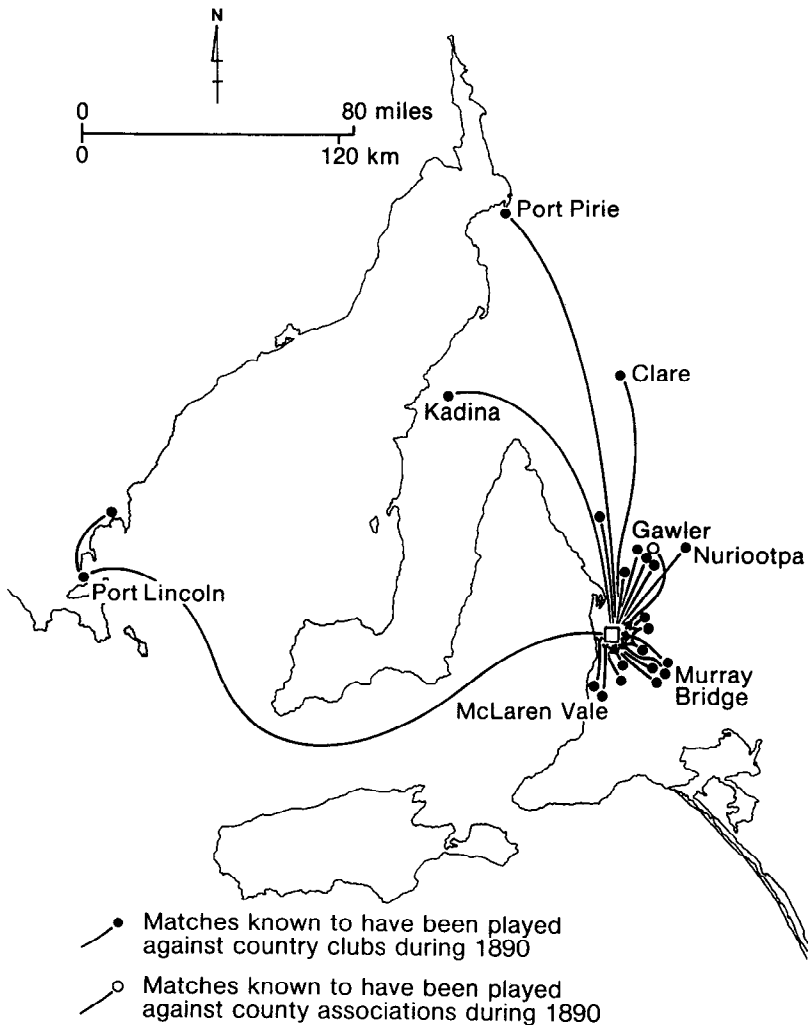


Fig. 4 Matches Between City and Country Clubs: 1890

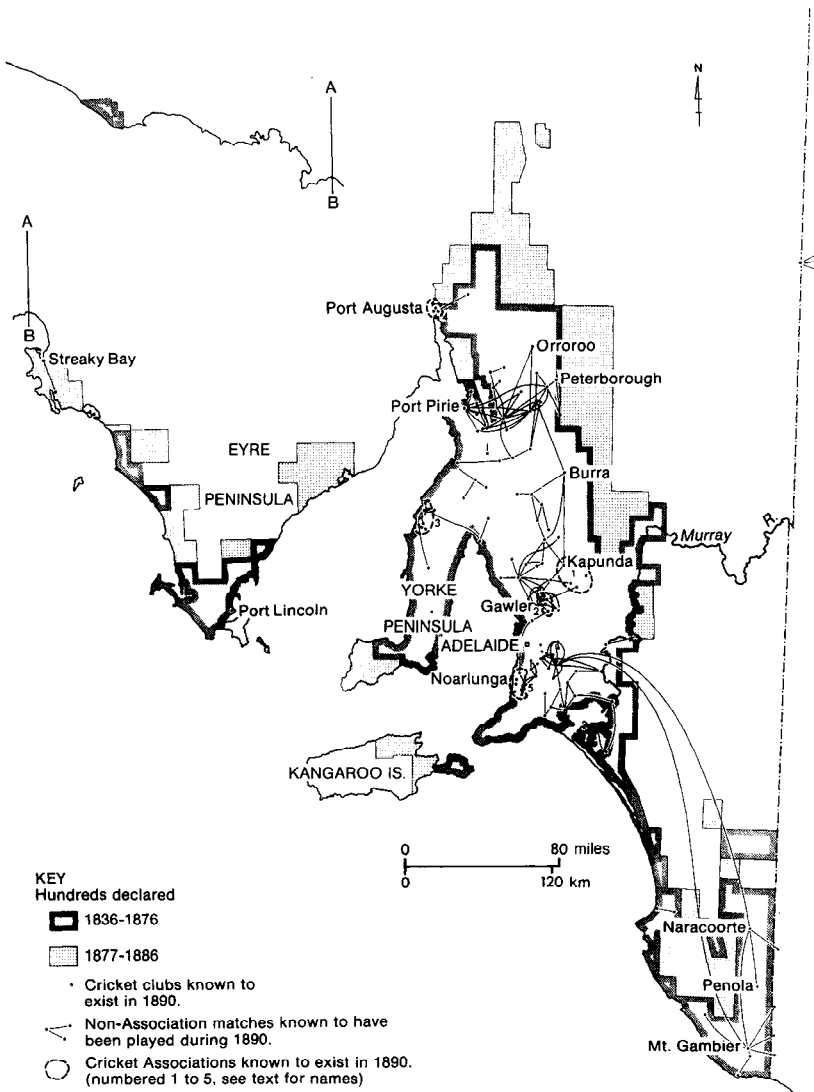


Fig. 3 South Australian Country Cricket: 1890

Matches had an important social as well as sporting role, often being followed - or even preceeded - by dinners and speeches.<sup>19</sup>

There is no evidence of the existence of formal cricket associations or leagues outside the Adelaide area in 1875, though the Yorke's Peninsula Cricketing Association had been formed in 1874 to arrange for the match against W.G. Grace's team.<sup>20</sup> But the occasional reference in newspapers to the difficulties of arranging club fixtures<sup>21</sup> suggests that the need for formal associations was beginning to be felt - as does the number of disputes concerning the conditions of play, umpiring standards, and residential *bona fides* of participants in matches between neighbouring settlements.<sup>22</sup> (Not that the forming of an association caused such problems to disappear. In a South Australian Cricketing Association match between Norwood and Hindmarsh an umpire was replaced at the request of the Norwood captain after giving two poorly-received LBW decisions, one against a well-known cricketer-journalist, W.O. Whitridge, who was probably the author of the newspaper report of the match! The report also complains about deep fieldsmen appealing for LBW.)<sup>23</sup> Country cricket was moving from an 'age of innocence' in which any opponents were welcomed for the chance they provided of playing a game, to a more competitive era in which local pride was at stake in matches, especially against traditional rivals. Following the tours by English teams, and especially after the first Test Match in 1877, cricket was increasingly to become an avenue for the expression of national pride and identity,<sup>24</sup> which may also have helped produce increased competitiveness at the local level.

#### COUNTRY CRICKET IN 1890:

South Australia in 1890 was very different from the confident and prosperous colony of 1875. Prolonged drought in the 1880s and low world wheat prices had combined to halt the northwards expansion of the settlement frontier, and to produce population losses in many agricultural areas. However, the overall population of the colony had increased because of growth in Adelaide, the Adelaide Hills, the Moonta, Kadina and Wallaroo copper mining area, and Port Pirie where smelting of Broken Hill ores began in 1889.<sup>25</sup>

