

LELIEFONTEIN:  
STRUCTURE AND DECLINE OF A  
COLOURED MISSION COMMUNITY  
1870 - 1913

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African Studies  
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## C O N T E N T S

	Page
<u>PREFACE</u>	i - iii
Acknowledgements	iii - iv
 <u>CHAPTER I</u>	
<u>Leliefontein in the Early History of Namaqualand</u>	1
 <u>CHAPTER II</u>	
<u>The Missionaries and the Methodist Church</u>	
1. The Role of the Missionary	15
2. Mission Education	27
 <u>CHAPTER III</u>	
<u>Authority</u>	
1. The Politics of Local Administration 1870 - 1896	36
2. Authority 1896 - 1913 : A Reassessment	47
 <u>CHAPTER IV</u>	
<u>Economy</u>	
1. The Economic Structure of Leliefontein	61
2. Some Aspects of Rural Decline	69
 <u>CONCLUSION</u>	 77 - 81
 <u>MAP</u>	 between pages 61 - 62
 <u>Appendix A</u>	
Rules and Regulations of the Kamiesberg Mission	
Critical Note on Sources	
Bibliography	

PREFACE

Leliefontein is a Coloured Reserve in the magisterial district of Namaqualand. There are five Coloured Reserves in Namaqualand: Leliefontein, Komaggas, Steinkopf, Concordia and Richtersveld. All these Reserves owe their existence to missionary influence.

Leliefontein is the most southerly of the reserves, and the only reserve where mission work is controlled by the Methodist Church. The missions to the North are under the guidance of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Leliefontein covers an area of 75, 000 acres.<sup>1</sup> To the North-East lies Bushmanland, to the West stretches the vast coastal plain. Leliefontein lies roughly between the towns of Garies and Kamieskroon. The heart of Leliefontein lies in the Kamiesberg range of mountains and much of the Reserve is mountainous and hilly. The settlement of Lilyfountain<sup>2</sup> nestles below one of the highest points of the Kamiesberg range, 5, 500 feet above sea level.

The mountainous region is a winter rainfall area and the low-lying area towards Bushmanland is a summer rainfall area. The rainfall, as in all Namaqualand is very low and erratic, although the mountainous regions have a higher

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<sup>1</sup> J. Leeuwenberg "Leliefontein Communal Reserve", Coloured Citizenship in South Africa, (ed) M. Whisson and H. v.d. Merwe (Cape Town, 1972) p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> A clear distinction must be made between 'Leliefontein', the Reserve and 'Lilyfountain', the chief settlement in the Reserve.

rainfall average than most of Namaqualand.<sup>3</sup>

The villages are the centre of community life. There are two main villages at Leliefontein - Lilyfountain and Kharkhams in the 'highveld' and 'onderveld' respectively. Lilyfountain is the largest and most important settlement. It has been the centre of Wesleyan Missionary activity since 1816, when the Rev. Barnabas Shaw began his work there. The first base for Methodism in South Africa was at Lilyfountain. It possessed the first church, the first mission school and provided the first lay preachers in South Africa. Missionary influence is strong at Leliefontein. The missionary, besides his considerable religious duties, exercises a beneficial social influence over the lives of the inhabitants.

There are nine schools at Leliefontein, formerly run by the missionaries, but now under the supervision of the Coloured Affairs Department. The church and the school represent important institutions and values around which the social life of the community revolve. Local affairs are dealt with by the Village Management Board at Kharkhams. The Board is subordinate to the Coloured Affairs Department.

Although Leliefontein had some of the best land in the district,<sup>4</sup> overcrowding and over-grazing have taken their toll and today Leliefontein suffers from soil erosion and soil exhaustion, especially near the settlements.

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<sup>3</sup> UG 33 - 1947, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> A7 - 1896, p. 46; J.S. Narais, The Cape Coloured People 1652 - 1937 (Johannesburg, 1968) p. 76.

There are approximately 4 475 persons living in Leliefontein.<sup>5</sup> Each registered burgher has the right to a building lot near the village, a right to 'saailande' or lands suitable for agriculture. Grazing rights are communal. Most of the people are small mixed farmers who supplement their meagre earnings by migrant labour, for Leliefontein which was once a flourishing mission station is today extremely poor.

Anthropologists, notably from the School of African Studies have given attention to the present socio-economic plight of the Reserves. For the historian the task required is to explain this situation in terms of historical perspective. The study of the history of Namaqualand and the Coloured reserves is relatively unexplored. Little historical interest has been directed to the reserves. It is in the light of this idea that the years 1870 - 1913 at Leliefontein have been examined.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to express my thanks to the many people who helped me by providing information and ideas.

There is a rich sense of historical awareness amongst the inhabitants of Leliefontein and this proved to be of great assistance in my collection of oral evidence. I am particularly indebted to Mr. Meissenheimer, long-time member

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<sup>5</sup> J. Leeuwenberg, in Coloured Citizenship, p. 9 (1972)

of the Raad and a surviving witness of the Boer raid, for his information. The School principal at Leliefontein, Mr. H. Horniman, provided valuable information about the history of education at Leliefontein.

I acknowledge my thanks to the former missionaries of Leliefontein, especially the Rev. Mackenzie Fraser and the Rev. E. Coombe, for their advice and information. I give sincere thanks to Rev. and Mrs. John Burgess of Leliefontein, not only for their warm hospitality, but their constant interest in my research.

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## CHAPTER I

### LELIEFONTEIN IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF NAMAQUALAND

The North West Cape, now the magisteral district of Namaqualand, was originally inhabited by the Nama Khoi Khoi. They were a nomadic people, roaming constantly with their flocks through a vast territory. Scattered amongst the Nama were Bushmen bands.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century Basters began moving into the North West Cape.<sup>1</sup> They were being pushed into the area of the North West by spread of the Trekboers. The Basters and the Nama Khoi Khoi had a similar economic role.<sup>2</sup> Both groups were stock farmers, both needed large tracks of land to graze their cattle, especially in the North-West.<sup>2</sup> The Basters caused pressure on the original Nama inhabitants. Many began moving across the Orange River. They were followed by the Basters.

The Nama who chose to stay in Little Namaqualand were beset by problems and confusion in regard to land. There were problems caused by Trekboer encroachment on their land, and confusion resulted because of the Nama's inability to grasp the new concept of individual land tenure of the

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<sup>1</sup> J. S. Marais, The Cape Coloured People 1652 - 1937. (Johannesburg, 1968) p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> P. Carstens, Social Structure of a Cape Coloured Reserve (Cape Town, 1966) p. 235.

Trekboers. Their economy was radically affected by the alienation of the land and their social structure by the departure of many groups across the Orange River.

The diffusion of the Baster and Boer groups into Namaqualand must, however, be seen in terms of a relatively peaceful process. This fact is related to the fact that the Dutch Trekboers and the Nama were dependent on each other for the satisfaction of certain needs, and that their social structures were similar enough to facilitate interaction between the two societies.<sup>3</sup> The Nama remaining in Little Namaqualand were small enough to constitute little threat to the Trekboers. They remained relatively passive, they did not lash out in acts of occasional violence as had done the Bushmen.<sup>4</sup>

It was into this situation that the missionaries came. Missionary activity among the Basters had begun in 1801 when Anderson and Kramer worked among Barend Barend's followers, fifty miles East of Prieska.<sup>5</sup> In the North-East, two missionaries from the London Missionary Society, C. Albrecht and Seidenfaden, began work in 1807 in an integrated community of Basters and Nama at Warmbaths. By 1809, missionary activity had moved to Kamiesberg. Albrecht started the first mission station there, but by 1811 this work was abandoned.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>5</sup> J. Heese, *Onderwys in Namakwaland*, unpublished Ph.d. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1942, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 104.

The people amongst whom the missionaries worked were nomadic, so that missionary influence could only reach the people intermittently. This unsettling mobility meant that the missionaries were unable in many places to make a lasting impression on their charges.<sup>7</sup>

In 1811 Jonker Afrikaner attacked Kamiesberg station, and this station too, was abandoned. The work was resumed later by Albrecht, Sass and Ebner. Mr and Mrs Sass were stationer at Zilverfontein, amongst Cornelius Kok and his followers. The Rev. Schemelen from the Rhenish missionary society went West and settled at Bethanie in 1814. It was Schmelen who suggested to the Methodist Rev. Barnabas Shaw that he begin missionary activity in Namaqualand.

Before a discussion of the origins of the Methodist Mission Station at Leliefontein is undertaken, it is necessary to know of the early history of Leliefontein itself.

The word "Kamiesberg" is derived from a Nama work meaning 'to gather'.<sup>8</sup> There is evidence to point out that the Kamiesberg in the Namaqualand, with its water supplies was a general Nama gathering place during migration.<sup>9</sup> Knowing the Kamiesberg intimately, the Nama would inhabit the better parts, and Leliefontein was one of the more fertile areas. Even in the face of Trekboer encroachment, Haaimap or Jantjie Wildschut, chief of the Nama at Leliefontein succeeded in

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>8</sup> J. Leeuwenberg, *Leliefontein Communal Reserve*, unpublished B.A. (hons) thesis, U.C.T., 1969, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

holding his lands.<sup>10</sup> Not without difficulties "Ongelukkig was die grense van die plaas, soos met alle lening plase, nie bepaal nie, met die gevolg dat daar gedurig struwelinge was tussen die Namakwas, en hul blanke-bure." 11

Jantjie Wildschut had succeeded, in the later years of the eighteenth century, in having the farm Leliefontein registered in his name. Leliefontein, and Ezelsfontein were granted in error to Hermanus Engelbrecht, and the governor Van Plettenberg in 1772 made haste to rectify the matter. "I have been informed that the use of one of these places was allowed by the late Governor Tulbagh to the farmer Dirk Coetzee, and that the Hottentot Captain Wildschut has lain with his kraal on the other. I have there, thought fit to revoke the grant of these two loan farms ..... He furthermore instructed the Landrost at Stellenbosch to ensure that the inhabitants "continue respectively to enjoy the undisturbed use of those farms." 12

A further extract from D. Moodie's "Record" clearly illustrates the situation in Leliefontein and the surrounding area with the relative positions of the Nama, the Bushmen and the Baster and the Europeans - a kind of strained hieracy. Two captains of the Little Namaquas, Wildschut and Grootvogel appeared before the magistrate complaining of "the violence and depredations committed upon them by the Bosjeman Hottentots, and in particular that they have been incited to

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11 *ibid.*

12 D. Moodie, The Record, vol. III. (Cape Town, 1960) pp. 10-11.

13 J. Leeuwenberg, Leliefontein, p.15.

these proceedings by the Bastard Adam Boer, residing as overseer on one of the farms of the Burgher Pieter Van der Heever." 14

Yet despite the uneasiness on the part of the Nama towards the Boers who were beginning to surround Leliefontein they were not always antagonistic. "Toe die Oorlams stam, die Witboois in 1799 gemene saake met die Boesmans teen die blankes gemaak het, het Jantjie se Namakwas hulle afsydig gehou".<sup>15</sup>

The authorities were concerned at the number of Basters and Khoikhoi crossing the borders of the Cape to escape landlessness and servitude. Wildeschut had been approached by the landroos Van der Graaf on the question of using Leliefontein as a mission station, to stabilize the situation there. The members of Wildeschut's tribe had been impressed by a small quantity of knowledge imparted to some of them by the early missionaries in the Kamiesberg, and they hoped that the authority and influence of a European missionary would enable them to maintain their land. Thus early in 1816 Wildschut and a few followers set out to Cape Town in search of a missionary.

The Rev. Schmelen had painted a strong picture of the needs of the Nama to Rev. B. Shaw, and to the Missionary hampered as he had been in his work at Cape Town by the obstructionism of the Governor Lord Charles Somerset, and

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14 D. Moodie, The Record, pp 10-11.

15 J. Heese, Onderwys in Namakwaland, p. 27.

horrified by the plight of the African slaves he had witnessed, Schmelen's entreaties fell to receptive ears. 'Pity poor Africa' became Barnabas Shaw's motto. He obtained the consent of the Governor to establish a mission circuit for the native inhabitants in the North West Cape. Methodism was regarded as constituting a politically conservative system of values.<sup>16</sup> The governor acceded to Shaw's request, because he felt Methodism would cause little disturbance amongst the inhabitants of the North-West.

Shaw had little knowledge of the conditions or the people of the area to which he was moving, but as a farmer's son, his knowledge of agriculture stood him in good stead. On 6th October 1816 the Rev. Shaw, his wife and Schmelen left Cape Town for the North West. On the 4th October, near the Olifants River, they met Jantjie Wildschut's party on their way South in search of a missionary. Shaw saw in this meeting the hand of God and he offered his services to the Nama group of which Wildschut was Chief. On 14th October, Shaw held his first service among the Nama at Naamrop, where he had been enthusiastically received.<sup>17</sup> On the 16th October the party reached Lilyfontain. Schmelen continued his journey further North and the Shaws were left to begin mission work at Leliefontein.

There were problems to overcome in the establishment of the mission, and at times Shaw despaired at the isolation: "Here I toil and labour, and see but little fruit. The best

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<sup>16</sup> W. MacMillan, The Cape Colour Question (London, 1927) p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> B. Shaw, Memorials of South Africa (Cape Town 1970) p. 70.

of my days are going and I gain no useful knowledge and I am forgetting all I ever know. My companions are ignorant Hottentots. O this Africa! this solitary land this land of darkness, of fatigue, and non improvement"<sup>18</sup> Yet Shaw persevered and to a certain extent overcame the difficulties that beset him. His most pressing problem was one that had beset all missionaries in the North. The people were nomadic and unless mission influence was constant it bore little fruit.<sup>19</sup>

The ~~missionary~~ believed Shaw, had to adapt. "He who goes to convert a wandering tribe must either collect them together, or himself become a wanderer. If he collects them he must show them some method of obtaining subsistence, that they may remain with him".<sup>20</sup> Shaw thus endeavoured to maintain the population at Lilyfontain by instructing them in agriculture. He endeavoured to maintain contact with many by training the more intelligent inhabitants to spread the Gospel. Jacob Links was such a man. A protégé of Shaw's, he became the first Coloured lay preacher in South Africa. The missionary moved with the seasonal migrations of the people.

There was the problem of control in a changing Nama Society. Shaw maintained that Jan Wildeschutte was unable

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<sup>18</sup> B. Shaw, quoted in J. Whiteside, History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa (Cape Town, 1906) p. 43

<sup>19</sup> Seidenfaden's work was constantly broken and bore little fruit. J. Heese, Onderwys in Namakwalend, p. 146.

<sup>20</sup> G. Mears, Methodist Missions among the Coloured people of South Africa (Cape Town, 1956) p.6.

to deal with the situation. After petitioning the Governor, Lord Charles Somerset in 1824 it was agreed that the missionary would take over the authority of the chief.

