

**Kat River Revisited**

**Susan Isabel Blackbeard**

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### **Note on ethnonyms**

Although I use the ethnonym Khoikhoi for “Hottentots”, the latter is used without pejorative or racist intentions in quotations, as are other colonial terms such as “Gonah” and “Fingoes”. Similarly, following my interviewees—who refer to themselves as “coloureds”—I use this term without pejorative or racist intentions.

### **Note on orthography**

I have used the coloured spelling of Tamboekiesvlei in preference to the colonial form, Tambookiesvlei. Similarly I have used the more phonetic spelling, Makanzana, in place of Mancazana.

The military abbreviations I have used are based on those of the Canadian military abbreviations.

### **Disclaimer**

Ethics clearance was obtained for the interviews. The interviewees signed permission forms which are lodged in the in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town.

For my interviewees,  
and in memory of those who have subsequently passed away

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## Abbreviations

A	Accessions
ANC	African National Congress
BPP	British Parliamentary Papers
CA	Western Cape Archives Depot, Cape Town
CLR	Commission of Land Rights
CO	Colonial Office
CPP	Cape Parliamentary Papers
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
DRDLR	Department of Rural Development and Land Redistribution
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
GMS	Glasgow Missionary Society
GTJ	Grahamstown Journal
LG	Lieutenant Governor
LMS	London Missionary Society
PE	Port Elizabeth
RLRA	Restitution of Land Rights Amendment (Act)
SC	Report on the Select Committee of Aborigines 1834-37
SCA	South African Commercial Advertiser
VGK	Verenigde Gereformeerde Kerk (United Reformed Church)

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## Preface

In 2011, after teaching the Kat River Rebellion (1850–1853) to second year students in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town, I realised that I needed to visit the area in which the Rebellion occurred, in order to find out more about it from “the underside”.<sup>1</sup> Hence my first trip to Kat River to ascertain whether memorials existed, or were being planned, to commemorate people who had fought in the Rebellion, in an area host to many memorials and sacred places. The latter, for example, comprise the grave of Ntsikana, Chief Ngqika’s counsellor and the first Xhosa convert to Christianity (d. 1821) at Twatwa; the grave of the Rev Joseph Williams on the Kat River near Fort Beaufort (d. 17 August 1818);<sup>2</sup> the grave of the Rev James Read Sr (d. 1852) in the Philipton churchyard, and the grave of a Khoikhoi victim of the War of the Axe (d. 1846) at the confluence of the Kluklu/Xuxuwe and Kat Rivers.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 1 Rev Williams’ grave, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

<sup>1</sup> Paul Thompson, “The Voice of the Past: Oral History” in *The Oral History Reader*, 2nd Ed., eds, Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 29.

<sup>2</sup> One of the earliest London Missionary Society missionaries to the eastern frontier, Joseph Williams founded a mission on the Kat River in 1816, near present-day Fort Beaufort. He died there, aged 38, two years later, leaving a wife and two small children. See Basil F. Holt, *Joseph Williams and the Pioneer Mission to the South-Eastern Bantu* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1954).

<sup>3</sup> See Susan I Blackbeard, “‘An unprecedented but significant atrocity’: A Window into the War of the Axe, 1846–1847”, *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 67, no. 2 (June 2015), 1-20.



Figure 2 Ntsikana's grave at Twatwa, 2014 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)



Figure 3 Grave of the Khoikhoi victim of the War of the Axe, 2012 ((Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

My first interviews were conducted on an ad hoc basis. My Xhosa interpreter, Des Kopke, and I travelled though a very wet Kat River Valley in his old Mercedes Benz, from Lower Blinkwater to Balfour, stopping at intervals to interview random people. Apart from a group of subsistence farmers in Lower Blinkwater, one of whom recognised the name Hermanus Matroos, and an elderly man who remembered stories of *Oom Paul se Oorlog* (Uncle Paul [Kruger's] War/ the Second Anglo-Boer War), and a couple at Fairbairn who claimed to be related to the rebels, Ruiters and Geswindt, we found no knowledge of the Rebellion.

Subsequent interviews were set up in advance, with Professor Jeff Peires<sup>4</sup> recommending Pieter Johannes (Hymie) Groepe and Tom Pringle to me as interviewees. This set the ball rolling in the community, and other interviewees were suggested or came forward. Apart from Hymie and Hermanus (Manie) Loots, the former's uncle, there was little knowledge of the Rebellion, although the memories of the 1980s forced removals were strong, and the progress of their current land claims of paramount concern.

As my first interview with Hymie unfolded, with stories of his great-great-great grandfather, Field-commandant Christian Jacobus Groepe and his Kat River Levy/militia in the frontier wars of 1834-35 and 1846-47, I began to realise the militaristic importance of the Kat River Settlement during its heyday, and the traditions and myths that it gave rise to. Similarly, I perceived that Christian Groepe's role in the development of the Kat River Settlement and his stance during the Rebellion needed revisiting; as did the Kat River Levy's in the sixth, seventh, and eighth frontier wars, and a reconstituted form of it in subsequent local wars. It also became apparent that little has been written on the coloured people's land claims in the Groepeskloof, Tamboekiesvlei, Hertzog, Bellvale, and Cathcartvale areas—a subject that is as close to their hearts as the legendary Christian Groepe.

While considering the terms of original tenure, I was also struck by the importance attached to cultivation in Kat River, with the British Colonial office, Cape governors, Andries Stockenstrom, Dr John Philip, and local officials indefatigably promoting it. This led to my enquiry into cultivation ideology, the political effects of it on the Settlement, the racist connotations it acquired, and the way in which, after the Rebellion, subsistence cultivation was increasingly jeopardised by commercial farming

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<sup>4</sup> Formerly of Rhodes University, and currently Professor of History at the University of Fort Hare, Eastern Cape, South Africa, Jeffrey Peires is the author of various works on the amaXhosa and abaThembu, and was the first to write a history of the former from the Xhosa point of view.

This thesis—based on six years of interviews with this pocket of Kat River inhabitants/former inhabitants, tested against primary and secondary sources, and analysed and interpreted with reference to various theories—attempts to address these topics, as well as the much-neglected role played by women in the history of Kat River.



Figure 4 Blinkwater interviewees, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)



Figure 5 Lower Blinkwater, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)



Figure 6 Philipton interviewees, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

## Introduction

### Kat River historiography

Kat River Settlement historiography—inevitably intertwined with that of the eastern frontier—began with its founder, Andries Stockenstrom, who described it in his autobiography, pamphlets,<sup>5</sup> parliamentary speeches, and before Thomas Fowell Buxton's Select Committee on Aborigines (1835-37).<sup>6</sup> During the latter, the Kat River Settlement was one of the foci as a novel humanitarian experiment in the British colonies. Witnesses to its success included former Cape Colony governors or acting governors, such as Sir Rufane Donkin and Lt-Col T. F. Wade, officers such as Major W. B. Dundas, Capt R. Scott, and Capt C. Bradford, and missionaries, such as Dr John Philip,<sup>7</sup> the Rev Stephen Kay, the Rev William Shaw, the Rev James Read Sr and his son James Read Jr, and the Khoikhoi witness, Andries Stoffels, and the minor Xhosa chief, Jan Tzatzoe (Dyani Tshatshu).<sup>8</sup> Besides Philip and the Reads, Stoffels and Tshatshu were the star witnesses at Buxton's Committee and depended upon, as “genuine representatives of the native peoples” to draw crowds (which they did).<sup>9</sup> Not only did they promote the Kat River Settlement, but they supported Philip in his denunciation of the reprisal system/commandos and military violence against the

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<sup>5</sup> Andries Stockenstrom, *Light and Shade, as shown in the Character of the Hottentots of the Kat River Settlement . . . a Speech by . . . Sir Andries Stockenstrom, in the Legislative Council of the Cape of Good Hope*, Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1854. See also C. W. Hutton, ed., *Autobiography of the late Sir Andries Stockenstrom, Bart., Sometime Lieutenant-Governor of the Eastern Province of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope*, 2 vols (Cape Town: Juta, 1887), 2: 417-26.

<sup>6</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements), *Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements) together with the minutes of evidence, appendix and index*, [London]: House of Commons, H.C. 538 of 1836; and H.C. 425 of 1837, Report of the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements), together with the minutes of evidence, appendix and index, [London]: House of Commons. [Hereafter, the abbreviation SC will be used.]

<sup>7</sup> Although initially opposed to the idea of the Kat River Settlement, after the Reads were installed there he extolled its progress to Pringle and the LMS, “in keeping with the need to prove the evangelical viewpoint”. See Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire*, 157, 251.

<sup>8</sup> See for example, SC 1836, Evidence of Andrew [sic] Stoffels, 27 June 1836, 5071-5076 (p. 588).

<sup>9</sup> Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire*, 210. Jan Tshatshu had also acted as translator to missionaries in Xhosaland and was himself an evangelist. *Ibid.*, 207. Stoffels became ill during his two years with Read in Britain during and after the Aborigines Commission and died, soon after returning to Cape Town, at Green Point (the philanthropic merchant, Henry Rutherford's farm). *Ibid.*, 213. In 1835 Tshatshu requested that the Reads be allowed to return to Kat River; and Stoffels asked for the return of their land to his community. Alfred Buckner, *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005), 75-76.

amaXhosa.<sup>10</sup> Additional comment on the Kat River Settlement was provided by visiting humanitarians such as the Quaker, James Backhouse and his companion, George Washington Walker,<sup>11</sup> and the Revs J. Freeman<sup>12</sup> and H. Renton.<sup>13</sup>

Initially, Robert Godlonton, co-editor and later sole editor of the *Grahamstown Journal*, praised the Kat River Settlement,<sup>14</sup> but after the 1834-35 frontier war he spared no invective against it and the “wicked ungrateful dogs” (the Khoikhoi settlers).<sup>15</sup> Similarly disenchanted, Albany settlers, John Centlivres Chase and John Mitford Bowker,<sup>16</sup> attacked the Settlement in letters to the press, addresses, pamphlets and other publications. These and other attacks were rebutted by the editor of the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, John Fairbairn,<sup>17</sup> the co-editor and champion of the first free press in South Africa, Thomas Pringle,<sup>18</sup> Dr John Philip,<sup>19</sup> and Sir Andries Stockenstrom, who continued to defend the Settlement after the Kat River Rebellion (1851-53).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire*, 207, 210-11.

<sup>11</sup> James Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa* (London: Hamilton, 1844), 321-325. See also “Testimony borne by Messrs. Backhouse and Walker, Members of the Society of Friends,” Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 416-17.

<sup>12</sup> J. Freeman, *A Tour of South Africa* (London: John Snow, 1851). Freeman was an Evangelical clergyman whom Philip persuaded to take charge of the Union Chapel in Cape Town during his absence in Britain between 1835 and 1837. Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire*, 202. In 1849, when Baines was visiting the Settlement, Freeman preached at Philipton. Baines, 1: 180.

<sup>13</sup> During Major-General Somerset's absence during the Kat River Rebellion, the Rev Renton collected depositions and statements from rebels in Philipton. For Renton's letter to Commdt T. Stubbs of the Albany Rangers, which was read to the Grahamstown Committee of Enquiry on 5 April 1851, see R. Godlonton and E. Irving, *Narrative of the Kaffir War 1834-1835 and 1850-1851-1852*, 2 vols. (Cape Town: Struik, facsimile repr., 1962), 322-23.

<sup>14</sup> See R. G., “The Kat River Settlement”, the *Grahamstown Journal*, 8 June 1832.

<sup>15</sup> See Robert Godlonton and E. Irving, *Narrative of the Kaffir War 1834-1835 and 1850-1851-1852*, 2 vols. (Cape Town: Struik, facsimile repr., 1962), and Read, *Kat River Settlement*, 36.

<sup>16</sup> See Chase's letters in the *Grahamstown Journal*, November 1839; and *Speeches, Letters, and Selections from the . . . Papers of the late John Mitford Bowker . . . Resident and Diplomatic Agent with certain Kaffir and Fingo Tribes*, ed., J. Bowker (Grahamstown, 1864, rpt. Cape Town: Struik, 1962).

<sup>17</sup> The *South African Commercial Advertiser* was launched on 7 January 1824 by Fairbairn and Pringle. Governor Lord Charles Somerset banned it twice (5/05/1824-31/08/1825, and 10'03/1827-3/09/1828). Pringle resigned in 1824. Fairbairn (who had married Philip's daughter) continued as editor, through several mergers, until his death in 1864.

<sup>18</sup> See Thomas Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa* (London, 1835, rpt. Cape Town: Struik, 1966), and R. Vigne, ed., *The South African Letters of Thomas Pringle* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> John Philip, D. D., *Researches in South Africa, Illustrating the Civil, Moral, and Religious Condition of the Native Tribes: including Journals of the Author's Travels in the Interior* (London: J Duncan, 1828).

<sup>20</sup> See Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 427-44 and HC 424 of 1851, Stockenstrom's speech to the House of Commons, 19 May, 1851.

Other contemporary accounts relating to the inception of the Kat River Settlement include reports by Civil Commissioner James Rose-Innes and Judge Menzies, and the anonymous “Notes on the Formation of the Kat River Settlement in the year 1828 and some of the subsequent events compiled from the most authentic sources by a Lady”.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, John Green’s pamphlet, *The Kat River Settlement*<sup>22</sup> and James Read Jr’s letters to *The South African Commercial Advertiser*, reprinted as *The Kat River Settlement in 1851*, are well-known sources of information on the Kat River Rebellion.<sup>23</sup>

The lesser-known unpublished diary of Sarah Ralph—the daughter of a Fort Beaufort commissioner—provides fresh information on Hermanus Matroos’s attack on Fort Beaufort,<sup>24</sup> as does the diary of Isaiah Staples on attacks in the Winterberg.<sup>25</sup> Reminiscences of the eighth frontier war<sup>26</sup> or letters pertaining to it,<sup>27</sup> shed further light on the Waterkloof engagements, as does Neville Crichton Mapham’s unpublished analyses of the Waterkloof battles,<sup>28</sup> and Keith Smith’s work, *Sir Harry Smith’s Last Throw*.<sup>29</sup> Nigel Penn’s book on

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<sup>21</sup> This document compiled in 1852 by High Commissioner Major Hogge and C. Mostyn Owen, is based on letters written by an anonymous woman, transcribed by L. H. Meurant, and currently housed in the Cape Archives Depot. Some held that Mary Barber (née Bowker) was the author but Ross challenges this. Ross, *Borders*, 315.

<sup>22</sup> J. Green, *The Kat River Settlement in 1852* (Grahamstown, 1853). Robert Ross sees Green as “a virtually illiterate, drunken puppet of the Settler faction”, with Robert Godlonton having had a “hand in writing his pamphlet”. Robert Ross, *The Borders of Race in Colonial South Africa: The Kat River Settlement, 1829–1856* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 315.

<sup>23</sup> James Read, *The Kat River Settlement in 1851, described in a series of letters published in “The South African Advertiser”* (London: British Library Historical Print Editions, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> The short diary of Sarah Ralph, covering the period 24 December 1850 to 8 February 1851, was printed in the Fort Beaufort museum newsletter, “Martello”, issues 3-6, 1952. It is currently housed in the Fort Beaufort museum, Eastern Cape. The author is indebted to Dr Carl Kritzinger for her copy.

<sup>25</sup> “The Diary of Mr. I [Isaiah] Staples: a burgher who fought in the Kaffir War and Hottentot Rebellion of 1851-1853, Copied from a copy belonging to his daughter, Miss Staples of Cambridge, East London, now in the possession of Rev A. Edmunds”. The author had access to a typescript of the MS belonging to a descendant of the Staples and James families. Staples’s diary was printed and published in book form by the Pretoria State Library in 1974, with an introduction by J. C. Visagie. The author had access to a typescript of the original.

<sup>26</sup> Such as Thomas Baines, *Journal of Residence in South Africa, 1850-1853*, ed., R. F. Kennedy (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1964); W. R. King *Campaigning in Kaffirland, 1851-2* (London, 1853); James Mackay, *Reminiscences of the Last Kafir War, Illustrated with Numerous Anecdotes* (London, 1871, rpt., Cape Town: Struik, 1970); (Sir) Stephen Lakeman, *What I saw in Kaffir-land* (Edinburgh and London, Blackwood, 1880; rpt., Uckfield, East Sussex, England: Naval and Military Press, 2003); and *The Reminiscences of Richard Paver*, eds, A. H. Duminy and L. J. G. Adcock (Cape Town: Balkema, 1979).

<sup>27</sup> The Letters of Captain Hugh Robinson, 43<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, Cory Library, MIC 220. [Restricted access.]

<sup>28</sup> N. C. Mapham, “The War of Mlangeni [sic] in the Waterkloof”. The author had access to a typescript of the original owned by a friend of the late N. C. Mapham. There is/was allegedly a copy of it in Cory Library, Protected Collection, Manuscript PR 10 345 1.

<sup>29</sup> Keith Smith, *Sir Harry Smith’s Last Throw: the Eighth Frontier War, 1850-1853* (London, Frontline Books, 2012). This work, as the author acknowledges, draws heavily on Mapham.

the northern frontier offers useful comparisons between the two frontiers and the commando system.<sup>30</sup>

It is unnecessary to mention in detail the works of the “settler historians”, G. M. Theal<sup>31</sup> and Sir George Cory,<sup>32</sup> who dominated earlier historiography until challenged by revisionist and radical historians, such as W. M. Macmillan,<sup>33</sup> J. S. Marais,<sup>34</sup> C. W. de Kiewiet, Richard Elphick, and Hermann Giliomee.<sup>35</sup> Basil le Cordeur,<sup>36</sup> Christopher Saunders,<sup>37</sup> V. C. Malherbe,<sup>38</sup> Susan Newton-King,<sup>39</sup> Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson,<sup>40</sup> Jeff Peires,<sup>41</sup> Timothy Keegan,<sup>42</sup> Timothy Stapleton,<sup>43</sup> Alan Lester,<sup>44</sup> Martin

<sup>30</sup> Nigel Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier: Colonist and Khoisan on the Cape's Northern Frontier in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press and Cape Town: Double Storey, 2005).

<sup>31</sup> G. M. Theal, *History of South Africa, 1795-1872*, 5 vols, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1889-1900).

<sup>32</sup> G. E. Cory, *The Rise of South Africa: a History of the Origin of South African Colonisation and of its Development towards the East from the Earliest Times to 1857*, 6 vols (London: Longmans, 1910; repr., 1921-1930).

<sup>33</sup> W. M. Macmillan, *The Cape Colour Question: A Survey* (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1927).

<sup>34</sup> J. S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1957).

<sup>35</sup> Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee, eds, *The Shaping of South African Society 1652-1840* (Cape Town and London: Maskew Miller/ Longman, 1979). See also Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> Basil le Cordeur, ‘Robert Godlonton as Architect of Frontier Opinion, 1850-1857’ in the *Archives Year Book for South African History*, 1959, and Basil le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism, 1820-1854*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1981).

<sup>37</sup> Christopher Saunders and Robin Derricourt, eds, *Beyond the Cape Frontier, Studies in the Transkei and Ciskei* (London: Longman, 1974).

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, “The Khoi Captains and the Third Frontier War,” in V. C. Malherbe and Susan Newton-King, “The Khoikhoi Rebellion in the Eastern Cape (1799-1803),” *Communications* no. 5 (1981) and V. C. Malherbe, “David Stuurman: Last Chief of the Hottentots,” *Journal of African Studies* 39, no. 1 (1980): 47-64.

<sup>39</sup> Susan Newton-King, “The Enemy Within”: *The Struggle for Ascendancy on the Eastern Cape Frontier*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), and Susan Newton-King, *Masters and Servants on the Cape Eastern Frontier, 1760-1803* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, eds, *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>41</sup> On Maqoma, see Jeff Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the days of their Independence* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1981), and Jeff Peires, *The Dead will Arise: Nongqawuse and the great Xhosa Cattle-killing of 1856-7* (Johannesburg and Cape Town: 1989). On Rharhabe, see Jeff Peires, “‘He Wears Short Clothes!’ Rethinking Rharhabe, c1717-c1785,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (2012): 34, 346. On Ntsikana, see Jeff Peires, “Nxele, Ntsikana and the Origins of the Xhosa Religious Reaction,” *Journal of African History* 20, no. 1 (1979): 51-61.

<sup>42</sup> T. Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996). See also T. Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire: One Man's Struggle for Justice in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2016).

<sup>43</sup> Timothy J. Stapleton, *Maqoma: Xhosa resistance to colonial advance* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994).

<sup>44</sup> Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-century South Africa and*

Legassick,<sup>45</sup> Richard Price,<sup>46</sup> Clifton Crais,<sup>47</sup> Tony Kirk,<sup>48</sup> and Elizabeth Elbourne.<sup>49</sup> To date, historian Robert Ross's book on the Kat River Settlement and the Kat River Rebellion remains the most comprehensive work on the subject.<sup>50</sup>

The Masters dissertations of P. J. Smuts,<sup>51</sup> J. M. Urie,<sup>52</sup> J. D. Pitman,<sup>53</sup> and J. C. Visagie<sup>54</sup> cast light from other angles on the Kat River Settlement and its founder, Andries Stockenstrom, with Janet Hodgson's PhD thesis on Ntsikana and the amaCirha offering a better understanding of local land claims.<sup>55</sup>

During the 1980s, the Grahamstown Rural Committee newsletters provided a running commentary on the Ciskei forced removals. Few historians, however, seem to have addressed the Stockenstrom/Kat River removals, with the exception of Jeff Peires.<sup>56</sup> His video-recording, *Kat River: End of a Hope* (1984), of interviews with Kat River people during the removals, his chapter, "The Legend of Fenner-Solomon", in Belinda Bozzoli's *Class*,

*Britain* (London and New York: Routledge), 2001.

<sup>45</sup> Martin Legassick, *The Struggle for the Eastern Cape, 1800–1854, Subjugation and the Roots of South African Democracy* (Johannesburg: KMM, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Richard Price, *Making Empire: Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-century Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Clifton Crais, *White Supremacy and Black resistance in Pre-industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Amongst other things, Crais looks at the colonial myth of vacant land which was used to justify dispossession of indigenes.

<sup>48</sup> Tony Kirk, "Progress and Decline in the Kat River Settlement 1829–1854", *Journal of African History*, 14, 3 (1973): 411–428. Focusing on agency and economic factors within the Settlement, Kirk discusses the causes of the Rebellion within a neo-Marxist framework.

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002). Elbourne examines the relationship between the London Missionary Society and the Khoekhoe/Khoikhoi between 1799 and 1853.

<sup>50</sup> Ross, *Borders*. Inter alia, Ross demonstrates how the Settlement "tested the borders of race" and why it "was not allowed to work".

<sup>51</sup> P. J. Smuts, "The Lieutenant-Generalship of Sir Andries Stockenström", MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1940.

<sup>52</sup> J. M. Urie, "A Critical Study of the Evidence of Andries Stockenström before the aborigines Committee in 1835", MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1954).

<sup>53</sup> J. D. Pitman, "The Commissioner-Generalship of Andries Stockenstrom", (University of Cape Town, 1939).

<sup>54</sup> J. C. Visagie, "Die Katriviernedersetting, 1829-1879" (unpublished D. Litt and Phil thesis, University of South Africa, 1978). See also J. C. Visagie, "Christian Jacobus Groepe: Oosgrenspionier en Veldkommandant van Katrivier", *S.A. Tydskrif vir Kultuurgeskiedenis* 22(1), Junie 2008: 29-55.

<sup>55</sup> Janet Hodgson, "Ntsikana: History and Symbol, Studies in a Process of Religious Change among Xhosa-Speaking People (PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1985).

<sup>56</sup> See V. C. Malherbe, 'David Stuurman: Last Chief of the Hottentots,' *Journal of African Studies*, 39, 1 (1980), 7–64.

*Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives* (1987), and his article, “Piet Draghoender’s Lament”, remain powerful but solitary oral history landmarks of that time.<sup>57</sup>

The importance of the Kat River Rebellion in South African historiography cannot be underestimated. It was more than simply a revolt of the rural oppressed and far exceeded the political sophistication of the Khoikhoi Rebellion of 1799-1803.<sup>58</sup> In a sense, it marked the coming of age of a sector of the eastern Cape Khoikhoi who were granted land in Kat River, education for their children, religious instruction, and mentoring, with the latter leading to the cultivation of political discernment and the recrudescence in 1834 of Khoikhoi nationalism,<sup>59</sup> which reached a pitch during the Rebellion and led to the break-up of the Settlement.

Ironically, these very advantages, together with the adverse forces of war and dispossession, impelled the Settlement with the relentless inevitability of classical Greek tragedy to its end. It is, therefore, no surprise that such a topic has been the subject of many books, articles, and dissertations, and still offers scope for reevaluation.

## **Problem and approach**

Although various historians have analysed the history of Kat River from 1829 onwards through political, religious, and socio-economic lenses, it appears that the original ideological bases of the Kat River Settlement—cultivation of the land and militarism, and their continuum into the twentieth century—have not been sufficiently explored. Neither has the role of women in Kat River from colonial times to the present. This thesis purports to address these lacunae by recourse to primary sources—including oral interviews

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<sup>57</sup> Jeff Peires, et al., “Kat River: End of a Hope” (Grahamstown: Dept. of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University, 1984), Videocassette (VHS), 36 min. See also Jeff Peires, “The Legend of Fenner-Solomon,” in *Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives*, ed., Belinda Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987); and Jeff Peires, “Piet Draghoender’s Lament”, *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 14, No.2 (1988), 6-15.

<sup>58</sup> See for example, V. C. Malherbe and Susan Newton-King, “The Khoikhoi Rebellion in the Eastern Cape (1799–1803),” *Communications* no. 5 (1981).

<sup>59</sup> Stanley Trapido, “The Emergence of Liberalism and the Making of Hottentot Nationalism, 1815–1834’ in *Collected Seminar Papers*, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 42 (1992): 34–60. See also Robert Ross, “The Kat River Rebellion and Khoikhoi Nationalism: The Fate of an Ethnic Identification”, *Kronos: Journal of Cape History*, 24 (1997), 91-105. Earlier expressions of what could be called Khoikhoi nationalism were the Khoikhoi’s participation in the Bushmen wars against the colonists on the escarpment to the west and north of Graaff-Reinet, and during the Servants’ Revolt when the Khoikhoi together with the amaXhosa made war against the colonists. See Ross, 93 and Newton-King and Malherbe, *Khoikhoi Rebellion (1799-1803)*.

conducted by the author, lesser-known diaries and journals—and archival and secondary sources. In this way the ideologies upon which the Kat River Settlement were based, and the practical outworking of them from its inception to the present are explored, as is the agency of Kat River women and their influence on the course of events .

## Methodology

Owing to the heterogeneity of the subject matter, a variety of methodologies has been used. First, it is argued that classical agrarian theories of cultivation—pressed into colonial use by the Spanish and later the English,<sup>60</sup> and reshaped by Evangelical notions of industriousness—formed the one ideological basis of the Kat River Settlement. Analogies are drawn between the hierarchical English views of the Irish in the 1700s and the derogatory views of Kat River officials of poor/less industrious Kat River Khoikhoi. In like manner the draft vagrancy law in 1834 is compared to vagrancy legislation of seventeenth-century England;<sup>61</sup> and Dr John Philip’s role in mobilising the Kat River Khoikhoi is revealed by citing Keegan’s work on the former.<sup>62</sup> In the discussion on official inroads into the Kat River commons Peter Linebaugh’s commons theories<sup>63</sup> are tested to see if they hold.

Second, it is argued that what has been seen as the quasi-military basis of the Kat River Settlement was more militaristic than has been recognised, and the Kat River Levy’s participation in frontier wars and other local wars has been neglected. In order to address this, examples of their service are provided and analysed with recourse to military reports, Stockenstrom’s autobiography, and other sources.

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<sup>60</sup> See for example, Ben Kiernan, ed., *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

<sup>61</sup> See Mildred Campbell, *The English Yeoman in the Tudor and Early Stuart Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942, repr., London: Merlin Press, 1960), Elizabeth Elbourne, “Freedom at issue: Vagrancy Legislation and the Meaning of Freedom in Britain and the Cape Colony, 1799 to 1842”, 1799-1842”, *Slavery and Abolition: Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, Taylor and Francis, Vol 15 (August 1994; online publication, McGill University, June 2008), and Peter Anderson, “The Host of Vagabonds”: origins and destinations of the vagrant in Cape history and ideas”. (Graduate School of Humanities and African Studies Seminar, University of Cape Town, 20 March 2002).

<sup>62</sup> Tim Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire: One Man’s Struggle for Justice in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2016),

<sup>63</sup> For example, Peter Linebaugh, *Stop, Thief!: The Commons, Enclosures, and Resistance* (Oakland: PM Press/Spectre, 2014).

In the Battle of Fort Beaufort the diary of Sarah Ralph is quoted; and in the chapter on the war in the Winterberg the author draws from the diary of Isaiah Staples, the journal of Eli Wiggill,<sup>64</sup> and a letter written by the widow, Hannah James.<sup>65</sup>

During the discussion of the war in the Waterkloof, use is made of official sources, letters, war reminiscences,<sup>66</sup> and works by Mapham, Keith Smith, and D. A. Webb.<sup>67</sup> In describing the Battles of Balfour and Fort Armstrong, military reports, the testimonies of Staples, and Cdt Holden Bowker,<sup>68</sup> eye-witness accounts by James Read Jr, and evidence of rebels at Botha's trial are utilised.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, the service provided by coloured levies from Stockenstrom in the ninth and other local wars is analysed with reference to the works of Sir Evelyn Wood,<sup>70</sup> Frank Streatfeild,<sup>71</sup> Chris Hummel,<sup>72</sup> and information provided by Major (ret.) Anthony Step of the Buffalo Volunteers, East London.

If, as argued, cultivation and militarism were the bases or piers of the Kat River Settlement, the current that flowed between them and tried to erode them was dispossession. This continuum, including the expulsion of Maqoma in 1829, the dispossession of Kat River rebels in 1853 and the effects of commercial farming on Kat River coloureds, and the National Party's forced removals of Kat River people in the 1980s is demonstrated by official reports, works by Jeff Peires,<sup>73</sup> and oral interviews with Hymie Groepe, Tom Pringle, Anna Pringle and others from Kat River.

Although women have always played a crucial part in the development of Kat River as cultivators and holding the land for long periods while their men were on commando, they

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<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Theo Newton Wiggill, *From the Cotswolds to the Cape: Isaac Wiggill, 1820 Settler* (Melbourne: Theo N. Newton Wiggill, 2012). Eli Wiggill's journal is housed in the family history section, Mormon Archives, Salt Lake City.

<sup>65</sup> Hannah James, née Buckley. Relations of Hannah James in the Winterberg provided the author with a copy of the letter.

<sup>66</sup> Such as those of King, McKay, Campbell, and Lakeman (see "Historiography").

<sup>67</sup> D. A. Webb, "Able to resist the attack of any enemy"? African Identity Formation, Colonial Attitudes and the Lower Kei Forts During the War of Ngcayecibi, 1877–1878", *South African Historical Journal*, 2017, Vol. 69, No. 4, 598–621. For Mapham and Keith Smith see "Historiography".

<sup>68</sup> I. Mitford Barberton, *Commdt Holden Bowker: an 1820 Settler book, including unpublished records* (Cape Town and Pretoria, Human Rousseau, 1970), 61-5.

<sup>69</sup> *The Trial of Andries Botha, Field Cornet of the Upper Blinkwater, in the Kat River Settlement, for High Treason, in the Supreme Court of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, on the 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1852, and Subsequent Days* (Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1852).

<sup>70</sup> Sir Evelyn Wood, FM, VC, GCB, GCMG, *From Midshipman to Field Marshal*, 2 vols (London: Methuen, 1906), 1: 321.

<sup>71</sup> Frank Streatfeild, *Kafirland: A Ten Months Campaign* (London: Sampson and Low, 1879)

<sup>72</sup> *The Frontier War Journal of Major John Crealock*, 1878, ed., Chris Hummel (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1989).

<sup>73</sup> Such as "Piet Draghoender's Lament" (see Historiography).

first drew public attention in 1849 by sending an anti-convict memorial to the governor, Sir Harry Smith. Again, after the Battle of Fort Armstrong they raised their voices in protest, this time at the burgher forces' destruction of the Kat River people's property and their mockery of them. Using evidence provided by James Read Jr, it is also argued that during General Henry Somerset's attack on Fort Armstrong, two marginalised groups—lepers and Khoikhoi women—appear to have been singled out as especial objects of colonial wrath, and in this regard it is suggested that the troops and levies were guilty of “genocide moments”.<sup>74</sup> In the leprosy discussion reference is made to the works of Rob Edmond and Rachel Holmes.<sup>75</sup>

Quoting from soldiers' reminiscences of the Waterkloof war, it also shown how rebel Khoikhoi women and Ngqika women assumed combatant and supportive roles, and later took the initiative in bringing the war to a close. Similarly, Staples and Hannah James provide evidence of women who risked their lives to rescue/protect family members.

In the chapter, “Reconstruction and Progress”, the two bases of the Kat River Settlement are shown to widen after the rebellion as rebel land was sold to white farmers, commercial farming challenged subsistence cultivation, commons were alienated, and Kat River men fought in newly-raised levies in new wars. New crops were introduced, new legislation allowed alienation of the commons, mechanisation increased, a railway line was built to facilitate the tobacco boom and the export of citrus, the Kat River Dam was built and the Kat River irrigation scheme launched—and Kat River coloureds who couldn't compete were squeezed off the land. In this chapter information is drawn from oral sources, the Cape Colony Statistical Registers, and the works of Tony Kirk,<sup>76</sup> William Beinart, Colin Bundy,<sup>77</sup> E. Nel and T. R. Hill.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Following Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*.

<sup>75</sup> Rob Edmond, *Leprosy and Empire: A Medical and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Rachel Holmes, *The Secret Life of Dr James Barry: Victorian England's Most Eminent Surgeon*, (Viking, 2002, rpt. Tempus, 2007).

<sup>76</sup> Tony Kirk, “The Cape Economy and the Expropriation of the Kat River Settlement”, *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, eds, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Essex: Longmans, 1982), 227-29.

<sup>77</sup> William Beinart, P. Delius and S. Trapido, eds, *Putting a plough to the ground: accumulation and dispossession in rural South Africa, 1850–1930* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1986); and William Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock and Environment, 1770-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). See also C. L. Bundy, “Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen: White Poverty in the Cape before Poor Whiteism”, in W. Beinart, et al, *Putting a Plough to the Land: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850-1930* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), 56-89.

<sup>78</sup> E. Nel and T. R. Hill, eds, *An Evaluation of Community-Driven Economic Development, Land Tenure and Sustainable Environmental Development in the Kat River Valley* (HSRC, 2000).

In discussing Kat River dispossession in the 1980s, the author's interviews with people from Groepeskloof, Tamboekiesvlei, Hertzog, and Cathcartvale are analysed and, where applicable, compared to earlier Kat River interviews conducted by Jeff Peires.

In the author's interviews with P. J. (Hymie) Groepe, in which the effect of emotion on memories and retelling is considered, references are made to the theories of oral historians Alessandro Portelli, Daniel James, Valerie Yow, Paul Thompson, Isabel Hofmeyr, and Sean Field.<sup>79</sup> Where applicable, reference is also made to the theories of methodologists Michael Marker, Lisa A. Mazzei, and Alecia Youngblood Jackson, and clinical psychologists Robin S. Edelstein, Friderike Heuer, Robin Fivush, Jessica McDermott Sales, Daniel Reisberg, and Paula Hertel.

In the interviews with dispossessed Stockenstrom people who moved to Friemersheim, reference is made to observations made by Peires and Sean Field.<sup>80</sup> The negative effects of displacement on the Friemersheim people are contrasted with the positive memories of Wykie Loots and Salome Groepe who paint an earlier, all embracing Tamboekiesvlei.

In the interviews with Tamboekiesvlei/Hertzog women, comments by feminist oral historians, Sherna Berber Gluck, Daphne Patai, Renny Goldman and Karin Barber, and cultural studies practitioner, Luisa Passerini, were found useful.

The works of Sheona E. Shackleton and Charlie M. Shackleton are cited with regard to the ecology and environmental sustainability of Kat River,<sup>81</sup> and the observations of Antjie Krog, and Ben Cousins and Cherryl Walker<sup>82</sup> are mentioned in the final section on the Tamboekiesvlei land claims process.

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<sup>79</sup> Sean Field, *Oral History, Community and Displacement: Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, (New York: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2012).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>81</sup> Sheona E. Shackleton and Charlie M. Shackleton, "Not Just Farming: Natural Resources and Livelihoods in Land and Agrarian Reform", in *Land Divided, Land Restored: Land Restitution in South Africa for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, eds, Ben Cousins and Cherryl Walker (Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2014), 201.

<sup>82</sup> See Antjie Krog, "Baas van die plaas/Izwe lethu: Essay in fragments and two villanelles exploring different relationship to land in some indigenous poetic texts, *Land Divided*, 210, 228; and Cherryl Walker, "Restitution Unbound", *Land Divided*, 235-6.

## Form of the interviews

As a departure from the kitchen-table interview, my first interview with Hymie Groepe assumed the form of a drive-walk-about in Groepeskloof and Tamboekiesvlei. My second interview with Kathleen and Tom Pringle took place at the former Dutch Reformed Church, currently known as the Verenigde Gereformeerde Kerk/VGK (Uniting Reformed Church) in Hertzog. Other interviews took place in the Kat River community hall, and in the Blinkwater, Fuller's Hoek, Winterberg and the Waterkloof. Where face-to-face interviews could not be arranged, they were conducted over the telephone, as were several follow-up interviews.

## Transcription and interpretation

In transcribing and interpreting my interviews I could not but be aware of the technical and moral challenges of converting, with minimal intervention, oral interviews of words and song into readable pages. During the interviews, I tried to avoid speaking for another, although it was tempting at times. I was also constantly mindful of the ways in which my interviewees positioned themselves towards their subjects and to me. It was interesting to see how their positioning changed over time, as I got to know them better and they came to regard me more an equal, rather than a foreigner from Cape Town. Many of the interviews revolved around emotional events. And, from the start, it was obvious that their words and enactments<sup>83</sup> were very much affected by their memory of events, their strong attachments to people, places, and myths, and their preoccupation with current problems.

During my initial analyses of the transcriptions, I wrangled with the concepts of truth, accuracy, and validity, until Professor Alessandro Portelli—at that time a guest lecturer at the University of Cape Town—explained that my interviewees' stories could all be valid because they were true, or because they were “truly told.” This being the case, he said, contradictions, discrepancies and departure from what we know to have actually been the case can be meaningful. Similarly, the “spaces into which subjectivity, desire, myth creep in. . . [can] tell us a great deal about the meaning of the events for the person who narrates them”. As Portelli also pointed out, “in order to realize that there are errors or contradictions

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<sup>83</sup> In the author's article, “Power, Politics, and Performances of Longing in Kat River”, *The Oral History Review, Journal of the Oral History Association*, Summer/Fall 2015, Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 195-230, the word “performances” was used. As this carries connotations of scripted or rehearsed presentations—which was not the case—the author has altered the word “performances” to “enactments” in this thesis.

we need to have a basic idea of some kind of factual truth, so that we can investigate the meaning of the wrong narratives.”<sup>84</sup> The archival records that I consulted, together with other written and oral sources, provided me with this “some kind of factual truth”. And additional sessions with my interviewees, together with frequent telephone calls, greatly aided my understanding of the “subjectivity, desire and myth” in their narratives.

Jeff Peires’ observation from his 1980s Kat River interviews that “five generations is too long a time for oral traditions that were not consciously memorized or transmitted to survive intact, also helped to dispel some of my unrealistic expectations.”<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, as he also maintained—endorsing Portelli’s view—although an interviewee’s accounts of events “proves to be exaggerated, it remains historically significant” as it is “the people’s understanding of their own . . . past.”<sup>86</sup>

My interviews also confirmed Portelli’s proposition that “oral history does not begin with one abstract person observing another, reified one, but with two persons meeting on a ground of equality to bring together different types of knowledge and achieve a synthesis from which both will be changed”.<sup>87</sup> This was certainly true in my experience. Yet, despite our shared Eastern Cape background—I was born in the Eastern Cape and spent more than 20 years there—my being concerned about the plight of my Tamboekiesvlei interviewees, my not having experienced loss of home, land, or children, made it difficult for me to empathise with them as completely as I desired. Nevertheless, I tried, unsuccessfully, on several occasions to contact the local Land Claims office to ascertain the status of their claims. The phone was either not answered or no one was available to speak to me.

Some of my interviewees were more confident and forthcoming than others, and could deal more easily with very emotional aspects of the past. Although it was frustrating at times, I respected their reticence to speak and their silences; and tried my best to eschew earlier white feminist traps, such as being contradictory, apolitical, or self-aggrandizing.<sup>88</sup> I believe that I was fortunate enough to enjoy a good rapport with all my interviewees—some of whom still

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<sup>84</sup> Private discussion, University of Cape Town, 18 May 2012, with follow-up email communication, 21 May 2012.

<sup>85</sup> Peires, “Fenner-Solomon,” 68.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>87</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, SUNY Series in Oral and Public History (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), xii.

<sup>88</sup> *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, eds, Susan Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (New York: Routledge, 1991), see Susan Geiger, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*, 19, 2 (1994), 499-503. See especially 499-501.

maintain contact with me<sup>89</sup>— although I appreciate Sean Field’s questioning of the notion of “rapport” as a “mythical fantasy place that cannot be reached”.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, my main interviewee, Hymie Groepe, became both my mentor and my friend.<sup>91</sup>

Professor Jeff Peires suggested Hymie Groepe and Tom Pringle to me as interviewees, and this started the ball rolling in the Hertzog and Tamboekiesvlei communities, with others coming forward to be interviewed. During the interviews we switched languages, Afrikaans and English, following one another’s cue. This resulted in relaxed and dynamic interviews—interspersed at times with much laughter—with certain expressive Afrikaans or Xhosa words proving more appropriate than English at times.

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<sup>89</sup> Compare Erica Macwilliam, et al., “Voicing Objections,” in *Voice in Qualitative Enquiry: Challenging Conventional, Interpretive, and Critical Conceptions in Qualitative Research*, eds, Alecia Y. Jackson and Lisa Mazzei (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 70.

<sup>90</sup> Sean Field, draft paper, staff seminar, Department of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town, March 17, 2013, 8–10.

<sup>91</sup> Compare the Eastern Cape anthropologist, Manton Hirst, who regarded his interviewee in the same light. *Memoir of a Life: Conversations with H. H. A. Mdledle*, ed, Manton Hirst (King William’s Town: Amathole Museum, 2009).

## Chapter 1: Genesis of the Kat River Settlement

### Location and name

The Kat River Valley is bounded by the Klein Winterberg mountain range to the west, the Katberg and Cathcart (Windvogelberg) Mountains to the north-east, the Hogsback range to the east, and Fort Beaufort to the south-west.

In 1752 a Dutch expedition to the Kat River area encountered only Khoikhoi living there. Similarly, Hendrik Jacobs, who settled in Kat River in his youth, claimed that there were only “Gonah Hottentots” in the area during the period Robert Ross computes as the 1780s/90s.<sup>92</sup> According to C. J. Skead, the standard authority on Xhosa place-names,<sup>93</sup> the Kat River has been called by that name since Jacob van Reenen’s expedition of 1790 to locate the wreck of the *Grosvenor*.<sup>94</sup> Skead derives “Ngcwenxa,” the isiXhosa name for the river from the Khoikhoi word “Hunca,” meaning “cat”.<sup>95</sup> Khoikhoi occupation of the area ended with Chief Rharhabe’s invasion, which was not later than 1775.<sup>96</sup>

### Maqoma

The ironic foundation of the Kat River Settlement on the Cape Colony’s eastern frontier is well known. The Xhosa leader, Maqoma, was expelled from Kat River and the area used to create a settlement based on ethnic requirements for recently “liberated” Khoikhoi—although the ordinance enabling it acknowledged neither race nor ethnicity.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 14. The Gonaqua, whom Captain Armstrong described as a race between [amaXhosa] and Khoikhoi, may have been Xhosa clients. *Ibid*, 94.

<sup>93</sup> C. J. Skead, *Pilot Gazetteer of Xhosa Placenames: A Preliminary Survey, 1970s to 1990s* (Port Elizabeth, 2001).

<sup>94</sup> Johannes Jacob van Reenen was an appointee of the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce. He arrived at the Cape in March 1755.

<sup>95</sup> See Skead, *Pilot Gazetteer*.

<sup>96</sup> The author is indebted to Professor Jeff Peires for this and part of the above information.

<sup>97</sup> Ordinance 50, passed in 1828 under Sir Richard Bourke’s administration, conferred the same civil rights on the Khoikhoi as enjoyed by whites; such as the right to own land, sell one’s labour, and freedom from the pass and apprentice system. For Andries Stockenstrom’s key role in the “Hottentot Magna Charta”, see. Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 282-29.

As a youth, Maqoma, the Right-hand son of Rharhabe Chief, Ngqika,<sup>98</sup> formed the amaJingqi clan from his circumcision age-mates and settled on the Kat River in Lower Blinkwater. Married to his first wife at 19 years, Maqoma had a daughter in 1817, followed by a son, K(h)ona.<sup>99</sup> Not being the Great-son, he was unable to succeed his father, Ngqika, as chief of the Ngqika/Rharhabe Xhosa, and was appointed regent for his half-brother, Sandile, until he came of age. Nevertheless, Maqoma led the amaNgqika in several frontier wars from 1818 onwards, until banished to Robben Island, where he died on 9 November 1873.

Although on 24 April 1819 Ngqika had allegedly ceded the land between the Fish and the Kat/Keiskama Rivers to the Colony as a buffer zone,<sup>100</sup> Maqoma repeatedly returned to Kat River (*Ngcwenxa*). By 1822, he had established his Great Place, *Mnqwasi* (Under the Katberg), between Balfour and Buxton.<sup>101</sup> The ensuing raids on the Baviaans River and Koonap burghers and the Chumie/Tyhume mission station, led to Maqoma being accused of failing to restrain his people. The last straw was Maqoma's attack on the "Tambookies" [abaThembu residing north of the border] in 1828, taking 30 000 head of their cattle, pursuing them into the Colony, and killing them.<sup>102</sup> Captain Andries Stockenstrom, who was on good terms with Maqoma, condemned the attack as a massacre and recommended the latter's expulsion from Kat River.<sup>103</sup> Nonetheless, Stockenstrom opposed sending a commando to recover the stolen cattle, but unable to prevent it, he promised Maqoma that it would not harm the people and the women would be allowed to reap their crops unhindered before leaving.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Rharhabe, Ngqika's father, was residing in the Somerset East area (west of Bedford) in the 1770s. Jeff Peires, "'He Wears Short Clothes!': Rethinking Rharhabe' (c.1715–c.1782), *Journal of South African Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (June 2012), 341.

<sup>99</sup> See Timothy J. Stapleton, *Maqoma: Xhosa resistance to colonial advance* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994), J. H. Soga, *The South Eastern Bantu* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1930), 176-77, and Jeff Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the days of their Independence* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1981), 86-100, and *The Dead will Arise Nongqawuse and the great Xhosa Cattle-killing of 1856-7* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1989), 28, 38-39.

<sup>100</sup> Note that the Kat is a tributary of the Keiskama River.

<sup>101</sup> Also known as Maqoma's Hoek (Maqoma's Valley).

<sup>102</sup> Stockenstrom denied the Rev William Shaw's allegations that Maqoma was expelled to provide the Khoikhoi with land, averring that the idea only occurred to him after the eviction. SC, Evidence of Stockenstrom, 969, 19 August 1835 (p. 82) and *ibid.*, 1876, 19 February 1836 (p. 213). See also Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 305-307.

<sup>103</sup> He was ordered to oversee the eviction. CA CO 367, Stockenstrom to Bell, 13/12/1828; CA CO 367, Stockenstrom to Cole, 06/02/1829. See also SC, Evidence of Stockenstrom, 1875, 19 February 1836 (pp.111-12).

<sup>104</sup> See Stockenstrom's interview with Maqoma, Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 316-19. A commando was a group of armed, mostly mounted, men, led by an officer/field-cornet or an appointee, and sanctioned by a government official to recover allegedly stolen cattle.

An examination of Stockenstrom’s words and actions shows that he was an implacable opponent of massacre of any kind and a proponent of “justice to all parties”.<sup>105</sup> This, together with his acknowledged integrity and good relationships with Xhosa chiefs<sup>106</sup>—despite his father having been massacred by the Dange Xhosa<sup>107</sup>— suggests that his reason for Maqoma’s expulsion from Kat River does not warrant uniform dismissal. Neither does the defence of Maqoma, who argued cogently that it was unfair of the British to hold Xhosa chiefs responsible for the actions of their people.<sup>108</sup>

The area from which Maqoma was expelled—between the sources of the Kat and “Goonappe”<sup>109</sup> (Koonap) Rivers in the Ceded/Neutral Territory—was a fertile, militarily strategic area of approximately 200 square miles (518 km<sup>2</sup>). Sir Lowry Cole, the LMS missionary, the Rev James Read Sr, and the humanitarian, Saxe Bannister, were amongst those who supported the idea of the Kat River Settlement.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 293.

<sup>106</sup> Always treating them with dignity; for example, on the war-prophet Makana’s surrender to him after the Xhosa attack on Grahamstown, Stockenstrom placed a covered wagon at his disposal, until compelled to hand him over to Colonel Willshire. Hutton *Stockenstrom* 1: 119–22.

<sup>107</sup> During the fourth frontier war, on 29 December 1811, Anders Stockenström and nine of his peace party were massacred by the imiDange “on the narrowest part of Doorn [Doring] Neck” in the Zuurberg. The amaXhosa “alleged that the massacre was “the result of an instantaneous impulse and not a preconcerted plot”. Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 59-60, 66-68. This did not prevent from Stockenstrom from abolishing the reprisal system, returning their land, and restoring their autonomy in 1836. *Ibid.*, 1: 179-82.

<sup>108</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 317. The Xhosa view is that Maqoma wished to reduce the abaThembu to political subservience. Peires, *House of Phalo*, 100-101. On inter-clan raiding, see Conversation with Tini Macomo, Sir George E. Cory, 16th April 1908, Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, The Cory Collection, MS 69.

The Revs Stephen Kay, William Shaw and Thomson supported Maqoma. SC, Evidence of Stephen Kay, 21 March 1837, 63, and D. Williams, *Where Races Meet: The Life and Times of William Ritchie Thomson, Glasgow Society Missionary, Government Agent and Dutch Reformed Minister, 1794-1891* (Johannesburg: APB Publishers, 1967), 113

<sup>109</sup> This tributary of the Fish River was also known as *Conna*, *Konap*, *Kunap*, *Koenap*, *Konab*, *de Komma*, *Gonap(pe)*; *Konappe*; *Xaharanxhap*, and *iKhobonqaba* (Xh. for “where slaves are scarce”), *Konaba* and *Caapna/Kaapna /Gabna* (the latter meaning “grassy fields” in Khoekhoe). Skead, *Pilot Gazetteer*, 225-27.

<sup>110</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1:356, 2: 358.



Figure 7 Gaika Chief, Macoma [sic] (Cape Archives and Depot: E3214)



Figure 8 Sir Andries Stockenström (Cape Archives and Depot: E416)

## The Kat River Settlement, beginnings

### Provenance

Tasked by Sir Lowry Cole to find suitable settlers for Kat River, Capt Andries Stockenstrom encouraged prosperous “Bastard” (coloured) tenant farmers from the Baviaans River area, and formerly of Zwagershoek, to settle in Kat River.<sup>111</sup> As their leader he headhunted Christian Groepe—the son of a German soldier, Heinrich Groepe, and a Khoikhoi woman—and appointed him as field-commandant and head or “squire” of the Settlement.<sup>112</sup> Groepe’s being appointed justice of the peace in 1847 by Sir Benjamin D’Urban lent further weight to his position, by entrusting him not only with the dispensing of justice in the Kat River Settlement, but increasing his patriarchal duties.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Currently known as Swaershoek, the valley extends from Cradock in the NE to bisect the road between Pearston and Somerset East in the SW.

<sup>112</sup> CA CO 3927, no. 56, Memorial of Christian Groepe. Stockenstrom described Groepe as being “at the head of the Kat River Establishment”: SC, Evidence of Stockenstrom, 28 August 1835, 1385 (152).

<sup>113</sup> For the traditional duties of the JP, which included keeping up the roads and bridges, see G. M. Trevelyan, *Illustrated English Social History*, Vol 3 (London: Longmans), 1942, rpt., 1951), 59.

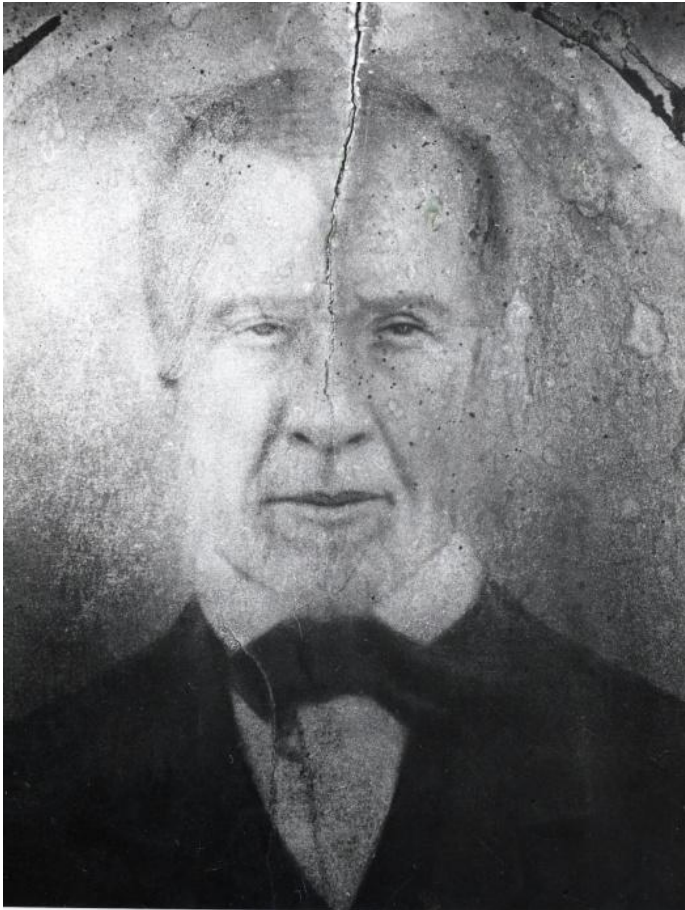


Figure 9 Commandant C. J. Groepe (Western Cape Archives and Depot)

Initially, the Groepes were tenant farmers of a fellow German, Stoltz, in Zwagershoek,<sup>114</sup> where Heinrich Groepe had served as field-cornet, but lost caste from his association with his Khoikhoi partner. On Stoltz's death, John Pringle invited the Groepes and their fellow tenant-farmers to relocate to his farm in the Baviaans River Valley. Here, on the Mankazana River, Christian Groepe ran a loan farm and the Groepe brothers participated in burgher commandos/border patrol and helped the Pringles build roads and dams.<sup>115</sup> With such varied experience, Christian Groepe seemed ideal for his position at Kat River.

On the residents of the over-crowded LMS stations Bethelsdorp and Theopolis<sup>116</sup> petitioning the government for land grants, Stockenström accommodated them in Kat

<sup>114</sup> Zwagershoek, now known as Swaershoek, extends for approximately 70 km from Cradock in the NE to bisect the road between Pearston and Somerset East in the SW.

<sup>115</sup> Thomas Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa* (London, 1835, repr., Cape Town: Struik, 1966), 108-10.

<sup>116</sup> Prior to Ordinance 50, missionary institutions were the only refuge for Khoikhoi who otherwise had to labour for burghers or enrol in the Cape Corps. By the late 1820s, some 6 000 Khoikhoi were living in missionary institutions. J. S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937* (London: Longmans and Green, 1939), 46-49, 131.

River<sup>117</sup> with the Bethelsdorp contingent being led by Andries Stoffels and Cobus Boezak.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, discharged men from the Cape Mounted Rifles (CMR),<sup>119</sup> also known as the Cape Corps,<sup>120</sup> were invited to settle in Kat River, as were some coloured families from Grahamstown and the Orange (Gariep) River respectively.<sup>121</sup>

Additionally, “Gonah Hottentots/Gonahs”—dispossessed Gonaqua from between the Gamtoos and Fish Rivers—who had been living under Maqoma near the Rev Joseph Williams on the Kat River—were allowed to remain there after the former’s death.<sup>122</sup> A group of Khoikhoi and Gonaqua “familiar with the Dutch language and in a state of detribalisation,<sup>123</sup> from the Chumie/Tyhume, accompanied the Rev W. R. Thomson to Kat River<sup>124</sup> and were allowed to remain there.

At the recommendation of Robert Hart,<sup>125</sup> Stockenstrom chose Andries Botha, then 49 years old—“an honest man, a brave soldier and a zealous government servant”<sup>126</sup>—as leader of the 143 Gonaqua Khoikhoi in the Settlement; 79 of whom settled under Botha at Buxton/Colevale, 15 under Stoffel Boezak in Wilberforce/Rawson, 40 under Andries Stoffels at Philipton, and 9 in the Elands River Valley.<sup>127</sup> Both Stoffels and Botha had Xhosa kin, with whom they retained ties. Botha proved to be a good leader, risking his life to save the ammunition when the amaXhosa attacked a wagon train at Burnshill during the War of the

<sup>117</sup> CA CO 604, no. 2, Burke to Huskisson, 29/6/28, and *ibid.*, no. 12, Cole to Murray, 31/1/29.

<sup>118</sup> Stoffels had been converted to Christianity in 1815. Boesak had saved Grahamstown in 1819 when the Ndlambe Xhosa attacked it, “levelling in a few minutes the most distinguished chiefs and warriors”. Cowper Rose, *Four Years in Kaffirland* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1829) 261.

<sup>119</sup> They included Isaac Isaacs, Hans Zeland, Jan Arander, Cesasr Cesar alias Ceyster Ceyster [sic], Michael Andries, Piet Bantum [sic], Uithaalder Booy [sic], Dirk Jonkers, Ruyter Kevido [sic], Stoffel Botha, and Willem Uithaalder. [1334] of 1851, J. H. Wienand and Groepe, 18 January 1851, enclosure 4 in no. 10, J. Montagu to B. Hawes, 31 January 1851, p. 130.

<sup>120</sup> First formed in 1795, the Cape Corps underwent many reformations, but at that time was officially known as the Cape Mounted Rifles, although the old name stuck. The strength of the CMR had recently been reduced (hence the discharges). Marias, 132-33

<sup>121</sup> See Stockenstrom’s Commission of Enquiry into reports of cruelty against native tribes beyond the Orange River”, 1830, Cory Library, Stockenstrom, MS 17246.

<sup>122</sup> Their headman was Hendrik Noega. Ross, *Borders*, 26.