Over 140 non-metropolitan cricket clubs were mentioned in

South Australian newspapers in 1890, compared with 90 in 1875. Of the 60 clubs present in 1890 that had not been reported in 1875, 24 were located in the newly-settled wheatlands inland from Port Pirie. Another six were on the upper Yorke Peninsula, eight were in the area north of Gawler, five were along the lower River Murray and three were on the Eyre Peninsula. The network of clubs in the areas immediately surrounding Adelaide had been well established in 1875 and had changed relatively little in overall numbers, though some individual clubs had apparently disappeared to be replaced by others nearby. The area south-west of Burra, which had been one of the strongest areas in 1875, showed signs of a decline in the amount and quality of cricket played, though not in the overall number of clubs. An editorial in the Northern Argus<sup>26</sup> complained that 'In nearly all the old townships in South Australia there had been a falling away in business and population...' and agricultural implement factories had closed down in Clare and Auburn. The area may have also lost some of its younger and more energetic population to the newer agricultural areas further north during the great expansion of the wheat frontier in the late 1870s and early 1880s, or it may simply be that the initial enthusiasm for cricket in the days of early settlement had waned: "What has become of the Auburn Cricket Club? Are all its former glories vanished?"<sup>27</sup>

The number of clubs in the South-East of the colony remained relatively stable, though the area still suffered from isolation and long distances between towns. Cricket continued to thrive in the copper mining towns of the Yorke Peninsula but a number of clubs known to exist in 1875 in the southern part of the Peninsula were not reported in 1890. However, as most of these reappeared by 1914 their absence may reflect poor newspaper coverage in a sparsely-settled region with poor communications.

