

Historical Series No 80.

Apollos Harrison Gouge (1825 to 1912)

Part 2 by Philippa Horton

From the biography of Apollos Harrison Gouge in Part 1, we see that he was a man of many talents, energetic, enterprising and capable. Some of the public works he constructed during his 15 years in Adelaide until 1863 still exist today, such as the now decommissioned Thorndon Park Reservoir (Figure 1). Had he been more cautious with business dealings and less scandalous in his private affairs, Gouge could have been remembered as a significant contributor to South Australian colonial history. His collection of mounted birds may even have found a museum home, to be admired to this day.

1. a pheasant and 'specimens of Old England's field birds' – quail, English magpie, woodcocks and partridges.
2. a cuckoo, several species of the 'land and water rail', thrush, etc.
3. a hummingbird, 'blue wren' [probably **Superb Fairywren**], several honeyeater species, robin, etc.
4. a spoonbill and 'birds of the families of Psittacinae, Passerinae, Scansores, and Gallinacae.'
5. 'a very beautiful specimen of the Nankeen crane, well set, and gazing upwards.' [**Nankeen Night Heron**]

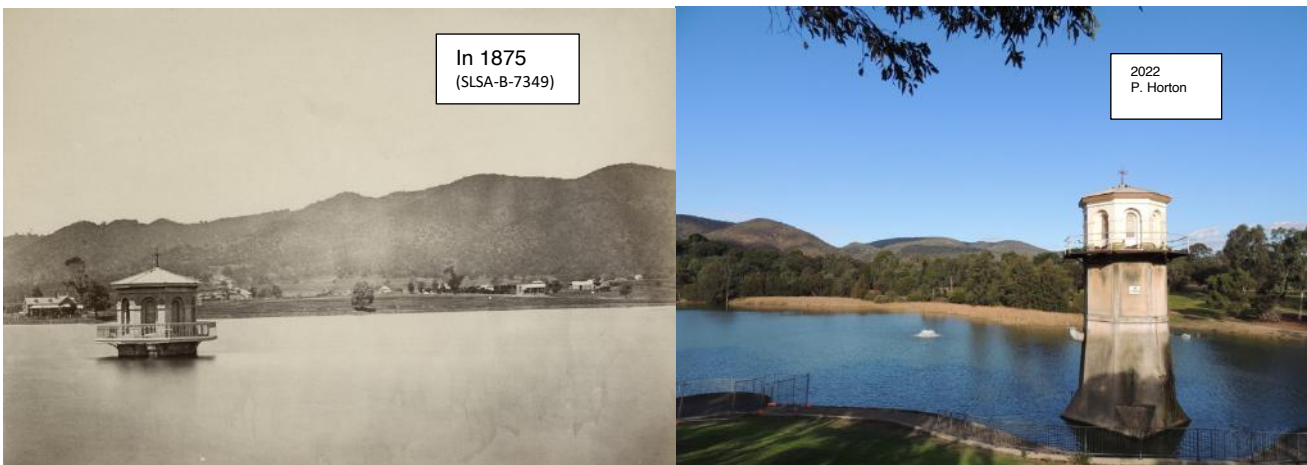


Figure 1-Thorndon Park Reservoir

With valve house and water tower, built by Gouge between 1857 and 1860

The only details of Gouge's bird collection are in the newspaper article¹ describing the inaugural soir e of the South Australian Institute (incorporating the SA Museum) on 29 January 1861, for which Gouge had lent his collection of English and colonial birds, insects, shells, corals, weapons and 'other curiosities'. The anonymous author of the lengthy article noted that the collection was 'most valuable' and described some of the cases of birds, focusing particularly on those of English specimens. They contained the following (with probable identifications of Australian species in bold):

6. a **Glossy Ibis** and 'solitary bittern' [**Australasian Bittern**], 'the latter bird having been caught by Captain Sturt, and mentioned by him in the diary of his last expedition.'
7. 'a great variety of the Citasinae' [*sic*], including a 'pink-crested cockatoo' [**Major Mitchell's Cockatoo**]. Also 'specimens of the shrike or butcher bird, kingfisher, honey-eater, &c., and a remarkably fine regent bird [**Regent Bowerbird**], the beautiful black and golden plumage of which was shown to the fullest advantage.'
8. a pigeon, thrush, goldfinch, 'titmouse', kingfisher, chaffinch, bullfinch, 'golden-crested wren', and 'many other English singing birds.'