On this Shaw arranged the framework of his authority. He appointed a Raad of four members with himself as Chairman. This proved to be the model on which future "Rade" of the missions stations in Namaqualand were arranged.

Shaw had maintained the traditional structure of authority when he replaced the authority of the chief.

The Nama had an eloquent spokesman on the problem of border disputes. In 1824 Lord Charles Somerset allowed tribes in the colony to occupy whatever land was either to be found near their principle stations unoccupied or which might be obtained by an exchange system.<sup>22</sup> This enabled the Wesleyan Missionary to procure Hoorngat and Tweerivieren. But the problem of boundary disputes and encroachment continued and led eventually to talk of having the land surveyed. A compromise was reached when in 1854 Lord Cathcart granted a Ticket of Occupation to Leliefontein in 1854. Tickets of Occupation were granted to all the Mission Stations of Namaqualand except Steinkopf which was held in trust for the coloured people of that area until March 1905 when it received a Ticket of Occupation. These Tickets of Occupation were granted for the purpose of giving the missionaries and their people some security in respect of the land occupied by them.

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<sup>21</sup> B. Shaw, Memorials, p. 98.

<sup>22</sup> UG 33 - 1929, p. 73.

It was regarded as having the same effect as a title, although not legally as binding.

The Ticket of Occupation for Leliefontein reinforced the structures of authority which Shaw had constituted. By voting for the Raad the occupiers of Leliefontein placed authority in this body to settle local problems. In May 1870 the Governor proclaimed that the rules and regulations used in the maintenance of authority should be published. The rules were given in the force of law.

The mission station at Leliefontein had prospered, despite severe setbacks caused by drought. Travellers who visited Leliefontein throughout the early and middle period of the nineteenth century spoke with admiration of its prosperity. In 1836 the traveller George Thompson had written 'The settlement at Lily Fountain appeared to me a well-selected and well conducted missionary station, highly creditable to its founders, and beneficial to the people under their control. Large herds of cattle are possessed by many individuals, and the two native superintendants who entertained me, mentioned that upwards of four thousand head belonged to this little community. The extent of land cultivated is very considerable: about ninety muids of wheat had been sown this season, covering from 3 to 4 hundred acres, and from which, if the season were favourable, a return of 30-50 fold was anticipated".

The material prosperity at Leliefontein, can, to a certain extent be attributed to the dedication of Shaw's successors,<sup>24</sup> Rev. E. Edwards, Jackson, Baillie, Godman

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<sup>24</sup> J. Whiteside, History of the Methodist Church, p. 46

and H. Tindall. Their position of influence meant that much depended on the strength of character of the resident missionary - a weak ministry would have an over-proportional effect on the inhabitants of Leliefontein. Drought, too, was another obstacle to the prosperity of the mission station.

To a large extent, this prosperity was shared by the other stations in Namaqualand. J.S. Marais states that prior to the days of copper, canteens and contact with Europeans the Namaqua people made great progress under the guidance of the missionaries and owned large and small stock and learned to work the soil on a fairly large scale taking into account the nature of the land.<sup>25</sup>

But by 1860 the industrialization caused by copper mining in Namaqualand in the midst of detribalized, disrupted societies of the North-West Cape, begun to take its toll. Cattle were lost by drought and transport riding. By 1860 the inhabitants of the reserves, especially those near the copper mines, were impoverished.<sup>26</sup>

The Mission stations had proved their value by attracting people back to the lands surrounding them. In Leliefontein the presence of the missionary had attracted back a number of Namaquas who had crossed the Orange River in front of the invasion of farmers.

The missionary played a unifying role in this regathering of the homeless, both Baster and Khoi Khoi. In Leliefontein in particular this unifying role is evident, by the success with which Nama and Baster people were integrated

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<sup>25</sup> J.S. Marais, The Cape Coloured People, p. 76.

<sup>26</sup> J. Smalberger, A History of Copper Mining in Namaqualand, 1846-1931 (Cape Town, 1975) p. 62.

into a unified local community.

Since Leliefontein formed one of a group of mission stations, it is worth noting briefly the others, in a context of the missionary activity that was continuing throughout the early half of the nineteenth century.

Leliefontein itself became a station from which Methodist evangelizing influences spread into Namaqualand. Archbell and his wife stayed at Leliefontein in 1824 on their way to a new station at Rietfontein. Eventually Rev. Archbell and Links moved to Warmbaths, a former outpost of the London Missionary Society. Attempts to administer Warmbaths had always met with serious setbacks. William Threlfall was murdered by Bushmen on his way to Warmbaths. Rev. Cook eventually settled there in 1834. Growth of Methodist mission activity was evident when mission work was begun at Concordia, Gobabis and Naosnains. The years of activity were followed by years of retrenchment. Concordia and Wesleyville, were handed over to the Rhenish Missionary Society by the Wesleyans.

C. Albrecht of the London Missionary Society received recognition of his authority to the stations of Steinkopf and Concordia in 1809. In the same year Seidenfaden's station at Pella, formerly the farm Kamas, was recognized.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> J. Heese, *Onderwys in Namakwaland*; p. 204, G60-1890, p.5.

In 1829, the London Missionary Society requested that the farm Komaggas be recognised as a reserve, in order that they might establish a mission there, among the Cloete Baster tribe. Schmelen moved from Bethanië to Komaggas. Schmelen moved constantly; retaining his interest in Bethanië and also undertaking work in the Richtersveld, in the arid North-West.

Development at Steinkopf, Komaggas and Pella was erratic. The traveller Thompson had found Pella deserted in 1824, the Witbooi's having trekked into Bushmanland.<sup>28</sup> The London Missionary Society thereupon abandoned their work at Pella, retaining Komaggas and Steinkopf.

The missionaries of the far North West, experienced the same problems that beset the missionaries at Leliefontein, in greater degree. The land was more arid, more prone to drought. The people were nomadic, constantly in search of better grazing. The missionaries attempted to overcome these difficulties.

"Hoewel die rondtrekkery nog steeds voortgeduur het, is dit nou baie beperkter in omvang as vroeër. Die groot bewegings van die nie blankes aan die einde van die 18e eeu, het nou tot reis gekom. Ook die verdere indringing van die blankes, het die nie-blankes daartoe gedwing om hul rond-en-bont trekkery in te kort. Dan het die latere sendelinge geleer om hul beter aan te pas by die namadiese aard van die mense. Schmelen, Wimmer en Bartlett het dikwels die stasie verlaat en saam met hul gemeentes getrek, en daardeur

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<sup>28</sup> G. Thomson, Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa, Vol. II (London, 1827) p. 55

die werksaamhede van die stasie voortgesit".<sup>29</sup> The missionaries undertook to establish schools on all the reserves, despite the fact that the nomadic life of the people caused attendance at Schools to fluctuate.

The Rhenish Missionary Society had shown an interest in work in Namaqualand, and when the London Missionary Society decided to retire from work in this area, their mission were taken over by Rhenish missionaries. Budler, the Rhenish missionary who had assisted Schmelen at Komaggas was in turn replaced by Rev. F. Brecher. Ferdinand Brecher proved to be an enthusiastic missionary, and identified himself wholly with the welfare of his people.

He moved to Steinkopf in 1843 where he attempted to encourage education and agriculture and remained there until his death.

In 1844, Hein, a Baster from Wuppertal began evangelical work in Richtersveld. In 1893 he was ordained and became the first non European minister of the Rhenish Mission Society. The missionaries of Richtersveld, succeeded in converting the inhabitants to Christianity yet no missionary achieved political power, as they had done in the other communities.

In December 1847 the border of the Cape Colony was extended to the Orange River and the inhabitants of Komaggas, Steinkopf (which included Concordia) and the inhabitants of the Richtersveld became British subjects. Thus

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<sup>29</sup> J. Heese, *Onderwys in Namakwaland*, p. 16.

despite their isolation, the reserves formed part of a wider political structure.

The historical origins of the political structures of the reserves differ. Steinkopf, Concordia, and Komaggas were invaded by the Basters who, together with the missionaries acquired political power. In Leliefontein, the Nama retained power over the Basters.<sup>30</sup> Their Nama chief lost political authority to the missionary, yet this was the fact that strengthened their identity as Nama, over the Baster group. The political structure was retained. In Richtersveld, the Basters did not attain political power nor did the Missionary. They lost their identity, as did the Basters at Leliefontein as separate groups.

The mission work in the early history of Namaqualand and the history of the reserves are closely connected. The Coloured Reserves in Namaqualand owe their existence as separate reserves to missionary influence.<sup>31</sup> Without the authority of the missionary and the communal system of land tenure that the missionary endorsed, the lands would gradually have been alienated from the Nama and Basters by White Trekboers moving North in search of new and better land.

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<sup>30</sup> P. Carstens, Social Structure, pp. 204-206.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

CHAPTER II

THE MISSIONARIES AND THE METHODIST CHURCH

1. THE ROLE OF THE MISSIONARY

The Methodist Church was by 1870 firmly established as the only denomination in Leliefontein. The Church was backed by the Raad and was a powerful instrument of social control. The Raad too, was influential because by 1870 their decisions were given the force of law.<sup>1</sup> The missionary wielded great authority over these two bodies, he was Chairman of both the Raad and the Church's administrative body, the Quarterly Meeting. Local administration was extremely effective because political power was reinforced by religious power and vice versa.<sup>2</sup>

The Nama had responded to the strictures of the early missionaries with enthusiasm. Barnabas Shaw wrote of his welcome to Leliefontein and the response to his teachings. The Chief, Haaimap himself told Shaw: "All the sins which I have committed from my childhood to this day are out before my eyes."

Although willing to submit to Shaw's religious strictures, on many it did not make a permanent impression. Shaw

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<sup>1</sup> Act no 10, 5.5.1870, para. II.

<sup>2</sup> B. Shaw, Memorials of South Africa (Cape Town, 1970) pp. 59, 63, 64

complained: "Though the people appeared to be zealous at the commencement, yet partly owing to their former habits of idolence, and partly a want of food, the work, after a while, went on but slowly".<sup>3</sup>

The reason why the Nama at Leliefontein were so eager to accept Christian principles and it's related ethical and social values should be examined. Three factors must be borne in mind.

Firstly, there were marked similarities between the concepts embodied in the traditional beliefs and the new. P. Carstens remarks of Steinkopf that it seems that one of the reasons why the early missionaries in that area were so successful in their mission work among the Khoi Khoin was that the latter found no difficulty in grasping new concepts such as "god" and "devil" because they already understood them.<sup>4</sup> The same hypothesis could be applied to the Nama at Leliefontein and the doctrines of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. Carstens offers the hypothesis that in the early years the Khoi Khoin "merely transferred their conceptions of a supreme being and a spirit of evil to Christianity ...."<sup>5</sup> Barnabas Shaw claimed to have found the people ignorant. "They knew nothing of God or a future state, and said they had never heard of the soul."<sup>6</sup> Shaw never accepted the Nama

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> I. Shapera as quoted in P. Carstens, The Social Structure of a Cape Coloured Reserve (Cape Town, 1966) p. 337.

<sup>5</sup> P. Carstens, Social Structure, p. 337.

<sup>6</sup> B. Shaw, Memorials, p. 74

concept of God as bearing a relation to his own.

Secondly, the Nama had wanted a missionary of Lilyfontein. They had set off South to find one and they met Schmelen and Shaw moving North. They had been impressed with the work of Albrecht and Seidenfaden amongst the people of the Kamiesberg in the early part of the nineteenth century. They hoped that a missionary would protect their interests against trekboer encroachment. The missionaries readily accepted this role. Shaw blamed the impoverishment of the Nama on the white farmers. "Corrupted by liquor, bereft of his cattle, unable to maintain effectively possession of his lands, the Namaqua, like the Cape Coloured Hottentot, had only two courses open to him - either to enter into service with the farmers, or to join a missionary institution."<sup>7</sup> In the chaotic conditions resulting from the Baster and Nama Northward migration, Boer encroachment, and land disputes, the missionary remained a unifying force.<sup>8</sup> It was the social values, which the missionary represented, of which Christianity played a part which the Nama of Leliefontein hoped to adopt.

Thirdly, the missionaries at Leliefontein were careful to preach to the people things with which they were familiar. They spoke of God, the land, hope, harvests and the soil. Barnabas Shaw spoke of the water of life and, "invited the

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<sup>7</sup> B. Shaw as quoted in the Methodist Historical Society Journal, Oct. 1956, Vol III, no. 5, p. 133.

<sup>8</sup> J. Leeuwenberg, Leliefontein Communal Reserve, unpub. B.A. (hons) thesis (U.C.T., 1969) p. 20.

thirsty to partake of it."<sup>9</sup>

The first church at Lilyfontain was built in 1816, soon after Shaw's arrival. Two other churches were built, one in 1828 and another larger one in 1855. The Nama people contributed to the building of the larger church. It cost them £1 000 to build and could seat two hundred people. The church was built under the supervision of the Rev. Baillie and dedicated by the circuit superintendent, Rev. R. Ridgill.<sup>10</sup>

The Nama were nomadic, their existence depended upon the availability of adequate grazing lands. In the winter months people trekked to the lower, more temperate areas. The church attendance at Lilyfontain suffered. This revealed a wider problem that had haunted the missionaries in the North-West Cape since the beginning of the century. Because of the semi-nomadic nature of the people, mission influence could only be sporadic. The missionaries at Leliefontein decided to adapt by moving with the people to the Onderveld. A church and a manse were built by the Rev. Jackson at Bethel for this reason.<sup>11</sup> The people scattered in the far areas of Leliefontein's vast tracts of land, a system of outstations was developed by Rev. M. Godman.<sup>12</sup> Yet it was Barnabas Shaw who had provided the germ of this

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<sup>9</sup> B. Shaw, Memorials, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> J. Whiteside, History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa (Cape Town, 1906) p. 47.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 49.



A Leaders' meeting with Rev. Morley Crampton presiding, circa 1912.

method. Shaw's more intelligent pupils became teachers, his 'converts', became local preachers and class teachers. They travelled into the outlying areas to teach those scattered in the Reserve. This system had received the encouragement of the missionaries who followed Shaw and the Rev. Edwards, especially Godman, Baillie and Henry Tindall.

Thus by 1870 the Leliefontein circuit was divided into a number of outstations in the outlying areas. The Chief settlement was at Lilyfountain, the home of the resident missionary. The Leliefontein Mission itself formed part of a wider structure of the Church district of the Cape of Good Hope. The Missionary of Leliefontein was subordinate to the Superintendent of the District.