The same main types of fixture were played as in 1875, though internal matches were less common except in remote areas such as the Eyre Peninsula, and a more or less formal programme of matches against neighbouring clubs had become the norm. Despite this, matches against Adelaide touring clubs were still prized (Figure 4) and the great expansion of the railway network enabled teams to travel more widely and easily. The Mount Barker Club, for example, travelled by train to play against Murray Bridge, arriving in time for a little shooting, fishing and swimming before lunch and the

match itself.<sup>28</sup> One Adelaide club, the Stragglers, played matches against Port Pirie and even travelled by steamer to play at Port Lincoln over Christmas, while the Mount Barker club travelled by rail on a tour of the South East over the New Year holiday.<sup>29</sup> Some clubs, especially those in the area between Port Pirie and Peterborough (Figure 3) used the railways to extend their network of local fixtures, occasionally playing games at a conveniently-located 'half-way house' so that travel time and expenditure were shared.<sup>30</sup> But the paucity of passenger services on Saturday evenings meant that teams often had to return home in brake vans attached to goods trains, if the authorities were willing to allow them,<sup>31</sup> and most travel to local matches was still by whatever horse-drawn vehicles were available.

Improvements in transport did, in theory, allow teams to travel further to play fixtures, but increases in the number and size of settlements meant that the need to travel in search of opponents was less and the average distance travelled by many clubs actually declined between 1875 and 1890. For example the average distance between the Georgetown club and its non-metropolitan opponents fell from 26.1 km to 16.8 km, and the Clare club experienced a similar decline from 25.5 km to 20.5 km. However in the South East, which was characterised by large pastoral properties and where towns were more widely-spaced than in most of rural South Australia, the railways allowed Mount Gambier, Penola and Naracoorte to play regular matches against one another rather than relying upon intra-club matches and fixtures with small surrounding settlements. Consequently the average distance between the Mount Gambier club and its opponents increased from 37.6 km to 64.5 km.

The most important development in the geography of country cricket between 1875 and 1890 was the growth of formal associations. Five country cricket associations were recorded as in existence in 1890. The Yorke's Peninsula Cricketing Association, based on Moonta, Kadina and Wallaroo, was founded in 1887.<sup>32</sup> The Gawler Association<sup>33</sup> and the Barossa and Light Association<sup>34</sup> followed in 1888. The Southern Association, consisting of clubs in the Morphett Vale and McLaren Vale area immediately south of Adelaide, formed in 1889,<sup>35</sup> and the Port Augusta and Flinders Cricketing Association formed in 1890.<sup>36</sup> A Northern Areas Association based on Gladstone

and Jamestown had actually been formed as early as 1882,<sup>37</sup> but failed in 1885:

Owing to the want of enthusiasm and sympathy from the associated clubs it is almost a certainty that there will be no 'Association' this year. This indeed is very much to be regretted . . . as it will somewhat tend to mar the interest of the game and retard the advancement which it so usually inspires into the play and proficiency of the different rival contests.<sup>38</sup>

The associations grew up for several reasons. They provided regular fixtures and perhaps playing regulations and were seen as encouraging the development of the game through a commitment to regular competition. They were a means of selecting combined sides from an area to play against other such sides or against Adelaide clubs or associations. The Gawler Association for example played three representative matches against Adelaide clubs during 1890<sup>39</sup> and one against the neighbouring Barossa and Light Association.<sup>40</sup> And associations in towns like Port Augusta which were large enough to support more than one cricket team but which were remote from other centres, provided meaningful week by week competitive fixtures and allowed the development of a shared playing arena of improved quality (as the South Australian Cricket Association had done earlier with the Adelaide Oval).

Several distinct types of association are recognisable in 1890 (Table 1) and were to continue to characterise the development of country cricket at least until 1914. The Southern Association was a typical grouping of several small settlements within easy travelling distance of one another in a relatively densely-populated agricultural area. The initially short-lived Northern Areas Association was basically similar, as was the Barossa and Light Association though it involved some longer travelling distances and included the large mining town of Kapunda. The Port Augusta and Flinders Association, in contrast, was typical of a 'one town' association, formed when two local clubs amalgamated and simply divided their members into three relatively even teams. The Gawler Association exemplified a third type, based on a large town and including several clubs from it but also incorporating some clubs from smaller surrounding settlements. The Yorke's Peninsula Association did not fit neatly into any category, incorporating a number of clubs from the closely-spaced yet clearly distinct towns of

Table 1: South Australian Country Cricket Associations in 1890  
(See Figure 3)

A. Groupings of individual settlements

Map No.	Association	Year of Formation	Number of Teams	Travel Distance (miles)	
				Maximum	Average
1	Barossa and Light	1888	4	13	9.5
5	Southern	1889	6	10	5.4

B. 'One town' associations

Map No.	Association	Year of Formation	Number of Teams
4	Port Augusta and Flinders	1890	3

C. Other associations

Map No.	Association	Year of Formation	Number of Teams	Travel Distance (miles) Maximum
2	Gawler	1888	5	6
3	Yorke's Peninsula	1887	5	10

the Moonta-Kadina-Wallaroo 'copper triangle', but perhaps most resembled the Port Augusta Association.