9. a 'Recurvirostra' [**Red-necked Avocet** although Pied Avocet cannot be ruled out], an owl, and a 'goatsucker' [nightjar].

10. a white cockatoo, white falcon, mopoke, bird of paradise, laughing jackass [**Laughing Kookaburra**], owl, English pheasant, doves, 'emu [sic] wren' [probably **Southern Emuwren**], and various other passerines.

11. 'numerous small cases, containing owls, longshanks, laughing jackasses [**Laughing Kookaburra**], parrots, and others'.

12. 'a magnificent specimen of the English sea-gull'.

13. parrots, including 'a remarkably rare specimen of the *Pezoporus Formosis*, or **ground parrot**'; also a bee-eater [**Rainbow Bee-eater**] and a 'blue mountain' [**Rainbow Lorikeet**].

14. 'colonial specimens, comprising principally mountain [**Australian Shelduck**] and shovel ducks [**Australasian Shoveler**].' Also a 'white heron', coots [**Eurasian Coot**] and 'goatsuckers', a bittern, and a tern.

Some of the Australian birds are notable. The 'solitary bittern' collected by Charles Sturt on his last expedition in 1844–46 was probably an Australasian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* (Figure 2), which he had found on the Murray River. Sturt (1849) listed this and Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis* in the Appendix to his narrative of the expedition but the latter was almost certainly White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica* (Cooper *et al.* 2014). Sturt lived in Adelaide from August 1849 until returning to England in March 1853 (Gibney 1967) so could have given the bittern directly to Gouge.



Figure 2— Australasian Bittern photographed by Philippa Horton in the South Australian Museum

Major Mitchell Cockatoos reportedly occurred on the northern Adelaide Plains (Clark 1890), so Gouge may have obtained his specimen locally, but at least by the 1860s they were available as cage birds (Clark 1890). So too were Regent Bowerbirds¹¹⁰, which do not occur in SA, so Gouge may also have obtained this bird from a dealer. Alternatively, he may have obtained it and the bird of paradise on a trip he made to Melbourne with his son in December 1859¹¹¹.

All the other Australian birds could have been acquired locally. In Part 1 we learnt that Gouge was adept with a shotgun and also that he kept birds, including native species, in his home aviaries; most likely he preserved them as mounts when they died. His Ground Parrot (now extinct in SA) probably came from its swampy habitats of the Adelaide Plains and

Mount Lofty Ranges; the specimen B52429 in the SA Museum that was collected at the Reedbeds in 1850 shows that this population was still extant by the time Gouge arrived in Adelaide.

In addition to his bird collection, Gouge also lent for the 1861 soirée his collection of insects, mostly collected on Kangaroo Island. Earlier in January 1861 Gouge had hosted a group of friends on the island to view a steam sawmill he had purchased at Cygnet River for £750 the previous year^{112–116}, so it is possible he had visited the island often. The insect collection was housed in several cases and 'comprised specimens of nearly every class'¹, probably meaning of every Order.

Gouge also lent his New Caledonian collection. In October 1860 Gouge had sailed on the steamer *Omeo* to Melbourne¹¹⁷, travelled on to Sydney, and departed 20th October on the barque *Sophie* for New Caledonia¹¹⁸. There he planned to negotiate with the French authorities for the construction of public works including railways¹¹⁹. He furnished them with estimates of construction costs¹²⁰ but the plans never came to fruition and he returned to Adelaide in late December 1860 on the steamer *Aldinga* from Melbourne¹²¹. He was not empty-handed however, bringing about 30 New Caledonian native plants for the Adelaide Botanic Gardens¹²⁰, hundreds of shells, samples of corals and minerals, a native canoe, and other artefacts, all of which he had on display at his North Terrace home in the weeks before the soirée¹²². The newspaper article describing the soirée stated the shell collection was housed in two display cases and included many cowrie species, bivalves, polished abalones, snipes

bill shells, nautilus, Triton's trumpet and spider conch. George French Angas reportedly considered one of the bivalves to be a new species, which he intended to describe¹. Adams and Angas (1863) did describe a new bivalve and a new gastropod from New Caledonia but did not name the collector of either, noting only that the type specimens were in Angas's collection.