The Methodist system of Church Management in Leliefontein was fairly democratic. The circuit was divided into congregations, administered by a Leaders' Meeting, consisting of lay preachers, class readers and church deacons. The minister was chairman of the Leaders' Meeting.

The Quarterly meeting co-ordinated the Leaders' meetings.



The preacher of Moed Verloren and his family, circa. 1912.

The minister presided over the Quarterly meeting and had the casting vote. As the eminent church members were active in local administration, they often were members of the Raad as well. Thus in the system of church management and local administration, the Church dominated both.

The winter station was at Bethel, where a chapel had been built. There was an outstation at Norap in the dry North West. The frequent droughts in this area, meant that the people were scattered, and the mission work of the outstation came to a standstill.<sup>13</sup> There was an outstation at Moed Verloren on the edge of Bushmanland. Here was no

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<sup>13</sup> Forley-Crampton slide lecture, 1915, typescript copy, Grahamstown.



A Quadruple Marriage at  
Lilyfontain, circa. 1912.

building erected for religious and educational purposes. Morely-Crampton explained "The Services there were on a very humble scale. The people were crowded into a mat hut. This was the smallest outstation on the reserve, in the charge of a coloured preacher and his wife".<sup>14</sup> There was a larger outstation settlement at Bpog Rivier and one at Kharkhams. The missionary supervised the work of the lay preachers and Sunday School teachers at the outstations when he visited them. To the people scattered in the far corners of the reserve, these outstations extended the work of the mission. Morley-Crampton explained, 'As far as I know there is no other mission station in South Africa where the outstations are, for the greater part of the year, of greater importance than the main station. The people at the outstations must be visited as often as possible and except during the summer months the missionary is away from Leliefontein almost every second Sunday.'<sup>15</sup> At all the stations the minister had much to do - baptisms, inspection of school work, administration of the sacraments and marriages to perform.

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14 *ibid.*

15 *ibid.*

By 1877 the outstations were growing. There were two chapels and three other preaching places, one native catechist, six local preachers and three Sabbath schools.<sup>16</sup>

The trek from Lilyfontain to Bethel in the winter months assumed the nature of a general exodus. The Raad who held the land communally, announced the land available for pasturage, by defining the boundaries.<sup>17</sup> The boundaries were not fixed for each year, the boundaries were adjusted depending on the availability of pasturage. In January, 1891 the Raad decided to build a new house at Bethel, as the pasturage in the area had improved. But this pasturage did not prove adequate to meet the demands of a growing population. The dams at Bethel also were not reliable. The problem was exacerbated by severe drought in the first two years of 1890. Because the people were moving away in search of better grazing land, the missionary found it difficult to fill his congregation. In September, 1894 the missionary suggested that the winter station be moved from Bethel to Kharkhams.<sup>18</sup> In November, 1894 the suggestion was ratified by the Raad.<sup>19</sup> The people who possessed corn lands at Bethel were to be given others nearer Kharkhams.<sup>20</sup> In July 1895 after the ploughing, the people left Leliefontein for Kharkhams. The Onderveld was dry in that year, but after 1897 the situation improved

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16 W. Clifford Holden, A Brief History of Methodism and of Methodist Missions in South Africa (London, 1877) p. 209.

17 Minutes of the Leliefontein Raad, Aug., 1870- Aug., 1910.

18 Minutes of the Leliefontein Raad, Sept., 1894.

19 *ibid.*, Nov., 1894.

20 *ibid.*

and the buildings at Kharkhams were repaired.

The establishment of outstations was not entirely successful. There were not always enough men to fill the posts of travelling preachers and school teachers. Furthermore, the missionary could never be entirely sure that the people would stay at the station to receive religious instruction. The system of maintaining two churches and various outstations, was an arduous one for the missionary to maintain. He was both chairman of a circuit and the only minister.

Yet, on the optimistic side, when the rains were good and the harvests successful, the congregations were full. Leliefontein became known for the piety of its people.

The missionary at Leliefontein had other tasks to fulfill. The land in the Namaqualand district was sparsely populated, less still did it have educated and well informed people. The missionary in the course of his work, acquired a fair knowledge of the conditions surrounding him. The Resident Magistrate and the Civil Commissioner at Springbok depended on him for information. Questions of stock conditions, weather conditions, rainfall measurements were referred to him, as well as queries about the general condition of the inhabitants of his mission.<sup>21</sup> He assumed the role of a 'mediator' between the Leliefontein inhabitants and the outside world, represented by the officials of the Colonial government in the magistracy of Namaqualand.<sup>22</sup> To the

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Chapter IV. The old rain gauge still stands in the mission garden. (1975)

<sup>22</sup> Dorley-Crampton slide lecture, 1915.

officials, when dealing with matters affecting the missions, the missionaries were the 'men on the spot'.

To the inhabitant of Leliefontein, the missionary possessed a stature that can be related to his religious influence. He taught the virtues of obedience and loyalty (the Leliefontein people were noted for their loyalty to the Colonial Government) and frowned upon infringements of his moral norms. For instance, Wesleyan missions added their moral sanction to the laws forbidding liquor into the reserves.<sup>23</sup> Yet despite the strong personal moral influence the missionary exerted in the people, it was proved that moral influence alone was not strong enough to rule the people.<sup>24</sup> It had to have the sanction of official authority as it had until 1881 to be effective.

The missionary, despite his involvement in the religious and administrative aspects of his work, was forced to give much attention to another aspect - the social one. Barnabas Shaw had drawn attention in the early years to the fact that religious instruction was useless, if the people were suffering from material want.<sup>25</sup> The problem the missionary faced was to keep the people from social depression. This became successively difficult as the droughts arrested material and social progress in the years after 1881.

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<sup>23</sup> Resident Magistrate to Morley-Crampton, Lilyfontain, 9.3.1909.

<sup>24</sup> A7 - 1896 pp. 12-34.

<sup>25</sup> Attorney General to C. Pettman, Secretary of Committee of Privileges, Wesleyan Conference, Cape Town, 24.8.1892

The missionary's involvement in an attempt to prevent the people sinking into social and moral decay, assumed a variety of functions. He tried to keep them from material want and he attempted to improve living standards and general health. Medical assistance was a problem in the area. There was one district surgeon for Namaqualand. He paid infrequent visits to the reserves, and the missionary and his wife were faced in the absence of alternatives to assume responsibility for the health of the inhabitants at the mission. Morley-Crampton elucidated, "Both he (the missionary) and his wife, in the absence of training, have to do their best with simple doctoring . . . . We were simply compelled to do what we could for the people." <sup>26</sup>

The missionary found himself in another role - that of farmer. Two farms, Hoorngat and Twee Rivieren were bought by the Wesleyan Missionary Society and transferred in trust in Sept., 1821.<sup>27</sup> The inhabitants of Leliefontein contributed towards the buying of the two farms, the amount being anything up to a quarter of the price.<sup>28</sup> An annual quitrent was paid by the Missionary society and the two farms were liable for road rates, which the reserve itself was not.<sup>29</sup>

The farms were inspected in 1895 and the report forwarded in Dec. 1897 Hoorngat had one third arable land and two thirds

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<sup>26</sup> Morley-Crampton slide lecture.

<sup>27</sup> G60 - 1890, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> A7 - 1896, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> G2 - 1888, p. 7.

pasturage, sufficient for 1 000 "vee" per annum with careful usage. The cultivation potential of Tweerivieren was less.

Although the Missionary Society held the lease of the farms, the inhabitants had always regarded the land as theirs and the farms were occupied by the people as ordinary portions of the Reserve. When ploughing lands were assigned to different people, certain lands in Hoorngat were set aside by the people for Missionary purposes. Some land, then on the farms was farmed by the missionary to supplement his stipend by cultivation and stock-keeping. Some land was cultivated for the general benefit of the people too. A dispute began in 1898 when the society retained the title deeds and turned the people off the farms. The Missionary, Rev. Tindall had clashed with the Raad in 1888 when they attempted to hire part of Tweerivieren to the burgers.<sup>30</sup> Until 1898 the people remained convinced that the land was part of the reserve because their ancestors had put money towards it. They could not understand how the Wesleyan Missionary Society got title to from them. When the Society took possession of the farms, they did not abandon the lands at Lilyfontain, but continued to have them worked for mission purposes. So that the position was that the society carried a farming at Hoorngat and Tweerivieren and mission work as two separate institutions. The Missionary then became a farmer at the expense of a certain amount of local confidence in the Mission Society.

When the Mission Stations and Reserve Act of 1909 was

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<sup>30</sup> Minutes of the Leliefontein Raad, Nov., 1888; Jan., 1889.

implemented in 1913, the Missionary Society retained ownership of the land, although many burghers disputed this ownership. The matter was only settled in 1934 when the farms were purchased from the Society by the Department of Coloured Affairs which then incorporated the farms into the boundaries of the reserve.

## 2. MISSION EDUCATION

The missionaries brought to the Nama new concepts that were to radically change their traditional lifestyle. These concepts which were imparted to the Nama were part of a wider system of education. Education can thus be viewed as a dynamic factor in social change.

It is the aim of this chapter to discuss education in a stricter sense, that is, the religious and secular education introduced by the missionaries, the development of this education, and the problems encountered in its development.

The early Nama had been impressed by the education imparted to a few of their members by Albrecht and Seidenfaden. That same enthusiasm to learn impressed Barnabas Shaw when he began a system of education at Leliefontein.

The growth of education in Namaqualand was closely linked to the work of the missionaries in that district.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> P. Kotszé, *Namakwaland: 'n Sosiologiese studie van 'n geïsoleerde Gemeenskap* (Cape Town, 1943) p. 204.

Christian education was important, yet no less attention was paid to a rudimentary scholastic education, and education of a practical nature.<sup>32</sup> All these elements of education were closely linked. Christian converts became school teachers. Men such as Jacob Links and his descendants Barnabas Shaw Links proved receptive scholars. Many unfortunately proved less so. Barnabas Shaw wrote: "But to my great mortification a few minutes were sufficient to obliterate every trace of what had been said, and when again asked, not one individual in the place could furnish a reply".<sup>33</sup>

Yet the Nama valued education of a 'Western' ~~kind~~ for it gave them relief from a crushing sense of inadequacy in their relations with the Trekboers. Shaw recounts with amusement how "a farmer declared to me that he believed the Namaquas were only a species of wild dog and had no souls; I therefore called Jacob Links, who was with me at the time, and offered to prove, that Jacob, though a dog, could both read and write better than the farmer." <sup>34</sup>

By 1830 the teachers of the day school were coloured people. These former pupils of Shaw's enabled the missionary to devote his labours to religious education. In 1840 Backhouse remarked on the unprogressive nature of formal

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<sup>32</sup> J. Heese, Onderwys in Namakweland 1750 - 1940, unpub. Ph.d thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1942, p. 224.

<sup>33</sup> B. Shaw, Memorials, p. 90.

<sup>34</sup> ibid.



On trek to Kharkams, home, family and livestock, circa. 1912.

education under a coloured schoolmaster.<sup>35</sup> There were serious problems facing the teachers and the missionary who supervised their work. Because the station was so isolated, there were few books available - often the only book available was the Bible.<sup>36</sup> There was little in the way of school necessities. In 1840 the children were sitting on the floor, in the absence of desks.<sup>37</sup>

The problem that troubled the educational role of the missionary and his helpers throughout the nineteenth century was the nomadic life of the people. The establishment of a school necessitated a settled environment, yet the Leliefontein people were constantly on the move. Most migrated to the

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<sup>35</sup> J. Backhouse, A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa (London, 1844) p. 526.

<sup>36</sup> P. Kotzé, Namakweland, p. 33

<sup>37</sup> J. Backhouse, Narrative of a Visit, p. 527.

Onderveld in winter. Rev. Jackson built a school at Bethel and the teachers moved with the people in the winter months. This was a fairly general practice in Namaqualand. „Die sendelinge het egter op al die verskillende sendingstasies saam met hul godsdienstige pligte ook nog daarvoor sorg dat die kleurlingkinders h mate van onderwys ontvang.”<sup>38</sup>

Bethel proved unsuccessful as a mission station. There was too little water and too little grazing to support the stock of the community. The population moved away to find better grazing and attendance at school dropped. The Bethel school was abandoned and a new one built at the new mission centre that was established at Kharkhams. Barnabas Shaw Links became the schoolmaster.

When the conditions were right, the schools prospered. When the new chapel was built at Lilyfountain in 1855, the old church was used as a schoolroom. By 1877 there were two day schools with 200 scholars.<sup>39</sup> The emphasis was on the young. “The most encouraging and hopeful department of our work was that which pertained to the training of the rising generation . . . . our Sabbath schools were not only extended to the rural districts, but the number of day schools increase , and we had ultimately one in connection with every principal station.”<sup>40</sup> By 1877 the Wesleyan Mission Society claimed educational grants, of which two were for the Kamiesberg circuit.

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<sup>38</sup> P. Kotsé, Namaqualand, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> W. Clifford Holden, A brief History of Methodism, p. 263.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

To reach and educate the scattered population, centers of education were established at Norap, in the North-West among the Baster community. Sixty-five scholars were instructed under the catechist F. Kardinaal.<sup>41</sup>

By 1870 the same system that had been applied to preaching the gospel was applied to teaching the students in rudimentary education. Adults received elementary education from the missionary who conducted evening classes after the day's work. The lessons were conducted in the quadrangle adjoining the mission house and chapel.<sup>42</sup> The real task was to educate the young. Baillie insisted that all children above the age of five should attend school if they could.<sup>43</sup> The traditional occupation of the children had always been to watch the flocks, and for this reason parents kept their children from school. Baillie realized this danger and appointed a herd watcher to replace the children.<sup>44</sup> Baillie scored another success when in 1859 the Leliefontein schools were the first in Namaqualand to receive government grants. The seasonal migration from Leliefontein to Bethel was more or less under the control of the Raad and this had a beneficial effect on education. Rev. Godman established a school at Spoegrivier, for the people there did not move out of their own mountain barriers.

The large seasonal migration left one or other school

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41 J. Heese, Onderwys, p. 323.

42 Recorded in conversation with Mr. H. Horniman, 2.8.75.

43 J. Heese, Onderwys, p. 323.

44 *ibid.*

empty, as did the drought years of 1873 to 1874 and 1881 to 1883.

