THE AFGHANISTAN COUNCIL

THE AFGHANS IN AUSTRALIA

by

May Schinasi

Occasional Paper #22

THE ASIA SOCIETY

112 East 64th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021
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1. Introduction

The project to build an Afghan Memorial Hall in the town of Adelaide, South Australia was announced in 1976. This announcement may seem strange to the rest of the world where the historical connections between Afghanistan and Australia appear to be remote. However, in Australia it is well known that in the second half of the 19th century cameleers brought their camels from Afghanistan and India and that they played a prominent role in various expeditions exploring that huge continent. The introduction of the camel greatly expedited the exploration of Australia. The cameleers were among Australia's pioneers.

An extensive body of literature recounts with praise the journeys of these cameleers and their beasts. Today their presence is recalled at tourist and cultural sites, museums, zoological gardens and reserves. Australians are well informed of the important contributions made by these men from Afghanistan.

The story of the camel in Australia was told remarkably well in a book published in Melbourne in 1969. The Camel in Australia covered all aspects of camel lore, including the physical and biological constitution of the species, the eventful voyages by sea from 1860 onwards, their various uses as pack and riding camels in the desert, their decline from the 1920s and their present return to a wild state. Since the lives of these animals were closely connected to those of the men who accompanied them and settled in Australia, the author, T.L. McKnight, did not neglect the immigrants. He described their journeys as caravaneers and their settlement in Australia, which at times ended miserably.

Up to now, writers have been more interested in the camels than in the men. To Australians the strange appearance of the beasts was strikingly novel and their significant share in the exploration of the continent was an added attraction. The men who accompanied the camels remained in their shadow.

The story of the continuous use of the camel lasted roughly 60 years. It started with the Burke and Wills expedition in 1860 and ended in the 1920s when motor transport took the place of camel transport. Documents related to the various stages of this story are available in Australia where both written records and living evidence of a not too distant, and far from dead, past exist. Additional information may be gleaned from Australian archives and also from Afghanistan where some of the cameleers originated. Much of the information is not entirely new since in both cases it was published many years ago; but access to it was somewhat difficult with the result that it remained little known. Not the least of the problems was the fact that the material from Afghanistan was written in Persian.

The additional sources consist of a book published in Australia by one Musakhan who originally came from Karachi and who, in Australia, had presided over the establishment of a mosque in Perth. Then there is a short passage in a travel account of the British engineer, Frank A. Martin, published in England in 1907. Martin worked in Afghanistan from 1895 to 1903. Later, several letters sent from Perth to Kabul in 1914-15 by a member of the Muslim community of Australia were published in an Afghan newspaper.

These sources deal with the men. Musakhan in his narrative about the Perth mosque gave, among other things, an extensive list of all the contributors to the building fund. Martin referred on two pages to some news from "the Afghan colony of Australia" which had reached Kabul while he was there; and he mentioned some of
the personal difficulties the cameleers encountered while they were in Australia in addition to those they faced at home when and if they returned. The letters in the Kabul periodical dealt mainly with the religious life centered around the mosques these zealous Muslims built in a number of places in Australia.

From this material one can at last positively identify something of the personality of the cameleers. Considering the relatively small size of their community in its heyday, which was comparatively brief, it now seemed possible to get to know these people as individuals rather than as shadows of their initial raison d'être, the camel.

To achieve this it was necessary to consult the record books and the archives extant in different Australian states as well as the memoirs of some private individuals. All the material presented here was collected through correspondence. Many correspondents, all of whom were at first unknown to the author, not only answered but took the trouble to send references, documents, photocopies of articles and press cuttings, photographs, personal souvenirs and other testimonies, in spite of the inconvenience and the slowness of the mail. Each has its place in this article. Nevertheless, it is likely that a systematic study of all Australian sources will enable us one day to revise the following survey which is based on the above-mentioned materials.

In order to place the cameleers in their new Australian perspective, it appeared useful to outline briefly the history of the explorations of the continent, together with the part the camels took in it. This was done with the help of expedition accounts and with the aid of McKnight's unique study.

2. The Exploration of the Continent: The Camels

After the discovery of the Australian coasts in the 17th century by Dutch navigators and merchants, in the 18th century by British explorers J. Cook (1770), Flinders (1799), Vancouver (1791), etc., and the French D'Entrecasteaux (1791-93) and Baudin (1800), the time came to penetrate the interior, an arid task if ever there was one. Australia's physical topography is immense, monotonous and devoid of large rivers. The soil is arid and the climate generally warm and dry, with extreme temperature variations and torrential rains.

Great Britain sent its first convicts to the bay of present day Sydney in 1788 and there founded New South Wales, the first colony. Then settlers, farmers and owners of large herds of sheep began arriving to settle where they could. They were soon joined by workmen who came mainly from Asia. While the colonizing of some parts of the continent was taking place, a number of courageous and dauntless men were exploring the rest of the country.

The explorations lasted many months and large amounts of material and provisions were necessary both for the men as well as the animals. Saddle horses, pack horses and bullocks formed part of the transport teams and the success of the expedition depended on the well-being of these animals. Thirst and exhaustion were the main hazards of the treks and each journey, successful or unsuccessful, undoubtedly met with moments of distress; some failed with all hands lost.

When the cameleers first landed in Australia in 1860, the eastern part of the continent had already been largely explored. Up until this time the beasts of burden used in Australia were the horse and the bullock and many were required for each expedition. While these animals lacked neither endurance nor robustness, it was known that these qualities were even more explicitly represented,
together with added desirable characteristics, by the camel, an animal not found on the Australian continent.

In 1839, the Sydney Herald first presented the idea of introducing the camel to Australia by describing this animal as being "admirably adapted to the climate and soil of New South Wales." An attempt to bring camels to Australia was made in the following year. Out of nine camels imported from the Canary Islands, however, only one survived the long journey. It arrived in Port Adelaide and was taken by J. Horrocks, an explorer, toward Lake Torrens. Horrocks, unfortunately, had an accident and the camel was shot. The same year a couple of camels which had travelled on the ship Calcutta landed in Melbourne. They were used only to satisfy people's curiosity and "their actual fate is unknown."10

Twenty years later, as the exploration of Australia was progressing, the Royal Society of Victoria came up with the novel idea of crossing the continent from south to north. The Government of Victoria quickly became involved with the project and appointed an organizing committee, collected funds and named an Irishman, R.O. Burke, as head of the party. Burke pinned his hopes of success on camels even though the earlier camel performances had been disappointing. Two months before the start of the expedition, 24 camels landed in Melbourne. A British officer, George J. Landells, who was posted in Lahore, had been asked to select and buy the camels. Little is known of Landells, his itinerary, the steps he took for the deal or even the places he went to: "Mr. Landells then in India, was communicated with, and in May last year has acknowledged from Lahore the receipt of the instructions addressed to him (...) but the difficulties Mr. Landells experienced in procuring the animals - for which he travelled to Affghanistan (sic) at a time when Northern India was still under the influence of the expiring flames of rebellion - occasioned more delay than had been anticipated."11 Only some of the 24 camels joined the exhibition but their services were fully appreciated even though several of them perished - lost, bogged or eaten!

The Burke and Wills (Wills was the second-in-command) Expedition (1860) was the first official expedition in Australia although the Government of South Australia sponsored a similar operation at about the same time adding a note of competition to both ventures. The Burke and Wills Expedition went down in Australian history and partially accomplished its mission although Burke, Wills and several other men died of exhaustion on their return. The expedition's main claim to fame, however, was that it was the first Australian expedition to use camels.12

In the 1860s Thomas Elder (1818-1897), a Scotsman, emigrated to Adelaide and became a prominent personality in the history of Australian exploration.13 Elder never conducted any expeditions himself but he organized and financed a number of them and, above all, he and his partner, S.J Stuckey, advocated the mass introduction, breeding and extensive use of camels on the continent.