As detailed in Part 1, by October 1863 Gouge was declared insolvent. He sold property, including the specimen collections, and fled the colony. However, at some time during the year 1 October 1862 to 30 September 1863, he made a donation to the SA Institute Museum, the curator Waterhouse (1863) having listed him among donors. Unfortunately, we do

not know what he donated but it was most likely bird specimens, Waterhouse (1863) noting that 'the principal additions made have been in Ornithology'. Even more unfortunately, most bird specimens from Waterhouse's era have not survived (Horton *et al.* 2018), so Gouge's donation is likely to have been lost.

On 30 November 1863 Gouge's collections were offered for sale at auction⁸². They comprised '25 cases of stuffed birds (principally South Australian) including many rare and valuable specimens', two cases of insects from China and one from SA, '2 very large cases of shells, probably the finest assortment in the colony', and a case of copper ore specimens from SA. The auctioneers added that the collections were 'the result of 15 years care and labour. Nothing equal to it has ever been offered for sale in this colony.' It seems unlikely however that Gouge collected the insects from China, as there is no record of him travelling in that country; most likely he bought that particular collection. A day after the sale, the same newspaper noted that 'Mr. Gouge has been making this collection for many years, and some of the specimens were really very good; but as a whole they did not show to advantage in the rough home-made cases that contained them.'

The auction house that sold Gouge's collections appears to have ceased operating during World War II, with no archived records in the State Library of SA, so determining the purchaser of Gouge's collections is probably impossible. When on display at the SA Institute soirée, Gouge's specimens were described as 'not classed' or 'not classified' from which we can assume they were unlabelled, so even if they survived today, they are unlikely to be identifiable as Gouge's. A valuable representation of the original avifauna of Adelaide has been lost.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Graham Carpenter for alerting me to the 1861 newspaper article describing Gouge's collection, and to Louise Stallard for genealogical information on Louisa Herring.

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Numbered articles from Trove

<https://trove.nla.gov.au> (for Parts 1 and 2)

AO = *The Adelaide Observer*

AT = *The Adelaide Times*

DC = *The Daily Colonist* (Victoria, British Columbia)

SAA = *The South Australian Advertiser*

SAR = *The South Australian Register*

SAWC = *The South Australian Weekly Chronicle*

SMH = *The Sydney Morning Herald*

TAM = *The Age* (Melbourne)

TRA = *The Register* (Adelaide)