People moved away to look for pasturage while others took their sons from school to work in copper transport riding. The school inspectors had difficulty in understanding the seasonal nature of the schools. Mr. Rowan, a school inspector, arrived at Lilyfountain in the winter of 1874 to find the school empty because the scholars had moved to Bethel. He returned in 1876 and 1878 to find the same situation. The new school inspector Mr. Samuels had the same experience in 1881. Before the migration in 1881 Henry Tindall had reported that the school at Lilyfountain was flourishing: „Maar toe Samuels enige maande later die skool besoek het, het hy net 14 leerlinge in die skool aangetref.“<sup>45</sup> But this state of affairs was the result of a misunderstanding and had little to do with misdirection of education on the part of the missionary. Heavy droughts from 1881 to 1883 left the reserve exhausted and education suffered because the student population dropped.<sup>46</sup>

Seasonal migrations and droughts were not the only cause for concern. Other factors conspired to disperse the people. The entire population fled in 1902 as a result of the Boer raid, and it was a year before the threads of education could be gathered up again. Furthermore, the missionary began to lose his authority from 1881. Inhabitants no longer felt

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<sup>45</sup> This was to lead to the report that the schools were in fact more badly attended than they really were. C. J. Heese, Onderwys, pp. 325-326.

<sup>46</sup> 1841 - 1889, p. 10.

obliged to attend school out of fear of the consequences. For instance, in 1895 the school at Norap was inspected and the poor attendance was noted. There were only 6 pupils at school. Robson's successors, H. Wilkinson and Cheeseman, found the educational system difficult to maintain. With social and economic conditions worsening, the missionaries struggled with the educational system and were rewarded by a fair amount of success: „Die onderwys het geworder of agteruitgegaan na gelang van die gunstigheid of ongunstigheid van b.g. omstandighede. Daar die hulp wat van staats wee beskikbaar gestel is, was daar baie goeie voorsiening vir kleurlingonderwys of die reserwes. Dat die onderwys nie meer vrug gedra het nie, was veral te wyte aan die tiepiese Namakwalandse onderwys probleem".<sup>47</sup>

By the Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act of 1909, the missionary lost his secular authority in Leliefontein but retained control over education. The Mission Society was awarded the control of the sites of the schools at Lilyfountain, Kharkhams, Spoeg Rivier and Norap.<sup>48</sup> The school site at Bethel had been abandoned.

The missionary felt that by narrowing the field of authority, his effectiveness in the field of education had also suffered. There was no material improvement the social conditions of the people either, since the application of the Act in 1913. The poverty of those years affected education. An official report stated: "The great poverty

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47 J. Heese, Onderwys, p. 349.

48 ibid., p. 354.

of the people was most seen in the appearance of the children attending schools." <sup>49</sup> The scholars were listless and apathetic.

The Raad appointed the school teachers on the advice of the missionary. Jan Dirk was the school master at Lilyfountain in the first two decades following 1870. He was followed by Johannes Boyes. Thomas Links was the school master at Spoegrivier.<sup>50</sup> The Raad was required to pay the teachers a salary, a part of the local tax of £1 levied on all burghers by the Raad. The teachers received £1 per month. When an assistant teacher was hired at Lilyfountain in 1887 his salary was slightly less - 15/- per month. Often the people were too poor to pay taxes and subsequently the Raad could not give the teachers their salaries. After the drought years of 1881 - 1883, for instance, the burghers were unable to pay their arrears in school funds and the teachers salaries. The Raad, when threatened with the closing down of the Lilyfountain school, formed a committee to personally guarantee payments to the school master.

The Raad was required to see to the upkeep of the school buildings. But when repairs were needed, school funds were not forthcoming and the Raad could not afford to meet the requirements of the schools.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> A.2 - 1909, p. 5545.

<sup>50</sup> U.G.26 - 1932, p.6.

<sup>51</sup> Minutes of the Leliefontein Raad, Jan., 1886.

When harvests were successful the attendance grew and the schools were so successful they needed more teachers. In 1904 another assistant teacher was appointed at Lily-fountain and all salaries were increased.<sup>52</sup> High attendance of pupils were noted at Spoeg rivier, and at a new school at Rooifontein.<sup>53</sup> In August 1905 a school was recommenced at Norap.<sup>54</sup> The school at Norap was so successful it was decided to send the school master there for one month.

Even if the missionaries had come to terms with the nomadic habits of the people, education was still hampered by other factors. These were mostly a result of poor socio-economic conditions. Poverty was a real reason for irregular attendance because parents were dependent on the labour their children provided. Parents were unable to pay the costs for education. Economic factors constantly recurred as obstacles in education. Besides pastoralism, the seasonal nature of grain farming meant that at harvest all the labour was needed and the schools were empty. Finally there was the problem of authority for the teachers and missionaries had no real means of enforcing attendance at schools.<sup>55</sup> Education had proved to be unsuccessful and unprogressive.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, March 1905

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, Aug., 1905

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Chapter III.

<sup>56</sup> J. George and W. Stanton, *Memoranda on Mission Affairs*, Cape Town, unpub., p.1.

CHAPTER III

AUTHORITY

1. THE POLITICS OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION 1870 - 1896

The system of government at Leliefontein from the years 1870 - 1913 must be seen against its historical background.

It was primarily due to missionary influence that the Missions in Namaqualand retained their separate identity. Leliefontein differs in certain respects from the other Reserves. First: "In Leliefontein the original Khoi Khoin did not lose their power to the Baster pioneers, who tended to settle in the North-east corner of the territory. There seem to be two reasons for this. First, the Methodist missionaries who settled permanently at Leliefontein ..... did so at the invitation of the Khoi Khoin and worked among them before going on to the Basters. Thus instead of the two alien elements (missionary and Baster) effecting the disintegration of the Khoi Khoin, the missionaries achieved power by operating within the framework of the traditional society without support from the Basters.

Second, in Leliefontein the missionaries achieved much greater political power ..... than any of the other communities." <sup>1</sup>

Barnabas Shaw complained to the governor, Lord Charles

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<sup>1</sup> P. Carstens, The Social Structure of a Cape Coloured Reserve (Cape Town, 1966) p. 205

Somerset that the chief of the Nama at Leliefontein was unable to control his people. He requested that the missionary be granted certain powers to preserve order in Leliefontein. In January, 1825 these powers were granted. The Missionary was given

- (i) Power to receive those whom he might think proper as residents,
- (ii) To expel any who might be disobedient or unruly,
- (iii) To give out portions of land for sowing corn and making gardens,
- (iv) To erect substantial dwelling houses, which must be built on the spot according to the plan pointed out by the missionary.<sup>2</sup>

The inhabitants of Leliefontein had complained that the surrounding farmers were encroaching on their land and because Leliefontein was unsurveyed, they could not prove it. They were too poor to have their land surveyed to rectify the matter. In 1854 a compromise was reached when Leliefontein was issued with a Ticket of Occupation which roughly defined the boundaries of the Reserve.<sup>3</sup> The land was granted in Trust to the Wesleyan Missionary Society to be administered for the benefit of the community.<sup>4</sup> The Ticket of Occupation provided for the

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<sup>2</sup> B. Shaw, Memorials of South Africa (Cape Town, 1970) p. 91; P. Carstens, Social Structure, p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> The land was estimated to be 219, 500 morgen. It was judged negatively, that is, calculated from the surrounding farms.

<sup>4</sup> Colonial Office to Rev. Moister, Cape Town, 26.3.53.

local administration of the Reserve. A committee was appointed to prepare regulations for administration. It provided for the annual appointment of corporals or overseers to carry into effect and enforce the rules and regulations. The Ticket of Occupation also provided for the protection of the rights of the Mission Society in Leliefontein: "Nothing therein or herein contained shall directly or indirectly affect the occupation by the Wesleyan or other missionary society of these churches, schools, or other buildings which may have been or may hereafter be by then built on the said land . . . ." <sup>5</sup>

The Ticket of Occupation therefore sanctioned two elements of authority in the internal politics of the Reserve, the missionary and the Raad.

The structure of local administration remained basically the same as it had been in 1825. There was an elected Raad of eight men, later increased to twelve. The missionary was chairman and had the casting vote. <sup>6</sup> "The system of administration in the Reserve was based in essence on principles first established by Shaw in 1824, with the agreement of the Colonial Government." <sup>7</sup> The underlying reason was to give the church necessary backing to provide stability in the North-West Cape. The Raad provided a focal point for local leadership within the community. The Raad was relatively autonomous and its decisions were seldom interfered with.

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<sup>5</sup> Ticket of Occupation 1854, C2-1882, p.4.

<sup>6</sup> T. Cheeseman, The Story of William Threlfall (Cape Town, 1910) p. 104.

<sup>7</sup> J. Leeuwenberg, Leliefontein Communal Reserve, unpub. B.A. (hons) thesis, U.C.T., 1969, p. 11.

Yet there was a representative of the Colonial Government in the district. He was the veldkornet of the Kamiesberg Ward in the Division of Namaqualand. He was responsible for the collection of house tax and the registration of voters in Leliefontein. Yet the veldkornet had little to say in the running of the Reserve. The missionary's role in running the reserve and the veldkornet's role as a Colonial representative should be seen as complementary, rather than in conflict.

To examine what constituted the Raad, the elective process should be studied. The inhabitants of Leliefontein were divided into certain classes. There was a major class distinction between the burghers or registered occupiers, and the bywoners, who had no claim to the land. There was a high bywoner percentage in Leliefontein. This was due to the fact that during no historical period has the privilege of burgerskap been extended to any newcomer.<sup>8</sup> Since 1824, the missionaries had been aware of the danger of overpopulation and admitted few newcomers to the Mission.<sup>9</sup> Only registered occupiers were allowed to vote for the Raad which was elected annually. Voting was held at the beginning of each year. Two corporals and six raadmen were elected from the Lilyfountain district. Spoeg Rivier and Naaurivier were represented by one corporal and one raadman respectively. The Baster community at Tocco sent a corporal and a raadman to the meetings which were held once a month. Only in

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<sup>8</sup> Burgerskap was hereditary.

<sup>9</sup> J. Leeuwenberg, Leliefontein, p. 76.

exceptional cases did the Raad fail to meet. In 1901 it was recorded: "It was found impossible to hold Raad for several months owing to so many of the Raadsmen being employed as scouts during the Great Boer War."<sup>10</sup> The following year the population was scattered by a raid on Leliefontein by General Maritz's commando. Some fled to O'okiep, others into the hills. All facets of Leliefontein's way of life were disrupted that year. In 1903 the Raad once again met and proclaimed a general harvest to assist the destitute people returning to their homes in Leliefontein.<sup>11</sup>

The Raad carried a wide range of functions of which the most important may briefly be examined. It was empowered to enforce the rules of the station and to raise certain taxes.<sup>12</sup> It was empowered to settle disputes amongst the people and represent the interests of the inhabitants in the numerous land and boundary disputes with neighbouring farmers. The history of the Raad is too long to be recounted, but an example may suffice to illustrate the workings of this body. The Raad was aware of frequent disputes with neighbouring farmers over boundaries. The problem was made worse because Leliefontein was unsurveyed and there were no official documents the burghers could use as definite proof that the land under dispute was theirs. The surrounding farmers took

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<sup>10</sup> Minutes of the Leliefontein Raad, Jan. 1901.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, Jan. 1903.

<sup>12</sup> There was a tax of 10s per year per person towards the salary of the missionary, a tax of 5s for the maintenance of the Reserve, including the repair of roads, dams and agricultural facilities, and a tax of 4s per year towards education.

advantage of this situation and moved their beacons further into Leliefontein land. In 1836 there were so many land disputes, the Raad decided to appoint a committee to define the limits of the land and guard against encroachment. This was, however, little help. In Oct. 1837 Petrus Links alleged that Mr. Jan Strüder of the <sup>farm</sup> Karagiesfontein had moved his beacons into Leliefontein and impounded the cattle belonging to the burghers in that area. The Raad appointed a committee to investigate and it was discovered that both Mr. Studer's chart and the institution's chart showed that the beacons were in the wrong place.<sup>13</sup> The Committee requested Mr. Studer to move his beacons back to the original position. Mr. Studer refused, and the matter was shelved.<sup>14</sup> This is an example of how the reserve lost land. Mr. Meissenheimer claimed that during his long lifetime the boundaries of the institution had, in certain places, moved in as much as four to five miles.<sup>15</sup>

Farmers in the area hired land from the Raad. They were required to pay a monthly sum of money, the amounts varying in accordance with the value of the land used.<sup>16</sup> When farmers used the land without the permission of the Raad, they were asked to withdraw. In times of drought, when all the land was needed, the Raad did not hire land out to the

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13 Minutes of the Leliefontein Raad, Sept. 1837, Oct. 1837, Jan. 1910.

14 C2 - 1838, p. 11.

15 Recorded in conversation with Mr. Meissenheimer, Lilyfountain, 1975.

16 Minutes of the Leliefontein Raad, Jan. 1894.

neighbouring farmers.

In carrying out its duties the Raad was strengthened by the religious authority of the missionary. Its authority was further enforced by the passing of the Act no 10 of 1870 in May of that year. The Act was aimed at establishing rules for the efficient management of communities not subject to Municipal Regulations.<sup>17</sup> The Act ordered that the Rules and Regulations be drawn up and published. The Leliefontein Rules and Regulations had already been drawn up and published under the authority of the 'Ticket of Occupation'. However, the Act of 1870 stated that these Rules and Regulations were to be given the sanction of the Colonial Government. It stated that people contravening the Rules and Regulations would be punished by the Resident Magistrate.<sup>18</sup> The decisions of the Leliefontein Raad now possessed the authority of law.

The strong local administrative role of the Raad and the Missionary began to wane by 1881. The Village Management Act was promulgated in 1881 which specifically repeated the Act of 1870 in "all matters in conflict with the new Act."<sup>19</sup> This Act marked the end of an autonomous and a strong local leadership at Leliefontein.

The Act was similar in many ways to Act no 10 of 1870. Qualifications for membership to the Management Board were the same. Board members and electors were to be registered

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<sup>17</sup> Act no. 10 of 1870, para. 1.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, para. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Act no 29 of 1881, para. I.

occupiers.<sup>20</sup> The times of the meetings, procedure and duties of the Board remained the same. There were differences however. The Magistrate, not the Missionary was to frame the list of registered voters.<sup>21</sup> The magistrate, not the missionary was to preside over the Board of Management.<sup>22</sup> Breaches of the Rules and Regulations were punishable directly by the Magistrate,<sup>23</sup> and not, as formerly by the Raad. The real difference was that the structure of authority had changed. This Act effectively took the force of authority away from the Raad and placed it in the hands of the Magistrate. Since the Magistrate was a representative of Colonial Government, it can be stated that this Act marked the increase of external intervention in the affairs of the Reserve. The repeat of Act no 10 of 1870 meant the repeat of the Rules and Regulations framed under the Act. This meant that theoretically the mission and the Raad had no authority to govern the Reserve. The Missionaries had hoped that because the Act of 1881 had not repealed the Ticket of Occupation, the Rules and Regulations drawn up under this document were still valid. Sir James Rose-Innes of the Native Affairs Office requested legal opinion. "As the institution has now been in existence for, it is believed sixty years, and special reference is made to the administration of its affairs by corporals and overseers, I shall feel

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, para. 9.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, para. 4.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, para. 6.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, par. 21.

obliged by being informed whether the conditions of the Ticket do not exempt the Institution from the operation of Act no 29 of 1881."<sup>24</sup> The Native Affairs Department themselves believed the regulations framed under the Ticket Occupation were valid,<sup>25</sup> but this did not stem the confusion in the Reserve as to who actually held authority. Contrary to the Native affairs department, Rev. Morley-Crampton at Leliefontein believed, "As far as I can ascertain this institution has not been proclaimed a properly constituted community under Act 29 of 1881",<sup>26</sup> hence the Rules and Regulations of 1870 remained operative. The confusion was part of a wide ranging uncertainty as to what the government planned to do with the whole question of Namaqualand Mission lands.