The associations present in 1890, with the exception of that based on the rapidly-growing town of Port Augusta, were located in areas where club cricket networks had been well established in 1875. The Northern Areas Association had also been an exception and its short initial life may indicate that it was a premature development. But several areas where cricket was thriving in 1875 had not developed associations, and it is worth asking why. In the Clare, Auburn and Burra area cricket appeared generally to have declined in popularity. In the South East, settlements were inconveniently widely-spaced, though larger towns such as Naracoorte and Mount Gambier seemed possible candidates for 'one town' associations and did develop them later. The Adelaide Hills area is more interesting. It constituted a densely-settled area with many small towns where cricket had developed early in the Colony's history and was thriving by 1875. Yet no associations had evolved. There are two possible reasons. First, the complex network of

small towns meant that there was no one obvious set of groupings and any proposed association would not suit some prospective members (the Northern Areas Association appeared to have suffered similarly).<sup>41</sup> Secondly, many of the Hills clubs, for example Mount Barker, had long-standing fixtures with Adelaide Association and touring clubs and may have found these plus a selection of local fixtures more appealing than the regular grind of association matches against the same three or four opponents. Many well-respected clubs in England, especially in the Midlands and South, held the same view about formal leagues at least until the 1960s. This lack of associations in an area apparently possessing an ample cricket-playing population illustrates that the spatial organisation of the sport was strongly affected by cultural factors and local traditions, as well as by considerations of population numbers and transport technology.

#### COUNTRY CRICKET IN 1914:

By 1914 the limits of the expansion of agricultural settlement in South Australia had largely been reached with the development of the Murray Mallee and Eyre Peninsula wheatlands, and with the spread of fruit growing on irrigated blocks along the Upper Murray.<sup>42</sup> The old-established areas between Gawler and Clare experienced some population losses, especially between 1890 and 1901, as migration took place to the new areas. But there was strong population growth in Mount Gambier and the industrial and mining towns of Wallaroo, Kadina, Kapunda, Gawler, Peterborough, Murray Bridge and especially Port Pirie.<sup>43</sup>

Almost 280 country cricket clubs were mentioned in South Australian newspapers in 1914, compared with 140 in 1890. The number of associations had grown even more rapidly, from 5 to 39. Approximately half the known clubs belonged to associations, most of which had formed since 1900 though several had formed earlier only to lapse. The Adelaide Hills area was still apparently without associations, although one had been proposed in the Lobethal area in the early 1890s.<sup>44</sup> Gaps also existed along the lower River Murray and in some of the recently-settled frontier areas, and the Barossa and Light Association had lapsed since 1890. Elsewhere,

however, the framework of the modern pattern of associations was clearly recognisable.

Travel to matches had been revolutionised by the rapid adoption in South Australia of the motor vehicle,<sup>45</sup> perhaps because, like California, the climate was suitable for open-bodied vehicles and the roads were for most of the year not too boggy. Motor lorries, charabancs and fleets of cars were used even where trains were available because of their convenience and cost advantages. The ability of clubs to travel to more distant fixtures had therefore increased markedly since the horse-drawn travel days of the 1880s. Yet the growth of population in the large and middle-sized towns meant that the need to travel had once more declined because many towns and their immediate environs or neighbours could support their own association of three or four teams. As a result the amount of travelling done by many clubs had declined still further since 1890. Auburn, for example, experienced a decline in distance to country opponents from 19.2 km to 14.7 km, and Georgetown had declined slightly from 16.8 km to 15.5 km. Kapunda experienced a sharp decline from 29.6 km to 15.8 km as a result of leaving the rather widespread Barossa and Light Association (Figure 3) and playing more local fixtures. Improved transport technology and larger local population numbers had combined to reduce markedly the incidence of matches played at 'half-way houses', though examples still existed east of the River Murray where new, small settlements were strung along a railway line.

Where reasons for the establishment of cricket associations were stated they resembled those motivating the foundation of the earliest country associations in the 1880s: encouragement of the game and the raising of standards of play through regular competition, through the incentive of a premiership to strive for, and often through the use of shared superior playing grounds; concrete pitches covered with matting were now the general rule.<sup>46</sup>

Twenty-five of the 39 known associations consisted of groupings of between three and seven small settlements, nine were 'one town' associations of between three and five teams, and five could not easily be classified as either (Table 2). Associations were generally organised on formal lines with fixed hours of play and player-registration systems. In some cases such as the Mount