During a trip to the Holy Land in 1857, Elder had had his first experience of travelling on camel back and by the time he returned to Adelaide he had become convinced that camels were the answer to transport in the outback. Stuckey went to India to negotiate the purchase of 124 camels as well as the more complicated terms of their shipment to Australia. That was done at last and "in 1865, Mr. Elder chartered the Blackwell to load camels at Kurrachee." The Blackwell landed in Port Augusta in January 1866. The camels were taken east of Lake Torrens at the foot of the Flinders Ranges to Beltana where Elder had set up a vast breeding station. Thus, Elder became the first camel-breeder in Australia. The camels were handled by a group of cameleers who made the trip with them.
Elder equipped several of the most famous expeditions in South and Western Australia. In 1873, Col. P.E. Warburton travelled with six men of whom two were "Afghan camel drivers" and a caravan of four riding camels and 13 pack camels loaded with provisions for six months. This was the first expedition to use camels exclusively. In 1875, the tireless British explorer, Ernest Giles, crossed the continent from Beltana to Perth with seven men, including an "Afghan camel driver" and only camels, seven for riding and 15 for packing. The same year, John W. Lewis was asked to reconnoiter the surroundings of Lake Eyre and he took eight companions of whom three were "Afghan camel drivers." In 1891, the Elder Scientific Exploring Expedition, organized by Elder but led by David Lindsay, consisted of five specialists, several assistants and five "Afghans" to attend 4 camels.

Almost all expeditions in Australia, whether private or official, used camels at that time. One can also mention the explorer, W.H. Tietkens, who, in 1899 under the patronage of the Royal Geographical Society, reached the heart of the continent with 12 camels and supplies for 14 months; Lawrence A. Wells, leader of the Calvert Scientific Exploring Expedition (1896), on whose expedition part of the team and the camels were lost forever; David W. Carnegie, fascinated by camels, who purchased several at his own expense in order to explore the West Australian goldfields between Coolgardie and the Kimberleys (1894 and 1896); Davidson, also looking for gold, who chose nine sturdy animals to carry men and provisions (1900), etc.

With the growing need in Australia for exploration and development, the demand for pack and draft camels increased. After Elder, a number of camel importers combined breeding stations with transport companies and the initially limited number of camels increased enormously in proportion to the growth of organized transport.

By the turn of the century the Australian continent had been almost entirely explored but the role of the camel was far from over. For two more decades camels remained the best way of transporting cargo. For example, camels worked for the heroic party which installed the first transcontinental telegraph cable, the Overland Telegraph Line (OTL), between Adelaide and Darwin. In 1908-10, they assisted in the construction of the Canning Stock Route between Wiluna and the Kimberleys and, from 1912-17, the transcontinental railway line from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie. They were also widely used in boring wells and setting up miles of rabbit and dingo proof fences.

The use of camels flourished from 1880 onwards after the discovery of gold in Western Australia and other minerals in Queensland. They also served the needs of settlers and cattle stations. As recognized routes between fixed points were established, the camel trains ceased to move at random as they had during the explorations. Regular routes were established and loads differed between the outward and the return journeys. Heavy material, basic supplies and provisions were carried to mining, agricultural or forest centers and to the remote cattle stations; ore, bales of wool, wheat and wood were brought back to railheads or depots.

The 1920s however, saw the introduction of modern facilities; lorries, other motor vehicles and railways replaced the slower camel caravans. As a result, camel-breeding stations and transport companies became obsolete. McKnight described how the camel-owners, facing bankruptcy, were forced to shoot a number of animals and free others in order to rid themselves of their expensive herds. He ends his story of the domesticated camel in Australia with a poignant account of the thousands of feral camels, viz. "reverted to wild existence," wandering alone in the Australian deserts today.14

Thus, the chapter of the camel caravans ended.
3. The Cameleers

The history of the life and times of the domesticated camel in Australia is closely associated with that of the cameleers who handled them and whose bread-winners they were for a long time. The cameleers provided the first known contacts between Afghanistan and Australia.

In 1860 the first cameleers arrived. There were three and two are known by name: Dost Mahomet (Dost Mohammed) and Belooch (Baluch). They walked to Karachi where they boarded the Chinsurah and reached Melbourne on 9 June, 1860. Six years later a second group of 31 men came, accompanying Elder and Stuckey's camels. They also walked to Karachi, boarded the Blackwell to Port Augusta and then walked to Elder's station where they were assigned to care for the herd.

As soon as they arrived in Australia these cameleers were called Afghans and the name stuck. Probably most of them came from Afghanistan or northern India. Those recruited by Landells and Stuckey naturally called themselves Afghans since they were members of Afghan tribes from Qandahar, Herat, the North West Frontier - especially Peshawar, Punjab and Quetta. From the ethnic point of view the term "Afghan" is applied to numerous Pashto-speaking tribes, Pashto being an Iranian language spoken by 10 to 12 million people. Geographically the Afghan tribes live in a vast mountainous area which includes the south and east of present day Afghanistan and stretches to the Indus River in Pakistan. In the 19th century this region constituted the floating north-west limit of the British Empire of India where these tribes, characterized by a nomadic way of life, moved about quite freely. It is noteworthy that they did not give up their freedom even though in 1893 a political and artificial frontier divided their territory and separated the new Afghan state from British India. (When the news reached Australia that Emir Abd ur-Rahman [1880-1901] had founded, unified and organized an Afghan state [1893 - delimitation of the boundaries] it aroused a burst of patriotic feelings among "the Afghan colony of Australia." The letter of congratulations they sent to the Emir when, in 1896, he received the title, "Light of the Nation and Religion [Zeyā ul-mellat w-ad-din]" was reported by Martin as evidence of their enthusiasm. In the same letter they also asked the Emir to intervene with the Government of British India to obtain exemptions from the immigration taxes imposed on all Asians by the Australian Government.

The majority of Australians had no appreciation of the ethnic diversity of the cameleers and attached the name "Afghan" en bloc to everyone who came from any Indian port, whose external appearance with turbans and "floating costumes" confounded the un-acustomed eye, particularly those who were accompanied by camels destined for the desert.

The ethnic diversity of the cameleers is illustrated by the reports from Musakhan (of whom we shall see more later), dated 1905 and 1906 (40 years after the first arrivals), listing contributors to the Perth mosque. The report was methodically organized according to ethnic and tribal origins. In the first report out of 204 contributors - all named - over 100 Afghans belonging to the following tribes and sub-tribes were listed: "Durranie" (Dorranī), 15 names; "Solayman Khel" (Solaymān-khēl) - 9 names and "Kharotie" (Kharōti) from the big Ghelzay tribe of southeastern Afghanistan - 6; "Kakarī" (Kākarī) - 5 and "Fareen (Tārin) from northern Baluchistan - 4; "Tokhī" (Tōkhi) - 2; "Nassir" (Nasir) - 1; "Baburāh" (Bābarāh) - 1; Mohmand - 5 "Shinwāri" (Shenwārī) - 1 and "Kohāie (Kohātī) - 3, tribes in the Khyber Pass vicinity; "Minānī" (Manānī) - 4, "Daftanie" (Daftānī) - 1, "Laghmanī" - 2 and "Maykhel" (Miyān-khēl) - 2. The main group, the "Pishorie Afghans" or Afghans from Peshawar, numbered 45 names. The 1906 report extended the 1905 list adding some Afrīdī, Bangash and Banūchi, all originating south of the Khyber Pass.
These reports also indicate that there were a large number of non-Afghan cameleers who were natives of various parts of western India, Baluchistan especially, Rajputana, Sind, Punjab, Makran and Bengal. The 1905 list included a number of them divided into "Baloach" (Baluch) - 16 names, "Punjabi Indians" - 15 and "Hindoo and Sikh Indians" - 6; the 1906 list added some Makrani, a Cingalese a Brahui, a Persian and a Malay from Singapore, etc. Ten years later, in a letter addressed from Perth to Kabul, most names listed were known to belong to Baluch communities in Sind. 20

In spite of communication problems news of the success of the cameleers and the sterling performances of the camels in Australia soon elicited a response. The success set in motion a second wave of immigrants. Those who had a little money and some initiative decided to take advantage of the situation by conducting their own caravans; others concluded working contracts with a carrier. All of them came by sea to Australia with groups of camels and landed either on the west coast at Fremantle or Port Hedland, or on the south coast at Port Augusta. The fact that they came into contact with the foreigners at the British military garrisons in India may have contributed to their decision to depart for Australia. They would have heard about long voyages and, being already nomadic by nature, it is likely that they were tempted by adventure as well as by money.