At Lilyfountain the missionary and Raad carried on as best they could and evidence seems to support that in practice there was little real change in the structure of authority.<sup>27</sup> The real difference was that from 1881 to 1909 the authority wielded by the Raad was not backed by official sanction officially backed and the missionary could govern by moral force only. "The missionaries in charge of Leliefontein and Kommagas are probably the most to be pitied" wrote Charles Sculley, Civil Commissioner of Namaqualand ..... "They have no practical authority ..... The slightest attempt making

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24 Sec. for Native Affairs - Sec. of Law Department, Cape Town, 5.4.94.

25 Sec. for Native Affairs - Rev. J. Thomson, 20.4.94.

26 W. Morley-Crampton, Notes on the suggested withdrawal of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Cape Town, 1919.96.

27 Minutes of the Leliefontein Raad, Jan. 1881 - Jan. 1909.

towards progress on their part is met by opposition and petty annoyance. They are expected, solely by moral force to control a people, the majority of whom are indolent." <sup>28</sup> Sculley felt that strong local authority in the reserves was imperative.

The missionaries protested at the state of affairs caused by lack of authoritative control, which together with deteriorating socio-economic conditions in the reserves, was leading to conditions of deterioration and chaos. The missionary was required to be a strong man because he was governing by little more than an illusion of power. Tindall elaborated: "Formally the people abode by the decisions of the Council, by which substantial justice was done, (sic), but of late several have brought them in review by an Agent in the Magistrate's Court, and having succeeded, (involved) the Corporals in heavy costs ..... There has been a disposition on the part of both Attorney General and the Magistrates to curtail their power as much as possible.

"Owing to these legal proceedings and their infavourable issue the Council and Missionary are held in contempt by a great part of the people, and a spirit of disaffection, lawlessness and resistance prevails". <sup>29</sup>

The people were aware of the missionaries lack of power. "These people know of our want of legal power, the men would say, "your regulations do not hold good in law", they knew

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<sup>28</sup> A7-1896, p.12.

<sup>29</sup> H. Tindall, Notes on Lelyfontain, unpub., Cape Town.

that many of these regulations under which they were governed were obsolete." <sup>30</sup>

Rev. G. Robson explained, "In 1887 the regulations were tested by the court at Garies, and the natives got to find out that they were absolutely without law and that everything was done merely by moral influence the result was the whole thing collapsed and from that time to this we have had nothing but a state of chaos." <sup>31</sup>

The Raad's inadequacy to deal with disobedience can be illustrated by the case of Dirk Paul's "rebellion". Dirk Paul had disobeyed the council and they had appealed to the Resident Magistrate in accordance with Act no 10 of 1870. The Resident Magistrate replied that by Act 29 of 1881 the Raad had had no right to try Dirk Paul in the first place. The legal question that arose was concerned with the question whether the Raad had exceeded its powers in trying Dirk Paul. The problem was unsatisfactorily concluded, and the question, how the Raad to govern without authority, remained.

Melville was aware of the chaotic disorder and economic depression in the reserves and felt that the rules had become unsuited to the present times.<sup>32</sup> Melville placed his emphasis on that fact that the Reserves were too large to be governed by one raad. He blamed the communal system of land tenure for many of the problems encountered in the reserves. He suggested that individual tenure would mean the introduction

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<sup>30</sup> 47 - 1896, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>32</sup> 450 - 1890, p.16.

of men of better blood. He did not however, emphasize the point that much of the confusion in that part of the reserve was related to the fact that the raad was not backed by the authority of the central government. The Melville report was not adopted, but the urgency of a necessary solution remained.

The years 1870 to 1896 represented the enfeeblement of the powers of local administration that had been placed in the hands of the missionary and Raad since 1825. Formerly the reserve had been largely autonomous, and isolated. The years following 1881 marked a stage of increased intervention in the affairs of the Reserve, by the Colonial Government.

## 2. AUTHORITY 1896 TO 1913: A REASSESSMENT

By 1896 the situation in the reserves had proved to be untenable. There was a lack of administrative control and greater supervision was needed. "There is a general consensus of opinion amongst the missionaries, past and present, that the existing rules and regulations binding upon these communities, however fitted for former times, ought to be recast. - What is wanted is more law." 33

The real problem involved the land. Leliefontein had the best lands in the district. This feeling was related to scepticism

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33 641 - 1889, p. 10.

about the adequacy of the communal system of land tenure, which was blamed for the retrogression of the reserves.<sup>34</sup> It was thought that the land at Leliefontein was too large to be managed adequately. The dissatisfaction about Leliefontein was part of a general feeling of dissatisfaction about the reserves, both of the state of affairs, inside the reserve, and those relating to its social and economic relationship outside the reserve. The time had come to reassess the situation of the mission stations and reserves in Namaqualand.

Some examination had already begun. In 1888 a select committee met to "Enquire into and report upon the lands in the Division of Namaqualand, set apart for the occupation of Natives and others."<sup>35</sup> They recommended that a report be drawn up on the general condition of the reserve occupants, and on the best way to deal with the land question. They emphasized the inadequacy of the communal type of land tenure to which they partly attributed the retrogression of the reserves, and partly to the way the reserves were administered.<sup>36</sup> There was doubt as to whether much could be done in the way of altering the system of land tenure, because change would involve the surveying of the land, which its inhabitants could not afford.<sup>37</sup>

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34 J. S. Marais, The Cape Coloured People 1652-1937 (Johannesburg, 1968) p. 71.

35 C2 - 1888, p. 2.

36 J. S. Marais, The Cape Coloured People, p. 77.

37 C2 - 1888, p. 13.

Leliefontein, it was reported in the following year,<sup>38</sup> possessed 219, 000 morgen, with 380 pieces under agricultural cultivation. The land was divided into winter and summer grazing, of which neither could be taken from the population: "In fact this institution, were it not for its extent of territory, affording summer and winter grazing, could never support its present population as a farming community."<sup>39</sup>

In 1890 Melville submitted his report, under the instructions of the Legislative Council of 1888. He stated that the institutions have just and well founded claims to be continued and secured in such occupation. The real question involved the extent of the land and under what form of tenure the land should be held.<sup>40</sup> He felt that the communal system of tenure encouraged the inhabitants in habits of indolence: "Possessing the characteristics and habits described, it is not surprising that the present condition of the natives is one of stagnation at some of the institutions, and of distinct retrogression at others."<sup>41</sup> He believed a change in the mode of occupation was essential to secure development and prosperity.<sup>42</sup> His first priority in this question of the Namaqualand reserves was not authority, but land tenure. Melville felt they were related. "If ..... a change of tenure ..... should take place, it must, in my opinion, be

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38 G41 - 1389, p. 4.

39 *ibid.*

40 G60 - 1890, p. 6.

41 *ibid.*

42 *ibid.*, p. 7.

followed by a change in the mode of administering the secular affairs of the Institutions," <sup>43</sup> that is for the administrative system and land tenure system to work, all depended on the mission. "The present system seems to act well only where the resident missionary, who is always the president of the "Raad" or Council, happens to be a strong and judicious man, capable of exerting a powerful influence for good on the members of the Raad as well as on the rest of the community." <sup>44</sup>

Melville suggested individual tenure with the result of the alienation of land of the Reserve from the inhabitants. This meant that by the proposed right of disposal of land to others not belonging to the institution, eventually the institution would cease to exist. Despite protest from Tindall, Melville felt that this fact should "not be allowed to weigh against the advantages the Institution will derive from the introduction of new and better blood by means of the purchase of land by outsiders." <sup>45</sup>

The Melville plans were not adopted. The unsatisfactory situation in the reserves was once again brought up by the Civil Commissioner of Namaqualand, Mr. C. Sculley. He felt the missionaries had had a moral influence amongst the native population, yet "still I think they are all capable of considerable improvement in their management." <sup>46</sup> He suggested a yearly inspection by the Civil Commissioner.

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Colonial Secretary - Under Colonial Secretary, Cape Town, 15.3.87.

Furthermore, he was in favour of giving the missionaries more power, "for dismissing the lazy."<sup>47</sup> The missionaries, he felt, were not to blame for the bad conditions in the reserve: "I have found these gentlemen keenly alive to the evils existing amongst their people, but having no legally constituted authority over their flocks they are not able to coerce them from their lazy and shiftless habits."<sup>48</sup> A remedy would be to provide the missionary or government official with more power to enforce rules and payment of taxes, the punishment being exclusion from the reserve.<sup>49</sup> The bad conditions were impressed upon Mr. Sculley when he made a tour of the district for the census of 1891.<sup>50</sup> He believed the people required control, and drew up a plan for a firmer system of control. The missionaries including Rev. Robson of Leliefontein endorsed his plan.<sup>51</sup> Sculley, when interviewed in 1896 placed the blame for the bad conditions in the reserves on the repeat of Act 10 of 1870 by the Village Management Act: "From 1881 up to the present time these mission stations have been left without authority. There has been no body in existence which has had the slightest power to direct or guide the people, or make any arrangements for the pasturage of their stock, the cultivation of the ground, or for building and anything else ....."<sup>52</sup>

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47 *ibid.*

48 *ibid.* Colonial Secretary - Under Colonial Secretary, Cape Town, 11.12.91.

49 *ibid.*

50 A7 - 1896, p. 15.

51 *ibid.*, appendix XV.

52 *ibid.*, p. 15.

He did not blame the land tenure system, as Melville had done; he felt, as did many others that the communal land system was suited to the nature of the country.<sup>53</sup>

Sculley's plan was that the proceeds of a general rate should be devoted to the expenses of the management of the locations, the payment of Divisional Council rates and a famine reserve fund. He believed there should be a Board of Management with the power to frame regulations. Sculley proposed to reinstate local authority in the reserves - he felt the Raad should be strengthened and allow the missionary to retain his position as chairman. The missionary would also nominate two members of the Raad, as would the Civil Commissioner and two would be elected by the people. This Raad would be given full powers under the Village Management Act.<sup>54</sup> He summed his proposal up:- "My idea is to leave the locations as they are, in as far as tenure goes, and to put regulations in force which will act like a sieve and eliminate the idle and lazy from amongst them."<sup>55</sup> Sculley's proposals were significant because he drew attention to the fact that many of the problems in the reserve resulted from lack of control, arising from the abolition of the regulations framed under and authorized by Act 10 of 1870 by the Village Management Act of 1881.

The Select Committee on the Namaqualand Mission lands and reserves which met in 1896 called for immediate attention

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53 *ibid.*

54 *ibid.*, p. 17.

55 *ibid.*, p. 20

to the problem. The Committee suggested two alternatives one influenced by Melville, favouring individual land tenure<sup>56</sup> and the other influenced by Sculley and the Namaqualand Missionaries, "to bring the reserves under a strict form of local government, prescribing the rights of each individual, and making strict provisions as regards vagrancy". They also suggested that in the case of the latter "the reserve for the missionary or church might also be marked off and vested in the church body by title."<sup>57</sup>

Robson, the missionary at Lilyfontain believed that the communal system of land ownership had never had a fair trial.<sup>58</sup> Because of the Village Management Act it had not been properly backed by the Government. He suggested, like Sculley, a strong Board of Management back by the Government.

The deterioration at Leliefontein continued. In 1902 there occurred an event which paradoxically affected the economy adversely and strengthened the stature and authority of the missionary. Since the older Lilyfontain inhabitants are adamant that this event gave impetus to the concept of their community's identity, it is important that it should be examined. The event was the Boer raid on Lilyfontain in 1902. Despite the complaints of the missionaries about their lack of control in the institution, many inhabitants were known for their loyalty to authority, both the missionary's

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56 G60 - 1870, p.7.

57 A7 - 1896, p. iii.

58 *ibid.*, p. 35.

and the colonial government. In 1879 100 armed Leliefontein volunteers were used against hostile Xerana forces on the Northern border.<sup>59</sup> The reasons given for General Manie Maritz's raid on Lilyfontain are numerous and contradictory. They range from the fact that the Leliefontein inhabitants had remained loyal to the Colonial Government<sup>60</sup> to General Manie Maritz's claim of reading a proclamation.<sup>61</sup> It is probable however that Maritz's commando were eager to obtain the large grain supplies that were stored at Lilyfontain.

The commando was met by Jan Dirks, in charge in the missionary's absence at Lilyfontain in Jan. 1902. Maritz informed him of a proclamation to be read to the people. Maritz claimed that Links had armed men who lay ready in the garden of the parsonage, while the proclamation was to be read.<sup>62</sup> Barnabas Links gathered the men together in anticipation of the announcement. It was the Boer's assumption of authority that angered the people. When the proclamation was read Barnabas Links shouted "Wat er recht het jiy hier."<sup>63</sup> Gen. Maritz shot B. Links, and this was a sign for a general attack. After a skirmish in which more burghers were shot, the people fled. "They, seeing their comrades falling down, fled into their houses, and now the

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59 Colonial Secretary - Rev. T. Tindall, Cape Town, 26.3.79.

60 W. Hewitt - Rev. G. Nuttal Cape Town, 4.2.1902.

61 G. Maritz's papers, Concordia, 1902, Cape Town.

62 *ibid.*

63 "What right have you here!"

armed men rushed forward ....."<sup>64</sup> Ultimately the Commando removed to the surrounding hills at Korenland's Kloof where they continued sniping. Reinforcements were sent by Commandant Schoeman at Van Rhymsdorp to quell the "Rebellion".<sup>65</sup> His reinforcements attacked from the North, Maritz's troops from Korenland's Kloof. Eight burghers had been killed the first day, twenty-two were killed on the second.<sup>66</sup>

The population fled into the hills, some found their way as refugees to Port Nolloth, some to O'okiep. The people were scattered and the Mission closed. When they returned they found their crops gone, their cattle stolen and homes burnt. Rev. Locke who left O'okiep for the Kamiesberg in June 1902 found "an empty store where a few months ago hundreds of bags of grain were stored, as well as many other things useful on such a station as ours in the Kamiesberg. .... It was easily discovered that anything that would burn had been used as firewood, such as gates, wheelbarrow wagons, etc."<sup>67</sup> By the end of the year most of the refugees had returned, possessing nothing but the clothes they stood in.