<sup>123</sup> Williams, 46-7, 63, 118.

<sup>124</sup> The first official minister of the Kat River Settlement.

<sup>125</sup> See Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 359. Prior to this, Botha had lived under Hart on the government farm, Somerset, and subsequently on Hart’s farm, Glen Avon, with an interlude in Bethelsdorp. See also At van Wyk, *Ou Man in Kettings, Vier Swartverhale* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1932), 6-7.

<sup>126</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 359.

<sup>127</sup> Described by Captain Armstrong as the offspring of Xhosa men and Gonaqua women. House of Commons Paper, 503 of 1837, p. 85, Armstrong to Smith, 17 January 1835. Ross describes them as Khoikhoi clients of the amaXhosa and potentially “a fifth column in the Settlement,” acting as “a camouflage to others”. Ross, *Borders*, 94-95.

Axe (1846-47).<sup>128</sup> His alleged illiteracy did not prevent him from opposing injustices in the Settlement by speaking at debates and dictating letters to officials. Together with Andries Stoffels (53 years old at the time) and Hendrik Heyn,<sup>129</sup> Botha represented his people until he was expelled from Kat River in 1852.

## Disposition

Twelve locations in Kat River were demarcated for settlement but over time these increased. Together with additional locations they comprised, inter alia, starting from the north, roughly east to west: Readsdale, Maasdorp, Philipton, Fairbairn, Elands Post, Wellsdale, Bruceton/Wilsonton (later called Eyre/Bergman's Hoek), Balfour, Bellvale, Fort Armstrong, Cathcartvale, Buxton/Colevale, Upsher, Hertzog, Tamboekiesvlei, Menzies, Upper Blinkwater/Wilberforce (later called Rawson), East and West Ebenezer, Mankazana, Lower Blinkwater, and the area approximately 3 km northeast of it, currently called Gonzana (formerly the Gona(h) Location).

Groepe's and Boezak's parties were the first to arrive, with the former taking up their grants in Bellvale, Hertzog and Tamboekiesvlei, and Boesak in the Mankazana Valley.<sup>130</sup> They were followed in June 1829 by the Bethelsdorp party, which settled mainly in Fairbairn, Philipton, and Readsdale.

To avoid confusion, it must be explained that there are two Mankazana Valleys, one of which is outside the boundaries of Kat River proper. The Mankazana River in the valley in which Boezak first settled<sup>131</sup> is located northwest of Alice, immediately south of the Juanasberg.<sup>132</sup> The other Mankazana Valley is due north of Adelaide. In 1850, the Kat River settler Kasper Olivier relocated to the latter with his followers—an area that became one of the flashpoints of the Rebellion.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 374.

<sup>129</sup> Heyn, whom Baines described as “respectable person” was granted land “in the picturesque kloof of Maasdorp”. Baines sketched Heyn's farm and approved of the house he had built. Baines, 1:180.

<sup>130</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 45, fn. 38.

<sup>131</sup> Owing, inter alia, to the unsuitability of the soil or lack of water, some settlers changed locations.

<sup>132</sup> Picardy and Tidbury Toll are found at the foot of the valley, while Grashoek and Springfield are found at the head of the valley. This valley, northwest of Alice, in which beautiful women supposedly lived (*Mankazana* being isiXhosa for girlfriend) was one of Xhosa Chief Tyhale's favourite grazing areas. He was repeatedly expelled from this valley, in which a post was built.

<sup>133</sup> See Godlonton, *Narrative*, 176, 180, 186 and Cory, 5: 339-40.

Kat River was further divided into 640 allotments of varying size.<sup>134</sup> Groepe was granted a large farm in Tamboekiesvlei, and Botha's allotment was bigger than average, comprising 21.15 acres. He donated a portion of his land to the London Missionary Society, who built a school and schoolmaster's house on it.<sup>135</sup> Colonialist bystanders kept a jealous eye on proceedings, with the surveyor, C. S. Rodger,<sup>136</sup> maintaining that "the Gonahs" were foreigners, and had no right to be offered land in the Kat River Settlement—a discriminatory mindset that plagued Kat River politics into Apartheid times, as when Kat River people who removed to Friemersheim (near Mossel Bay) were regarded as *inkommers* (incomers/foreigners) by the local people, and allegedly subjected to xenophobic attacks.

## Tenure

The Kat River settlers were granted freehold land, with the exception of the elderly and infirm who received village lots. There were five locations of village blocks, with a total of 640 allotments of six acres each. The terms of the Settlement were strictly provisional.<sup>137</sup> Each erf was granted on perpetual quitrent, with titles only given on the fulfilment of certain conditions. The latter included fencing their properties with hedges or other enclosures, and building cottages of stone and burnt-brick, with walls of 8 feet (2.4 m) high, 33 feet (10 m) long and 16 feet (4.8 m) wide. The interior was to be divided into a hall, bedroom and kitchen, each with a four-paned glass window in wooden frames, and the house "decently thatched, plastered and whitewashed." Provision was to be made for streets. If the settlers had not improved their allotments by five years, they would revert to the government.<sup>138</sup> A limited number of cattle were to be grazed on the commonage and only people with permission could live in the Settlement.<sup>139</sup>

To protect the Kat River settlers, Stockenstrom located 100 Dutch and English farmers between the Winterberg and the junction of the Koonap and Fish Rivers.<sup>140</sup> Although there was tension between them in 1831, owing to rumours that Kat River settlers

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<sup>134</sup> Rose-Innes quoted by Hutton, *Stockenstrom* 2: 425.

<sup>135</sup> Van Wyk, 6.

<sup>136</sup> Thomson's brother-in-law.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 356-57.

<sup>138</sup> Stockenstrom, "Plan on which the Commissioner General has hitherto proceeded and intends proceeding, in the lands in the Kat River Settlement", 9/10/1831, CPP G18, '59, 36-37. See also Cory, 2: 386.

<sup>139</sup> Stockenstrom to Bell, 11/1/30, CO 647, no. 56.

<sup>140</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 367.

were planning to attack them, and Groepe and Peffer's houses were searched,<sup>141</sup> Kat River people had a greater dislike for the "English" [British settlers] and their mouthpiece, the editor of the *Grahamstown Journal*, Robert Godlonton.<sup>142</sup> It is noteworthy that Stockenstrom opposed the settling of British immigrants in the Zuurveld/Albany district in 1820.<sup>143</sup>

## Becoming a land owner

The first Kat River settlers arrived in Kat River in June 1829,<sup>144</sup> with their eye-catching trek at its last stage through Fort Beaufort being described by an anonymous woman. Comprising young and old, "the decently-clad respectable family" with a wagon and cattle contrasted with the poor Khoikhoi family on foot, with a pack ox and a small flock of goats, all bound for the "land of promise", and Sir Andries Stockenstrom, "night and day among them, placing them and arranging for their welfare".<sup>145</sup>

In a few words the writer described what became the hallmarks of the Settlement; the most heterogeneous of settlers, the assiduity and compassion of the Settlement founder, and the high hopes that all cherished. Almost immediately they were disabused of most of their expectations: apart from being given seed corn, they received no assistance from the government besides the sometimes grudging provision of rations during frontier wars. Although some of the better-off settlers had brought supplies to tide them over until the first harvest, indigent settlers<sup>146</sup> subsisted on *veldkos* (field food, such as roots, tubers, berries, wild honey and indigenous beans) or hunted for the pot.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 78, quoting CA/AY 1 8/3/1832.

<sup>142</sup> Williams, 154-55.

<sup>143</sup> J. L. Dracopoli, *Sir Andries Stockenström: 1792-1864: The Origins of the Racial Conflict in South Africa* (Cape Town: AA Balkema, 1968), 42.

<sup>144</sup> Williams, 113.

<sup>145</sup> "Notes on the Formation of the Kat River Settlement by an Anonymous Lady", CA LG 590, 133-34.

<sup>146</sup> Among them Botha's people and those from Bethelsdorp. Ross mentions Cobus Jager, Marthinus van Beulen, and others who settled in Bruceton, Maasdorp, Eyre, and Bergman's Hoek. See Ross, *Borders*, 49.

<sup>147</sup> Hutton, Stockenstrom, 2: 420. On traditional Khoikhoi veldkos, which included birds, small mammals and tortoises, see *Carl Peter Thunberg, Travels at the Cape, 1772-1775* ed., V. S. Forbes (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1986), 92, 95, 99, 134, 210. Rooy Bergman—a self-styled "Bushman", who settled in Bruceton, on the Elands/Eilands River, for example, continued to hunt on the Bontebok Flats, which was seen as engendering "idle habits" in "the Hottentots". Ross, *Borders*, 66, quoting D. Campbell, "Report of the progress and present state of the Settlement at the head of the Kat River", 7/6/1833, CA 1/AY 9/7.

Initially, the settlers built temporary wattle-and-daub dwellings. Soon Boezak and John Valentyn had set a lofty example by constructing “large and commodious houses”, with the latter’s whitewashed house standing “every chance of gaining the Pompey colt” which Stockenstrom had offered as a prize for the most progress in construction by 1 January 1831.<sup>148</sup>

Using wooden spades, the settlers dug irrigation furrows from streams to their lands. The system was entirely gravity fed, aided by damming up the water upstream to ensure a better head of water. Although at first ignorant of the correct levels, length and depth of the furrows, by October 1830 all 12 locations—with two exceptions, where the streams had dried up—had completed the furrows to their gardens.<sup>149</sup> Some of the settlers showed remarkable ingenuity, with John Valentyn hollowing out a tree to make a trough to carry his water across a gully in Balfour.<sup>150</sup> Another wooden aqueduct was made in Eyre, and one in Upsher, where water from the Kat was conveyed across the Umsebenzi River. Furrows were sometimes lined with stones to prevent erosion, and some plank bridges had brick foundations and stone pillar supports.<sup>151</sup> (Plank bridges would not have supported ox-or mule-wagons, which would have crossed the rivers at drifts.)

The settlers established orchards—using circular furrows for irrigation—and sowed wheat, barley and oats—using flood irrigation. The soil was turned with ploughs of “of the rudest and most basic kind”. Wheels were made from two discs sawn from a “round” tree, with holes in the centre for the axle. The wooden plough share was defended with iron plates, and the handle was a wooden beam.<sup>152</sup> Menzies was also pleased to find that a “sufficient quantity of Indian and Kafir corn [mealies/maize and sorghum] and pumpkins” had been planted to support the settlers through the winter, with the corn being already 7-8 feet [approximately 2 m] high.<sup>153</sup>

Stockenstrom’s rationale was that becoming a land owner was a gradual process. This was inextricably linked with his view of industry and cultivation as a “civilising” occupation—the “benefits” of which the settlers must not be “deprived”.<sup>154</sup> His ideology was

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<sup>148</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1:363.

<sup>149</sup> As observed by Justice Menzies on his tour of the Settlement. Menzies to Governor, Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 361.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

<sup>151</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 56. Similarly, the Khoikhoi at Genadendal built bridges with stone supports. Marais, *Coloured People*,

<sup>152</sup> Thus described in 1848 by Baines, 1: 82.

<sup>153</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 56.

<sup>154</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 356.

not racially exclusive. Hence, he opposed the Great Trek for the same reason that he promoted cultivation in Kat River, regarding trekking away from “civilisation” as causing a “lamentable drawback on their [the trekkers’] improvement” by keeping them from “more profitable and industrious pursuit”.<sup>155</sup> Interestingly, Macmillan cites the same reason for the poverty and “backwardness” of trekboer descendents, who were unable to “cope with the coming of industry and the demand for more intensive agriculture.”<sup>156</sup>

The village system provided the requisite denseness for military purposes. Generous commonage<sup>157</sup> to which all erf holders had access—including only part-owners of an erf—was granted for communal grazing. Later, the bequeathing of portions of an erf to heirs led to legal loopholes, which were exploited by unscrupulous lawyers, as joint ownership of land allowed the property of all to be seized for the debt of one.<sup>158</sup>

On his tour of the Settlement in 1830, Stockenstrom exulted in “the fine herds of numerous oxen and cattle” although in some valleys he noted that horse sickness had killed many of the settlers’ horses.<sup>159</sup> In 1833, Civil-commissioner Rose-Innes observed even greater progress: Kat River settlers had reaped 1500 muids<sup>160</sup> of wheat, barley and oats, 60 muids of maize and sorghum, and 33 loads of pumpkins; their livestock comprising 624 horses, 5 460 cattle and 8 925 goats.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 1: 279. See also P. J. Smuts, “The Lieutenant-Governorship of Andries Stockenstrom” (University of Cape Town: PhD thesis, October 1940), 70.

<sup>156</sup> Beinart, et al. *Putting a Plough to the Land*, 3.

<sup>157</sup> Blinkwater commonage, for example, comprised 4000 hectares, beginning on the flat land above the church and continuing up and over the Blinkwater Mountain in both directions. The common was so big that stock often got lost in the bush. Information supplied by Gert van der Westhuizen, 11 July 2016.

<sup>158</sup> Peires, “Fenner-Solomon”, 69-70, 80.

<sup>159</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 363.

<sup>160</sup> A muid equalling 3 bushels (approximately 109.2 litres).

<sup>161</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 421.



Figure 10 Water furrow at Philipton, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

## Chapter 2: Cultivation, religion and identity, and population

### Cultivation ideology

In Kat River, cultivation of the land was seen as a necessary adjunct to defence, as it would anchor the military settlers to the soil in a way that pastoralism could not. As the Kat River Settlement was based on European ideologies of cultivation and industry, together with the ability to muster,<sup>162</sup> it was imperative that its leaders exemplify these skills, together with other European mores such as marriage, education, respectability, and Western-type housing and dress, which were seen as beneficial for a stable settlement.<sup>163</sup>

The privileging of cultivation and respectability in Kat River<sup>164</sup> and in other British colonies harks back to post-Renaissance interest in classical agrarian theory in Europe and Britain. The revival of classical texts, valorising conquest and cultivation, influenced courtly thinking in justifying early colonisation and the elimination of indigenes who did not cultivate their land, or did not do so along European lines.<sup>165</sup> Thus, drawing on racial theories from Aristotle, Cato's heroic account of the destruction of Carthage, and Vergil's account of the latter, early British colonial ideology imagined the creation of a new empire "structured according to God's plan".<sup>166</sup> This ideology not only drove Cortés's Mexican massacres, and English genocides of the Irish, who were seen as "spoiling" and "wasting" the land by not cultivating it, but justified colonial genocides of aborigines in Australia, Canada, and the Cape Colony, and on its frontiers.

In sixteenth-century England, good farmers were seen as making good men and rivalling the importance of noble-lineage wealth. As Thomas Elyot argued in 1531 in *The Book Named the Governor*, which drew on Livy's description of the Second Punic War, the

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<sup>162</sup> Capt A. B Armstrong averred, "I expected that [Groepe] would summon but 30 men. He tells me the whole settlement is on the *qui vivre*, and that he will bring 80 men to the post tomorrow to make a show." HC 503 of 1837, Armstrong, Journal, March 5, 1834, enclosure 4 in 23, D'Urban to Glenelg, 9/06/1836, 112-113. In 1834 Colonel Wade was delighted to find "300 mounted and 452 unmounted men available for defence" in Kat River. Pitman, "Stockenstrom", 59, citing A.C. Enclosure to 2795, Affidavit of P. R. Erasmus.

<sup>163</sup> Compare the houses and dress of the Kat River settlers in Butler's painting, "The Kat River Settlement" to those of the Genadendal Mission in George French Angas' painting of 1849. .

<sup>164</sup> Both Stockenstrom and Philip valorised settled agriculture above transhumant pastoralism. See Hutton, *Stockenstrom 2*: 350, and Philip, *Researches*, 1: 96-103, 201-224. See also Ross *Borders*, 33.

<sup>165</sup> See Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: a World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 43-45, 76-79. On cultivation ideology justifying English genocide in Ireland, *ibid.*, 177-212.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

Romans chose Quintius—who owned only 30 acres of land—for the highest dignity (leading the people to victory). After accomplishing this, he “repaired again to his plough”.<sup>167</sup>

I do not suggest that Stockenstrom or others involved in the founding of the Kat River Settlement—which lauded and rewarded European-type cultivation—harboured genocidal intentions, or that it was even remotely entertained that the most industrious Kat River settlers could rival the importance of noble-lineage wealth in the Cape Colony. I argue, rather, that agrarian/cultivation ideology—derived from Hesiod and Vergil, respectively, reinterpreted by Sir Thomas More, Sir Thomas Smith, the Earl of Essex, Thomas Elyot, and Henry Sydney,<sup>168</sup> and re-packaged by the Evangelicals of the Church of England (as well as Wollstonecraft and Godwin)<sup>169</sup>—implicitly influenced the organisation of the Kat River Settlement. Thus, the promotion in Kat River<sup>170</sup> of dryland irrigation, ploughs and wagons—instead of relying on rain, the traditional *isikhuba* (sharpened digging sticks)<sup>171</sup> and sledges—to English-cottage-style housing, enclosure, and streets.<sup>172</sup> Similarly, European military structures, such as field-cornetcies, provided the protection necessary for these pursuits.

Industrious Kat River settlers, who dug irrigation furrows and grew crops such as wheat, barley, and corn and established orchards, were praised.<sup>173</sup> Those living in Lower and Upper Blinkwater and the amaMfengu tended to grow Xhosa staples such as sorghum

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<sup>167</sup> Quoted by Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 170.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-9.

<sup>169</sup> Such as Hannah More, William Wilberforce, Thomas Fowell Buxton, Charles Grant, Charles Simeon, James Stephen and Arabella Katherine Hankey the daughter of William Hankey, the treasurer of the LMS. The latter was the namesake of the LMS mission station at Hankey in the Gamtoos Valley in the eastern Cape. It was established in 1822 and was later run by Dr John Philip and his wife Jane’s son. Both John and Jane Philip died and were buried at Hankey. Hankey ceased to exist as a LMS station in 1876. See Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire*, 54, 64, 70, 300, 308-309, 315, 329-330. On Hannah More’s eulogy of Wilberforce (whom she called “Candidus”), a notable champion of industry, see Hannah More, *Christian Morals*, 265. See also William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, Facsimile Edition, ed., F. E. L. Priestley, 3 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946) 1: 350-56.

<sup>170</sup> And to some amaXhosa in the Tyhume. On Sir Harry Smith’s encouraging “old” Soga and Tyhale’s interest in ploughing and irrigation, see, Baines, 1:189.

<sup>171</sup> Using 2-3 foot-long sticks with sharp (fire-hardened) wooden points, the women would squat and dig with the sharp end. They also cleared the land with fire prior to tilling it. No axes were used. Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa*, (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1934; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Oxford: Oxford University for the International African Institute, 1961) 74.

<sup>172</sup> Cory, 2: 386.

<sup>173</sup> Read, Kat River Report for 1840, LMS report, 17/3/A, quoted by Ross, *Borders*, 120. During his visit to Kat River in 1849, in the paternalistic discourse of the time, Merriman praised the “advancement of these Hottentots in civilisation and the arts of life”, despite the drawbacks of the war of 1846-47. *The Cape Journals of Archdeacon Merriman, 1844-1845*, eds, D. H. Varley and H. M. Matthew (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1957), 117.

(*amazimba/amabele*), melons, calabashes, pumpkins, and an indigenous bean.<sup>174</sup> Hermanus Matroos—the first leader of the Kat River Rebellion—had a large indigenous market garden in his “settlement” in Lower Blinkwater (comprising 87 men, 122 women and 122 children),<sup>175</sup> this enabling him to conduct a brisk trade with the amaXhosa, which was seen as keeping the corridors open to “the enemy”. Here, the stigma of class-related agriculture—if there were one—became intertwined with treasonable actions. It was also observed that indigenes in other British colonies preferred to grow traditional crops, which were better suited to their “modes of agriculture”, and lifestyle.<sup>176</sup>

The London Missionary Society, formed and supported by the Evangelicals, although also comprising many Dissenters (such as Philip and the Reads), played an important role in spreading the “gospel” of cultivation on the eastern frontier. When the first LMS missionary, Dr Johannes van der Kemp, arrived at the Cape, acting Cape Governor Lt-Col Dundas gave him grain and tools to encourage the Khoikhoi (and amaXhosa) to cultivate, promising Van der Kemp government protection in exchange for his instruction of them. Dundas also tried to persuade rebel Khoikhoi in the third frontier war to settle on farms as agriculturalists, and likewise the Khoikhoi bandits in the Zuurveld to cultivate at Algoa Bay.<sup>177</sup> In this way cultivation was seen as ensuring both stability and peace.

Van der Kemp may not have taken the same interest in producing the desired level of cultivation, but Dr John Philip, the chairman of the Cape LMS, promoted it unceasingly in the eastern Cape. (And once Natal had been annexed, he envisioned not only the spread of the gospel, but the establishment of “model farms and cotton plantations worked by diligent peasant cultivators”.)<sup>178</sup> After giving evidence at the Aborigines Commission in 1835-6, he went on an extensive tour of England and Scotland, drumming up support for the mission Khoikhoi on the eastern frontier and especially the Kat River Settlement, returning in 1837 with not only school books and apparatus for them, but plenty of cultivation tools and implements: “spades, pruning hooks, ploughs and other implements of agriculture and

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<sup>174</sup> See Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, eds, *The Oxford History of South Africa*, Vol. 1 *South Africa to 1870*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 109, and Report by Rose Innes, 1839, in Hutton, *Stockenström*, 2: 422: “On the slopes of many of the hills, fields have been prepared by the Fingoes, are planted with kaffir corn”. Indian corn/ mealies/*umbona* was introduced to the Cape Colony during the early colonial era.

<sup>175</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 122.

<sup>176</sup> John Williams of the South Sea Islands also observed that the indigenes there preferred to cultivate their crops, bananas, yams and bread fruit, according to their own modes of agriculture. SC, Evidence of Rev John Williams, 29 July 1836, 5625 (668).

<sup>177</sup> Elbourne, “Freedom”, 120-21.

<sup>178</sup> Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire*, 295.

implements of peace”.<sup>179</sup> (Note Keegan’s use of the word “peace” to stress the philosophy behind cultivation).

Nevertheless Philip unblushingly shared the ancient Roman dream for the eastern frontier, averring that he had “no objection to see the whole country from the Keiskama to the Kei, or even from the Keiskama to Delagoa Bay, included within the limits of the Colony on the plan adopted by the ancient Romans which led them to . . . spread their institutions over the countries which submitted to their government.”<sup>180</sup>

Thus, in keeping with his desire to spread “civilisation” and imperial advance to protect indigenes from rapacious colonists, he advocated the incorporation of Griqua Town and Philippolis into the colony. Furthermore, he suggested that a magistrate be appointed over the Griqua, and that they be formed into a militia with Waterboer appointed as a colonial commandant of it.<sup>181</sup> And, though initially deploring D’Urban’s annexation of the area between the Keiskama and Kei as Queen Adelaide Territory, Philip believed it would be better to keep the territory under British suzerainty and the law of nations, supplemented by treaties with the Xhosa chiefs, so that “the Africans might drink with eagerness from the fountains of our religion, Civil Policy and Science”.<sup>182</sup> Thus, as Keegan sums it up, his goals were “imperial advance, annexation of territory, protection of indigenes people’s rights, and the forward march of the kingdom of God as represented by the LMS”.<sup>183</sup> Conversely, Stockenstrom rejected imperialism as he knew it would perpetuate military violence against indigenes.

The LMS missionaries were not the only ones to advocate industry in the field. The Kat River Superintendent (appointed in by Pottinger in May 1847) T. J. Biddulph and the Stockenstrom resident magistrate, T. H. Bowker (appointed in March 1848) deplored “idleness”,<sup>184</sup> and urged Kat River settlers to cultivate the soil rather than use it for grazing, with the plough being upheld as the symbol of industry and progress. Captain Lennox Stretch—Philip’s friend and government agent to Chief Maqoma (and formerly a land surveyor and captain in the Cape Corps)—also saw the promotion of the plough as a means of female liberation, as a way of “subverting the degrading system” of polygamy or, as he

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<sup>179</sup> Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire*, 224.

<sup>180</sup> Philip to D’Urban, 1834; quoted by J. L. Dracopoli, *Sir Andries Stockenström: 1792-1864: The Origins of the Racial Conflict in South Africa* (Cape Town: AA Balkema), 95.

<sup>181</sup> Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire*, 151, 155-56, 176-77.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>184</sup> With Biddulph describing Kat River as “a concourse of rebellious, idle paupers”. Report on the Kat River Settlement, *Government Gazette*, 18/11/ 1847.

described it, keeping women for “breaking the soil by hand” (using a hoe).<sup>185</sup> Bowker established an agricultural society to “introduce the English plough” to the settlers (there were originally only 22 ploughs in the Settlement) and “praised the Bastards [sic] for their extensive cultivation and criticised the Khoikhoi for their backwardness in this respect”.<sup>186</sup>

Although Stockenstrom promoted European agriculture, he did not discourage indigenous agrarian or pastoral practices (why else would he have provided commonages for the settlers?). Neither did he scruple to espouse the cause of “the poor Hottentot” Gerrit/Gert Samson de Boer against Bowker, who wanted his land.<sup>187</sup>

### Socio-political climate

From the outset, establishing Khoikhoi ethnicity—on which land grants depended—created headaches for officials who battled to “unscramble” ethnic “omelettes”.<sup>188</sup> Even Stockenstrom admitted that “the pure Hottentot race may be almost considered extinct in the Colony now”.<sup>189</sup> Although it was ironic that these people, enfranchised by a colour- and class-blind ordinance,<sup>190</sup> were vetted according to ethnicity, it seemed to have been seen as the fairest way of ensuring that the Khoikhoi received the land.

To what extent Stockenstrom—who referred to himself disparingly as “nothing but a boer of the land”<sup>191</sup> and elsewhere as “an Africander”—was troubled by the colonial classification of people, is debatable. He made neither ethnic nor class distinctions in his dealings with Kat River settlers, maintaining an open-door policy to all, and encouraging the

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<sup>185</sup> Letter from Captain Stretch to A. G. Bain, Fort Cox, 8 July 1836, reprinted in Lister, *Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain*, 189. Bain was referring to amaXhosa in the Tyhume area but it could be equally applicable to Hermanus’s settlement in Kat River.

<sup>186</sup> Kirk, “Progress”, 422.

<sup>187</sup> See Stockenstrom’s speech to the Legislative Assembly, Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 37, 443. Samson, who had been influenced by the Wesleyan missionary John Ayliff [Kay and Shaw’s successor) at Somerset [East], was first granted land near the Poort. Ross, 39, quoting Hinchcliff, ed, *The Journal of John Ayliff*, and Memorial of Christian Groepe, n.d., c. 1835, 1927 56.

<sup>188</sup> V.C. Malherbe, *The Cape Khoisan in the Eastern Districts of the Colony before and after Ordinance 50 of 1828*, PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1997, 363, fn 195.

<sup>189</sup> SC, Evidence of A. Stockenstrom, 4 March 1836, 236.

<sup>190</sup> “One comprehensive law embracing all free inhabitants without reference to colour or tribe” to “avoid the opprobrium of denoting particular classes”. See Memorandum of the Commissioner General, 3/4/28, and Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 286, ff. and 2, 403.

<sup>191</sup> See Command Paper 1352 of 1851, Correspondence regarding Kaffir Tribes . . . and Representative Government at the Cape, 1847-51, Stockenstrom to Montagu, 11 July 1851, pp. 108-109.

poorest to consult him.<sup>192</sup> His impartiality also enabled him to stand up for all maligned groups. Although condemning the racist attitudes of some burghers and British colonists, he defended both against unfair generalisations, averring that it “is the fashion to associate everything that is barbarous, brutal and cruel with the idea ‘the African-Boer’”, and objected to the British colonists being seen “*en masse* as cut-throats”.<sup>193</sup>

## Population and production

As applicants for the Kat River Settlement increased, land became scarcer and erfholders’ children had less recourse to new land or access to an equitable market. After 1829 there were no further grants of crown land. Adult children remained with parents on one erf, and the Gonaqua Khoikhoi shared theirs with Xhosa kin.<sup>194</sup>

Although the population of the Settlement grew rapidly, initially agricultural and pastoral production kept pace. From 900 people in 1830 (250-300 of which were available for defence), the population rose to 2 114 in 1833, including 101 Mfengu and 654 “foreigners”, including “Bechuana” (Batswana) and “Makatiesen/Mantatees”<sup>195</sup> from north of the Orange/Gariep River). In 1835 a number of people from Theopolis were allowed to settle in Blinkwater.<sup>196</sup> This brought the Kat River population to a total of 4 876 in 1842, of whom 60 were “Europeans”, 3 312 Khoikhoi and “persons of colour”, and 1 504 “native foreigners”. By 1845 the population had grown to 5300. In 1849 Read estimated it at 6 000.<sup>197</sup>

To exacerbate the land shortage the government alienated a large tract of land in Blinkwater for Hermanus Matroos, aka Ngxukumeshe, who had served as a government interpreter/informer during Hintsa’s War.<sup>198</sup> Owing to his feudal allegiance to Ngqika’s house, Hermanus attracted many Xhosa, Mfengu, and Thembu clients, who squatted on his land.<sup>199</sup> Other beneficiaries of the Blinkwater land were Capt Campbell, Major Armstrong,

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<sup>192</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 74.

<sup>193</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 11.

<sup>194</sup> Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 305-306.

<sup>195</sup> The generic name that the settlers applied to all Sotho speakers, and in particular those who had been displaced during the upheavals caused by the state-building of local chiefs. The Rev Thomson had a “Mantatee” servant called “Selah”. Baines, *Journal*, 1:183.

<sup>196</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 153.

<sup>197</sup> Kirk, “Progress”, 461.

<sup>198</sup> On Stockenstrom’s reasons for opposing Matroos’s residence in Kat River, see Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 370-371.

<sup>199</sup> Read, 14-16.

Henry Fuller, and Major Blakeway—the allocations of which Stockenstrom regarded as contravening “royal instructions”.<sup>200</sup>

The year 1844—during which the population amounted to 5 000—probably marked the zenith of Kat River productivity, although there were warning signs of strain on natural resources. Rose-Innes’s report, together with statistical reports from government registers, provide a good idea of the production of Kat River at this time. Despite settler losses incurred by the 1834-35 war and the introduction of quitrent and road taxes—the first road tax for those with fixed property coming into effect in 1844—the Kat River Settlement did remarkably well. Production increased steadily between 1841 and 1844, but Rose-Innes noted that the growth rate was lower than during the first ten years, and the Settlement “had, perhaps, become overstocked and over-populated”.<sup>201</sup> By 1850 the Settlement was showing visible sign of strain. There were 7 000 settlers and 2 000 squatters, and the former were beginning to view their Mfengu clients<sup>202</sup> as competitors for the land.<sup>203</sup>

## Religion and identity

Although the Kat River Settlement was a government and not a missionary establishment, in 1830 the former LMS missionary at Bethelsdorp, James Read Sr settled there, followed soon afterwards by his son, James Read Jr. Together they formed a Congregational church, which the latter described as being something in-between Independents and Presbyterians.<sup>204</sup> It was

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 397.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> In 1834, during his invasion of Gcalekaland, Sir Benjamin D’Urban “rescued” 17 000 Mfengu (former abaMbo refugees from the so-called mfecane) from Gcaleka Chief Hintsas’s service, and brought them to the Colony, on condition that they vowed to go to church, educate their children, and fight for the government. They were settled in the Peddie/Ngqushwa area, where a star-shaped earth fort was built for their protection. Although they fought for the government in successive frontier wars, they were unarmed and had to rely on their spears. Enormous animosity existed between them and the amaXhosa, against whom they fought, and on whose former territory they were granted land in the Amathole basin. See J. E. Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage of Observation among the Colonies of Western Africa . . . and of a Campaign in Kaffirland . . . in 1835*, 2 vols (London: Colburn, 1837), pp. 144 ff; J. Ayliff and J. Whiteside, *History of the Abambo, generally known as Fingos* (Butterworth, 1912, rpt., Cape Town: Struik, 1963), 1-22; *The War of the Axe and the Xosa Bible, The Journal of the Revd J. W. Appleyard*, ed., J. Fry, (Cape Town: Struik, 1971); 37, R. Moyer, “A History of the Mfengu of the Eastern Cape, 1815–1865” (PhD thesis, London, 1976. See also Moyer, ‘The Mfengu: Self-defence and Cape Frontier Wars’, in *Beyond the Cape Frontier*, eds, C. Saunders and R. Derricourt, *Studies in the history of the Transkei and Ciskei* (London: Longman, 1974), 101-26.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>204</sup> Stockenstrom had asked Read Sr to escort the Theopolis people to Kat River but had not allegedly expected him to remain there or his son to join him. Williams, 115-18. See also Read, 125.

essentially democratic, allowing the congregation to participate in decision making, including the “calling” of their ministers, and other matters. Like the Glasgow missionaries, the Reads also used “native agents” in evangelical work, entrusting them to spread the gospel and teach in Sunday and day schools that they established. As Read Sr had been sidelined at the Bethelsdorp mission (owing to his having committed adultery), his colleague from earlier Bethelsdorp day, Dr John Philip, not only backed him when his people “called” him to Kat River, but hastened to ordain him in order to ensconce him there. In this way Philip extended the influence of the LMS into the Kat River Settlement, and ensured that his prime informant on the eastern frontier would be able to continue his work. This outraged Government House in Cape Town, and caused a rift between Philip and Stockenstrom. But it was a *fait accompli*, and soon afterwards his son, James Read Jr joined him. Despite fears that the Reads would encourage laziness and alienate their parishioners from the Colony, their presence was reluctantly tolerated,<sup>205</sup> owing to the political clout of the Evangelicals of the Church of England, who were highly invested in both the LMS and the Kat River Settlement.<sup>206</sup>

The Reads’ first chapel in Philipton, built on Andries Stoffels’s location, could seat 100 and was attended by the Lushington, Fairbairn, Readsdale, and Philipton residents, including many Mfengu.<sup>207</sup> As Philip observed, the latter—whom Sir Benjamin D’Urban had “rescued” from Hintsia and brought into the Colony as British subjects—were particularly susceptible to Christianity, and formed the mainstays of the Reads’ church.<sup>208</sup>

On his first visit to the Settlement, the Quaker, James Backhouse, noted that 60 “Fingoes”, 40 of whom had been married by Read, were availing themselves of the Philipton resources and learning to read.<sup>209</sup> At this period (1839), Philipton, “consisted of a large, plain building used as a chapel and schoolroom, and of humble cottages, occupied by the Missionaries, James Read senior and junior, and of still humbler ones, with a few huts,

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<sup>205</sup> Although they were not allowed to operate under the LMS banner. Nevertheless, the LMS supported them financially.

<sup>206</sup> The London Missionary Society, a non-denominational society of which Philip was the Cape chairman, was formed in 1795 by Evangelicals, many of whom, such as William Wilberforce, Charles Lushington, and Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, were members of Parliament, where they were known as “the Saints” or “the Clapham Sect”. Together with Hannah More, James Stephens, Anna Sewell, and others, they fought for the abolition of slavery, and human and animal rights, with Buxton initiating the Select Committee on Aborigines of 1835-37.

<sup>207</sup> Cory, 2: 389-91. Ross suggests that the “Mantatees” (South Sotho-Tswana people) in Philipton and the western part of the Settlement were also described as amaMfengu. Ross, *Borders*, 95.

<sup>208</sup> Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire*, 265.

<sup>209</sup> J. Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa* (London: Hamilton, 1844). 321. And thereby taking the opportunity to rebuild their lives. Moreover, their devotion to Christianity was preparing them for “perfect native agents”. Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire*, 265.

inhabited by (Khoikhoi), (Mfengu) and other people”. Backhouse adds that “a [Xhosa] interpreter residing here, kept an eating-house, and supplied a basin of coffee, and a slice of bread and butter for twopence”.<sup>210</sup>



Figure 11 The second Congregational Church at Philipton (the first was burnt), 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

As a counterfoil to the Reads (and Philip), Stockenstrom invited the Rev William Ritchie Thomson—formerly of the Glasgow Missionary Society and government agent to the Tyhume Ngqika—to establish a church in Kat River along Dutch Reformed Church lines. First based at Balfour in a cottage that did duty as church, school and manse, Thomson began preaching and teaching literacy on 1 May 1830.<sup>211</sup> In July 1830 he was ordained minister of what was to become the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in Hertzog,<sup>212</sup> but he only moved

<sup>210</sup> Backhouse, 184.

<sup>211</sup> CA 5100, 119, Acting Colonial Secretary to Thomson, 18/06/1830. The government paid £200 pounds per annum towards his upkeep and £100 pounds towards the building of the church. Theal, *History of South Africa since September 1795* (London: Sonnenschein, 1908), 3: 455. The Reads were initially not financially assisted as De Mist’s legislation (in place until 1843) only allowed the DRC to claim support from the public treasury. *Merriman*, xi.

<sup>212</sup> Although the Church of Scotland recognised this appointment, initially the Graaff-Reinet Presbytery was unhappy about it. Williams, 117, 120.

there on the completion of the church building in 1845,<sup>213</sup> the frontier war of 1834-35 delaying its construction.



Figure 12 Thomson's first church at Balfour, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 140.



Figure 13 Thomson's Dutch Reformed Church at Hertzog, 2011 Photo: S I Blackbeard, 2011.)

Despite Thomson's desire for the amalgamation of the Khoikhoi and coloureds in the Settlement",<sup>214</sup> the Khoikhoi and amaMfengu seemed to have felt more at home at the Reads' church, where a more "indigenised Christianity" was encouraged.<sup>215</sup>

By contrast, Thomson's church was run on more formal lines. From being formerly a non-churchman, Groepe became a founder member of it, and one of his sons taught in Thomson's school in Hertzog. Further, in 1834 Groepe was appointed as *scriba* (recorder) of the church.<sup>216</sup> This marked the start of a symbiotic relationship, with Thomson translating Groepe's reports to the government from Dutch into English, and probably using this as a conduit for "putting certain of his [Thomson's] views to Government".<sup>217</sup>

Although Thomson tried to be "all things to all men",<sup>218</sup> the Reads had no need to do so. With James Read Sr having married a Khoikhoi woman and their half-Khoikhoi offspring, James Read Jr, identifying himself with Khoikhoi, there was an inimitable empathy between them and the Khoikhoi settlers. Indeed, Read Sr, who had been on the eastern

<sup>214</sup> See "Notes on the Formation of Kat River", CA LG, 590, 133-134, and Thomson to Cole, CA CO, 362/61.

<sup>215</sup> Keegan's phrase. Philip's dream was "an indigenised Christianity along Congregationalists lines" by Africans or Khoikhoi. Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire*, 339.

<sup>216</sup> Although he relinquished this post in 1835, owing to his field-cornet duties. Williams, 128, citing Notule van Kerk, Stockenstrom, 1834-1847, 7 April 1834, Pastorie, Greykerk, C. P.

<sup>217</sup> See Williams, 128.

<sup>218</sup> See 1 Corinthians 9: 22.

frontier since 1799, had so embraced the Khoikhoi that he has been described as “see[ing] himself as much Khoikhoi as white man”.<sup>219</sup>

Pre-existing ethnicities and class distinctions in the Settlement were sharpened by animosity between the Khoikhoi and coloureds, with the former complaining that the latter—who comprised the majority of the field-cornets—treated them as inferiors and lorded it over them in Stockenstrom’s absence.<sup>220</sup> Although this animosity probably stemmed more from jealousy than from colour prejudice,<sup>221</sup> onlookers, such as “Justus” [Mackenzie Beverley], Capt James Alexander, and Archdeacon Merriman, fanned these embers.<sup>222</sup> Groepe’s own people also criticised him for having too many *Boersnuk* (boer habits/tricks)<sup>223</sup>—probably owing to his previous connections with burghers, and Stockenstrom’s using his house for district commando enquiries.<sup>224</sup> Groepe and Lodewyck Peffer also preferred to work with burgher commandos;<sup>225</sup> and Peffer was friendly with the Koonap burgher, Niklas Rhensburg, who invited him to a hunt on the Bontebok Flats. That this amicability was not extended to all Kat River Khoikhoi is shown by certain jealous burghers preventing some of them from obtaining credit at a stock auction on Stockenstrom’s farm.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire*, 204.

<sup>220</sup> SC, Evidence of J. Read, 29 June 1836, 5235 (pp 599 ff.)

<sup>221</sup> Williams, 198, 126-27.

<sup>222</sup> “Justus”, Mackenzie Beverley, *The Wrongs of the Kaffir Nation* (London: 1837), 261 blamed the Rev Thomson for encouraging “Bastard” superiority. Archdeacon Merriman described the Bastards as being superior to the “Hottentots”, Merriman, 118; and Capt James Alexander described the Khoikhoi teachers as being sulky and bad mannered. J. E. Alexander, *Narrative of a Voyage of Observation among the Colonies of Western Africa . . . and of a Campaign in Kaffirland . . . in 1835*, 2 vols. (London: Colburn, 1837), 2: 234, 239-240.

<sup>223</sup> Cory, 3: 395.

<sup>224</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 400-405.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 403.

<sup>226</sup> This occurred during Stockenstrom’s absence. After the auction on 10 November 1838, the Koonap farmer, Nicholas Prinsloo, harassed Andries Platgees [sic] and Fred Rooy and threatened to kill them as their “god”, Stockenstrom, had been killed. Cory, *Rise*, 3: 395. Ross suggests that Prinsloo was drunk. Ross, *Borders*, 75-76.

### Chapter 3: The vagrancy divide, education, and war on the commons

#### “What is a nation without freedom?”<sup>227</sup>

The Kat River Settlement itself was a testament to the benefits of freedom conferred on the Khoikhoi by Ordinance 50, and Stockenstrom, an early proponent of abolition at the Cape,<sup>228</sup> not only oversaw the emancipation of slaves on the eastern frontier in 1834, but followed up illicit practices of it. Thus, soon after emancipation, Stockenstrom ordered a patrol under Capt A. B. Armstrong to pursue Louis Tregardt, who had left the Baviaans with his slaves and Khoikhoi pressed into service, and had reached the Indwe River. Christian Groepe and two Kat River men accompanied the patrol. They not only tracked down Tregardt, but persuaded him not to resist the patrol and to surrender the slaves and Khoikhoi.<sup>229</sup>

That same year the Cape Legislative Assembly’s attempt to pass a vagrancy act before the abolition of slavery exacerbated the tension between the Reads’ and Thomson’s congregations. Prior to this there had been attempts at the Cape to lessen the evils of slavery and to usher in gradual abolition by freeing slave children at birth.<sup>230</sup> The fact that ultimate abolition at the Cape on 1 December 1838 was seen as both abrupt and through outside intervention caused former slave owners to fear an “orgy of revenge”, as in the slave uprising of 1825, and a dire shortage of labour. It was also expected to increase vagrancy, with freed

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<sup>227</sup> Elizabeth Elbourne, “Freedom at issue: Vagrancy Legislation and the Meaning of Freedom in Britain and the Cape Colony, 1799 to 1842”, *Slavery and Abolition: Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, Taylor and Francis, Vol 15 (August 1994; online publication, McGill University, June 2008), 114-150.

<sup>228</sup> In 1826 he was formulating plans for gradual emancipation and promoting freeing female slaves at birth. See Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 258-59. See also *ibid.*, 2: 62. Before the abolition of slavery in the colonies Stockenstrom was also wont to purchase female slaves and emancipate them immediately. *Ibid.*, 446,

<sup>229</sup> HC 503 of 1837, Grahamstown, Somerset to Dutton, 24 October 1834, p. 154. See also J. C. Visagie, citing B. Le Cordeur, ed., *The Diary of Captain Lennox Stretch*, 2 April 1835, 32-3, 40-3. Klaas Prinsloo and Christiaan Muller were also members of the patrol. *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>230</sup> Both Stockenstrom and Philip favoured gradual emancipation. See Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 111, 112-3. While landdrost of Graaff-Reinet, Stockenstrom discussed with his heemraden the launching of an initiative for the ultimate abolition of slavery at the Cape, and was delighted to find “the most liberal feelings on the subject ... among these unsophisticated Boers”. The heemraden wished to fix an early date for all slave owners to free all female children born to slave mothers. (There were some who wanted to free male babies too but it was not unanimous). The Cape Government was startled but Sir Richard Plasket supported it. The Graaff-Reinet slave owners’ resolutions were sent to Cape Town but they weren’t published. In a letter to Plasket (August 1826) Stockenstrom urged him to go ahead and emancipate the children. Hutton, 1: 260-1. Stockenstrom also promoted and practised the purchasing and emancipating of female slave children, and urged the freeing of all slave children. *Ibid.*, 446.

slaves becoming vagrants. The Khoikhoi feared that abolition would be followed by the repeal of Ordinance 50, and they would be reduced to their former state of virtual slavery in order to fill the labour gap.<sup>231</sup> This drove many of them to seek refuge at the mission stations.<sup>232</sup> Ironically, only four years earlier the Khoikhoi had held celebrations in February 1830 at Bethelsdorp to mark Ordinance 50—celebrations attended by John Philip, John Fairbairn, and two protestant French missionaries—where the Khoikhoi made speeches about their spiritual and material advancement.<sup>233</sup>

Once passed, the proposed vagrancy act would have enabled any official or farmer to apprehend people he suspected of “having no honest means of subsistence or who could not provide satisfactory accounts of themselves. Further, he could deliver them to the landdrost/justice of the peace/field-cornet, who could make work on public roads until a “respectable person” could vouch for them or take them into service.”<sup>234</sup>

This proposed vagrancy ordinance differed little from vagrancy legislation in seventeenth-century England. In 1622, for example, English statutory law allowed “offenders” (paupers wandering outside their parish) to be “taken by churchwardens and overseers in conjunction with constables to the public square, stripped to the waist, whipped until [they] bled and sent back in the direction of [their] parish church” or put to work.<sup>235</sup>

According to the proposed Cape vagrancy legislation, other punishments following apprehension comprised flogging and being sent in chains to toil on the public works.<sup>236</sup> One need hardly point out the similarity between these punishments and in the Tudor and early Stuart periods in England.

How did the Khoikhoi who had gradually been driven to the Eastern Districts from the Western Cape react? They had apparently retained a stronger sense of Khoikhoi ethnicity than their western counterparts and had benefited from the literacy and economic ideology

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<sup>231</sup> Fearing the retraction of their civil rights; and the reintroduction of pass laws, indenture, and not being allowed to own land. (Pass laws, based on Dutch settlement law, existed in Swellendam since the 1780s and in Graaff-Reinet since the 1790s. Landdrosts [magistrates] and field-cornets who were often unsympathetic administered the pass laws. Unlike in England, there was no parish poor relief for the unemployed or struggling. See Elbourne, 122-23.

<sup>232</sup> Elbourne, “Freedom”, 115.

<sup>233</sup> Ross, “Khoikhoi Nationalism”, 95-6.

<sup>234</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 80.

<sup>235</sup> Mildred Campbell, *The English Yeoman in the Tudor and Early Stuart Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942, repr., London: Merlin Press, 1960), 331-332. See her case study of Giles Roles, a “vagrant beggar” in Hereford. *Ibid.*, 332. For Marx’s comments on the “bloody legislation” against “vagabondage” in fifteenth-sixteenth century England, see Marx, *Das Kapital*, ch. 28, 522, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf>, accessed 13 March 2016.

<sup>236</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 80-89.

learned from missionaries such as Philip and the Reads, but they appear to have required someone to mobilise them.<sup>237</sup> Philip, noting the many petitions and memorials drawn up by pro-vagrancy act colonists, lost no time in doing so. Accordingly, he organised political agitation at the Pacaltsdorp, Bethelsdorp, Theopolis mission stations, and at Philipton in Kat River, hoping that indigenous voices would sway the British against the ordinance.<sup>238</sup>

There was enthusiastic participation at the protest debates in the Reads' church in Philipton—an occasion that has been described as manifesting Khoikhoi nationalism<sup>239</sup>—during which Philip was careful to remain in the background. Andries Stoffels (an orator of note from Bethelsdorp), Andries Botha, Hendrik Heyn, Andries Hatha, (Oerson?) Maegerman, Antonie Pieterward, and Marthinus van Beuelen were key speakers.<sup>240</sup>

Other also contributed, warning against the proposed legislation, and citing experience of oppression from burghers/boers (sometimes their biological fathers, who refused to acknowledge them as their children and treated them as slaves) and some English settlers whom the Khoikhoi had helped to get on their feet.<sup>241</sup>

Hendrik Heyn, who was to participate in several petitions to the government, cut straight to the problem: “What is a nation without freedom?” he asked. “Better a slave at once than that a man should compel me to work, then can he me also sell, for there is no midway between slavery and freedom”. And, at Theopolis, as Valentyn Jacobs put it, “We are assembled to oppose the introduction of a law, the object of which is to bring us back to slavery.”<sup>242</sup>

Andries Hatha, who remembered the state of the Khoikhoi prior to 1828, exemplified the point further:

Suppose I have cultivated my ground and sowed 10 muids of my barley at Rixdollars 6 per muid, with which I have paid for 3 oxen I bought, yet I journey to see friends at Algoa Bay, but have on a ragged jacket and the Veld-Cornet meets me on the way and inquires from where and whereto I am going. I inform him of all, but he looks on my ragged jacket, and asks if I have any proof upon me. Upon which having no proof upon me, he seizes me and

<sup>237</sup> Elbourne, “Freedom”, 116.

<sup>238</sup> Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire*, 164.

<sup>239</sup> See Ross, *The Kat River Rebellion and Khoikhoi Nationalism: The Fate of an Ethnic Identification*, *Kronos: Journal of Cape History*, 24 (1997), 91-105.

<sup>240</sup> Such as Andries Hatha, Hendrik Heyn, Andries Pretorius (not the trekker leader) Andries Botha, Oerson Maegerman, Antonie Pieterward, and Marthinus van Beuelen, Ross, *Borders*, 80-89.

<sup>241</sup> Such as Pretorius, Maegerman, Van Beuelen, Windvogel Smit, and Cobus Dirk. *Ibid.*, 84-87.

<sup>242</sup> Elbourne, “Freedom”, 116-7.

brings me before the Magistrate, who also gives me into the hands of a Baas . . . Thus though I am really a free person, yet am I dealt with as a slave.<sup>243</sup>

Hatha's observation was acute. Even highly-prized cultivation was not sufficient to ensure respectability in Kat River. No one was even allowed to look like a pauper. The ideal was writ large for all to read in Captain Henry Butler's painting "Kat River Housing", which shows Kat River adults wearing Western clothes, with a woman riding side-saddle like a Victorian lady, and a gentlemanly Khoikhoi holding her bridle. Another woman, with a hint of a bustle on her dress and an air of sentimental maternalism, holds the hands of a child who looks beseechingly up at her. Another woman rests (a little less elegantly), but still "respectably" dressed, in the foreground. In the monochrome background two women industriously grind corn, while two children properly stay out of the way against the wall.<sup>244</sup>

At the Philipton anti-vagrancy bill meetings on 5 and 12 August 1834, twelve party heads drew up a petition against the proposed vagrancy ordinance, which was signed by 401 people, mostly of the Reads' congregation, although the Reads did not sign it. Not surprisingly, in the charged atmosphere preceding emancipation, the Khoikhoi "clearly conflated their own former status with slavery itself".<sup>245</sup> And the more the Khoikhoi contemplated the loss of their freedom, the more they extolled the liberating effects of Ordinance 50. As Andries Stoffels, a prominent speaker at the Philipton meetings, eulogistically put it:

[T]hen [in 1828] did we first taste freedom . . . that other men eat so sweet—we rejoiced at the very word Freedom and Free Labour even before it was mingled with Water & Ground [being granted land and water] it is 20 times sweeter than forced labour—It was after this 50<sup>th</sup> Ordinance that we began to buy more clothes for ourselves and our Wives.<sup>246</sup>

Hendrik Heyn, Andries Hatha, and Hendrik Vincent wrote down the speeches, which were given in Dutch—and probably translated into English by the young missionary, James

<sup>243</sup>Quoted by Elbourne, "Freedom", 114. For the terrible punishments the Khoikhoi formerly had to endure at the hands of their *baas*, see Ross, 85-6. Others spoke of the persecution they received from the hands of their white fathers, who refused to recognise them as their sons. Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> See the painting by Captain Henry Butler, "Kat River Settlement", MA 1952-653-13. The dress of the Khoikhoi in Kat River in this representation is more stylish than those of the Khoikhoi in George French Angas's (1849) painting of the Genadendal Mission, which was considered a model Khoikhoi settlement. On Genadendal, see Marais, *The Coloured People*, 45-6.

<sup>245</sup> Elbourne, "Freedom", 114.

<sup>246</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 88, quoting Select Committee on Aborigines, 748.

Clarke—with the exception of Jan Uithaelder’s, which was in Khoikhoi and translated by another interpreter.<sup>247</sup> Philip then disseminated the speeches, which were published by Fairbairn in the *Commercial Advertiser*. Philip also wrote to Pringle in London, describing the 600-700 people who attended one of the meetings in the Philipton church.

Although Philip mobilised them, the Khoikhoi spoke for themselves, averring that they were speaking on behalf of the *de Hottentotsche natie* [the Hottentot nation] and standing up for the rights Ordinance 50 had granted them. And, in so doing, they demonstrated the “first major exposition of Khoikhoi nationalism”,<sup>248</sup> pressing memories of past oppression into the service of political actions.<sup>249</sup>

Swayed by Philip and his evidence, Buxton warned the colonial secretary, Spring Rice, that the vagrancy act would lead to the enslavement of indigenous labouring people, and his successor, Lord Aberdeen, wrote to D’Urban, saying that the proposed vagrant law would conflict with Ordinance 50 and contradict the principles of personal freedom. Philip was delighted with his success.<sup>250</sup>

Although this may not have been the sole reason for the proposed vagrancy legislation, there would have been economic spinoffs for labour-hungry farmers, and the political and economic ends of the colonial state would have been forwarded by setting vagrants to labour on the public works.<sup>251</sup>

While the Reads had encouraged critical discussion on the vagrancy act, the Rev Thomson and Captain A. B. Armstrong were allegedly in favour of it, as were eighty “Bastards”, who maintained that they were not “Hottentots”.

### **Vagrancy and disease**

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<sup>247</sup> There is a MS version of them in CA Acc 50.. Reports of the meetings were also printed in the SCA 3/9/1838, 6/9/1838, and 10/9/1838, and in the Select Committee on Aborigines, 748. See Ross, 85-86, fn 57.

<sup>248</sup> See Trapido, “The Emergence of Liberalism”, and Ross, “The Kat River Rebellion and Hottentot Nationalism,” 97.

<sup>249</sup> Clifton Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865* (Cambridge, 1992), 84.

<sup>250</sup> Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire*, 167-170. Sir John Wylde and Advocate Cloete, who were on circuit in Kat River at the time, also allegedly supported Philip in his anti-vagrancy act drive. *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>251</sup> See Tony Kirk, “The Cape Economy and the Expropriation of the Kat River Settlement”, *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, eds, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Essex: Longmans, 1982), 234; and Peter Anderson, “The Host of Vagabonds: origins and destinations of the vagabond in Cape history and ideas” (Graduate School in Humanities Seminar, 20 March 2002, University of Cape Town Libraries, Centre of African Studies).

Peter Anderson mentions the threat that the almost classless “indigent and itinerant” people, who transgressed social and political boundaries, posed to colonial society. It seems, however, to have been more than colonial fear of the undermining of “law and order”. Vagrants, as I argue, were also seen as carrying disease, and thereby threatening the physical as well as social health of society.

It is a truism that hygiene and respectability were Victorian watchwords. Although there were increasingly radical progressive approaches to curb the spread of disease, especially that of leprosy and tuberculosis, in the 1860s the study of bacteriology had not come into its own. Contagion was especially feared. And in Western thought there was a definite connection between disease, such as tuberculosis, and unemployment. As Rob Edmond explains:

Tuberculosis had powerful social resonance, and unemployment was a social disease with disturbing implications for social order. Poverty and unemployment were significant causes of tuberculosis and that disease itself was a frequent cause of pauperisation.<sup>252</sup>

In light of the aforementioned vicious circle, one can understand the aversion to pauperism and unemployment in England and her colonies. As the wards and parishes of England were responsible for controlling vagrants and paupers, so Kat River officials, Godlonton and his lobby, and other settlers seemed to expect the ministers of religion in Kat River to do this, castigating them when they failed to prevent poverty, “laziness”, or their parishioners from rebelling—as noted by an acute young Kat River woman.<sup>253</sup> Moreover, as the Reads’ parish was considered the poorest, most recalcitrant and politically dissident, they came under the hottest fire.

Vagrancy was also discussed at Buxton’s Select Committee on Aborigines, where the Rev Hans P. Hallbeck from the Genadendal Mission supported the Khoikhoi. Whilst acknowledging that they had “a greater disposition to wander about” than contemporary English peasants, he explained that it was “a natural disposition in such a climate”. And, unable to resist concluding with a barb, he added, “that which is called travelling in a boor is called vagrancy in a Hottentot”.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Rob Edmond, *Leprosy and Empire: A Medical and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 209.

<sup>253</sup> Read, *Kat River Settlement*, 81.

<sup>254</sup> SC, Evidence of Rev Hans P. Hallbeck, 20 April 1836, 3117 (341), 3134 (342) and 3161(344).



Figure 14 Kat River Housing by Capt. Henry Butler (MuseumAfrica, MA 1952-63-13)

## Temperance, education, and commerce

Believing that, since their dispossession, Khoikhoi were susceptible to “strong liquor”, Stockenstrom had advised a rural location for them, rather than near a town as Cole had suggested.<sup>255</sup> The Khoikhoi themselves also requested that military canteens and the sale of liquor be forbidden in the Kat River Settlement.<sup>256</sup> The Reads and Thomson endorsed this resolution, and the settlers’ temperance was eulogised by military and civil witnesses at Buxton’s Select Committee on Aborigines, and initially by Godlonton in the *Grahamstown Journal*.<sup>257</sup> As was the vogue of the time, a temperance society was established in the

<sup>255</sup> SC, Evidence of Stockenstrom, 4 March, 1836, 248. Stockenstrom feared that if they lived near towns they would sell everything for liquor, forfeit their land grants, and be dispersed. CO 580, no. 294, Stockenstrom to Bell, 22/11/28, cited by Pitman, “Stockenstrom”, 48.

<sup>256</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 111, 113, quoting CA LG 526, Hendrik Heyn and others to Lieutenant-Governor in (James) Clark to Stockenstrom, 16/10/1837.

<sup>257</sup> See Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 350–51, SC, Evidence of Capt Bradford, 28 August 1835, 171, and Dracopoli, *Sir Andries Stockenström*, 75.