1. Inaugural soiree of the South Australian Institute. *SAA* 23/2/1861: 3.

2. Contract for the Waterworks Reservoir. *AT* 5/10/1857: 2.

3. Advertising. *AT* 25/7/1850: 1.

4. Port Adelaide. *The South Australian* 24/10/1850: 2.

5. A champagne dinner. *AT* 13/3/1851: 2.

6. Shipping intelligence. *The South Australian* 15/5/1849: 2.

7. To surveyors and others. *AT* 13/12/1851: 4.

8. Police court. *AT* 21/10/1851: 3.

9. Married. *SAR* 19/6/1852: 2.

10. Bench of magistrates. Transfers. *SAR* 14/9/1852: 3.

11. Star Inn. *SAR* 2/8/1852: 2.

12. Star Inn Concert Room. *AT* 27/7/1853: 1.

13. Unley Farm – Notice. *AT* 4/4/1853: 4.

14. Auctions *AO* 9/12/1854: 1.

15. District councils. Mitcham. *AT* 14/3/1855: 3.

16. Old time Unley and Unley Park. *TRA* 23/12/1902: 6.

17. Cremorne Gardens. *South Australian Free Press* 8/4/1854: 7.
 18. Auctions. *SAR* 13/8/1855: 4.
 19. Shipping intelligence. *TAM* 13/9/1855: 4.
 20. Blackwall Line of packets. *TAM* 3/9/1855: 1.
 21. Shipping intelligence. *AO* 23/8/1856: 5.
 22. Retirements and promotion. *TRA* 1/7/1914: 9.
 23. Double Dublin stout. *AT* 18/9/1856: 3.
 24. Amusements. *SAR* 31/10/1856: 1.
 25. Contract for the Waterworks Reservoir. *AT* 5/10/1857: 2.
 26. The reservoir at Thorndon Park. *SAR* 18/4/1859: 2.
 27. The Waterworks. *SAR* 5/6/1860: 3.
 28. Railway to Kapunda. *SAA* 11/10/1859: 2.
 29. The Wallaroo railway. *SAR* 16/8/1861: 2.
 30. Wallaroo Railway. *SAR* 26/11/1862: 5.
 31. Kadina and Wallaroo Railway and Pier Company. *SAR* 27/7/1863: 3.
 32. Wallaroo and Kadina railway. *AO* 9/5/1863: 5.
 33. Port Elliot. *SAR* 18/6/1862: 2.
 34. Opening of bridges in the south district. *SAR* 3/8/1863: 3.
 35. Victor Harbor Works. *SAR* 4/7/1862: 1.
 36. Victor Harbor Steam Saw Mills. *SAA* 18/10/1862: 1.
 37. The Advertiser. *SAA* 14/9/1863: 2.
 38. Opening of the Victor Harbour Tramway and Victoria Jetty. *SAR* 9/8/1864: 3.
 39. Death of Pioneer. *DC* 6/1/1912: 1.
 40. Licensed Victuallers' Association. *SAR* 1/2/1859: 3.
 41. Municipal Elections. *SAR* 2/12/1858: 2.
 42. Municipal Council. *SAR* 31/1/1860: 3.
 43. New omnibus to the Bay. *SAA* 13/11/1858: 1.
 44. Morning trip to the Bay. *SAA* 18/12/1858: 1.
 45. Auctions. *SAA* 11/5/1859: 4.
 46. A good speculation for the summer. *SAA* 22/8/1859: 1.
 47. The Mochatoona Copper Mining Company. *SAR* 16/6/1859: 3.
 48. Cumberland Mining Company. *SAA* 17/5/1861: 1.
 49. Kulpara Mining Company. *SAR* 25/4/1861: 3.
 50. Auctions. *SAR* 27/10/1863: 4.
 51. To brewers and others. *SAR* 16/3/1861: 1.
 52. Public notices. *SAR* 20/12/1862: 1.
 53. South Australian Agricultural and Horticultural Society's show. *SAR* 14/2/1862: 3.
 54. The South Australian Agricultural and Horticultural Society. *SAR* 14/2/1863: 2.
 55. Wednesday's hailstorm. *SAR* 24/10/1862: 2.
 56. Sporting. *AO* 10/3/1855: 4.
 57. Pigeon shooting. *SAA* 17/5/1861: 3.
 58. Pigeon match. *SAR* 28/2/1863: 2.
 59. The Brighton races. *SAR* 23/2/1853: 2.
 60. Races at Thebarton. *SAR* 23/4/1861: 3.
 61. A tiger. *AO* 22/5/1858: 5.
 62. The monster Royal Bengal tiger. *AO* 22/5/1858: 1.
 63. Exports. *AO* 11/9/1858: 5.