There was an acute problem of how to feed the people. In 1903 a general harvest was proclaimed and a general division of corn took place. Yet in spite of severe economic

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64 G. Maritz's papers, 1902.

65 *ibid.*

66 *ibid.*

67 Rev. Locke, File no. 4 on the Anglo-Boer War, n.d., Cape Town.

hardship that followed the raid, the authority of the colonial government and the missionary increased. Rev. Locke was decorated for his part in the town of O'okiep when it was under siege. The Lilyfountain people were proud of the achievements of those who had acted as scouts and those who had died were regarded as heroes.<sup>68</sup>

Before Union the long-standing problem of the reserves was again brought forward. Nothing had been done about the recommendations of the Select Committee of 1896.<sup>69</sup> As Union grew closer the problems were seen in a wider context. In 1909 the Cape Parliament passed the "Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act"<sup>70</sup> and the government was given the power to extend certain provisions of the Act to the Namaqualand reserves. The Act reserved the right to grant title to the areas of land occupied by the Mission Society for church, school, residential and other purposes and to determine the societies rights to grazing. The remaining areas of the reserve were to be demarcated for the use of the burghers, whose rights to the land as registered burghers were to be certified.<sup>71</sup> The Board of Management was to consist of nine members, six elected by the registered occupiers and three appointed by the governor, one of whom would be recommended by the Society, and the Resident magistrate, and a government

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68 A plaque exists in the church at Lilyfountain. It is inscribed 'To all those who died while courageously defending their country'. A list of slain burghers follows.

69 W326 - 1932, p.5.

70 A2 - 1909.

71 *ibid.*, p. 5546, para 1.

official, a superintendent, who when present would reside as chairman. He would have a casting vote.<sup>72</sup> There were provisions regarding method of election and tenure of office that were similar to the Village Management Act of 1881. The rights of the Board of Management were similar to those published in 1881 and the Board of Management was to levy taxes from the registered occupiers to "defray the cost of the exercise and performance of its rights, powers and duties."<sup>73</sup> Theoretically by this Act the Missionary lost all secular authority. Far from dominating the Council and having the casting vote, he was empowered only to nominate one member of the Village Management Board.

The Act was implemented in 1913 and the reaction in Leliefontein was immediate and negative. The Missionary protested at his loss of influence. "The law in question, although not in itself harmful, touches our work vitally and its provisions for depriving the missionary of all authority over the secular affairs of his people".<sup>74</sup>

The inhabitants led by Corporal Willem Willems were suspicious of the Act, they felt it was a plan to take the land from them. They resented the fact that although the Missionary Society did not agree with the Act, it had done little to stop it. When they discovered that the leases of the farms Hoorngat and Tweerivieren were to be granted to the

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<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, para 5 (2).

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, para 5 (3).

<sup>74</sup> H. Tindall, Notes on Lilyfontain, n.d.

Missionary Society, they became suspicious of the Church's intentions. "The general suspicion against the new Act as an attempt to filch the land from the people extended to the church." <sup>75</sup> There were differences of opinion as to what areas of land were entitled to the church. The Society had claimed the sites of their churches, parsonages and schools at Lilyfontain, Khakhams and Spoeg Rivier. They Also claimed the Bethel Church, the right to use the Kharu Kamiesburg Lands and rights of grazing and water on the Common-~~age.~~ The people were against the sites being granted to the Church and the Consultative Committee who were implementing the Act, decided for the people. The Wesleyan Missionary Society felt it had been unfairly treated but was prepared to accept the situation except "in regard to the allocation to the community of church buildings erected by the Society, the retention of the ownership and control of which it regards as absolutely essential to the continuance of its operations in Namaqualand where it has laboured for nearly 100 years". <sup>76</sup>

In March 1914 the Prime Minister received a deputation from the Wesleyan Church which protested against the granting of the buildings to the inhabitants. The Society complained of the character of the Consultative Committee which had drawn up the settlement. The Prime Minister promised to look into the matter and decided "that the real cause for complaint

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<sup>75</sup> Rev. O. Thomson - Rev. Robson, 20.8.1913, Cape Town.

<sup>76</sup> Notes of an interview between Rev. G. Robson and Mr. Nalan, Native Affairs Dept., 10.9.1913.

will be removed if the whole matter is submitted to the people concerned so that they may have the opportunity of either associating themselves with, or disassociating themselves from the advice given the Consultative Committee.<sup>77</sup> Finally a decision was arrived at between burghers and the church by which the rights to the buildings and gardens at Lilyfountain were granted, as was the church at Kharkams.

The implementation of the Act did little to ameliorate the conditions in Leliefontein. As Sculley had suggested, local authority was strengthened, but the church now felt that the Raad had too much power and was incompetent. They complained that the work of the church had been crippled by lack of authority, and ill feeling in the implementation of the reserve. The application of the Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act marked a new era in Leliefontein. It was the culmination of the missionary's loss of secular power. It marked the beginnings of direct State intervention in the Reserves and effected the separation of the Methodist Church and politics at Leliefontein.

The real weakness of the Act was that it failed to arrest the social and economic decay. This was partly beyond control. "Since 1913 ..... dark days have descended upon the reserves". There were droughts and the copper mines closed down. There was poverty and a decrease in stock and agriculture. Famine affected the nature of the people. "And the lean hungry

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<sup>77</sup> Notes of an interview between the Prime Minister and a deputation of the Wesleyan Church, 20.3.1914.

years made them apathetic, and almost indifferent to the future." 78

Thus an increase in local authority had not arrested the decay in the reserves. The problem was greater, involving the reserves in growing dependence on outside resources. When these failed, the system collapsed. By 1914 the poverty of the people was well established.

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78 UG 26 - 1932 pp. 5 - 6 .

CHAPTER IV

ECONOMY

1. THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF LELIEFONTEIN

Leliefontein had known years of considerable economic progress, but by 1870 it was clear that the economy and general living conditions were declining. From a position of relative economic and administrative autonomy and self-sufficiency, the reserve was less and less able to support and govern itself. Eventually economic self-sufficiency was impossible and the Reserve became wholly dependent on the economy of the 'outside world' to sustain itself. By the end of the period under study, Leliefontein was totally unable to meet the economic needs of its inhabitants.

There were a number of reasons why Leliefontein became less and less self-sufficient over the years. The most obvious natural cause was drought, and the uncertain climatic conditions in that district. In addition Leliefontein became 'closed in' as farmers settled permanently around them. The Nama were forced to confine their nomadic habits to a definite area and despite the relatively large size of the of the reserve, the inevitable results of being a 'closed in' pastoral people began to appear. There was overpopulation, over-grazing and the soil was worked to the point of exhaustion. Further factors contributing to Leliefontein's growing inadequacy was its absorption into the economy of the district





Sheep shearing at Lilyfontain circa.  
1912

outside the reserve. The process followed the classic example of detribalization and absorption into the industrial and agricultural economy of white inhabitants of Namaqualand. Moreover Leliefontein could not participate in the productive resources of Namaqualand as much as could be desired since the reserve was hampered by isolation and lack of communications such as roads. Leliefontein was thus held back in the economic progress of the district after copper was discovered. In the reserve itself there was stagnation and even retrogression. This can be attributed mainly to the fact that the people opted more and more for relatively unproductive means of support outside the reserve, while within the reserve, they mismanaged their productive resources in such a way as to diminish their productive potential. These factors account in measure to the economic distress that crippled Leliefontein for many years and continues to do so.

Today Leliefontein faces a problem of enormous underdevelopment and the reasons for this can, in measure be traced back to the years under consideration.

The Nama were traditionally pastoralists reputedly



Cattle farming at Quarkhoms.  
circa. 1912.

owning large herds of cattle.<sup>1</sup> The people were scattered, in the North West, and roamed incessantly in search of grazing. "They ranged within the coastal plain south of the Orange River down as far as the Olifants river."<sup>2</sup>

The Nama in the Kamiesberg need both summer and winter grazing veld. There was a small amount of trade in Buchu and mica, but mostly the Nama in the Kamiesberg lived on milk, meat, and roots which they gathered. The poor people relied on these roots to eke out a living.<sup>3</sup>

The colonization of the North-West by the Basters and Trekboers was a gradual process in the course of which many of the Nama lost their lands to the Boers. The Kamiesberg Nama retained their land, primarily due to missionary influence.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. Leeuwenberg, Leliefontein Communal Reserve, unpub. B.A. (hons) thesis (U.C.T., 1969) p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Forley-Crampton lists three types:- the raapuintje or, in Nama, 'nare; the teeruintjie or 'omi and the !uis - !ubi (untranslated). These bulbs are collected in the spring. Forley-Crampton slide lecture, Grahamstown, 1915.

<sup>4</sup> *vide* Ch. I.



Working at the iron forge.  
Lilyfontain circa. 1912.

The Missionaries attempted to settle the scattered groups at Leliefontein, by introducing agriculture. Barnabas Shaw erected an iron forge, built a plough and showed the people how to plough their land and plant seeds. The land was unused and fertile and the growing of wheat, barley and rye was successful. Most of the Nama began to cultivate land as well as maintain their stocks. The missionaries were responsible, therefore for the change in the traditional Nama economy. They moved from pastoral farming to mixed farming. The Nama began to prosper. Tindall used Lilyfontain as an example of a model mission station. In the years of its inception, "the inhabitants who had once been ignorant and poor were now comparatively rich in enlightenment and economy. By 1860 they possessed large numbers of wagons, horses and cattle. All the land available which can be spared from the pasturage were cultivated in wheat and rye." <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> H. Tindall, Two lectures on Great Namaqualand, (Cape Town, 1856) p. 11.

Benjamin Risdale remarked "What a change in the face of the country, and in the habits of the people, since the venerable Barnabas Shaw first asked leave of the old chief Haaimaap to cultivate corn for his own use." <sup>6</sup>

The discovery of copper in Namaqualand had initially added to the prosperity of the Leliefontein inhabitants. High prices were fetched for produce, although as Leliefontein was far from the copper mining areas, it is doubtful to what extent it benefitted on this score. On the other hand inhabitants made money by transport riding. Leliefontein became a comparatively wealthy settlement. Their flocks of goats, sheep and cattle multiplied. In 1855 the inhabitants paid for a large and expensive church to be erected.<sup>7</sup>

Some inhabitants worked for the neighbouring farmers, but this was only to supplement their income. It had not as yet become a necessity, as it did in the later years.

In 1870 the land was an important economic asset. The inhabitants depended on the land for their livelihood, whether in agriculture or stock farming and the majority of burghers were both, they practiced mixed farming. The land was communally owned by the community, and administered for the benefit of the community by the Raad. Registered occupiers had the use of those lands and their produce as

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<sup>6</sup> B. Risdale, Scenes and Adventures in Great Namaqualand (Cape Town, 1883) p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> J. Whiteside, History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa (Cape Town 1906) p. 47.

long as they cultivated them. Occupants could dispose of their land to one another with the consent of the Raad. If land was not used for a number of years, its occupant lost the right to his land. Communal land tenure had obvious drawbacks. "Although each inhabitant may have his plot of garden ground or sowing land, it is not his own, he uses it only on sufferance. Should he make improvements in the way of opening up springs or keeping them in a proper state for supplying his cattle or his garden with water, he cannot claim to benefit alone by such or any other improvements he may make." <sup>9</sup>

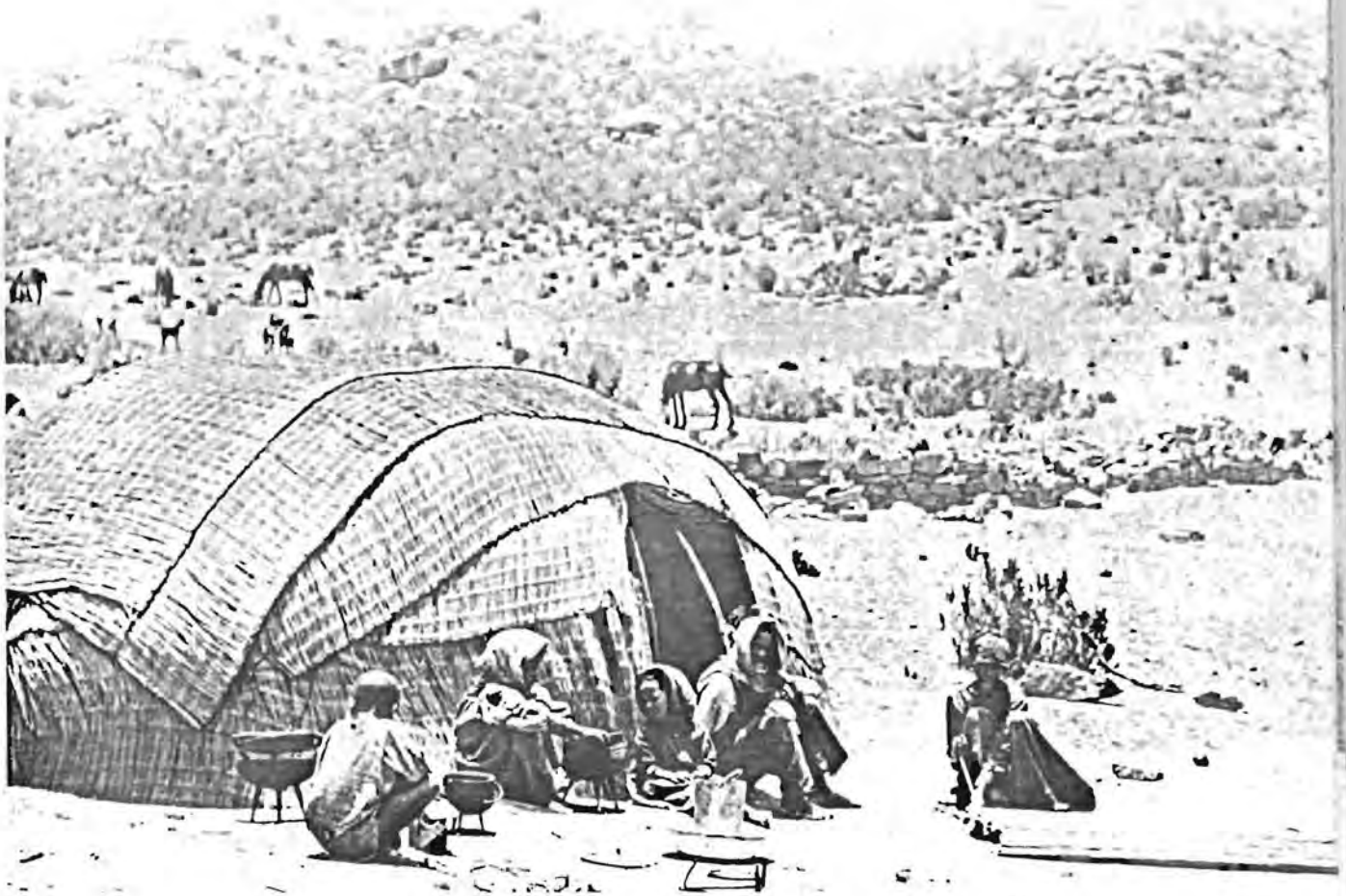
Although individual initiative was stifled, the communal system of land tenure had one overriding advantage - it prevented the alienation of the land from the Coloured people in Leliefontein. This would have been the result of granting individual land tenure to the people.