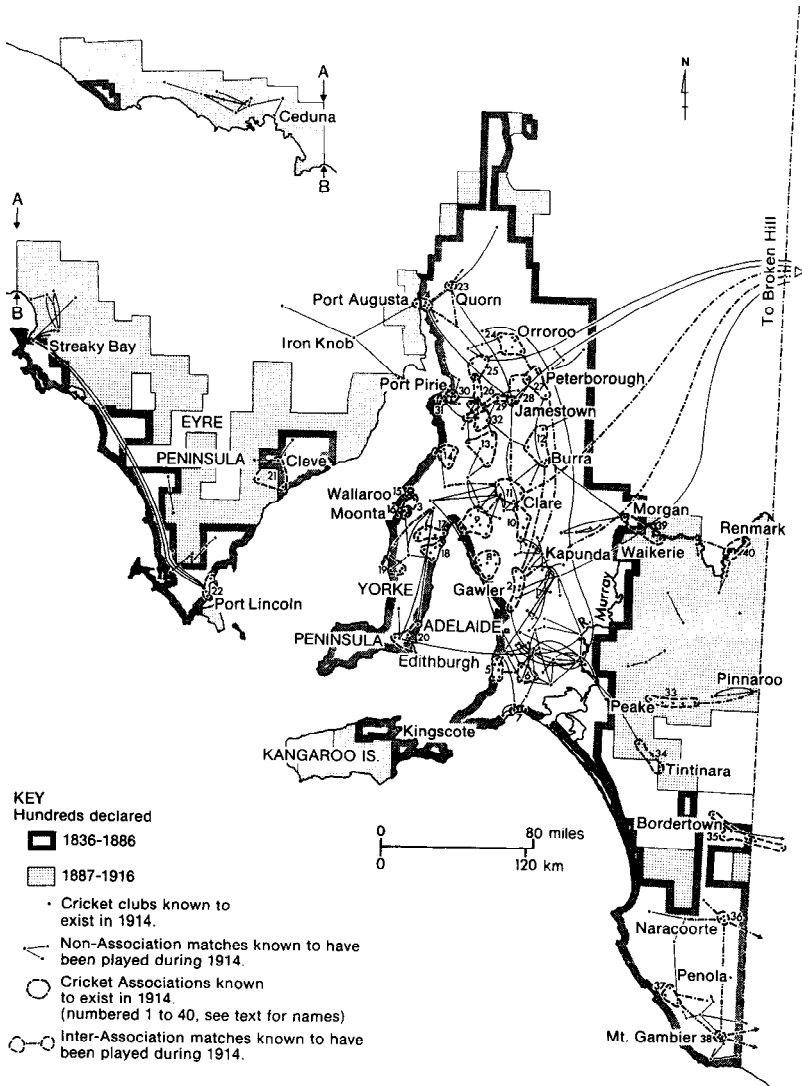


Fig. 5 South Australian Country Cricket: 1914

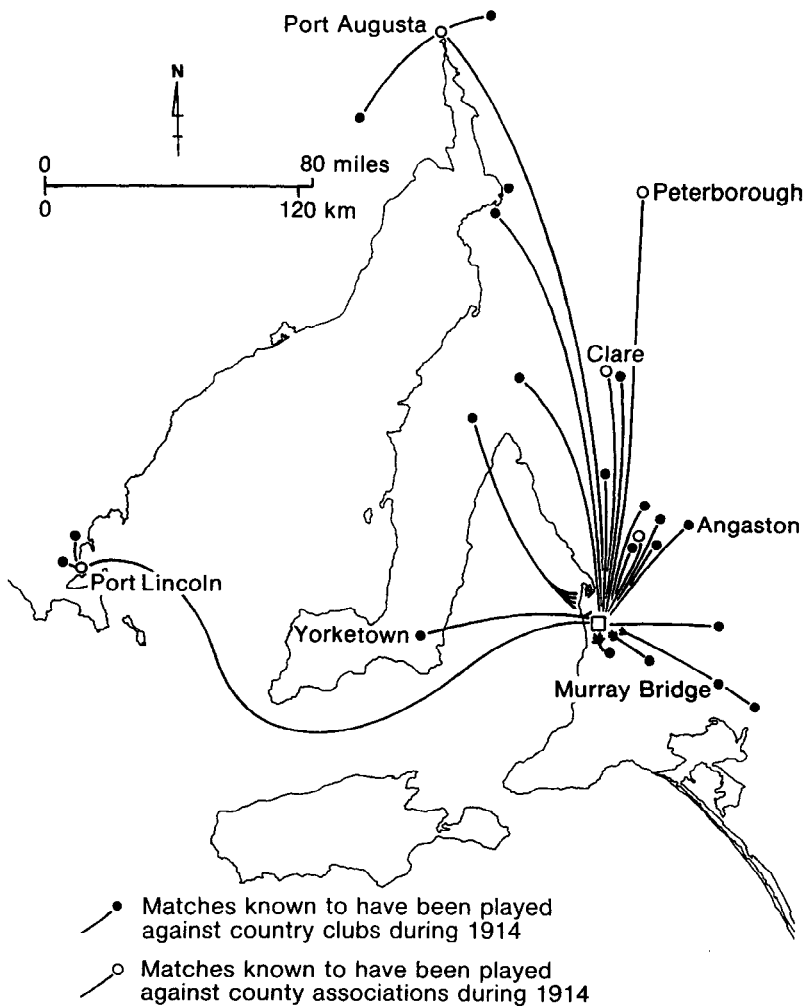


Fig. 6 Matches Between City and Country Clubs: 1914

Table 2: South Australian Country Cricket Associations in 1914  
(see figure 5)