Settlement, with 1 600 members supporting the banning of canteens.<sup>258</sup> Whilst attending such a meeting at Philipton, James Backhouse noted that 680 people had signed a total abstinence pledge.<sup>259</sup>

The Reads established numerous Sunday, day, and elementary schools,<sup>260</sup> supported by parents, benefactors and the LMS, and run by Khoikhoi trainees tutored by the Reads. The Philipton area boasted twelve schools in 1838, with Thomson contributing three day schools, two elementary schools, and eleven Sunday schools by 1839, supported by the government and parents.<sup>261</sup>

Establishing Sunday schools—which also taught literacy—was a *tour de force* of the Evangelicals, after whom several localities in Kat River were named.<sup>262</sup> Thomson’s Sunday schools also taught literacy and the Dutch language—government requirements for a legal marriage—to adults. In 1839 the Superintendent of Education, J. R. Rose Innes, praised Kat River schools for “afford[ing] instruction to upwards of 1 200 people, diffusing extensively a knowledge of the Dutch and English languages”.<sup>263</sup>

Biblical metaphors invoking the contrast between darkness and light are were not only used to describe the process of spiritual enlightenment in those who accept the gospel, but converts such as Andries Stoffels took the conceit further. Thus, Stoffels linked the effects of spiritual redemption with the 50<sup>th</sup> Ordinance and the opportunities it created for the education of young Khoikhoi, by describing the Bible as “charm[ing] them out of their caves” and the 50<sup>th</sup> Ordinance bringing them “to light” through the introduction of schools, where their

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<sup>258</sup> SC, Evidence of Capt Bradford, 28 August 1835, 171. Evangelicals were great promoters of temperance societies. See, for example, Hannah More, *Practical Piety or The Influence of the Religion of the Heart on the Conduct of the Life* (London, 1811). Buxton’s sister, Anna Gurney who compiled the *Final Report of the Aborigines Commission* (1837), blamed colonial evils on the British introduction of alcohol. See Final Suggestions, “The sale of ardent spirits to be prevented”, Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes (British Settlements), 1837, with comments by the Aboriginal Protection Society, (London: William Ball et al., 1837), 2: 83-90.

<sup>259</sup> Backhouse, *Narrative of a Visit*, 320.

<sup>260</sup> Not the first, as Robert Balfour from the GMS had established a school on the Kat River in 1826. Williams, 66.

<sup>261</sup> J. Rose-Innes, *Memorandum of the Kat River Settlement*, in Read, *Kat River Settlement*, vii. The Glasgow Mission at Chumie also used “native teachers” in their schools. Williams, 67.

<sup>262</sup> Such as Buxton (named for Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton), Lushington (the humanitarian English MP, Dr Charles Lushington), Thomas Wilson (1764-1843, after whom Wilsonton was probably named), and Wilberforce. At one time Wilson, a generous wealthy Congregationalist, was treasurer of the LMS. Wilberforce and Hannah More were great proponents of Sunday schools, schools of industry, and benefit clubs. Mary Alden Hopkins, *Hannah More and her Circle* (New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1947), 172 ff.

<sup>263</sup> Read, *Kat River Settlement*, viii.

“little infants . . . [were] making progress in learning”.<sup>264</sup> (Infant schools—a precursor of Froebel’s kindergarten—providing an emotionally secure environment for the teaching of young children, had recently been introduced in London by the Swiss educationalist, J. H. Pestalozzi, and caught the imagination of the LMS missionaries.)<sup>265</sup> Similarly, “conflating the idea of education with the escape from slavery”, James Read Jr described the “theme of national regeneration from a liberal evangelical perspective”.<sup>266</sup> And John Philip averred that “the gospel could ‘never have a permanent footing in a barbarous [sic] country unless education and civilisation go hand in hand in with religious instruction’”.<sup>267</sup>

There is no mention of the Khoikhoi language being used in Kat River as a medium of teaching—it may have been in the Reads’ schools—but it was still spoken in Philipton and apparently by Stoffels, who sang a Khoikhoi war song at dinner at the Buxton’s London house.<sup>268</sup> Perceiving perhaps that the language was in danger of dying out, Andries Hatha and James Read Jr attempted to compile a Khoikhoi grammar, but their efforts were “without success”.<sup>269</sup>

By 1850 the government was supporting six mission schools in Kat River and one at Kaalhoek, with regular allowances. Balfour and Hertzog school teachers were paid government salaries of £22 10s each, with an additional gratuity of £15 for teachers at schools exceeding 50 pupils. When the Rebellion broke out on 31 December 1850, the allowances were withdrawn and all the schools were closed.<sup>270</sup>

The British settler, James Collett, opened one of the first shops in Kat River in Balfour.<sup>271</sup> Although, there were several shops at Fort Armstrong owned by the English,<sup>272</sup> there is no mention of Khoikhoi-owned shops. On a visit to the Settlement in 1850,

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<sup>264</sup> Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 271.

<sup>265</sup> Note for example, how the Reads returned to the eastern frontier after the Aborigines Commission laden with books and teaching apparatus for their schools donated by Scotch and English evangelicals. Elizabeth Schreiner, daughter of Gottlieb Schreiner, and a Miss Richard and Jessie Matthews accompanied Philip to the Cape to teach in infant schools, which Philip described as the “finest things we have in South Africa”. Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire*, 224.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 210-211, quoting the *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, September 1836, 421-2.

<sup>267</sup> Keegan, *Dr Philip’s Empire*, 157.

<sup>268</sup> As noted by Catherine Buxton. *Ibid.*, 208. For instances of the Khoi language being spoken at Philipton, see Elbourne, 124, and Ross, 85.

<sup>269</sup> Housed in the Grey Collection, South African Library. Ross, *Borders*, 289.

<sup>270</sup> Cape of Good Hope Statistical Register for 1868, Educational Returns for 1850, Division of Fort Beaufort, 398-399.

<sup>271</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 64.

<sup>272</sup> In keeping with Sabbatarian views, all the Kat River shops were closed on Sundays. SC, Evidence of Capt C. Bradford, 28 August 1835, 1499-1504 (p. 171).

Archdeacon Merriman remarked on the absence of this, ascribing it to the Khoikhoi being too generous with credit to their fellows.<sup>273</sup> During the Rebellion, James Read Jr commented on the same trait, which he called “Hottentot sympathy”. This same sympathy, however, ultimately worked against them when they were too generous in sharing their land. Although Kat River had become a model European-type settlement, almost completely dependent on “agricultural pursuits”,<sup>274</sup> the settlers lacked markets for their grain and were unsuccessful in acquiring government contracts for forage.<sup>275</sup>

### War on the commons

Despite the impressive progress made in cultivation and education, Godlonton and his compeers regarded the Kat River Settlement as a failure, owing to its semi-feudal” organisation and the “idleness” of the settlers.<sup>276</sup> Clientship was practised more or less by all settlers, with the Blinkwater people attracting the most clients.<sup>277</sup> Soon Mfengu clients began to be viewed as competitors for the land.<sup>278</sup> The problem was exacerbated by the government using Kat River as a dumping ground for surplus people,<sup>279</sup> moving amaGqunukwebe from the Fish River to Blinkwater, and 100 Mfengu to the Mankazana Valley. The increase in population complicated water rights,<sup>280</sup> and strained grazing and water resources. Kat River officials aggravated matters, with T. J. Biddulph, letting Mfengu use riverside commonage in the Mankazana and the amaMfengu superintendent allowing other Mfengu to use Blinkwater commonage.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Merriman, 118.

<sup>274</sup> Read, Kat River Report for 1840, LMS report, 17/3/A, quoted by Ross, *Borders*, 120.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> Dutch/Afrikaners also practised feudalism, calling their crop-sharing clients *bijwoners*. This mostly illiterate, landless “underclass” was allowed to stay on their farms provided they also went on commando for the owners and defended their property, without recompense. Wealthier Afrikaners regarded them as pariahs and blacks despised them. See Hermann Giliomee, “Reinterpreting Afrikaner Nationalism, c.1850-1900), 3. [http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4124/1/Hermann\\_Giliomee\\_-\\_Reinterpreting\\_afrikaner\\_nationalism\\_1850-1900.pdf](http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4124/1/Hermann_Giliomee_-_Reinterpreting_afrikaner_nationalism_1850-1900.pdf) Accessed 27 August, 2015.

<sup>277</sup> For example, Christian Groepe had clients who acted as cowhands/herdsmen, and his descendants employed Xhosa-speaking people. Telephone conversation with Hymie Groepe, 18 September 2015.

<sup>278</sup> R. Moyer, “The Mfengu: Self-defence and Cape Frontier Wars”, *Beyond the Cape Frontier*, 117.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.* See also Tony Kirk, “Progress and Decline in the Kat River Settlement, 1829-1854”, 416-7.

<sup>280</sup> As noted by Surveyor J. F. Hertzog, “If more families were placed on the ground susceptible of irrigation ... It would be injurious to the prospects of the Inhabitants already settled there.” Cited by Ross, *Borders*, 60.

<sup>281</sup> Fining them inordinately. Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 429. Fines were supposed to be fixed, for later examples see Heads of Revenue, Statistical Register, Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1886, 53, 19.

The importance of the commons to Kat River settlers—whose communing way of life—sharing grazing, water, wood, and labour, with the reciprocities that it entailed—was understood by Stockenstrom, who would probably have concurred with Peter Linebaugh’s definition:

The commons is often outside of the realm of buying and selling or the realm of the commodity; it is where life is conducted face to face. The commons is neither a gift economy nor potlatch. No, not everything is free, but yes, everything may be shared. It is a place of reciprocities. This economy is not grounded in those triplets of evil named by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, namely, militarism, racism, and consumerism.<sup>282</sup>

The increasing infringement of the Kat River commons, steady white appropriation of Khoikhoi land, and Lt-Gen Henry Somerset’s ultimate militaristic destruction of the Settlement, offer extraordinarily apt illustrations of the above “triplets of evil”.

Nevertheless, it is tempting to romanticise the commons. One cannot ignore the fact that, by practising unrestricted clientship, the Kat River settlers did not always “manage” their resources astutely—although their generosity to strangers was in line with Biblical teaching.<sup>283</sup> Unfortunately, the aforementioned, together with official abuse of natural resources, jeopardised the long-term viability of the commons and ultimately that of the Settlement.

### **Other forms of opposition**

Soon after the inception of the Kat River Settlement, white farmers in the area, and the Albany settlers led by Robert Godlonton, showed their disapproval of Kat River settlers by various forms of discrimination and abuse in the local press.<sup>284</sup> The former were not only jealous of the settlers, who were making good progress in the coveted Kat River basin—the choicest spot in the Ceded Territory—but the burghers felt threatened by rumours of the

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<sup>282</sup>Peter Linebaugh, “Some Principles of the Commons: a talk given on 8 January 2010”, accessed 24 August 2015. See also *Stop Thief, A Primer on the Commons and Commoning*, 18-32, and *The Magna Carta Manifesto Liberties and Commons for All* (University of California, 2008/9).

<sup>283</sup> Not only taking strangers in, but every seventh year, letting the poor (and wild animals) feed off their fallow fields, vineyards, and oliveyards for the duration of the year. See Exodus 22: 21 and 23: 9-12. On a different note, see Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990), for the assumptions about human motivation and the rules governing the use of the commons.

<sup>284</sup> See for example, Cory, 2: 395 and Godlonton, 1:111.

imminent transfer of their land to Khoikhoi and the English, who would “squeeze [them] out by degrees”.<sup>285</sup> Nevertheless, despite human opposition, shortage of land, natural disasters—drought, flood, locusts, and horse sickness—and continual plundering of their stock, Kat River settlers prospered until the amaXhosa laid waste the Kat River Settlement during the sixth and seventh frontier wars.

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<sup>285</sup> See Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 391, and Giliomee, 140.

## Chapter 4: Hintsas's War, 1834-35

### Background to the war

The Kat River Settlement's first big test occurred during the sixth frontier war; also known as Hintsas's war, after the paramount chief of the amaXhosa. There were several causes for this war, among them drought, dispossession, and the taking of Xhosa stock by patrols.

The latter half of 1833 was marked by a spate of "depredations" along the eastern frontier.<sup>286</sup> Maqoma and his brother, Chief Tyhali, who had returned to their favourite grazing areas in the Ceded Territory, were expelled—Maqoma from the Fort Willshire area and Tyhali from the Mankazana.<sup>287</sup> Owing to a severe drought in January 1834, the frontier commander, Lt-Col Henry Somerset,<sup>288</sup> had allowed them to graze their starving cattle on the right bank of the Chumie/Tyhume but forbade their crossing the ridge between the Kat River Post and Block Drift and the road to Fort Willshire.<sup>289</sup> On Tyhali's encroachments beyond this line and Maqoma's reoccupation of his old kraals near Fort Willshire, they were re-expelled, with Maqoma offering no resistance.<sup>290</sup> It was reported, though, that the amaXhosa "were very angry and were determined to get possession of the Muncassana [sic] again". Additionally, the Mbalu chief, Nqeno, accused Tyhali of being too meek, threatening to punish him if he did not try to recover the Mankazana.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> House of Commons Paper (HC) 503 of 1837, Copies of Extracts of . . . Despatches . . . to the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope Relative to the Caffre War and Death of Hintsas, 1837 [hereafter HC 503 of 1837], Colonial Office, Cape Town, 11 October 1833, Copy of letter from J. G. Brink, Acting Secretary to Government, to the Civil Commissioner of Albany and Somerset, 1 November 1833, p. 101. See also 503 of 1837, Memorandum of Losses, Grahamstown, 8 August 1834, Lieut.-Colonel H. Somerset to Sir B. D'Urban, p. 146.

<sup>287</sup> HC 503 of 1837, Military Secretary's Office, Cape Town, 20 September 1833, Copy of a letter from John Doyle, Capt., Military Secretary, to Lieut.-Colonel England, p. 98.

<sup>288</sup> Like Stockenström, Somerset was more sympathetic to Xhosa chiefs than other officials. It is ironic that both were often at loggerheads.

<sup>289</sup> HC 503 of 1837, Copy of a letter from Lieut.-Col Somerset to Captain Campbell, Grahamstown, 7 February 1834, p. 105. See also Somerset to Campbell, 5 March 1834, p. 113.

<sup>290</sup> See HC 503 of 1837, Copy of a letter from Lieut.-Colonel Somerset to Governor Sir B. D'Urban, Grahamstown 6 March 1834, p. 106; and Somerset to Major Dutton, 14 March 1834, p. 115. 106. See also HC 503 of 1837, Grahamstown, 7 March 1834, Lieut.-Colonel Somerset to Major A. Dutton, p. 108, and *ibid.*, Civil Commissioner's Office, Grahamstown, 7 March 1834, D. Campbell, Esq. to J. G. Brink, Esq., pp. 109-110.

<sup>291</sup> HC 503 of 1837, Fort Beaufort, 1 March 1834, Copy of a letter from Captain A. B. Armstrong to Captain Campbell, No. 8 in No. 23, D'Urban to Glenelg, 9 June 1836, pp. 112-13.

Previously on good terms with the government, Nqeno<sup>292</sup> was driven to desperation in November 1834 when a commando arrived at his kraal demanding stolen horses. On his people resisting the patrol they were expelled to the east of the Keiskama River.<sup>293</sup> Both the government and colonists seemed to be oblivious of the resentment these repeated expulsions evoked in the amaXhosa.<sup>294</sup>

Following an interregnum in the Colony (August 1833-January 1834), during which Lt-Col T. F. Wade<sup>295</sup> acted as governor, the new governor, Maj-Sir Benjamin D'Urban, arrived at the Cape. On the latter repeatedly deferring his promised visit to the troubled eastern frontier, Xhosa hopes, which had been roused by Philip (that D'Urban would allow them to return to the Ceded Territory) were dashed.<sup>296</sup>

### **“The torch that kindled the war”<sup>297</sup>**

In the meantime, Tyhali and his followers had returned to the Ceded Territory and built huts on the ridge between the Mankazana and Gaga Rivers. When some officers' horses were stolen from Fort Beaufort, Tyhali's people were suspected.<sup>298</sup> On the morning of 10 December 1834 a detachment of the 74<sup>th</sup> Regiment and 12 of the CMR under Lt-Col Sutton arrived at Tyhali's kraal. Unable to find the horses or obtain compensation for them, the troops fired Tyhali's huts and seized some oxen. This caused a furore, as the oxen belonged to Tyhali and the confiscation of chief's cattle was seen as a declaration of hostilities. Tyhali's men surrounded the patrol and shots were fired. A soldier was wounded, two

<sup>292</sup> The most capable son of Langa, the brother of Rharhabe. Peires, *House of Phalo*, 58

<sup>293</sup> On their removal, see HC 509 of 1837, Memorandum upon a Report from Colonel Somerset, Commandant of Caffraria, Camp on the Keiskama, 5 December 1834, enclosure 4 in no. 23, Sir B. D'Urban to Lord Glenelg, 9 June 1836, p. 159.

<sup>294</sup> Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, 142.

<sup>295</sup> Formerly in command of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders, and thereafter, military secretary to Sir Lowry Cole. He accompanied Cole from Mauritius to the Cape in 1828. Cory, *Rise*, 2: 449.

<sup>296</sup> Wade, for example, also averred that Philip had produced “dissatisfaction” in the mind of Mdange Chief, Bhotomane. SC, Evidence of Col. T. F. Wade, 25 April 1836, 3494 (p. 372). Bhotomane had previously occupied the west bank of the Tyhume, to which he returned in 1826, until re-expelled. Cory, *Rise*, 2: 343. Philip admitted that he had visited the chiefs without government sanction. He met them first in 1825 and again in December 1834, where, accompanied by the Reads and Andries Stoffels, he met Chiefs Bhotomane, Kama, Tshatshu, and Maqoma at the Rev Gottlob Kayser's mission, Knapp's Hill. On hearing their grievances concerning the reprisal/commando system and their expulsions, he promised to refer their grievances to D'Urban. Keegan, 170, 175-6.

<sup>297</sup> A phrase used in James Laing's report, the Fortieth Report of the Glasgow Missionary Society, HC 503 of 1837, 16 June 1835, enclosure 6 in no. 23 of Sir B. D'Urban to Lord Glenelg, 9 June 1836, p. 171.

<sup>298</sup> Horses were commonly lifted before the start of a war. See HC 503 of 1837, Copy of letter, Grahamstown, Lieut.-Colonel Somerset to Major Dutton, 8 August 1834, p.145.

amaXhosa killed, and two wounded.<sup>299</sup> One of the latter was the minor Xhosa chief, Xhoxho (Tyhali and Maqoma's brother), whose head had been grazed by a bullet. As a chief's person was considered sacrosanct, the amaXhosa regarded this as a *casus belli*.<sup>300</sup> During the nights of 11 and 12 December "signal fires blazed from every prominent hill" between the Keiskama and the Mbashe, to rally the counsellors and warriors.<sup>301</sup>

## Invasion

For this war the amaXhosa formed a confederation of chiefs, including Tyhali and Maqoma of the amaNgqika, Nqeno of the amaMbalu, Bhotomane of the imiDange,<sup>302</sup> Mhala of the Ndlambe, Siyolo of the Mdushane, and the paramount Xhosa chief, Hintsisa. Although he did not fight, he supported the war from Gcalekaland and allegedly received stolen cattle.

The war began in Xhosaland with attacks on traders and spread to the Colony. On Sunday evening, 21 December 1834, 12 000-15 000 Xhosa warriors, divided into several attacking parties, crossed the various fords into the Colony, with Maqoma crossing the Kat River near Fort Beaufort. In 10-12 days they had laid waste the area between Uitenhage and Somerset East and down to the coast.<sup>303</sup> As Giliomee put it, "At last, after five frontier wars, the Xhosa had learned to fight the whites effectively. Instead of massing in a single body or two to be decimated by the guns of their enemies . . . they attacked in numerous small detachments."<sup>304</sup>

The farmers on the lower Kat below Fort Beaufort were attacked first, followed by Hermanuskraal/Fort Brown and the other Fish River forts, until the attacking parties reached Bathurst and, finally, Grahamstown.<sup>305</sup> All the military posts, with the exception of Fort

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<sup>299</sup> G. Theal, *A History of South Africa, from the Foundation of the European Settlement to our own Times*, Vol. 4, 1834-1854 (London Sonneschein, 1893, rpt., C. Struik ed. 1964), 6: 89.

<sup>300</sup> See Peires, *House of Phalo*, 104-5 and Mostert, 664-702.

<sup>301</sup> Theal, *History* (Struik, 1964), 6: 89-90,

<sup>302</sup> One of the most senior and outspoken chiefs in the Neutral Territory. Although he admitted that the amaXhosa stole cattle, he blamed the reprisal system for punishing the innocent, and the government for taking their country "without a show of justice", starving and threatening them with destruction for thefts they were forced to make or die of famine. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*, Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003).142, and Mostert, *Frontiers*, 644.

<sup>303</sup> Xhosa invasions usually extended into the Colony for a distance of 150 miles. Godlonton, *Narrative*, 2: 44.

<sup>304</sup> Giliomee, 142.

<sup>305</sup> Until 1811, the amaXhosa possessed all of Albany until "a large force" under Colonel Graham expelled them across the Great Fish River, during which "a great many lives were lost on both sides". SC, Evidence of Captain R. S. Aitchison, 31 July 1835, 192 (p. 12).

Beaufort, were abandoned.<sup>306</sup> For the next three weeks the amaXhosa controlled the Colony from the Winterberg to the sea. From Cape Town, Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban proclaimed martial law, dispatched detachments of the 72<sup>nd</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Regiments to the frontier, and ordered out all the burgher forces. In the meantime, Lt-Col Harry Smith—a veteran of the Waterloo and the Peninsular campaigns<sup>307</sup>—galloped the 600 miles from Cape Town to Grahamstown, arriving on 6 January. Prior to this the Grahamstown inhabitants organised their own defence, with all who could muster a horse being formed into a mounted corps and the remainder into companies of foot.<sup>308</sup> With customary rapidity, Smith ordered forces to clear Albany, and open the roads to restore communication. Refugees streamed into Grahamstown, amongst them c. 1 300 Khoikhoi. Smith formed them into levies—kitting them out in green baize—and employed 800 as auxiliaries to the regiments of line and 275 to the CMR.<sup>309</sup>

Unprepared for such an invasion, 22 whites were killed, 4 564 homesteads were razed, and 5 715 horses, 14 930 head of cattle, and 161 930 sheep and goats were driven off.<sup>310</sup> The only one to make a stand against the Xhosa forces was Pieter Retief in the Winterberg. Accompanied by his stepson, Jan Greyling, he rode from farm to farm, appointing assembly places and men for patrol duty. Thus they minimised destruction in the Winterberg, whereas the Kroomie and Blinkwater were hard hit.<sup>311</sup> In 1836 Sir Benjamin D'Urban established a post with a barrack and guard houses on Retief's farm, which was later named Post Retief.<sup>312</sup>

The Kat River Settlement initially escaped assault—possibly because the amaXhosa were expecting the Khoikhoi to join them. Nqeno, for example, declared that “the Hottentots

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<sup>306</sup> Cory, *Rise*, 3: 46-80.

<sup>307</sup> G. C. Moore, ed., *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith, Baronet of Aliwal on the Sutlej*, G. C. B (London; John Murray, 1903), 62-73. He was celebrated for his actions during the Battle of Aliwal and the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, and preventing the rape of women at Badajoz.

<sup>308</sup> *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs*, eds, W. A. Maxwell and R. T. McGeogh, Grahamstown Series 4 (Cape Town: Balkema, 1978) 105. Although 400-500 males were mustered there was a shortage of muskets and ammunition, and few could shoot. Cory, *Rise*, 3: 82. For settlers' narratives see Una Long, ed., *The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain: Albany settler of 1820*, 2 vols. (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1949), 1: 42-77, and I. Mitford Barberton, *Commdt Holden Bowker: an 1820 Settler book, including unpublished records* (Cape Town and Pretoria, Human Rousseau, 1970), 61-5.

<sup>309</sup> Theal, *History* (Struik, 1964), 6: 95.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>311</sup> Cory, *Rise*, 3: 69-71, 77.

<sup>312</sup> It included a kraal for 1 500 cattle, with the later addition of stables for the CMR, officers' quarters, a kitchen, bakery, boilery, and commissariat store. Colin Coetzee, *Forts of the Eastern Cape: Securing a Frontier 1799-1878* (University of Fort Hare Press, 1995), 226-8.

were tired of working for the English and wanted to join them [the amaXhosa].”<sup>313</sup> Was he implying that some of the Khoikhoi resented having to fight for the government, as stipulated, in frontier wars? Despite rumours of the likelihood of an imminent Khoikhoi defection,<sup>314</sup> Groepe’s Kat River force acted loyally and courageously during an attack on Fort Adelaide (renamed Fort Armstrong in 1837), and in combined offensives against the amaXhosa in various theatres.

## Fort Adelaide

At the outbreak of hostilities, Groepe and his force encamped at Fort Adelaide on the ridge in the meander of the Kat River. This was also the base of Capt A. B. Armstrong and his small force of the Cape Mounted Rifles (20 mounted men and 11 infantry).<sup>315</sup> Until the Fort Beaufort Levy under Capt Alexander, and detachments of the 72<sup>nd</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Regiments from the Cape arrived, Armstrong relied on Groepe’s force, which had a strength of 115 mounted men and 387 infantry.<sup>316</sup> At this stage, Fort Adelaide was merely an entrenched camp<sup>317</sup> (*sans* fortifications) but it commanded an extensive area.<sup>318</sup>

Armstrong had ordered all Kat River settlers to assemble at Fort Adelaide, for their safety and to prevent defection of the Khoikhoi, of which there were rumours.<sup>319</sup> Whereas the majority of Kat River settlers complied, initially the Reads demurred,<sup>320</sup> claiming they were

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<sup>313</sup> HC 279 of 1836, Deposition of the Chief, Eno [Nqeno], before Colonel Smith, Deputy Quartermaster General’s Office, King William’s Town, 23 May 1836 (enclosure in no. 12, D’Urban to the Earl of Aberdeen, 19 June 1835), p. 237. See also Evidence of Wade, SC, Sessions 1836, 25 April 1836, 3528 (p. 378).

<sup>314</sup> See Theal, *History*, 2: 96 and Cory, *Rise*, 3: 47-51.

<sup>315</sup> HC 279 of 1836, Caffre War and Death of Hints, Return of the Troops on the 1<sup>st</sup> Line of Defence under Lieut.-Colonel England, enclosure 2 in no. 2 in Sir B. D’Urban to the Secretary of State, March 19, 1835, p. 12.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>317</sup> Of wattle and daub buildings, comprising a kitchen and officers’ mess (the Khoikhoi soldiers built their own huts and cooked over their own fires), an ordnance store, stables and a cattle kraal. Water had to be fetched under an armed guard from the river below. Coetzee, *Forts of the Eastern Cape*, 231.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 231-5.

<sup>319</sup> Williams, 127, quoting from the Rev Bennie’s journal and a sworn statement of the Rev Chalmers, 19 January 1835. See also See HC 279 of 1836, Correspondence Relative to the Caffre War and Death of Hints, Military Secretary’s Office, Report of T. F. Wade, Lt-Col, Act. Mil. Secretary to Sir B. D’Urban, in D’Urban to Glenelg, 9 June 1836, pp. 97-8.

<sup>320</sup> Botha was also allegedly unwilling to go to Fort Adelaide. J. C. Visagie, “Christian Jacobus Groepe: Oosgrenspionier en veldkommandant van Katrivier,” *S.A. Tydskrif vir Kultuurgeskiedenis* 22(1), Junie 2008, 44.

capable of defending themselves.<sup>321</sup> This, together with their continued contact with the amaXhosa, who had been forbidden to enter the Kat River Settlement without passes,<sup>322</sup> raised fears. Not only had Maqoma attended a church anniversary service/tea at Philipton without a pass, but Read Sr being the guardian of a young son of the deceased Ngqika and a Khoikhoi woman, made ongoing communication with the Ngqika inevitable.<sup>323</sup> On the boy being removed to Grahamstown, the Reads relocated to Fort Adelaide. Shortly afterwards, Smith recalled them to Grahamstown, where they remained or were detained for three years.<sup>324</sup> The Rev Chalmers and his colleague, James Weir, also delayed going to Fort Adelaide, and at the eleventh hour detachments of Groepe's force, the CMR and the 72<sup>nd</sup> and the 75<sup>th</sup> regiments conveyed them by ox-wagon to Fort Adelaide.<sup>325</sup>

Although there was no evidence against the Reads, their long-standing radical and egalitarian approach to the evangelisation of the amaXhosa and Khoikhoi<sup>326</sup> seems to have damned him in colonial eyes from the start. Conversation was the medium of Van der Kemp's teaching,<sup>327</sup> an approach adopted by the Reads, who also encouraged political debates such as the ones at Philipton on the vagrancy bill and representative government.

Nevertheless, there were still fears about the loyalty of Groepe's force—two of the suspects being Andries Stoffels and Andries Botha. For this reason, Capt Armstrong decided to remain at Fort Adelaide to prevent any of the potentially disloyal from leaving.<sup>328</sup> By 8 January 1835 Armstrong and Groepe claimed to have sufficient information on the disaffected. In a bid to ensure the loyalty of the suspects, the latter were placed in the frontline. A military proclamation announcing their positions and stringent penalties for

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<sup>321</sup> Visagie, *Groepe*, 45, citing Brenthurst Library, 4061. Kitchingman Papers, Read Sr—J. Kitchingman, 1835-02-06, s.p. See also Godlonton, "The affairs of the frontier ... irruption", *GTJ*, 15 February 1835.

<sup>322</sup> Read Sr professed ignorance of the pass regulation. Evidence of Rev James Read, SC, 29 June, 1836, 5259-5267 (p. 604).

<sup>323</sup> Ngqika allegedly wanted his son educated at the infant school in Kat River. SC, Evidence of Rev James Read, 29 June, 1836, 5287-5281 (p. 605). See also Visagie, *Groepe*, 44.

<sup>324</sup> On the pretext of obtaining information from him about the amaXhosa. Read maintained that he was not asked to provide any. SC, Evidence of Rev James Read, 29 June, 1836, 5312 (p. 607).

<sup>325</sup> Visagie, "Groepe", 48-9, citing CA CO 4381, W. R. Thomson to H. G. Smith, 19 January 1835.

<sup>326</sup> Probably inherited from Read Sr's mentor, Dr J. Van der Kemp.

<sup>327</sup> Often conducted while sitting under a tree, smoking, and drinking honey beer with his followers. See Janet Hodgson, "Ntsikana: History and Symbol, Studies in a Process of Religious Change among Xhosa-Speaking People," unpublished PhD thesis (University of Cape Town, 1985), 83, 86.

<sup>328</sup> Part of the "disloyalty" seems to have been the reluctance of the field-cornets to furnish a quota of men to reap the crops. There were fewer to perform this task, as 40 of Groepe's men had been detached for the Fort Beaufort Levy, which had been reformed under Captain Alexander. HC 279 of 1836, enclosure 3 in no. 23, Armstrong to Campbell, 8 January 1835, p. 93.

disobedience was read at a parade at Fort Adelaide, and a copy sent to the Reads. The plan worked.

There were not only no defections,<sup>329</sup> but Groepe's Kat River Levy performed superbly. With a strength of 502, comprising both mounted men and infantry, it was the strongest of all the burgher forces in the 1<sup>st</sup> Line of Defence under Colonel England.<sup>330</sup> The Kat River Levy not only protected their part of the frontier, but Albany, the Baviaans, Somerset, Koonap, Winterberg areas, and participated in the invasion of Gcalekaland.

### Attack on Fort Adelaide

On 19 February, Tyhali attacked Fort Adelaide "on all sides".<sup>331</sup> Capt Armstrong, who repelled the attack with "cool determination", praised "the conduct of all under his orders" and spoke "very highly of the local force of the Settlement under Field-cornet Groepe",<sup>332</sup> without whom it was believed a number of the Khoikhoi would have defected.<sup>333</sup> During the battle that followed, Groepe's Levy, the CMR, and the Fort Beaufort Levy—to which some of Groepe's men had been detached—beat off the assailants, with a loss of two of Groepe's men and two severely wounded.<sup>334</sup> In General Orders, Lt-Col Harry Smith described Groepe's Levy and the Fort Beaufort Levy as having "behaved steadily and bravely".<sup>335</sup>

Thereafter, in the face of rumours of a Xhosa plan to burn the Kat River Settlement and kill all the inhabitants,<sup>336</sup> Groepe and his force remained constantly on the *qui vive*. In the meantime Tyhali escalated his raids on the Settlement, lifted cattle, let his stock trample settlers' gardens<sup>337</sup> and threatened to kill Groepe.<sup>338</sup> By the end of the war, virtually all of the

<sup>329</sup> See Marais, *Coloured People*, 227, citing Theal, *History of South Africa, 1795-1872*, 2: 96 and Cory, 3: 47-51.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Theal, 6: 101.

<sup>332</sup> HC 279 of 1836, Notice, Headquarters, Grahamstown, 26 February 1835, enclosure no 5 in no 1, By Order of His Excellency, the Commander in Chief, signed, W. H. Dutton, Major, Military Secretary, in D'Urban to Secretary Spring Rice, enclosure 5 in no. 1 February 27, 1835, 6-7.

<sup>333</sup> See HC 279 of 1836, Report of T. F. Wade, Lt-Col, Act. Mil. Secretary to Sir B. D'Urban, pp. 97-8, and Williams, 129.

<sup>334</sup> Ross cites Xhosa losses as 67, and many wounded. Ross, *Borders*, 112.

<sup>335</sup> HC 279 of 1836, General Orders of HG Smith, Lt-Colonel, enclosure 6 in no.1, in Sir B D'Urban to the Secretary of State, 27 February, 1835, 30 May 1836, p. 6.

<sup>336</sup> HC 279 of 1836, Copy of letter from Somerset, Lieutenant-Colonel, Commandant, to Major A. Dutton, Grahamstown, 14 March 1834, pp. 113-14.

<sup>337</sup> Extract from Captain Armstrong's Journal, Kat River Post, 5 March, 1834, 113. Arnolus Janssens and Piet Camphor [sic] in the Mancazana [sic] were two of the victims. HC 279 of 1836, Caffre War and Death of Hintsas, A. B. Armstrong, Journal, March 5, 1834, enclosure no. 4 in no. 23, D'Urban to

Kat River settlers' livestock had been "swept away", and 44 of their dwellings burned to the ground.<sup>339</sup>

### **Amathole operations**

For these operations a provisional troop, comprising detachments of Groepe's force and the Fort Beaufort Levy under Capt James Alexander, was formed and led by the latter. Groepe's Levy was mentioned more than once in General Orders and the local press, where it was described as distinguishing itself in "a most spirited and gallant manner" with the Fort Beaufort Levy in combined operations under Capt Alexander and Lt-Col William Cox against Maqoma and Tyhali in the Amathole.<sup>340</sup> To illustrate the danger of the work Groepe's men had to perform as bush-fighters and as bait, a précis of an operation follows.

While Lt-Col Cox set off to chasten the amaXhosa on the upper Keiskama, Capt Alexander was ordered to infiltrate Chumie/Tyhume Hoek and join him at Fort Cox. Alexander marched from Fort Armstrong on 9 August 1835, with 160 of Groepe's men and 25 of the Beaufort levy, halting that night on the Tyhume. Here he divided his force, sending half of it under Field-cornet Piet Campher [sic] to Tyhume Hoek via Elands River. Taking another route with the remainder of the patrol, Alexander joined them early the next morning, only to find abandoned Xhosa huts. Later that day, on being reinforced by 70 Mfengu from Block Drift, Alexander divided his force again, sending them into the Amathole at 3 am the next day (11 August). They surprised "a large body of the enemy", who dispersed into the bush after stabbing 80 of the cattle they had collected. Unable to get within musket shot of them, Alexander sent a decoy party of Kat River men and Mfengu to lure them into the open. They were attacked by a "strong force of the enemy" and surrounded by Maqoma on a white horse.<sup>341</sup> On being ordered to retreat, the decoys were followed "vigorously" by "the enemy", of which an estimated 150 had firearms. Managing to get the amaXhosa into the open, Alexander's men rushed them, killing 20 and wounding several, with the remainder fleeing.

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Glenelg, June 9, 1836, pp. 112-3. See also Deposition of Arnolson [sic] before Capt A. B. Armstrong, 503 of 1836, 10 May 1836, pp. 235-6.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid. See also SC, Evidence of Stockenstrom, August 21, 1835, 106, and Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 400-5..

<sup>339</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 369. See also HC, 503 of 1837, p. 329.

<sup>340</sup> HC 279 of 1836, General Orders, Fort Cox, 15 August 1835, Captain W. Cox, 75<sup>th</sup> Regiment, to H. G. Smith, Lt.-Col, p. 100. See also Fort Armstrong, 17 August, 1835, W. Alexander, Captain, Beaufort Levy, to Captain A. B. Armstrong, p. 101, Cox's report, pp. 100-101 and the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, 27 March 1835.

<sup>341</sup> Note the similarity between this and Maqoma's later attacks in the Waterkloof in 1851-52.

On 13 August, Alexander sent his force back into the Amathole. They set off at 1 am. At 3 am they surprised some warriors around their fires, killing 11 and wounding several, who retreated to the Tamacha. The next day a messenger from Tyhali's counsellors arrived at Alexander's camp, requesting "mercy and peace". Cox ordered a ceasefire and Alexander marched his men back to Fort Armstrong.<sup>342</sup>

While Groepe's force was fighting in other theatres,<sup>343</sup> small armed parties of Kat River settlers would leave Fort Adelaide to attend to the remaining stock in the Settlement. On one occasion, when it was the turn of Groepe's young son, Christiaan, and Groepe's brother to do so, their group was ambushed by armed Xhosa. Bravely, the former fought back to back, with Christiaan being badly wounded.<sup>344</sup>

## Invading Gcalekaland

In March 1835 Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Commander of the Forces, and Lt-Col Smith, Chief of Staff, with a force of regular and irregular troops and a corps of guides,<sup>345</sup> crossed the Kei River to bring Xhosa Paramount Chief Hintsá to book for allegedly supporting the war and receiving colonial cattle. Groepe and his levy formed part of the force and were mentioned by Smith in his final report.<sup>346</sup> Groepe was also mentioned in connection with Major T. C. White, the assistant-quartermaster to the burgher forces. When White wanted to leave the camp to investigate the source of the Bashee/Mbashe, Groepe warned him that he had seen some warriors in the area. White disregarded the warning and was stabbed to death with his corporal while making a topographical sketch map from a hilltop.<sup>347</sup>

During this campaign a number of momentous events occurred. Thousands of colonial cattle were recovered, and Chief Hintsá—who supposedly offered himself as a hostage until

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<sup>342</sup> HC 279 of 1836, Fort Armstrong, 17 August 1835, W. Alexander, Captain, Fort Beaufort Levy, to Captain Armstrong, Caffre War and Death of Hintsá, p. 101. See also Cox' Report, *ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>343</sup> Such as in the East Riet/Baviaans, Fish, Amathole, and Buffalo areas, and Gcalekaland. See Cory, *Rise*, 3: 121, and J. C. Visagie, "Die Katriviernedersetting, 1829-1879" (unpublished D. Litt. and Phil. thesis, University of South Africa, 1978), 278-83.

<sup>344</sup> See the narrative, *Christiaantjie se bos*, in the interview with Hymie Groepe, "Forcing the gates open".

<sup>345</sup> The combined force comprised 1 997 cavalry, 1 1157 infantry and 761 burghers/levies, 25 artillery men and 6 field pieces. It was divided into four columns, all under the command of D'Urban.

<sup>346</sup> HC 279 of 1836, Caffre War and Death of Hintsá, H. G. Smith, Colonel, Chief of Staff, Enclosure 13 in No. 3 in D'Urban to the Earl of Aberdeen, 19 June 1835, p. 51.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50. Four survivors made it back to the camp. Cory, *Rise*, 3: 156.

all the cattle were returned (although J.H. Soga contests this)<sup>348</sup>—was shot dead whilst attempting to escape.<sup>349</sup> D’Urban subsequently proclaimed the territory between the Keiskama and Kei Rivers as Queen Adelaide Province,<sup>350</sup> and recognised the late Hintsas’ son “Creli” [Sarhili] as his successor.<sup>351</sup> Finally, on 24 April 1835, approximately 17 000 Mfengu—former clients of Chief Hintsas, whom Sir B. D’Urban had proclaimed British subjects—were allowed to accompany the troops back to the Colony.<sup>352</sup>

## Recovery

At the start of the war the settlers were encouraged to assemble for safety purposes at Fort Adelaide, where around 2673 received support from the Grahamstown Board of Relief. On returning to their devastated erven at the end of the war, the settlers had to start from scratch, buying seed, new milch cows and draught cattle, and rebuild their houses. Yet, despite these setbacks and uncertain weather, the settlers made an exceptional recovery.

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<sup>348</sup> J. H. Soga, *The South Eastern Bantu, Abe-Nguni, Aba-Mbo, Ama-Lala* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1930),

<sup>349</sup> For Smith’s account of it, see HC 279 of 1836, Caffre War and Death of Hintsas, .H. G. Smith, Chief of Staff, Enclosure 18 in No. 3 (in Sir B. D’Urban to the Earl of Aberdeen, 19 June, 1835), pp. 48-51.

<sup>350</sup> HC 279 of 1836, enclosure 12 in No. 3 (in Sir B. D’Urban to the Earl of Aberdeen, 19 June, 1835) Declaration (B) of D’Urban, Major-General, Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, and Commander in Chief, etc., p. 42. See also *ibid.*, Enclosure 16 in no. 3, Memorandum for the Information of Major Cox, p. 47.

<sup>351</sup> And induced Sarhili to sign the “unexecuted” treaty of Hintsas. HC 279 of 1836, Enclosure 17 in No. 3, Notice, HQ Camp on the Impotshana, in the Province of Queen Adelaide, 18 May 1835 p. 48.

<sup>352</sup> On the Mfengu, see HC 503 of 1837, The Fingoes, No. II, J. Ayliff, missionary to Hintsas’ people, in D’Urban to Lord Glenelg, Enclosure 13 in no. 23, pp. 245-7.

## Chapter 5: The War of the Axe, 1846-47

Kat River was assailed again during the seventh frontier war, the War of the Axe. As part of Somerset's division, Groepe's Levy participated in various combined attacks on the amaXhosa in the Amathole. Initially, 200 of Groepe's men were detached and transferred to Lt-Col Sutton, to serve with a detachment of the 91<sup>st</sup> division under Maj Campbell and the CMR under Maj Armstrong. During one of the operations they were attacked by "a numerous body"—estimated at 2 000—of armed Xhosa who "opened a heavy fire on them". When Campbell's men were exhausted, the skirmishers of the CMR and the Kat River force were advanced, and "kept up a steady fire" on the amaXhosa until the latter were "silenced" by Capt Brown's artillery. During this engagement three of the 91<sup>st</sup> Regiment were killed and three severely wounded. Two of the CMR were wounded. One of Groepe's men was "shot through the body", and died the next morning.<sup>353</sup>

From July 1846 onwards the Kat River contingent fell under Andries Stockenstrom, who had been appointed commandant-general of the burgher forces. Having observed their performance in many instances, he maintained that "[u]nder every possible privation and misery—a complete repetition of those of 1835—the loyalty, zeal, obedience, and bravery of the [Kat River] settlers were most exemplary."<sup>354</sup> He also mentioned the variety of tasks Groepe's force had to perform; such as guarding the Kroomie range, Middle Albany, the Mankazana, and the Baviaans River areas, and protecting the mail and supply convoys between Cradock, Somerset and Fort Beaufort. As he reminded his readers, "Depredations were incessant . . . [and] the Kat river [sic] Burghers were placed in defensive positions along the frontier".<sup>355</sup>

Lt-Col Sutton made special mention of Andries Botha. And, at his recommendation, Stockenstrom appointed the latter second in command of the Kat River Levy. When the amaNgqika attacked a wagon train at Burn's Hill, Botha played a prominent role in saving

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<sup>353</sup> [786] of 1837-1847, Amatola Mountains, 17 April, 1846, Copy of letter from Somerset, Lieutenant-Colonel, CMR, Commanding Troops in Kaffirland, to His Honour, Col Hare, CB and KH, Commanding Troops, p. 118.

<sup>354</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 221. For other commendations of the Kat River force, see [786] of 1837-1847, Fort Cox, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1846, J. Hare, Colonel, to Lt-Colonel Cloete, pp. 166-7, and *ibid*, Amatola Camp, 1st August, 1846, Stockenstrom, Com. Gen. to Col Cloete, pp. 167-8.

<sup>355</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 251-52.

the ammunition.<sup>356</sup> At the time of Botha's trial, Stockenstrom described his heroic action as follows:

During the flight and panic, sixty-five of our wagons in a blaze, and the ammunition wagon abandoned, the "arch rebel", Andries Botha, with 250 of his Kat River settlers, came, forced his way through retreating friends and pursuing enemies—seized upon the ammunition—carried it triumphantly through the fight—covered the retreat, and was mainly instrumental in saving what was saved.<sup>357</sup>

Stockenstrom also noted drily that Hermanus Matroos offered to fight in his division during this war. To the relief of the Kat River settlers, who "did not trust him", Stockenstrom declined his offer.<sup>358</sup>

Thereafter, Stockenstrom was ordered to lead a contingent across the Kei River to parley with Paramount Chief, Sarhili, after which a treaty was signed. Christian Groepe was the only person of colour amongst the six signatories, who included the military, burgher commanders, and prominent Dutch and English citizens. Stockenstrom must have been proud of his "squire".<sup>359</sup> The Kat River Settlement also had reason to be proud of their women.

### **Kat River women take a stand**

In mid-June 1849 Sir Harry Smith, Pottinger's successor, was the recipient of a memorial from Kat River women during the anti-convict agitation in the Colony. The British government had decided to use the Cape Colony as a penal settlement, but it elicited intense opposition from all parties in the Cape, with various petitions being drawn up against it. Stockenstrom opposed it, as did the Kat River men, who formed the Kat River Anti-Convict Association. Desiring to voice their sentiments, a party of Kat River women compiled their own memorial—praying against the introduction of convict felons among them—and sent it to Smith. This seems to be the first indication of Kat River women's involvement as a separate body in politics.

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<sup>356</sup> [786] of 1837-1847, Maitland to Grey, 26 November 1846, enclosure no 19, p. 194; *Ibid.*, Somerset to Smith, 1 August 1846 in Maitland to Gladstone, 18 September 1846, 167-69, and *ibid.*, Grey to Maitland, 18 July 1846, pp. 124 ff.

<sup>357</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2:374.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>359</sup> [786] of 1837-1847, Stockenstrom, Result of a conference with . . . Chief Kreili [sic] in Council, 21 August, 1846, pp. 178-80. See also See Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 280.

In his reply from Government House dated 10 June 1849 and beginning “Mesdames”, Smith said that he was honoured and gratified to receive the address from them and gave them “every credit for the good and virtuous feelings therein expressed”. He went on to attribute the bravery and zealousness of the Kat River commandos to the women’s influence on their children; or, as he put it: “I attribute the good behaviour of the men of Kat River to the virtuous conduct of the women”, ending “I have the honour to be, Mesdames, your most obedient humble servant, H. G. Smith, Governor”.<sup>360</sup>

As will be shown, this was not the only time the Kat River women went public with their opinions.

### **Kat River privation**

During both wars Fort Armstrong provided shelter for the families of the levies, as well as refugees from the Lovedale Institution<sup>361</sup> such as the youthful Tiyo Soga and his mother.<sup>362</sup> With over-crowded, insalubrious living conditions and shortage of food—7-8000 Kat River cattle had been lifted<sup>363</sup>—sickness took its toll on the Kat River people. Many were destitute as their breadwinners—among them, sawyers, smiths, and wheelwrights—had been on prolonged burgher duty and their families were not receiving rations. Smallpox had also broken out in the Settlement. On the departure of the medical officer who had been attending the cases at Fort Armstrong, Thomson stepped into the breach, administering the medication (which was in short supply) and vaccinations.<sup>364</sup>

The crisis in the Kat River Settlement—evoking pleas for help from Thomson and the Reads—eventually resulted in the government issuing rations. Yet, Governor Sir Henry Pottinger condemned the settlers in his report of May 1847, as “idle, useless” and “bordering on rebellion”.<sup>365</sup> T. J. Biddulph, whom Pottinger had appointed as the Kat River Superintendent in May 1847, penned a similarly damning report on the squalor and

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<sup>360</sup> For the complete letter, see Read, 5.

<sup>361</sup> In 1824 the GMS established the Lovedale missionary station on the banks of the Tyhume. In 1841 it became the Lovedale [Educational] Institution, with the Rev W. Govan as the first principal. R. H. Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa: The Story of a Century 1841-1941* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1940), v, ix.

<sup>362</sup> Who had sought refuge with the Rev Thomson at Balfour. *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>364</sup> Williams, 143, citing LG 191/225, Thomson to Hudson, 17/01/1842.

<sup>365</sup> CA CO 2849, Pottinger Memorandum, 17 May 1847.

“incorrigible laziness” of the settlers.<sup>366</sup> As Ross observed, it was compiled during the war when most of the settlers were congregated at the overcrowded and insalubrious Fort Armstrong. Further, as a local military officer pointed out, the settlers’ inability to plough was not owing to laziness, but to their oxen having died from lack of pasture, been stolen, or commissioned as draught oxen.<sup>367</sup>

To aggravate matters, when Biddulph called up an additional 400 Kat River men for service, they refused, objecting that their families would starve.<sup>368</sup> Godlonton needed no further inducement to describe the Settlement as “a concourse of rebellious idle paupers”; comparing it to the “great difficulty” that Ireland was to the United Kingdom.<sup>369</sup> He also mentioned Alsatia, echoing English contempt for the late-sixteenth-century Irish, “[idle Loyterors that ar the caterpillars of the common welth”].<sup>370</sup>

Biddulph,<sup>371</sup> and T. H. Bowker, who was appointed as the Stockenstrom resident magistrate in March 1848, were both English settlers who shared the “Albany commercial creed”, desiring to squeeze out the “undeserving” Khoikhoi by increasing the number of white farmers in the fertile Kat River basin. Godlonton had been given a farm in Kat River, as had Major John Blakeway and Henry Fuller, after whom Fuller’s Hoek was named.<sup>372</sup> When Stockenstrom heard of these irregularities, he re-possessed the farms.<sup>373</sup> Smith, however, alienated the land and advertised it in the *Government Gazette*. If any deserved the sobriquet “caterpillars of the common welth” it was the officials who were “eating up” the Kat River settlers’ land.

The eighteenth-century Anglican cleric, William Paley, Archdeacon of Carlisle, had urged contentment and industry on the poor, averring that Providence had appointed different ranks; that “all a poor man’s children require are “industry and innocence”, adding smugly,

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<sup>366</sup> Report on the Kat River Settlement, *Government Gazette*, 18/11/1847.

<sup>367</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 66-8.

<sup>368</sup> Biddulph did this at Pottinger’s bidding. Moreover, he maintained (wrongly) that the Settlement was held on military tenure. As Legassick noted, part of their reluctance to fight for the government was Maitland’s poor treatment of them. M. Legassick, *The Struggle for the Eastern Cape*, 76.

<sup>369</sup> Godlonton, *Narrative*, 2: 111. When speaking of the settlers he referred to them disparagingly as the “Hottentot Question”, in terms later echoed by the Nationalist (apartheid) government, who used a similar phrase, “the Native Question”.

<sup>370</sup> The words of Edmund Tremayne, Henry Sidney’s secretary. Quoted by Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 181.

<sup>371</sup> Biddulph came to the Cape to join his (English) family in the early 1830s. Ross, *Borders*, 173. He was appointed as the Kat River Settlement Supervisor in May 1847 and Bowker as resident magistrate in March 1848.

<sup>372</sup> Fuller’s Hoek is situated at the southern foot of the Waterkloof.

<sup>373</sup> This entailed an exchange for Fuller. When Hermanus was evicted, his land was given to Fuller, who relinquished his land adjoining Theopolis in Lower Albany. Godlonton, *Narrative*, 1: 143.

that “denial increases the enjoyment of pleasure”.<sup>374</sup> No doubt, “Moral Bob” (Godlonton) would have agreed with these sentiments. Whereas Stockenstrom and the Reads promoted industry, they never encouraged the settlers to become wage labourers. Yet, soon after the founding of the Kat River Settlement, Civil Commissioner Duncan Campbell compared the indigent settlers of Bergman’s Hoek to helots—Messenians which Sparta dominated and exploited as serf-like labourers, their name denoting “capture”.<sup>375</sup> In doing so Campbell was making the point that the Bergman’s Hoek people were undeserving of their fertile, well-watered land.<sup>376</sup> Although Ordinance 50 had enabled the Khoikhoi to own land—unlike the unhappy helots—many of the white settlers were eager to “capture” the poorer ones as labourers. There is more than meets the eye in Campbell’s allusion to helots: Sparta’s combination of agrarianism and violence made it a precursor of genocidal regimes.<sup>377</sup>

As the ruling classes in Cobbett’s England had supported enclosure, opposed poor relief, and harped on the idleness and depravity of agriculturalists,<sup>378</sup> so Biddulph, Bowker, and other Kat River officials tried to turn the clock back by coercing Kat River settlers to become labourers or wagon drivers, dubbing them idle when they refused. The problem, as James Read Jr pointed out, was the way in which Godlonton and some of the Albany settlers regarded “civilisation”: as an inevitable process that would cause the “black man” to “melt away before the white man”. Contrastingly, the Reads saw civilisation as “a vivifying and strengthening power—a power developing the highest excellence of individual and social character”.<sup>379</sup> Although encouraging agrarianism and industry, Stockenstrom decried the way that “Anglo-Saxon colonialism” was “motivated by greed and characterised by hypocrisy”.<sup>380</sup>

The disasters of the 1840s were unprecedented. Groepe had been slighted and his levy had not received the recognition they deserved. Thomson voiced his fears that the government’s neglect of the Kat River Levy would bode no good.<sup>381</sup> He was correct, as events would prove.

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<sup>374</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 396-399.

<sup>375</sup> Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 45.

<sup>376</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 79, citing CA 1A/Y 9/6, Campbell to Bell, 13.1.1832.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>378</sup> Such as a certain Dr Macqueen, who wrote to the English Agricultural Board in 1816. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 246.

<sup>379</sup> Read, *Kat River Settlement*, 72.

<sup>380</sup> Trapido, “Stockenstrom”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>381</sup> Thomson, who was exhausted, rode to Chumie to discuss these fears with Laing. On his return he came off his horse and broke his leg. Williams, 152.

## The undermining of Groepe

Although Groepe's force was praised for its contribution to the war, and Stockenstrom had treated him as one of the "inner ring" during the expedition to Sarhili, Groepe had had a difficult time. Inadvertently, Stockenstrom had done him a disservice at the outbreak of hostilities in 1846 by ordering Lt-Col Sutton to re-organise the Kat River Levy, which had hitherto been under Groepe's command. Sutton's dismissing of Groepe's arrangements upset the latter, who was regarded as being tantamount to a lieutenant-colonel and would not take orders from anyone lower than that rank.<sup>382</sup> Likewise, the poor treatment of his men rankled with Groepe.

Not surprisingly, when Sir Henry Pottinger required Sutton to raise a 400-man levy from Kat River, he was unable to do so. On looking into it, Somerset found that 900 of the 1 000 Kat River men were still on commando duty, yet their families were not being supplied with rations, as stipulated. (Maitland had stopped their rations and Pottinger was unwilling to overturn this.) On being enlightened by Thomson and Read Sr, Pottinger sanctioned the extra rations, but warned that clothing, and rations for Xhosa refugees in Kat River, would depend on investigation and expense.<sup>383</sup> Some rations were provided. However, the non-arrival of the clothing, medicine, and other necessities that Somerset had promised caused a "bad spirit" in Kat River, which never entirely dissipated.

On returning from the war, the Kat River Levy was faced with untold devastation. Property to the amount of £30 000 had been destroyed<sup>384</sup> and virtually all of the livestock taken. All of Groepe's cattle had been lifted, and his house, "the best in the Settlement", burnt. The Philipton church had suffered the same fate.<sup>385</sup> To crown it, drought depleted the settlers' remaining stock, and floods in 1848 destroyed their dams and water-courses.<sup>386</sup> In order to replace their stock, the Khoikhoi went to the forests. When Rose-Innes visited the

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<sup>382</sup> Williams, 166-7.

<sup>383</sup> See, for example, see Command Paper 786 of 1837-1847, Sir H. Pottinger to Earl Grey, Camp Fort Peddie, March 21, 1847, enclosure 1 in 17, Berkeley to Pottinger; Camp Fort Peddie, March 23, 1847, enclosure 2 in 17; Pottinger to R. Woosnam (Secretary to the High Commissioner), March 24, 1847; Woosnam to Metcalfe, April 11, 1847, enclosure 4 in 17; and Pottinger to Berkeley, April 14, 1847, pp. 58-9.

<sup>384</sup> Report, Cape Town, 30 May 1851, J. Rose-Innes, in Read, *Kat River Settlement*, viii.

<sup>385</sup> Kirk, *Progress*, 418-19, quoting Report by J. Read, jun., 17 Dec. 1847, L.M.S. Archives, 23/3/B. On the "Kat River arsons" see Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 297.

<sup>386</sup> Rose-Innes, Report, 1851, Read, viii.

Settlement, he found “upwards of 90 saw-pits in operation, with boys as young as nine years working in them”—resulting in a glut in the timber market.<sup>387</sup>

Altogether, these communal and personal blows alienated Groepe, causing him to betray a noticeable apathy during the attack on Fort Armstrong in 1851.<sup>388</sup> However, when Thomas Baines visited the Settlement in 1849, he noted that “Mijnheer [Mr] Groepe, also a coloured man, who so nobly distinguished himself in the war of ’35 and is now a Justice of the Peace”, was still held in high regard.<sup>389</sup> Yet, the War of the Axe marked the turning point in the lives of both the founder and the “squire” of the Kat River Settlement, leaving both irrevocably disillusioned.

Not surprisingly, during the eighth frontier war (1851-53), many Kat River Khoikhoi joined the amaXhosa in what became known as the Kat River Rebellion. Ironically, European agrarian ideology worked against the British this time, where settlers who owned less land—and therefore had less to lose—entered more readily into the Rebellion.

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid. See also Stockenstrom, *Light and Shade*, 61. A decade and a half later the Rev Charles Kingsley would similarly decry the use of young boys as chimney sweeps. See Charles Kingsley, *The Water-Babies, a Tale for a Land-Baby*, first published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1862-63.

<sup>388</sup> Williams, 15.

<sup>389</sup> Baines, 1: 183. At this time Baines was in demand for portraits in the settlement. He drew Groepe's in 1848.

## Chapter 6: Build-up to the Rebellion

Many unheeded grievances had accumulated over the decades in the Kat River Settlement. Amongst other factors, the settlers had not been adequately compensated for their losses in the wars of 1834-35 and 1846-47.<sup>390</sup> And some had been deprived of the full extent of their cattle war-booty, with Andries Botha's sons being particular victims of this.<sup>391</sup> Furthermore, the infringements of settlers' rights, the imposition of new taxes and the increase of former ones, the delay in the granting of titles, and a series of cavalier actions by Kat River officials, alienated many Kat River settlers who had hitherto been loyal to the British.

