HISTORY OF BETHANY

Bethany (Bethanien) was the first village established in the Barossa Valley. It was settled in 1842 by 28 families under the care of Pastor G.D. Fritzsche, who emigrated from Prussia (now Poland) on the vessel the Skjold. There was much hardship experienced on this voyage, resulting in 51 deaths during the passage from Hamburg.

The village was laid out in German Hufendorf style. Houses were built along the main road with their farmland stretching out at right angles in long narrow strips. Most farmlets had access to water from the Tanunda Creek which flowed through their properties. The farmers grew cereal crops, vegetables and fruit and gradually introduced cattle and horses.

Life was hard in the early years of settlement with a number of deaths, especially children, due to disease and poor living conditions.

The land was at first leased from George Fife Angas. It became the freehold property of the local settlers in 1852; their mortgage was paid off in 1857, when surveyor C. von Bertouch deposited a "Plan of the Village of Bethany". By that time many of the original 28 families had moved on and settled elsewhere in the Valley.

Traditional Prussian customs were observed in the village, among them the election of a village herdsman. It was his duty to collect the village cattle early each morning and take them to the Common in the hills above Bethany Reserve. He would return them in the evening for milking, announcing his homecoming with a blast from his horn.

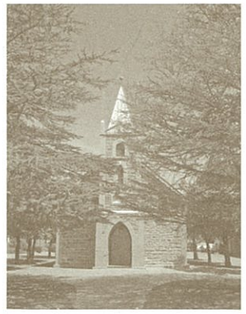
Community life centred around the church and school. Music was important and a choir and brass band were formed in Bethany. A pipe organ, built in the Barossa Valley, was installed in the Bethany Church and used until 1929 when a bigger organ replaced it. The original organ, now renovated, is still in use at the Stockwell Lutheran Church.

An early interest in mission work made Bethany the starting point for an early Central Australian mission party in 1875. The party formed the Hermannsburg Mission, Finke River.

Bethany continues to be a close knit community centred around its church and some of the names of the original settlers still remain. The community is still based largely on farming, fruit and grape growing and winemaking. However, the last years have seen tourism playing an important role in the village with visitors from all over the world visiting and soaking up the history.

HISTORICAL WALK OF BETHANY

1. **LUTHERAN CHURCH - HERBERGE CHRISTI (Dwelling Place of Christ)**
The first church in Bethany was built in 1845 by pioneer settlers under the direction of Pastor Gotthard Daniel Fritzsche. It had mud walls, a thatched roof and was built on the site of the present Lutheran manse on the north side of Bethany Road. The present church was built in 1883 by J. Basedow of Tanunda from stone quarried out of the eastern Barossa foothills. The adjacent school and teacher's residence were added in 1888 by local builder F. Kassebaum & Co.



2. **TOPP HOUSE (Private)**
This was the residence of the village's second schoolteacher Friedrich Topp who taught at the local school for 43 years. Later the house was occupied by the Heidenreich family. Early photographs show a thatched roof and central chimney.

3. **OLD LUTHERAN MANSE (Private)**
This bluestone house was first occupied in 1866 by Pastor George A. Heidenreich and his family and later, in 1913, by Pastor H.F.W. Roehrs. Its historical interest is in its pug ceiling, timber work and thick bluestone walls.

