

STATE TREASURES

Many artefacts in our State and local collections relate to British pioneers and founding fathers. But there are also treasures that celebrate the cultural diversity that has always been a feature of South Australian history. Significantly, too, much of the evidence of cultural diversity is held by individuals and associations. Please show the historical 'treasures' in your museum or personal collection by sending black and white photos with descriptions for publication in *Community History*.



Chinese proclamation. Gold leaf on gesso. 170cm x 57cm. Acquired by the Art Gallery of South Australia in 1978. Transferred to the History Trust of South Australia in 1986.

Photo courtesy Migration Museum.

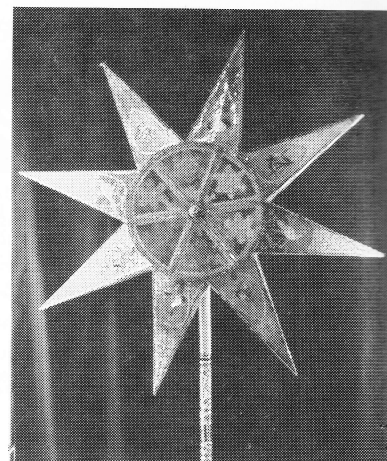
Chinese Proclamation

This beautiful Chinese proclamation was sent to Adelaide in July 1889 by Tseng Kuo-Ch'uan, Imperial Trade Commissioner for the South Seas of the Great Ch'ing Empire and Governor of the Jiangsu and Anhui provinces. It was addressed to the Adelaide Chinese committee, thanking them for funds raised for the relief of flood victims in the Jiangsu and Anhui provinces.

It is one of the earliest pieces of evidence linking the local Adelaide Chinese community with their homeland. The fund for the relief of flood victims was, according to the *Observer*, 7 July 1888, 'subscribed for by all ranks of people in the city, from His Excellency the Governor downwards, the Chinese population contributing generously'.

The proclamation arrived in Adelaide at a time of intense debate in Australia about imposing restrictions on Chinese immigrants. And yet, the fund was heavily subscribed, and the proclamation of thanks framed and initially mounted in the Adelaide Town Hall.

The large characters are a Confucian proverb, roughly translated as, 'Benevolence comes from over the seas'. The column on the far left is the date, 'The sixth moon of the fifteenth year of the reign of Kuang-Hsu'; the next column is the address to the committee. The column on the right is Tseng Kuo-Ch'uan's name and titles. It measures 170cm x 57cm.



Zirka - Star of Bethlehem.
Loaned to the Migration Museum
by the Association of Ukrainians in S.A. Inc.
Photo courtesy Migration Museum.

Zirka-The Star of Bethlehem

The Star of Bethlehem is the traditional symbol of carol singers in northern Europe. The Star is carried by the singers as they go from home to home on Christmas Eve, singing carols and performing the story of the Nativity and the life of Christ.

This Zirka belongs to Ukrainian South Australians. It was made in Adelaide in the early 1980s. It is elaborately decorated and when in use it lights up and rotates. The sixth of January is celebrated by Orthodox and Catholic Ukrainians as Christmas Eve. Children stay up late and families gather together to wait for the arrival of carol singers who perform the *Vertep*, the Nativity play.

Ukrainians brought the *Vertep* tradition with them when they came to South Australia as Displaced Persons from war-torn Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Within a short time, *Vertep* began in Adelaide. At first, the players walked from house to house and woe betide if they bypassed a Ukrainian house. Later Ukrainian companies like Michael Lesiw's Blue Ribbon small goods factory lent delivery vans to transport the performers. Today *Vertep*, with its Star of Bethlehem, is still part of Christmas celebrations for Ukrainian South Australians. The Zirka is on display at the Migration Museum until October 1993, as part of a display, *A Ukrainian Perspective*, part 4 of the series of displays entitled, *Your Past Is What You Keep*.

Kate Walsh, Curator, Migration Museum