One of the first cameleers to make a name for himself in the camel transport business was one Abdul Wade (Abd ul-Wahed) who originated in the Quetta district. From an interview he gave in Port Augusta to The Age, a Melbourne daily, we learn that he understood the opportunities existing in Australia and that he arrived on the continent in 1879 with a number of camels. 21 He settled in the goldfield area near Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. He must have made his fortune quickly and then moved on. At the time of the interview he owned many animals, pack-camels, milk-camels and she-camels, and headed a transport business, the Bourke Carrying Company, at Bourke, NSW. According to the History of Bourke his office was on the outskirts of town and his stud farm was on the Wanaaring road, at Wangamana station. 22 Each time he had to buy and import camels he would contact his "agents in Rajputana, Beluchistan and Afgahnistan" (sic); they would select the animals and bring them to Karachi where Abd ul-Wahed would meet them and bring the camels to Australia. In 1892-93 he imported about 750 animals and planned to buy still more. The cost of an adult camel in those days was 40 pounds. After a 90-day quarantine period at Port Augusta, the camels would be loaded with goods (which would be sold along the way) and head for Bourke, covering the 750 miles in about 30 days. As soon as they arrived the animals, already under contract, would be loaded for their trek to the outback. Abd ul-Wahed's caravans served much of South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland, particularly the Paroo Valley. Success brought Abd ul-Wahed respect and he often acted as spokesman for his less powerful compatriots against rival cameleers and the local government. At one time he had 60 compatriots among his camel drivers who were hired for three years for three pounds a month. One of them, Bye Khan (Bay Khan) led a 50 camel string, had fought in the Second Anglo-Afghan War in 1879-80 and reputedly was over 100 years old when he died at Bourke in 1947. 23

Documents provide some figures about the number and dates of successive arrivals which permit one to define the rhythm of movement. From 1860 (Burke and Wills) to 1907, the date of the last important arrival of 500 camels on the Century at Port Hedland, there was continuous traffic between the Indian sub-continent and Australia. The year 1887 alone, for example, saw "120 native drivers" disembark in September from the Abergeldie at Fremantle. 24 The next month "44 Afghan drivers" arrived on the Yeoman. 25 The official number of "393 Afghans" given by the 1901 census is said to be the maximum ever reached: "In 1901, 393 Afghans were recorded in Australia. Since then they have steadily decreased. In 1911, 295 were recorded, 6 being females, and in 1921, 147, including 3 females." 26
These figures require a word of comment. As we do not know the sources nor to whom the figures were applied, we wonder again what is implied by the term "Afghan." Did it mean the number of arrivals registered by some port authority police or the number of residents in a particular state? In any case, the Afghan population was decreasing.

Attendance at the great mosque in Adelaide during Ramazan indicated the same decline. There were "over 80 Afghans" in 1890 and "67 turbaned residents in Adelaide" in 1894, noted the daily Observer.27 But there were only "a handful of worshippers" in 1939 and "only two worship in the mosque now in 1950."28

As a matter of course the geographical distribution of the cameleer population on the Australian continent was subject to market demand. From 1880 onwards the goldfields attracted people the way a magnet attracts iron. Western Australia had the greatest density of Afghans and continued to have it as long as camels were needed to haul cargo.

"In January 1903 six Indian camel owners and drivers in Perth took the unusual step of petitioning the Viceroy of India on behalf of the 500-odd natives of India and Afghanistan resident in Western Australia." Reports for the same region up to the end of 1906 mention about 300 contributors to the mosque out of a total of "400 members residing in different parts of this State."29 In 1914 at Broken Hill, Sayyed Jalâl Shâh spoke of "200 persons of whom some are with families," in reference to "Afghan Muslims."30 In 1915 the same Sayyed estimated the number of "Afghans" living in Australia to be 700.31 There were few if any newcomers after 1910.

Only a study of Australian birth registration records will reveal the pertinent data about another group of people, the first generation of cameleers born on Australian soil of non-Afghan mothers and Asiatic fathers. It is likely that they followed their fathers' profession and religion and were probably included in the above-mentioned figures. A few burials of children bearing Muslim names dating as far back as 1896 suggest that the descendants of mixed marriages were increasing. However, English soon became the language of communication and today the descendants of the early pioneers are probably integrated into Australian society, their origin only a far off memory if not lost.

Since the cameleers were born nomads they had no great difficulties in acclimatizing themselves for the long desert crossings and were content with few material comforts. At each stop they formed a group which came to be known as a "Ghan camp" or "Ghan town," since the word Afghan was shortened to Ghan. Often situated on the outskirts of town and populated according to times and seasons, these camps were located on all main caravan tracks "at Cloncurry and Dutchess in Queensland; Bourke, Wilcannia and Broken Hill in New South Wales; Port Augusta, Lyndhurst, Farina, Hergott Springs, Oodnadatta and Tarcoola in South Australia; Alice Springs in the Northern Territory and Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, Wiluna, Meekatharra and Marble Bar in Western Australia."32

Their real difficulties came from elsewhere. First was the language problem. Most of them knew only their own language, Pashto, Hindustani, Baluchi, Sindi, often a little Persian as well. They did not know English and did not always learn it as fluently as the man Martin referred to as an Afghan back from Australia whom he met in Kabul: "He spoke English like an Australian, and his language was interlarded with oaths which sounded queerly from the lips of a typical Afghan."33 In situations of conflict the cameleers usually had to use an interpreter or one of their group who had some knowledge of English and some social standing.
Their profession also hindered their acceptance. At the beginning, competition between camels and Australian bullocks led to hostility. Later, when the camel prevailed and the Australians started their own companies, the rivalries were exacerbated. Quarrels sometimes exploded on the road. McKnight listed the reasons for the disputes which included the lower wages accepted by the "Afghans," the "low standard of health and sanitation of their camels," "the overstocking of common paddocks with camels, largely owned and managed by Afghans." In the 1890s, for example, the situation became serious when the Queensland Australian carriers petitioned the authorities and demanded that the "Afghan" cameleers be excluded from the state. Nothing happened.

Hired cameleers were not spared either. Many recruited by Australian transport companies were in difficulty soon after their arrival. As early as 1882 "a party of Afghans at Baltana" was reported out of work and, in 1888, so was another at Farina. Often, following attacks of mange - the most common disease among camels which caused disastrous losses - an employer was no longer in a position to honor his contracts. Consequently cameleers were summarily dismissed and found themselves penniless. Such a fate awaited 23 camel handlers who landed in September 1887 at Fremantle; their case was referred to the local government and mentioned in the press. The men did not accept repatriation but insisted on being sent to South Australia where, in the Port Augusta quarantine center, they thought they would have a better chance of finding jobs.

Many cameleers had to find a way of making a living after their contracts expired. Some made for the city. In Adelaide, for instance, the mosque was known to be a refuge for the poor where "they were provided with food and shelter." Some became hawkers, travelling on foot from place to place; others did odd jobs. Musakhani's list gives an idea of the sedentary occupations in Perth: drapers, shopkeepers, merchants, two tailors, one gardener, two watchmen, one herbalist and a champion wrestler originating from the Punjab.

Because their routes led the cameleers across the whole continent, death could be expected in the most isolated and remote areas. "Some lie buried in a little cemetery south of the highway where it crosses Anabranche." Those who passed away in camps or towns were sometimes honored with tombstones and traces of these still exist. The register of Adelaide West Terrace Cemetery records about 30 "Islamic burials, the greater part of them involving Afghans or their descents," between 1896 and 1950 and "where grave stones are mentioned, epitaphs are in Arabic script." The Broken Hill cemetery register gives the names of nine cameleers buried there between 1919 and 1952; eleven other names, inscribed in Latin characters, appear on tombstones in the Muslim section of the same cemetery among a great number of anonymous, neglected graves.