The land of Leliefontein, although meant to comprise the best in Namaqualand, had really few natural advantages. There <sup>were</sup> few springs, and rivers ran for a few months of the year only. Much of the land was hilly. From the high Kamiesberg the land sloped down to Tweerivieren and Kharkhams. From Kharkhams the land sloped East to the 'onderveld,' the winter grazing land. To the North lay the dry regions of Norap and the desolate Moed Verloeren, or 'Courage Lost'.

In summer the temperature at Lilyfountain was extremely hot and in winter snow had been known to fall and cause

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<sup>9</sup> H. Tindall, Notes on Lilyfountain, private collection, Cape Town, p.3.



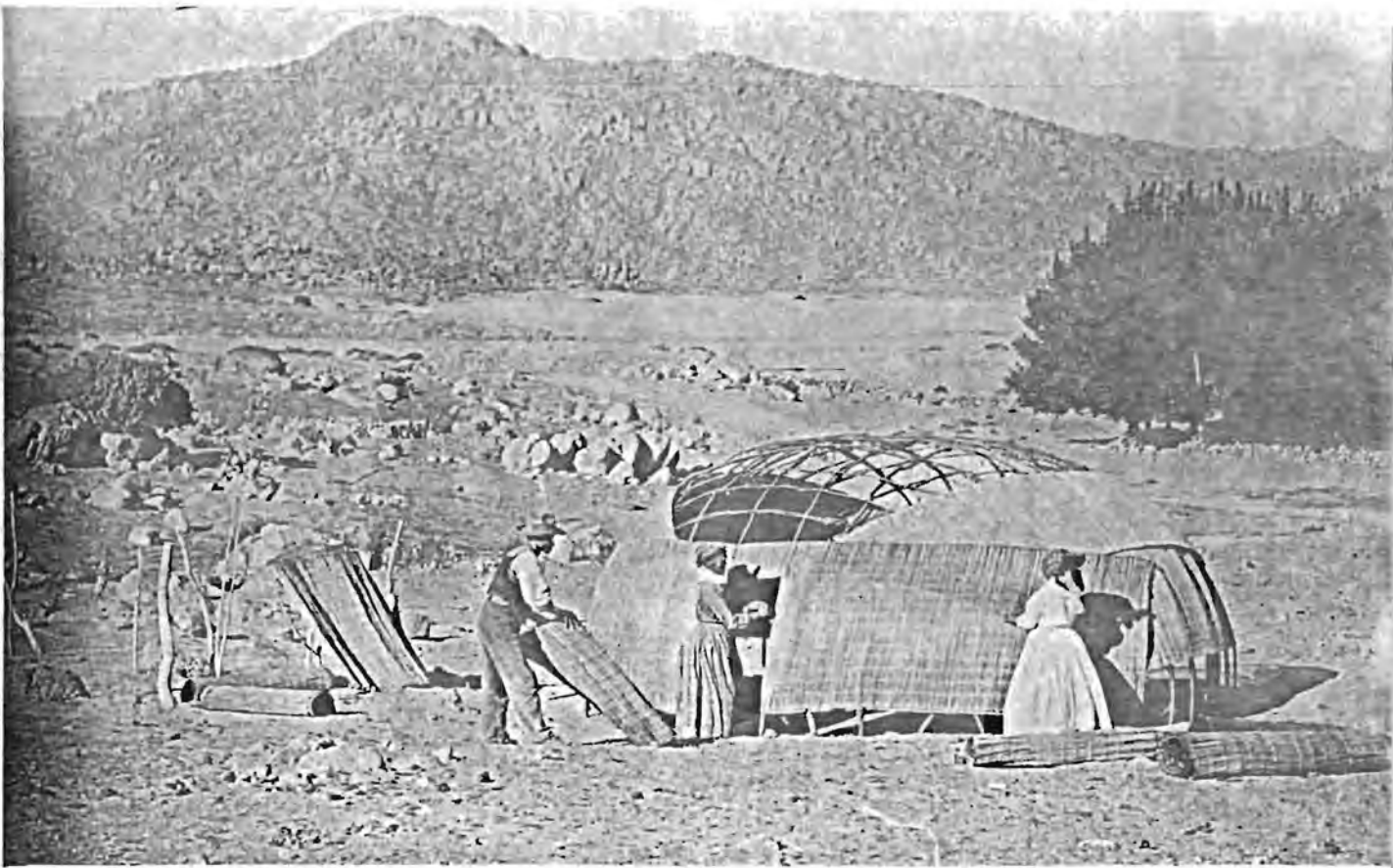
A family outside their home at Lilyfountain Circa. 1912

distress to the people sheltered only by their mat huts.

The fact that the inhabitants 'trek' with the seasons has been discussed together with the fact that the Raad controlled this seasonal migration. The Raad declared each winter, what boundaries were open for pasturage. This, of course depended on the condition of the veld. Pasturage in the onderveld may vary from year to year. In 1887 the Raad declared that the cattle must be moved within the boundaries defined as "East from Naaurivier, West from Draaiklip to Grensvoet and Komshoogte".<sup>10</sup> The following year there was more pasturage available from "the dam of Naaurivier, along

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<sup>10</sup> Minutes of Leliefontein Raad, Aug. 1887.



Building a matjieshuis, Lilyfountain circa. 1912

the mountain South East of the line towards the Winterveld and West of the line as far as Kharkhamshoogte." <sup>11</sup> The following year, there was a scarcity of water at Bethel, and the cattle remained in the Summerveld under the care of a 'lend wagter'.<sup>12</sup> Thus the direction of the migration was dependent on the rainfall and pasturage.

In winter the community moved en masse from Lilyfountain to Bethel, missionary, raad, school, school teacher, pupils and stock. Mobility was easy, the burghers merely packed up their 'matjieshuise' and re-erected them at Bethel or Kharkhams. The matjieshuise were the traditional homes of

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, Aug. 1888.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, Aug. 1889.



Water was scarce in the drought years. Leliefontein circa. 1912

the Nama, suited to mobility and heat, but not to cold. They were reed huts constructed on a wooden framework. The erection of these huts was not haphazard, it was in accordance with specific conditions and traditions.<sup>13</sup>

In the years following 1870 there was a growth of migrant and labour of transport riding for the copper mines. Formerly transactions had been mostly in kind, but these new factors brought into being a introduction of cash economy.

## 2. SOME ASPECTS OF RURAL DECLINE

The theme that reoccurs throughout the years 1870 to

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<sup>13</sup> The first mat is placed round the structure and forms the skirt. It is called ori-!harup, the mat above is the =ani - !harup. The East mat is am-!ap and the West mat the !gus, the mat on top is the lla-!harup. The doorways traditionally faced East for the Nama worshipped the rising sun. Morley-Crampton slide lecture Grahamstown 1915

1913 is deterioration, rooted in economic misfortune and changes in the traditional rural economy of the reserve. The reasons for the slide from 'comparative' rural prosperity into poverty must be examined.

The most obvious factor was drought. In an area well known for its droughts, the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century witnessed a series of severe droughts that crippled the Nama economy. There were a series of droughts in the seventies but the most severe occurred in the years 1831 to 1833. The harvest had been poor in 1831, the dry weather had continued into 1832, and by the following year, the people were destitute, with no harvest, and except for a few emaciated oxen, none of the animals on which their existence depended. The fertility of the land was harmed and most of the springs dried up. All the people in Namaqualand suffered during these drought years, but the worst suffering was felt on the reserves.<sup>14</sup>

"I know that the last three harvests have either been very indifferent, very bad or total failures" <sup>15</sup> wrote the Civil Commissioner, to the Secretary of the relief committee set up in Cape Town, for the purpose of alleviating distress.

The situation on the reserves was worsened by the plight of discharged labourers whom the farmers were unable

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<sup>14</sup> Civil Commissioner - Mr. J. Ellis, 9.3.83.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

to employ.<sup>16</sup> Fortunately for Leliefontein the government had recently undertaken to build a road to Hondeklip Bay, near the reserve. Many men found work on this road, so that in 1883 Barnabas Links stated that there were now only some eight or ten men at the Institution, that the bulk of them were working on the road.<sup>17</sup> To the people who remained on the Reserve especially the aged and infirm, the year was a hard one. The Resident Missionary pleaded for a share in the large scale corn distribution undertaken by the Cape Government and the Relief Committee in Cape Town. He was granted fifty bags of seed on the conditions that should the following harvest be successful "half for every measure received,"<sup>18</sup> should be repayed. If the harvest was a failure, no return was expected. The inhabitants of the reserve were requested to fetch the corn from O'okiep, as draught oxen were so scarce that the Commissioner could not provide the transport. In June the Rev. Gooch requested another fifty bags, but only thirty were granted.<sup>19</sup>

Rain fell in the winter months of 1884 but the drought had left scars on the land. The number of cattle decreased and cattle were replaced by small 'drought' animals such as goats. In 1860 there had been 2 500 head of cattle.<sup>20</sup> In

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16 *ibid.*

17 *ibid.*

18 *ibid.*

19 Civil Commissioner - Under Colonial Secretary, 18.5.83.

20 J. Leeuwenberg, Leliefontein, p. 34.

In 1890 there were 1 400.<sup>21</sup> The small animals nearly doubled between 1860 and 1890.<sup>22</sup> The physical resources of the reserve, never strong, showed marked deterioration which continued into the twentieth century. This was caused by overgrazing, crop failure and population growth.<sup>23</sup> The growing inability to support its inhabitants caused the people to look outward for sources of income. It had always been the complaint of the White farmers that the reserves had not served as the pools of labour they required. The farmers complained they could only get labour from the reserves when the people were not working on their own farms. The farmer regarded reserves as a refuge for the indolent. Fr. C. Sculley called them 'insufferable lotos eaters who keep body and soul together by the least possible exertion, until scarcity sends them whining to farmers.'<sup>24</sup>

The Cape Copper Mining company also complained that in years of good harvests they could not recruit as many members of the reserve as they would have liked to. The Company offered higher salaries than the farmers yet, "the natives prefer living in a thriftless improvident condition on their grounds surrounding the different mission stations."<sup>25</sup> The farmers were anxious that the natives contribute to the economy of Namaqualand. They were not subject to municipal

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*; G60 - 1890, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>23</sup> J. Deeuwenberg, Coloured Citizenship, p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> Civil Commissioner - Under Colonial Secretary, 6.1.92.

<sup>25</sup> Civil Commissioner - Colonial Secretary, 8.4.92

conditions and therefore paid no local taxes. They were liable only for house tax and even this was seldom collected as the people were too poor to pay and arrears were not collected because the people simply moved away. The inhabitants of Leliefontein were required to pay certain taxes within the reserve which were considered rather as church-contributions. The Raad levied a small tax on the inhabitants to pay stock watchers, and repair dams and see to the upkeep of the roads. Unfortunately, these taxes were sometimes difficult to collect.

Farmers and government officials blamed the communal system of land tenure for the difficulties experienced by the reserves. A series of government reports revealed this. In 1890 Mr. S. Melvill proposed a new system of land ownership based on individual tenure, with the right of alienation to others. This report was not accepted and it was Sculley's bill that provided the basis of the Mission Stations and Reserve Act in 1909.

Another drought struck in 1895 and the dependence of the reserve on the external economy for survival increased. There was a marked increase in migratory labour to areas as far away as Cape Town. This meant a further loss of labour in the Reserve and a lack of investment. There was cash filtering into the Reserve, but it was used to buy unproductive articles. At the time of the copper boom in the 1860's, many men from Lilyfontain sold their cattle for oxen for transport riding. This had proved initially successful, but the oxen suffered through lack of pasturage along the journey. Eventually, when the Cape Copper Mining Company's railway was



Poverty at Lilyfontain Circa. 1912.

built from Muishond to Port Nolloth many transport riders were without work. The transport riders at Leliefontein had also suffered in the 1860's when the Company had reorganized the transport line to Port Nolloth instead of Hondeklip Bay, which was nearer to Leliefontein. Finally there was no market for labour when the Cape Copper Mining Company was terminated in 1919.<sup>26</sup>

Liquor was a danger to social improvement. The men working in the mines, the transport riders and farm labourers spent a large quantity of their pay on alcohol. A canteen was established as near the Reserve as Garies and excessive drinking became an unfortunate factor in the social and

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<sup>26</sup> J. M. Smalberger, The History of Copper Mining in Namaqualand (Cape Town, 1975) p. 83.

economic deterioration of the reserve. J.S. Karais sums up the problem "..... until the days of copper, canteens and contact with Europeans they (the Nama) made appreciable progress under the guidance of the missionaries." 27

Leliefontein was faced with problems of economic underdevelopment, social problems that were caused by influences from outside the reserve and problems of a rural community in many ways still isolated. The inhabitants could not find markets for their produce and yet were being drawn into the wider economy of the district. This increased involvement was draining the reserve of its most important resources, its manpower, education and the wealth spent in the towns instead of productive use within the reserve.

The Boer War caused disturbing factors which were but repetitions of the factors already at work. The natural assets of the reserve, cattle, sheep and goats were exchanged for money and wagons to be used in the war. "On the sudden conclusion of hostilities the people were saddled with wagons and mules to them now practically valueless with the resultant effect of greater poverty." 28

The Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act had done little to ameliorate the conditions. There were further droughts and the year 1913 saw the reserve exhausted and the natural resources in a state of decline. The increased intervention of the outside world and the increased involvement

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27 J. S. Karais, The Cape Coloured People 1552 - 1937 (Johannesburg, 1968) p. 76.

28 UG 26 - 1932, p.5.

of Leliefontein with the outside economic system had proved disastrous to the Reserve itself, although in their involvement within the communities outside the Reserve, many benefitted by the education they had received at Leliefontein.

### CONCLUSION

The striking fact about Leliefontein in years preceding 1913 was its initial success and then its decline. The Reserve in the early nineteenth century possessed relatively good natural resources, the inhabitants had possessed fairly large numbers of stock and had a fair amount of large under cultivation. There was a firm system of control.