Map No.	Association	Year of Formation	Number of Teams	Travel Distance (miles)	
				Maximum	Average
8	Adelaide Plains	?	6	12	7.5
6	Alexandra	1910	3	10	8.3
13	Broughton	?	4	16	9.5
21	Cleve District	1913	4	15	11.4
18	Eastern Yorke Peninsula	?	6	11	6.5
7	Encounter Bay	?	3	5	3.3
26	Flinders	1914	3	11	7.3
25	Frome	1913	3	11	8.7
10	Gilbert	1910	4	15	9.3
28	Middle North	?	4	13	8.6
17	Midland	?	5	15	7.9
39	Mid-Murray	1912	4	26	13.6
37	Millicent (Drainage Area)	1905	3	9	7.0
29	Northern Areas	1882*	4	26	14.7
14	Northern Yorke Peninsula(1)	1906	4	9	7.1
19	Northern Yorke Peninsula(2)	?	5	11	6.4
24	Orroroo	1913	6	13	7.0
33	Peake	1913	5	23	11.5
32	Rocky River	1913	5	14	8.2
5	Southern	1889	6	10	5.4
20	Southern Yorke Peninsula	1908	5	14	8.8
11	Stanley	1902	5	13	8.3
35	Tatiara	1912	6	40	17.6
40	Upper Murray	1912	4	13	7.5
9	Wooroora	1910	7	16	10.3

\* Known to have lapsed from 1885 until at least 1890.

B. 'One town' associations

Map No.	Association	Year of Formation	Number of Teams
16	Moonta District	?	4
38	Mount Gambier	1903	4
36	Naracoorte	1911	3
4	Port Augusta	1890	5
30	Port Pirie	1893	5
23	Quorn	1891	3
31	Solomontown	?	3
15	Walleroo	1913	3

C. Other associations

Map No.	Association	Year of Formation	Number of Teams	Travel Distance (miles) Maximum
34	Border Downs	1914	3	18
12	Burra	1912	6	18
2	Gawler	1888	5	20
27	North Eastern	1898	4	15
22	Port Lincoln	1912	3	11
3	Yorke's Peninsula	1887	5	11

Gambier Association<sup>47</sup> and the Tatiara Association based on Bordertown,<sup>48</sup> complex eligibility rules were based upon players' homes lying within a certain radius of the post office of a club's home town. With improved playing conditions, many associations found it necessary to play two-day games on successive Saturdays, and to recognise first-innings results as is usual today.

Associations incorporating a number of neighbouring towns formalised and intensified traditional inter-town rivalries as a battle for a premiership became involved. But in cases such as Mount Gambier and Naracoorte where the towns had grown large enough to have their own internal associations the traditional fixture was raised to a higher level as an inter-association representative game,<sup>49</sup> often played on a public holiday. By 1914 areas like the South East were thus characterised by a two-tiered hierarchy of cricketing interaction. A further tier came into existence in the form of the 'country week' organised each year by the South Australian Cricket Association, during which combined teams representing regional groupings of country associations and clubs played one another and metropolitan representative teams on the Adelaide Oval. The country week was reinstated in 1914 after an apparent hiatus, with two Northern teams, one Southern team and three 'City' teams taking part.<sup>50</sup>

The existence of a formal association did not usually mean the end of other matches. Adelaide teams still undertook country tours as far afield as Port Augusta, Quorn, Iron Knob and Port Lincoln (Figure 6), often travelling in fleets of motor cars and playing against combined association teams as well as individual clubs. Country clubs and associations themselves also toured,<sup>51</sup> and 'friendly' and picnic games continued to be played in addition to formal association fixtures for premiership points and official inter association fixtures. In holiday towns like Victor Harbor and Port Lincoln,<sup>52</sup> teams of visitors played regularly against local sides during January and February. However despite this variety of fixtures the occasional writer still bemoaned the passing of the 'good old days' of stagecoach travel, banquets, speeches and festivities. The State border was no barrier to cricketing linkages. The Tatiara Association included several Victorian clubs, the Mount Gambier and Naracoorte clubs had long-standing links

with clubs in settlements over the nearby border, and in cricket as in most other things Broken Hill's main interaction was with South Australia rather than with New South Wales.

Adelaide newspapers, especially the Chronicle, still reported matches between Adelaide clubs and country teams, and gave progress reports on the better-known country associations - or perhaps the associations whose secretaries were most efficient in forwarding information. Ironically many country newspapers were more parochial in their coverage than in 1890, probably because populations in nearby towns had grown, new papers had come into existence, and economic circulations could be achieved within a smaller area. The local association was increasingly the only one reported, thus reducing the amount of information that can be cross-checked. Sheffield Shield, Test, and even South Australian Cricket Association matches were often reported more fully than the matches of a club only fifteen kilometres away but belonging to a different association.