The great Bejah Dervish died at Marree in 1957. A plaque commemorating one Sayyed Omar who dies at Cloncurry in 1915 was erected by his compatriots. A few other names are recorded at Bourke cemetery. As for Dost Mohammad, the very first cameleer, his tomb is now part of the tourist center at Menindee, New South Wales.

Most of the cameleers came alone leaving their families behind. If any women ever arrived, they were exceptions and nothing yet confirms "in 1911, 295 Afghans were recorded, 6 being females." Many cameleers remained single. Others married Australian women of various origins including Europeans and Aborigines. These women did not necessarily convert to Islam as did Mohammad Alam's young wife or Bibi Fatima of British origin and Bibi Zaynab of French origin; these are the only ones we know of.
Old cameleers faced the dilemma of whether or not to return home. Those who kept some contact - if only through sending a little money to their families - went back. If married, they took along their Australian wives. Thus, around 1946 in the region of Parachinar in the Kurran Tribal Agency of the NWFP, we are told that there were a number of Australian wives. 45 What little is known of the links the cameleers kept with their homeland comes from the account of British engineer Frank A. Martin, who lived some years in Afghanistan. Martin met a Qandahari in Kabul who had returned to Afghanistan after 30 years in Australia. This man had always wished to die in his own country and actually did so two years later. But we may well believe, with Martin, that after so many years of living in a totally different manner, readjustment by Afghan males to their original milieu was difficult. 46

The general influx of foreigners during the 19th century forced the Australian Government to regulate and limit immigration, particularly immigration from Asia. We learn that "small numbers of Afghans...entered...Australia...but never in quantities sufficient to cause concern or to make necessary the enacting of special restrictive legislation." 47 Nevertheless, like other Asiatics, the pioneers had to pay an immigration tax. The problem of the precise identity or nationality under which each cameleer entered Australia has yet to be scrutinized. There are, however, grounds for supposing that the Australian Government later treated them differently according to whether they originated in British India or Afghanistan.

As far as we can tell, neither of the first two cameleers, both originating from Qandahar, ever succeeded in becoming a "naturalized British subject." The case of one Faiz Mahomet (Fayz Mohammad) is significant. He arrived in Australia in 1866 as a handler of Elder and Stuckey's camels; he stayed in South Australia until 1892 when he decided to form his own transport company in Western Australia. His business, which his brother Tagh Mahomed (Táj Mohammad) joined as a partner, prospered and served many depots in the goldfields. But in spite of repeated applications for naturalization submitted from 1896 onward over a period of 30 years residence, he was never allowed to become a citizen. 48 Mahomet Allum (Mohammad Alam) who lived in Adelaide was no more successful. Born in Qandahar in the mid-19th century, Mohammad Alam arrived in Australia about 1900. 49 For 20 years a cameleer he was forced to find other employment and he settled in Adelaide as a herbalist and healer. He was universally consulted and praised for his generosity as well as his cures. Interviewed often by the press, he spoke highly of his medicine which, he said, was in harmony with the Islamic tradition. He printed, at his own expense, pamphlets exalting Islam and often tried to convert his patients. His most famous convert was a young Australian woman whom he claimed to have cured of tuberculosis and whom he married in 1939. He was already an old man and she was not yet 20. They had a daughter named Nora (from Nur "light" in Arabic) in 1941. The press took note of this remarkable man who wore a turban, dressed in European fashions of studied elegance and wore diamond rings on his fingers. His booming practice had earned him a considerable fortune which was noted with admiration. 50 In 1953 he returned to Afghanistan where his wife died of small pox; he later set out again for Australia with his daughter. 51 On the way he stopped in Bombay, entrusted Nora to some friends, and went alone on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Back in Australia he bought a beautiful house and resumed his practice until he died in 1964. Unfortunately he had quarreled with his daughter so his will left everything to charity. He is said to have been a generous contributor to the Kabul Review, the publication of the Kabul Cercle Literaire. In 1937 the Review published a notice about him entitled "An Afghan Doctor Abroad" together with his portrait as a token of homage. 52

From time to time the Australian press carried short news items about the camel and about the cameleers Muslim colonies. For whether Afghan, Indian or Baluch, the cameleers were all Muslims with the exception of a few who will not be considered
Articles appeared on Islamic religious holidays such as the end of Ramazan or the Feast of Sacrifices. These articles gave general explanations about the religious observances and described the newly built Australian mosques. Thanks to these articles, to Musakhan’s book about the Perth mosque and to letters sent to Kabul from Australia by a Muslim correspondent, one can clearly imagine the vitality of Islam at its beginning in Australia. The cameleers were not long in setting up mosques in several of their camps. A special place for daily prayers was not necessarily required but one was needed for Friday religious duties and for holiday celebrations. Places of worship were erected at Cloncurry in Northern Queensland, at Broken Hill in New South Wales, at Marree and Oodnadatta in South Australia and in the western parts. Whether they were improvised frame buildings or more elaborate constructions, these mosques indicated the direction of Holy Mecca and functioned as a link uniting the transplanted Muslims.

Few of the cameleers had the essential background necessary to maintain this link with any strength. To fill this need various groups consulted together to discuss the means whereby they could invite someone from the homeland to join them. They desired someone with a good religious knowledge who could lead prayers and spread the word of Islam in addition to being able to travel on request throughout the continent. Sayyed Jalâl Shâh, who arrived in Australia in 1914, fulfilled these wishes. Sayyed Jalâl Shâh was descended on both sides of his family from descendants of the Prophet Mohammad. He was the son of Sayyed Hasan, son of Sayyed Mir Ahmad who came from Bombay. On his mother’s side he was the grandson of Sayyed Mewâ Shâh from Afghanistan whose tomb is one of the most visited holy shrines in Karachi. Jalâl Shâh was born in Karachi and came to Australia at the age of 30. There he is first encountered at Cloncurry where he gave a sermon and conducted prayers at the festival held at the end of Ramazan in August 1914. He appeared next at Broken Hill for a delayed celebration of the same feast - the two towns being "15 days travelling apart, three days by water and 12 by train." The "Muslims" and the "Afghans" of Broken Hill raised 25 pounds for his travelling expenses - first class.

The Broken Hill mosque has often been described. Like the others, it was deserted in the 1920s, but, unlike the others which almost all disappeared or closed down, it was restored in 1968. Built in 1891, it was the oldest mosque in the outback and almost contemporary with the Adelaide mosque. It was made of wood, had a galvanized iron roof, and was painted red. Its size reflected the heyday of the local community which Sayyed Jalâl Shâh estimated at 200 people in 1914.

The mosque at Marree (formerly Hergott Springs) reflected a once flourishing cameleer colony. The description we have dates from 1948 when the building seemed shut in spite of the presence in the town of two venerable Muslim camelmen. The Marree mosque was made of pise, viz. pressed clay mixed with straw, and covered with a corrugated iron roof "with a shadowy verandah." "In front of it was a large tamped earth pit, reinforced with timber, where ritual ablutions were once made... Inside... a shaft of sunlight lit up cool blue walls and green mats on the floor... On the walls hung four colored prints, depicting holy scenes - including one of the spires of Mecca. Upon a low stool in an alcove facing east was the Koran, carefully wrapped in colored silk..." Mosques were built in three large commercial cities on the coast. Although we know nothing of the Brisbane mosque, we are fairly well acquainted with those in Perth and Adelaide because of the documents mentioned above. Furthermore, they still stand almost unchanged and have never stopped functioning, albeit not always with the same affluence.
The mosque in Adelaide, located in Little Gilbert Street, off Sturt Street, is the oldest mosque in Australia. The building was started in 1889 and completed a year later. In 1915, Sayyed Jalāl Shāh described it as a place that 25 years of active life have turned into a home for the faithful. The edifice, he wrote, is made of "baked stones (sang-e pokhta)" (sic) a striking and necessarily precise description for one who, like his readers in Afghanistan, was familiar with mud rather than hard constructions. Two minarets high enough to be seen from a distance adorned the facade, one on each side of the main door. In the yard there was a basin for ablutions before prayers, a garden with a plot of grass where the congregation could assemble, fig trees and vineyard. Construction costs were about 3,000 pounds and another 500 had to be raised to build the adjoining school.