With the concurrence of the civil commissioner of Fort Beaufort, T. J. Biddulph, a number of illegal squatters had entered the Settlement and the Kat River settlers were blamed for the ensuing stock theft. Without notice, the Kat River magistrate dispatched a detachment of the so-called Kaffir Police, who evicted Botha's people and their Mfengu servants of long-standing in the middle of a bitter winter, shouting as they torched their houses and drove off their stock, "Today we burn Botha out of the Blinkwater as he burnt us out of the Amatola last war!" Those evicted—women, children and newborn babies—had to overnight outdoors en route to Eland's Post.<sup>392</sup> This was an outrage that Botha never forgot.

After Sir Harry Smith's establishment in 1848 of the four military villages, Woburn, Juanasberg, Auckland, and Ely,<sup>393</sup> the military significance of Kat River declined. Smith subsequently ordered the settlers' disarmament,<sup>394</sup> with the Kat River magistrate, T. H. Bowker, being sent to effect it.<sup>395</sup> The settlers were furious at having to surrender their weapons—300 or more—that Stockenstrom had given them in 1830 to defend themselves

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<sup>390</sup> Kasper Olivier, for example, a member of Read's church, lost all his property in this war. Read, 43.

<sup>391</sup> When Sir H. Pottinger called on volunteers to attack Sandile in the Amathole in 1847, with promise of cattle war-booty, four parties under (i) Oerson Magerman and Andries Botha Jr, (ii) Field-cornet Andries Pretorious, (iii) Rhenatus Paarl of Shiloh, and (iv) Madoor's Bushmen under Andries Hatha. Each one received comparatively few cattle compared to what they had captured, and some even had to buy cattle. Read, xiv.

<sup>392</sup> A. Van Rooyen, Tidmanton, to J. R. B. Wienand, Blinkwater Post, 25 November, 1850, quoted by Read, 17. See also See Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 428-9.

<sup>393</sup> On the villages, see C. G. Coetzee, *The Unfortified Military Villages of Sir Harry Smith, 1848-1850* (Cape Town: Westby Nunn Publishers, 2010), 29-51.

<sup>394</sup> In contradiction to Ordinance 50, which allowed the Khoikhoi to be armed. J. D. Pitman, *The Commissioner-Generalship of Andries Stockenstrom* (PhD Thesis, University of Cape Town, 2001), 41.

<sup>395</sup> Bowker, who was appointed resident magistrate of the Stockenstrom area on 8 March 1848, resided in Hertzog, and seemed to be something of an artist and a nurseryman. For a description of his garden and strawberry bed, see Baines, 1:178.

and their settlement.<sup>396</sup> To add insult to injury, the Kaffir Police were allowed to retain their arms.

Another cause of offence concerned a section of the Lower Blinkwater commons which the Mfengu superintendent, T. W. Cobb(e), had appropriated for his own use, impounding the cattle of the lawful proprietors and enriching himself by the fines he imposed on them.<sup>397</sup> Similarly, Major Blakeway, who had been given land in Blinkwater, allegedly built a house on the commonage<sup>398</sup> Bowker went a step further, placing all Kat River forests under the magistrate's charge. This enabled him to bar the settlers from the forest reserves—set aside since the beginning of the Kat Rive Settlement but not enforced—which contained the best timber. Similarly, it allowed him to increase the cost of licences to cut wood, charging six shillings per load of cut timber, which still had to be conveyed to market. Cutting timber for sale was the only income of many penurious Blinkwater people. With the multiplication of sawpits after the war in 1847, however, there was a glut in the timber market which, together with the increased tax, made the Blinkwater sawyers' occupation barely viable.<sup>399</sup>

Raising the price of timber licences was an odd way to repay the entrepreneurial efforts of the “lazy, idle” Hottentots. Ross, however, suggests that it was a means of eliminating Khoikhoi competition in the local timber business.<sup>400</sup> This may have been the case. Whites, however, had the monopoly as suppliers of commercial timber, providing the Grahamstown market with timber from the Kroomie and Fuller's Hoek forests. English settlers who arrived in Albany in 1820, such as Isaac Wiggill and his sons, were also awarded military contracts to harvest timber in the Winterberg, including sneezewood for posts and fortifications.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> Read, xx.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., xviii. See also Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 378-82

<sup>398</sup> Read, 16.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., xiv, 17. Kirk maintained that the six shillings for the cost of the licence was allegedly double the sum whites had to pay for the same load. Tony Kirk, “Progress and Decline in the Kat River Settlement, 1829–1854”, *Journal of African History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1973), 421.

<sup>400</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 173.

<sup>401</sup> They and other sawyers would camp (illegally) in the forest whilst harvesting the timber. Theo Newton Wiggill, *From the Cotswolds to the Cape, Isaac Wiggill, 1820 Settler* (Melbourne: Theo N. Wiggill, 2012), 169-70. Isaac Wiggill was a prodigious millwright and wainwright, and taught his sons, Eli and George, both trades.

Outraged by the injustices of their officials, the infringement of their commonages, and the increasing control of natural resources,<sup>402</sup> Andries Botha appealed to Sir Harry Smith and Stockenström. Two commissions of enquiry, in May and August 1850, examined the Kat River settlers' complaints. Biddulph was transferred<sup>403</sup> and Bowker was dismissed from office. Cobb(e) was, allegedly, accidentally shot during the Kat River Rebellion.<sup>404</sup> With uncanny prescience, Stockenström wrote to John Montagu, warning him that:

The Kat River people, so lately and so justly considered one of the most loyal communities in the Colony, after having been twice mainly instrumental in saving the Colony, and being rewarded by malicious calumny and the denial of justice, have from later events taken it into their heads that a plot exists somewhere to goad them on to some excess, and furnish the plea for their expulsion from the only nook in the land of their fathers, which remains to them and in which they hoped to rest the last ashes of their expiring race.

Rumours of the loss of their liberty and fears of the proposed vagrancy act becoming law if the Colony were granted representative government affected the final radicalisation of Kat River people, goading them to the "excess" of which Stockenström had warned.<sup>405</sup>

## **Hermanus Matroos**

The Kat River Rebellion occurred within the context of the frontier war of 1851-53, also known as the War of Mlanjeni, the Riverman, as the latter immersed himself for long periods in a river.<sup>406</sup> Mlanjeni, a young Xhosa seer who urged all amaXhosa to slaughter their dun cattle and eradicate witchcraft, doctored Xhosa armies in preparation for an attack on the

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<sup>402</sup> Licences were required for collecting and cutting poles for huts and reeds for thatching roofs. By 1875 a load of firewood cost 2 shillings and sixpence. Cape of Good Hope Statistical Register, 1876, Sources of Revenue, B4.

<sup>403</sup> To Winburg in the newly-established Orange River Sovereignty, where he was appointed resident magistrate. Baines fought with him in the action under Sir Harry Smith on 27 June 1848. Baines, 1:112.

<sup>404</sup> R. Godlonton and E. Irving, *Narrative of the Kaffir War, 1850–1851–1852*, 2 vols (Cape Town: Struik, facsimile repr., 1962), 2: 293.

<sup>405</sup> From rumours emanating from Koonap and Winterberg labourers, Kat River settlers believed that with the advent of representative government, "the Queen's reign would soon cease in this country", and the Winterberg farmers would get their own parliament and introduce vagrancy laws, thereby oppressing the Khoikhoi. Read, 27, 35.

<sup>406</sup> Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 23.

Colony, assuring the warriors that this would turn whites' bullets to water.<sup>407</sup> In order to identify those defiled by the practising of witchcraft, Mlanjeni erected two poles and made the people pass between them, "purification" being the essential component of his programme.<sup>408</sup>

In Kat River, former government intelligence agent, Hermanus Matroos, also known as Ngxukumeshe (henceforth, Hermanus), slaughtered his beasts as prescribed and distributed the meat to his followers, whom he encouraged to refrain from cultivation. This not only signalled his affinity with the amaXhosa but challenged the bedrock of the Kat River Settlement—cultivation ideology.

Like Christian Groepe, Hermanus had grown up on a burgher's farm in Z/Swagershoek,<sup>409</sup> where he acted as *agterryer* (an attendant on horseback) and learned to speak Dutch,<sup>410</sup> groom horses, and drive a wagon. Having fought for the government against Ngqika in 1819, Hermanus fell foul of the latter and joined Maqoma on the Kat River. When his clients were accused of stock theft, Hermanus was evicted. Nevertheless, he fought for the British in the war of 1834-35, for which he was given a double-barrelled gun and a farm near Fort Beaufort—where he accumulated stock, acquired a wagon, and cut timber for sale. Again, in the war of 1846-47, he was useful to the government<sup>411</sup> but his clients were suspected of plundering local farms. Prior to the Rebellion, the government's imposition of a quitrent on Hermanus and his people alienated them, and his Xhosa ties made it natural for him to join the amaNgqika in their war.

### **The Ngqika position**

Sandile, the young Ngqika chief<sup>412</sup> who had been criticised for not assuming a more active role in the seventh frontier war, was determined to compensate for it in the eighth. Sir Harry Smith's arbitrary deposition of him on 30 October 1850 probably strengthened his resolve,

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<sup>407</sup> On Mlanjeni's syncretic and millenarian approach, *ibid.*, 24-36.

<sup>408</sup> The innocent emerged unscathed, but those who felt themselves guilty, were overcome with weakness and fear as they approached." *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>409</sup> Zwagershoek, now known as Swaershoek, extends for approximately 70 km from Cradock in the NE to bisect the road between Pearston and Somerset East in the SW.

<sup>410</sup> Besides isiXhosa and Dutch, Hermanus spoke some English, and acted as interpreter for Maqoma and Stockenstrom's interview in 1829. Cory, 2:119.

<sup>411</sup> For Hermanus's services as informant, *ibid.*

<sup>412</sup> Sandile was born in 1820, and his half-brother, Maqoma, in 1798.

and he increasingly became Mlanjeni's "chief supporter".<sup>413</sup> Similarly, Maqoma fought with a vengeance from 1851-53 to compensate for not participating in the war of 1846-47. After haranguing the Xhosa chiefs at a meeting at Fort Cox, Smith ordered all male colonists to report for burgher duty, and sent three columns on a punitive expedition to the Amathole.<sup>414</sup>

Within the space of four days, the amaNgqika had launched four shock attacks. The first was on 24 December 1850. Civil Commissioner Col George McKinnon's column was sent to Burn's Hill (Sandile's birthplace) to confront the latter but on his arrival he found Sandile absent. As the column continued up the Boma Pass<sup>415</sup>—a narrow boulder-strewn path flanked by krantzes, dense bush and the river below—they were ambushed by "thousands" of Ngqika warriors, with great loss to the British. The survivors pushed through the following 4 km of the pass and camped at Niven's farm.<sup>416</sup> Later that day, when McKinnon's battered column was crossing the Debe Flats, the amaNgqika attacked them again; killing a civilian, a sergeant and 13 men of the 45<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and leaving their bodies naked and mutilated on the road.<sup>417</sup> This was but the precursor of what was to come.

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<sup>413</sup> Charles Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, n.d.), 168.

<sup>414</sup> On Smith's deposition of Sandile, see Command Paper, 1334 (henceforth [1334]) of 1851, Correspondence Relative to the State of the Kaffir Tribes and to the Recent Outbreak on the Eastern Frontier, Copy of a Despatch from Governor Sir H. G. Smith, Bart., to Earl Grey, 30 October 1850, pp. 5-6. See also N. Mostert, 1002-5.

<sup>415</sup> Currently covered by the waters of the Sandile Dam.

<sup>416</sup> See Mapham, 2-9. In the Boma Pass attack, 10 privates of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, a corporal of 73<sup>rd</sup> and Assistant-Surgeon Dr Stewart of the CMR were killed, two of the 63<sup>rd</sup> wounded, one of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and Brigade Major Bisset of the CMR. N. C. Mapham, 10.

<sup>417</sup> Mapham, 9.

## Chapter 7: The Rebellion gathers force

### News reaches Fort Beaufort

In her diary entry for 24 December 1850, Sarah Ralph, the 23-year old daughter of the Fort Beaufort commissioner, Richard Ralph and his wife, Elizabeth,<sup>418</sup> described the family as “busy preparing for a Christmas feast, and happy in the anticipation of relations coming from Alice to spend the day with us”. The diary continues:

#### December 25<sup>th</sup>

Rose early and rode out about seven miles to meet them, it being half way, but not seeing them, was obliged to return very much disappointed, but fully persuaded that something of consequence must have occurred to prevent their coming, but at nine o'clock . . . an express arrived with the intelligence that war had commenced with all its horrors . . . [the attacks on McKinnon’s column in the Boma Pass and near Fort White. [An incomplete sentence then follows].

We received the distressing intelligence that three of the Military Villages, namely Johanna [Juanasberg], Woburn and Auckland were destroyed and all the inhabitants murdered. . . . We have since heard that five men and most of the women and children made their escape. . . Those that escaped from Woburn said the [amaXhosa] went down in a friendly fashion and asked them to allow them to take their cattle there for protection. One of the Settlers was in the act of opening his Kraal gate to allow them to put some stock in when the Butchery commenced, he, poor fellow, being one of the first to fall.

The Chief Harmanus [sic] who had been an ally of the British Government . . . came in today for Arms and Ammunition—but the people suspecting him of treachery very strongly advised Col. Sutton . . . not to supply him—more especially as we had not sufficient Arms in store for our own men but nevertheless they gave him ten stand of Arms and one hundred rounds of Ammunition . . . While here he visited most of the Stores but it being Christmas all the Stores were closed. . . He begged some of the Storekeepers to open them, as he had brought people with him . . . They asked for flints as much as anything. As they were leaving a person said to him, “Well, Harmanus, you have been on our side for two Wars I hope you

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<sup>418</sup> Both Richard (ex Warminster, Wiltshire) and Elizabeth (née Mills, ex Frome, County of Somerset) Ralph were 1820 settlers. First settled in Bathurst in Albany, they relocated to Fort Beaufort, where Richard resided as commissioner. Ralph Street in Fort Beaufort appears to have been named after him.

will prove faithful this one. His answer was “I do not know, the Lord will see who will stand,” pointing upwards.<sup>419</sup>

It was an interesting reply. Hermanus seems to have possessed sufficient Christian discourse to allay colonial fears, but it is doubtful to what extent he had internalised the tenets of the religion.

## Following suit

Shortly afterwards, the Kaffir Police at Fort Cox deserted, followed by their counterparts at Eland’s River. Thereafter, many of the CMR followed suit.<sup>420</sup> At Lower Blinkwater, Hermanus mustered his rebel forces under Kupido Klaas and Klaas Stuurman,<sup>421</sup> some of whom joined through conviction and others by impressment.<sup>422</sup>

In the meantime, rebels under Koevoet,<sup>423</sup> the brother of the ex-Cape Corps sergeant, Willem Uithaalter, began inciting farm labourers in the Koonap.<sup>424</sup> On seeing their servants deserting and driving off their stock, the Fort Beaufort, Kluklu, and Koonap farmers, sought refuge at one another’s farms, and subsequently at Berry’s Hotel in Fort Beaufort.<sup>425</sup>

Likewise, farmers in the Mankazana due north of Adelaide moved to the Haddon/Koonap/Adelaide Post, and the Winterberg farmers went into laager as their Khoikhoi employees absconded with the arms they were given to protect the settlers’ families.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Diary of Sarah Ralph, 24-25 December [1850]. On the attacks on the military villages, see Colin Coetzee, *The Unfortified Military Villages of Sir Harry Smith, 1848-1850*, ed., Tony Westby Nunn (Cape Town, private publication, 2000), 53-9.

<sup>420</sup> [334] of 1851, Sir H. G. Smith, Bart., to Earl Grey, Fort Cox, December 26, 1850, p. 174. Smith was besieged at Fort Cox but escaped disguised as a CMR/Cape Corps soldier.

<sup>421</sup> [1334] of 1851, Proclamation by his Excellency, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry George Wakelyn Smith, pp. 280-1. See also V. C. Malherbe, “David Stuurman: Last Chief of the Hottentots,” *Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (1980), 47-64.

<sup>422</sup> According to some Blinkwater women, “Those who refused to join and fight against the Government were seized and bound to trees, to be murdered on Hermanus’s return from Fort Beaufort.” [1334] of 1851, Somerset, Notice, 8 January 1851, in enclosure 1 in no. 10, Montagu to Hawes, 8 January 1851, 127.

<sup>423</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 196.

<sup>424</sup> Some of whom had grudges against their employers. One complaint was investigated in Kat River. The Rev Thomson wrote to the Winterberg farmer, but no one would deliver the letter. Read, 23.

<sup>425</sup> Peter Sanderson Campbell, *Reminiscences of the Kafir Wars* (London: Buck Bros, n.d. [1910?]), 40. He drove their remaining stock to Somerset, but more than half of them died en route. *Ibid.*, 38-46. On Mrs Booth’s letter to her sister concerning the trauma of the attacks and the bankruptcy it caused, see Godlonton, *Narrative*, 1: 126.

<sup>426</sup> Staples, 7. The attacks ranged from the Cowie River (not to be confused with the Kowie River near the coast) to the sources of the Koonap River. The farm owners comprised, inter alia, W. Ainslee Sr

## Rebel commoning

Hermanus's rebel camp at Lower Blinkwater openly enjoyed the spoils of the Winterberg farms, broiling the stolen livestock amidst great revelry.<sup>427</sup> Although frowned on by the Reads, who rode out to the rebel camp to remonstrate with them, this kind of feasting can be seen as a manifestation of commoning or communing, whereby people celebrate something by sharing food and drink.<sup>428</sup> In this case, it marked the celebration of Khoikhoi nationalism and victory over white farmers, with the nascent nationalism evinced at the vagrancy bill debates at Philipton in 1834 reaching its apogee in Blinkwater.

Perhaps perceiving that the communal meal he stumbled on was not only an act of defiance but a travesty of the Christian idea of communing, James Read warned the revellers that God would punish them, as it was “food of blood and plunder, that would of truth meet with retributive justice from on high”.<sup>429</sup> Read noted again the striking of “chords of national pride”, with the rebels appealing to the “sympathetic nature of the Hottentot nation” and to “men who had been till then loyal to the backbone”.<sup>430</sup> The camaraderie that Read observed in their tacit but volatile communication, “the lightning glances, the secret, sly, undertone colloquies, winking and significant talk with the eyes”,<sup>431</sup> can also be said to be similar to the “fiery” and “generous to a fault” nature of the Irish, which Engels cited in contrast to the “stable, reasoning, persevering” English.<sup>432</sup>

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and Jr, (Spring Grove), J. McGregor, J. Lawrence, T. Nourse, S. Nel, H. van der Nest, W. Bear, F. H. and W. Mundell, C. L. Stretch, Mrs C. Botha, T. J. Botha, J. Greyling, J. McMaster, Sr and Jr, the Rev Welsh, James Eastland, Sr (St Lawrence), the Bentleys (on Isaac Wiggill's farm Thornhill), Mrs Edwards, George Wiggill (Braamboschspruit) and George James (Foots Cray).

<sup>427</sup> Read, 23, 101.

<sup>428</sup> This kind of communing over food and drink is usually cited in a Christian context, with regard to the partaking of Holy Communion. Here it marks the celebration of Khoikhoi nationalism and victory over white farmers. On the social and economic aspects of the commons, see Peter Linebaugh, “Some Principles of the Commons”, a talk given on 8 January, 2010. Linebaugh's mention of the social aspects of commoning at a post-graduate seminar in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town inspired the author's observation concerning the rebels' feasting.

<sup>429</sup> Read, 24.

<sup>430</sup> On fear, sympathy and nationalism, see Read, 56, 21. 101-102. See also Robert Ross, ‘The Kat River Rebellion and Khoikhoi Nationalism: The Fate of an Ethnic Identification’, *Kronos: Journal of Cape History*, 24 (1997) ) 91-105; R Ross, “Ambiguities of Resistance and Collaboration on the Eastern Cape Frontier: The Kat River Settlement 1829-1856”, in Jon Abbink, Mirjam de Bruijn and Klaas van Walraven (eds.), *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History* (Leiden, 2003)117-140; and Ross, *Borders*, 193- 271.

<sup>431</sup> Read, 10.

<sup>432</sup> E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 484. See also Godlonton's unflattering comparison of the “paupers” of Kat River to the “Irish problem”, Godlonton, *Narrative*, 1: 111.

The general tenor of the Kat River Rebellion also fits the Marxist model, whereby oppressed people use revolution to promote change—in this case, to break the galling yoke imposed on them by officials and restore Kat River, the “Hottentots’ Republic”, to the people. The amaXhosa, who seemed to have relied from the beginning on Khoikhoi support,<sup>433</sup> similarly encouraged their burgeoning nationalism by promising to restore to them the lost “kingdom of Chama,” although Read noted that it was all very vague.<sup>434</sup> That this nationalism was wide, also embracing the Griqua under Adam Kok, Hendrik Waterboer, and H. Heyn, is demonstrated in a letter written by Uithaolder. Dated 2 June 1851, he urges the Griqua to help the Khoikhoi fight the English, arguing that they are all part of one nation.<sup>435</sup> Despite the Reads, Groepe, and Thomson’s attempts to dissuade the rebels from their course—and Read’s pointed refusal to share in their feasts on stolen meat<sup>436</sup>—this sympathy and nationalism became the “greatest force to the Rebellion and defied every attempt of the ministers and friends to check its progress”.<sup>437</sup> Read also described it as “a war of races, in which the Hottentots and [amaXhosa] were against the English”. Certainly, Uithaolder regarded them all as one, advocating the necessity of making common cause with the Xhosa chiefs, Sandile, Maqoma, Bhothomane and others, as “they are also on our side”.<sup>438</sup>

On the other hand, as there was no “domestic consensus”, no “pitting an entire people against another in a contest for supremacy”, it cannot unqualifiedly be called a race war.<sup>439</sup> The Kat River Rebellion could equally be described as a class war—with the Khoikhoi (in contradistinction to the “Bastards”/coloureds) resisting a vagrancy law that could again reduce them to servitude. The rebellion of Kat River settlers was also not dissimilar to the “treason” of the *bijwoners* in the first Anglo-Boer War/South African War, who revolted

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<sup>433</sup> Or further, as Tyhali claimed, the Hottentots “induced us to go to war, they assured us we could beat the English”. Ross, *Borders*, 109. See also 107-8.

<sup>434</sup> On the kingdom of ‘Chama’, or the Inqua, see Read, *Kat River Settlement*, 41, although he maintains that there was ‘nothing in a substantive or tangible form’, *Ibid.*, 101. Read also noted that “since the war I have often heard the Hottentots designated Machama [amaChama], or the children of Chama. Read, 102. The Inqua “had been the major Khoekhoe polity in the Camdeboo until finished off as an independent polity by Xhosa attacks and absorbed into Xhosa society”. Ross, *Borders*, 19.

<sup>435</sup> See Uithaolder’s eloquent letter (written in Dutch), dated Amatola, Juny II, 1851 in Ross, 256-57 and 308-10.

<sup>436</sup> Read, 23.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, 21, 23.

<sup>438</sup> See Ross, *Borders*, 309.

<sup>439</sup> This definition of a race war is from Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 22.

against the poor treatment they received from Afrikaner landowners (read English settlers in the Kat River context), by joining the British against their exploiters.<sup>440</sup>

Khoikhoi sympathy was so strong that the Gonaqua leader, Klaas Stuurman, and Andries Botha's sons, Andries, Stoffel and Klaas, joined the rebels; as did the Philipton church office-holder, Thielman/Speelman Kievit. Religious libertarianism amongst dissenting laity was not unprecedented. Methodist lay preachers had participated in "extreme Radical agitations" as their contribution to the working-class movement between 1790 and 1830, and the Baptist preacher and slave, Samuel (Daddy) Sharpe, led a strike during the Christmas week of 1831 in Jamaica.<sup>441</sup> When Read warned the Blinkwater rebels that levies would repress the Rebellion, the rebels were so sure of the legitimacy of their cause (to get rid of "the *gwee*" or scum-of-the-sea English)<sup>442</sup> that they answered confidently: "Let them come. They will soon understand the rights of our case".<sup>443</sup>

## Levelling and egalitarianism

In describing the Rebellion at Blinkwater, Read mentions the word "levelling". It could be argued that the commoning aspects of the Kat River settlers' lives—sharing and reciprocating—was consonant with Classical agrarian levelling, or at least with the principles of Sextian-Licinian law. This law allowed for the extent of an individual's property to be restricted. And the Gracchi, who lived during the late 2nd century BC, tried to reform it further by ensuring a more equitable redistribution of public land.<sup>444</sup> Yet, Read links the rebels' "levelling" to "radical destructiveness", maintaining that "there was that essence of agrarian equality, of French socialism, liberty, equality and fraternity, radical destructiveness and levelling, and the uprooting of existing social arrangements".<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> See Giliomee, citing A. M. Grundlingh, *Die "Hendsoppers" en 'Joiners": die rasional en volskyning van Verraad* (Pretoria, 1939). 232-6, in Reinterpreting Afrikaner Nationalism, [irkangfrasspace.sas.ac.uk/4124/1/Hermann\\_Giliomee\\_-\\_Reinterpreting\\_afrikaner\\_nationalism\\_1850-1900.pdf](http://irkangfrasspace.sas.ac.uk/4124/1/Hermann_Giliomee_-_Reinterpreting_afrikaner_nationalism_1850-1900.pdf) Accessed 27 August 2015.

<sup>441</sup> Thompson, *English Working Class*, 235 and Holmes, *Secret Life of Dr James Barry*, 184.

<sup>442</sup> From one of Read's letters to the *Commercial Advertiser*, quoted by Godlonton, *Narrative*, 1: 76. The author reads *gwee* as the Irish word for scum, a similar word to isiXhosa, *umLungu*. *Gwee* may also have been a Khoikhoi word.

<sup>443</sup> Read, *Kat River Settlement*, 101. The case, as Read also explained, was that of the French revolutionaries, who wanted liberty, equality, fraternity ... and levelling. See also Godlonton, *Narrative*, 2:176.

<sup>444</sup> Eric Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2004), 99.

<sup>445</sup> Read in a letter to the *Commercial Advertiser*, quoted by Godlonton, *Narrative*, 2: 176.

Read, closer in time to the French Revolution, may have been thinking of uncontrolled seizure and redistribution of private property, or “the sharing out of the goods of others”, which Jean Bodin, quoting Cicero’s *De Officiis*, saw as “simply theft under the name of equality”.<sup>446</sup> It is a truism that Kat River settlers, whom the Reads encouraged to think critically, were politically well informed and read all the local publications.<sup>447</sup> Certainly, what Read describes were the catchwords of the French Revolution of 1789—liberty equality and fraternity.<sup>448</sup> These concepts—still fresh in the minds of older Kat River settlers familiar with the burghers’ attempt to establish the Republic of Graaff-Reinet—could have been passed down to their children and remembered at the start of the Kat River Rebellion, which was as Christian in its orientation and expression as that of the Graaff-Reinet Rebellion. For example, Gert H. Rautenbach, also known as Freedom’s Child, one of the representatives of the Graaff-Reinet “citizens”, warned the office-holders and other representatives that if “the general Prayer of Liberty” was not said at the meeting, he would leave it. (It was agreed that both the old and the new Prayer of Liberty be said.)<sup>449</sup> As the burghers sang the Song of Liberty, so the Bible-bearing Kat River rebels<sup>450</sup> sang hymns in their camps during the war; hymns, such as “Awake my soul and with the sun, thy daily course of duty run”.<sup>451</sup> Similarly, Nigel Penn remarks on the northern-frontier burgher practice of singing hymns (and drinking brandy) which preceded commandos.<sup>452</sup> Prior to this, the Van der Kemp’s Khoikhoi at Graaff-Reinet would challenge the local boers by singing psalms at them across the village.<sup>453</sup>

Similarly, in her unpublished interviews with the late Manie Loots in 1998 and 1999, V. C. Malherbe remarked on the correspondence between the French Revolution and the Kat

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<sup>446</sup> Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought*, 99. Jean Bodin (1529-1596), humanist and philosopher, was the author of *The Six Books of the Commonwealth*. In the context of the Catholic-Huguenot wars, he reckoned that peace was only possible if the prince was accorded the absolute and indivisible power of the state.

<sup>447</sup> Such as “the [*Commercial*] *Advertiser*, *Mail*, *Observer*, *Frontier Times*, *Grensblad*, *Port Elizabeth Herald*, *Easter Province News*, *Mercury*, *Telegraph*, *Grahamstown Journal*, *Kerk Bode*, *Christian Watchman*, and *Kafir and English Paper*”, Read, *Kat River Settlement*, 123.

<sup>448</sup> Compare also the demands of the 1848 February Revolution—the right to work, benefits, and a reduction of taxes.

<sup>449</sup> J. S. Marais, *Maynier and the First Boer Republic* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1944, rpt., 1962), 89.

<sup>450</sup> For example, a Bible and other illustrated Christian literature were found in a rebel camp at Kaalhoek. Baines, 2: 212.

<sup>451</sup> Merriman, 155, and Lakeman, 40.

<sup>452</sup> Penn, *Forgotten Frontier*, 235.

<sup>453</sup> Ross, “Kat River Rebellion and Khoikhoi Nationalism”, 94.

River Rebellion, remarking that the latter “had repercussions throughout the Colony very like the peasants response to the French Revolution”.<sup>454</sup>

Although Read was quick to distance himself from the “leveling and radical destructiveness” of some of his congregation, the Reads’ approach—in shaping a generally dissenting consciousness—was not that different from Puritanism and Methodism, all of which were “highly politically conscious religions”. And, in finding ready Biblical allegories for their “tribulations”, it was easy for the people to combine spiritual and temporal egalitarianism.<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> V. C. Malherbe, “Meeting with Mr H. G. ‘Manie’ Loots,” MP, 24/4/1998, and “Telephone Interview with Mr Manie Loots, 8 February 1999”. Papers in the possession of V. C. Malherbe.

<sup>455</sup> Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 430-31.

## Chapter 8: Hermanus as rebel leader

Hermanus continued to ride around mustering rebels, demanding on 29 December that Field-cornet Valentyn Jacobs, and others who had taken refuge in the Tidmanton Church, come out and join him. When the Rev Arie van Rooyen told him not to force the people into rebellion, Hermanus replied with consummate sophistry, “No, I shall first ask them; but willing or not willing; they shall go.” He then proceeded to order out all the Blinkwater men, taking those capable of bearing arms to Fuller’s Hoek.

Groepe wrote to Hermanus, warning him against the “folly, impolicy and hazard” of joining the amaXhosa and implored him not to continue in his undertaking”.<sup>456</sup> It made no impression on Hermanus, who had established himself as general of the rebels, and was ordering out further men for an attack on Fort Beaufort.<sup>457</sup> One of the unsung heroes of Hermanus’s Tidmanton muster was a woman, Dela Jagers. When John Andries arrived and wanted to shoot Hermanus, Dela, together with other women, prevented him from doing so, fearing that this would endanger the lives of others.<sup>458</sup>

### Raids on Fort Beaufort

The only defences of the small garrison town of Fort Beaufort were a Martello tower—on which was mounted a small cannon—and a strongly-built barracks, with a defensible guardhouse at one end and a blockhouse in front.<sup>459</sup> The defences were manned by a small detachment of the 91<sup>st</sup> Regiment under Capt Pennington,<sup>460</sup> a few Sappers and Miners, and a small detachment of the CMR, totalling not more than 60, under the command of Lt-Col W. Sutton.<sup>461</sup> As prescribed by law, there was also a burgher/citizen force, comprising two corps: the Mounted Volunteers (young men who rode and shot well), and the (unmounted) Volunteers. Both performed regular duties and had their headquarters at St John’s Anglican Church in Campbell Road. The amaMfengu living north of Fort Beaufort constituted the biggest force—600—under command of James Verity with two lieutenants, Mr Gee and Mr

<sup>456</sup> Read, *Kat River Settlement*, 12.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>458</sup> Ironically, Andries became a rebel. *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>459</sup> Mapham, 31-2.

<sup>460</sup> The 91<sup>st</sup> Regiment did not participate in the battle, having been held in reserve to guard the ammunition stores and supplies.

<sup>461</sup> The diary of Sarah Ralph, Monday 6<sup>th</sup> [January 1851].

Clarke, to assist him.<sup>462</sup> The Mfengu levies usually had to rely on their spears and *knobkieries* (sticks with knobs) but in this case Somerset had allowed some of them to be armed with muskets.<sup>463</sup>



Figure 15 Martello Tower at Fort Beaufort with the officers' mess to the right, 2012 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

On 27 and 28 December Hermanus raided the Fort Beaufort cattle. In the first raid they took Capt Bovey's cattle and 350 Mfengu cattle, and during the second they took the Mfengu herds which been taken out to graze. Sarah Ralph observed Mfengu women armed with *knobkieries* and spears, shouting and driving the remaining cattle into town. She also noted that most of the assailants were mounted.<sup>464</sup>

On Col Sutton's delaying in sending out the CMR, Capt Wynne of the Volunteers, rushed out to Stanton's Drift and fired at the 100-odd Gonaqua rebels. The amaMfengu—belatedly joined by the CMR—pursued the raiders on foot. Hermanus had almost reached Victoria Bridge when his horse was shot from under him. He fled, leaving his tobacco pouch,

<sup>462</sup> Mapham, 32.

<sup>463</sup> Sarah Ralph, Monday 6<sup>th</sup>

<sup>464</sup> Ibid.

saddle, and bridle. To the shock of the whites, many of the 13 killed were Blinkwater Khoikhoi.<sup>465</sup>

Hermanus spent the next two days attacking William Gilbert's property, Sipton/Sephton Manor, which was considered a model fortified farm. A high rectangular stone wall encircled the homestead, a tower with a swivelling two-pound cannon mounted on it,<sup>466</sup> a fruit and vegetable garden, a spring, grazing for sheep and a stone building containing a year's supply of provisions.<sup>467</sup> Hermanus and his men stormed the gates, removed the cannon, and burnt the buildings. The following day some of the mounted volunteers and Mfengu accompanied Gilbert to his farm to salvage some buried arms and other possessions, doing the same for the Aytons the following day.<sup>468</sup>

In the meantime, Major-General Somerset had managed to smuggle a message in French in a tinder box to Col Sutton in Fort Beaufort, warning him of an imminent attack and ordering all the men to be under arms all night and the women and children to go to the barracks. As Sarah noted, the town was not defensible because all the drifts were open. "Of course", she added, "there were outlying picquets stationed at them. But they could not expect much assistance from the military as there were not more than 60 men including the Sappers, 91 and the Cape Corps (CMR) to man the guns [and] protect the Magazine, Commissariat Store and Barracks. So the whole of the duty of defending the Town devolved on the civilians and fingoos, it not being thought advisable to arm the few Hottentots that are still left here."

### **Hermanus attacks Fort Beaufort**

Before daylight on Tuesday, 7 January 1851, Sarah Ralph was "suddenly aroused by the report of a gun, followed by four more reports". She woke the other women, and, dressing quickly, they mounted the barracks bedsteads to look out of the high windows of the upper storey, from where followed the whole of the first engagement.

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<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

<sup>466</sup> Gilbert had sent the remainder of his stock to Fort Beaufort. Mapham, 30.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Sarah Ralph, Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> and Monday 6<sup>th</sup>.



Figure 16 The Fort Beaufort barracks, 2012 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

Hermanus had divided his 500-strong force into three divisions, with each division ordered to enter Fort Beaufort by a different drift. The first division was to attack at Stanton's Drift, the second at the drift below the hospital, and the third at the Brak River Drift, near Johnson's house. In the meantime, as Sarah Ralph explains:

A mile and a half out [of Fort Beaufort], Hermanus halted and harangued his followers, pointing out that the duty of each party and telling them that he had great power in [Xhosaland] and that if one of them proved false Umlanjeni [sic], who was his friend, would know and would let great evil befall them, He showed them a knife which he had sharpened to cut all the Englishmen's throats while they killed the Fingoes, and those who had no arms were to drive the cattle to that spot and remain there until he returned, having made up his mind to breakfast before his return on Mr Holliday's stoep, with the English ladies who were to have been at his disposal [serving him breakfast and thereafter performing other "services"].<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> Sarah Ralph, Tuesday Morning, the 7th [January, 1851.

As Sarah also noted, Hermanus had “taken a great fancy to Mr Holliday’s house it being the finest in the place and well stocked with goods of every description. . . [and] the Hottentot and [Xhosa] women were also on their way in to carry the goods away.”<sup>470</sup>

Hermanus’s first division entered Fort Beaufort from Stanton’s Drift and took uncontested possession of the houses in the lower part of the town. In Stanton’s house, the rebels ordered the Mfengu female servants to “hurry up and make them plenty of coffee”.<sup>471</sup> Without time to saddle their horses, the leaders of the Fort Beaufort Mounted Volunteers, Capt Savory, Capt William Wynne and Mewett, ran down D’Urban Street to the scene of the firing, where several Volunteers and amaMfengu joined them.<sup>472</sup>

Encountering heavy fire as they approached the enemy-occupied houses, Wynne and his men took refuge behind a house near the Independent Chapel, from where they took potshots at their attackers. Mewett and his men had to retreat to St John’s Church, where they were reinforced by 37 other Volunteers. The augmented force then took up positions along Church and Campbell Streets, and “poured volley after volley into the enemy” until they had to retreat.<sup>473</sup>

It was “scarcely light” and all that Sarah could see were “flashes of light from enemy muskets from Stanton’s Drift and the hospital”. Five minutes later, she could see everything clearly except the flat just below the Presbyterian Chapel [which] was completely enveloped in smoke from the guns.” She had a good view of the hospital, though, where “the Christian [Xhosa] of Birklands, formerly under the Rev H. Calderwood stood their ground well and did good execution” attacking Hermanus’s 2<sup>nd</sup> division so fiercely that they had to retreat before entering the town. The engagement, as she noted, lasted 20 minutes.<sup>474</sup>

Hermanus commanded the 3<sup>rd</sup> division at Johnson’s Drift. They were crossing it when Capt Verity and the Mfengu Levy descended on them from the town and drove them back. Then, instead of pursuing them, Verity marched his men back to the upper part of town, crossed the Kat River near Holliday’s shop, and led them down to the flat west of the town, where they attacked Hermanus’s left flank. In the meanwhile, the Volunteers and amaMfengu had forced the 1<sup>st</sup> division to retreat across Stanton’s Drift, killing several rebels and putting the remainder to flight. By 5am—half an hour after the battle started—Hermanus’s three

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<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid. See also Mapham, 46.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid., p.4.

<sup>473</sup> Mapham, 47.

<sup>474</sup> Sarah Ralph, Tuesday Morning, the 7th [January, 1851. See also Mapham, 47, for additional details.

divisions were all “in full flight”. Sarah Ralph continues: “As soon as we saw them run, we got ready to return home . . . to make coffee for the absent. It was just five o'clock and all were still in perusit of the enemy. So for some time we had to remain in suspense.”

On the return of the men, Sarah served them coffee, and the Rev Ayliff took a canteen of water and wine to the wounded. Sutton emerged from the barracks, ordered the prisoners to be secured, and returned to the barracks.<sup>475</sup>

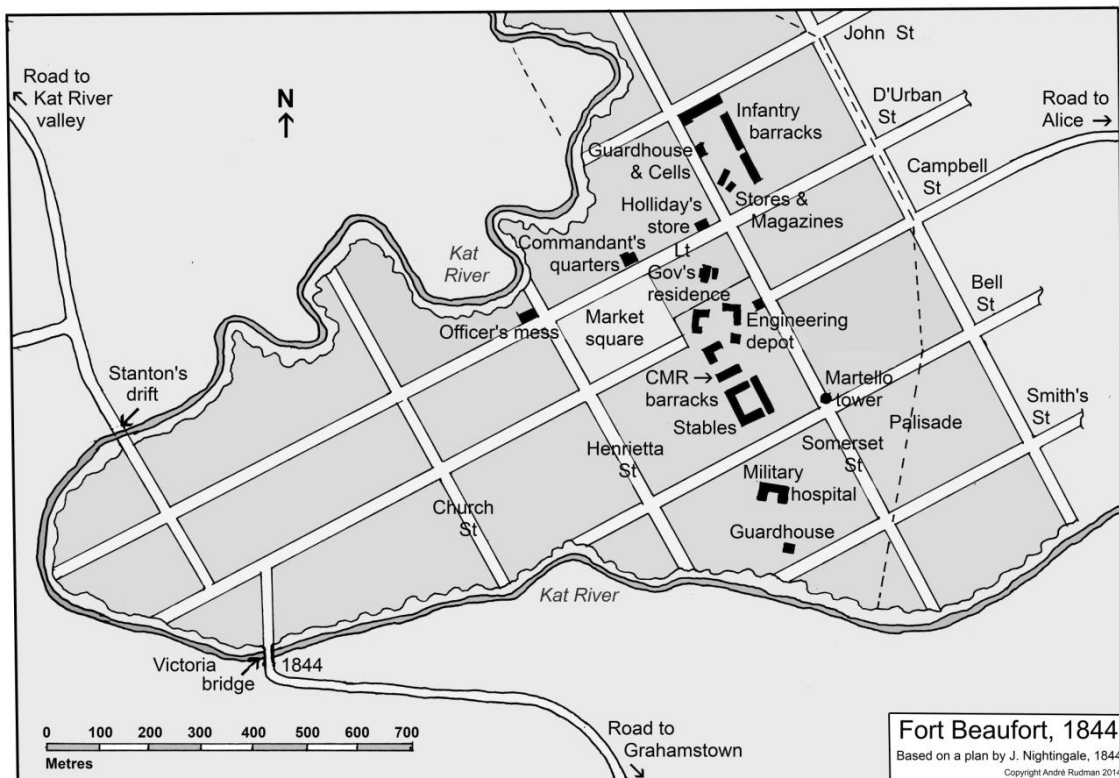


Figure 17 Street map of Fort Beaufort (A. Rudman, 2014)

The Mfengu Levy, on foot, and the Mounted Volunteers pursued the fugitives to the farm, Olive Cliffs, in Fuller’s Hoek. Here the rebels made a stand, “pouring several volleys” into the amaMfengu, who retaliated without loss.<sup>476</sup> The Mfengu and Mounted Volunteers continued into Blinkwater, where they raided and burnt huts and recovered goods belonging to the Booths, Aytons, and Gilberts. Around 1 200 cattle and “hundreds” of sheep and goats were divided among the Mfengu levies, who retired to Fort Beaufort covered by the Volunteers. Sutton met them 5 km from Fort Beaufort.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid. For other eyewitness accounts of the battle see Godlonton, *Narrative*, 1: 135-7.

<sup>476</sup> Following my sources, in order to distinguish them, Volunteers and Mounted Volunteers are capitalised.

Two kilometres from town, Capt Carey, with a detachment of the CMR from Fort Hare, met them.<sup>477</sup> They had arrived too late to be of any assistance, but took the field in case the amaMfengu were attacked while bringing back the cattle. Sarah, who seemed to have been disappointed that Capt Carey had missed the battle, described him as follows: “He is a very good and active Officer and the right sort for [Xhosa] warfare, was he not tied by Military Orders which of course must be obeyed. Our men did not wait for orders. Indeed there was no time ... and they were determined not to be shackled.”<sup>478</sup>

One of Andries Botha’s sons—all had joined the rebels—was wounded in the fray, and one captured. Amongst the Khoikhoi killed were several from the Rev Arie van Rooyen’s church, including a deacon who had been in the Ralph’s employ for three years.<sup>479</sup> An estimated 80 rebels were killed, and the blood spoor of many wounded was found. Amongst the defenders, one imMfengu was killed and two wounded, one mortally. Hermanus’s body was found face-down in the mud amongst the dead at Johnson’s Drift, at the western entrance to the town. It was easily identified by the size.<sup>480</sup>

His body was thrown across a horse and brought into the market square in a state of nudity, with the exception of a black Crepe bonnet where it was left for several hours that all might really see him. When the Fingoes returned, as tired as they all were, they went in a Body to see the fallen enemy, so rejoiced were they that the Hurra was most deafening. The Union Jack was hoisted on the market pole. There were four prisoners brought in, a wounded [Xhosa] and three other wounded Hottentots, one a son of Andries Botha.<sup>481</sup>

As can be seen, Sutton played no active role in the battle, with the Mfengu Levy and Volunteers carrying the day. As Mapham summed it up:

The defenders had adequate warning, although the pickets were caught napping, the counterattacks were properly led, Verity’s cross-over from east to west was superb [and] the follow-up was well-executed. The only points that need comment are the low casualties on the side of the defenders, the late arrival of Capt Carey from Fort Hare, and the inactivity of the military.”<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>477</sup> Mapham, 46-47.

<sup>478</sup> Contrary to expectations, Sarah did not marry Capt Carey. She eventually married the Rev W. Clifford Holden, the Wesleyan missionary and historian. She died in Grahamstown in 1900. (Mapham’s comment, *ibid.*)

<sup>479</sup> Sarah Ralph, Tuesday Morning, the 7th [January 1851].

<sup>480</sup> Hermanus had a large frame, unlike the diminutive Uithalder, his successor.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.* All of Botha’s sons participated in the battle. See Mapham, 49-50.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

That night, Fort Beaufort waited in suspense for “a visit from Sandilli”. To everyone’s relief he did not arrive.<sup>483</sup>

### Uithaolder as leader

Maqoma subsequently attacked the Mankazana Valley due north of Adelaide, and Willem Uithaolder replaced Hermanus as rebel leader. At Blinkwater, Uithaolder drilled and disciplined the rebel forces—including 1 500 disaffected labourers from the Koonap and Winterberg—along military lines.<sup>484</sup> He also kept a notebook in which he compiled lists of the troops, camp regulations, discipline, orders, and appointments.<sup>485</sup>

Further Kat River people joined Uithaolder, including some from Lushington and 70 followers of the loyalist, Kasper Olivier. Rumours had reached Olivier at Fort Armstrong that the English had attacked his people on 19 January, wounded his brother, and burnt his house, when the real culprits were a Mfengu levy. Soon afterwards, the Pringles from the Baviaans area (near Adelaide) confiscated Olivier’s men’s guns and powder to punish them for receiving a sheep stolen from their farm.<sup>486</sup> Olivier’s men subsequently defected—in what was seen as a turning point in the Rebellion—and together with Uithaolder, attacked the Mankazana farmers. Read averred, however, that Olivier remained loyal.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> Ibid.

<sup>484</sup> On visiting the rebel camp at Blinkwater at the height of the Rebellion, James Read Jr observed that, “The Hottentots moved in rank and file as they were ordered by their officers, while the Commander, William Uithaolder, rode about from point to point, swearing at the men and imitating the bearing of a general officer on parade, in putting his men through their various evolutions.” Read, 29. Uithaolder had procedures for guarding the roads, dealing with spoil, keeping the water supply clean, and punishing disobedience. Ross, *Borders*, 220-21.

<sup>485</sup> On the notebook, *ibid.*, 259. In June 1851 Governor Sir Harry Smith wrote to inform Earl Grey of the notebook which he enclosed, explaining that it also showed that the rebellion had been pre-planned. [1380], Cape of Good Hope Correspondence. . . to the recent outbreak of the Eastern Frontier of the Colony, in continuation of Papers presented to Parliament, Kingwillamstown [sic], June 14, 1851, p. 127.

<sup>486</sup> When the guns were returned they were broken. Ross, 222.

<sup>487</sup> See Read, 41, 55, 58, 101.

## Chapter 9: War in the Winterberg

In the meantime, bands of Khoikhoi rebels, augmented by amaNgqika, were attacking farms in the Koonap, Kaalhoek, and Winterberg areas. On Christmas Eve 1850, a farmer from Kaalhoek returned from Fort Beaufort with news that war had broken out. The local field-cornet sent five volunteers with a wagon to Fort Beaufort to procure more ammunition. On Civil-commissioner Stringfellow refusing to issue it in case it fell into rebel hands, they returned empty handed. On their way back they were attacked in Blinkwater. Two of the men—one a father of three young children—were beheaded. Another was repeatedly stabbed. He managed to dive onto the wagon, crawl through to the back and plunge into a waterhole, emerging after dark and walking back to Fort Beaufort to report the attack.<sup>488</sup>

The next day, while hunting for stolen stock, Isaiah Staples of the farm, Cold Valley, saw smoke rising from Eastland's farm and Ngqika dancing around the homestead. On investigating he found that James Eastland (brother of one of the men who had gone to Fort Beaufort) had been stabbed to death, but at his wife's beseeching they had spared her and her son. On returning to Cold Valley, Staples saw his Khoikhoi employees deserting with the muskets he had given them to protect his farm. Staples then went into laager with other English farmers (the burghers had all trekked away at the outbreak of war) on William Bear's farm, Ellington. As attacks increased around them Bear's whole laager, comprising several families, decided to seek refuge at Post Retief, some 17km to the north. As most of their oxen had been stolen they requested to send them some, which took some time. Eventually the oxen arrived and after some delays and a broken wheel they set off.

On the way to Post Retief, the travellers noticed numerous Ngqika and rebels heading in the same direction. The people in the laager managed to beat them to it, although they had to leave the flock of sheep they had brought with them outside. That night the post was surrounded and fired on from all sides, and their sheep were taken.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> Staples, 10.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.



Figure 18 View of Cold Valley, Staple's farm in the Winterberg. (Photo: Brian Miles, 2017)

### The siege of Post Relief

As the attack—allegedly led by Shaw, formerly of the 7<sup>th</sup> Dragoons<sup>490</sup>—became a two-month siege, the refugees' situation became critical.<sup>491</sup> There was no communication with the Colony, and their supplies of provisions and ammunition dwindled. Although “almost daily engaged with the enemy”,<sup>492</sup> the men had to be prudent with their shots. The old and the very young suffered, as all were reduced to rations of “dry bread and coffee made from roasted

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<sup>490</sup> Godlonton, *Narrative*, 201.

<sup>491</sup> There were a number of families at the post, The men included John, Thomas and Charles Edwards, the two Marshall men, the Irishman, John Armstrong (not Capt Armstrong), the Gibbons, two Sweetnam men (including James Sweetnam, the local magistrate), John Wiggill, Francis Bentley, and the only “Dutchman”, Ryneer Botha, “the bravest man who ever shouldered a rifle”. The Anglican clergyman, the Rev R. Wilson was also present. Staples found his services very comforting. Staples, 10-11.

<sup>492</sup> Staples described them as “almost the whole rebel force”, with thousands of Ngqika camped nearby. Staples, 10.

wheat or other substitutes, without either milk or sugar”.<sup>493</sup> Eventually, two men were sent to Fort Beaufort for reinforcements. None were despatched, as it was also under-defended.<sup>494</sup>

In the meantime, additional Ngqika and rebels (amongst whom were 150 women) swelled the ranks of “the enemy”,<sup>495</sup> who maintained a steady fire at the post from a small watermill on a stream.<sup>496</sup> Soon afterwards, they cut off the post’s water supply, by opening a sluice gate in the furrow and diverting the water. The river, 200 m away, was too exposed for the women to collect water. Prior to this, some of them had filled 3-4 pots with drinking water. This, together with some rainwater, provided by what was seen as a providential thunderstorm, enabled the besieged to survive for 28 hours, although the horses suffered.<sup>497</sup> The rebels then fetched their wives and children, who danced in looted finery before the besieged, and threshed 40 sacks of wheat belonging to the widow, Mrs Edwards, loaded them on a wagon, and drove it away.<sup>498</sup>

Soon afterwards, some rebels arrived with Gilbert’s two-pounder gun, which they set up on the rise above the post. Not being artillerymen, they only wounded a few cows, with the remainder of the balls bouncing harmlessly off the post’s zinc roof. The hungry besieged thought longingly of the ripe fruit in their orchards. Intermittently, some of the men would slip out to reap some of their produce.<sup>499</sup>

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<sup>493</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>495</sup> Who were estimated at 4 000, as against 70-80 men defending the post.

<sup>496</sup> W. R. King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland, 1851-2* (London, 1853), 177.

<sup>497</sup> Staples, 17-18. See also Theo Wiggill, *From the Cotswolds*, 201-2, quoting from Ely Wiggill’s journal, and Godlonton, Narrative, 1: 201.

<sup>498</sup> King, 177.

<sup>499</sup> Staples, 11-12.



Figure 19 Ruins of Post Retief with the Winterberg in the background (Photograph: Barry James, 2017)

## A rebel captive

Rumours reached Post Retief that the Smiths' farm, Hartebeesfontein (present day Waylands), had been attacked. Seven men from Post Retief—including the 16-year old boy, John Wiggill—volunteered to go and reconnoitre. The boy's father, Eli Wiggill, provides a narrative of what occurred.

On reaching Smiths' camp, they found all well (at this stage)<sup>500</sup> and set off again for Post Retief. En route, a man hiding in a hollow, but appearing to be friendly, beckoned to them. Suddenly they were surrounded by a large number of rebels and amaNgqika, who dismounted and disarmed them. They were saved from being killed by the intercession of a Khoikhoi rebel, Diedrich, who recognised John as the son of his former employer, Eli Wiggill, "a good man", who "had preached to them and not done them any harm". Diedrich

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<sup>500</sup> Later, Hartebeesfontein was attacked and besieged for 36 hours, with the rebels maintaining a ceaseless fire on the house in which the families were assembled. One of the male defenders was killed, and bullets passing through chinks in the walls narrowly missed the women and children on the beds. All of Smith's stock was taken, his wool sacks emptied, filled with produce from the farm, and driven away on wagons. The mill was burnt. See Staples, 19-20, "Determined attack on Smith's Camp".

persuaded the amaNgqika that John and his fellows could make them wagons if they were spared.<sup>501</sup> Reluctantly, they agreed. The Khoikhoi took the prisoners to an “empty Dutch house”, with the resentful Ngqika peering over their shoulders and calling the prisoners “Satana”. They also warned the rebels that their chief [Sandile] would not be impressed. At that, the rebels retorted that he was not their chief.

With the prisoners under guard at the Dutch house, the rebels and their Ngqika allies attacked Smith’s camp. On capturing some sheep, they brought them to the Dutch house, killing them by “cruelly throw[ing] assegais into their bodies and see[ing] them run about in pain.” Grapes were ripe, and Diedrich fed John on them and mutton.

The rebels then decided to negotiate an exchange of prisoners. Leaving John and two others at the Dutch house, the rebels set off for Post Retief. On seeing the party approaching with a white flag, the magistrate, James Sweetman, and some of the men went out to meet them. Susannah Wiggill—John’s mother—walked boldly up to the rebels and asked them to take her to her son. It upset her to see him “stripped of nearly all of his clothing”. The rebels explained that he could have had his liberty if he would have promised not to take up arms against them. He had refused, and was further detained. At Susannah’s pleading, he was released. But they would not return her mare, which he had been riding when captured. (Later, John recaptured it at the Battle of Fort Armstrong.) Diedrich sent a leg of mutton home with John for his grandmother, Mrs Bentley.<sup>502</sup> In the meantime, a burgher force had arrived at the post.

Eli’s description of John’s treatment by the rebels, especially Diedrich, provides insights into the dilemma caused by their residual loyalty to ex-employees to whom they had been attached. The rebels’ speech and behaviour also reveals the widening gap between their and Ngqika and aims and methods, with the former wanting to spare the prisoners that the latter wanted to kill. The rebels also demonstrated that they were beginning to distance themselves from the amaNgqika by denying that Sandile was their chief.

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<sup>501</sup> Eli was a wainwright, as was his brother George. The latter’s farm, Braamboschspruit, on the Koonap River, was also attacked during the siege Post Retief. George had fortified the mill on his property and filled it with provisions for the family and friends, among whom was a sick elderly woman who had to be carried into the mill. A large party of rebels, allegedly led by Andries Botha, hid in George’s vineyards prior to the attack. One of the mill defenders was wounded and another killed while trying to reach it. George’s house was burnt, and his stock, wagons and barrels of wine and spirits removed. Some of the drunk rebels were captured on their way home. See Wiggill, *Cotswolds to the Cape*, 174-5, and Godlonton, *Narrative*, 1: 200-1.

<sup>502</sup> Wiggill, “Cotswolds”, 203-4. Prior to this, Eli had spent six months preaching to the “Bechuanas” at the Thaba ’Nchu Wesleyan Mission Station, Mirametsu. *Ibid.*, 179.

The siege at Post Retief was relieved by Field-commandant W. M. Bowker, accompanied by Messrs William (Dods) Pringle and Kruger, with a combined burgher force of 130, and 120 Mfengu under Capt W. Ayliff and Mr Hart. They “fell on the enemy in the rear and drove them off after three hours”.<sup>503</sup> Subsequently, Bowker set off to relieve the Smiths at Hartebeesfontein. When Bowker confronted the rebel, Van Beuelen, the latter informed him that he was also a commandant.<sup>504</sup>



Figure 20 Officers' mess at Post Retief. (Photo: Barry James, 2017)

<sup>503</sup> King, *Campaigning*, 178.

<sup>504</sup> Staples, 29. When Bowker took him prisoner at Fort Armstrong, he took him by the nose and reminded him of this. *Ibid.*



Figure 21 Buildings on the north side of Post Retief (Photo: Barry James, 2017)

### Attack on Foot's Cray

During a period of quiet, when the farmers had been lulled into a false sense of security, a body of rebels attacked the English settler, George James, on his farm, Foot's Cray, near the source of the Koonap. According to Staples—who was engaged to Sarah, one of James's daughters—James was “a very well known farmer and many a belated traveller could testify to his hospitality”.<sup>505</sup> One late afternoon, after having attended a meeting at the local field-cornet's house with James, Isaiah Staples, and a few other farmers (all unarmed), accompanied him home. Staples continues the narrative:

Arriving at Foot's Cray, the house of Mr James, just as the dusk of evening was coming on, we dismounted and went inside, to see the rest of the family, and remained talking for a few minutes. . . The supper was being prepared . . . and we were urgently pressed to remain and

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<sup>505</sup> Staples, 34.

partake with them but we refused. . . . and I must say I wished at the time that I had given another answer. (Later, he regarded it as providential that he had refused the invitation.)

It was now quite dark and as we mounted our horses sprang away in a great hurry. . . I think we covered the distance between the two places in about fifteen minutes . . . we heard several shots fired in the direction of Mr James' farm, which gave us considerable alarm and we were on the point of returning at once but were overruled by an older man who pointed out the danger, and we were only three men at our place, and so he persuaded us to wait till morning, and as we heard no more shots we hoped it was not a serious attack. . . .

