



A BRIEF HISTORY OF MIKKIRA

Aboriginal nations, including the tribes of Barngalla, Nauo and Battara had lived on Eyre Peninsula for thousands of years and wandered the coastline between watering places such as the Mikkira permanent waterhole.

In 1839 Adam Borthwick, with his wife and children left Peebleshire, Scotland, and came to South Australia in the ship "Duchess of Northumberland" (540 tons), to look for land with a good water supply to run sheep. In 1842 Adam selected land near Port Lincoln, on Occupational Lease 103 which included the Mikkira waterhole.

Port Lincoln had been settled for three years but the Fishery Bay whaling station south of Mikkira was already a working whale catching site, from 1837 officially, but in fact some years earlier than that.

Adam had a small homestead built from the plentiful limestone and other one-roomed huts with stone chimneys and sheoak (casuarina) walls for the shepherds. Shallow wells were dug, rough brush fences made and each year the sheep washing and shearing had to be done. The sheep washing meant the wool was clean- important for fetching a higher price, and cost less freight to send to England to the woolen mills.

Each shepherd was responsible for guarding the sheep from dingoes and stopping them from straying. After shearing, the wool was baled and taken in bullock drays to Wool Bay at Tulka, where it could be loaded onto small ketches.

Later, Adam's son William acquired the lease for the Tulka run. In June 1859, Adam Borthwick sold Mikkira to the brothers Dr. John Harris Browne and Dr. William James Browne, who were large landowners on Eyre Peninsula, owning at different times Calca, Talia, Warna, Koppio and other properties.

By 1865 the improvements on Mikkira were listed as:- "four oak and one stone huts - five wells - one set of troughs - two, two-roomed oak huts with porch-store - men's kitchen and sleeping room - tool and harness room - cart shed and outhouse - woolshed and lean-to - wooden drafting yards - garden fence - milking yard".

The men's room survives as the big stone chimney. Alec Tolmer was manager for the Browne brothers and later for Hugh Dobbins, from 1867.

On July 8th 1879, Lily May Farrant aged one day, died and was buried in the little stone walled grave under the gums; the mother Margaret Farrant, wife of the manager, also died and was buried in the Happy Valley Cemetery.

In 1884 the lease, now a much smaller acreage, passed to James Sinclair and in May 1889, to Joseph Sawyer, and then his son Richard. In 1906, William Bolitho White held the lease briefly. Alexander Sinclair lived at Mikkira from 1906 to 1912. John William Henderson 1912 - 1915 and James Augustine Schmidt the Elder 1915 - 1923.

Samuel and Charles Theakstone took up the lease on 26th February 1923 and later Charles Theakstone was the owner.

Elizabeth de la Perrelle (nee Theakstone) has had freehold title to Mikkira and lived there since 1986.