Who presided over the Adelaide mosque is not yet known but a caretaker was employed to see to the building and ensure a friendly welcome. The names of Hadji Mollah (Hajji Molla), Sid Goolamaeleen (Sayyed Gholam Ali) and Mr. Khoda Box (Khoda Bakhsh?) are recorded as those fulfilling this function. In 1953, Ahmad Skaka, a Yugoslav, was officially appointed imam of the Adelaide mosque.

The project to construct a mosque at Perth dates back to 1895 but the mosque was not begun until 1904 when land in the heart of town, William Street at the corner of Robinson Avenue, was purchased. A Muslim named Din Mahomed (Din Mohammad) was instructed to draw up a plan. This plan, approved by the city council, included a prayer room, an entrance hall, an assembly room, a pond for ablutions and lodgings for transients. The first stage of the building was completed at the end of 1906. It comprised the prayer room, "a brick cottage of 3 rooms and a kitchen with an open meeting hall." The foundation stone bears the precise date, 13 November 1905/13 Ramazan 1323, in Persian and English on two plates affixed to the entrance gate.

The necessity of collecting large amounts of money compelled the promoters of the mosque to travel all over western Australia. Faiz Mahomet (Fayz Mohammad) was said to be the most efficient fund raiser and his departure in June 1906 was a blow to the enterprise. An appeal was made to "Mohammedan princes, nobles, and merchants, and other gentlemen of all ranks, positions and professions outside the Commonwealth of Australia." Since it was necessary to guarantee a regular income for future up-keep, the imam and the distribution of religious pamphlets, the two plots adjoining the mosque were mortgaged.

Those instrumental in starting the Perth mosque, besides Fayz Mohammad, were Hoffiz Mohammad Hayat (Hafez Mohammad Hayat) who, like Fayz, was a merchant; Nathoo Mohamed (Nazar? Mohammad), a tailor, and Mohamed Hasan Musakhan (Mohammad Hasan Musâ Khan), our informant, a "Newsagent, Bookseller and Stationer."

M.H. Musakhan was one of the pillars of the Muslim community in Western Australia. This is evidenced by the energy he devoted to constructing and organizing the Perth mosque in the first quarter of this century and to the guidance he offered to hundreds of Muslims scattered throughout the country whom he occasionally gathered together. Musakhan was the nephew of one K.B. Morad Khan from Karachi who was, he said, the first camel exporter to Australia. Musakhan was descended from an Afghan family of the Tarin tribe settled in Sind and was born in Karachi on May 30, 1863. He won a scholarship to Karachi University in 1883 and one in Bombay in 1887. He worked as a drawing teacher (1889-90) in Shikarpur in Sind and as a schoolmaster (1890-92) in Kandiaro. He knew five languages: English, Pashtô, Urdu, Persian, Sindhi and a little Arabic. In Australia he took a prominent part in the
affairs of the cameleer colony. In 1896 he was their representative at the inauguration of the Coolgardie railway. Until at least 1928, the date of the last document referring to his activities, he held a position of trust and appeared as a prominent figure. The letters of thanks addressed to Musakhan from many places abroad attest to this. His name was widely mentioned as a representative of the cameleers, the Indian community and the Muslim community including the Ahmadiya community of Qadyan. He travelled extensively at the service of these groups (Adelaide in 1918-19 and Kalgoorlie in 1921) and even went to India in 1911 to represent the groups at the celebration of the Coronation of George V. Little is known about his personal life except that he had one son and two daughters.

Under the title of "The Mohammedan Mosque" the Perth mosque was made a legal entity under the "Associations' Incorporation Act, 1895, West Australia" and on August 9, 1906 an eight member committee was elected. Anwar Kakad (Anwar Kâkar) was named president. Three series of 'rules and regulations governed the mosque's operations. The first was approved on August 26, 1906 and included nine clauses; the second, more elaborate, had 23 clauses and dated from March 30, 1921. It mentioned four new trustees. Both sets appeared in Musakhan's book. The "Constitution of the Perth Mosque, Incorporated" has no date but post-dated the 1921 rules and pre-dated January 1924. There are two amendments, one of which mentions Pakistan, and thus indicates a much later period.

The description of the mosque we have is from Sayyed Jalâl Shâh who gives a profusion of details showing his surprise at confronting a type of construction with which he was not familiar. In the two-floor building the French windows had polychrome glass, decorated inner and outer walls and electric lighting so that the mosque shone from a distance. The decorated mehrah indicated the direction of Mecca. A pond and several clumps of roses and hyacinths were in the garden. According to Musakhan in 1906, the land cost 680 pounds and the building nearly 1,000. Ten years later Jalâl Shah reported the cost to be, after additional construction but not including the Koranic school, 4,900 pounds.

As in Adelaide, the building of a Koranic school or madrasa was planned from the very beginning but it did not materialize until 1915. In that year, a certain Mawlawi Molîa Yâr Mohammad acted as headmaster of the madrasa, imâm at the mosque and president of the trustees. Sons of all Muslim residents of Perth were allowed to take lessons at the madrasa twice a day, after the morning and noon prayers.

However, in Australia, Afghans and Indians were having their problems, particularly over the operation of the Perth mosque. Musakhan reported that the foundation stone laying ceremony in 1905 was presided over by a Dorrâni Afghan, Fayz Mohammad, and a Punjabi Indian, Hâfez Mohammad Hayât. It was after Fayz Mohammad left Perth in June 1906 that a disagreement "betweenthe Afghan and the Indian communities over the management of the mosque affairs" was revealed. The disagreement was said to be because the mosque administration was in the hands of the Afghan community "to the exclusion of the other Mohammedan communities." The parties eventually reached a settlement when the two groups proposed that "His Majesty the Ameer of Afghanistan shall be appointed as Trustee of the said mosque and all lands and properties connected therewith." The Emir referred to was Abd ur-Rahmân's eldest son, Habibullah (1901-1919) who began his reign a few months after the Commonwealth of Australia was officially proclaimed. This was the period in Australia when the cameleer population attained its full vitality and its religious life was organized, particularly around the new Perth mosque. From 1911 to 1918 the first important Afghan periodical, Serâj ul-akhbâr (The Torch of News), was published and it was read far beyond the Afghan frontiers where it won fame for
its support of Muslim minorities. We know it reached Australia because Sayyed Jalâl Shâh thanked the editor, "Sardâr Mahmûd Khân Šâheb Tarzî" for the periodical and encouraged his friends, both rich and poor, to buy it. Sayyed Jalâl Shâh's first letter to Serâj ul-akbâr was published in November, 1914 and his last, from Australia, in January 1916.

Sayyed Jalâl Shâh recounted that at the 1914 Ramazan Festival he directed prayers for "the progress of Islam," for the Emir of Afghanistan and for the people (ahâli) of Afghanistan. In his sermon, Jalâl Shâh also spoke of sympathy (hamdârdû) with the Emir. Jalâl Shâh, born in Sind but "originating from Afghanistan," used a fluent but often colloquial Persian and was the champion of all Afghans in Australia, not only those in Perth. In one of his letters he reproved his compatriots from Sind and Baluchistan for their lack of religious zeal and praised "the Afghan civilization" which, he said, was well represented in Australia by the mosques at Brisbane, Hergott Springs, Broken Hill, Adelaide and Perth. In this letter and in others he considered the Afghans from Afghanistan as his only responsible communicants; so much so that in addition to exchanging news with people in Afghanistan he submitted an account of the financial difficulties besetting the Australian mosques - as well as the solutions he recommended - to the judgement of Mahmûd Tarzî and the readers of Serâj ul-akbâr thousands of miles away. Moreover, the expressions "Muslim Afghan serâjiya mosque" and "serâjiya madrasa" came again and again from his pen; serâjiya being the adjective derived from the first word of Emir Habibullah's title, which in Afghanistan specifically characterized all the achievements of the reign.