At daybreak I saddled my horse and rode over . . . The first thing I saw was poor Mr James' hat stuck upon a pole in front of the house. . . On entering the house I found the family bathed in tears, and a dead body in two corners of the room.<sup>506</sup>

Hannah James, the widow of George James, completes the narrative of the "Never to be forgotten 6<sup>th</sup> November" in a letter to her brother:

The family being assembled for supper, at about 8 o'clock, the dogs commenced barking furiously, on which the herdsman ran outside to ascertain the cause. A shot was then fired close to our house and poor dear James and Thomas, an English servant, went out at the back door. At that moment a great many shots were fired at the house and I found that we were completely surrounded by the enemy. I immediately put on my slippers and wrapped a cloak about me and at that moment heard my dear James outside—My dear Hannah and my poor children, what will become of you? Hearing this sad lamentation repeated, I quickly quitted my bedroom, for the first time since my confinement ten days before, I went to the door, entreating him to save himself and leave us to the care of the Almighty. . . Hoping he would be able to affect [*sic*] his escape, I returned to the children, and then heard the rebels outside call out, "Set the house on fire!"

On this I led my poor children to my bedroom, entreating them to sit still there while I went outside to the rebels and pleaded with them for their lives. My dear little William looked at me imploringly, saying, "Oh mother do not let them come in . . . for you know they will kill all the little boys!" I told him to go and sit with his little brothers and sister in my room . . . and went to my daughter's room . . . and saw three rebels just in the act of applying fire brands to the thatch. I entreated them to desist, asking them why they would fire the premises and not be satisfied with taking all the stock. The leader of the rebels then told them to wait a little and ordered all in the house to come out. I told him it was impossible as there were young children and some who were too weak and too sick to come out. He then

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<sup>506</sup> Ibid., 34.

enquired how many men there were in the house. I said none, on which he ordered me to light a candle and open the door. I asked him what he wanted, as he had all the stock. He replied that he wanted food and would have it, saying that if I was not quick and opened the door he would fire the house. I then lit a candle . . . and Sarah assist[ed] me open the door. I wished her and Eleanor her sister to return to the children in my room but they would not leave me. In unlocking the door at least 30 rebels and two [amaNgqika] rushed in and began devouring the food on the table.

At this juncture, Staples adds:

The poor young ladies were compelled to make coffee and find eatables for those who had just imbrued their hands in the blood of their father. But let me here give them what credit they deserve and I must say that under similar circumstances some (even white men) may have done worse. They did at least respect the young ladies and did not molest them, nor did they enter the room in which the poor mother was lying ill.<sup>507</sup>

Hannah James continues with her account:

The leader of the rebels then went to the door and called to one Hermanus to maintain a good lookout lest help came from one of the neighbouring farms. The ruffian then demanded money and ammunition. The rebels took the blankets and sheets from the beds, spreading [them] on the floor, [and] filling them . . . with shop goods, which they tied up and carried off. They also . . . took away all the clothes that suited them. Poor little John, Elizabeth, Edward, William, Busby, and Thomas, the Englishman, had not a thing left. . . Having then rifled the premises . . . the leader ordered them to be quickly off, holding Sarah by the arm, he remarked, "Now tell the Englishmen that as many as may choose may follow us, and they will find us ready for them." He then followed his men. . .

We went in search of those who had gone out . . . and found my poor dead husband's body in a state too shocking to describe. My poor children . . . managed to carry [it] inside and laid it on the sofa. . . [and] went out again and found the body of poor Jantjies, a Tambookie that had remained faithful to us during the whole war. He was lying on the step near the front door. . . They then searched for Thomas, who had made his escape and lay under the quince hedge . . . until daylight, when he came back to the house more dead than alive. . . When day broke I sent little William over to his uncles McGrath and Redman, who occupied Mr O'Connor's farm opposite ours. They soon came over . . . and removed us and

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<sup>507</sup> Staples, 38.

the children to a room at Mr J. Edwards [at Post Retief], where a few families have gone for mutual protection.

After a while we left . . . to return to our farm. Captain Bruce with a party of mounted men were based at Post Retief under Mr Bear with a party of Police on Malan's farm about two miles from us. We had only been there a short time when the Police were removed from Malan's farm and Captain Bruce was ordered from the Post and so we were left utterly unprotected. The consequences are I am a widow with nine children dependent on me and we are driven from a comfortable and once happy home, not knowing who may fall next.<sup>508</sup>

The James family lost all their cattle, save for one cow which was tied up, four horses, saddles and bridles, ammunition, and ten sacks of meal, as well as an estimated £200 pounds worth of other items and clothing. Magistrate Sweetnam led a party of men, including Staples, to follow the spoor of the stolen cattle and recovered 38 head. Later they found more of the cattle, but while driving them back from between Balfour and Philipton rebels took them.<sup>509</sup>

On his capture, the rebel Khoikhoi, Johannes Fortuin, divulged that one of Uithaalder's "captains", the ex-Cape Corps man, Stephanus Smit, had led the attack on George James.<sup>510</sup> No reason for it was given.

## Motives and compunction

One can speculate on the motivation for George James's murder, as well as that of others in the area.<sup>511</sup> It is unlikely that all of the farmers maltreated their labourers.<sup>512</sup> Rather, as Sandile mentioned in a letter to the Kat River magistrate, J. H. Wienand—amaXhosa viewed the white settlers as men of war who "belong to the race that hates the Kafirs".<sup>513</sup> Further, Sandile described the "teachers" (ministers), who obeyed Somerset's injunction to leave their

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<sup>508</sup> Hannah James, letter beginning "My dear Brother", from a typescript of the letter found in old family papers belonging to Barry and Norma James.

<sup>509</sup> Staples, 38.

<sup>510</sup> Evidence of Johannes Fortuin, 1 December, 1852, *The Correspondence of Lieut-General the Hon. Sir George Cathcart* (London: John Murray, 1857), 221.

<sup>511</sup> For example, others who were killed in Kaalhoek comprised Joseph Allison and Thomas Eastland.

<sup>512</sup> For example, the rebels recognised the kindness of the Ainslees by later returning their wagon and oxen to them. Read, 77.

<sup>513</sup> [1380], Further Correspondence to the Governor . . . Outbreak on the Eastern Districts, Wienand to Somerset, Camp Fort Armstrong, January 18, 1851, p. 129. In this letter, which he sent with the blind messenger, Jantze Nocka [Jan Noega], Sandile warned the English settlers to leave "the kranty" [Fort Armstrong], or the amaXhosa would not be responsible for what befell them. *Ibid.*

posts and gather at Fort Armstrong, as being “defiled by the settlers, who asked Government to make war and destroy the Kafirs.”

This fits with Mlanjeni’s distinctions between the defiled and undefiled, and his urging of the eradication of all sources of impurity<sup>514</sup>—a traditional Xhosa concept that the early LMS missionary, Van der Kemp, may have unwittingly endorsed by teaching that God would punish all evil people.<sup>515</sup> There are many biblical warnings against defilement,<sup>516</sup> and it is probable that they were conflated with the Xhosa concept of it. Similarly, John Wiggill’s Ngqika captors, who called him and the other white prisoners “Satana”, could have been expressing their disgust at what they saw as the defiled ones.

Additionally, there could have been those attackers who subscribed to neither persuasion, simply succumbing to mob mentality and the lure of cattle and loot. Moreover, there were rebel leaders, like Stephanus Smit, who had to continue to prove their military prowess in order to placate the exacting Uithaalter. It is also noteworthy that, given the opportunity, the rebels would feast and drink and sometimes dance (as at Post Retief) before their captives, and make the latter serve them, as in the case of the Mfengu women at Fort Beaufort, and Sarah and Eleanor James at Foot’s Cray.<sup>517</sup> It is striking that these were also characteristics of the first slave uprising in the Cape.<sup>518</sup>

Certainly, the Foot’s Cray rebels were hungry—as evidenced by their “devouring the food” on the table. There also appears to have been an element of sexual desire in their attacks, with Hermanus’s plan to rape the young white women after they had served him tea; and, less overtly, the rebel taking Sarah James familiarly by the arm. Although this would have been seen as outrageous at the time, as Staples admitted, they did not molest the young women, although they had the opportunity to do so.

That rebels could be not only merciful—such as Diedrich, who saved John’s life, and the rebel who spared the James house—but kind, as in Diedrich feeding John well and sending a leg of mutton to his grandmother.

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<sup>514</sup> See Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, 24-5. See also Janet Hodgson on the Xhosa concept of pollution, “which could diminish the life of the man”, “Ntsikana”, 87.

<sup>515</sup> Evil here being associated with impurity/defilement. See Janet Hodgson, *Ntsikana*, 83, 86.

<sup>516</sup> See for example, Psalm 119: 1, which promises blessings to the undefiled.

<sup>517</sup> As during the attacks on Fort Beaufort and Post Retief.

<sup>518</sup> See Nigel Worden, “How a slave from Mauritius led a rebellion in Cape Town, and how he was influenced by a revolution in Haiti”. <http://www.groundup.org.za/article/how-slave-mauritius-led-rebellion-cape-town>, uploaded 30 March, 2016, accessed 14 December 2016.

In a postscript to the letter to her brother, Hannah James wrote: “You can show this letter to Mr.—who with your concurrence can make use of it as he thinks proper. It may serve at least to those who advocate so strongly the cause of the Hottentots and [amaXhosa] what we have to suffer.”

Hannah appears to have been an astute, articulate woman, who wrote with a larger audience in mind—perhaps hoping that more troops would be sent to the frontier. There seems to have been another purpose in her writing the letter. The detailed account of their suffering and the repetition of the epithet, “poor”, before her children’s names, indicate that she was also soliciting support for herself and them—something that any sensible woman in her position would have done.



Figure 22 View of Foot’s Cray (Photo: Barry James, 2017)

## Chapter 10: Uithaolder and the Battle of Balfour

### Not foreign warfare

*At this time ... people had no confidence in each other. . . A Rebellion is quite different from foreign warfare. . . .In the latter you know your enemy. Not so in the former, in which there are currents and counter currents – sympathies and counter sympathies. Distrust is the only general feeling.*<sup>519</sup>

By the end of January Uithaolder controlled the entire upper Kat River Valley and was in a position to attack Fort Armstrong. Andries Botha<sup>520</sup>—who, together with Cobus Fourie, was second in command to Groepe—heard of the imminent attack and galloped to warn Read. Botha subsequently mustered 30 men and rode into the square at Fort Armstrong, shouting to his men to stand to arms. In the meantime the rebels, estimated at 400 (as against 300 loyalists at Armstrong), encamped across the river opposite the fort.

On 22 January, unarmed and accompanied by the Reads and Thomson's son, Groepe and Fourie crossed the river to parley with Uithaolder, who had ordered the English to leave the fort immediately.<sup>521</sup> When Read tried to intervene, Uithaolder told him it was “not his day”; it was their “turn to act”. He maintained they weren't against the Queen but against the settlers who oppressed them, and they would show them they were also men.

As the parleying party rode back to the fort, Groepe—who was upset at recognising his own people amongst the rebels—asked Read's advice on how to act. The latter replied, “Fight: the propositions can't be entertained.” Yet, Groepe waived an engagement with them; despite Fourie shedding tears at not being able to fire on those defying him.<sup>522</sup> Read, deploring the absence of “energy, a power to organise, regulate and control”, maintained that the Khoikhoi would have fared better with white officers, whom they obeyed more readily. Loss of Khoikhoi nationalism and class distinctions, he averred, had made them “intractable to orders” from one another.<sup>523</sup> After giving the English five days' grace, Uithaolder and his army returned to Blinkwater.

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<sup>519</sup> Read, 59.

<sup>520</sup> It was his turn that week to assist Groepe at Fort Armstrong. Read, 46.

<sup>521</sup> There were about 25 families, together with others who had taken refuge at the fort.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>523</sup> “All ranks and the different grades of society were crushed when the Hottentots lost their nationality, and all feeling that they are on the same level, some of them are intractable to orders from any on them themselves”, Read, 56.

## Philipton and Fort Beaufort

On rumours reaching Fort Armstrong that the English had attacked Olivier's people, the Englishmen left Fort Armstrong. Guided by a Philipton escort during the night of 23 January, they took a bridlepath from Readsdale to Whittlesea.<sup>524</sup> The rebels then commenced pillaging the shops and houses around the fort, loading their loot on to wagons the English had abandoned.<sup>525</sup>

The next morning, James Read Jr escorted the Englishwomen and children to Philipton, where the mission folk accommodated them. To avoid attracting attention, Read advised the Englishwomen to mimic the Khoikhoi by draping handkerchiefs over their heads, before wading across the river. They reached Philipton safely, where they remained until 13 February. Then they left on seven wagons for Whittlesea, victualled, and escorted part of the way by the Philipton people.<sup>526</sup> At their parting, Read noted the "tears of the English and native females." He also mentioned the friendship between the English settler, Mrs Barnes, and the Philipton women who habitually sent her gifts.<sup>527</sup>

Alarmed by the breakdown of law and order, the Council of the Kat River Loyal Burghers Association was formed on 25 January, and drafted a manifesto pledging to arrest the spread of anarchy and promote "peace, order, and virtue in the community". A council of twelve and a president were nominated to take provisional steps for public safety, and the Kat River magistrate, J. H. Wienand, delivered the manifesto to Somerset.<sup>528</sup> To the chagrin of Grahamstown colonists, the Reads and the visitor, the Rev H. Renton, took statements and depositions from rebel Khoikhoi.<sup>529</sup>

On 29 January, Wienand, escorted by Andries Botha, Cobus Fourie, Christian Groepe, Valentyn Jacobs, and Lodewyck Peffer, together with Read Sr, and Thomson and his son, rode to Fort Beaufort to formulate with Col Sutton a strategy against the rebels. Soon after

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<sup>524</sup> Amongst whom was a Mr Webster. Somerset arranged for the refugees to receive rations. Read, 55. It was probably Thomas Webster from Shiloh or his son, who lived below Fort Armstrong. See Baines, 1: 165, 169, 172-79.

<sup>525</sup> At this time, there was quite a village of mud-walled thatched houses and trading stores at Fort Armstrong. Although in 1849 Baines was told that there hardly 50 Englishmen in Kat River. Baines, 1: 177.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-52. For the full manifesto see Godlonton, *Narrative*, 183. The Glen Lyndon Patriots (farmers in the Baviaans area) also sent a memorial to Harry Smith, disassociating themselves from "falsehoods and calumnies" in the rebel Khoikhoi's depositions before the Reads, H. Renton, R. Niven, John F. Cumming and Mr John Thomson. Godlonton, *Narrative*, 2: 184-45.

<sup>529</sup> Godlonton, *Narrative*, 188-9,

their arrival, the crowd—including many Mfengu—became restive. When they threatened to shoot Peffer (whose sons had allegedly shot some Mfengu children), Sutton advised the Kat River people to leave. Botha was fired at as he galloped away, and lost his horse.<sup>530</sup> The next day the Shiloh (Moravian Mission) and Whittlesea people rebelled,<sup>531</sup> followed by those at Theopolis.<sup>532</sup>

## Uithaelder moves in

On 2 February Uithaelder moved his camp from Wilberforce—where he had mounted Gilbert’s howitzer on an entrenchment—to the lower reaches of the Blinkwater. Read and Thomson preached to them without success. Groepe had still not heard from Somerset. On 4 February the Kat River Loyal Burghers’ Association sent another letter—signed by Thomson and Read to Somerset—requesting places of safety for the loyal.

On 7 February Somerset issued a proclamation extending amnesty to all rebels prepared to lay down their arms and submit to commandants at appointed assembly points.<sup>533</sup> The latter were established at Balfour, Philipton, Hertzog, Elandspost, and Fort Armstrong. Dela Jager separated from her rebel husband, who refused to go to Philipton, and drove herself there.<sup>534</sup> Another single woman—the Shiloh widow, Ernastina Lodewyk—also drove her wagons to Philipton.<sup>535</sup>

In the meantime, Uithaelder occupied the area from Hertzog to Groepeskloof, including Balfour, Maasdorp and the forests above Philipton, and encamped between Upsher and a drift at Fort Armstrong. From Somerset’s silence, Groepe assumed that the fort was condemned. Rumours and confusion proliferated, with burgher forces finding rebels at Balfour and loyalists at Fort Armstrong. On 21 January Sandile arrived at Philipton to kill the amaMfengu and take their cattle. The Reads dissuaded him from the first but not the second. Loyalists were restrained from shooting him.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> For further details, see Read, 60-61.

<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-59.

<sup>532</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 254-5.

<sup>533</sup> See “Notice, Fort Hare, 7<sup>th</sup> Feb., 1851” in Read, 67.

<sup>534</sup> Dela’s husband, Klaas Jager, had been a “most respectable blacksmith at Williamstown, near Fort Beaufort. According to Read, he had been forced by Hermanus to join him and became so determined that he would not let the loyalists or ministers speak to him. Klaas was killed at the attack on Fort Armstrong. Dela refused to wear mourning for him. Read., 93.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>536</sup> Read, 62.

## The Battle of Balfour

After relieving the Post Retief siege, Commdt W. M. Bowker met with Somerset—who had been awaiting the arrival of his artillery—at Fort Hare to discuss an attack on the rebels at Fort Armstrong. The plan was as follows: Commdt Bowker, with 600 burghers and Mfengu, would attack Balfour at dawn, while General Somerset—with two howitzers, two squadrons of the CMR and 1 200 levy members—would approach Fort Armstrong from Fort Hare via the Lushington valley. A two-pronged attack would then be launched on Fort Armstrong by Bowker from the west and Somerset from the east. After taking the fort, the combined force would proceed to Philipton and evacuate and destroy the village.<sup>537</sup>

At midnight on Friday, 21 February 1851, the burghers left Post Retief. Prior to this, the Rev Wilson had held a service for them and Mrs Edwards had baked them some bread. Despite their arms being inferior to the rebels', and there being many ravines in which the rebels could take cover around Balfour, the burghers were in high spirits. As the moon rose, they rode up to the escarpment above Balfour. While descending the ridge, they saw fires and heard singing, dancing, and drumbeating from the rebel camp below, which they described as comprising mostly Gonaqua Khoikhoi and Ngqika under their leader, Jan Hermanus, the son of the late Hermanus Matroos.

Bowker divided his force for the attack, with Dods Pringle, Walter Currie and the amaMfengu taking the left flank, and the remainder approaching from the right—the plan being to sandwich the rebels in between. At the burghers' first volley, the rebels returned fire or fled to the bush. Fifteen rebels were killed, with the loss of one young burgher, John Niland.<sup>538</sup>

At daybreak, a large number of rebels approached from Fort Armstrong and began working their way up the valley bed. Simultaneously, another rebel force approached from Philipton and occupied the Balfour buildings. Shortly afterwards, mounted rebels approached from the east and fired at Bowker's men from the ridge between Balfour and Fort Armstrong. Hemmed in by 500-odd of the enemy, and with no sign of Somerset arriving, some of the burghers deserted. Urged on by Hermanus Bertram, the remainder charged the rebels, dislodging them from their cover on the river bank. Seeing Somerset's force descending the Lushington Valley, the rebels fled to Fort Armstrong.

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<sup>537</sup> Mapham, 64.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

## The Battle of Balfour—from the underside

Witnesses at Botha's trial alleged that he was not only absent from Somerset's muster but that he was present at the Battle of Balfour, cheering on the rebels from the ridge. There is no reason to disbelieve Botha's explanation that he absented himself from General Somerset's muster for fear of the Mfengu and burgher levies. Moreover, he had sent a message requesting Somerset not to bring the Mfengu—whom the Khoikhoi (and amaXhosa) “hated most cordially”<sup>539</sup> and who were not allegedly restrained. As Read averred, “They did not go under a Commander, they precede the regular troops, and generally spread themselves over the country.”<sup>540</sup>

On hearing that the dreaded Mfengu levies were on their way, Botha seems to have adopted the only expedient to save his skin—and “gone to the bush”. As naïve as this was, he might have escaped accusations of treason had he not reputedly been seen talking to Uithaalder and Maqoma and supporting the rebels at the Battle of Balfour. Further, it was alleged that Botha had fired at some burghers during the battle and won a “yellow horse”, which he gave to his rebel son, Klaas, who had been wounded in the foot at Fort Beaufort. Thereafter, Botha had allegedly accompanied Klaas—whom he had mounted on the horse—to Van Beuelen's Hoek.<sup>541</sup> Botha, however, denied being present at the Battle of Balfour, and claimed that fear of Somerset's forces had driven him to Van Beuelen's Hoek.<sup>542</sup>

Four so-called witnesses to Botha's alleged participation in the Battle of Balfour were drummed up at the last minute from the Wellington convict station, and rushed to his second trial in Cape Town in a desperate attempt to “prove” his guilt. Had Botha been seen talking to Maqoma and Uithaalder he might have been attempting to persuade them to desist from fighting. Most likely, he was present as an anxious father, bent on protecting his lame son. Had Botha also robbed a burgher of his horse for Klaas and helped him to escape,<sup>543</sup> these acts hardly seem to have warranted the death penalty.

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<sup>539</sup> *Trial*, Testimony of Sir Andries Stockenstrom, 148.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*, Testimony of the Rev James Read, jun, 145.

<sup>541</sup> Where the rebels were congregating. *Trial of Andries Botha*, 164-65.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, 165. See Watermeyer's defence of Botha, *Trial*, 191-205, in which he exposes contradictions in the final witnesses' testimonies against Botha. *Ibid.*, 171, See also Botha's own defence, *Ibid.*, pp. 227-9, in which he dwells on the horror of being shot at by the Fort Beaufort Mfengu, and avers that his people would not listen to him at Fort Armstrong. Marthinus Groepe said that in prison Botha spoke of a horse he had won at Balfour. *Trial*, Testimony of Marthinus Groepe, 88.

<sup>543</sup> *Trial*, Testimony of Brander, 165. Marthinus Groepe said that Botha spoke of a horse he had won at Balfour. See *Trial*, Testimony of Marthinus Groepe, 88.

## Chapter 11: The Battle of Fort Armstrong

Exhausted but elated after the Battle at Balfour, Bowker's forces arrived at dawn at Fort Armstrong—also known to the Khoikhoi as the *Kranty* or the *Kraus*.<sup>544</sup> On riding up to the fort, they were shot at by rebels from the bed and *sluits* (gulleys) of the Kat River, and fired at by others from the ridge above the fort. The fighting continued until 10 am—the burghers claiming to have been fighting for 8 hours since leaving Post Retief—with a number of casualties on the colonial side.<sup>545</sup>

Somerset had left Fort Hare between 2 and 3 am, but had been delayed by having to repair a drift on the Tyhume River to enable his artillery to cross. Near the top of Peffer's Kop, they were fired at by amaNgqika, who subsequently attacked the centre and rear of his column during the descent. Two of Somerset's men were wounded and two horses killed.

Leaving some of his men to recover at Hertzog, Somerset continued with the CMR and two howitzers to Fort Armstrong, taking a circuitous route to avoid rebel roadblocks. On arrival, he occupied the ridge above Fort Armstrong—approximately 300 m to the northeast of the fort and out of musket range—and posted the Mfengu Levy in the bush on the river bank on the other side of the drift.

There was much activity at the fort, with rebels still running up to it. Commandant Groepe emerged from the fort with a white flag to negotiate a safe passage for the women and children. Somerset gave his consent. Immediately after the evacuation, Lt Field of the Royal Artillery began shelling the fort, at which rebels galloped off or fled on foot. Burghers had been posted on the southern slopes along their flight-line, and the CMR were lined up across the river, ready to attack from the northeast. Those who managed to elude both were shot by Mfengu from the riverbanks.

In the meantime, a squadron of the CMR under Lt Salis and some burghers had braved rebel fire by galloping up to the fort and entering via the gate or by scaling the walls. They allegedly killed 12 rebels, without suffering any losses. The tower remained occupied

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<sup>544</sup> The “Gonahs and Nocka's [Noega's] people” called it “the Kraus” or “the Kranty”. [1334] of 1851, Fort Armstrong, 18 January 1851, Wienand to Somerset, Evidence of Jantze Nocka [sic], p. 129. “Kraus” may have been a corruption of the Khoikhoi word *Kei-//kxaus* for “great captain's kraal”—an appropriate name for a fort. For the use of *Kei-//kxaus* in another context, see Engelbrecht 1935 in Wikar, 1779:229 in G. S. Nienaber, *Khoekhoense Stamname: n Voorlopige verkenning* (Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, 1989), 505.

<sup>545</sup> Mitford-Barberton, 170.

by rebels. Some waved a white flag from the one side, while others continued firing from the other side. The flag was shot down.

Somerset decided that the only way to take the tower was to blow one of the doors open. It took 2-3 shells from the howitzer to effect this. Twenty women and a man dressed as a woman emerged. The latter was shot. There were 12 men in the tower, including three Englishmen, one of whom took his own life. The interior of the tower was subsequently burnt.<sup>546</sup> Somerset reported that, “We took Fort Armstrong yesterday at 12 o’ clock having stormed it. Sandile had been there at Philipton on 21 [February] and no doubt given orders to the rebel commander. 27 [Xhosa] and Khoikhoi were killed in the fort and 9 in the tower.”

Altogether, 120 defenders of the fort were killed. Of Somerset’s forces, two burghers and two Mfengu were killed. Five Khoikhoi (4 from the CMR and 1 from George), 15 burghers and five Mfengu were wounded, bringing the total of the wounded to 25.

Four were dangerously wounded. Fourteen horses were killed or wounded. Perhaps foreseeing criticism, Somerset maintained that “the men in the tower would not surrender” and that his forces “had difficulty separating the women and children from the rebels”. He took 220 prisoners, 400 women and children, and 100 stand of arms. He concluded his report by saying: “[T]he brave conduct of the burghers is beyond praise. The whole Colony is indebted for its salvation to the conduct of the burghers for the last six weeks, especially yesterday.”<sup>547</sup>

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<sup>546</sup> Mapham, 69-70.

<sup>547</sup> Command Paper 1334 of 1851, Correspondence with the Governor Regarding the State of the Kaffir Tribes and the Recent Outbreak on the Eastern Frontier, H. Somerset to Smith, Fort Armstrong, February 12, 1851, in Smith to Earl Grey, Enclosure 3 in No. 7, p. 23



Figure 23 The tower door. 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)



Figure 24 View from inside the tower of the ladder leading to the roof on which the gun was mounted, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)



Figure 25 View from Fort Armstrong, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)



Figure 26 Another view from Fort Armstrong, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

## Attack on the Kranty—from the underside

James Read Jr, another eyewitness, described Somerset's attack on Fort Armstrong differently, with the latter's forces "pour[ing] in from every direction, firing volley after volley upon those below the fort and on the other side of the river."<sup>548</sup> This suggests little discrimination or respite, making it almost impossible for the innocent to escape. He noted that the rebels were mostly Hermanus's people. And he described the panic of the fugitives as they slipped and slid down the steep banks, "almost throwing themselves down the precipices" in their anxiety to escape.<sup>549</sup>

During the aftermath, bodies of both sexes— shot by the forces or caught in the crossfire—were found. Read mentions a leper woman, Leentjie Jagers, who was "shot through the body" (and killed)—as was another leper, Hendrik Prins. A young woman, K. Erasmus<sup>550</sup>—taking refuge behind mimosa trees some distance from the fort—was also shot dead. The remains of "another" (woman?) were found on the Hertzog road.<sup>551</sup>

These observations beg questions. Why, besides rebels, were lepers targeted as fair game, especially at a time when isolation was not yet legalised at the Cape? Why were two—possibly three—women singled out? What had become of the tacit frontier rule that women and children be spared in war?

## Lepers, women, and genocide moments

During the modern colonial period leprosy was both racialised and sexualised.<sup>552</sup> Early accounts of leprosy in Africa maintain that it was brought in pre-colonial times from the north to southern Africa,<sup>553</sup> and that it affected mostly "Hottentots, Bastards, Free-blacks and slaves" more than Nguni people.<sup>554</sup> Ignorance and superstition played a large role in the understanding of leprosy's origin and transmission. Thus, a variety of causes, ranging from

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<sup>548</sup> The ensuing account follows Read, 79-80.

<sup>549</sup> Read, 79.

<sup>550</sup> Gert Erasmus was Uithaalter's scribe for the camp regulations. Ross, *Borders*, 258. K. Erasmus may have been his daughter.

<sup>551</sup> Read, 57.

<sup>552</sup> Rob Edmond, *Leprosy and Empire: A Medical and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>553</sup> Frank G. Clemow, *The Geography of Disease* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1903) rpt, 2011, 232-3.

<sup>554</sup> Holmes, *Secret Life of Dr James Barry*, 100.

exogamous (leprosy as the product of transgression of [physical] borders)<sup>555</sup> to moral theories (that deformity was the outward manifestation of inward corruption, such as backwardness, evil, or sexual licentiousness)<sup>556</sup> were imagined. Leprosy was seen as hereditary or associated with race/ethnicity<sup>557</sup> and sex (leprosy was often diagnostically confused with venereal disease), and “loose” women were seen as key contaminants.<sup>558</sup> It was also regarded as highly contagious, with the trans-cultural and historical impetus in dealing with it being to isolate and contain.<sup>559</sup>

There appears to have been no *cordon sanitaire* in Kat River. Legal separation in the Cape Colony was only introduced in the early 1880s.<sup>560</sup> Owing, however, to the stigmas attached to the disease, leprosy sufferers—many of whom were not only disfigured but disabled by it—were ostracised or abandoned to live in starvation and squalor. Ironically, the conditions they were forced to live in were ideal breeding grounds of the disease.

Earlier, Dr James Barry,<sup>561</sup> who was concerned at the neglect of and suffering of the lepers, had opposed isolation. Disturbed, however, by the plight of the lepers and the growing number of cases, she was the first to suggest, in 1817, that a salubrious place be created for lepers to live in—the Valley of Hemel en Aarde in the Western Cape was chosen—and prescribed healthy diets, sanitation and medical care for the patients.<sup>562</sup> Owing to the negligence of the Moravian missionaries placed in charge of this “sanctuary”, the plan backfired. On inspecting the premises, Barry found starved, ulcerated, and mostly immobile lepers confined in appalling conditions. When she interviewed them, Barry discovered that many were “discarded” Khoikhoi.

Many of them were prize Negroes, or Hottentots under Indenture; thus not being actual or valuable Property; there services are used as long as possible; and when they become useless

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<sup>555</sup> Especially the tropics and “the East”. See Edmond, 35.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid*, 31-32, 219.

<sup>557</sup> Chinese, Jews, Arabs, and Greeks, and people from “warm zones” were seen as dangerous contaminants. Edmond, 57-58.

<sup>558</sup> In medieval literature, for example, there is the “faithless” Criseyde of Chaucer’s “Troilus and Criseyde”, who, in Robert Henryson’s “The Testament of Cresseid”, after she had left Troilus and had an affair with Diomedes, became a prostitute and developed leprosy.

<sup>559</sup> Edmond, 67-69.

<sup>560</sup> With the Leprosy Repression Act of 1884, and the Leprosy Repression Act Amendment of 1894.

<sup>561</sup> Dr James Barry, a woman who passed herself off as a man in order to train as a doctor in Edinburgh, was Lord Charles Somerset’s family physician, whom he appointed as the Cape’s Medical Superintendent. She retained her masculine identity all her life—it was only discovered at her post-mortem that she was a woman.

<sup>562</sup> On Barry’s accounts of its degradation and her attempts to reform attitudes to lepers and the conditions in which they lived, see Holmes, 85, 106.

in point of labour, and disgusting to the sight, they are sent to the Institution – the number of slaves are very few indeed.<sup>563</sup>

Barry's findings—that previously-indentured, underfed and over-worked Khoikhoi were particularly susceptible to leprosy—is especially significant in the light of similar observations made by Wilson and Thompson concerning tuberculosis.<sup>564</sup> Many of the formerly-indentured diseased Khoikhoi that Barry described could have landed up at the mission stations from which Kat River drew its settlers.

In 1852 lepers were still being treated as pariahs; feared, despised, avoided and loathed by society. Yet, as shown, lepers—rebel or not—were amongst those gathered at Fort Armstrong. Somerset's proclamation did not exclude anyone; hence lepers must have had the right to be there. As double victims—assuming that some may have been casualties of indenture—and stigmatised by their ethnicity, sex, and the “filthy, contagious” disease, the men in Somerset's combined forces would have needed no further inducement to single them out for their bullets. Further, as leprosy and tuberculosis were connected in the public mind, coloured people were considered more susceptible to these diseases than others,<sup>565</sup> and both

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<sup>563</sup> Ibid., 102. Barry tried to move the Hemel en Aarde lepers to Simonstown, to be under her watchful eye, but this was over-ridden. And the institution—as it became against her wishes—was relocated to Robben Island. In 1889 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* exposed the scandalously squalid conditions in which the lepers lived on Robben Island, lamenting that something so “inhumane and disgraceful” had been permitted in a British colony. Edmond, 158. Prize negroes were negroes seized from slave trading vessels docking in the Cape Town port after the passing of the British Act of 25 March 1807, forbidding the importation of slaves into His Majesty's colonies. The slaves thus seized were forfeited to the Cape government. To prevent them from being palced on the same footing as slaves at the Cape they were designated as prize negroes. Cory, 2: 255.

<sup>564</sup> Monica Wilson cites as reasons for this, forced labour, and crowded village locations, where there was “a great deal of squalor and endemic tuberculosis”. *Oxford History of South Africa*, 1: 293.

<sup>565</sup> Later, reports were made of leprosy amongst the amaXhosa. W. D. Scully, magistrate and colonial administrator for 38 years and manager from 1898 of Emjanyana (now Mjanyana), the Government Leper Institution near Engcobo (Ngcobo), drew attention to the tragic effects of the enforcement of the Leprosy Repression Act on rural Xhosa affected by it during the late-nineteenth century. In his story “The Lepers”, published in *Veld and Kopje* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907) and republished in *Transkei Stories*, ed., Jean Marquard (Cape Town: David Philip, 1984), 94-111, a young great-son of a chief commits suicide whilst still in the early stages of leprosy, despite his impending marriage to a young woman who is bearing his child. This narrative not only reveals the ravages of leprosy on old and young but depicts the desperation of the lepers rounded up and sent to their living deaths at Emjanyana. An interview with a 90-year old Ngcobo resident, who used to visit a male nurse at Emjanyana in the mid-twentieth century, verified the stringent isolation of the lepers and spoke of visitors' terrible fear of coming into contact with the “unclean”. “It was just like in Bible days,” he reminisced. Author interview with Ashley Hessel, 7 November, 2015.

diseases were linked to pauperism,<sup>566</sup> these factors could have incited those rankling under the stalling of the proposed vagrancy act to target the lepers at Fort Armstrong.

That Read could name two of the lepers amongst the gunshot casualties—Leentjie Jagers, and Hendrik Prins who was “shot through the shirt”— suggests that he knew them.<sup>567</sup> According to the official lists of erfholders,<sup>568</sup> Hendrik Prins was an erfholder in Blinkwater under Field-cornet Andries Botha, and Leentjie Jagers an erfholder in the field-cornetcy of Mankazana (due north of Adelaide) and Balfour, under Field-cornet David Jantjies.<sup>569</sup> One can only conjecture whether or not they had developed leprosy after coming to Kat River, or whether they came with it. That two of those shot were women, is unsurprising in light of the traditional leprosy-gender stigma.

According to both Somerset and a volunteer in his force, “[t]he rebels then mixed themselves up with the women and children” and the forces had trouble separating them.”<sup>570</sup> This implies that the rebels’ act was both deliberate and cowardly—a superb irony, as little can be more cowardly than targeting lepers and women. No doubt, Somerset’s allowing of these acts to escape with impunity was all of a piece with his ruthless “breaking of the neck of the Rebellion”, the “probing of the erosive cancer of the KRS to its source”.<sup>571</sup> Yet, it was not merely a “Hottentot cancer”; amongst the rebels were three Englishmen, one of whom—Shaw, allegedly led the attack on Post Retief, and may have been present at the attack on George Wiggill’s mill in the Koonap.<sup>572</sup>

Read avers that, when Somerset blew open the tower door, “one or two children” were killed.<sup>573</sup> There is no mention of this in the official accounts. Although the children’s deaths may have been accidental, those of the lepers and women were not. The fact that they were targeted testifies to their being recognised as lepers, or women related to rebels, and feared or loathed because of this.

The indiscriminate killing of unarmed people could exemplify Lyndall Ryan’s definition of massacre, which she describes as “the killing of an undefended group in one

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<sup>566</sup> Edmond, *Leprosy and Empire*, 206, 209.

<sup>567</sup> Read, 79.

<sup>568</sup> Cape of Good Hope Government Gazette, 18/10/1849.

<sup>569</sup> According to Surveyor Hertzog’s list, David Jantjies originally settled in Upsher. As he had joined the rebels, his people may also have been singled out for attack.

<sup>570</sup> Godlonton, *Narrative*, 2, 257.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>572</sup> See Wiggill, *From the Cotswolds*, 202-4.

<sup>573</sup> Read, 79.

action”.<sup>574</sup> More appositely, the actions of the burgher force and levies at Fort Armstrong conform to A. Dirk Moses’s notion of “genocidal moments of massacre”, which combines structuralist and intentionalist dimensions in any conjuncture:<sup>575</sup> As Moses explains:

The place to look for genocidal intentions ... is not in explicit, prior statements of settlers or governments, but in the gradual evolution of European attitudes and policies as they were pushed in an exterminatory direction by the confluence of their underlying ideological assumptions, the acute fear of Aboriginal attack, the demands of the colonial and international economy, their plans for the land, and the resistance to these plans by the Indigenous peoples.<sup>576</sup>

To Moses’s etiology can be added settler anger. As Ramsay McMullins noted, “Anger gives the most, and most long-lasting, force to our actions”.<sup>577</sup> No doubt, the anger of the volunteers/levies, exacerbated by fear, was responsible for at least some of the leper and female deaths. That this anger persisted and gathered force in the aftermath, is shown below.

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<sup>574</sup> Lyndall Ryan, “Settler massacres on the Australian colonial frontier”, in Philip Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan (eds.), *Theatres of Violence: Massacre, Mass Killing and Atrocity throughout History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 95.

<sup>575</sup> A. Dirk Moses, “An antipodean genocide? The origins of the genocidal moment in the colonization of Australia”, *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2000, 89–107.

<sup>576</sup> A. Dirk Moses, “Genocide and settler society in Australian history” in A. Dirk Moses, ed., *Genocide and settler society: frontier violence and stolen indigenous children in Australian History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 33.

<sup>577</sup> Quoted by Ben Kiernan in Ben Kiernan, ed., *Blood and soil: a world history of genocide and extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 23.



Figure 27 The watchtower at Fort Armstrong, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

## Aftermath and women

After “reducing the fort”, Somerset’s forces commenced burning and looting the shops and houses around it. Groepe and his people lost all their property as the “maddened feelings” of the pillagers and attackers raged out of control. Somerset was allegedly heard to say, “Those fellows are doing all that contrary to my orders,” but he seems to have done nothing about it.<sup>578</sup>

This is a classic case of the ones allowing the massacre to “turn aside” and disclaim responsibility, as in Cortes’ Mexico, where “the Spaniards would turn aside while their native

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<sup>578</sup> Read, 79.

allies tore apart their former rulers and ate them”,<sup>579</sup> or at the Battle of the Gwangqa, where the officers turned aside whilst Mfengu levies butchered the Xhosa survivors, and distraught Xhosa committed suicide with their spears.<sup>580</sup> Similarly, great was the panic at Fort Armstrong. Amongst the rebels (“to their everlasting disgrace”) were three Englishmen. Two were captured and the third, Shaw, committed suicide by jumping from the tower.<sup>581</sup>

After the battle, Somerset encamped east of the Kat River. Field-cornet Kupido David’s “commodious” house was used as a hospital. Many rebels surrendered and a number of prisoners were taken—some mistakenly, such as Groepe and other loyalists at Fort Armstrong. At Thomson’s intercession they were released, but their arms were not returned to them.<sup>582</sup> Thus were they rewarded for remaining—albeit tenuously—loyal. Poignantly, Read describes the rebel women and children who arrived as prisoners at Somerset’s camp:

Vast numbers of the wives and children of the rebels came into the camp, and an appalling scene of misery presented itself to the eye and the mind. Kat River families, who had been not only respectable but in comfortable circumstances, were at once reduced to penury, nakedness and want.<sup>583</sup>

While moving his camp to Lushington, Somerset’s wagon train was attacked in the rear by amaXhosa, who killed the drivers and shot a (Khoikhoi?) woman. On 15 February another loyalist woman, Anna Smit, and her companion—who were taking letters from Somerset to Kat River—were intercepted by Maqoma. Her fate is unknown. Amongst the prisoners at Philipton was a Julie Windvogel—her “crime” unknown.

The Philipton women had demonstrated a notable solidarity to the English women, whom they had accommodated, victualled, and escorted part of the way to Whittlesea. Their friendship, which entailed gifting one another, was also commented on. Another brave, nameless Philipton woman came to the rescue of the white settler, Webster, who was being mobbed by four angry young men whilst visiting Philipton. While the Rev James Read, Cobus Fourie, and other men ineffectually remonstrated with and threatened the rioters, she

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<sup>579</sup> Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 77.

<sup>580</sup> See Blackbeard, “Acts of Severity,” 125.

<sup>581</sup> Godlonton, *Narrative 2*: 255.

<sup>582</sup> Read, 81.

<sup>583</sup> *Ibid.*

“endeavoured to shame them out of their unmanly and cowardly proceedings [and] they soon dispersed”.<sup>584</sup>

As part of the demilitarisation programme, Somerset’s forces wept through the Settlement, “destroying twelve schoolrooms, two large mission houses, a chapel, and printing offices with press, type, paper and books”.<sup>585</sup> The properties of Groepe and other loyalists were also destroyed during the “smashing” of the Settlement.<sup>586</sup> Many Khoikhoi, who had hitherto been loyal or passive, left all they had and took to the hills

Allegedly disregarding Somerset’s orders, the burgher and Mfengu levies continued to destroy schools and properties in Bruceton, Readsdales, Wilsonton, Eland’s Post, and pillaged or destroyed loyalists’ houses in Van der Kempton. One of the victims was David Scheepers—a former non-commissioned Cape Corps officer, assiduous cultivator, and church elder. Infuriated by the proceedings, local women reviled the levies as “convicts”.<sup>587</sup>

While searching Kat River settlers’ wagons for stolen goods,<sup>588</sup> some of the burghers—Read sarcastically calls them “Dutch friends”—taunted a young Khoikhoi woman, “Maria P”, saying, “Tell me little woman, how is this that you could take on yourselves to do such things? Where were your ministers that they could not hold you back?” The feisty Maria retorted:

You are too hard upon us. The ministers teach us right, and this has nothing to do with the case. But you must also know, although it is bad what the rebel Hottentots have done ... it is the first time. But your people have often done so; think of Graaff-Reinet, and Rooywaal [sic], and Port Natal, when you made Captain Smith eat horse flesh; and there is my brother Jan van Beueling, with the one leg and crutch, whose leg as shot off by the boers there when he was with Mr Smith, and see what Pretorious does year after year; and the Government is obliged to send troops to keep the land quiet. The pot cannot complain of the kettle, your ministers were not blamed on account of what the people did, and I do not see why our ministers should be blamed and persecuted.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>584</sup> Read, 69.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>588</sup> Ernestina Lodewyk’s “two good wagons loaded with meal” were confiscated, but later returned. Ibid., 93.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid., 89-90.

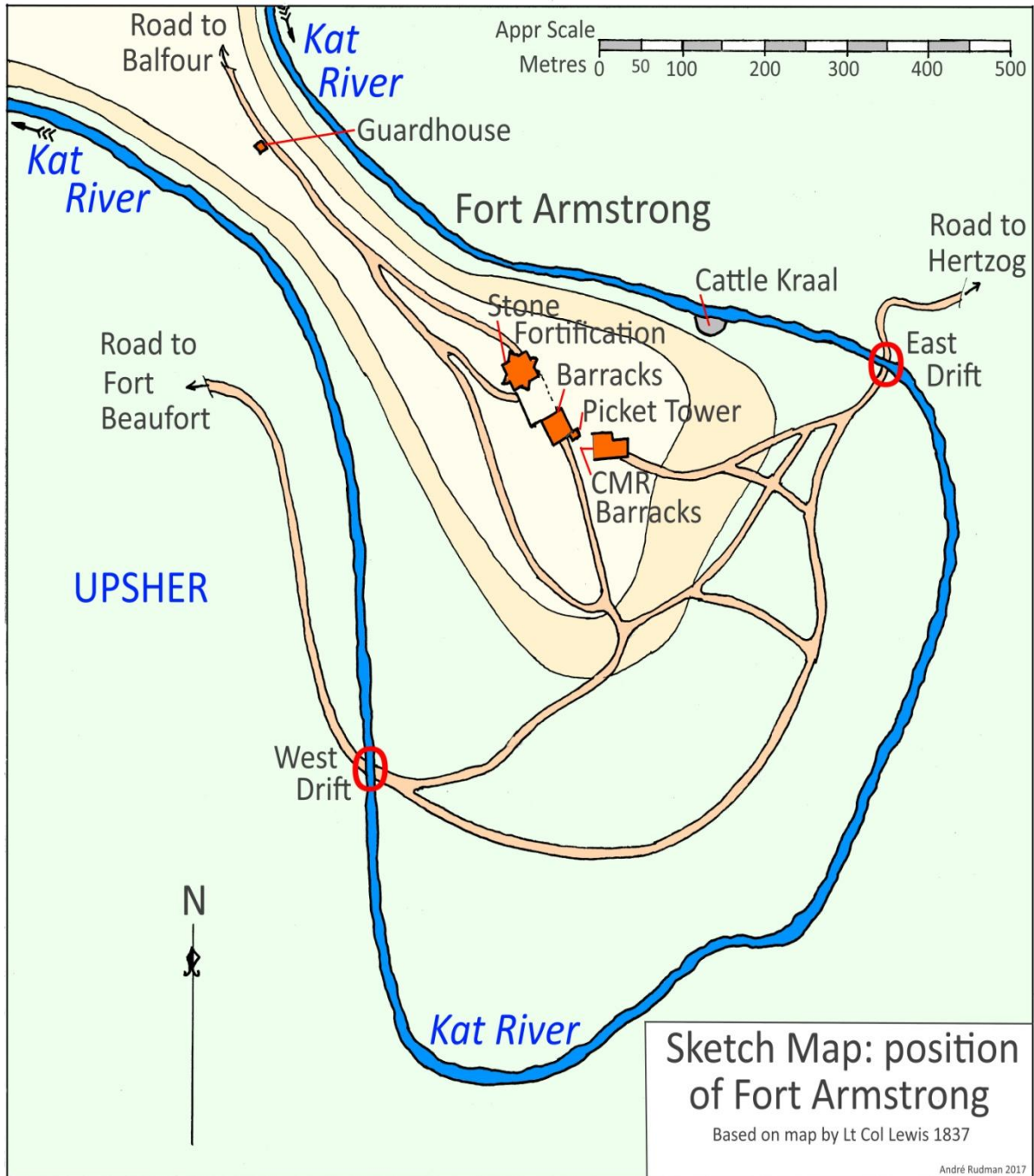


Figure 28 Map showing the site of the Battle of Fort Armstrong. A Rudman, 2017

## Chapter 12: Crime and punishment

The captured rebels or those who turned themselves in—422 males and 500 women and children—were moved from Philipton and Elandsport to Fort Hare on 1 March.<sup>590</sup> Botha—who had notoriously absented himself from Somerset’s muster—emerged from the bush after a three-day absence and turned himself in. He was held with 60 other rebels in a large cell at Fort Hare.<sup>591</sup> Lt-Col Sutton presided over a court-martial at Fort Hare from 18 March to 30 April 1851. Only 54 prisoners were brought before the court on charges of rebellion and treason. Of these, five were found guilty, 47 (two of them Botha’s sons) were sentenced to death, and three transported for the terms of ten, seven, and five years respectively. The remaining four were acquitted. Subsequently, the death sentences were commuted to transportation and imprisonment with hard labour for life.<sup>592</sup>

Botha was detained for six weeks—perhaps in one of the makeshift cells at Fort Hare described by Colin Coetzee—measuring three by two feet, with walls of masonry-clay, roofs of poles and thatch, small ventilation holes, and no windows.<sup>593</sup> On his release—nothing could be proved against him—Sutton allowed Botha to return to his wife at Buxton. In September he was rearrested sans explanation or warrant, and sent to Block Drift where he was again incarcerated, this time in irons.<sup>594</sup> Thereafter, he was sent to Grahamstown and, from there to Algoa Bay, where he was taken by ship (of the apposite name of the *Styx*) to the Supreme Court in Cape Town to be tried for high treason—the first trial of this kind in the Colony.

Botha was 71 years of age when his trial began. Sir John Wylde presided as judge, with William Porter as attorney-general, and A. B. Watermeyer as counsel for the defence. On 18 April 1852 the four counts of which Botha was found guilty by the jury<sup>595</sup> were

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<sup>590</sup> For lists of prisoners’ names, *ibid.*, 82.

<sup>591</sup> *Trial of Andries Botha*, 88. Botha was probably in confinement with Groepe’s sons Marthinus and Jan, and other rebels.

<sup>592</sup> Coetzee, *Forts*, 476

<sup>593</sup> Owing to the absence of sufficient lockup facilities at Fort Hare/Alice, three makeshift cells, as described above, were constructed of masonry, clay and wood, with ventilation holes but no windows. *Ibid.*, 460.

<sup>594</sup> “After handing himself over to the authorities he was imprisoned at Fort Hare, and ‘though unconvicted and untried, his aged limbs were laden with fetters, and thus indignity was added to the grievous wrong he suffered.’” *Trial of Andries Botha*, 3. See also Botha’s statement in court, *ibid.*, 227.

<sup>595</sup> The jury comprised F. Pocock, A. A. Bruins, H. Nelson, J. J. Jurgens, R. Langley, William Gilman, H. Peck, P. J. Botha, and J. C. de Villiers. Messrs Watermeyer and Brand Jr appeared for the defence. *Ibid.*, 1.

deemed insufficient for high treason. A further trial was held with four additional witnesses, two white men, and four Mfengu convicts<sup>596</sup> from Bain's Kloof, providing the evidence that the jury desired. The jury found Botha guilty on all counts and Judge Wylde condemned him to death by hanging, after a lengthy, vitriolic homily.<sup>597</sup> Pleading guilty to dereliction of duty, Botha spoke with stark eloquence in his defence—claiming that his actions had been motivated by fear (mostly of the Mfengu)<sup>598</sup>—but to no avail. During this show trial, the jury had decided that Botha's leniency towards the rebels and his absenting himself from the muster constituted criminality of the highest order. Later, Botha's sentence—as were those of other rebels who were sentenced to death—was commuted to life imprisonment and hard labour.

As an old man in exile from his beloved Buxton, Botha endured the cold convict camps in Wellington, working on convict rations and in flesh-galling chains in labour-gangs, cutting a pass through the exposed and often snowed-under Bainskloof. At the completion of the pass in October 1855 all the convicts were pardoned by royal decree, although their confiscated lands were not returned to them, and Botha's requests to return to Buxton were refused. He ended up living on Robert Hart's farm, Glen Avon. In 1865 Botha wrote/dictated a letter in Dutch to the civil commissioner at Elandsport (Seymour), W. T. L. Emmet, begging him to let him return to Buxton. His request was denied. Thereafter Botha disappears from the record although some maintain that he returned to Buxton and lived there quietly until he died.<sup>599</sup>

As observed, it was not that Botha was an arch-fiend but rather a case of the colonists, led by Godlonton, versus the Kat River Settlement,<sup>600</sup> with Botha as scapegoat. Further, this animosity was backed by racist governors and Earl Grey, who regarded it as Smith's "fatal error" that he "failed to deal more promptly with treason on the part of the Hottentots".<sup>601</sup>

Among the many ironies in the trial was Judge Wylde's eulogium on the progress of English law since the time of Queen Anne, implying that British had become more enlightened and humane. He then proceeded to undercut his argument by the implacability of his hatred against Botha, whose "sin" of rebellion he seemed to regard as unforgivable and

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<sup>596</sup> What Van Wyk aptly calls "*bandiet getuienis*" (convict testimony), Van Wyk, *Ou man*, 24.

<sup>597</sup> Although Attorney-General Porter was not convinced of Botha's guilt.

<sup>598</sup> As had the field-cornet, Bruintjies, who disappeared into the mountains. Read, 86. On Mfengu beating up a deacon of the Philipton church and others seeking to help wounded people after Somerset's attack on the fort, *ibid*.

<sup>599</sup> For Botha's letter, see Van Wyk, 32-37

<sup>600</sup> See the lead article in the *GTJ*, 29 May 1852, and Van Wyk, 20.

<sup>601</sup> See Moore, *Autobiography of Harry Smith*, 791-92.

worthy of the severest punishment possible at the Cape at that time. The civilised fury of Wylde hardly differs from those who condemned the Irishman Edward to being disembowelled, drawn and quartered, hanged and then beheaded in London in 1802, yet more than half a century had elapsed since then.<sup>602</sup> It was easy for the British to conceive of criminality in terms of proletariat responses to capitalism (which Linebaugh argues often caused criminality),<sup>603</sup> and there was an abundance of “unprincipled white men on the [eastern] frontier” who “offered to public vengeance, under the forms of law, inferior victims . . . among them Field-cornet Andries Botha”.<sup>604</sup> Thus, those who organised and perpetrated with such gusto the burning out of innocent people in Buxton in the nadir of winter were not guilty of criminal acts, whilst those who protested against expropriation of their common resources and unfair treatment by officials, were. As Read noted, hatred of the Settlement was based on racism and driven by capitalism, with Godlonton as its mouthpiece, expressing “felt complacency at the melting away of the black man, and at his possession falling into the hands of the white man”.<sup>605</sup> Perhaps the greatest irony is that Botha, a fine musterer and brave leader who risked his life for the British in prior wars, was mostly arraigned for absenting himself from a muster.

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<sup>602</sup> See Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

<sup>603</sup> Linebaugh argues that the “the forms of exploitation pertaining to capitalist relations caused or modified the forms of criminal activity”. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged*, xxi.

<sup>604</sup> W. Thomson, Introductory Note, *Trial of Andries Botha*, v-vi.

<sup>605</sup> Read, 72.

## Chapter 13: War in the Waterkloof

At the start of the war, many of Hermanus's rebels fled to the Kroomie range and Maqoma ensconced himself in the Fuller's Hoek kloof below the Waterkloof range.

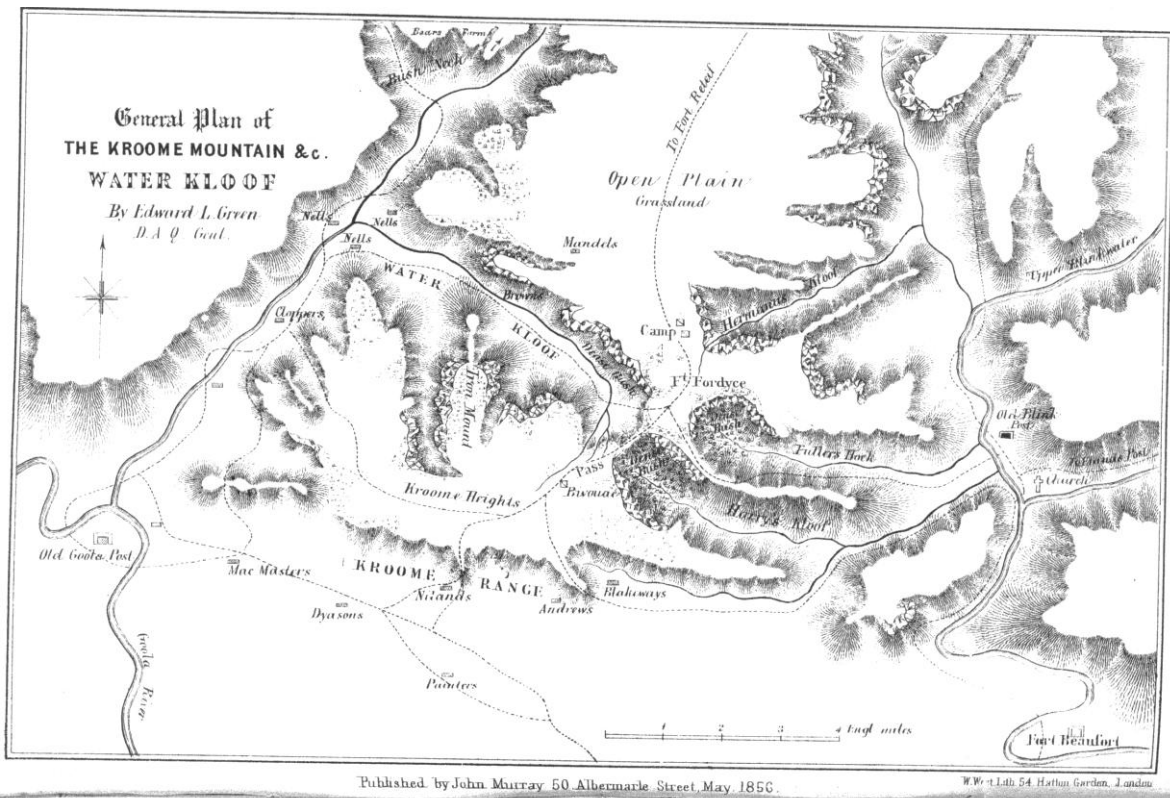


Figure 29 General Map of the Kroomie Mountain and Water Kloof, by Edward L Green 1856 (*The Correspondence of Lt-General the Hon. Sir George Cathcart, KCB* (London: John Murray, 1857), 120-121.

### The Waterkloof theatre

The Waterkloof theatre comprised the Kroomie and Waterkloof ranges and the valleys and passes in the area. Although several engagements took place in the Kroomie, the better-known ones occurred on the Waterkloof plateau between the top of Fuller's Hoek and the Waterkloof Valley, in an area measuring roughly 1 km. From the high ground, this area resembled a horseshoe, owing to a "tongue" of bush intruding into the otherwise semi-

circular shape. King describes it as “a small flat surrounded with large forest trees, with the exception of 200-300 yards”.<sup>606</sup>

The Waterkloof plateau is connected in the south by a ridge to the Kroomie heights, and adjacent to Fuller’s Hoek in the southeast. In between the embayments of the plateau are deep, wooded ravines and valleys. The most spectacular of the valleys is the 8-10 km long Waterkloof, which branches into two valleys to the east. The dark southern slope of the ridge separating the two valleys is densely forested, while the sunny northern slope of the ridge is “semi arid and covered with mimosa and scrub”.<sup>607</sup>

Along the bush-fringed edges of the Waterkloof plateau and on the valley ridges, Maqoma’s warriors built grass huts for themselves and their families, who accompanied them to war. They also kept a number of dogs, which raised the alarm on the troops’ approach. The plateau, and especially the elevated area around Fort Fordyce—officially known as Mount Pleasant after a farm in the area—were renamed Mount Misery by the disenchanted troops.<sup>608</sup>

Maqoma, a tactician of note, was astute in his choice of theatre. The rugged terrain and densely-forested kloofs provided ideal conditions for the attack-and-retreat tactics of guerrilla warfare. It also offered many escape routes. Moreover, the plateau offered excellent observation posts. Looking south on a clear day, the plateau above Fuller’s Hoek commands views of the Kat River basin and the town of Fort Beaufort. Thus, any movement of the British troops from that side could be descried from afar. From the Fort Fordyce side, Gaika’s Kop can be seen to the north, Didima Mountain to the northeast, and the Great Winterberg to the northwest. There were plenty of springs in the Waterkloof, with a lot of surface water what became Fort Fordyce. The amaNgqika knew all the buck paths and overhangs in the area and the Amathole was close enough for reinforcements.