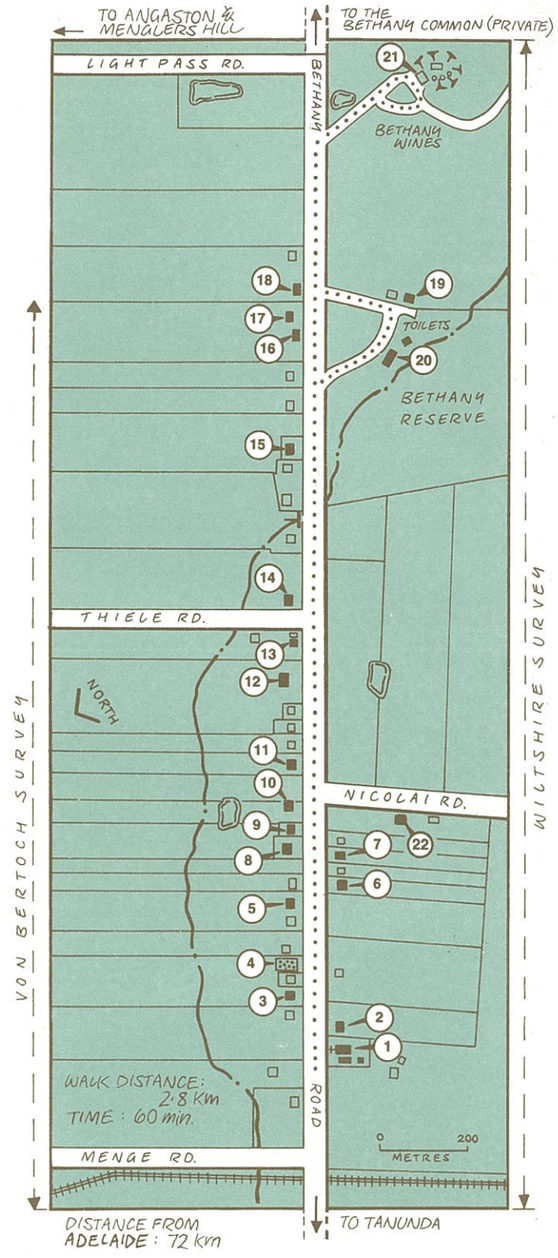
4. **PIONEER CEMETERY (Open to public)**
A feature of the oldest cemetery in the Barossa Valley is the cast iron monument to Pastor H.A.E. Meyer, Bethany's first resident pastor from 1848 to 1862. The pastor lived in a house built on the opposite side of the cemetery, now vacant land. A section of the eastern side of the cemetery was reserved for children, reflecting the high child mortality rate in the settlement's early years.

5. **TSCHARKE HOUSE (Private)**
First occupied by the Schilg family and later owned by the Kube family, the house features German architectural influences such as the steep roof pitch, casement windows and the loft opening in the eastern gable end.

6. **DOST HOUSE (Private)**
Built in the 1840s as a two-roomed cottage for the first village herdsman, Friedrich Kockrick lived in it from 1866. It was eventually passed on to one of his daughters who married into the Dost family. The former high pitched roof has been replaced by a lower roof, but the original pug walls, ceilings, beams, loft access and most of the woodwork have been preserved. In 1985 it was fully restored to offer an exclusive restaurant and accommodation experience, known as The Landhaus.

7. **KOHLHAGEN HOUSE (Private)**
Also built in the 1800s in the German style, this house was owned at first by the Kube family and later the Kohlhagen family for many years. It has been fully restored and extended.

8. **KEIL HOUSE (Private)**
This was originally the Seidel property but was owned for many years by Heinrich (Peter) Liersch, a butcher, and subsequently by Ewald Keil, also a butcher. It is probably the best example of this architectural style in SA and is the only house set at right angles to the main street. The black kitchen, where the early cooking and meat smoking were done, is in the centre of the building as is the entrance to the loft. Outbuildings include what were once a horse-drawn vehicle shed, a slaughter house and a commercial meat and smoke house.



9. **KOCH HOUSE (Private)**
Part of the Liersch property, this house was built by Heinrich Liersch who lived in it until his death. Subsequent owners have been the Unger and Koch families. The house is an example of the way German farmhouses have been compromised by more modern additions and renovations. Two rooms were built across the front, later a turn of the century gable wing was added on the eastern end and recently aluminium tiles have covered the iron roof.

10. **LIERSCH HOUSE (Private)**
Originally owned by Ernst Hueppauff, it was the home of Heinrich Liersch's son Ed for many years. The house has been restored. The property has an interesting collection of farm buildings. The inside roof frame still includes undressed tree branches and there is a beautifully vaulted brick cellar under the house.