By 1913 there had been a series of misfortunes and the community had retrogressed into relative poverty. Furthermore, in 1881 the authority backing the administrative structure had broken down and between 1881 and 1913 the administration of the Reserve was in a chaotic state.

J. Leeuwenberg has stated that the period of missionary rule, that is, the period 1825-1913, represented the nearest the Reserve ever got to equilibrium.<sup>1</sup> This is not entirely correct. The period of confusion about authority between 1881 and the implementation in 1913 of the Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act witnessed the end of the Reserve as a self-contained economic and social unit. Moreover the years 1870-1913 saw the start of a change in Leliefontein from a relatively autonomous unit to an area under the control of an official of the Government. By 1913 the Raad was ostensibly subordinate to the Resident

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<sup>1</sup> J. Leeuwenberg, Leliefontein Communal Reserve, unpub. B.A. (hons) thesis, (U.C.T., 1969) pp. 53-54.

Magistrate, although in practice the missionary continued to fill his position on the Management Board until 1952 when he was asked to vacate his seat by the Coloured Affairs Department. Today the Raad is directly subordinate to the Coloured Affairs Department.

In the sphere of economy, Leliefontein underwent a change from a relatively self-sufficient community to a community wholly dependent on outside resources. The change was from an independent to a peasant community. These changes in the structure of the Reserve have been caused as a result of interaction with the outside world, by either extending the social and economic boundaries of the Reserve, or by the introduction of new elements into Leliefontein itself.<sup>2</sup> Interaction was the product of a gradual intrusion of institutions of the outside world into the affairs of Leliefontein: "the development of interaction with the outside world in general through alien institutions such as the Church and the schools, has tended also to stimulate people to further and more intense external interaction and encourage them to achieve a higher standard of living."<sup>3</sup> Yet this interaction was not necessarily a willing, or even an unconscious process. As Peter Carstens has remarked, pressure was brought to bear on the reserves and they resisted.<sup>4</sup> The Mission Stations and Communal Reserves Act is an example of

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<sup>2</sup> P. Carstens, The Social Structure of a Cane Coloured Reserve (Cape Town, 1966) pp. 53-54.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

this, for although the Act was strongly opposed by the burghers, they witnessed its execution in Leliefontein. Eventually the structure that the Act imposed upon the burghers was accepted.

The results of changes in the reserve are deeply felt by the community, especially the older generation. They do not possess the optimism and the education of the younger people. There is a sense of sadness and defeat. Except at holidays, Leliefontein is empty of the young people who form the bulk of the migrant labour exodus from the Reserve. This is a drain on the vitality and identity of home life on the Reserve, although many of the remaining inhabitants depend on the money sent home to the reserve to survive. "The strength in the war between tradition and change is inclined away from tradition by a third factor, the gradual process of education and migration in the battle of families."<sup>5</sup>

Yet most of those away express a desire to return, despite the fact that Leliefontein can offer little in the way of economic resources. The land is overworked and overcrowded, yet the migrant workers always return, even to retire, twenty to thirty years hence.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> J. Leeuwenberg, Leliefontein Communal Reserve, Coloured Citizenship in South Africa, (ed) R. Whisson and H. v.d. Merwe (Cape Town, 1972) p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> Recorded in conversations with Rev. E. Coombe and Rev. Mackenzie Fraser, Oct. 1975 and Feb. 1976.

The inhabitants regard the land as theirs, and it provides a sense of security to those who eventually settle there. There is a sense of identity at Leliefontein especially among the old people. Despite large social distinctions on the grounds of wealth and education, the people have common ties of belonging to a single race, the Coloured Community, to the Methodist Church and to Leliefontein itself. These ties have been weakened to a certain extent by the migratory labour pattern because the migrants only return to the reserves for short periods of time.

The values generated by the Methodist Church in the period of their control have lasted in some cases as the traditions of some of the people. These values have an important modifying effect on the way in which new ideas are accepted. Thus social attitudes are not only generated by the external influences moving into the Reserve, but by the resources within the reserve itself. Despite the theoretical loss of secular power, the missionary continued to wield a great deal of power in the reserve until the nineteen fifties. His influence over the Raad continues to be considerable, as does the influence of the church in religious and social matters.

At Leliefontein in 1817 Barnabas Shaw remarked, "O this dark Africa! this solitary land, this land of darkness, fatigue and non-improvement."<sup>7</sup> He did not know it but

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<sup>7</sup> B. Shaw, quoted in J. Whiteside, History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa (Cape Town, 1906) p. 43.

his despairing sentiments foreshadowed the outcome of the missionary effort at Leliefontein. Subsequent missionaries and Raad members have made tremendous efforts to serve Leliefontein. In some spheres, notably in education and religion, their efforts have been successful, but in material terms their great efforts have not met with success. "Grinding poverty is present everywhere: in housing, clothing and health, and it is felt to be poverty".<sup>8</sup> Missionaries looking at this situation may issue the sentiments of Barnabas Shaw.

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<sup>8</sup> J. Leeuwenberg, in Coloured Citizenship, p. 13.

RULES and REGULATIONS  
of the  
KAMIES BERG  
WESLEYAN MISSIONARY INSTITUTION

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1. That the Institution may be so managed as will best promote the temporal and spiritual interests of the people, two Overseers shall be appointed to assist the Resident Missionary, whose business it shall be to apprise the inhabitants of all necessary public works, to superintend the affairs of the Station generally, and to maintain the Rules and Regulations of the Institution.
2. That the Overseers shall continue in office two years, one retiring on the first day of January in each year, whose successor shall be elected by a majority of votes; all the male inhabitants, above eighteen years of age, being allowed to vote on the occasion.
3. That six Councilors shall also be chosen on the first day of January in each year to assist the Overseers, making eight officers in all, who, in connexion with the Resident Missionary as Chairman, shall constitute a full and sufficient Council for the management of the Institution, and for the settlement of all disputes among the people. But should anyone be dissatisfied with the decision of the Council, he shall be allowed to appeal to the Resident Magistrate of the District.
4. That the Council shall meet to transact all necessary business on the first Monday of every month, or oftener if

necessary, and the Overseers shall give due notice of such meetings to the members of the Council, and if any member of the Council be unable to attend, in consequence of sickness or urgent private business, he shall give timely notice to the Overseers that they may appoint a proper person to act for him.

N.B. The proceedings of the Council shall be recorded, and the Chairman will see that the necessary Books are provided for the purpose.

5. Any persons wishing to live on the Institution, must apply to the Overseers, who shall submit their names to the Council for the purpose of ascertaining its decision as to whether they are fit and proper persons to be admitted, and the said Council shall have the right to receive such persons on trial for a period not exceeding two years, at the expiration of which probationary period, they shall be acknowledged as residents on the Station and enjoy all its privileges accordingly.

6. Every family residing on the Institution shall attend Divine Service on the Lord's Day, unless they are herding cattle or otherwise necessarily engaged; but all trading and other unlawful employments are strictly prohibited.

7. All children on the Institution, above five years of age, shall attend the Week-day and Sabbath Schools, and no parent shall be allowed to take a child from school without the permission of the teacher, and should any dispute arise between the parents and the teacher, the Resident Missionary shall decide the same.

8. To encourage industry among the people of the Institution, any of them desirous of doing so shall be at liberty

to engage in the service of the neighbouring farmers, but before entering into any lengthened engagement, they shall make known their intention to the Overseers, who shall report the same to the Missionary that he may have the opportunity of giving the parties suitable advice as to the nature and period of their servitude; and in case of any one leaving the station without permission, or being absent more than two years, it shall be lawful for the Council to lend his corn lands to some other person; but should he not return within five years he shall forfeit all claim to his improvements, with the exception of his dwelling house, should he have one.

9. That any person desirous of cultivating a garden or field shall, upon application to the Council, obtain suitable garden ground, or unoccupied arable land, so far as the capabilities of the Station will allow, of which a full description, with his name, shall be entered in a book kept for the purpose; and it shall thenceforth be considered as his property, subject to the Rules and Regulations of the Station. And should any person having either field or garden wish to transfer it to another person, he shall be allowed to do so and receive the value of his improvements thereon, provided the person obtaining possession of it is a resident of the Institution, and approved by the Council.

10. In allotting land for cultivation the following rules shall be observed:- 1. Four morgen of land shall be granted to every man who has the means of cultivating the same; and 2, To such as can cultivate more than four morgen any further grant may be made which the Council may deem requisite.

11. To encourage building on the Station, a building lot shall be granted to every applicant on such part of the Institution ground as may be available for the purpose and the building erected thereon shall be his own personal property, as every thing else in his possession, except that on leaving the Station he must dispose of it, by sale or otherwise, to a resident on the Station, and to no other person. And should the owner of the house and land die, both shall become the property of his widow, or other lawful heir, or heirs, subject to the Rules and Regulations of the Institution.

12. To enable the children to attend school, and the men to engage in service, the Council shall hire as many herdsmen as may be necessary to tend the cattle, and horses &c. belonging to the community in general, and levy a tax upon all the inhabitants, according to the number of their stock, for the payment of such herdsmen.

13. The Council shall have power to make all necessary arrangements for grazing all kinds of stock on the lands of the Institution, and no person shall move from one part of the said lands to another, with his horses, cattle or sheep without permission from the Council. And as it is necessary to make special provision for the milch cows and draft oxen, the Council shall decide upon, and, from time to time, point out to the people the parts of the lands reserved for that purpose, and should any owner of sheep and goats, allow his flock to trespass on these reserved parts, it shall be lawful for the Council to fine him to the value of one sheep or goat for every such offence; but it must be distinctly understood that this law does not apply to a person

having a few slaughter sheep or goats with the flocks of others.

14. It being necessary for all the people to move from Lily Fountain to Bethel every winter, they shall do so at such time as the Council directs, after the usual ploughing season, and return again to Lily Fountain at such time in the spring as the Council may think proper to fix for getting in the harvest, and to prevent the destruction of the standing crops, the Council shall decide what number and description of stock is to be taken to the Station, as also to make provision for the remainder of the stock left in the onderveld.

15. To prevent disputes about trespasses in corn fields, a pound shall be established on the Station, from October to the end of February, and the Council shall appoint a pound-master, who shall receive all cattle and horses trespassing on corn lands, making such charge per head for his trouble as the Council shall appoint, as also to collect the amount for damages as may be fixed from year to year; but should anyone estimate the damage done to his corn at a higher rate than that fixed by the Council, he shall report the same to the Overseers, and they shall value the damage done, and require the owner of the cattle to pay accordingly.

16. As the ponds and fountains require cleaning, and the dams repairing, it shall be lawful for the Council to call the people together, to arrange for these services when necessary, and to tax the inhabitants according to the number of stock to defray the expense incurred thereby. The same plan shall be adopted for making roads on the lands of the Institution. And should any other work for the

public benefit be deemed necessary it shall be lawful for the Council to summon the people together, and select parties of men who, from time to time, shall perform such labour without any remuneration except their food.

17. In order to guard the morals of the people, the manufacture or vending of spirits, Namaqua beer, or any other intoxicating liquors, on the Institution is prohibited.

And if any person belonging to the Institution should be found guilty of making or selling any of the aforesaid liquors, or of drinking them to excess, the Council shall procure his removal from the Station by an application for that end to the Resident Magistrate of the District.

18. Should any additional Rules and Regulations at any time be found necessary, they shall first be compiled by the Council, and then submitted to the next District Meeting of Wesleyan Ministers for the approval and sanction. By their authority these Rules and Regulations have been compiled from the books of the Institution.

19. It is to be distinctly understood that these Rules and Regulations are intended solely for the civil management of the Institution, and have no bearing whatever upon the administration of Church discipline.

20. The foregoing Rules and Regulations are in harmony with the conditions on which the Institution lands are settled upon the people, by the Colonial Government, and so must all future ones.

21. So far as the circumstances of the Station called Norap agree with those of Lily Fountain, these Rules and Regulations shall be applicable thereto.

N.B. The officers who are here called Overseers are the same as those who were formerly designated Corporals.

## CRITICAL NOTE ON SOURCES

The study of the history of Namaqualand is relatively unexplored and material for this field of history is very scarce. However, I gained much valuable information from the anthropologists who have worked in this field. Peter Carstens' study of Steinkopf "The Social Structure of a Cape Coloured Reserve" proved helpful as a parallel study. In Leliefontein itself, Jeff Leeuwenberg has conducted fairly extensive field work and both his social Anthropology thesis on Leliefontein and his article in "Coloured Citizenship in South Africa", edited by M. Whisson and H. Van der Merwe, were helpful. Oral evidence proved as useful to the historian as to the anthropologist, as many events of local history were provided by the people themselves.

The mission documents at Lilyfontain were disappointing for most material prior to 1902 had been burned by the Boer Commando. The Raad Minutes were most informative and they supplied the bulk of my historical research. The Methodist private collection in whose possession the Raad minutes remain, provided useful, if scattered sources of information in the shape of correspondence and memoranda about mission affairs.

General Methodist church histories gave little new information. An exception to this rule was J. Whiteside's study volume, "A History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa". The problem constantly encountered in viewing Leliefontein through the history of the missions, was that the period under study was not the 'popular' period in Church history. It was on the early years so ably described by

Barnabas Shaw in his "Memorials of South Africa", that the reputation of Leliefontein rested. Less was known about the later period, the period of decline. J. S. Marais deals competently, although briefly, with the decline of the reserves, in "The Cape Coloured People 1652-1937". Unfortunately he favours Mr. S. Melville's reasons for the decline of the reserves rather than viewing the deterioration of the reserves in the light of the evidence provided by the Civil Commissioner, Mr. C. Sculley.

The growing concern in Government circles about the bad socio-economic conditions of the reserves, provided a rich source of information in the form of Reports on Reserve Conditions. The Legislative and Select Committee Reports provided much practical information as well as a guide to Governmental policy.

The official correspondence of the Magistrates and the Civil Commissioner's provided much useful information about the Reserves in general, but little on Leliefontein in particular. Because of the pressure of time, the sources at the Cape Town Archives were not explored as fully as they might have been. There is much future research to be done in this quarter.

To sum up, I had great difficulty in finding material, partly because much of it has been destroyed or lost, and partly because historical inquiry into Namaqualand and the Coloured reserves has been extremely meagre. But the evidence that did come to light, often provided exciting insights into the local history of Leliefontein.

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## VII. PHOTOGRAPHS

Slides from the Morley Crampton slide lecture, delivered in 1915, Lilyfontein 1975.

## VIII. MAP

Map of Leliefontein, W.F. von Ludwig, June, 1856, G60-1890, appendix I.