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<sup>606</sup> King, 136.

<sup>607</sup> Mapham, 115. See also King, 265.

<sup>608</sup> King, 130.



Figure 30 The Waterkloof Valley, 2012 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

Governor Sir Harry Smith was commander of the forces until replaced by Sir George Cathcart in March 1852. Lt-Col Henry Somerset, who was in command of the eastern forces under Smith, was promoted to general in this war and led the first division.

The Waterkloof campaigns comprised the following actions, over a period of 14 months:

Attack 1	Monday, 14 July 1851
Attack 2	Monday, 8 September 1851
Attack 3a	14-15 October 1851
Attack 3b	16-17 October 1851
Attack 3c	23 October 1851
Attack 3d	26-26 October 1851
Attack 4	6-7 November 1851
Attack 5a	4 March 1852
Attack 5b	10-15 March 1852
Attack 6a	29 April 1852
Attack 6b	17 May 1852
Attack 6c	7-15 July 1852
Attack 6d	24 July 1852
Attack 71	5-18 September 1852

## Camps and passes

The British established a number of camps for the troops and levies at old posts or on abandoned farms. Apart from Lower Blinkwater (a grassy flat on the other side of the Poort/Baddaford),<sup>609</sup> they included the following farms: Rietfontein, Blakeway's, Niland's Bear's, Nel's, Brown's, Mundell's,<sup>610</sup> Eastland's, and Thornhill.<sup>611</sup>

The columns would make their various ascents to Mount Misery, using the Blinkwater,<sup>612</sup> Niland's, Wolfsback, Fuller's Hoek, and Tenth Passes, as well as the Argyle Ridge. The Bushneck Pass was used for access to Bear's farm, Thornhill, and the Kaalhoek area.<sup>613</sup> Locals in the forces, or soldiers familiar with the passes, acted as guides. As the passes were mostly steep, narrow and bushy, marching a column through them was a dangerous exercise, especially when accompanied by pack horses and mules towing artillery.<sup>614</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> "The camp at Blinkwater was formed within a rectangular breastwork of earth, which we had thrown up after our arrival. Its height was about four feet. The enemy often annoyed us at night by firing in to our camp." Cattle guards protected the oxen, cattle and horses but sometimes the enemy "got clear off with some of them". McKay, 187. See also Campbell, *Reminiscences*, 48-52.

<sup>610</sup> Sometimes spelled "Mandel" in early maps.

<sup>611</sup> On the grassy undulating plain above Fort Fordyce. Then owned by Isaac Wiggill, it is currently owned by Brian Miles.

<sup>612</sup> The Blinkwater Pass, which dissected the farm Mountain Top, was in use until about 20 years ago. Telephone conversation with the Ronnie Smith, former owner of Mountain Top, 9 November 2015. In colonial times the Blinkwater pass was "a rough and almost impractible [sic] wagon road, winding down through thick forest". King, 120.

<sup>613</sup> On the camp at Eastland's farm, where the bodies of soldiers, Leitch and Burgess, were buried, see McKay, *Reminiscences*, 119, 139. On the camp at Mundell's, *ibid.*, 187, 198.

<sup>614</sup> This led to ambushes, such as the one in Niland's Pass, 8 September 1851, where the rear of Fordyce's column was attacked, with many casualties. See King, 89-90. On 14 October 1851, the middle of another of Fordyce's columns was attacked in Tenth Pass, with several casualties, Pte Roper was shot and killed, and Ensign Ricketts and Lt Norris wounded. Norris died soon afterwards and was buried on Mundell's farm, St Lawrence. (The latter is on the plain above Nel's farm, which is currently called Endwell). Ricketts died and was buried at Post Retief. See King, 104-109.; 154-156, and McKay, 192.



**Figure 31 Bottom of Fuller's Hoek Pass, 2012 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)**



**Figure 32 View from above Fuller's Hoek, showing Fort Beaufort in the background, 2012 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)**



Figure 33 Overhang in the Fuller's Hoek krantz, 2012 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

## Weapons and ammunition

Ngqika weapons included the spear or *assegai*,<sup>615</sup> seven of which were carried in a bundle tied loosely together with a hide thong, which was attached to a long stick that was considered to be charmed. There were two kinds: the long heavy spear with broad iron blades of 12-18 inches long (*umkhonto*), which were used as javelins, and the short stabbing spears (*intshuntshe*), with narrower blades were used as bayonets for close-quarter attacks. The long spears were hurled with such force that they could pass straight through the human body. Additionally, Ngqika fighters had muskets, which the Kaffir Police and Cape Corps defectors “had been taught to use with precision”.<sup>616</sup>

In this war the Khoikhoi rebels had the advantage over the infantry and burghers, who had long traditional smooth-bore muskets/flintlocks such as the Brown Bess. The latter, which used round balls, did not have a long range (not exceeding 30-40 m) and was not very

<sup>615</sup> The colonial name, which was an English corruption of an Arabic word introduced by the Portuguese.

<sup>616</sup> King, 171. See also Baines, 1: 52.

accurate. The British cavalry had double-barrelled carbines, or the 5.77 calibre Minié rifles, in which the bullets (conical cartridges) spun, moving down the bore faster and producing a much greater accuracy than flintlocks, with a range of up to 50 m. Ex-Cape Corps rebels, who defected with their double-barrelled rifles (which were accurate up to 300 m), therefore had the edge on the infantry and burgher levies who used flintlocks.

Many of the burghers had modified their flintlocks into caplocks, which made them more efficient and accurate. To enhance the performance of their muzzleloaders, they used *vetlappies* (Afr. for patches), which they kept in a little box. A patch was made from a small piece of fabric—about 1.5 inches in diameter—which was rubbed with beeswax or fat from a sheep’s kidney. It was wrapped around the bullet to form a gas seal between the barrel and the bullet, and to lubricate the barrel. This was especially necessary, as the black powder used at that time formed a sticky residue in the barrel. During a running battle, when there was no time to wrap the bullet in a patch, a running ball was dropped straight down the bore.<sup>617</sup>

The burghers also made little tubes from old flour bags and filled them with *lopers* (Afr. for buckshot). These comprised .32 calibre round balls, which they tied with a piece of sinew/string, smeared with grease, and used as a cartridge. On firing, it would explode, seriously injuring the victim. In this way, they transformed their muskets into shotguns—a trick learned from the Voortrekkers.<sup>618</sup> By 1850 all the burghers were doing this.<sup>619</sup> Ngqika fighters loaded their guns with shrapnel, such as iron cooking-pot legs and old horseshoe nails, blocked with a wasp’s nest, which they used as projectiles in bush fighting.<sup>620</sup>

The Mfengu Levies, who were “universally athletic”, came from all over the Colony, but King regarded the 120 levies from Algoa Bay as comprising the most “well-made”. Although normally kitted out in gaudy shop goods, in the field they simply wore a checked cotton shirt, and a “dirty blanket and raw beef tied on their backs”.<sup>621</sup> In addition to old muskets with which some were issued, they carried their own bundles of spears.

## Iron Mountain

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<sup>617</sup> Gert van der Westhuizen, telephone conversation, 21 September 2016.

<sup>618</sup> Boers/burghers who, mostly during 1834-36, trekked away from the eastern districts towards the north.

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>620</sup> Baines describes one of these “winging its way” past his head. *Journal*, 2: 211.

<sup>621</sup> King, 101-2.

From Brown's farm at the back of the Kroomie range, an entrance could be seen to a large southward-trending kloof—one of two, which are connected by a ridge with two conspicuous features; a conical hill jutting into the Waterkloof, and south of it a mountain crowned with a red krantz,<sup>622</sup> attached to the Kroomie range by a narrow, peninsular-like ridge. Called *Ysterberg* (Iron Mountain) by Dutch/burgher guides, it occupies a naturally defensive position with its steep slopes and views of Waterkloof Valley, Kaalhoek, and in the direction of the Great Winterberg. On the plateau below the summit there was a cave and several scattered forges for the repairing of flintlocks and spear-heads, and the casting of lead balls.

Based on interviews in the 1970s with old Blinkwater men, one of my informants described the process. The rebels made clay ovens or used hollowed-out termite/ant-heaps, with part of the finely-ground ant-heap made into a kiln inside it. The bellows were made from a goatskin. A goat was slaughtered and the meat cut up and removed from the skin, which was left intact. The hoofs were cut off. The two front legs were tied together and the two hindlegs were used as air intakes. A small wooden peg was inserted in each foot and the left and right hand of the bellows worker would alternately manipulate the opening and closing of the pegs. A copper pipe inserted into the neck of the goatskin was positioned in the aperture on one side of the ant-heap to blow the air into the furnace.<sup>623</sup>

Tongs holding the iron that the rebels scrounged—horseshoe nails, pieces of iron tyres, the twin blades of leaf springs from carts, hinges, and cast-iron pot legs—were inserted through another aperture on the other side of the ant-heap. Once heated to the point of malleability, they would be beaten on the anvil into shapes required for the repair of spear-heads, battleaxes, and gun parts, and quenched in water, fat, oil or blood. Using lead procured by camp followers, the rebels could also cast musket balls, using a metal ladle and moulds stolen by their women from the soldiers' camps or taken from dead soldiers, each of whom carried a mould.<sup>624</sup>

## **Camp followers**

As camp followers, Khoikhoi, Ngqika, and Mfengu women (mostly camp followers) played a vital role in the war, victualling and cooking for their men and laundering for the troops. The

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<sup>622</sup> Red from the iron ore in the area.

<sup>623</sup> . Originally, instead of copper piping, a bullock's horn, connected to an eland's horn, was used. Telephone conversation with Gert van der Westhuizen, formerly of Fuller's Hoek, 21 September 2016; and discussions in Lower Blinkwater, Fuller's Hoek, and the Waterkloof, 7 July 2016.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid.

latter was a useful alibi for soldiers who made nocturnal visits to the Khoikhoi and Mfengu camps—although occasionally they got into brawls with the women’s partners or other jealous admirers. In one tragic incident, a provost sergeant from the CMR, who was known to visit a “Bastard vrouw” [coloured woman] in a camp, was killed by a man from the Graaff-Reinet Levy, who claimed to have done it unintentionally.<sup>625</sup>

Many of the officers regarded the Khoikhoi women as “a nuisance”, purveying arms and powder to the rebels and accompanying commissariat trains.<sup>626</sup> In the latter case, one woman was found with 95 rounds of government ammunition, another with 80 rounds, and a third with a canister of loose powder, a bullet-mould, and a turn screw—all hidden under their clothes.<sup>627</sup> Women also provided their men with intelligence, with the Fort Hare women being notorious spies.<sup>628</sup> At night, rebel Khoikhoi women from Kat River would smuggle ammunition to disloyal men in the CMR/Cape Corps at their camp at Thornhill (often called Kaalhoek), signalling their arrival by imitating the calls of jackals. Besides Corporal Floris, General Somerset’s personal servant, 13-14 other Khoikhoi were implicated.<sup>629</sup>

Somerset’s kindness to Khoikhoi women and their children—many of whom he rationed—gave rise to rumours of venality, although there is no proof of this.<sup>630</sup> Ngqika, Mfengu and Khoikhoi women also assumed combatant roles, with Mfengu women attacking cattle raiders at Fort Beaufort with their *knobkieries* (olive stocks of roughly 1 m long with a knob at one end) and spears,<sup>631</sup> and Ngqika women using their *knobkieries* to brain white prisoners.<sup>632</sup>

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<sup>625</sup> Ibid., 128-31.

<sup>626</sup> “A nuisance to everybody but the Cape-Corps men and waggon-drivers, from whom they are inseparable.” King, 122.

<sup>627</sup> McKay, 157.

<sup>628</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 263.

<sup>629</sup> Baines, 1:224-5.

<sup>630</sup> It was joked that Somerset had “relatives” among the CMR officers, “Bastard children” in the ranks, and kept 3-4 Khoikhoi prostitutes. Mapham, 81. See also McKay, 59: “Somerset was habitually an early riser; and understanding the native dialects as well as English, he always kept a tribe of bastard Hottentots about him, and some passable looking wenches whom . . . he rationed”.

<sup>631</sup> Sarah Ralph, Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> [December, 1850].

<sup>632</sup> McKay, 138.

## Rebel victories: Attacks 2 and 4

Two of the actions in which Lt-Col Fordyce, a senior officer of the 74th (Highlander) Regiment, played a leading role, were marred by the deaths of a high number of officers and men, with the officers being targeted by ex-Cape Corps rebels.<sup>633</sup>

The first of several rebel victories occurred during the second attack, when Fordyce prematurely attacked the “enemy” on the Waterkloof. On seeing that they were outnumbered, he ordered them to withdraw. They were ambushed in a pass, and the Mfengu in the rear, probably realising that there was little hope, fled. The unlucky troops were stabbed at close quarters by Ngqika warriors and shot at by snipers from treetops.<sup>634</sup> In this humiliating operation, Fordyce lost 15 men and 6 horses, with 14 men wounded. One unfortunate member of the regiment—who had set out after the others had left—Hartnung, the German bandmaster, was missing. Later, it was discovered that he had been tortured to death in the most macabre and protracted manner.<sup>635</sup>

Similarly, during the fourth attack, 6 and 7 October 1852, the rebels had a field-day. This action, conceived “on a grander scale” than prior attacks—involved all the cavalry that Somerset could muster, as well as four divisions under Lt-Cols Michel, Fordyce, Sutton and Yarborough, who were to ascend the Waterkloof plateau from different directions and converge to attack “the enemy position” on the Horseshoe. Again, Fordyce attacked prematurely.

After leading his flank of the 74<sup>th</sup> into the bush and ordering the artillery closer to the enemy, “with his rifle sloped over his right shoulder”, Fordyce set off towards the Horseshoe flat. Handing his gun to an orderly, he stood on a hillock to watch the various companies advance. On noticing No. 2 Company inclining to the right—towards amaNgqika who were moving unseen towards them—he roared to his men to keep to the left. The noise of the musketry and bursting shells drowned his shouts. Running further down the hill, he stood in the middle of it, waving his hat and yelling to No. 2 Company, who could not hear him. A

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<sup>633</sup> In the first attack, Fordyce was subservient to Somerset and only manhandled the gun up the Waterkloof Valley to the Horseshoe. That night, the troops bivouacked at Wiggill’s ruined mill at Thornhill. Thomas Baines, who accompanied the Headquarters Party (Somerset’s), described the loeries in the Waterkloof, shooting a Ngqika warrior from a distance with a conical bullet (Minié rifles had recently been distributed to some of the men) and washing in a cold stream running past the mill. He also mentioned being shown a “volume of a large edition of the Bible and another illustrated work which had been found in one of the Hottentot laagers that day”. Baines, 2: 209, 212.

<sup>634</sup> King, 89-90.

<sup>635</sup> According to a Ngqika female prisoner, by roasting him alive over a fire and cutting off various pieces of his body, including his genitals, which were fed to him until he died on the third day. *Ibid.*, 92-4.

ball struck his chest and passed through to his back. He staggered and collapsed and was taken to the “hospital trees” at the edge of the Horseshoe. On the rebels yelling in delight at the fall of the “Scotchmen’s *baas*” [boss].<sup>636</sup> Lt Herzel Carey led the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company of the 74th in a charge against them, and was killed.<sup>637</sup> Fordyce was carried to the “hospital trees” at the edge of the Horseshoe, and died several hours later.

As the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company of the 74<sup>th</sup> urgently needed support, Lt-Col Yarborough, who had assumed command of the 74 as requested by the dying Fordyce, ordered them to break into skirmishing order and run across an open piece of ground (the “flat”), enter the forest behind it, and join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company. Tragically, when they reached the end of the flat, the Light Company found a chasm separating them from the forest. Lt Gordon was the first of several to be shot (through both legs) by a sniper from a yellowwood tree bordering the flat. Two young sergeants were killed in the action; with one being shot by another sniper hidden in “the thick summer foliage”, and falling with his legs dangling over the precipice. A private, who was sent to recover the body, was shot in the stomach and died in agony that night.<sup>638</sup> British casualties were heavy. Besides the officers, Fordyce, Gordon, and Carey, two sergeants and two rank and file were killed, a lance-corporal and a private badly wounded, and a corporal and five men wounded so severely that two of them had to undergo amputations.<sup>639</sup> Cape Corps deserters—all excellent marksmen—were assumed responsible for the officers’ deaths. Xhosa tradition, however, has it that Maqoma emerged from the bush on his favourite bull and shot Fordyce.<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>636</sup> .McKay, 183.

<sup>637</sup> McKay, 163-69 and King, 146. Herzel Carey was a kinsmen of Capt Carey of the CMR.

<sup>638</sup> McKay, 169-170.

<sup>639</sup> King, 147.

<sup>640</sup> T. J. Stapleton, *Maqoma: Xhosa Resistance to Colonial Advance* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994), 161. Fordyce’s remains were buried at Post Retief. Later, they were disinterred and repatriated.



Figure 34 Graves at the hospital trees, Fort Fordyce, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

## Chapter 14 Hunting rebels in the Winterberg

In November 1851, Captains Bruce and W. R. King of the 74<sup>th</sup> Regiment, with 70 rank and file were sent to relieve the 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment at Post Retief.<sup>641</sup> Their task being to protect the local farmers, a six-pounder gun with its complement of artillerymen was sent up from Fort Beaufort.<sup>642</sup> The barrack square had not been used for several months and was a metre-deep in dung. Once the steps to the quarters were cleared, a number of rebel Khoikhoi women and children were found living there. Together with their pigs and poultry, they were “bundled out”. The rooms were white-washed and used once more as soldiers’ quarters.<sup>643</sup>

Bruce had established a mounted force to patrol the area, with horses supplied by burghers who could no longer afford to feed them.<sup>644</sup> While patrolling along a winding path on the Didima in the Oribi-Rhebok area, King and his men spotted two Ngqika peering at them over some boulders.<sup>645</sup> King rode up the slope and followed their spoor until it mysteriously disappeared. After capturing some horses, King heard some shots and saw c. 300 Ngqika engaged with an outlying burgher picquet. He galloped to Post Retief for reinforcements, who assisted them in driving the Ngqika into the Koonap Valley, killing and wounding several. During the attack, Maqoma, mounted on a white horse and surrounded by some of his “staff”, shouted continually to his fighters and sent them mounted orders. On his men fleeing, Maqoma rode up the mountain and disappeared from sight.<sup>646</sup>

During their leisure, King and Bruce made surveys and maps of the area, filled the quarries in which the rebels had taken cover during the siege, repaired the roads, and “built a flanking bastion, enfilading the two unprotected faces of the [post]”.

King was fascinated by the “sharp-pointed peak of most rugged and fantastic form” of Didima, and the ostriches and hartebeest—seen through a “glass” from the barracks *stoep* [verandah]—browsing on the “flat-topped” Winterberg range.<sup>647</sup> He also enjoyed sitting “every night on the stoep . . . watching the dazzling coruscations which flashed and flickered

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<sup>641</sup> Post Retief comprised Piet Retief’s former farm house, around which a wall had been built. Other buildings such as barracks, mess and stables had been added inside the wall. King, 178.

<sup>642</sup> Ibid., 218.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>644</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>645</sup> King, 183. Oribi were plentiful in the area but rhebok (reed buck) are currently the dominant antelope species. Nigel Brunette of Fountainhead, telephone conversation with the author, 31 December 2016.

<sup>646</sup> King, 185-87.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid., 188.

. . . over the dark sky, showing for an instant the lofty, rugged grey peak of Didima, the sentries on the wall, and every loophole”.



Figure 35 Didima Peak from the road to Post Retief, 2016 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

From December 1851 to April 1852, King and his men patrolled the Winterberg, dislodging rebels from kloofs and deserted farms to which owners were returning. While reconnoitring the Koonap Valley from the northern spur of the Klein Winterberg, King saw some rebels crossing from Viljoen’s farm (currently Kruistementvlei) to the Waterkloof. They pursued them to Eastland’s farm, where the rebels dropped two skin sacks containing half-ripe mealies and melons. Soon afterwards they captured the owners: a Khoikhoi woman—allegedly the wife Speelman Kiewiet—and a female Madagascan slave. For the women to reap such young mealies, which were small and not preferred eating, food must have been in short supply.

On two other occasions King and his men found and shelled rebel villages in Engelbrecht’s Kloof and the Springs area respectively.<sup>648</sup> They subsequently returned to Engelbrecht’s Kloof to search for more rebels. After crossing the “tortuous” Koonap seven

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<sup>648</sup> So-called as many springs rise here to form the Koonap River.

times, they halted for the night at a ruined farmhouse. Here they tossed coins for two old Dutch bedsteads, made a fire and “thick coffee”, and washed down their rations of tough beef with “a kettleful of hot grog concocted with Cape-smoke and freshly-gathered limes”. Joined by some burghers the following morning, they resumed their boulder-hopping up the Koonap, crossing it eleven times, sometimes with their horses landing in deep pools. At 9 pm they were met by another column, who informed them that the rebels had left the kloof.<sup>649</sup> Thus the repetitive hide-and-seek warfare that took place in the Winterberg and Waterkloof.

One of the more light-hearted events that Capt Bruce introduced at Post Retief was ball practice, with a ball firing competition (for smooth bores and rifles) held on 31 July. Bruce had donated “two excellent rifles and a new saddle and bridle” as prizes. John Wiggill won the rifle for the closest hit to the bull’s eye, and Isaiah Staples the saddle and bridle for “the best rifle shots”.<sup>650</sup>



Figure 36 A winter view of Didima from the Springs (Brian Miles, 2017)

<sup>649</sup> King 230-31.

<sup>650</sup> Mapham, 172.



Figure 37 Another aspect of Didima (Photo: Micky Liddell, 2017)

## Chapter 15: Smith's final offensives

Believing that he had cleared the Waterkloof, Sir Harry Smith invaded Gcalekaland on 3 December 1851, with three columns under General Somerset, Lt-Col McKinnon and Lt-Col Eyre, respectively.<sup>651</sup> They returned triumphantly on 13 January 1852 with 7 000 head of cattle.<sup>652</sup> During their absence, however, amaNgqika and rebels lost no time in reoccupying the Waterkloof and Kroomie.

Smith was daily expecting the arrival of HMS *Birkenhead*, which was carrying fresh drafts for his regiments when he heard of the loss of the troopship—wrecked off the coast at Danger Point, near Gansbaai, on 25 February 1852. Few of the 91<sup>st</sup> Regiment bound for the Waterkloof survived the wreck.<sup>653</sup> Another blow for Smith was his recall.<sup>654</sup> <sup>655</sup> Prior to his leaving the Cape, he called up all the burgher levies to assist the troops (the total corps engaged numbering over 4 000) for a final assault on the Waterkloof.

### Attack 4: Maqoma's Den

On the second and third days of the attack, 5-6 March 1852, Maqoma's "den"—hitherto thought to be impregnable—was the focus. Col Eyre ordered four big guns to be drawn up at the foot of the Argyle Ridge, from which the Royal Artillery would shell the area in which the "den" was thought to be. After the bombardment, eight small columns were sent in. The first, comprising the 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment and Capt Campbell's Mfengu Levy, encountered fierce opposition as they ascended the Argyle Ridge, driving off "the enemy", burning huts and destroying crops. The remainder of the columns followed the next day.

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<sup>651</sup> Eyre was to go to Butterworth to protect the missionaries and traders. Somerset and his division, comprising the artillery, 150 of the CMR and 300 Mfengu, and detachments of the 12<sup>th</sup>, 71<sup>st</sup> and 91<sup>st</sup> Regiments, augmented by Capt Tylden's levies from Shiloh, were to defend the Kei border. McKinnon was to recover stolen cattle, fine Sarhili 10 000 head of cattle for theft and damages to traders' property, and demand the surrender of Uithaelder and Hans Brander.

<sup>652</sup> Keith Smith, *Harry Smith's Last Throw*, 193-4.

<sup>653</sup> Cathcart reckoned that he lost 400 of his reinforcements in the tragedy. *The Correspondence of Lieut-General the Hon. Sir George Cathcart, KCB, Relative to his Military Operations in Kaffraria until the Termination of the Kafir War and to his Measures for the Future Maintenance of Peace on that Frontier and the Protection and Welfare of the People in South Africa* (London: John Murray, 1857), 110.

<sup>654</sup> Besides the crew, nine officers and 349 men perished. King, 201-11.

<sup>655</sup> McKay thought the recall of Sir Harry very unjust. McKay, 226, On Earl Grey's loss of faith in Smith, see Keith Smith, 179-81.

Capt Hugh Robinson of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Regiment described the Xhosa luxuries they found in Maqoma's den: leopard-skin karosses embroidered with beads, necklaces made of teeth and glass, ivory amulets, tortoise-shell snuff boxes, tobacco pouches, and two colonial saws. Eyre had taken 139 prisoners—among them Maqoma's Great-wife and his son, Namba, whom Robinson was shocked to see emptying a pot of scalding soup over a child. One of the Ngqika women in the den confessed to having taken part in the torturing of Hartnung.

Robinson also noted that the Mfengu levies "saved the government" from victualling many of the prisoners by massacring them, describing the "very horrible" screams of the tortured.<sup>656</sup> Other occasions of torture by Mfengu, who were often tasked with guarding prisoners, comprised hanging one on a yellowwood tree "and practis[ing] throwing assegais at him until he was dead". On another occasion they tied a stone around a Khoikhoi rebel woman and drowned her.<sup>657</sup> As in the Battle of the Gwangqa, when the Mfengu levies were not restrained from butchering the amaXhosa, there seems to have been little officer interference in the Mfengu torture and massacre of the Maqoma's Den prisoners.

Apart from Lakeman's men, who were laws unto themselves,<sup>658</sup> and Lakeman's belief in "the utter indifference to physical pain that the black man exhibits"<sup>659</sup> there is no mention of soldiers dismembering or beheading those they shot. After learning of the fate of the bandmaster, Hartnung, and that of a fellow soldier crucified over a fire,<sup>660</sup> coming across a beheaded friend of theirs propped up with his lap,<sup>661</sup> and finding the bodies of their buried friends exhumed "and dreadfully mutilated",<sup>662</sup> it appears that some of the troops became hardened to the fate of their foes.<sup>663</sup>

During this attack, Lt the Hon. H. Wrottesley of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Light Infantry was shot in the thigh by a rebel sniper from a tree at the edge of the Horseshoe. The sniper was "picked off immediately and fell to the ground". Wrottesley managed to run 200 metres to cover but lost a lot of blood. He died that night in the Blinkwater camp.<sup>664</sup> He was buried on Eastland's

<sup>656</sup> Robinson, quoted by Mapham, 195.

<sup>657</sup> See King, 152, 157 and 115 and 113 for the suffering of the soldiers.

<sup>658</sup> See for example, Lakeman, 103-4.

<sup>659</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-5.

<sup>660</sup> At the attack on the abaThembu at Mundell's Krantz led by Lt-Col Yarborough. See McKay, 211.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>662</sup> King, 180.

<sup>663</sup> Compare D. A. Webb, "War, racism and the taking of heads: revisiting military conflict in the Cape Colony and western Xhosaland in the nineteenth century," *Journal of African History* Vol. 56 (2015), 37-55, where Webb talks about "the difficulty in separating colonial mythology and demonization which formed a strong part of the colonial discourse", and warns against the [racial] bias in historical narratives. *Ibid.*, 42-3.

<sup>664</sup> See King, 215-6, and Mapham, 196.

farm.<sup>665</sup> Sir Harry Smith attended the funeral, which was led by the Rev Joseph Wilson of Post Retief.<sup>666</sup>

While Eyre's column was attacking Maqoma's den, Lt-Cols Napier and Michel ascended the Kroomie and Waterkloof heights, where they killed a number of rebels and took 50 women and children prisoner. In the meantime, the 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment under Capt the Hon. A. Hope were sent to "clear" Iron Mountain. On the defenders taking a final stand, the troops drove them with fixed swords over the krantzes. This was accomplished with great loss to "the enemy" by a detachment of the 60<sup>th</sup> under Major Bedford, who took 560 head of cattle and 75 horses. Thereafter "the enemy" fled in all directions, with most heading for the Amathole.



Figure 38 Macomo's (sic) Den, T. W. Bowler, courtesy of Dr John Steer (Photo: C. Brodrick)

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<sup>665</sup> King 216, and Mapham, 197.

<sup>666</sup> Mapham, 197.

## Chapter 16: Cathcart's campaigns in the Kroomie and Waterkloof

Sir Harry Smith's replacement, Sir George Cathcart, arrived at the Cape on 30 March 1852 and assumed command of the forces on 7 April. Despite Somerset and Eyre having made some headway in the Amathole, having allegedly killed 100 Ngqika/rebels and taken much stock, Sandile still held the Amathole and Maqoma the Waterkloof, and Uithaalter's commandos were continuing their attacks on farmers.<sup>667</sup> Moreover, Mlanjeni was elated because the crops of mealies and sorghum that the troops had cut down earlier had sprung up again—a “miracle” that he attributed to himself.<sup>668</sup> Additionally, in March 1852, Maqoma's father-in-law, Qwesha, chief of the Ndungwana Thembu<sup>669</sup> (from the Komani/Queenstown area) and 2 000-3 000 abaThembu had joined Maqoma in the Waterkloof, establishing themselves at the base of it.<sup>670</sup>

On arriving at the frontier, Cathcart redoubled the efforts to clear the Kroomie and the Waterkloof, deploying Col Eyre, Lt-Col Buller<sup>671</sup> and Major Horsford of the Rifle Brigade, and Lt-Col Napier with his men, in successive patrols of the area from the end of April to the end of May 1852.<sup>672</sup> On capturing six Ngqika women en route to the Amathole for provisions, they learnt that Maqoma was at the top of the Waterkloof, and the Thembu chief below it, although the abaThembu were allegedly leaving, as they had run out of food. Napier

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<sup>667</sup> Smith's report in his final General Order noted 40 defeats for “the enemy” between 2 December 1850 and 21 October 1851, 12 officers killed and 18 wounded, 195 soldiers killed, and 364 wounded— totalling 589 casualties on the British side. Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, 5: 411.

<sup>668</sup> Theal, *History* (Struik, 1922), 4: 37.

<sup>669</sup> Jeff Peires, *The Dead will Arise: Nongqawuse and the great Xhosa Cattle-Killing of 1856-7* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1989), 127.

<sup>670</sup> Information obtained from Xhosa women, Lt-Col Napier, Report, 18 May 1852, Cathcart, *Correspondence*, 72. See also Keith Smith, *Sir Harry Smith's Last Throw*, 198-9. On Qwesha, see Jeff Peires, *The Dead will Arise: Nongqawuse and the great Xhosa Cattle-Killing of 1856-7* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1989), 127. A disastrous attempt was made to burn their village during a midnight attack on 15 March, during which a detachment of the 74<sup>th</sup> Regiment under Lieut-General Yarborough and Capt Patton was routed, Yarborough wounded, 2 soldiers killed and several wounded. See McKay, 211-13.

<sup>671</sup> Lt-Col Buller, later General Sir George Buller, was a distant cousin of Sir Redvers Buller. He served in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> frontier wars and at the Battle of Boomplaats, and commanded a brigade in the Crimea. Baines, 1: 112, fn.

<sup>672</sup> Buller's Rifle Brigade joined Somerset's 1<sup>st</sup> Division (HQ, Fort Beaufort) in April 1852 detachments of which were based at Bear's farm, and the Blinkwater, Balfour, Haddon/Koonap/Manczana and Elands Posts. Together they blockaded the Xhosa and their allies in the Waterkloof. For Buller, Major Horsford, and Captain Stevenson's offensives, see Cathcart to Grey, May 20, 1852, Summary of Reports and Events, and Cathcart to J. S. Pakington, 12 October 1852, Cathcart, *Correspondence*, 69-73, 123.

reported that no further Ngqika were entering or exiting the Waterkloof and Kroomie.<sup>673</sup> In the meantime, Major-General Yorke “hunted up rebel Hottentots” in the Koonap and attacked a rebel laager on the Buffalo River<sup>674</sup>

Around this time (May 1852), in order to ingratiate themselves with Sandile, the Khoikhoi rebels kidnapped Toyise, the Ndlambe chief who collaborated with the British. Toyise was kept at another kraal while the rebels awaited the arrival of Sandile and his brother Anta. Before they came, the rebels released Toyise, with a letter to Cathcart. It appears that Uithaalter had decided that Toyise require a full trial, with the charges against him being heard.<sup>675</sup> This seems to be further evidence of rebel compunction, or the inability to relinquish due military procedures or the mores acquired during their Cape Corps service.

Earlier evidence of diverging rebel interests occurred in mid June 1852, when detachments of the 91<sup>st</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> were sent to the Amathole basin to cut down “the enemy’s” ripening mealies and sorghum. While destroying the crops below Uithaalter’s encampment, the soldiers were shot at by rebels. The next day, a small group of refugees—a man, woman and “two poor little children”—fled, under fire from the rebels, down the hill towards the soldiers’ camp. When they took cover in a ravine near the camp, the guard stood to arms, and Sgt McKay and a file went to meet them. In an advanced state of starvation, the refugees emerged from the bush, explaining that they had fled from the rebels, and “their acknowledged chief”, Uithaalter, had fired at them.”<sup>676</sup>

Soon afterwards, Lt-Col Eyre announced that he had assaulted Sandile’s and Uithaalter’s strongholds in the Amathole.<sup>677</sup> Leading a detachment of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, Eyre had stormed Uithaalter’s den/camp, “inflicting a severe chastisement upon them”, with three of the British wounded. The rebels fled, “leaving women and property”.<sup>678</sup> Suspecting that Uithaalter was still in the area, Cathcart offered a reward of £500 for his capture.<sup>679</sup>

On 14 July, Cathcart sent a force of the 60th Regiment, the Rifle Brigade, two squadrons of the CMR, a detachment with rockets, four guns, and Mfengu levies to occupy the Kroomie range; personally selecting their encampment and sites for two redoubts that

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<sup>673</sup> A. J. Cloete, Military Reports, cited in Cathcart, *Correspondence*, 71-3.

<sup>674</sup> Cathcart to Pakington, 20 July 1852, *Ibid.*, 92, 94, 98.

<sup>675</sup> Mostert, 1151-52.

<sup>676</sup> McKay, 204-9.

<sup>677</sup> Cathcart to Grey, 14 July 1852, and 11 February 1853, Cathcart, *Correspondence*, 110-11.

<sup>678</sup> See Cathcart, *Correspondence*, 94, and Command Paper 1635 of 1852, Yorke to Cloete, 20 June 1852.

<sup>679</sup> Cathcart to Pakington, 20 September 1852, Cathcart, *Correspondence*, 122.

were to be built commanding the area between the Waterkloof and Fuller's Hoek.<sup>680</sup> During August 1852, forces under Lt-Cols Michel and Napier were despatched to Gcalekaland to round up cattle and fire Xhosa huts and crops until Chief Sarhili sued for peace.<sup>681</sup>

### **Attack 7: Scouring Iron Mountain**

Cathcart's final assault on the Waterkloof and Kroomie strongholds, involving four columns, led by Lt-Cols Napier, Nesbitt, Buller and Eyre, respectively, began on 15 September 1852 and lasted for four days. Eyre's column was ordered to ascend the Kroomie range at Niland's farm and assail the south scarps of the Waterkloof. On joining the Rifle Brigade at Brown's farm, he was to assume command of the whole force in the Waterkloof. Major Horsford's column was to move from Nel's to Brown's farm and join Eyre as he descended the Kroomie range, and place himself under his orders. Capt Bruce was to march on Mundell's farm and cooperate as circumstances demanded. Cathcart had agreed to let Lakeman and his corps (who fell under Nesbitt's column), cooperate with Eyre's column if need arose.<sup>682</sup>

Lakeman had been ordered to wait for Eyre but when he had not arrived by 10 am, he attacked some rebels who were "creeping back down Iron Mountain". It was more difficult than he anticipated, but he managed to drive them from their position and took a number of prisoners, carrying hammers, bellows, tongs and an anvil. He marched them to the Waterkloof plateau, where he found Cathcart "toasting a chop on a ramrod". Lakeman laid his trophies at his feet, while Col Cloete wrote down the details of the proceedings.<sup>683</sup> Later, Lakeman was horrified to find that his name had been omitted from General Orders. Wasting no time, he sought out Cathcart to set the record straight. After first flying into a rage, Cathcart wrote another General Order—solely for Lakeman—in which he commended his

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<sup>680</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>681</sup> Ibid., 112, 116-7.

<sup>682</sup> Lt-Col Napier's column was to act from the high open ground north of the Waterkloof. Lt-Col Nesbitt's column, comprising 4 companies of the 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Stephen Lakeman's corps and half of the Mfengu Levies were to occupy Tenth Pass, and one company of the 60<sup>th</sup> and the other half of the Mfengu Levies were to occupy the Tongue in the Horseshoe. Nesbitt was to allow Lakeman and the amaMfengu under him to support him with one or more companies of the 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment, but not to leave Tenth Bush unoccupied. Both columns north of the Tenth Pass were to be under the command of Lt-Col Buller.

<sup>683</sup> Lakeman, 80-83.

volunteer corps and “the gallantry of its commander”, and named them the Waterkloof Rangers.<sup>684</sup>

### **The cave tussle**

Capt Peter Campbell and his Mfengu had been invited to join Eyre’s column—which included the 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, the Light Company of the 74<sup>th</sup> under Capt W. R. King and the Rifle Brigade—for the assault on the Kroomie.<sup>685</sup> Owing to Eyre’s initially disregarding Campbell’s guidance, they arrived too late to surprise the rebels, c. 400 of whom were seen rushing across the ridge to the krantz on Iron Mountain. On reaching the plateau, the men of the 73<sup>rd</sup> were spread out to search it.

As Campbell approached with his levy, he noted a soldier of the 73<sup>rd</sup>, who had been scrambling across some rocks concealing a cave, being seized by the leg and dragged into it. Several of his comrades ran up and managed to pull him out, his assailant having to relinquish him as he could not hold him and his spear simultaneously. The soldier had dropped his bayonet in the cave during the scuffle, and was unable to recover it without being stabbed. William, a Thembu man in Campbell’s levy, volunteered to retrieve it. Using his own spear, from outside the cave he fought a “harmless duel” with the man inside, and succeeded in hooking out the bayonet.

The cave was subsequently barricaded with rocks collected by “hundreds of willing hands”. Brushwood was piled on the rocks and set alight to “roast the poor fellow”. The fate of the man was unknown, as immediately afterwards the men were ordered to move on.<sup>686</sup>

### **Prisoners and diverging interests**

Eyre had ordered several small parties—among them Capt Bewes, with the Grenadier Company of the 73<sup>rd</sup>, and King’s detachment of the 74<sup>th</sup>—to descend Iron Mountain on both sides to intercept the flight of the attacked. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, mounted levies, and amaMfengu were sent down the western slope. They killed 15 of “the enemy”, who were in a severe state of starvation, and captured some horses.

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<sup>684</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>685</sup> King had recently been gazetted captain of the Light Company of the 74<sup>th</sup> and was also commanding the Light Company of the 73<sup>rd</sup> that day.

<sup>686</sup> Campbell, *Reminiscences*, 60.

As King and his men descended a sliptrail on the eastern slope, the packhorses had to slide down on their hindquarters, almost dislodging the rocket apparatus on their necks. At the bottom, they captured 71 women and 20 children “secreted among the cavities of the rocks at the base of the krantz”, and “quantities of assegais, guns and native ornaments were taken.” Moreover, they killed “half a dozen rebels and Cape Corps deserters in an attack on their stronghold, and hung them on the nearest trees as examples to any of their comrades who might come that way.”<sup>687</sup>

On meeting up with Major Horsford’s column at the ruins of Brown’s farm, King learned that they had killed “a good many of the enemy”, captured some horses and fired huts. They had also destroyed “a gunsmith’s shop up in the rocks, fortified and loopholed and well stocked with tools and materials for the repair of fire-arms”. While they rested briefly, King observed that the “whole valley was smoking from end to end with burnt huts, as were the heights above us.”<sup>688</sup>

The following day, Eyre divided his column into four parties, which would scour the kloofs on southern and northern sides of the Waterkloof, throw rockets into the “inaccessible retreats” of Iron Mountain, and burn huts. King found it amusing that the amaMfengu who followed Eyre skirmished with “unusual activity, being in great awe of *Inkosi Inamehlo amane* the four-eyed chief—so called, as he wore spectacles.”<sup>689</sup>

On ascending the Waterkloof Valley, King’s detachment took the south branch and the Mfengu the north. When the latter emerged from the forest, they were driving “a score or so of [Ngqika] women and children and horses with sore backs”. King described the women’s hair, which was entwined with animal claws and teeth, and their “finely-dressed karosses”, dyed black with mimosa bark. He noted that the meeting between them and female prisoners taken earlier was emotional. He was also struck by their emaciation, “the result of living entirely on leaves, roots and berries,<sup>690</sup> averring—perhaps to convince himself—that their capture was “in reality a necessary respite from starvation and misery”. Contrastingly, he noticed that the rebel women, unused to bush life like their Ngqika counterparts, “did not regard their capture as a misfortune”.

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<sup>687</sup> Ibid., 262-3. The later hangings and subsequent collection of skulls as trophies, has been interpreted as the soldiers’ hardening attitudes towards “the enemy”, as they found more corpses of comrades who had been beheaded, mutilated, or tortured by roasting or crucifixion over fires. See McKay, 211, and Mostert, 1152-3.

<sup>688</sup> King, 263.

<sup>689</sup> King, 264.

<sup>690</sup> King, 268-9. McKay also commented on the emaciation of Ngqika and rebel women in the Amathole. McKay, 206.

If this were so, it could have indicated further divergences between the allies. There had already been macabre signs of this, such as the five rebel corpses the 74<sup>th</sup> Regiment found hanged from trees, their bodies scorched by fires still burning beneath them—confirmation, according to McKay, of rumours of differences between the rebels and the amaNgqika.<sup>691</sup> In a despatch to Sir John Pakington, Cathcart confirmed this, explaining that “recent occurrences” had led to “open hostilities between them”.<sup>692</sup>

Towards the end of the Waterkloof and Kroomie assaults on 27 October, Capt Verity’s Mfengu Levy, which had scoured the southern slopes of the Waterkloof, arrived on the high ground with ten captured oxen and three Khoikhoi women. On being interrogated, the women professed not to know anything, except that their husbands had been killed on 23 October, and that Maqoma did not know where to go to be safe. One of the women was the widow of the rebel leader, Christiaan van Staaden.<sup>693</sup> When offered their freedom, the women chose to remain in the camp with the soldiers.<sup>694</sup>

## Roots

While King’s detachment was patrolling Iron Mountain from the eastern side, they came across “an immense number” of burnt-out enemy fires, and sentinel points commanding extensive views of Harry’s Kloof and the surrounding areas. They also noticed that the ground around them was “thickly strewn with pellets of chewed root”. Hearing firing ahead, they pressed on and came across some corpses, including that of a rebel deserter who had been hanged from a tree and shot in the head, with the blood still trickling down to his feet.<sup>695</sup>

This was not the first time that King had discovered old fires and chewed roots on the plateau or on ledges. Mapham presumed that these “pellets” indicated that the starving rebels had been chewing roots for their juices, and subsequently spitting them out. The positions in which they were found, however, suggests that they could have been roots of the blue-flowered plumbago, *Plumbago auriculata Lam.* Known to the amaXhosa as *umthi kaMaqoma* (the tree of Maqoma), as it grew in abundance around Middledrift—where he is thought to have been born—plumbago was used in various ways to doctor Xhosa armies. It was held that it could heal broken bones if a solution were made from boiled roots and drunk

<sup>691</sup> McKay, 136.

<sup>692</sup> Dated Fort Beaufort, September, 20<sup>th</sup>, 1852. Cathcart, *Correspondence*, 122.

<sup>693</sup> He does not appear to have been on the Kat River erfholders’ lists.

<sup>694</sup> Mapham, 146.

<sup>695</sup> *Ibid.*, 268-9.

or inserted into incisions around the wound. The roots were also believed to have power to turn British bullets to water, if chewed during an attack.<sup>696</sup>

## Full circle

Events turned full circle when Uithaalder—calling himself general—made overtures to Sir George Cathcart. Capt King and Lt Burns were escorting a wagon-load of Minié rifles through the Tyhumie Valley to Fort Hare, when a party of rebels “marching in file with sloped arms came down the slope towards them”. Half way down they halted, and sent on 5-6 unarmed rebels with a flag of truce. Soon afterwards Uithaalder, accompanied by rebel attendants in SAPPER uniforms, descended. Wearing a “braided surtout of a British staff officer, trousers with a red stripe on the side, a red morocco and gold sword belt, a cavalry sword, and a straw hat with a black crêpe band”, Uithaalder explained that he was weary of the war and wanted to come to terms. Before leaving, he announced that he would send a letter to His Excellency (Cathcart) the following day.<sup>697</sup>

In October 1852 Cathcart felt sufficiently confident to report the “disuniting” of the amaXhosa and rebels and the “clearance” of the Waterkloof and Kroomie and the occupation of the area, which was to be patrolled by the CMR, levies and a newly-organised police force.<sup>698</sup> A few months’ later, Sandile and Maqoma offered to surrender Mlanjeni, Uithaalder, and other rebel leaders in return for pardon. Their offers were declined and the war dragged on.<sup>699</sup>

At the end of February 1853—after negotiations with Charles Brownlee, the Ngqika resident agent—Sandile, Maqoma and Siyolo surrendered.<sup>700</sup> It appears that this was the only frontier war in which the government was determined on unconditional surrender, and held out until it was achieved. Smith and Somerset may not have been able to have accomplished

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<sup>696</sup> Andrew Smith, *A Contribution to South African Materia Medica, Chiefly from Plants in use among the Natives*, 2nd ed. (Lovedale: Lovedale Mission Press, 1888), 103. See also J. H. Soga, *The Amaxosa: Life and Customs* (Lovedale: Lovedale Mission Press, 1932), 66; and Albert Kropf, *A Kafir-English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lovedale: Lovedale Mission Press, 1915), 36.

<sup>697</sup> King, 256. See also Command Paper 1635 of 1852-3, Uithaalder to Sir George Cathcart, 25 May 1852, p. 131.

<sup>698</sup> This enabling the withdrawal of the 60<sup>th</sup> and 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiments. Cathcart to Pakington, Cathcart *Correspondence*, 122-3.

<sup>699</sup> *Ibid*, 145; Cathcart to Colonial Secretary of State, November 14, 1852.

<sup>700</sup> Mostert, 1155

this. As Mapham put it, “Somerset was 58 years at the time and liked his bodily comforts too much to be an effective and aggressive commander”.<sup>701</sup>

After the war, ex-rebels drifted via the Zuurberg to Butterworth/Xalanga or to the Indwe River, where Uithaolder was thought to be living. It is alleged that he had intended to start a settlement in the Zuurberg, on land that he claimed Sarhili had given them.<sup>702</sup> Hans Brander “fled across the Bashee and died of wounds sustained from a conflict with the police”.<sup>703</sup> His influence over his men having dwindled, Uithaolder wandered for some years as an outcast beyond the colonial border before allegedly committing suicide.<sup>704</sup> Maqoma was banished to Robben Island. One of his wives, Katya, chose to accompany him, but she said that her heart was sore and she wanted to die.<sup>705</sup> After serving his term he returned to the eastern frontier in 1867. On taking up residence twice at the Poort, he was sent back to Robben Island in 1871, where he died on 9 September 1873. Thus petered out the longest and bloodiest of frontier wars.

## Concluding remarks

As in the Khoikhoi uprising of 1799, the Kat River Rebellion more or less “paralysed the eastern economy”. Moreover, with their command of European weaponry and strategies, the rebels had posed the “greatest challenge . . . to colonial hegemony in the eastern Cape”. Unlike the 1799 revolt, which lacked an ideology for a successful political movement, the Kat River Rebellion was politically much more sophisticated.<sup>706</sup> In light of this, what went wrong?

Divergence of aims, methods, and ideology and the contestation of resources seem to have strained the Ngqika-rebel alliance to breaking point. Shortage of food and ammunition, the barricading of the Waterkloof and destruction of their strongholds, together with Cathcart

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<sup>701</sup> Mapham, 80.

<sup>702</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 266-7, *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>703</sup> Cory, 5: 471.

<sup>704</sup> Theal, *History of South Africa since September 1795*, 5 Volumes, Vol. 3:109. Some accounts give the date of Uithaolder’s suicide as 8 April 1865. It was averred that he stabbed himself in the throat after overhearing a sermon while standing outside a church in King William’s Town. Mostert, 1158. (Mostert does not cite his source.)

<sup>705</sup> Peires, *The Dead will Arise*, 326.

<sup>706</sup> William M. Freund, “Thoughts on the Study of the Cape Eastern Frontier Zone”, in *Beyond the Cape Frontier*, 94-5.

and Eyre's take-no-prisoners tactics, seem to have left the Ngqika and their allies little choice other than to surrender.

As shown, there were many portents of the collapse of the rebel-Ngqika alliance; such as the rebels involved in John Wiggill's capture denying allegiance to Sandile, the rebel family fleeing from Uithaolder, the rebel widows who refused the offer of freedom, the emaciated rebel women who appeared relieved to have been taken prisoner, and the skeletal Ngqika women who put up little resistance to their capture.

Were rebel and Ngqika women more prescient than their male counterparts, realising earlier than the men that their cause was doomed? Moreover, those with starving babies and children could have seen no reason for continued resistance in the face of dwindling food supplies. Given the Xhosa social structure, Ngqika women and children would have had to wait for the men and boys to have eaten their fill at meals, leaving them little—if anything—to eat afterwards, especially in the circumstances.

In describing the “ravages” of this war Archdeacon Merriman mentions the many [Xhosa and Khoikhoi] deaths, the women and children he feared had starved to death, and the orphans. In so doing he cites examples from retainers and their families in his household. A son of the one of the women was murdered in the war of 1835, her brother and stepson “barbarously murdered” in 1846, and a son murdered in the eighth war, and all their property destroyed. He continues: “We have at present feeding at our board a [Xhosa] orphan child whose father and mother both fell in the Waterkloof . . . the principal scene of our contests with the enemy”. He goes on to explain that another retainer of his, Wilhelm, had found the little “homeless wanderer” near his hut and taken him in.<sup>707</sup> In the light of the above—deaths of women and children and orphaned children, were the “enemy” women not the saner, braver ones to take the initiative to end the war by surrendering themselves?<sup>708</sup>

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<sup>707</sup> Merriman, 205-6.

<sup>708</sup> With the exception of the man who accompanied his wife and two children, who fled from Uithaolder's thrall.



Figure 39 Maqoma and some of his wives, courtesy of the Cape Archives and Depot.

## Chapter 17: Reconfiguration

### Removal of the amaNgqika

At the close of the eighth frontier war, Sir George Cathcart expelled Chief Sandile and his Ngqika from the Amathole and its surrounds.<sup>709</sup> From this area, he created the Royal Reserve and invited applications for village lots to be laid out in the vicinity of existing or new military posts/garrisons that he had ordered.<sup>710</sup>

Candidates for the Royal Reserve, which abounded in water and good pasture, were to be fully-armed men who would defend the area, serve the government, and be liable for annual musters on the Queen's birthday. Those who had served in levies would be given preference.<sup>711</sup> In this way, Keiskamahoe, Queenstown<sup>712</sup>—which was built in a hexagonal shape for defence purposes—and Seymour (formerly Elandspost) were established. The latter—named after Colonel Seymour, Cathcart's military secretary who fell at the Battle of the Inkerman<sup>713</sup>—enjoyed a strategic position, being the gateway from Kat River to the north via the Windvogelberg (Cathcart) and Shiloh/Whittlesea.

### Commission of inquiry and land redistribution

Following the verdicts of the rebels' trial in Cape Town, Kat River people criticised the “unequal justice” that was dispensed, with the Rev Thomson requesting the Executive Council for clemency for the rebels or a revision of their punishment.<sup>714</sup> In 1851 Earl Grey ordered a “strict investigation” into the causes of the Rebellion.<sup>715</sup> This was perverted by John Montagu, the Colonial Secretary in Cape Town, appointing a commission of members

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<sup>709</sup>*The Correspondence of Lieut-General the Hon. Sir George Cathcart, KCB, Relative to his Military Operations in Kaffraria. . . and Welfare of the People of South Africa* (London: John Murray, 1857), 16, 36, 67, 340-41, 250-52. The Ngqika were moved to a reserve between the Cumakala and Kei Rivers.

<sup>710</sup> For a list of the forts and posts he established in a chain of defence, within a 2-km radius of one another, *ibid.*, 59, 67-9, 79, 84 and 90..

<sup>711</sup> Government Notice, 12 February 1853, *Cathcart Correspondence*, 251-3.

<sup>712</sup> For details of the layout and terms, see Committee of Evidence, T. H. Bowker's Memorial, 14 March 1858, Mitford Barberton, 203-4.

<sup>713</sup> Cathcart, Private Letter, 11 November 1853, *Cathcart Correspondence*, 353. See also Cory, *Rise*, 5 (1847-1853), 490.

<sup>714</sup> Archives of the Executive Council of the Cape of Good Hope (EC), 3, 18 January 1855.

<sup>715</sup> Williams, 192.

who were all in government pay.<sup>716</sup> On Captain C. L. Stretch's objection, the first commission was cancelled.<sup>717</sup> Cathcart appointed a second commission, comprising C. W. Owen, J. B. Ebdon<sup>718</sup> and Henry Calderwood, but it failed to produce a just etiology of the revolt, absolving the government and white settlers, and blaming the missionaries.<sup>719</sup>

Based on the commission's findings, measures were taken to re-structure Stockenstrom. Rebel property was confiscated and sold, together with vacant land, to whites.<sup>720</sup> It was found, however, that the confiscation of rebels' erven was unconstitutional under Roman Dutch law, and ruled that property could not be confiscated for treason. Porter, however, argued that Kat River settlers, who had not defended the Colony as stipulated when they were granted land, were liable to forfeit it.<sup>721</sup> Andries Hatha and Hendrik Heyn petitioned the government for clemency, requesting that Stretch be appointed to the commission for land restoration. Rebels, as well as loyalists whose lands had been mistakenly confiscated, applied for restitution. A positive outcome of the commission was their decision in 1858 to uphold Andries Stockenstrom's ruling that Stockenstrom be racially mixed.<sup>722</sup> In the meantime, sales of confiscated land had gone ahead, with Andries Botha's land in Buxton having been transferred to Johs. P. Nell and H. G. Nell [Nel] in 1852. Botha—pardoned and residing on Robert Hart's farm, Glen Avon—was the first to submit a claim to the restoration commission.<sup>723</sup>

There were 134 claims, divided into those with and without titles; although this was a spurious distinction, owing to the fairly random way in which surveyors had operated before 1850.<sup>724</sup> Although D'Urban had waived Stockenstrom's building regulations, as a last ditch,

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<sup>716</sup> Such as, Attorney-General Porter, Mr Hope and Capt (later Col) Surtees.

<sup>717</sup> He insisted that a commission from England be appointed to secure justice for the Khoikhoi. Williams, 193.

<sup>718</sup> Ebdon was chairman of the Cape of Good Hope Bank, which he established in 1837, and president of the (Cape) Chamber of Commerce from 1861 to 1873. Warren, Digby, "Merchants, Commissioners and Wardmasters: Municipal Politics in Cape Town, 1840-54" (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1986), 47, 49.

[http://open.uct.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11427/7604/thesis\\_hum\\_1986\\_warren\\_d.pdf?sequence=1](http://open.uct.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11427/7604/thesis_hum_1986_warren_d.pdf?sequence=1) accessed 21 April 2016.

<sup>719</sup> The commission found the "Hottentots' grievances" unfounded, and the Reads "injudicious" in dealing with "the complaints and alleged political grievances of the Hottentots" which were "too readily listened to and believed." Annexure to the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 1<sup>st</sup> Session 1854, Report of the Commission of Enquiry, 2, cited by Williams, 194.

<sup>720</sup> Several English and Afrikaans families who had been in the area since the late 1820s, such as the Painters and Nels, bought land in Stockenstrom.

<sup>721</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 284.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, citing Memorial from Coloureds in Stockenstrom District", CA CO, 4083, 43.

<sup>723</sup> Van Wyk, *Ou Man*, 30.

<sup>724</sup> Ross *Borders*, 278-85.

the commissioner tried to make compliance with them necessary.<sup>725</sup> In the meantime the Stockenstrom magistrate, L. H. Meurant, engrossed part of the Seymour commonage<sup>726</sup> and his efforts to whiten the Kat River Valley resulted in the lands of 158 rebels and 83 untenanted lots being sold to “Westerners”.<sup>727</sup> Fourteen survivors of the 1851 Christmas Day massacres of the Tyhume military villages were granted erven at Blinkwater in 1855 as compensation for their losses.<sup>728</sup>

## Newcomers in Stockenstrom

In addition to South Africans, Kat River attracted European, Asian and Jewish immigrants, amongst whom were several entrepreneurs. Soon colour consciousness developed in Stockenstrom, with certain members of the Hertzog Dutch Reformed Church objecting to taking Holy Communion with “converts from the heathen” (people of colour).<sup>729</sup> In 1855 they requested their own *Kerkraad* (church council) and separate facilities for the celebration of *die Avondmaal* (Holy Communion). Their request was granted to avoid secession.<sup>730</sup> They subsequently formed their own congregation and built the Greykerk in Balfour, which was consecrated on 4 January 1862. Thomson was requested to be their *konsulent* (visiting preacher).<sup>731</sup>

White farmers in Kat River soon began to complain about things that had irked original Kat River settlers, such as the delay in the granting of titles, vagrancy and theft. There was also friction between white and coloured farmers about grazing allocations on the commons, with the former maintaining that their portions were too small.<sup>732</sup>

<sup>725</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 439.

<sup>726</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 279.

<sup>727</sup> Van Wyk, *Ou Man*, 30.

<sup>728</sup> C. G. Coetzee, *The Unfortified Military Villages of Sir Harry Smith of 1848-1850*, 2001, reprinted in *The Cape Journal*, ed., T. Westby-Nunn (Cape Town: Westby-Nunn, 2010).

<sup>729</sup> Earlier, the DRC Synod of 1834 had reluctantly accepted Thomson’s Hertzog congregation of “Bastards, Hottentots and Gonaquas”, *WRM*, 197.