Financial difficulties were ever present in all the Australian mosques and Sayyed Jalâl Shâh, in 1915, thought the mosque organizations in Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth unsatisfactory since not one of them had a solid financial base. He therefore advocated the adoption of a traditional institution of Islamic jurisprudence, the waqf or mortmain property. He explained that the new system would entail the purchase of well located premises in good repair in the centers of the largest Australian towns with money raised among "all Afghans." After pruchase the premises would be registered with the Australian Government as the inalienable property of the various mosques and, finally, the income from rent would cover the annual operating expenses of the mosques. He said that the project for building a mosque in Sydney should be based on the prior creation of a waqf.

At present it is not possible to examine the whole Muslim population of Australia and we do not know the numbers of non-"Afghan" Muslims using the mosques. One author stated that there were 4,700 Muslims on Australia in 1881 but it is not possible now to analyze that figure. There were other Muslim immigrants in Australia. Musâkhan listed the various communities who frequented the Perth mosque and he ended the list with "Arabs, and other various Mohammedan races." These additions still need to be examined.

Things changed somewhat during the reign of King Amânnûllâh (1919-1928); third son and successor of Habibullah. After a short Anglo-Afghan War (1919) Amânnûllâh declared Afghanistan a totally independent state (until then Britain had controlled Afghanistan's foreign affairs). This period coincided with the decline of the camel's use in Australia. Old cameleers were out of work and the younger ones, of mixed blood, mingled with sedentary Australian society. The third set of by-laws from the Perth mosque dates from this period and article 7b stated that: "So long as any present member of the mosque of Afghan nationality (hereinafter referred to as 'the Afghans') shall be residing in Western Australia one of such Trustees shall be elected by the Afghans voting separately for the election of such Trustee. The other Trustee shall be elected by the members of the mosque who are not of Afghan nationality."

Article 22, the last of the two post-1947 amendments, stated that: "Whenever the word Afghan is used in these rules it shall mean a person irrespective of his place of birth whose parents, both father and mother, are Afghan of full blood and whose parents resided in Afghanistan or in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan." It excluded the Australian-born generations who could claim only an Afghan father or grandfather from becoming head of the mosque.
Today Australians still remember the camels and the cameleers and one need not look far to find marks of their presence. For example, there are these place names listed by the Peekens in the chapter "Gazetter (sic) of Australian Place Names":

"Bejah Hill, W.A. (3901)
Wells, Lawrence Allen; 22.8.1896. 'After the faithful Bejah, who has proved himself a splendid fellow and an excellent camelman' (An Afghan who was in charge of the camels on this expedition).

Halleem, The, N.T. (3376)
Warburton, Col. Peter Egerton; probably 24.4.1873. After the Afghan camel driver of the expedition.

Punjaub (country district), N.T. (3245)
Cadell, Francis; 1.6.1867. So named 'from the similarity of the number of creeks to the great Indian Rivers.'

Sahleh Springs, N.T. (3389)
Warburton, Col Peter Egerton; 16.5.1873. After one of Warburton's Afghan camel drivers.

Saleh Fish Ponds, W.A. (3654)
Giles, Ernest; 26.4.1876. 'After my Afghan camel driver who was really a first-rate fellow, without a lazy bone in his body.' 78

The famous Ghan Express (which links Port Augusta and Alice Springs) may have acquired its name when it began operation in 1923-24 when one or two Ghans, easily recognizable from their turbans and clothing, were seen boarding the train. 79

Additionally, there is a herb called "buffel grass" which was indirectly brought into Australia between 1870 and 1880 when "the species escaped from camel harness imported from India at Wallal about 200 km NE of Port Hedland and from here it spread widely." 80

During the past few years, in its quest for entertaining and sensational news, the Australian mass media has revived the story of the "ship of the desert" and its use in the country. Interviews with people with the vaguest of memories are published; color photographs of camels in the bush appear on post cards; special programs are televised 81 and tourist agencies organize expeditions to the reserves of Central Australia. At Alice Springs there is an Afghan Camel Driver Association 82 and a Camel Cup. 83

At least two organizations have gathered small collections of items recalling the camel-driver era: The Broken Hill Historical Society, founded in 1965, set up an exhibition in a small room adjacent to the mosque and the Coolgardie Tourist Bureau, Library and Museum provide information to visitors.

Currently several Islamic associations exist in several parts of the country and new mosques are being built, and planned, in many towns. 84 Centrally located mosques continue to thrive supported by new waves of Muslim immigrants. Regarding the project begun in 1976 to build an Afghan Memorial Hall near the Adelaide mosque (mentioned at the beginning of this paper), the Australian Information Service reported on October 6, 1977 that "... building plans have been suspended because many members of South Australia's Moslem community feel that the number of devotees of the religion are growing so rapidly as to make these plans obsolete before they can be put into effect."
Notes

1 Australian Information Service, Canberra, 25.V.1976.

2 T.L. McKnight, The Camel in Australia, Melbourne, 1969


4 F.A. Martin, Under the absolute Imam, London, 1907

5 Seraj ul-akhbar (The Torch of News), Kabul, 4th & 5th years, 1914-1915.

6 Libraries sent references and photocopied material, other institutions kindly answered various questions, individuals helped with their knowledge of the subject. We are grateful to them all: The National Library of Australia, Canberra, ACT; The J.S. Battye Library of West Australia, Perth; The State Library of South Australia, Adelaide; The State Library of New South Wales or Mitchell Library, Sydney; The Charles Rasp Memorial Library, Broken Hill, NSW; the John Oxley Library, Brisbane; The Waite Agricultural Research Institute of the University of Adelaide; the Bourke and District Historical Society; the Coolgardie Ghost Mining Town Tourist Bureau; the Cloncurry Police Station; K.A. Badr, Imam of the Perth mosque; Br.M. Bambridge (NSW); B.T. Cash (Vic.); A. Coulls (SA); Rev. A.T. Fitzpatrick (SA); W.N. Scott (Queensland); the late Br. A. Sellenger (WA); A. Skaka, Imam of the Adelaide mosque; and P.S. Sterck, superintendent of the West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide.

We owe a special debt to E.T. Joyce from Warradale, SA, the very first correspondent who answered our advertisement in the Adelaide daily Advertiser; and to Br. Cletus Howley, the only person we get to know personally. We met in Kabul in 1972 and he was the initiator of our correspondence to Australia. Thanks to his interest and wide knowledge we were put in contact with the right private informants and the proper public sources.


8. New South Wales (1788, Sydney), South Australia (1834, Adelaide), Victoria (1851, Melbourne), Queensland (1859, Brisbane), Western Australia (1890, Perth), Tasmania.


11. Argus (Melbourne), 11 June 1860; and Morehead, Cooper's Creek, London, 1963, pp.38ss.

12. A. Morehead, op.cit.


14. McKnight, chap. 5 and 6; and H.M. Barker, Camels and the Outback, Adelaide, 1972.

15. The Australian Encyclopaedia, Sydney. 1962, gives an article entitled "Afghans in Australia" and another one "Camels."

The National Geographic Magazine, January 1921, p. 97 mentions that "the only
considerable group of Afghans who seem ever to have gotten far from home is a colony of men taken to Australia some years ago for handling camels on the Australian deserts." See also "Camels and Cameleers" in Journal and proceedings, Broken Hill Historical Society, vol. 6. The adventures of Muslim camelmen in Australia were described in another type of record, namely fiction. A good example is by D. Gunn, The Story of Lafsu Beg, about a camel driver who describes his life and times in Australia to Dr. David Gunn, Sydney, Melbourne, no date but likely to have been published around 1910.