11. **KUBE HOUSE (Private)**
This property was originally owned by J. G. Hohnberg. The present house was built for Johann Traugott Kube in about 1899 (the third house built on the property). Subsequent owners have included the Liersch family. The gabled section is a later addition.

12. **HUEPPAUFF HOUSE (Private)**
Owned at first by Ernst Milich, then by Carl Graetz, this house with German influences was extended to accommodate the large Hueppauff family of 11.

13. **MILICH HOUSE (Private)**
The first owner of this property was F.W. Gehling. Besides the Milich family, many other families have lived here during the last 100 years. A modern house has since been attached to the old cottage.

14. **THIELE HOUSE (Private)**
It was originally owned by Carl Heinrich Thiele, whose name was given to the adjacent unsealed road. Mr. Thiele was one of the trustees who in 1852 purchased the land of the original Bethany settlement from George Fife Angas. The very old two roomed farm house is now used as a farm shed by the present owner.

15. **SONNTAG HOUSE (Accommodation)**
This house was built in the 1840s by Johann Franz Sonntag. It was occupied continuously by his descendants until the early 1960s when it was vacated and fell into disrepair. It was initially restored in the 1970s and housed the Bethany Art and Craft Gallery. Further renovations took place in 1995 and Sonntag House now offers Historic Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

16. **SCHULZ FARM SHED (Private)**
An excellent example of a slabsided, thatch-roofed implement shed this was thought to have been the work of Johann Friedrich Traube. The slabs would have been cut from mature trees. The timber was hand split with an axe, maul and wedges - a rare and nearly lost bush craft. It was rethatched in 2003 by the Barossa Vintage Festival Heritage Group and Bethany Community.

17. **SCHULZ HOUSE (Private)**
Gottfried Klaffuss was the first owner of this property until it became the Traube home. Owned for most of this century by the Schulz family, it is another example of an early German house with additions.

18. **HAGE HOUSE (Private)**
Gottlob Schrapel settled in Bethany in 1844 and built the family's first house which had the original cellar underneath. The house alongside was built by Traugott Schrapel (second generation) who later decided to settle closer to the creek adjacent to the Bethany Reserve. His original house was sold to Heinrich Stiller who later sold it to Traugott's descendant Alf Hage. It is still in the Hage family.

19. **SCHRAPEL HOUSE (Private)**
It was occupied before the end of the last century by Gottlieb Schrapel (third generation). The land had already been purchased in 1858 from Daniel Schlinke, who had built a flour mill further up the gully. This mill only functioned for a few years until it was damaged by flood and the land was sold to the Schrapels. Three houses were built along the creek, Gottlieb occupying the one closest to the reserve which is now owned by a sixth generation descendant.

20. **BETHANY RESERVE**
This area was originally set apart as a water reserve and was inhabited in the early days by the few Aborigines left when the white settlers arrived. The reserve provided pasture to those settlers who lived alongside, and it also became an important picnic place for family, school and church groups - a use which continues today.

21. **SCHRAPEL QUARRY (Bethany Wines)**
Many houses, several schools, and two churches (Bethany and Langmeil) along with the Chateau Tanunda Winery were built from stone quarried here. The quarry also provided crushed metal for the Gawler to Angaston Road, before it was sealed between 1927 and 1931. Local residents remember the depressions cut in Bethany Road by the hard tyred trucks which carried the rubble from the quarries. It is now the site for the Schrapel Family Winery.

22. **LINDNER MEATWORKS**
(Bethany Cottage Bed and Breakfast)
Settled by Johannes Bernhard Lindner at the turn of the century, the buildings currently used as bed and breakfast accommodation were formerly a smallgoods workshop and stone coolroom with cellar. The distinctive high pitched slaughter shed, timber cattle races and smoke house still remain.

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A HISTORICAL WALK *of* Bethany

BETHANY by G. F. Angas, Reproduced Courtesy Art Gallery of S.A.

Barossa Valley
South Australia