<sup>730</sup> Following the precedent of *herstichten* (separate chapels for whites and the “heathen”), adopted in Calvinia in 1847. Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2003), 54-9, quoting C. J. Kriel, *Die Geskiedenis van die Nederduits Gereformeerde Sendingkerk in Suid Afrika*, 1881-1956 (Paarl: Paarl Drukkers, 1963), 123-5.

On the situation in Stockenstrom, see Williams, 197-206.

<sup>731</sup> Williams, 206.

<sup>732</sup> E. Nel and T. R. Hill, eds, *An Evaluation of Community-Driven Economic Development, Land Tenure and Sustainable Environmental Development in the Kat River Valley* (Pretoria: HRC, 2000), 37-8, citing CA CO 4503, 1858.

Kat River, however, continued to live up to its reputation of taking in displaced people, including poor whites. Amongst the latter were Olive Schreiner's parents, Gottlieb and Rebecca (Lyndall) Schreiner, and their nine surviving children (three had died in infancy). On Gottlieb's dismissal as supervisor of the Healdtown Institute in 1865,<sup>733</sup> the family moved into a cottage in Hertzog, and later relocated to Balfour. In 1867 Olive Schreiner joined her older siblings in Cradock.<sup>734</sup> Although Gottlieb had died in Kat River, Olive Schreiner remembered her sojourn there with affection, urging her sister, Ettie (Henrietta), to join her in a trip there in 1903.<sup>735</sup> In January 1904, she suggested to her friend, Betty Molteno, that, "If Cron goes to Parliament . . . we could go to Kat River . . . & I'll show you all the places I played in when I was a child. I have always thought it would be so beautiful to go there with someone I loved."<sup>736</sup>



Figure 40 Olive Schreiner's house in Hertzog, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

<sup>733</sup> In 1853 the Methodist missionary, the Rev. John Ayliff, started Healdtown, an industrial school for amaMfengu on the *eNxukhwebe* River (Skead, *Xhosa Place Names*, 618), 10km north-northeast of Fort Beaufort, on the Rev. Henry Calderwood's former LMS mission station, Birklands. See Trevor Webster, *Under the Eagle's Wings* (Grahamstown: Rhodes University, 2013).

<sup>734</sup> *The World's Biggest Question: Olive Schreiner's South African Letters 1889-1920*, eds, Liz Stanley and Andrea Salter (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2014).

<sup>735</sup> "Olive Schreiner to Henrietta ('Ettie') Schreiner, 23 June 1903", UCT Manuscripts & Archives, Olive Schreiner Letters Project transcription, lines 31-7.

<sup>736</sup> "Olive Schreiner to Betty Molteno, 25 January 1904", UCT Manuscripts & Archives, Olive Schreiner Letters Project transcription, lines 10-14.

## Representative government

Although the Cape Colony had requested representative government in July 1848, it was only achieved in 1853. After disagreements between the conservatives (Sir Harry Smith, Sir J. Montagu, Godlonton, and the Cape Town merchant, J. B. Ebden) and the radicals (Fairbairn, Christoffel Brand, Francis Reitz, and Stockenstrom), a constitution was agreed on in 1853, with a bicameral parliament comprising a House of Assembly (the lower house) and a Legislative Assembly (the upper house), with a low franchise of £25 of fixed property.<sup>737</sup>

Originally, the conservatives opposed the low franchise, fearing that it would admit “the untutored aborigines of Kat River”, and in 1850 Attorney-General Porter arrived at a final draft of 94 articles in 1850, with a franchise of £50. In protest, Andries Stockenstrom and John Fairbairn took their draft of 16 articles to London.<sup>738</sup> It was thrown out. Porter’s draft was accepted but Governor Darling reduced his franchise to £25, with a £50 income qualification.<sup>739</sup>

Fearing the entrenchment of white settler power, Stoffels and Hatha initially opposed representative government. On the adoption of the 1853 constitution with the low franchise, they thanked Stockenstrom and Fairbairn for their lobbying.<sup>740</sup> Porter’s quip that he “would rather see the Hottentot at the hustings voting for his representative . . . than in the wilds with a gun on his shoulder” could be taken at face value,<sup>741</sup> although Legassick held that the low franchise was “in the interest primarily of enfranchising [poor] Afrikaners to ensure white security”.<sup>742</sup> Conversely, Giliomee stressed the role of the “modernising elite” (Cape) Afrikaner in bringing about the colour-blind franchise.<sup>743</sup>

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<sup>737</sup> See Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, eds, *The Oxford History of South Africa*, Vol. 1 *South Africa to 1870*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 322-8, Martin Legassick, *The Struggle for the Eastern Cape, 1800–1854, Subjugation and the Roots of South African Democracy* (Johannesburg: KMM, 2010), 85-8, and Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, 119.

<sup>738</sup> For Stockenstrom’s contribution to the obtaining of representative government, see Hutton, *Stockenstrom 2*: 449, 463.

<sup>739</sup> Wilson, *Oxford History of South Africa*, 322-28.

<sup>740</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 187

<sup>741</sup> BPP 1636 of 1852-4, 218-19, cited by Ross, *Borders*, 275-6.

<sup>742</sup> Legassick, *Struggle*, 88.

<sup>743</sup> The British introduction in 1827 of elected municipal councils in the Cape provided an oeuvre to liberal Afrikaans farmers, lawyers, and businessmen, such as F. W. Reitz, C. J. Brand, and J. H. and J. A. H. Wicht, who played a seminal role in Cape Town’s first council of 1840. Together with the Cape Town bourgeoisie, they and Stockenstrom, emboldened by the 1848 popular uprisings in Europe, denounced Smith and Montagu’s regime as “unrepresentative and irresponsible”. Giliomee, *Afrikaners*, 119.

The Stockenstrom Khoikhoi voted for Andries Stockenstrom as their candidate for the legislature, and opposed the separation of the east and west divisions.<sup>744</sup> Stockenstrom spent the remainder of his time in South Africa oscillating between Cape Town and his farm, Maastron—part of which he auctioned to recoup his losses after it was burnt in 1852. This section became the town of Bedford. He continued to take an interest in the Kat River Khoikhoi, justifying the Kat River Settlement in his parliamentary speeches.<sup>745</sup> In 1862 he sailed for England, where he died in 1864—probably of pneumonia caused by decades of exposure on commando duty.



Figure 41 Outhouse on Maastron, with the Kaga in the background, 2014 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

<sup>744</sup> Ross, *Borders*, 282. Separation drives petered out in 1872. For further information, see Wilson, 324-28.

<sup>745</sup> See Hutton, *Stockenstrom 2*: 455-67.

## Chapter: 18 Reconstruction and “progress”

The coloured people in Stockenstrom had much to rebuild, as well as ploughing and sowing crops which they had formerly cultivated. Among the natural resources of Stockenstrom were timber, mullet, rock fish and eels in the Kat and Elands Rivers, and “several quarries of good building stone”.<sup>746</sup> The main revenue, though, of the Stockenstrom area derived from cultivation and stock farming.<sup>747</sup> From government statistics it appears that, although white farmers continued to cultivate maize, potatoes, wheat, barley, oats, and vine stock, they experimented with new crops, with tobacco becoming the most important non-cereal crop. As it was an imported seed and required a steady water supply and much labour, it became more or less the preserve of white farmers.

Owing to the growing demand for timber for barracks, houses, shops, wagons, railway sleepers, and mine props, the number of sawyers increased and more sawmills were built, such as the one at Balfour. Mahogany was exported for the making of furniture and gun stocks.<sup>748</sup> There were also a number of watermills in Kat River and the Winterberg, many of which—apart from Ainslee’s mills at Millbank (Baddaford) and Spring Grove—were built by Isaac Wiggill and his sons.<sup>749</sup>

One of Isaac’s more iconic mills—a Dutch-style windmill—can be seen at Thornhill, in the Kaalhoek area.<sup>750</sup> Thought to be unique in South Africa, the mill’s rotors (blades for the sails) were installed “not perpendicular to the circular sidewall but on top of the structure in a horizontal position, like a helicopter”. This enabled them “to power the central, upright wooden driveshaft and gears to the mill stones”, irrespective of the direction of the wind.<sup>751</sup> Although the interior of the mill was destroyed three times by fire, the fitments were only replaced after the first two fires. The original dry-packed stone walls are still in excellent condition, with the interior plaster and concrete floor being more recent additions. A broken millstone in the nearby Kaalhoek River suggests that Isaac also had a watermill on Thornhill.<sup>752</sup> The largest watermill in the area, however, was on Andries Stockenstrom’s

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<sup>746</sup> Mostly dolerite and some limestone. Cape of Good Hope Statistical Register, 1875, GG 13.

<sup>747</sup> Ibid.

<sup>748</sup> Telephone conversation with Gert van der Westhuizen, 30 April 2016.

<sup>749</sup> Isaac also built a watermill at the northwest end of the Waterkloof Valley, where the Waterkloof River joins the Kaalhoek River below the Endwell Dam.

<sup>750</sup> The Bushneck Pass runs from Adelaide to Kaalhoek, past the Endwell Dam.

<sup>751</sup> Wiggill, *From the Cotswolds*, 174-5.

<sup>752</sup> Interviews with Brian Miles, owner of Thornhill, Kruisementvlei and portions of Kaalhoek, 6-7 December 2016.

farm, Maastron. Used for milling flour, it was erected by Richard Paver and converted to steam in 1860.<sup>753</sup>



Figure 42 The millwheel at Maastron, 2014 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

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<sup>753</sup> *The Reminiscences of Richard Paver*, eds, A. H. Duminy and L. J. G. Adcock (Cape Town: Balkema, 1979) 2-5.



Figure 43 Isaac Wiggill's mill on Thornhill, 2016 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

## Wool farming

From 1840 onwards the Cape's woollen industry grew as a result of the market for colonial wool in Britain.<sup>754</sup> British settlers, such as Miles Bowker, had brought merino sheep with them from the Cheviot Hills to Albany. Together with the Barbertons and their other neighbours, by 1846 they owned some 18 000 sheep, 900 cattle and 100 horses.<sup>755</sup> The best sheep country, however, was the Baviaans/Mankazana,<sup>756</sup> Somerset East, Cradock, Bedford and Adelaide areas and the Winterberg. As the demand for wool increased further (white)

<sup>754</sup> Owing to the decline in the yield of domestic clip in Britain, and the cost of importing wool from Australia. (hitherto Britain had imported wool from Australia and the Continent, but it was found cheaper to do so from the Cape Colony.) See Tony Kirk, "The Cape Economy and the Expropriation of the Kat River Settlement", *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, eds, S. Marks and A. Atmore (Essex: Longmans, 1982), 227-29.

<sup>755</sup> Mitford Barberton, 44-45, 68, 227.

<sup>756</sup> Which, according to Eric Pringle, produced some of the finest clip. See Eric Pringle, *Mankazana: Secret Loves* (Port Elizabeth: Acme Printers, n.d.), and Denzil Pringle, "My Memories" (n.d.). Farmers in the Mankazana continue to win prizes for "the finest wool in the country". Denzil Pringle from Glen Thorn (the farm adjoining Dods Pringle's farm, Marshall Vale), maintained that they used to shear 110 bales of clip at a time. Telephone conversation with the author, 27 May 2016.

farmers converted to wool, raising finance by using their title deeds as collateral security. Between the period 1834 and 1837 more British settlers from the Albany area moved up onto the farms in the above mentioned areas vacated by burghers in their trek northwards.<sup>757</sup> And the officials, the settler press, and pamphleteers encouraged British immigrants with capital were encouraged to settle in the Eastern Districts further to boost the economy.

Cape merchants acted as middlemen and assisted wool farmers in remote areas with transport problems. Wool was originally sent by ox-wagon to Port Elizabeth (where Mosenthal Bros had opened a branch of the wool importers, Lippert and Co., of the Hamburg firm),<sup>758</sup> and stock was driven on the hoof to stock sales—a practice that continued into the mid-twentieth century.<sup>759</sup> Although a number of wealthy immigrants to the Eastern Districts were running woolled sheep, it was mostly the established land-owners that dominated the market. Prices for wool increased annually—more stock (mostly Spanish merinos) was imported from Europe—and by 1851 wool constituted 59% of Cape exports.<sup>760</sup>

As Kirk points out, it was difficult for coloured people in Kat River to enter the wool market as they could not raise the necessary finance. Few of them (approximately 100) had been issued with title deeds (owing to the negligence and dilatoriness of the Cape Survey Office) and were thus unable to offer security for purchases at stock auctions.<sup>761</sup> Additionally, the size of their individual erven and commonages would probably not have carried sufficient sheep to make wool farming worthwhile.<sup>762</sup> Moreover, had they managed to overcome these obstacles, it is unlikely they would have been very successful, as the vegetation in Kat River is not conducive to sheep farming (but good for goats). Some white farmers tried to run a few sheep in the less bushy parts of Stockenstrom, but with little success.<sup>763</sup>

The labour of coloured Kat River settlers, however, was highly prized by sheep farmers in the surrounding areas. Nevertheless, being of an independent nature, few Kat

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<sup>757</sup> An exodus commonly referred to as the Great Trek. Reasons for trekking out of the Colony comprised inter alia “severe losses” caused by inadequate compensation for their slaves after the abolition of slavery, plunder by indigenes, and despair of Stockenstrom’s support. See points 1-4 of Piet Retief’s Manifesto, Grahamstown, 22 January 1837, in Theal, 6: 266. In leaving the Colony they claimed that they ceased to be British subjects. *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>758</sup> Kirk, 231.

<sup>759</sup> Denzil Pringle, Telephone conversation with the author, 27 May 2016.

<sup>760</sup> Kirk, 230. Stockenstrom promoted stud farming in the Graaff-Reinet Agricultural Society and imported some of the first merino sheep to that area. He also imported some “fine Dutch rams”, and asked the Pringles to help the farmers manage their wool. See Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1: 206 and 2: 446-47.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>763</sup> Interview with Ronnie Smith, formerly of Mountain Top farm, Blinkwater, 4 July 2016.

River settlers were keen to sell take service.<sup>764</sup> And those that did, were regarded as not exerting themselves sufficiently and being averse to continuous employment—not surprisingly, as the wages Kirk quotes were lower than average.<sup>765</sup> The coloureds’ resistance to pressure from the Godlonton faction and the white commercial classes, led to accusations that they were not responding positively to the changing economic situation in Kat River, and efforts were redoubled to dispossess them. Kirk suggests that this could have contributed to the causes of the Rebellion, and that gradually Kat River inhabitants were “dispersed or forced into service”.<sup>766</sup> It must be remembered, though, that terms of the original Kat River contract did not allow them to sell their land to whites. There were a number of them that remained on the land and sold their produce at the local markets.<sup>767</sup> In the meantime, as more whites moved into Kat River, the price of land, aided by rampant speculation, soared.<sup>768</sup>

There were, however, spurts of resistance to commercial farmers; as, for example, in the Mankazana ward in 1875, when the rural poor, including *bijwoners*, objected to wool farmers burning the veld to improve the grazing:

The only reason why a poor family can’t get a living at thatch cuttings is because the rich sheepfarmer [who] wants green pasture for his sheep . . . saddles up his horse, and rides along the veldt with a box of favourite Tandstickors, and drops them lighted into the grass.<sup>769</sup>

Additionally, government regulations for collecting firewood and cutting timber and thatch reeds had become more stringent concerning sizes and quotas, and licences more costly.<sup>770</sup> It was not a system that favoured the indigent.

## Booms and slumps

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<sup>764</sup> The LMS missionaries were blamed for encouraging self-sufficiency and some mission stations such as Genadendal where the people did not want to work as labourers came under fire. There were also calls from colonists for a Vagabond *Wet* (vagrancy law) to force the “vagrants” (Khoikhoi who refused to labour for the whites) to work for masters. Kirk, 233-4.

<sup>765</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>767</sup> See the interview with Hymie Groepe in the chapter, “Forcing the gates open”.

<sup>768</sup> For example, whereas in 1850 a good erf might have fetched £20, an erf in 1858 sold for as much as £1 400. *Ibid.*, 242. The hike in land prices was also due to much speculation, with wealthy whites buying land and reselling it. *Ibid.*

<sup>769</sup> Quoted by C. L. Bundy, “Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen: White Poverty in the Cape before Poor Whiteism”, in W. Beinart, et al, *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850-1930* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), 109.

<sup>770</sup> Cape of Good Hope Statistical Register, 1876, B4, Sources of Revenue.

The wool price dropped between 1865 and 1869. There were simultaneous slumps in wine exports, and a local and international banking crisis. The depression that ensued led to high unemployment in Port Elizabeth.<sup>771</sup> It is not mentioned how this affected Stockenstrom. From the 1870s onwards, boosted by the discovery of diamonds in 1876, commercial farming in Stockenstrom became more progressive. The boom was followed by a series of small booms and slumps. The eruption of the ninth frontier war (1878-79) and a severe drought slowed down economic growth,<sup>772</sup> with another short boom in 1879-80 being followed by a trade depression in 1882-86.

Statistics for 1898-99 show a marked increase in the Stockenstrom crop<sup>773</sup> as well as pastoral production.<sup>774</sup> (It is probable that the coloured farmers only supplied small local markets, as earlier on they had been squeezed out of the commissariat market by commercial farmers. Originally they had supplied the army with fodder, but already in 1840 they were outbid and not awarded the usual contract).<sup>775</sup> The number of oxen in the area (2 803) shows to what extent ploughing and transport in Stockenstrom still depended on them, although some steam traction ploughs and tractors were being imported, and the Pirie sawmills were the first in South Africa to convert to steam (in 1859).<sup>776</sup> Despite the depression of 1903, pastoral statistics for Stockenstrom in 1904 show 70 640 woolled sheep, 14 115 crossbreed sheep, 10 826 angora goats, and 21 734 other goats. The branch line from King William's Town to Middledrift was completed in 1903. By 1904 the railway line—which included Fort Beaufort—had reached Adelaide. Owing to the tobacco boom in Kat River, the line was extended from Fort Beaufort to Seymour, where the first tobacco cooperative was established.

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<sup>771</sup> Bundy, 106.

<sup>772</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-7.

<sup>773</sup> Production totalling 1 619 muids of wheat (a muid equalling approximately 109.2 litres), 1 393 muids of barley, 115 muids of oats, 495 600 bundles of oathay, 5 392 muids of mealies, and 3 811 muids of potatoes.

<sup>774</sup> With statistics showing a total of 157 stallions, 740 mares, 533 geldings, 8 mules, 74 asses, 263 bulls, 4 002 cows and heifers, 2 803 oxen, 452 ostriches, and 1 018 pigs in Stockenstrom.

<sup>775</sup> See Williams, 133, quoting LMSLLSA, Read to Sec., 26/1/1841.

<sup>776</sup> J. and T. Perks obtained the first steam licence. Their machinery was installed by W. Haynes, who came from England to do so. Later Haynes took over the mill which became the Victoria Saw Mills. He also imported machinery for making yellowwood tongue-and-groove floor boards and ceiling boards. A. Burton, *Sparks from the Border Anvil* (King William's Town: Provincial Publishing Company, 1950), 223-24.

## Tobacco farming

Tobacco farming on former Kat River commonages was made possible by the passing of the Boedel Erven Act and *Snywet* (fencing law). Early Kat River settlers who had been allowed to hold land without title were known as the Boedel-Erven heirs. They were increasingly regarded as “stumbling blocks to capitalist enterprise” as their land could not be sold or detached for debt. In 1905 the Boedel Erven Act, fathered by the Seymour lawyer, Augustus Adendorff, was passed. It defined those who had the legal right to land in Stockenstrom, and provided the necessary legal mechanisms for the survey and transfer of this land to heirs, as well as the sub-division of the commonages, provided that two-thirds of the erfholders approved it.

As soon as the Boedel Erven claims were approved, Fenner-Solomon—who had bought Adendorff’s practice—extended “lavish” credit to the Boedel Erven heirs, paid for their transfer deeds, informed his clients only verbally of government charges, his legal fees and the loans he extended to them, offered them time to pay him, and kept no records. Co-heirs were made jointly indebted and severally liable for the payment of the bond. Most of Fenner-Solomon’s debtors were ignorant of what they owed him, as he seldom sent out written accounts. He allegedly ended up with bonds worth £3 413 from 82 Kat River erfholders, and Adendorff with 5 bonds worth £810. Finally, “as the mortgages foreclosed and two-thirds of village erven fell into white hands, the Kat River commonages were fenced in as part of the *Snywet* of the Boedel Erven Act”;<sup>777</sup> and more coloured people were robbed of their livelihoods as their commons, a place “outside the realm of buying and selling”, a place of sharing and reciprocation, were expropriated, and an economy grounded on “the triplets of evil named by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, namely, militarism, racism, and consumerism”<sup>778</sup> was consolidated. In the meantime commercial farming thrive and Stockenstrom tobacco farming attracted global attention.

The Stockenstrom commonages were eminently suited to tobacco farming, with strong water sources enabling flood irrigation of the crops. White Burley tobacco from America was one of the early varieties grown for export. The government established a tobacco cooperative in Seymour, which was moved later to Balfour. In 1890, together with

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<sup>777</sup> See Jeff Peires, “The Legend of Fenner-Solomon,” in *Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives*, ed., Belinda Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987), 77-90.

<sup>778</sup> Linebaugh, “Some Principles of the Commons”. See also *Stop Thief*, 18-32, and *The Magna Carta Manifesto Liberties and Commons for All*.

other global crops, Stockenstrom tobacco showed signs of fusarian wilt. The British entomologist and parasitologist, C. P. Lounsbury, who spent some time in Stockenstrom researching the disease, published his findings locally and abroad.<sup>779</sup> Plants imported to the Cape were increasingly scrutinised, with regulations being drafted in 1897 to control them. Lounsbury, who studied fungi and other cryptogams, was allegedly the first to construct a fumigation chamber, using hydrogen cyanide to sterilise the imported plants.<sup>780</sup>

How long did the tobacco boom last? According to my interviewees, Stockenstrom tobacco farmers did well until the 1980s, when tobacco prices slumped, owing to a glut in the market. Kat River tobacco was sold to the mines,<sup>781</sup> and also to Rembrandt, who distributed it in small hessian bags with drawcords. Kat River tobacco, also known as called *Kat-tabak*, was highly prized, with Xhosa smokers as far afield as Komgha insisting only on tobacco from Kat River. The tobacco bags were used by black and white alike for storing small objects like coins.<sup>782</sup>

The government established a tobacco cooperative at Seymour, which was later moved to Balfour. There were sidings along the branchline line from Fort Beaufort to Seymour. The train ran three times a week, carrying the mail, delivering supplies to farmers and traders, and transporting tobacco and citrus.<sup>783</sup> Several of the coloured people from Kat River were employed as watchmen and truck drivers at the co-operatives. And, on the tobacco farms, coloured people were favoured for picking, sorting and drying the tobacco leaves.<sup>784</sup> Large scale tobacco farming continued until Stockenstrom was subsumed into a bantustan in the 1980s, after which many white farmers left the area.

## Ostrich farming

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<sup>779</sup> It was published in the *Agricultural Journal of the Cape Of Good Hope*, and cited in the *Washington Journal of Agricultural Research*. See <http://naldc.nal.usda.gov/naldc/download.xhtml?id=IND43966361&content=PDF>, accessed, 31 March 2016.

<sup>780</sup> Lounsbury, a foundation member of the South African Biological Society, was awarded a medal by the South African Association for the Advancement of Science in 1915.

<sup>781</sup> The miners were rationed with tobacco and some farmers had contacts at the mines.

<sup>782</sup> Telephone conversations with Ken Hagemann, Komgha, 12 March 2016, and Des Kopke, 25 April 2016.

<sup>783</sup> Telephone conversation with Ronnie Smith, formerly of Mountain Top, Blinkwater, 19 March 2016, and interview in Port Alfred, 2 July 2016.

<sup>784</sup> Author interview with an anonymous former tobacco farmer in Kat River, 2016.

Between 1891 and 1904 Kat River benefited from the global ostrich-feather boom. From 154 786 ostriches being farmed in Stockenstrom in 1891, the number rose to 357 808 in 1904. The pioneer in ostrich-stud farming in South Africa, Gilbert White, owned a farm in Kat River in the early 1900s. His descendants turned to citrus farming when the ostrich price crashed in 1913.<sup>785</sup> Some of the coloured farmers, such as Adam Peffer from Peffer's Kop bred geese for feathers,<sup>786</sup> and supplied Pudneys in Port Elizabeth—a well-known dealer in ostrich and other feathers. Other smallholders in Tamboekiesvlei, such as Anna Pringle's father, Abraham Smit and William (Wills) Loots kept ostriches in a “camp” in Tamboekiesvlei, selling the feathers and eggs to local traders.<sup>787</sup>

Crop production was good in the early 1900s, with Stockenstrom producing 5 178 bags of potatoes and 224 545 pounds of tobacco per annum in 1904—outrivalling Somerset East's annual production of 600 pounds of tobacco.<sup>788</sup> Lucerne was a popular crop, as it could be flood irrigated. Besides being used as stock fodder, it was an important feed for ostriches.<sup>789</sup> A cheaper feed for ostriches was the prickly pear.

## War on the prickly pear

The prickly pear/*Opuntia ficus-indica*, (L.) Mill,<sup>790</sup>—thought to have been brought to the Cape by an East Indiaman from Central America—was first observed at the Cape in the 1770s by the Swedish botanist, Carl Thunberg.<sup>791</sup> In 1776, the explorer/traveller Andries Sparrman noted a “large cactus” in the Camdeboo from which the local people made brandy. Its origin was traced to the burgher, Van den Bergh, who had taken some leaves of the plant from the Cape to his farm at Buffelshoek. Two years later, leaves were taken to Bruijntjieshoogte (Somerset East area), and *Opuntia ficus-indica* (the prickly pear/*itolofiya* (Xh.)/*Turksvy* (Afr., Turkish fig) spread from Somerset East to Pearston, and further afield.<sup>792</sup>

<sup>785</sup> Telephone conversation, Gert van der Westhuizen, 30 April 2016. -

<sup>786</sup> On Peffer, see the chapter on Hymie Groepe, “Forcing the gates open”.

<sup>787</sup> Email communication, Salome Groepe to the author, 3 March 2016.

<sup>788</sup> Cape of Good Statistical Register, 1904.

<sup>789</sup> William Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock and Environment, 1770-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 272.

<sup>790</sup> Also called *Opuntia megacanthus* Salm Dyck or *Opuntia vulgaris*, Mill.

<sup>791</sup> And recorded in his *Flora Capensis* in 1823.

<sup>792</sup> D. P. Annecke and V. C. Moran, “Critical Reviews of Biological pest control in South Africa, the Prickly pear, *Opuntus Ficus Indica* (L) Miller,” *Journal of Agriculture Africa*, 1878, Vol. 41, No. 2, 161-188. <http://www.arc.agric.za/arc-ppri/Documents/Annecke%20Moran%20Prickly%20pear%20Review.pdf>,

By 1888 prickly pear multiplication had become a “serious nuisance” and at meetings in Cradock eradication was recommended. Four select committees examined it between 1890 and 1904, after the Department of Agriculture (established in 1887) drew attention to it.<sup>793</sup> As the fruit is so versatile— it can be eaten fresh, used for preserves, or as yeast, or for making alcohol—and grows easily, and require only an annual rainfall of 300-500 mm, progressive farmers and agricultural experts advocated it as fodder for supplementing the veld during droughts.<sup>794</sup> Subsistence farmers depended on it for domestic use and fodder.

The two main varieties of prickly pear comprised the *doornblad* (thorn leaf) and the *kaalblad* (bare leaf). As the long conspicuous spines/spicules on the *doornblad* can be harmful to stock, the *kaalblad* was regarded as a better source of stock feed, though cattle (rather than sheep or goats) can feed off the thorny cladodes. Prickly pears were also used as ostrich feed in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>795</sup>

As prickly pear plants multiplied—birds, baboons, and rivers assisting its distribution—further damage to stock was noted. Lodged in the gullet and stomach lining of the animals, spicules can cause potentially fatal sores, swelling and inflammation. Ostriches can also be blinded by it. Additionally, prickly pear groves were seen as harbouring squatters and thieves, a factor that encouraged racism. As the plant was so useful, both progressive and subsistence farmers opposed eradication.<sup>796</sup> Partial (mechanical) eradication was tried, as was boiling or steaming the thorny prickly pear in vats to soften/burn off the spicules to render it useful as fodder.

Public opinion was divided on the issue. Eradication proponents argued that prickly pear diminished the value of farms and was expensive to eradicate. In 1891 it was estimated that it would cost £320 000 to eradicate it in heavily-infested areas. The state intervened, distributing poison free of charge between 1898 and 1905. During the depression in 1905 they charged half price. After Union (1910) eradication of plant and animal pests became a provincial responsibility.<sup>797</sup>

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Could the burgher have been Veld-korporaal Hendrik Van den Bergh, who lived “south of the Camdeboo”? See Nigel Penn, *Frontiers*, 127-128.

<sup>793</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>794</sup> Ibid., 268-9.

<sup>795</sup> Ibid., 267-280.

<sup>796</sup> Progressive farmer G. H. Maasdorp, MLA for Graaff-Reinet, for example, pointed out how many people depended on it. Beinart, *Conservation*, 277.

<sup>797</sup> Ibid., 263-89. Much later, biological control was used. Based on the successful control of cottony cushion scale (identified in 1878 in New Zealand) by means of the ladybird beetle [*Rodolia*

Prickly pear eradication also played into the hands of the Seymour lawyer, Vivian Fenner-Solomon. Using government legislation, he allegedly frightened the coloured landowners in Stockenstrom into selling their land cheaply to him and reselling it at higher prices to whites (see the interview with Hymie Groepe and Tom Pringle).

## Stock farming

Like other parts of South Africa, Stockenstrom was affected by stock diseases such as the Rinderpest (Steppe murrain) epizootic/cattle plague in the 1890s, East Coast Fever (heartwater disease) in both cattle and sheep, redwater disease (*Bovine babesiosis*) in cattle,<sup>798</sup> and scab in sheep. Poisonous plants also caused stock losses. White, black and coloured farmers routinely treated their own sick animals.<sup>799</sup> The highest losses of sheep to scab occurred in the 1870s in the Fort Beaufort area, where sheep were infested with worms/fluke (newly-hatched eggs). In 1874 the Cape Government passed the Scab Act, and set up a scab commission in 1890. Dipping and isolation were recommended but not enforced like the 1860 lung-sickness legislation.<sup>800</sup> Some of the poorer farmers concocted their own dips, using strong solutions of nicotine to discourage ticks.<sup>801</sup>

From Rhodes's administration onwards there was an increasing interest in the scientific causes of stock and plant diseases.<sup>802</sup> Environmental consciousness developed from investigations into the cause of scab, thought to be caused by worms, which was linked to overstocking the veld. By the 1870s farmers were more aware of the number of stock their lands could carry, and realised that denuded veld led to soil erosion. This, however, did not solve the problem for Stockenstrom subsistence farmers, who lacked camps/paddocks for rotation. Some commissioners, such as Branford, also warned against kraaling sheep, which could spread heartwater disease, and advocated paddocking. Again the poorer pastoralists could not afford this option.

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*cardinalis, the introducior*], cochineal insects were introduced to South Africa in 1913, resulting in the virtual eradication of *Opuntia vulgaris/Opuntia ficus-indica*.

<sup>798</sup> "African and Asiatic Redwater in Cattle", 4 June 2015, *Farmer's Weekly*, 4 June 2015.

<http://www.farmersweekly.co.za/article.aspx?id=74503&h=African-and-Asiatic-Redwater--in-cattle> accessed 14 April 2016.

<sup>799</sup> Beinart, *Conservation*, 133.

<sup>800</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>801</sup> Telephone conversations with Hymie Groepe and Des Kopke, respectively, 26 May 2016.

<sup>802</sup> Beinart, *Conservation*, 131-32.

The passing of the Contagious Diseases Act of 1881 enabled the government to restrict the spread of epizootics. An experimental farm to examine disease was established at Leeufontein in the Koonap district, where the highest sheep mortality occurred.<sup>803</sup> It was believed that ticks caused heartwater (so dubbed by farmers as it caused fluid on the heart)<sup>804</sup> in sheep and cattle, and extensive burning of the veld was practised. Ironically, this reduced the number of tick-eating birds. The government also promoted—and later enforced—the dipping of stock.<sup>805</sup>

## Stock diseases and treatment

From plant pest control, C. P. Lounsbury turned to the study of ticks as disease vectors. In 1902 there was an outbreak of what was thought to be redwater disease in the Transvaal. Specimens of the blue tick, *Rhipicephalus (Boophilus) decoloratus*—known to be the usual vectors for redwater—were taken from infected cattle and sent to Lounsbury (then in Cape Town). He discovered that blue ticks were not the cause of the disease—East Coast fever—but a new protozoan parasite. (East Coast fever was thought to have reached South Africa through cattle imported from the Mozambican coast.) After conducting extensive experiments with ticks on cattle, sheep, goats and dogs in the Cape, in 1904 Lounsbury discovered that the disease was caused by the brown ear tick.<sup>806</sup> He mapped out the life-cycle of different ticks and classified them according to how long each species spent on a specific host. During the early part of the tick's life-cycle the infected animal could transfer the disease to other animals. Fencing was used to restrain infected stock from mixing with the uninfected, and dipping was vigorously promoted. Stock infected with the brown/*bont* tick

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<sup>803</sup>So-called because in 1847, Buck Adams had sat on the verandah at Leeufontein farmhouse with his master and hosts, the Moffats, and watched four adult lions and two cubs drinking at a small stream near the house. Adams was surprised that the dogs guarding the sheep near the house were not disturbed. *The Narrative of Buck Adams, 7<sup>th</sup> Princess Royal's Dragoon Guards on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape of Good Hope, 1843-1848*, ed., A. Gordon-Brown (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1941), 212-13. Rob Sparks, former owner of Leeufontein, confirmed that there was a seasonal spring below the old house. Telephone conversation with the author, 21 November 2016

<sup>804</sup> Beinart, *Conservation*, 143.

<sup>805</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>806</sup> Lounsbury worked with Arnold Theiler on East Coast Fever. Initially, he housed his tick host animals in builders' sheds throughout Cape Town. Cattle, goats, sheep and dogs were kept for experiments without much objection from public health authorities. In 1903 he found an out-of-town stables to accommodate his "hosts". [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C.\\_P.\\_Lounsbury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._P._Lounsbury) accessed 10 April 2016.

required weekly dipping.<sup>807</sup> Whilst conducting his research in the Fort Beaufort-Adelaide area, Lounsbury stayed at Baddaford, at the Kat River Poort, with Llewellyn James Roberts—the farmer who invented made fences from bent piping to restrain his stock and invented the metal gate. He also introduced the navel orange to the area.<sup>808</sup>

After 1910 state veterinary services were unified, and a year later the Diseases of Stock Act was passed, making dipping compulsory. The government encouraged farmers to build plunge dipping tanks, and offered them low-interest loans. They also built communal dipping tanks in the Native Reserves, the Transkei, and in Stockenström. In the 1970s the Fort Beaufort Divisional Council built a dipping tank at Lower Blinkwater, above the old Catholic Church.<sup>809</sup> One was also built in Hertzog, which is still used by Tamboekiesvlei people.

In areas where East Coast Fever was particularly severe, dipping took place every five weeks. Livestock inspectors were responsible for administering livestock laws, which included restricting the movement of stock. Later, this became a municipal responsibility. East Coast Fever spread, however, with 80% of stock dying from it in the Eastern Cape, the Transvaal and Natal. Only in 1953 was South Africa declared free of the disease.<sup>810</sup> As a result of the dips used—poisons such as DDT, arsenic soda, and later Toxaphene—insects and other wildlife, as well as the soil and water near former dipping tanks, have been exterminated or polluted.<sup>811</sup> Toxaphene sales were restricted from 1982 and banned in the USA in 1990.

## Adaptation

Adopting the tradition of transhumance, white stock farmers in Stockenström made the most of the two biomes in the area—the sweet and sour veld—moving their stock in winter from Kat River to the sourveld plateau in Kaalhoek. To facilitate this they used coloured or black

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<sup>807</sup> See William Beinart and Karen Brown, *African Local Knowledge and Livestock Health: Diseases and Treatments in South Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2013), 35 and Karen Brown, “Tropical Medicine and Animal Diseases: Onderstepoort and the Development of Veterinary Science in South Africa 1908–1950”, *Journal of South African Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (September 2005), 513–29. Lounsbury worked with Arnold Theiler on East Coast fever. *Ibid.*

<sup>808</sup> Email communication, Llewellyn Roberts to the author, 11 April 2016.

<sup>809</sup> Gert van der Westhuizen, telephone conversation, 30 April 2016. Gert built the dip.

<sup>810</sup> *Ibid.*, 36

<sup>811</sup> These poisons were thought to have exterminated the entire dung-beetle population in Kat River. Telephone conversation with Des Kopke, 19 May 2016.

stock drivers, for whom they built huts along the way.<sup>812</sup> Existing roads and passes were used, as were short cuts/cross-country tracks—known as *trekpads* (from the Afrikaans *trek*, to move, and *pad*, road). Remnants of these can be seen in the Kluklu area, from where cattle were driven from Sephton/Sipton Manor, across Olive Cliffs in Fuller’s Hoek, and up the Blinkwater Pass to the plateau behind Fort Fordyce.<sup>813</sup> Farmers in the Bedford area, such as the Hockleys from the farm Cullindale, paired with Fountainhead in the Winterberg, for grazing, running their stock on the valley sweetveld in winter and droving the animals to the high ground in the Ruitjies area for the summer.<sup>814</sup>

Owing to droughts, depressions, and the growth of commercial farming, many small-scale coloured farmers continued to be squeezed off the land. Many of them remained on their erven and continued to practise mixed farming and grow a few crops,<sup>815</sup> and others continued to live there but became transport riders.<sup>816</sup> Others earned livings as blacksmiths, masons, carpenters, gangers, dam builders,<sup>817</sup> watchmen at the local citrus and tobacco co-operatives, and chefs, waiters, and cleaners at inns. From 1855 onwards, owing to increased traffic and later, the advent of commercial travellers, more inns/hotels were built on the main road through Kat River, and at the base of passes such as the Bushneck Pass. Yet others had the opportunity to acquire mechanical skills. During the twentieth century several young Tamboekiesvlei men went to work at General Motors in Port Elizabeth and were trained as tractor mechanics at the Mthonjeni Training Centre outside Port Elizabeth (see the interviews with Hymie Groepe and Wykie Loots.)

## Animal pests and extermination

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<sup>812</sup> There was a hut in what is now the Mpofo Reserve, one in Kaalhoek and one in Sweetman’s forest at the Post Retief junction. Site visit with Gert van der Westhuizen, 3 July 1916.

<sup>813</sup> Ibid.

<sup>814</sup> Nigel Brunette, email communication to the author, 19 December 2016.

<sup>815</sup> Such as the Peffers and their descendants in the Lushington area. According to Sarah Benn, whose great-grandmother, Louise, was a half sister of Adam Peffer (see interview with Hymie Groepe) the land that Adam Peffer lived on belonged to Louise, and Sarah remembers holidays on the farm. Sarah Benn, email communication to the author, 26 March 2017 and 8 January 2018.

<sup>816</sup> Prior to this the Khoikhoi were renowned for their expertise as wagon- or post-cart drivers, although sometimes caricatured in this role. See Godlonton, *Narrative*, 1: 47, and the “adventures” of Kippie the postcart driver and Boesac on the Ecca Pass, A. W. Burton, *Sparks from the Border Anvil*, 122-25. On transport drivers from Bethelsdorp in the mid-1820s, see J. S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1652–1937* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1957), 150, fn. 5.

<sup>817</sup> Poor whites were vying for similar jobs during the 1912 depression, although more of them became navvies. See Bundy, “Vagabond Hollanders”, in Beinart, *Putting a Plough*, 111.

All classes in the Eastern Province—from governors and the military to the poorest subsistence farmers—hunted jackals (also called foxes) for sport or to protect their flocks.<sup>818</sup> The Khoikhoi ate jackals, and the amaXhosa made use of the pelts. At one time there was also a small market for jackal skins. Africans and Khoikhoi/coloured people used dogs in hunting jackals—and still do—but they are difficult to spot during the day, and difficult to corner. White farmers built fences to safeguard their stock, burying the wire deeply to prevent burrowing. From the end of the nineteenth century, poison—in the form of strychnine—was the most popular means of extermination, with poisoning clubs, congresses and agricultural journals advocating its use. Farmers in Graaff-Reinet and Pearston were particularly active in jackal extermination—as were those in Stockenstrom—with a proliferation of wild poisoning clubs in these areas.<sup>819</sup>

During 1889 the state encouraged extermination, offering bounties for jackal tails. These and caracal tails fetched a flat rate of 7 shillings each, with bounty payouts totalling £1 000 during 1898 and 1899. Rewards were also offered for black eagles—called *lammervangers* (lambcatchers), as they were thought to prey on lambs.<sup>820</sup> The first Anglo-Boer War slowed down jackal extermination. As poison began to be less effective, with jackals regurgitating it, poison pills were embedded in fat from sheep stomachs.<sup>821</sup> The Game Amendment Law of 1886 extended hunting permits to cover vermin, although it was feared that this would jeopardise protected game in the forests. Farms with prickly pear were also regarded as harbouring jackals.

The amaXhosa were better at controlling sheep-killing jackals, as their youth hunted with dogs on a daily basis. Coloured farmers also used/use dogs for hunting jackals and caracal (see interview with Hymie Groepe).<sup>822</sup> Jackals also prey on ostrich eggs, which affected the ostrich farmers as well. During the 1890s the efficacy of poisoning and the indiscriminate use of it were questioned, as it was also killing hawks, vultures, mice and domestic dogs.<sup>823</sup>

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<sup>818</sup> Ibid., 207. Lord Charles Somerset and his son Henry were avid hunters and the 7<sup>th</sup> Dragoons hunted jackals for sport or to “keep up their blood”. See Susan I. Blackbeard, “Acts of Severity”, 173. Foxhounds were brought from England, and kennels built for them at the Fort Beaufort and King William’s Town barracks.

<sup>819</sup> Telephone conversation with Hymie Groepe, 15 May 2016. See also Beinart, *Conservation*, 209.

<sup>820</sup> It was thought that all eagles killed lambs. During the [Great] Depression years a farmer in Somerset East killed 57 eagles in 5 years. At another time, 150 were killed and 2 brought in for a reward. Ibid., 322-2.

<sup>821</sup> Ibid., 215-17.

<sup>822</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>823</sup> Ibid. 216-17.

Debates ensued about the blanket destruction of jackals, including the silver jackal/fox, *maanhaar jakkals/aardwolf* and the *draaiback jakkals*, with some arguing that not all of them damaged flocks.<sup>824</sup> Similarly, there were debates against state intervention and state subsidies of poison and bounties, which were abused by some shepherds allowing jackals to grow up to increase the size of their tails.<sup>825</sup>

After Union, the Provincial Council of the Cape assumed responsibility for vermin control. Hunting clubs replaced poison clubs. In 1914 subsidies were offered for a pack of more than five hunting dogs. All races participated in the prevailing “sporting spirit”. In 1916 it was estimated that vermin killed 7.5-10% of woolled sheep annually. The Cape Administrator, Sir Nicolaas Frederic de Waal, launched a “merciless” campaign against the jackal, for which there was to be “no armistice”. Between 1914 and 1917, 282 124 jackal pelts came in, amounting to almost £50 000 per annum. As the market value of pelts increased, the provincial Extermination Commission of 1923-24 tightened control of the sales.

Those who could afford to, erected jackal fencing or paddocked their sheep/goats, thereby affecting the livelihoods of *bijwoners* and herders in the southern Cape<sup>826</sup> and possibly Stockenstrom. It does not seem to have affected the Tamboekiesvlei people, who originally employed Xhosa herders but currently herd their own stock (see the interview with Hymie Groepe). Statistics confirm that fencing increased the survival of sheep, with paddocked sheep maturing quicker. This minimised the effects on the drought of 1923 on progressive farmers, whereas the poorer ones suffered losses.

## Water storage and irrigation

Uncertain rainfall has always been a problem in South Africa, and various colonial governments tried different methods of addressing it. Under the British administrations of Rhodes, Milner<sup>827</sup> and Jamieson, Percy Fitzpatrick and Thomas William Smartt introduced

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<sup>824</sup> The *aardwolf* (Afr. for earth wolf), *Proteles cristata*, is a small, indigenous insectivorous mammal that feeds on insects and termites. Also called the *maanhaarjakkals* (jackal with a mane), it is related to the hyena.

<sup>825</sup> Beinart, *Conservation*, 218.

<sup>826</sup> Commission of Enquiry into Coloured People, 1917, *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>827</sup> Forestry reconstruction was also “a key element of Milner’s plans”. See Brett Bennet and Fred Kruger, *Forestry and Water Conservation in South Africa, History Science and Policy* (Sydney: Australian National University Press), 57-59.

storage dams to replace *saaidamme*.<sup>828</sup> Irrigation in South Africa was further advanced by Afrikaner politicians bent on improving the lot of poor whites.<sup>829</sup> Thus, the passing of the Irrigation and Conservation of Waters Act of 1912, which led to the construction of big storage systems, the employment of water experts, and creation of water courts which could cede rights to non-riparian owners.<sup>830</sup> Stockenstrom, however, was not the recipient of a large government-sponsored dam and irrigation scheme until 1969.

Like original Kat River settlers, white farmers in Stockenstrom first used gravity-fed earth furrows for flood irrigation, leading water in rows between crops, or in circles around fruit trees. They also built earth storage dams, using scoops drawn by oxen, to tide them over the dry seasons when streams ceased to flow. Later the farmers installed paraffin engines to pump water up from the rivers, followed by diesel, and then electric pumps. Currently, solar power is used. The Balfour River, which then had deep pools and weirs, seldom ran dry. In the 1930s Eugene Rudman of the farm, Flanders, on the former Balfour commonage, installed an irrigation pump on the Balfour River bank, powered by a Ruston-Hornsby paraffin engine.

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<sup>828</sup> Percy Fitzpatrick spent ten years resurrecting an irrigation scheme in the Sundays River Valley. Beinart, *Conservation*, 188. Smartt, the Irishman after whom the Smartt Dam near Britstown was named, formed the Smartt Syndicate, in 1895. Beinart, *Conservation*, 165-166. A *saaidam* (Afr./Du., sowing dam) was a *vlei* or natural shallow lake, which was used for cultivation during the dry season, a system also called *décrue*. See Ross *Borders*, 45.

<sup>829</sup> For example, the DRC established the Kakamas irrigation settlement (in the northern Cape) to help poor whites. Beinart, *Conservation*, 166.

<sup>830</sup> *Ibid.*, 186. The Water Court was established in 1906.



**Figure 44 Eugene Rudman and his wife Nancy, and the first water from the Balfour River on the farm Flanders, mid 1930s (photograph courtesy of A Rudman)**

In 1969 a multi-arch dam was built on the Kat River near Seymour. Eugene Rudman was also involved in this project. The dam was capable of supplying water to approximately 1 600 ha of arable land downstream of the dam. White farmers were offered the opportunity to participate in the project called the Kat River Catchment (KRC) plan. At the turn of the century the Kat River, in terms of the Kat River Water User Association's constitution, was divided into three districts: the Upper Kat, the Middle Kat and the Lower Kat. This came about after the new Act of 1998, at a workshop in Fort Beaufort facilitated by Rhodes University's Department of Geography.

The Upper Kat allocation was 1 100 ha which had been part of the Ciskei State. The farms are owned either by emerging black farmers or the state, and the water allocation is not fully utilised today. The Middle Kat was fully utilised by mainly white commercial farmers. (This area was not included in the consolidation of Ciskei.) The Lower Kat was the non-scheduled South African farmers who had agreed not to be included when the Kat Dam was

allocated in 1969.<sup>831</sup> The coloured people of Kat River are not beneficiaries of this project but have to fetch water from the rivers by donkey cart.



Figure 45 Eugene Rudman viewing the Kat River dam under construction, May 1966 (Photograph courtesy of A Rudman)

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<sup>831</sup>Email communication from Llew Roberts, 2 November 2016. For water projects launched in 1996 to assist Kat River villagers in the broader Kat River catchment area, see the chapter, “Economic and ecological sustainability of Kat River”.

## Chapter 19: Kat River/Stockenstrom levies and volunteers, 1878-1914

Groepe was still field-commandant of Stockenstrom in 1876—a testimony to the fact that the government still trusted him—at the time that J. Bisset was Civil Commissioner and L. G. Meurant was clerk. There is, however, no mention of field-cornets in the Cape of Good Hope Statistical Register for 1876,<sup>832</sup> and the task of raising local volunteer corps and levies had since fallen to local whites in positions of authority.<sup>833</sup>

### The ninth frontier war (1878-79), Morosi's Mountain (1879),<sup>834</sup> and the Basutoland Rebellion (1880-81)<sup>835</sup>

Volunteer units and levies continued to be raised in Stockenstrom after the Kat River Rebellion. As Major Anthony (Tony) Step explained to the author:

A levy was formed by a prominent white ex-soldier, farmer or official who was highly respected in the area by the local inhabitants. He also had some influence over the local chiefs, headman or community leaders.

The Stockenstrom Volunteer Rifles was raised in 1862 and re-raised in August 1877 under Capt J. W. Green, with the strength of 2 officers and 43 other ranks. In 1878 they had a strength of 3 officers and 97 men, of whom 25 were mounted. The dismounted men apparently took the title of 1<sup>st</sup> Company, and came from the Balfour Rifles. They were an infantry unit of the Eastern Province which served in the ninth frontier war and at Morosi's Mountain in 1879. On 30 September 1880 the strength was three officers and 87 other ranks, and the unit formed part of the garrison of Maseru during the Basutoland Rebellion of 1880-81.<sup>836</sup>

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<sup>832</sup> Bisset, the (acting?) civil commissioner in Stockenstrom, was drawing an annual salary of £150 and Groepe a salary of £28 in 1876. Cape of Good Hope Statistical Register, 1878, A36, Civil Establishment.

<sup>833</sup> Ross maintains that this ruling was questioned. Andries Hatha, however, supported it, maintaining that they (the coloured recruits) preferred white officers. See Ross, *Borders*, 289.

<sup>834</sup> Morosi/Maroosi was a Baphethi chief in southern Basutoland. On this war see J. J. Hulme, "Morosi's Mountain: A Royal Engineer's Report", *South African Military Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 3. June 1990. See also Geoffrey Tylden, "The capture of Morosi's Mountain, 1879", *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, no. 15 (1936), 208-15; and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morosi>.

<sup>835</sup> The information in this section was provided by Major A. Step, Buffalo Volunteers, East London, via email communication on 19 April 2016. Any errors that occur in the transcription of the text are the author's.

<sup>836</sup> *Ibid.*

The Stockenstrom Rangers was a mounted unit of three officers and 44 of other ranks, which served at Morosi's Mountain in 1879, and in the Basutoland Rebellion 1880-81. Also known as cavalry, they served in the ninth frontier war from October 1877 under Capt R. F. Rorke, with a strength of 3 officers and 46. On 11 May 1878 the 1<sup>st</sup> Company Stockenstrom Mounted Rifles was formed from the infantry unit the Stockenstrom Volunteer Rifles.

Two levies were also raised from Stockenstrom for the ninth frontier war. Capt T. F. Emmett formed the Hottentot Militia, and a levy was formed under J. Boyes on 4 January 1878 (see the medal roll), and initially comprised 40 cavalry and 60 infantry, with the addition of ten of other ranks.<sup>837</sup>

Medal rolls provide the only reliable information on who formed the levies and who served in them. Again, as Step explained:

Unless the corps took the name of their commanding officer or of a town or district, it is impossible to distinguish them. Medal rolls not only provide names of the members but indicate the wars in which they served. Medals were awarded with campaign clasps. Clasps of 1877-78 indicate that the recipients fought on the eastern frontier, while a clasp with the date 1879 indicate that the recipient could have been involved at Morosi's Mountain in 1879 or the Zulu war.<sup>838</sup>

The medal roll for Emmett's levy contains a number of well-known Kat River coloureds, such as Arends and Groepe, with the medal roll for Boyes' militia including Dragoener [Draghoender]. (See the medal rolls.)

### **“Non-white” levies**

According to a report in the Grahamstown Journal quoting Sir Gordon Sprigg, the Khoikhoi in this war were armed with guns of a “wretched character” and supplied with an “inferior quality of powder” and some (possibly unarmed) carried axes.<sup>839</sup> frontier war, owing to whites doubting the loyalty of “non-white allies”, Emmet's men were allegedly armed with

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<sup>837</sup> Step, 19/04/2016. According to Hummel, Boyes was killed in a skirmish in the Tyityaba Valley on 4 February 1878. *The Frontier War Journal of Major John Crealock*, 1878, ed., Chris Hummel (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1989), 88, fn 164.

<sup>838</sup> Step, 19/04/2016.

<sup>839</sup> *GTJ*, 23 January 1878.

poor weapons and the unarmed had to use axes.<sup>840</sup> A. W. Burton further described the guns as “gas tubes”.<sup>841</sup> Richard Moyer suggests that the whites doubted the loyalty of the Khoikhoi, and the latter were at a distinct disadvantage.<sup>842</sup> Major Step also comments on this and explains the context:

Much of the fighting in this war took place in dense forested areas such as the Tyityaba Valley,<sup>843</sup> Pirie Bush<sup>844</sup> and the Waterkloof. The British and colonial units used tactics such as surrounding the areas in which the enemy were ensconced and then sending in a force to flush them out. Irregular units like levies were formed from the local population, “who were young, fit and had amazing bush craft skills to perform these duties”. To recruit men like this, T. Emmett and J. Boyes would approach a local leader and ask for men to form a unit. The local leader would then summons all able-bodied men and they would volunteer en masse, thus enabling a levy to be immediately formed.<sup>845</sup>

On the other hand, volunteer units in existence at the time and new units to be formed would start volunteer recruiting drives, assisted by farmer associations/civic meetings, the use of the press, recruiting posters, etc. This was a more formal approach and recruited members would then fill in attestation forms, be enrolled and start training . . . This took time and the levies went into battle as immediately they were formed to assist the British Army and Colonial forces deployed at the time.

To arm them could have been a logistic nightmare and the only weapons available at the time were old redundant firearms stockpiled at garrison armouries at places like Fort Beaufort, Grahamstown and King William’s Town . . . Bush fighting was very much a close combat mobile-on-foot type of operation. The rifles at the time were single shot, long and cumbersome, and not suitable for dense bush warfare. Yes, they [the levies] were poorly armed but after the Kat River Rebellion no one trusted one another.<sup>846</sup>

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<sup>840</sup> See also *GTJ*, 23 January 1878. Hummel, quoting A. W. Burton Cory Library, MS 14, 254/13m ii, 87, described the old muzzle-loaders issued to the Khoi unit as “gas tubes”.

<sup>841</sup> Cory Library, MS 14, 254/13, iii, 119-20 (a summary of Crealock’s despatch dated 13 May 1878).

<sup>842</sup> R. Moyer, “The Mfengu, Self-Defence and the Cape Frontier Wars”, in *Beyond the Cape Frontier*, eds, Saunders and Derricourt, 103.

<sup>843</sup> On the Kei River near Komgha. For a detailed account of the Tyityaba skirmishes, see D. A. Webb, “Able to resist the attack of any enemy”? African Identity Formation, Colonial Attitudes and the Lower Kei Forts During the War of Ngqayecibi, 1877–1878”, *South African Historical Journal*, 2017, Vol. 69, No. 4, 598–621.

<sup>844</sup> Near Keiskamahoeck (in the Amathole). It derived its name from the nearby Pirie Mission.

<sup>845</sup> Maj Step, email communication to the author, 19 April 2016.

<sup>846</sup> *Ibid.*

## The death of Chief Sandile

Capt T. F. Emmett's levy participated in the grand final campaign to flush out Chief Sandile and his forces, which resulted in the death of Siyolo and the capture of Tini Maqoma.<sup>847</sup> Both Sandile and his best shot and bodyguard, Dukwana, died on 29 May 1878 after a skirmish with a Mfengu levy under Capt Lonsdale in the Bawa Forest near Isidenge.<sup>848</sup> Sir Evelyn Wood, commander of the combined forces in this war, described it thus:

On 29th May a patrol of Lonsdale's men skirmished with a few [amaXhosa] near Mount Kempt, and were startled at the resistance, until they recognised amongst the slain Dukwana, an elder of the Emgwali Mission, who had shot several of the officers and was now killed in protecting the flight of Sandilli. He fell mortally wounded, and with his death the rebellion ended. He [Sandile] had fought in 1835, '46, '48, '50-3 and always previously escaped.<sup>849</sup>

It is ironic that Dukwana, the son of Ntsikana, and himself an elder at the Mgwali/Chumie mission church, turned rebel and shot a number of officers whilst protecting Sandile. Prior to this, Dukwana had prevented an inflamed Xhosa crowd from killing the survivors of the Christmas Day massacres who had fled to the Mgwali mission for protection, invoking Ntsikana's "dying pledge of sanctuary at Tyhume".<sup>850</sup> For Dukwana, churchman and ex-pupil of Sir George Grey's Sonnebloem College for Chiefs' Sons in Cape Town, it was not a matter of fighting against *uThixo* (God) but against the people who were robbing the amaXhosa of their land.<sup>851</sup> Sandile's body was found on 7 June. He was buried by Col Schermbrücker on Schuch's farm at Isidenge. Before the interment (9 June 1878), Mfengu from the levy that killed Sandile allegedly danced exultantly around Sandile's corpse. There

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<sup>847</sup> On the final campaign, see Hummel, *Crealock*, 82-90.

<sup>848</sup> According to Ayliff and Whiteside, the amaMfengu, Gumede, chief of the Kuze and Nunga, chief of the Zizi, killed Sandile. J. Ayliff and J. Whiteside, *History of the Abambo, generally known as Fingos* (Butterworth, 1912; rpt Cape Town: Struik, 1963 (68-9)). The Divisional Police Inspector of Beaufort West and his brother Sub-Inspector Mark Blakeway and a Mfengu police patrol captured Tini Maqoma. Tapi, Maqoma's brother was apprehended at Alice. Hummel, 90, 156-57.

<sup>849</sup> Sir Evelyn Wood, FM, VC, GCB, GCMG, *From Midshipman to Field Marshal*, 2 vols (London: Methuen, 1906), 1: 321.

<sup>850</sup> Mostert, 1030.

<sup>851</sup> These last words of Dukwana were recalled by the Rev. R. Johnson. M. W. Spicer, "The War of Ngcayecibi 1877-1880" (MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1978), 158. One of the Mfengu levy leaders, Frank Streatfeild, confirmed that the corpse was Sandile's, as "the foot was not shaped properly". Frank Streatfeild, *Kafirland: A Ten Months Campaign* (London: Sampson and Low, 1879), 272. Sandile had a shorter stirrup for this foot on his white horse. *Ibid*, 121.

is no record of Emmett's levy being present at either the killing of Sandile or his burial. The feelings of some ex-Kat River Settlement Khoikhoi, especially those related to rebels, must have been mixed at the news of the chief's death. Chief Sandile, after all, was the one in whom the hopes of the Khoikhoi nation were vested, he allegedly being the one who had promised to restore the "Kingdom of Chama" to the Kat River Khoikhoi.