For all proper names mentioned hereafter, and some others, see "List of proper names, biographical elements" on p. 21-24.


17 Musakhan, pp. 6-11 and 19-22.
18 Seraj ul-akhbâr, IV, 24, p.8.
19 The Age (Melbourne), 21 January 1893, "Camels in Australia. A visit to the S.A. quarantine station."
20 See Papers on the History of Bourke and district, vol. 4; and Journal and proceedings, Broken Hill Historical Society, vol. 6 (precise reference lacking).
22 West Australian (Perth), 30 September 1887.
23 Id. 25 October, 1887.
26 Press (Adelaide), 15 April 1939; and Advertiser (Adelaide), 27 May 1950.
28 Seraj ul-akhbâr, IV, 6, p.8.
29 Seraj ul-akhbâr, V, 10, p.6.
30 McKnight, p. 70
31 Martin, p. 284.
32 McKnight, pp. 67-69.
33 Police Correspondence Files, Adelaide, 1882/673 and 1888/36.
34 West Australian (Perth), 18 January, 1888.
35 Observer (Adelaide), 4 July, 1891.


40 Personal correspondence, Allan Coulls, Plympton Park, SA, 22 May, 1977. A. Coulls as Broken Hill City Librarian greatly contributed to the establishment, design and set-up of the Archives section at the Charles Rasp Memorial Library. He is now retired after 65 years at Broken Hill. He most generously provided me with very useful information and interesting comments.

41 Personal correspondence, Cloncurry Police Station, 15 Nov., 1976.

42 Personal correspondence, B. Cameron, Research Secretary, Bourke District Historical Society, 25 November 1976.

43 Lyng, p. 187.

44 Serâj ul-akhbâr, IV, 24, p. 7.

45 Personal correspondence, Br. Cletus Howley, 2 August, 1973. (Communication from Father A. Johnson who was a chaplain there in 1945-47.)

46 Martin, pp. 283-284.

47 Australian Encyclopaedia, vol. 5, p. 78 "Immigration."

48 Archives, Battye Library, Perth, which maintains a file on this case.

49 M. Brunato, Mahomet Allum, Leabrook (SA), 1972.

50 Pix (Sydney), vol. 8, no. 20, 15 November 1941, pp. 3-5, mainly photographs.

51 Personal interview with Gholam Ahmad Nawid, 8/76. Gh. A. Nawid who was then the Afghan Consul General in Bombay welcomed Mohammad Alam and family on their way to & from Afghanistan.

52 Majalla-e Kabul (The Kabul Review), 6th year, no. 12, February 1937, p. 86.

53 Musakhan, p. 11, numbered six "Hindoo and Sikh Indians" among the contributors to the Perth mosque.

54 Serâj ul-akhbâr, IV 6, pp. 8-9 (Barakatullah and Sayyed Jalal Shah); IV, 21, pp. 9-10 (Sayyed Jalal Shah); IV, 24, p. 7 (id.); and V, 10, pp. 4-7 (id.).

55 Barrier Miner (Broken Hill), 30 May 1963, with a fine photograph; and Barrier Daily Truth (Broken Hill), 16 September, 1973, with a photograph taken after the restoration of the building.


57 Serâj ul-akhbâr, IV 21, p. 10. Two more minarets were added later as shown on more recent photographs.

58 Observer (Adelaide), 1890, 1891, 1892, 1894.
59 **Advertiser** (Adelaide), 27 May, 1950.

60 Musakhan's book and **Seraj ul-akhbar**, IV, 21, pp. 9-10 provided the following description.

61 It could possibly be the same Fayz Mohammad known for having made vain efforts to become a British subject. (See text p. 9 )

62 Musakhan, pp. 2 & 51.

63 See a photograph reproduced in Brunato, p. 20, with the following caption: "Afghan guard of honour to His Excellency the Governor at the Coolgardie Railway opening."

64 Musakhan, pp. 46-63


67 For full particulars about receipts and expenditures up to 30 Nov., 1906, see Musakhan, pp. 5-11 and 18-27.

68 Musakhan, pp. 30-31.


71 **Serâj ul-akhbâr**, IV, 24, pp. 7-8.

72 **Id.**, V, 10, pp.6-7.

73 T. van Sommers, **Religions in Australia**, Adelaide, 1966, p. 139

74 A few Syrians perhaps in spite of their being "all practically Christians," Yarwood, chap. 8.

75 Musakhan, p.30.

76 **Dupree**, chap. 20, pp. 441-457.

77 **Constitution**, pp. 3 and 11.


80 Personal correspondence, Waite Agricultural Research Institute, Univ. of Adelaide, 20 September, 1976.

81 Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1976 (reference lacking).

82 **Port Hedland Times**, October 11, 1973
83 Advocate (Alice Springs), no date.


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The following list gives only a few of the many names of cameleers recorded in various published and unpublished sources (See Bibliography). These names were chosen when some information about the person was given. Since Australian ears were unfamiliar with Muslin names, the spelling corresponded more or less, and not always happily, to the sounds; the supposedly correct transcription of the spelling is given here between the brackets.

**ABDUL (Abd ul-)** "Afghan camel driver," took part in L.A. Wells' expedition, 1892 (Feeken).

**ABDUL KADIR (Abd ul-Qadir)** "A mile or so outside Marree is a further symbol of what has passed. It is many years since Abdul Kadir died. His name is seldom remembered. Yet he initiated the only commercially successful grove of date palms in Australia. The pise house he built is now worn down to mud walls four feet high or less. Only two of the many palms remained (...) Hence the grove, which once had produced first-class dates, has dwindled to a tattered memorial of one man's initiative and toil." (G. Farwell, "Camel Town")

**ABDUL WADE (Abd ul-Wahed ?)** Leading figure in camel transport. Arrived in Australia in 1879 and after a few years in the West Australian goldfields formed the Bourke Carrying Company at Bourke, NSW. (See text, p. 6)

**ABD ul-WÂHED** Came to Kabul in the 1920's to negotiate the purchase of goldmines in Afghanistan

**AD JOON (Hâdi Jân ?)** Died January 6, 1953 at Bourke, NSW, aged 94.

**ADROMAN KHAN (Abd ur-Rahmân Khan ?)** "Australia's foremost camel-man of recent times and one of the few remaining links with the era of camel transport, left Darwin by air in February 1950 for Karachi, on his way back to Peshawar, where he had been born in a camel camp 78 years before. Adroman Khan has spent 50 years in the Australian interior with camel teams. In 1901 he had a string of 25, used mainly in carrying supplies to Kimberley cattle stations. He dealt in tea, flour, sugar and clothes and in anything else that was needed at the isolated stations at which he called. A few years before leaving Australia he gave his string of 40 camels to a fellow-countryman and set up a trading store at Wave Hill cattle station, NT." (The Australian Encyclopaedia, I, 126; see also Journal and proceedings, Broken Hill Historical Society, vol. 6.)

**AESOP** "Had come to Western Australia from Peshawar in the far north of India. Owner of a big string of camels, he employed many Afghans as drivers, and became well known as a champion wrestler and weight lifter" (Brunato, 19, with a portrait taken in 1894 at Coolgardie, WA). Could be the same champion wrestler, an Afghan from Peshawar, recorded by Musakhan, p. 22, and named Abdul Kadir Shaikh (Sheikh Abd ul-Qadir).

**ALI ACKBAR (Ali Akbar)** Died November 20, 1936 at Broken Hill, NSW, aged 80.

**ANWAR KAKAD or 'APAD (Anwar Kâkar)** Leading member of the Afghan community and chairman of the Perth mosque committee in 1906.
BELOOCH (Baluch), Took part in the Burke and Wills Expedition, 1860.

BARAKATULLÂH, Author of a letter sent from Perth to Kabul in 1914.