 64. Anniversary dinner of the old colonists. *AO* 3/4/1852: 6.
 65. A grand concert. *SAR* 17/7/1852: 2.
 66. Complimentary banquet to Mr. McKinlay and party. *SAA* 13/11/1861: 3.
 67. Banquet to Mr. McKinlay and party. *SAR* 9/12/1862: 3.
 68. Kadina. *SAWC* 3/10/1863: 2.
 69. South Australian Society of Arts. *SAR* 28/1/1861: 1.
 70. South Australian Society of Arts. *AO* 31/1/1863: 3.
 71. New fountain in King William-street. *SAR* 6/7/1861: 2.
 72. Municipal Council. Fountains. *AO* 14/9/1867: 3.
 73. Last of an historic fountain. *TRA* 1/12/1908: 4.
 74. The mail from Wallaroo. *AO* 28/3/1863: 1.
 75. Auctions. *SAA* 10/1/1861: 4.
 76. Merchandise. *SAR* 27/7/1863: 1.
 77. Insolvency notices. *SA Govt Gazette* 15/10/1863: 864.
 78. Insolvency Court. *AO* 7/11/1863: 3.
 79. Commercial. *SAA* 19/10/1863: 2.
 80. Auctions. *SAR* 27/10/1863: 4.
 81. Auctions. *SAR* 27/11/1863: 4.
 82. Auctions. *SAA* 28/11/1863: 4.
 83. Auctions. *SAR* 18/12/1863: 4.
 84. The absconder Gouge. *SAR* 9/2/1864: 2.
 85. Chamber of Commerce. *SAR* 2/2/1864: 3.
 86. Police court – Adelaide. *SAA* 5/12/1863: 3.
 87. Matrimonial. *SAA* 2/4/1864: 3.
 88. Obituary. *TRA* 31/7/1928: 12.
 89. Newcastle. *SMH* 11/2/1864: 5.
 90. Vessels in Port. *Newcastle Chronicle* 17/2/1864: 2.
 91. Mr. Apollos Harrison Gouge. *AO* 23/4/1864: 5.
 92. Ransacking the Island for minerals. *DC* 5/4/1878: 2.
 93. The northwest coast. *DC* 26/8/1879: 2.
 94. Auction sale. *DC* 31/3/1881: 2.
 95. Men wanted for the Yale-Savona Railway. *DC* 30/7/1881: 1.
 96. Shipping. *TAM* 27/11/1882: 4.
 97. Shipping news. Cleared. *SAWC* 31/3/1883: 2.
 98. The Northern Territory. *SAR* 25/4/1883: 1.
 99. Northern Territory. *SAWC* 23/6/1883: 13.
 100. The Northern Territory. *SAR* 18/7/1883: 1.
 101. Shipping. *The North Australian* 9/11/1883: 2.
 102. Shipping. *The Sydney Mail* 24/11/1883: 998.
 103. Notice to applicants for mineral leases. *NSW Govt. Gazette* No. 183 1/5/1885: 2946, No. 573 1/12/1885: 7714
 104. Adelaide Licensing Bench. *South Australian Chronicle* 13/9/1890: 9, 13/12/1890: 6.
 105. Fires at Whyte River. *Launceston Examiner* 17/1/1898: 6.
 106. Waratah. *The Examiner* (Launceston) 25/5/1905: 3.
 107. Shipping. *SMH* 10/7/1905: 8.
 108. A pathetic incident. *The Examiner* (Launceston) 6/11/1905: 6
 109. Death of pioneer. *DC* 6/1/1912: 1.
 110. Birds, birds, birds. *SMH* 21/9/1861: 2.
 111. Shipping Intelligence. Cleared out. *AO* 31/12/1859: 4.
 112. Shipping intelligence. Arrived coastwise. *SAR* 28/1/1861: 2.
 113. Dinner to Mr. Gouge. *SAA* 17/5/1861: 3.
 114. Auctions. *AO* 11/8/1860: 1.
 115. Insolvency court. *AO* 27/10/1860: 3.
 116. Kangaroo Island. *SAR* 15/10/1860: 3.
 117. Shipping news. Cleared. *SAA* 8/10/1860: 2.
 118. Clearances. *SMH* 22/10/1860: 4.
 119. Mr. A. H. Gouge. *SAA* 5/10/1860: 2.
 120. New Caledonia. *SAR* 24/12/1860: 3.
 121. Shipping intelligence. Arrived. *SAR* 24/12/1860: 2.
 122. New Caledonian productions. *SAR* 7/1/1861: 2.
 123. Topics of the day. *SAA* 1/12/1863: 2.
- Genealogical information was derived from Ancestry <https://www.ancestry.com.au> and the Genealogy SA database <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-database-search>