As the 1914/15 season progressed war, economic depression and a severe drought took their toll and many associations had difficulty maintaining fixtures, emphasising the fragile nature of such social institutions in a sparsely-settled State. The Naracoorte Association was reorganised with fewer teams.<sup>53</sup> The Millicent (Drainage Areas) Association lapsed.<sup>54</sup> Fragility was also generally apparent in the area east of Port Pirie, where government town-planting in the 1870s and 1880s had resulted in a surfeit of small towns in close proximity to one another.<sup>55</sup> The Frome Association lapsed,<sup>56</sup> and others experienced constant changes in membership numbers and identity. Many teams, as today, depended for viability on itinerant 'professionals' - bankers, teachers, lawyers, doctors and clergymen - and reports of speeches at farewell dinners to prominent local sportsmen often reflected fears that the departure of even one active player could cause a club to lose viability.

In much of non-metropolitan South Australia the distribution patterns of country cricket clubs and associations and their linkages in 1914 formed the recognisable precursor of today's pattern. In many areas, in response to general considerations of population distribution and transport technology, a similar three-tiered hierarchy of interaction had developed consisting of association

matches, inter-association representative matches, and participation in 'country week' in Adelaide. However local patterns also reflected variations between areas in physical environment, the history of settlement, transport networks and local traditions.

## A GENERAL MODEL OF GEOGRAPHICAL DEVELOPMENT:

An examination of the origins, spread and changing organisation of country cricket in South Australia suggests that many areas passed, albeit at different times, through a similar sequence of stages as they struggled to solve the problems of applied geography involved in organising a cricket season. A simple stage-model of geographical development can be proposed as follows:

### Stage 1: Origin.

This stage marked the beginning of cricket in an area. Playing conditions were primitive and great emphasis was placed on enjoyment and socialising. Once a club was formed, internal matches between married and single players, etc. were played, touring teams were invited and feted, and fixtures against other nearby clubs were sought.

### Stage 2: Informal Organisation.

During this stage a series of fixtures were built up with surrounding clubs and playing conditions were improved, usually by laying a hard wicket. Formal associations did not yet exist, but winning became a matter of importance and disputes arose. Holiday games and touring links were still important.

### Stage 3: Formal Organisation.

Associations were formed often resulting in greater localisation of cricketing links, though holiday, 'friendly' and tour matches may have continued in reduced numbers. Formal rules were laid down for playing hours, player eligibility, determination of results, and the award of premiership trophies. Playing conditions were improved further, amidst great feelings of initial enthusiasm. A second tier of cricketing interaction often arose in the form of matches between representative association teams and Adelaide clubs or other associations.

#### Stage 4: Periodic Recession and Recovery.

Associations adjusted to changing population density, transport technology, prosperity and levels of enthusiasm by periodically lapsing, shrinking, changing membership, expanding and reforming.

In 1875 (Figure 1) only the Adelaide urban area had reached the third stage of the model, though the second stage was recognisable in the Adelaide Hills, the Gawler area and the Clare-Auburn area, which was a particularly good example of strong informal organisation. Elsewhere, in the South-East, the Yorke Peninsula, along the lower River Murray and in the northern wheat lands, recent settlement, low population densities and long distances between towns restricted development to the first stage.

By 1890 (Figure 3) the second stage of the model could also be recognised in the northern Yorke Peninsula and in much of the area east of Port Pirie, and five areas had proceeded to the third stage of formal associations. Newly-settled areas on Eyre Peninsula and on the fringes of the northern wheat lands were still passing through the first stage during a period of drought and recession. It could be argued that the Northern Areas Association had passed very rapidly to the fourth stage but it is probably more accurate to regard it as having abortively attempted to reach the third stage too soon.

In 1914 (Figure 5) the pattern was more complex. Newly settled or sparsely populated areas such as the west coast of the Eyre Peninsula, the Murray Mallee and Kangaroo Island were clearly still at the first stage. The Adelaide Hills and the lower River Murray appeared reluctant to proceed beyond the second stage. Many parts of the State had reached the third stage, some very rapidly like the Tatiara area around Bordertown and the Upper Murray irrigation areas, others after a long period in earlier stages like parts of the agricultural areas north of Clare. And other parts of the Upper North, the Barossa Valley and the South East were experiencing the uncertainties of the final, fourth stage.

Since 1914 country cricket in South Australia has had to adapt to the changes imposed by two world wars, the Great Depression, a continual fall in the population of many agricultural areas, a

revolution in personal mobility brought about by improvements in cars and roads and by almost universal car ownership, and by the development of many undreamed-of alternative forms of amusement. Country cricket has survived as a vital element in rural social organisation, much-modified but showing clear signs of its nineteenth-century roots.