BEJAH DERVISH, Born in 1867 in Baluchistan and arrived in Australia in 1891. His courage, generosity and endurance during the Calvert Expedition guaranteed him eternal fame in Australia. He set out with Lawrence Wells in search of two lost explorers; they found them dead in the desert. On his return Bejah Dervish was honored with a reception given by the Adelaide authorities and 50 years later he still enjoyed showing off a precious souvenir that Wells had given him, the compass which had saved both their lives. Until he retired in 1933, Bejah Dervish led his own caravans and had a number of camel drivers working for him. In 1939 he declined Dr. Madigan's invitation to cross the Simpson Desert because of old age. He died in Marree in 1957.

BEJAH, JACK, Son of Bejah Dervish. Participated in Madigan's expedition in 1939.

BIBI FÁTEMA, Wife of an Afghan cameleer. Of British origin and a convert to Islam.

BIBI ZAYNAB, Wife of an Afghan cameleer. Of French origin and a convert to Islam.

BOX KUDAH (Khodâ Bakhsh?), Caretaker of the Adelaide mosque. "Went back to India about 3 years ago [viz. 1972]."

BYE KHAN (Bay Khán ?), Manager of Abd ul-Wahed's Bourke Carrying Company. Died June 9, 1947 at Bourke, NSW.

CHEIKH WILLIE (Shér Ali ?), Took part in Lewis' expedition, 1875. (Peeken)

DIN MOHAMED (Din Mohammad), "An Indian gentleman." Architect of the Perth mosque.

DOST MAHOMET (Dóst Mohammad), "A Pathan from Kashmir." Took part in the Burke and Wills Expedition, 1860. Buried at Menindee, NSW.

DOST MOHAMMAD (Dóst Mohammad), "A well-known and wealthy Afghan called Dost Mohammad was killed in a brawl at Port Hedland (...) Dost Mohammad was greatly missed in the north-west, being a good businessman and leader of all the Afghans." Had an Italian wife (Barker, 98-99).

FAIZ MAHOMET (Fayz Mohammad), Born in Qandahar. Merchant and camel proprietor first in South Australia, then in West Australia. (Text, p 9).

FAIZ MAHOMET (Fayz Mohammad), Afghan, Dorrani. Active member of the Perth mosque. Left for India in 1906 (Text, p 11).

GANNY KHAN (Ghani Khan), Owner of a carrying company at Bourke, NSW.

GOOLAM FAIZ MAHOMED (Gholam Fayz Mohammad) Trustee of the Perth mosque (Constitution, 3).

GOOLAM JOHN (Gholám Jân), Died September 17, 1910 at Broken Hill, NSW., aged 33.

GOULAM MOHAMMED (Gholâm Mohammad), "At Coolgardie in 1896 an Afghan named Goulam Mohammad murdered another called Tagh and then gave himself up (...) That is the only instance I heard of an Afghan committing a serious crime." (Barker, 97)

GOULAM ROUSEL (Gholám Rasul), Member of the Adelaide mosque (Brunato, 29).
GOOL MAHOMET (Gol Mohammad), Died in May 1950 in Adelaide (Advertiser 5/27/50).

HADJI MOLLÁ (Hâjji Mollá), Caretaker of the Adelaide mosque in the 1890s.

HALLEEM (Halim), Took part in both the Warburton and the Lewis expeditions in the 1870s.

HOFFIZ MOHAMAD HAYAT (Háfez Mohammad Hayat), Indian, Punjabi. Merchant and proprietor of the "Busy Bee" Drapery Establishment in Perth. Trustee of the Perth mosque in 1905.

KHAN, E.A. Ted; Born 1907, died 28 January 1976 at Broken Hill. Was always interested in sport such as boxing, foot-running, billiards (personal correspondence).

KHANZADA (Khân-zâda), "Riding a bull-camel, shortly before WWI, Khanzada is reputed to have carried the mail from Broken Hill to Wilcannia - a distance of 120 miles - in one day" (R.H.B. Kearns, "Broken Hill"). Had a son Gool Zada and a daughter Miriam.

MAHOMET ALLUM (Mohammad Alam), Born in Qandahar, died in Adelaide in 1964 (Text, p. ).

MOLADAD (Mawlâ-Dâd), Preceded Bejah Dervish as head of the camel-driver community and led prayers at the local mosque. Died after 1948 at Marree, SA.

MORAD KHAN, K.B. (Morâd Khan), Camel exporter from Karachi to Australia in the 1860s.


MUSA KHAN Kara-khêl, Originated from Ghurghushti, Punjab. Went to Australia in 1888. As camel proprietor had his trade registered in 1906 by the name of M.K. Camels and purchased land in North Broken Hill in 1911. His brother Enayatullâh and 3 other camel handlers originating from the same village worked with him. In 1932 came back to his village where he died in 1958 (Personal correspondence, Mohammad Ahsan Khân Kara-khêl, 1978-1980. M. Ahsan is Musa Khan's grandson; he kindly sent us a number of his grandfather's original documents as well as valuable information for which we are very grateful).

NATHOO MOHAMED (Nazar ? Mohammad), Indian Punjabi. Trustee of the Perth mosque, 1905.

NAZARE (Nazar), Took part in Lewis' expedition, 1875. (Feeken).


NUR MAHOMMET (Nur Mohammad), "Nurie for short." J. Bejah's assistant in Madigan's expedition, 1939.

OMRAH (Omar), "An Afghan identity at Wyndhan in the far north-west of Australia, in 1925 at the age of 100. A year later he returned to Afghanistan. Picture from The Battye Library, Perth" (Caption of a fine portrait published in Australia Now, Vol. 6, nr. 4, 1977, p.31).
SADADDIN, Charlie (Sa'd ud-din), "Before leaving Alice Springs we had to go see Charlie Sadaddin and his garden (...); it is curious that an Afghan should have had the best vegetable garden in the place. Sadaddin came to Australia with camels over fifty years ago. He was a very old man, a good Mohammedan, and a handsome old fellow, with quite the grand manner. He was a camel-man in Lord Roberts' new transport corps on the famous march to Kandahar in 1880, and still had the bearing of a soldier. He had seen wild times on the north-west frontier of India (...) (C.T. Madigan, Central Australia, 77).

SAHLEH (Sâleh), Took part in both the Warburton and the Giles expeditions in the 1870s.

SAID ALI (Sa'id Ali), "The last wandering Afghan, Said Ali, a hawker in Western Queensland, has lately taken to a truck" (G. Farwell, Land of Mirage, 25). Died at Broken Hill on May 3, 1959 aged 71.

SAID SHER JAN (Sayyed Sher Jan), Treasurer of the Perth mosque (Constitution, 3).

SALLEY MAHOMET (Sâleh Mohammad), Born in Kalgoorlie, WA, from an Afghan father and a French mother. A close friend of Mohammad Alam (Brunato, 61-64).

SAYYED JALÂL SHÂH, Born in Karachi in 1883; arrived in Australia in 1914 not as a camelman but as a religious adviser to the Muslim cameleer community. (Text, p. ).

SID COOLAMAELEEN (Sayyed Gholâm Ali), Caretaker of the Adelaide mosque.

SULTAN AZIZ (Soltân Aziz), "Could have claimed to have been the last of the West Darling cameleers in 1929."

SULTAN RAZ MAHOMED (Soltân Râz ? Mohammad), Camel-dealer at Marree. Died July 24, 1933 in Adelaide aged 75.

SYID OMAR (Sayyed Omar), "In loving memory of Syid O Mar, Mohammedan priest, died 14th July 1915, aged 45 years. Erected by his countrymen" (Cloncurry cemetery).

TAGH MAHOMED (Taj Mohammad), Brother of Fayz Mohammad.

YÂR MOHAMMAD, Son of Mawlawi Mohammad Ghaws of Qandahar. Imam at the Perth mosque.

ZARIPH KHAN (Zarif Khân), Born in Afghanistan in 1871, died March 23, 1903 at Bourke, NSW aged 32.

ZAREEN (Zarin), "Towards the end of 1927 the last of the active Afghan camel men left the Marble Bar district" (Barker, 1, 97-98).