



TOWN OF GAWLER

# Your house ... tracing its history



6 Edith Street, Gawler, date unknown  
(Town of Gawler, Gawler Heritage Collection)

## **Gawler Public Library**

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## **Background**

The 208 lots of land which formed the town of Gawler were divided between 12 people (Reid, Murray, King, Porter, Fotheringham, Stubbs, Sutton, R. and P. Tod, Paterson, Henry Johnson and Reverend Howard.) When land was allocated, the land in the name of Henry Johnson was allocated to Moore, Wright and Jerningham. Land also went to Schiebner who built the original Old Spot Hotel in 1839. Gawler Public Library has a copy of the original plan which shows details of the lots.

So, to trace the history of your house:

### **Step 1**

Obtain details of earlier owners of the property.

The ownership of land can be traced through **Land Titles Office** records. Obtaining a Certificate of Title for your property is the best way to begin. You will need to know the Volume and Folio numbers for your land. A searching fee may be charged.

### **Step 2**

If your search turns up an Application Number (e.g. A5799) or a Search Number (e.g. S1324) the title for the property is under the pre-Torrens Title system. These records, which are held at 33 Carrington Street, are hand-written or typed and detail the contracts by which land was conveyed, mortgaged etc. prior to Torrens Title. These generally do not give details on houses but sometimes the price paid may imply that there was a house on the land.

A word of caution: Often a contract will say that it is for the sale of land including all dwellings, messuages, hereditaments, buildings and so on. It does not always mean that there were any buildings at all. It was more likely the lawyers of the day using descriptions which ensured that nothing was left to dispute.

Under the old system, a mortgage was treated as a conveyance of land. Careful reading of the contract should tell you if it was a sale or mortgage. Also at 33 Carrington Street are indexed books of land transactions. These give the names of landowners and then details of the land they owned. Individual records are kept on microfilm and sometimes contain additional details such as areas of land leased, contract prices or descriptions of land and land uses.

### **Step 3**

Property assessment records of local councils can help you to accurately date the origins of your house.

You will need to know which council:

**Gawler Council** from 1857 to 1933 was the only area between East Terrace, west to the North Para and South Para Rivers.

To the east was **Barossa West** which became **Barossa** around 1880.

Willaston was part of **Mudla Wirra South** from 1854 and then **Mudla Wirra** later.

Gawler South and Gawler West were part of **Munno Para West** from 1854.

**Munno Para East** covered the Riggs Hill and Evanston Park area.

In 1899, **Gawler South Council**, comprising Gawler South and Gawler West, was created.

In 1933, **Gawler Council** expended to include Gawler East to Cheek Avenue, Gawler South, old Gawler West and inner Willaston.

**Munno Para Council** amalgamated the east and West remains in the 1950s.

In 1985, **Gawler** again expanded to include Gawler East to the Wheatsheaf Inn, parts of outer Willaston and large parts of Munno Para in the Evanston, Evanston Park, Evanston Gardens (Gawler Blocks) and Kudla areas.

The Clonlea/Harkness Heights area was part of **Nuriootpa** Council and later in **Light** and then **Kapunda/Light**.

Most of the surviving old rates records are held at State Records. You need to know the original lot or section number of land and owners names to search successfully. Most of the assessments of early years describe the land and any improvements on it, give the names of owner and occupier, the assessed value and the annual value. The assessed value is the capital value of the property. This will tell you when initial building or major additions occurred.

Some records are missing e.g. Willaston prior to 1877. Some records are held by Playford and Salisbury Libraries. Barossa Council records are still held by the Council.

### **Step 4**

Once you have the names of owners and occupiers over the years, you can try to find some of the history of those people. Historical records, such as those held at Gawler Public Library and Mortlock Library (State Library of South Australia) are excellent sources of information about the times.

Newspapers, such as *The Bunyip* will also provide "a feel" for the time in which your house was built.

Heritage surveys (some of which are held by Gawler Public library) contain a wealth of useful information.

## Useful Addresses

### Land Titles Office

101 Grenfell Street, Adelaide. SA 5000  
Phone 8226 3983 or 1800 648176 (country callers)  
Hours : Monday-Friday, 9 am-5 pm excluding public holidays.



### State Records

115 Cavan Road, Gepps Cross. SA 5094  
Phone 8226 7750  
Hours : Monday-Wednesday, 10 am-4 pm  
Thursday, 11 am-8 pm, excluding public holidays.

### State Library of South Australia

Mortlock Library, North Terrace,  
Adelaide. SA 5000  
Phone 8207 7250 or 1800 182013  
(country callers)  
Hours : Monday-Friday, 9 am-5 pm  
Saturday and Sunday, 12 noon-5 pm  
Excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day,  
New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday.



Corner Jacob and Reid  
Streets, c. 1872  
(Town of Gawler, Gawler Heritage  
Collection)



Marchant's house, c. 1980  
(Town of Gawler, Gawler Heritage  
Collection)



Baker's Cottage, Date  
Unknown  
(Town of Gawler, Gawler  
Heritage Collection)

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