#### NOTES:

1. C. Moody, *South Australian Cricket: Reminiscences of Fifty Years* (W.K. Thomas, Adelaide, 1898).
2. J.A. Daly, *Elysian Fields: Sport, Class and Community in Colonial South Australia* (the author, Adelaide, 1982).
3. Non-metropolitan South Australia is defined approximately as the area lying outside what has become the built-up metropolitan area today.
4. G.J. Hugo, *South Australian Country Newspapers 1839 - 1971: A Preliminary List and Survey* (Geography Discipline, Flinders University, Adelaide, 1972).
5. M. Williams, *The Making of the South Australian Landscape: A Study in the Historical Geography of Australia* (Academic Press, London and New York, 1974), pp.39-45.
6. *South Australian Register*, 25, 27 and 28 March 1874.
7. W.O. Whitridge, *The South Australian Cricketers' Guide*, Season 1876-77 (E.S. Wigg, Adelaide, 1877).
8. Williams, *op.cit.*, pp.65 123.
9. Moody, *op.cit.*, p.145.
10. *South Australian Parliamentary Papers*, 74, (1881).
11. Daly, *op.cit.*, p. 68; *South Australian Register*, 1 November 1875.
12. *South Australian Register*, 18 October 1875.
13. Moody, *op.cit.*, p. 29.
14. *Kapunda Herald*, 2 April 1875.

15. The North Adelaide Young Men's club, for example, played at Balhannah on the 26th March, Mount Barker on the 27th and Strathalbyn "... after an enjoyable night ride..." on the 28th, *South Australian Register*, 1 April 1875.
16. *Border Watch*, 24 and 27 February and 3 March 1875.
17. *Southern Argus*, 21 October 1875.
18. *South Australian Register*, 25 March 1875. A report in the *Northern Argus*, 5 January 1875 also described one venue as being "admirably suited for agricultural purposes or for pleasure seekers, but as a cricket ground it is below mediocrity..."
19. See, for example, the *Kapunda Herald*, 2 April 1875.
20. *South Australian Register*, 25 March 1874.
21. *Kapunda Herald*, 12 March 1875.
22. See reports of varied disputes in the *Northern Argus*, 15 January and 12 and 16 November 1875, the *Southern Argus*, 7 November 1875 and the *Border Watch*, 25 December 1875.
23. *South Australian Register*, 22 March 1875.
24. K. Dunstan, *Sports* (Sun Books, Melbourne, 1981), p. 69 et seq.
25. C. Fenner, "A Geographical Enquiry into the Growth, Distribution and Movement of Population in South Australia, 1836-1927" *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of South Australia*, 53, 1929, pp.130-131.
26. *Northern Argus*, 10 October 1890.
27. *Northern Argus*, 30 December 1890.
28. *Mount Barker Courier*, 14 March 1890.
29. *Border Watch*, 31 December 1890.
30. *Port Pirie Standard and Barrier Advertiser*, 13 November 1890.
31. A Port Pirie team returned from a match against Gladstone on a 9.30 p.m. goods train and "... had to ride as far as Crystal Brook without a light in the brake van - packed in like a lot of sheep." *Port Pirie Standard and Barrier Advertiser*, 27 March 1890.
32. *Kadina and Wallaroo Times*, 8 October 1890.
33. *Gawler Bunyip*, 5 October 1888.

34. Kapunda Herald, 11 September 1888.
35. *South Australian Register*, 13 September 1889.
36. *Port Augusta Dispatch*, 12 September 1890.
37. *Jamestown Agriculturalist and Review*, 13 September and 4 October 1882.
38. *Jamestown Agriculturalist and Review*, 30 September 1885.
39. *Gawler Bunyip*, 7 November 1890.
40. *Gawler Bunyip*, 2 January 1891.
41. *Jamestown Agriculturalist and Review*, 4 October 1882.
42. Williams, *op.cit.*, pp. 50-55.
43. Fenner, *op.cit.*, pp. 135-137.
44. *Mount Barker Courier*, 14 September 1894.
45. S. Nicol, *Bullock Tracks and Bitumen: South Australia's Motoring Heritage* (Royal Automobile Association, Adelaide, 1978), p.30.
46. *Border Chronicle*, 3 October 1913.
47. *Border Watch*, 30 September 1914.
48. *Border Chronicle*, 3 October 1913.
49. *Border Watch*, 31 January 1914.
50. *South Australian Register*, 28 December 1914.
51. *Yorketown Clarion*, 17 April 1914.
52. *West Coast Recorder*, 28 January 1914.
53. *Naracoorte Herald*, 1 December 1914.
54. *South Eastern Times*, 1 December 1914.
55. Williams, *op.cit.*, p.363.
56. *Petersburg Times*, 23 October 1914.