## The Anglo-Boer Wars

Stockenstrom volunteers also fought for the British in the Anglo-Boer Wars of 1899-1902, as remembered by one of my anonymous interviewees in Lower Blinkwater. Another interviewee, Adam Arends, who grew up in Cathcartvale, recalled stories about his grandfather who fought for the British in the Orange Free State. His narrative follows.

### "Diamonds and de Wet": Adam Marthinus Arends<sup>852</sup>

My grandfather, Adam Marthinus Arends, was born in 1884 in Cathcartvale and baptised by the Fort Beaufort minister, who changed his name from Adam Martin Arends (like that of his forebear from Holland) to Adam Marthinus Arends.

When the Anglo-Boer war broke out my father—who was only 16 or 17 years old at the time—volunteered to fight on the British side. He was sent to the Orange Free State. As he could ride well, he was sent to track De Wet. [This was part of Kitchener's plan to seal off the Orange River to De Wet and prevent any junction between him and Gens. Hertzog and Kritzinger who were raiding the Cape.]<sup>853</sup> When he was in the Free State he saw some *blink klippies* [shiny stones/diamonds] and picked them up and put them in his pocket. There were lots of them in the veld and other people were also picking them up.

Three years later, when he came home from the war, he brought his Lee-Metford and £200 worth of pound coins. He took the coins in an old Horseshoe tobacco bag to the Kaffrarian Bank in King William's Town. And he told the manager to keep them safe for him, and to give him them back when he wanted his money. He did not want paper money. He then went out. And with some money from the war, or help from the government, he

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<sup>852</sup> Telephone interview with the author, 13 May 2016. Adam's father was Christiaan David Arends; his grandfather, Adam Marthinus Arends. At the start of the Kat River Settlement, Hans Arends and Daniel and Martinus Arends settled at Cathcart Vale. Hans was the head of the party which included Uithaolder, two van Daniel and Kasper van der Vyer, and Stephanus Wessels. Ross 298.

<sup>853</sup> Coleman, 86. On De Wet exhausting his trackers by doubling back, *ibid.*, 87-8.

bought a span of oxen and a wagon and started delivering goods (agricultural produce and other goods) to Grahamstown and King William's Town.

Whilst he had been away fighting in the war, a white neighbour, Alan Oates [who did not have direct access to the Kat River] asked the Arends family to let him dig a water furrow from the river across their property. When Adam got back from the war and saw the furrow and found out what had happened, he took his Lee-Metford<sup>854</sup> and went to [confront] him. Oates was not a nice man. And, when Adam got home, his family were angry with him and said, "Why did you show him your gun?" So Adam dug a hole in his ground and buried his Lee-Metford and his three *blink klippies*.

When we went to look for them we found that a house had been built on top of where he buried them. Later I tried to find out what had happened to his pound coins. When I tried to go to the Kaffrarian Bank I found it wasn't there anymore. And the old bank manager was dead.

## **The Great War/World War 1**

During this war more than 20 000 South African troops participated in the actions against the German and Askari forces in German East Africa. They fought under the command of General Jan Smuts, who resigned as Minister of Defence to direct the British campaign there in 1915. South Africans also saw action with the Cape Corps in Palestine. More than 146 000 whites, 83 000 blacks and 2 500 coloureds and Asians served in South African military units during the war. This included 43 000 in German South-West Africa and 30 000 on the Western Front.

### **Coloured recruits**

During WW1 the recruiting of coloured people for the Cape Corps started in Cape Town, but owing to the strict physical requirements many of them could not meet the minimum height (5 ft 3 inches), as stipulated. Consequently, recruiting also took place in the eastern and northern districts, and it can be assumed that men from Stockenstrom area volunteered for the

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<sup>854</sup> Used by the British, the Lee-Metford was a bolt-action Army Service rifle which replaced the Martini-Henry rifle in 1888. The Lee-Metford's long range accuracy was inferior to the boers' Mausers. The Lee-Enfield replaced the Lee-Metford.

Cape Corps, which saw action in East Africa, Egypt, Palestine, and Turkey.<sup>855</sup> Many of the Cape Corps men were drivers. In 1917, 38 officers and men of the Cape Corps in German East Africa were killed and 121 died of tropical diseases.

### **The Stumble brothers**

Memorials in Stockenstrom cemeteries provide a limited source of information about those who fell in war. Not only are there few memorials, but those that remain have weathered or deteriorated owing to neglect, damage by grazing cattle, and vandals.

There is however, a WW1 memorial in the Balfour graveyard in which the epitaph is/was still legible—a Cross of Sacrifice to the Stumbles brothers from Balfour, Sydney Stumbles, aged 21, and Harold Stumbles, aged 18, who both died in action in France on 12 October 1916. Although it is tempting to speculate that they were killed in Flanders,<sup>856</sup> owing to the farm of that name outside Balfour, according to the date of their deaths it is more likely that they were killed at the Battle for the Butte De Warlencourt in the Somme Valley.

There were probably other volunteers from Stockenstrom, as South Africa was still a dominion, and all able-bodied men were urged to fight for King [George V] and Country, but the author was unable to trace them.

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<sup>855</sup> Thus Major Step, 19 March 2016. For further information on the role of the Cape Corps in Africa and the Middle East, see <http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/cape-coloured-corps-and-first-world-war>

<sup>856</sup> It could not have been the Battle of Delville Wood, which was earlier. When the South African Brigade went into Delville Wood on 15 July it numbered 3 155 from all ranks (including those at HQ and in support roles). After 6 days 140 men emerged alive from Delville Wood. Kathleen Satchwell, *“For the Glory of South Africa and the Empire” : Five Eastern Cape Soldiers and the Great War* (Cape Town: Kathleen Satchwell, 2015), 96.

## Chapter 20: “Forcing the gates open”: interview with Hymie Groepe

### Introduction

Much had changed in Stockenstrom/Kat River since the Kat River Rebellion, not least of which were the forcible removals of 1980s, and the launch in 1994 of a national land restitution programme.

### The 1980s removals

The forced removals occurred as a result of the National Party Government’s cession of Stockenstrom to their newly-created Bantustan,<sup>857</sup> Ciskei, as part of their overall (black) “homeland” consolidation plan. Deputy Prime Minister H. van der Walt finalized the plans in 1979, but Kat River people only heard of it later, via their white neighbours. They requested a territorial area to be set aside for coloured people in the Kat River watershed. Although the Minister of Land and Constitutional Development, Chris Heunis, promised to consider it, neither he nor his successor, F. W. de Klerk, took action.

A Stockenstrom delegation sought an audience with the Ciskei president, Lennox Sebe. He failed to arrive. A white official came out and told them that “they were not Ciskei’s problem and Ciskei expected South Africa to get rid of them before the land was handed over”. On 30 April 1984, the South African Development Trust (SADT) sent individual Stockenstrom landowners cash offers for their properties, none of which was valued at more than R15 000. Most people received between R2 000 and R10 000 each for their properties, with 40 of them receiving only the ludicrous amounts of between R5 700 and R50. A flat charge of R100 was levied for transfer fees, and 20% of the payment was withheld as a

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<sup>857</sup> The Bantustan strategy—a sophisticated political, economic, ideological, and demographic control of the African population—included the creation of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei. These puppet states, designed to exclude black South Africans from demanding political rights, provided conditions for the production of labour and capital by entrenching the migrant labour system. This strategy displaced an estimated 3.5 million people. See *Forced Removals in South Africa, The Eastern Cape*, Surplus People Project Report, Vol. 2 (Cape Town, January 1983).

deposit against possible damage of fixtures. Thus, as Peires dryly observed, “Some landowners actually owe the Government money for the privilege of losing their land”.<sup>858</sup>

In the meantime, the Hertzog Dutch Reformed Church bought Moordkuil, also known as Gonakraal, a small (116 morgen) farm adjoining Friemersheim for Kat River for their parishioners (later, extending this to some Roman Catholics as well). Those who opted to go to Friemersheim had to use their deposit to pay the government trucks to transport them there. Others sold and moved elsewhere.<sup>859</sup> Some refused to sell.

As I was to discover, the interruption of their physical occupation of Kat River has affected them emotionally and materially—many are financially worse off—and shaped their perceptions of Kat River prior to their dispossession and diaspora.

## Land claims and contestants

In 1994 in an attempt to “provide equitable redress to victims of racially-motivated land dispossession” in South Africa, post-1913, the current administration passed the Restitution of Land Rights Act (Act No. 22 of 1994). Claimants were invited to submit claims, with supporting evidence, through their local land claims offices. The Kat River people were some of the first to submit land claims. The Land Claims Commission had not resolved all the claims—including those of Kat River—when I conducted my first interview with Hymie Groepe in 2011.<sup>860</sup> The restitution process was halted, and then resumed on 4 February 2014. Since 1994 many of the dispossessed landowners have returned to Kat River, where they have been engaged in proving their rights to land that they were coerced into selling in the 1980s.

There are other contestants for the land in Kat River: the Hoenigqua Khoikhoi, who claim, questionably, earliest occupancy of the area under their chief Toena, Ruyters/Ruiters,<sup>861</sup> the Nkayi, and the amaCirha.<sup>862</sup> The Nkayi, local Xhosa-speaking

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<sup>858</sup> See Jeff Peires, “Stockenstrom: by trust and betrayal”, GRC (Grahamstown Rural Committee) Newsletter, No. 11, April 1988, Periodicals-Protected Collection, b 1011899, Cory Library, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa.

<sup>859</sup> *Inter alia*, to Fort Beaufort, Hankey, and Port Elizabeth.

<sup>860</sup> On the progress—or otherwise—of the settling of the claims from 1995 to 2008, see Cherryll Walker, *Landmarked, Landclaims and Restitution in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana Press, 2008), 1-27.

<sup>861</sup> For a more accurate earlier location of the Hoenigqua, see *Hitherto into the Unknown, Ensign Beutler's Expedition to the Eastern Cape, 1752* (eds), Hazel Crampton, Jeff Peires and Carl Vernon (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2013), 75, fn 139.

<sup>862</sup> For further information on the amaCirha, see Appendix 2.

residents who entered Tamboekiesvlei as sharecroppers on coloured properties and had no specific tribal affiliation, although vaguely thinking of themselves as amaJingqi [Maqoma's chiefdom], formulated a land claim under the guidance of Mr Nkayi, a local schoolteacher.<sup>863</sup> Ngqika, chief of the Rharhabe Xhosa,<sup>864</sup> and his sons lived in the Kat River basin during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and Ngqika's counsellor, Ntsikana, of the amaCirha clan (the first Xhosa convert to Christianity), resided at Blinkwater but died at Twatwa (Tamboekiesvlei) whilst on a journey.<sup>865</sup> The amaCirha currently regard his grave as their title deed, and Nkayi's group have allegedly ceded their claim to them.<sup>866</sup> In the meantime, groups of squatters continue to move into Tamboekiesvlei.

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<sup>863</sup> Jeff Peires, email communication to the author, 30/09/2014

<sup>864</sup> On Rharhabe, see Jeff Peires, "He Wears Short Clothes!" Rethinking Rharhabe, c1717–c1785', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol 38 no 2 (2012), 333-54.

<sup>865</sup> On Ntsikana, see Janet Hodgson, "Ntsikana: History and Symbol, Studies in a Process of Religious Change among Xhosa-speaking People", unpublished PhD Thesis (University of Cape Town, 1985), and Jeff Peires, 'Nxele, Ntsikana and the Origins of the Xhosa Religious Reaction', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1979): 51–61. See also Appendix 2.

<sup>866</sup> Jeff Peires, email communication to the author, 30/09/2014



Figure 46 Figure 46 Map of the Kat River Settlement (Map: A Rudman)

## “Forcing the gates open”: interview with Hymie Groepe<sup>867</sup>

Having set up the interview prior to my arrival, I meet Hymie Groepe for the first time outside the former Dutch Reformed Church<sup>868</sup> in the hamlet of Hertzog. Large pools of water lying in the road and the fields testify to recent heavy rain. Hymie, friendly and enthusiastic, is waiting. He gets into the battered 1989 Toyota Hilux *bakkie* (utility vehicle) that I am using, and we splash along the “main” dirt road, Thomson Street, past straggling houses and into the veld. As we drive, Hymie maintains a running commentary on the inhabitants and buildings, indicating the little community hall and a new ochre-coloured house belonging to his uncle, Hermanus (Manie) Loots, aka James Stuart.<sup>869</sup> The road deteriorates further as we ascend the heights to Groepeskloof (Groepe’s Gorge)<sup>870</sup> where Hymie lives. When possible, we talk.

**SB** How long have you lived here, Hymie?

**HG** I was born here on 5 May 1948 and have lived here all my life, except for the time I went to work at General Motors in Port Elizabeth and when I trained as a diesel mechanic at Mthonjeni, and for 15 years when I lived in the Kroomie.

**SB** And the land you live on now belonged to your great-great-grandfather, Christian Groepe?

**HG** Yes. His father was a paid soldier, Heinrich Karel Albrecht Groepe, from Germany. He came to Cape Town in 1775 and married a slave woman, Maria, and had four sons— Christian Jacobus Groepe was the eldest. As a young man he was in the Camdeboo, working for a boer commando ... and then on the farm Glen Lyndon on the Mankazana. He met his first wife, Johanna Alida Arends and they had nine children. She died and was buried in Tamboekiesvlei. Then he married

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<sup>867</sup> Interview conducted in Tamboekiesvlei and Groepeskloof on 10 March 2012. Selections of this interview were first published in the *Oral History Review*, as follows: Susan I. Blackbeard, “Power, Politics, and Performances of Longing in Kat River”, *The Oral History Review, Journal of the Oral History Association*, Summer/Fall 2015, Vol. 42, No. 2, 195-230.

<sup>868</sup> Currently called the Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika (The Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa), aka VGK. It was formed by the union of black and coloured Dutch Reformed mission churches in South Africa.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniting\\_Reformed\\_Church\\_in\\_Southern\\_Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniting_Reformed_Church_in_Southern_Africa), Accessed 26 February 2016.

<sup>869</sup> The late Manie Loots, who was still living at the time of the interview, was the erstwhile trainer of Umkhonto weSizwe/MK—the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC)—and a member of the first ANC Parliament.

<sup>870</sup> Also called *Groepe’s Hoogte* (Groepe’s Heights). Somerset’s wagon train was attacked here en route to Eland’s Post during the Kat River Rebellion. Read, 81.

Margareta Jacoba Loots and had one daughter. Stockenstrom gave him his job of field-cornet in Kat River and a grant of land—the biggest farm of all—2117 morgen [1900 hectares]. Yes, it was all one big farm—Tamboekiesvlei, and Groepeskloof—which was used as grazing by the Kommandant [Christian Groepe]. One farm, one owner, one title, diagram 858, with 16 portions, and diagram 859, with 3 portions. I am only on portions 12 and 13.



Figure 47 Hymie's father's house in Tamboekiesvlei (Photograph: Salome Groepe)

Hymie explains that, after the Kommandant's death, the farm was divided among his sons by his first wife. And his daughter, Maria Wilhelmina, by his second wife, received portion 3 of 859—*Verhoek* [Far corner], later called *Mooihoek* [Pretty corner] stretching from above Groepeskloof to Tyhume Peak. The Kommandant's land remained in the family until the early 1960s, when portions 12-16 passed into white hands. This was aided by the Seymour lawyer, Fenner-Solomon, who allegedly struck a deal with the late Kommandant's second wife—who had sons without land—giving the family firewood and brandy in exchange for signing *huurkontrakte* (leases).

**HG** In 1963/4 Mr N [a white man] got letters from Fenner-Solomon and took portions 14 and 15 [of Groepeskloof] and his son took portion 16—where the dam is now—and called it Eureka. They built a big dam here but they wouldn't let the coloured people use it. And portions 12 and 13 they called *Sonop* [Sunrise]. They invented new names to rebaptise the land. That's why I moved back here in 1994—to force the gates open for others. We have permission [from the government] to live here until the land claim is resolved.

**SB** How did you go about returning to Groepeskloof?

**HG** In 1994 Manie Loots came to me at Kroomie and told me to launch a claim. I was encouraged by Mr Derek Hanekom [then Minister of Land Affairs]. He came here [to Tamboekiesvlei] and we had a big meeting . . . in the school grounds. The entire Kat River Settlement . . . and the whole ANC delegation was there. And Derek said, “The Kat River story—your claim—is the most clear-cut in the Eastern Cape and this land should be returned to you immediately, because you have all the proof.” But the next minister came and said that the claim must be researched and racial purification proved—family trees must be provided. And we provided 95 percent, and she said evaluation will follow—but it did not. Then another two ministers came—and nothing happened. Two groups of researchers . . . made reports and . . . evaluated the land. I still have the evaluations. But when they came in July [2011], they said, “Who wants their land?” And they said the money they gave us in 1984–88 they will deduct from the new global evaluation total . . . and use it to resettle our people on the land and buy tractors and implements and start training for the youngsters.

We are waiting on this—for the development of the land. They tested the soil, and the dam for irrigation is in the pipeline, the dam [to be built] here in Groepeskloof. Yes, this is all just for Tamboekiesvlei. This farm granted by the government to the Kommandant is unique in the valley—we have solid documentation, and the last will and testament of the Kommandant, saying it must be “from generation to generation, and must not be sold to any stranger.”



Figure 48 Tamboekiesvlei School, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

We cross a flooded river on a narrow causeway, with debris-festooned trees and banks on either side and continue up the track, which becomes mere ledges between *dongas* [gulleys made by soil erosion]. As we reach higher ground, euphorbia-clad *kloofs* [ravines] close in on us.

**HG** But we were forcibly removed. No-one agreed to go. No-one agreed to sell. We were forced to sign. If you didn't, you could be stripped [of your land]. Like in the days of Fenner-Solomon [Vivian Fenner-Solomon]—way back—when there was big corruption, daylight robbery, like when he got the Arendskop farm. A white man went to him and said he wanted the farm. And Sollie [Fenner-Solomon] went to the farm and found the *vassteek*, a small plant with thorns like the prickling [prickly] pear. And they found the land full of it. And Sollie called the two Arends brothers—Oom Andrew Arends was *koster* [sexton] of the church. And Sollie said, “Are you owners of the land?” And they said, “Yes.” And he said, “You will be penalized for this [plant]! The government wants you! The only thing for you to do is to sign a document saying you don't own the land—deny the land!”

**SB** And they did?

**HG** They had no option. And Sollie took the land and gave it to [the white man] and so Arendskop was sold to [that] family. So Oom Andrew Arends lost his farm, he and his brother [in a retelling, it was his cousin]. That was one of the tricks of that lawyer, Sollie. He could take the land very, very easily from you! Then he wanted to jump onto Groepeskloof and take it, too, but the Ciskei government put them out in 1984–88, put the whites and the coloureds out.

**SB** Then you went to Kroomie. Where did the other Kat River people go?

**HG** Many went to Friemersheim, near Mossel Bay.<sup>871</sup> The [Hertzog Dutch Reformed] church bought land there for the Tamboekiesvlei people with the money they got from selling church lands here. About 14 families went. The lorries came and loaded them all up. You had to show your [church] membership cards to get the Moordkuil/Gonakraal [Murderpit/pool] land—ja [yes], what a name! But when the people arrived and wanted to move onto the land, the whites said that only two or three families could come, because it was not zoned as a *woonbuurt* (residential area)—it was zoned as agricultural land, you see. So they sat in the little RDP houses [low-cost housing built by the government] at Friemersheim. And they couldn't pay for electricity, so they had to work as agricultural labourers.

**SB** Do they have land there now?

**HG** No, just small little portions with their houses on them.

A green signboard, with Hymie and his wife's names (P. J. and E. P. [Esme Patricia] Groepe on it, indicates that we are entering their property. We drive up to the house. Lowering mountains encircle it, and a fuzz of pale blue-flowered plumbago, interspersed with bright orange flowers of the wild *dagga* [*Leonotis leonurus*] blur the fence. On the edge of the *werf* [farmyard], we admire Hymie's fine herd of *boerbokke* [boer goats/indigenous goats with white, black or brown markings]. He explains that their excellent condition is due to the area having "the best grazing in the country." When I ask how he herds his goats and deals with jackals, he explained as follows:

<sup>871</sup> Hymie used the names Friemersheim, Moordkuil and Gonakraal [Gonaquakraal] interchangeably. He explained that "[T]here was an existing *gemeente* [congregation] at Gonakraal and Moordkuil, and a coloured Dutch Reformed Church. Then their preacher left, and the people went to the church at Klein Brak or Groot Brak. They still live there, up on the mountain slope. There is a big coloured community there." Louis Maingard connects the prefix "Gona" to the Korana word for foreigner ' < ≠ gona'. See Hazel Crampton, Jeff Peires, and Carl Vernon, *Into the Hitherto Unknown: Ensign Beutler's Expedition to the Eastern Cape, 1752* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2013), xxxviii.



Figure 49 Groepeskloof, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

**HG** We used to get the [jackal] poison free. And in Fort Beaufort you got paid £1.10 for a jackal skin . . . They had a hunting club for farmers, the Jackal Club. The local (white) neighbours invited some of us to come and show them what kind of dogs we had. And we sat there in the front with them, while they looked at what we had. We have the little dogs with the sharp faces that go after the jackal when it goes into the *aardwolf* hole.<sup>872</sup> And they don't come out till they have killed it. Sometimes they [the dogs] go off on their own in the veld and come back with their faces all bloody. . .

I turn my goats out of the kraal in the morning between half-past eight and nine, after the jackals have gone back to their lairs. And I trust them to come home at the usual time, five past five. The jackals go out hunting after that. They hunt in a team. But in the cold, rainy weather they get hungry and start hunting earlier—about half past three. The one jackal heads off a young ewe or a kid with two teeth or less—

<sup>872</sup> The *aardwolf* (Afr. for earth wolf), *Proteles cristata*, is a small, indigenous insectivorous mammal that feeds on insects and termites. Also called the *maanhaar-jakkals* (jackal with a mane), it is related to the hyena.

a *tweetand*—from the herd, and he *tjanks* [howls] *ha-hi-hi-hi* to the others in the pack. Then they come up and surround the goat for the kill. Goats usually head into the wind to make it more difficult for the jackals to scent them. And, if the wind changes, they change direction too. But when it's rainy the goats stay away longer, sheltering under the bushes—and becoming easier prey.



Figure 50 Hymie's goats, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

As we walk through the gate, Hymie's pack of small lithe hunting dogs leap excitedly up at us, the ones that keep the *rooikatte* [caracal] *en die rooijakkals en die maanhaar-jakkals* [the black-backed jackal/hyena] at bay. There is an old green John Deere tractor in the yard, a big grey gas bottle (the coloured areas have no electricity), a thatched *rondawel* (hut), and washing on the fence. The house, built by the white man who renamed the farm *Sonop* [Sunrise], faces east. Hymie occupied it in 1994, when he was encouraged to return. It has a pitched roof and partly timbered gable, and a porch half hidden by an old olive tree and a lanky sunflower. There are no people in sight. Apart from the snuffling and scratching of the dogs, the only sounds are the river below the house, the chirp of birds,

and the occasional bawl of a cow from over the hill. Hymie explains that he has 17 *beeste* [cattle] of mixed breeds. He grazes them on his upper pastures, but people steal his fencing, pasture their own cattle there, and hire out his land to others. Consequently, his cattle wander and get lost or stolen.

**HG** (earnestly) That's why we want the title deeds [recognized] so we can do something about it. We don't want the caretaker agreement the government is offering us—we want the deed of transfer! And, in the meantime, a letter of authority.

When asked how he coped with cattle disease and what assistance they received from the government, he replied as follows:

**HG** There was a very old dipping tank in Hertzog. You had to pump the water up from the Kat River to fill it. There used to be an old paraffin Lister engine—the white people used to pull it there on a tractor trailer to help us to fill the dipping tank. Later there was a petrol pump. The whites belonged to the *Boere Vereniging* [Farmers Union] and invited us to their meetings at Balfour. They told us what to inject the cattle with and what medicines to give them when they got sick. We used Terramycin for the cattle<sup>873</sup> and Rifacol and Mecksiet. For the dips we used double Benox [arsenic soda] mixed with tar water.<sup>874</sup>

**SB** What did you use before?

**HG** Once a month to keep the ticks away we mixed Kerol [veterinary fluid] and *growwe sout* [coarse salt] and put it in big drums for the cattle to eat.<sup>875</sup> We also used to mix the Kerol with old motor oil and brush the tips of the ears and inside the ears and under the tail—all the places they couldn't lick.<sup>876</sup> If the cattle got sick we would dose them with an old Khoi remedy from a man near Flanagan's Drift [in the Balfour

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<sup>873</sup> Used for eye infections or by injection for pneumonia in cattle.

<sup>874</sup> Later, ticks became resistant to arsenic soda, a harmful accumulative which has polluted the soil and water around former dipping tanks. Telephone conversation with Ken Hagemann, 17 May 2016. See also M. R. Ramudzuli and André C. Horn, "Arsenic residues in soil at cattle dip tanks in the Vhembe district, Limpopo Province, South Africa", *South African Journal of Science*, Vol. 110, No. 78 (July/August 2014), 1-7.

<sup>875</sup> It thought that this killed internal parasites. The salt prevented the cattle from eating too much of the Kerol.

<sup>876</sup> Kerol was also used as a foot dip for foot abscesses in angora goats, and for scab in pigs, and mange in dogs.

area]. It was made from the *umkwenkwe*<sup>877</sup> root, boiled up in the forests and kept in a bottle until it went brown. I used to buy six bottles from Oom Erios—one for each of my cattle. When they were in the races we would open their mouths, hold the tongue, and pour the whole bottle down the throat. You have to do it early in the morning when the cattle are hungry. When the sheep got cuts we used to sew them up with gut but first we put a bit of *matunga* root in the wound. You had to stamp on it first [crush it] and then sew [up the cut] with a wife's big needle. Now some of the people use plastic thread from orange bags.

**SB** What other help did you get with your stock?

**HG** We didn't have any agricultural supervisors to come to us. We fell under the Fort Beaufort Divisional Council. They only sent people out to check for dog licences. During the Ciskei they built the Agricultural Training Centre. We don't get much help from them now except for some powder for dipping. We dose our own animals. There some new dipping tanks in Baddaford, Bellvale and Upsher but we can't get our cattle there. It's a long way and they have to cross the tar road—very dangerous. They get separated and lost. So we have to use our old dipping tank at Hertzog. I fixed the old pump for the community the last time it was broken.

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<sup>877</sup> A Xhosa name. Known also as *kwenkwebas* (Afrikaans)—the *Pittosporum viridifolium*, a small tree, commonly used medicinal bark. Tony Dold, email communication, 20 May 2016.



Figure 51 Hymie on the stoep of his house, Groepeskloof, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

As we walk through the long grass bordering Hymie’s crops—fine specimens of maize, potatoes, and onions—he enacts, with sound effects— *tsik tsik tsik*—his method of hand-drilling a mixture into the soil to eradicate the weeds. And, laconically, he recounts how, “the other day,” his wife trod on the head of a *pofadder* [puffadder]. It coiled around her leg, but he killed it quickly. When I ask about the *veldkos* [field-food] that sustained the

Khoikhoi and some of the early Kat River settlers, he mentions some of the plant names in Afrikaans.<sup>878</sup> Then he speaks proudly in the first person plural of the local revival of Khoikhoi culture in Tamboekiesvlei: “We formed the Khoi [Khoikhoi] Union in 1995. Charlene Moonsamy is the chief of the Hoenigqua. We have *!naus* [traditional Khoikhoi ceremonies] here.” He goes on to mention that, as chairman of the local land claims committee, he encouraged the Khoikhoi to submit their land claims.

**HG** In Tamboekiesvlei there is a small committee to work for the community—just six of us. We’ve been working on the Kat River land claims for a long time. We sent our title deeds as proof that we owned the land. Then they wanted proof of racial purification—and we had to provide this too, to show which families we came from. They sent someone to value the land. But we are still waiting to hear. We’ve been waiting for 20 years now.

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<sup>878</sup> Translated into English, Hymie’s reply reads as follows: “The wild potato, the *barootjie*—it grows to the size of a medium potato. It looks a bit watery but if you cook it nicely it’s sweet. Just add a little salt. You find it growing where there are cracks in the ground. Then there’s the *bergkiepersol*. It looks like a pineapple. You can use it if you need water in the veld. And there’s the prickly pear, and the wild apricot, and wild berries, like the *droggie*—very sour. And the wild plum. The monkeys are mad about it—they get them first!”



Figure 52 Tamboekiesvlei, 2014 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

Hymie explains how he, Charles Groepe, Oom Wykie Loots, and Anna Pringle helped Kat River people to submit their claims in 1996. The men drove to East London to collect the forms, which they handed out at meetings in Tamboekiesvlei. The people came from all over Kat River, and Hymie and his team read them the procedure. They sat in desks dragged from the community hall and, aided by Hymie's team, they filled in the forms.

**HG** The people enjoyed being outside in the winter sunshine. Anna made *vetkoekies* (fried dough-balls) with tomato and onion [fillings] and *worsrolletjies* (sausage rolls) for them on paraffin stoves. Then I took the forms in my old box Cortina to the land claims office in East London. It took two to three months to get them there—quite a few trips.

**SB** Did anyone help with the petrol costs?

**HG** I didn't get a blue penny! I could see the tears in the eyes of the people and had to help them. I handed in the forms and brought back the all the receipts. Then we had other meetings to hand them back.



Figure 53 Tamboekiesvlei community hall, 2014 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)



Figure 54 Anna Pringle, 2014 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)



Figure 55 Oom Wykie Loots, 2014 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

I ask Hymie about the mountains surrounding his farm.

**HG** To the left is Snell's Peak and, behind it, there is Lushington and the state forest, and Peffer's Kop, past the dam. There were coloured people under Kommandant Peffer—you know Kommandant Peffer? He served under the Kommandant. And there is the grave of *neef* [cousin] Adam Peffer on the right of the stream, and on the left, the house with the big oak tree next to it. He had a farm with geese and sold the feathers to Pudneys in PE [Port Elizabeth]. He was the last Peffer in Lushington. The people all left and never came back.

**SB** And the peak to the far right?

**HG** *Ai*, that's Spitskop, the big peak there, and in the middle, the *klein koppie* [little mountain] Tyhume, is where Driefontein [Three Fountains] is—a waterfall where the three fountains come from, and *Oudassiekraal* [Old Rockhyrax Kraal], with a little fountain behind it, where the Pieterses farmed. Driefontein, he helps us a lot

with the water. We pump it up from the *Groepesrivier*—remember we crossed it on the way here?—and it runs all the way down, past the Hertzog church.

## Interim review

From the outset the interview has been dominated by space—the imposing amphitheatre, ancient, yet constantly changing, with shifting dark clouds revealing shafts of chiaroscuro-like sunlight; high, hidden valleys where Hymie’s friends and relations lived; Hymie’s *werf* with the goats in their pen, the dogs snuffling and scratching around us, and the cows lowing in the distance—and by Hymie’s attachment to it, his desire to prove ownership of it, and his anger at how it was winkled from them in the 1960s and wrested from them in the 1980s.

Kinship—evident in the interconnectedness of the Kat River people—is a prominent strand in Hymie’s narrative. As names and naming are important to him, he includes them wherever possible; hence his scorn at the way whites “rebaptised” his land. Since 1994 there has been a tenuous solidarity with the Hoenigqua Khoikhoi—another marginalized people—with Hymie referring to them in the first person plural, “We formed the Khoi Union . . . we have *!naus*.”

In the Arends story, Hymie uses dialogue masterfully, accompanied by appropriate gestures and facial and tonal expressions, as he presents the crafty “Sollie” stripping vulnerable relations of their land. As Peires puts it, owing to his legal knowledge, Vivian Fenner-Solomon (b. 1883)—Seymour mayor, chairman of the local school board, the divisional council, and the tobacco cooperative, brother-in-law to the town clerk, and member of the Union parliament—“held Kat River by the throat for fifty years.”<sup>879</sup> Although Peires’s interviewees described Solomon as a bully, who hurried them into signing documents, gave them inadequate time to repay loans, “lost” people’s titles, sold property he had no right to sell, and used a loophole in a land act to dispossess people further of their allotments and the commonage, “oral recollections are notoriously prone to elaboration and inaccuracy of detail”.<sup>880</sup>

The remissness of some Kat River people in registering their complicated land transactions also enabled “ambitious small capitalists to prejudice the security of the Kat River Settlement, buying up village blocks, erf by erf” and, after the 1905 *Snywet* (fencing

<sup>879</sup> Jeff Peires, “The Legend of Fenner-Solomon,” in *Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives*, ed., Belinda Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987), 77.

<sup>880</sup> *Ibid.*, 86, 90.

law), the commonage for tobacco farming. Yet, as Peires observes, “In hounding small proprietors [to sell their land] and expropriating their commonages, Fenner-Solomon was only expediting processes which capitalist agriculture, working through laws of contract and land tenure, would ultimately have executed anyway.”<sup>881</sup> Bearing Peires’s caveat in mind, Hymie’s retelling of Uncle Andrew Arends’s dispossession is truthful in Portelli’s sense, despite subjectivity (in Hymie’s sympathy for Arends) and desire (for justice) “filling the spaces in the narrative”.<sup>882</sup>

As we continue to walk around Groepeskloof, I ask Hymie how he lost his land.

**HG** When the rumours started going around [in the late 1970s] that our land was going to the Ciskei—our white neighbours told us about a meeting in Balfour—a meeting of the [white] Kat River Farmers’ Union. They invited me—the only one from Tamboekiesvlei. I was actively involved in the Tamboekiesvlei Farmers’ Union, for coloured people—just for landowners. Wykie Loots was the chairperson and now it’s my brother’s son.

When the rumours became true, we investigated by writing letters . . . to [a man] in Cradock in charge of land transactions in Kat River and to Chris Heunis—the two *voormense* [main people] who worked for the SADT [South African Development Trust]. Their secretary replied to us and said—I know it off by heart because I’ve still got the letter—“*U saak word ernstig oorweeg. ’n Verdere skrywe word binnekort aan u gerig.*” [Your matter is being seriously considered. Further correspondence will be sent to you shortly.] But nothing ever came. The principal of the Hertzog school was chairman of our Kat River Landowners’ Union. He fought back. We trusted him—he grew up with us in Tamboekiesvlei—and the correspondence lasted for a number of years.

Then a lawyer from Seymour—acting on behalf of Eliot Brothers—asked for all our title deeds [which] we had to hand in, so they could send us *koopbriewe* to tell us what our lands were worth. We had to go to Seymour by donkey cart or in old tractor trailers pulled by donkeys and queue there in the bitter cold. Ja, it was winter. We had to hand in our names and numbers to get the title deeds. They were kept in

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<sup>881</sup> Peires, “Fenner-Solomon”, 88.

<sup>882</sup> Professor Alessandro Portelli, private discussion, University of Cape Town, 18 May 2012, and follow-up email communication, 21 May 2012.

the safe in the magistrate's court. Mr H. was the magistrate then. We had to go on certain days to get forms to fill in to get the title deeds. Mrs Peggy P. had a list. We had to give her our names and numbers and then she handed them [the title deeds] to us. That was the first time we saw them.

This went on for more than a year. All the people had to go. . . And they all flocked up to Seymour on horseback or in donkey-carts, and some walked to take short cuts. And we were standing there all day—without food or anything to drink—in the bitter cold on the verandah, waiting to sign up.

There were also Kat River people from Fort Beaufort, Port Elizabeth, George and Cape Town, who came by train or bus—some people stayed in the location in Seymour. You could see that the people did not want to leave [Kat River]; you could see it in their faces. They sat [on the concrete floor of the verandah] and waited. And I walked up and down and talked to them. The old people were crying. And they were asking if they could *vat 'n paar sinkplate van hulle dak af* [take a few sheets of corrugated iron from their roof] with them when they moved. Lots of them had nowhere to go. And they had to hire rooms in town [Fort Beaufort]. Some of them are still [living] there today.

We took the title deeds home for a week or two. Then we had to take them back and hand them in. We were told that if we didn't participate in this *hulle sal ons grond wegvat* [they would take away our land]. When we handed them in we didn't get receipts, but I asked for one. We had to sell the land—or stay and hire it back from the government. No one wanted to do that. The money took time to come. It was really forced removals. Then the bakkies came in with cameras and corrugated iron, and boys [government employees] with paintbrushes. Mr P. was in charge. And he went round and put up little pieces of corrugated iron at your gate, with your number pated on it. The whole land in Kat River was evaluated in two days.

**SB** How did you feel about all of this?

**HG** I was very sad, but I had to be strong—my parents were very old, and they died soon afterwards at Kroomie. We weren't allowed to buy land in white-zoned areas, because of the Group Areas Act. But I managed to form a company with [a white man] and bought some land in Kroomie. I paid the money. But the land was in his name. I could only stay on it and work on it. You see, a white man had to stand surety. The money we got for our land in Kat River was not paid in full. They kept

back some of it, *die agterskot* [the final payment], to check that we didn't take out any doors or windows when we left. But the *agterskot* was never given to us.

In contrast to the Arendskop story, Hymie's recounting of the 1980s forced removals—in which he was both victim and eye-witness—is more powerful. The details are compelling, with some of the Kat River families and their goods being “loaded up into lorries” and buses, and taken to Friemersheim, almost 600 km away—an alien place to many of them.<sup>883</sup>

Poignantly, Hymie conveys their shattered hopes when their land did not materialize: they sat in their RDP houses, and then went out to sell their labour—a familiar South African tragedy.

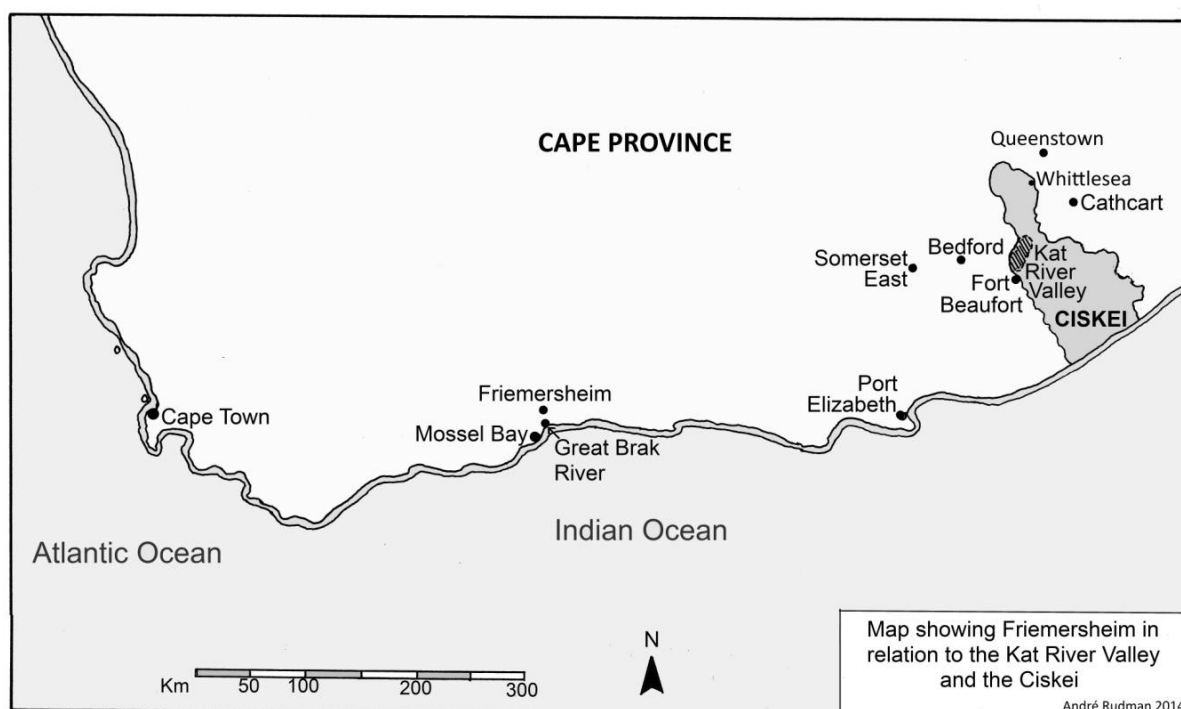


Figure 56 Map showing Friemersheim in relation to Kat River (A. Rudman, 2014)

As in Hymie's previous narratives there is a strong story line, with the characteristic amplifications, asides, digressions, and dialogue. The threat- and-tricks modus operandi of white lawyers is elevated to a grander scale in the apartheid removals, where again there is no real choice, and they are grossly underpaid for their land.

Hymie evinced less emotion than anticipated during the 1980s expropriations. There was sadness as he recalled the numbers being painted outside their gates—a brutally tangible

<sup>883</sup> See the chapter on the Friemersheim interviews. See also Susan I. Blackbeard, “It was a strange place to me: cultural genocide at the Kat River Settlement,” paper presented at the annual INoGS (International Network of Genocide Scholars) Conference, Cape Town, December 2014.

sign of appropriation—and distraught old people wanting to take pieces of corrugated iron with them, but there was also control. When asked about how he felt at the time, he said simply, “I was sad, but I had to be strong.” Reisberg and Heuer’s theory of the changing assessment of prior emotional events, resulting in the fading of the sting of past mishaps, seems to hold here.<sup>884</sup> Hymie’s details, both central and peripheral, are clear and convincing, as memories of causal events often are. And, although he may have suffered inchoate anger and sorrow at the time, he was able to talk of the removals with comparative composure, illustrating what psychoanalytic psychotherapists call emotional containment.<sup>885</sup>

There are notable differences between my interview with Hymie and Jeff Peires’s interviews with Andries [Andrew] Arends and Piet Draghoender. Arends was born in 1908 and had farmed in Stockenstrom all his life, with his family owning extensive properties in Hertzog and Cathcartvale. He was occupying a portion of Tamboekiesvlei land and was a deacon of the Hertzog church, when Peires interviewed him during the removals on 1 September 1982. Draghoender’s father was a loyal sergeant during the Kat River Rebellion. His family had also lost successive portions of land to Fenner-Solomon and neighbouring farmers, but he still occupied about three morgen when interviewed. He was illiterate, and had all his life on the farm.<sup>886</sup> Peires interviewed him on 15 December 1982, and again on 10 January 1984—in the midst of the removals when his emotions were raw and his future uncertain. Both he and Arends were outraged, with Draghoender beating the ground with his stick and invoking stern Biblical prophecies and maledictions on the expropriators—perhaps the only safe way in which he could vent his anger.

During the removals Hymie was younger and more adaptable than Arends and Draghoender. Additionally, new skills and a broader outlook on life gained from his Port Elizabeth sojourn enabled him to turn his loss into victory by acquiring tenure of white land at Kroomie. This is not to suggest that Hymie felt less for his land than Draghoender and Arends, but that he was better equipped to cope with the disaster.

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<sup>884</sup> Daniel Reisberg and Friderike Heuer, “Memory for Emotional Events,” in *Memory and Emotion*, ed., Daniel Reisberg and Paula Hertel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 31.

<sup>885</sup> Sean Field, *Oral History, Community and Displacement: Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, (New York: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2012), 85.

<sup>886</sup> Peires, “Fenner-Solomon”, 89.

## The Kommandant's exploits in story and song

Before we leave Groepeskloof, I ask Hymie about the Kat River Rebellion. He says that he knows about Willem Uithaalter, Hermanus Matroos, and Andries Botha, the “Gonah” field-cornet who was accused of being a rebel, but denies knowledge of Groepe’s sons being rebels. The two stories that he tells occurred prior to the Rebellion, probably during the wars of 1834, and showcase the Kommandant and his men in skirmishes with amaXhosa or their allies.

**HG** (indicating a copse on a hillside) That is *Stuurman se bos* [Stuurman’s Bush/Forest], but there are actually two bushes, *Stuurman se bos* and *Christiaantjie se bos* [Young Christian’s Bush], that is next door to us. The Stuurman brothers, from Lower Blinkwater—they were some of the fighters, some of the big fighters. In 1851 they were ambushed and sent to Robben Island.<sup>887</sup> They were real fighters. They fought on the side of the rebels, like Hermanus Matroos and Willem Uithaalter and Jan Fortuin and Andries Botha. They—two of them [the Stuurmans]—returned alive to the Gonah location at Blinkwater.<sup>888</sup>

**SB** Do you think Andries Botha was a rebel?

**HG** (cautiously) Well, he had some ties with Maqoma. And his sons became worse after he was taken to Cape Town. Maqoma was the enemy of Kat River. He lived at the foot of the Katberg Mountain but he was never at home—he was always attacking—here, there, everywhere—from Maqoma’s Hoek, his *lali* [abode, from isiXhosa *ezilalini*]. It was near Balfour, there—past the sawmills, by the big trees.

**SB** Some say that Andries Botha’s sons were rebels. But wasn’t one of Groepe’s sons a rebel, too?

**HG** (in a surprised tone) Was he? I haven’t heard of that.

Hymie proceeds to tell the first story, “Stuurman se bos”:

**HG** Now, Stuurman<sup>889</sup> was one of the families that worked for the Kommandant—one of the cowhands. He was nearly killed here by the Maqoma army; he escaped from

<sup>887</sup> On Kupido and Klaas Stuurman, see Read, *Kat River Settlement*, 32 and Ross, *Borders*, 198, 201.

<sup>888</sup> Currently called Gonzana.

<sup>889</sup> See Malherbe, “The Khoi Captains and the Third Frontier War,” and “David Stuurman: Last Chief of the Hottentots,” 47–64.

that kloof (indicating a small gorge). You see Vaalkop, just above right from *Stuurman se bos*? That is very bushy; that is where the Mfengu—they were also on the side of the Maqoma people—used to attack the Valley.

**SB** But I thought the Mfengu were on the side of the Kat River people?

**HG** Ah well, the whole Valley was mixed up.<sup>890</sup> Now, one day an old cowhand, old Vaalkop—he was employed by the Kommandant—and one of the Stuurman brothers, who was also the Kommandant’s cowhand, got caught by the Mfengu. They took the cattle, the Kommandant’s cattle, and tied [Vaalkop] up. The other one ran away. They killed one of the cows and cooked the meat. This is going to be your last piece of meat, old man, they said to him. Then he [old Vaalkop] asked for a knife to cut it. And he cut the rope and the meat with one stroke and ran off. They had stripped off his clothes so that saved him—no bush could hook him. He ran to the Kommandant and the Kommandant fired at the guys and his men chased them back to Fort Beaufort and grabbed back the Kommandant’s cattle.

In a subsequent retelling, the Kommandant was “old and sick.” But he “gave the signal and his horsemen went and grabbed back the cattle of the Kommandant.”

**HG** And they killed some of the Mfengu and chased them all the way to Healdtown, the Mfengu location up on the hill near Fort Beaufort. You can see the lights up on the hill there at night—they have electricity.<sup>891</sup>

Hymie then narrates the story, “Christiaantjie se bos”:

**HG** Now, Christiaantjie se bos is up there [pointing to a copse on another hill]. He was thrown right through by an *assegai* [spear]; it went right through his back and came through on the left side. They [his friends] pulled it through. He and his uncle, the brother of the Kommandant, were ambushed by eighteen Xhosa rebels. There was

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<sup>890</sup>“At this time ... people had no confidence in each other... Distrust is the only general feeling.” Read, 59. Hendrik Heyn also remarked on the “great confusion amongst the people.” Ross, *Borders*, 228, 232.

<sup>891</sup> In 1853 the Methodist missionary, the Rev. John Ayliff, started a school of industry for Mfengu at Healdtown on the *eNxukhwebe* River, 10km north-northeast of Fort Beaufort. Known as Birklands, it was formerly the site of a LMS mission station under the Rev. Henry Calderwood, who relocated to the Tidmanton station in 1839. On Healdtown, see Trevor Webster, *Under the Eagle’s Wings* (Grahamstown: Rhodes University, 2013).

no way out. They had old *voorlaaiers* [muzzle-loaders/muskets] but they took on the enemy back to back; the old man on the one side, and the younger one, Christiaantjie, was wounded with the assegai. He survived at Fort Adelaide military hospital.

There are additional details in a retelling:

**HG** He [Christiaantjie] was thrown right through by an assegai; it went right through his back and came out in the front. He and his uncle, the Kommandant's brother, they had *voorlaaiers*. Christiaantjie, the son of the Kommandant, went with his uncle to collect the community livestock and he got assegaied when eighteen Xhosas attacked them. Grandma and Mamma used to tell us that there was still blood on the rocks there. The people won't go there now because of the ghosts. There are big *melkbome* [*Ficus cordata*] there. You know those trees? Very dangerous. If you knock against them white milk comes out. . . He [Christiaantjie] was given a gold-coated Bible and a brand-new gun—a musket [by the government].<sup>892</sup>

**SB** Who told you all this, Hymie?

**HG** The stories were passed on; we knew the bush as Christiaantjie se bos, a dirty old bush. We were told, “Your grandfather was nearly killed here by the Xhosa warriors!” And my mother and her sister, Auntie Lettie—she did not get married—used to take us to the Kommandant's grave once a month. They also took the school children there when we went to the shop at Hertzog. It was owned by an Indian, Peter Casson, who was married to a coloured woman, Ellen Kram; her family also married into the Groepe family. There was also a shop owned by a white man. He grabbed some of our land, and the post office too, and he even changed the road to Tamboekiesvlei so that people could buy petrol; he had a petrol pump outside. He used to check our packets [bags] when we walked past, and shoot our dogs. But when he got old and sick, Oom Andrew Arends and his [church] choir used to go to his house and sing for him.

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<sup>892</sup> The main details of Hymie's story match Visagie's account. He mentions that the skirmish occurred in January 1835 and that, despite being seriously wounded, Christiaantjie retired with his face to the enemy. Later, Christiaantjie attended school in Fort Beaufort. Visagie, “Groepe,” 51. Commandant W. M. Bowker claimed to have disarmed Groepe's son outside Fort Armstrong of a prize gun that Sir Benjamin D'Urban had given him. (See Mitford- Barberton, 171). Hymie denies that this was Christiaantjie.

The last shop there closed in 1988. It was run by Mammattjie Abdul. When we went to the shop Grandma and Mamma used to buy some biscuits, and we would sit under a thorn tree and they would tell us the stories and sing us the songs. And at night, when we sat around the fire and cooked *roosterkoek* [griddle-cake], they would also tell us the stories and sing the songs. You can say that these things come from the women. And the songs, like the *Katrivierliedjie en die Kommandantsliedjie* [the Kat River song and the Kommandant's song. The women used to sing the *Kommandantsliedjie* when he came back from fighting Maqoma. All the people would come out to see the Kommandant, and praise him and sing *die lied van die community* [the song of the community].

In a very emotive performance, Hymie performs the songs. In the Kommandant's song, intoned almost reverently in Afrikaans, the Kommandant rides up front, leading his burghermag into battle and returning triumphantly. The third last line, reminding the listener of the price they had to pay for defending their land, causes Hymie's eyes to fill with tears as he intones it.

***Die Kommandant se liedjie***

*Die saal en die toom en die blesperd,*

*Vier wit voete en 'n stompstert:*

*Dis hy wat die saak sal waar maak,*

*Dis hy wat die saak sal waar maak.*

*Wie ry voor so regop in die saal?*

*Dis die Kommandant wat ons almal kom haal.*

*Daar gaan hy vorentoe!*

*Met ons bloed het ons alles betaal.*

*Dis hy wat die saak sal waarmaak.*

*Dis hy wat die saak sal waarmaak.*

### **The Kommandant's song**

The saddle and bridle and the horse with a blaze,

Four white feet and a stumpy tail:

It's *he* that'll make it all right,

It's *he* that'll make it all right.

Who rides up front so straight in the saddle?

It's our Kommandant come to call us.

There he goes up ahead!

With our blood we have it all paid.

It's *he* that'll make it all right,

It's *he* that'll make it all right!<sup>893</sup>

**HG** (after a few seconds of silence) You see, Sue, this is blood land. They paid for it with their blood.

Before we leave Groepeskloof, Hymie invites me into the house to show me documents and diagrams proving the Kommandant's ownership of the farm; and his will, proving his bequeathing of it to his descendants.<sup>894</sup> Poring over the papers in the dim room, one is aware of the absence of electricity.

### **The Kommandant's grave**

On the way back to Tamboekiesvlei, Hymie suggests that we stop at *Helde-akker* (Heroes' Acre). This unmarked area in the overgrown Hertzog cemetery is where the Kommandant is buried—not beside his family but flanked by his fighters, or what Hymie calls his "military wing." Though the locally-gathered headstones have fallen and are almost smothered by

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<sup>893</sup> Hymie (P. J. Groepe) holds the copyright to this song which was first published in "Power, Politics and Performances of Longing", *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 43, No. 2, pp. 225-226. English translation by Susan I. Blackbeard, July 2012, revised February 2015.

<sup>894</sup> See also CA DSGEP, 83 Kat River Commission, plans, diagrams and grants: 1844-09-03 to C.J. Groepe; CA, CO, Albany Quitrents Vol. 6, 1843-1844, folio 35: Notice to C.J. Groepe, 1844-09-03.

grass, and the handwritten inscriptions have long been effaced by the weather, Hymie knows which one is the Kommandant's.

Set some distance apart from these, three imposing granite tombstones guarded by iron railings indicate the remains of the first (white) minister of the Dutch Reformed church, the Rev William Ritchie Thomson, his wife, and his successor—indications, even in death, of apartheid. It is a somber moment; the silence broken only by the rippling of a small wind through the long grass that shields the fallen tombstones of the Kommandant and his men.

## Final review

Rugged Groepeskloof—empty of people but filled with running water, clouds, and bird and animal sound—and Hymie's visible attachment to it, heighten his narratives/enactments in which nostalgia and history blend to "create memories of solace" to help him bear past losses and face present problems.<sup>895</sup> His farm, and Christiaantjie and Stuurman's "bushes," the Hertzog church, the school where political meetings were held, the shop and tree under which his grandmother told the stories, and the Kommandant's grave, where they placed flowers, provide not only a matrix for Hymie's memories, but in the remembering and retelling they become extensions of the people celebrated.

The Kommandant and his burghermag are elevated to eponymous stature as they engage with the formidable Maqoma. Similarly, Hymie emerges as a hero in the narrative, following in his forbear's steps as he fights for his people's land, by submitting and following up on their land claims, and telling his story to whoever will listen. Hymie's narratives and songs are enacted on the land, his *erfenis*—an Afrikaans word denoting heritage, with *erf*, its root, signifying a plot of ground, as well as to inherit.<sup>896</sup> In Hymie's case, both drive his quest.

In Hymie's stories and songs, as in other oral narratives of early South African history, there are the usual hallmarks: the episodic nature of the narrative; the larger-than-life hero (the Kommandant) and the formidable and ubiquitous foe (Maqoma), skirmishes instead of battles, and the blurring, telescoping, or personalizing of chronology.<sup>897</sup> Although some details may be exaggerated, spot archival checks—for example, on the military reputation of

<sup>895</sup> See Field, *Oral History, Community and Displacement*, 95.

<sup>896</sup> D. B. Bosman et al., eds, *Tweetalige Woordboek: Afrikaans-Engels* (Cape Town: Nasionale Boekwinkel, 1937, rpt 1962).

<sup>897</sup> See Isabel Hofmeyr, *We Spend our Years as a Tale that Is Told: Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chieftdom* (Johannesburg: Heinemann, 1993), 139-50.

the Kommandant and the strength of his burghermag<sup>898</sup>—endorse Hymie’s claims. The formulaic nature of the narrative, paratactic syntax, asides, digressions, and amplifications are regular features, as are the affective dialogue and dramatic gestures.<sup>899</sup>

Discrepancies in Hymie’s retellings show how *événements* are reinterpreted in the *longue durée* of memory. They also accentuate changing alliances, resulting in confusion (“Ah well, the whole Valley was mixed up!”) and tragedy, as when the families—wittingly or unwittingly—harboured both loyalists and rebels during the Kat River Rebellion. The reason for Hymie’s silence with regard to Groepe’s son’s/sons’ implication in the Rebellion could be owing to his not having heard of it—owing to suppression of it in family history—or it could be denial. Other minor discrepancies in Hymie’s narratives/performances could exemplify what Portelli called “desire filling the spaces”,<sup>900</sup> such as Christiaantjie’s Dutch Bible being gold-coated in Hymie’s story, but having a silver clasp in other records.<sup>901</sup>

Using frameworks acquired as a young listener, Hymie passes on the stories of his grandfather, uncle, grandmother and aunt, imprinted with his own reflections and emotion during each retelling. Not only does the emotionality of the events he recounts visibly and audibly affect his performances, but at times there is additional vivid emotional recall, as when he intoned the Kommandant’s song<sup>902</sup>—an emotionalism that also occurred in Arends and Draghoender’s interviews with Peires. Hymie’s reference to Kat River as blood-ground also recalls Draghoender, who used the same image to describe earlier Kat River sacrifices:

During the *Bonte-oorlog* [Kat River Rebellion] my grandfather was taken and sent off to fight. And when the War was over Mr Stockenstrom . . . said, “I am sending you home, and I am going to give you grazing ground. This is your property, the *basela* [present/reward] which I’m giving you for . . . what you gave up to death, to make this place free. And you did make it free. This ground was washed clean by blood.”<sup>903</sup>

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<sup>898</sup> House of Commons Paper 279 of 1836, Caffre War and Death of Hints, Return of the Troops on the 1<sup>st</sup> Line of Defence under Lt-Colonel England, enclosure no. 2 in no. 2 in Sir B. D’Urban to the Secretary of State, March 19, 1835, p. 12.

<sup>899</sup> Hofmeyr, *We Spend our Years*, 139–50.

<sup>900</sup> Alessandro Portelli, private discussion, University of Cape Town, 18 May, 2012 with follow-up e-mail communication, May 2012.

<sup>901</sup> Visagie, “Groepe,” 51, citing Cape Archives, DSGEP 82, Kat River Correspondence: C. J. Groepe to W. F. Hertzog, 1837-01-23, s.p.

<sup>902</sup> Robin Fivush and Jessica McDermott Sales, “Children’s Memories of Emotional Events,” in *Memory and Emotion*, 245, and Robin S. Edelstein et al., “Emotion and Eyewitness Memory,” *Ibid.*, 362.

<sup>903</sup> Peires, “Fenner-Solomon”, 69. Stockenstrom volunteers also fought for the British in the Anglo-Boer Wars and the two World Wars.

The blood-ground metaphor highlights a continuum of symbolism in Kat River, which underscores Robin Fivush and Jessica McDermott Sales' observations that "emotion and memory are inseparable", and "the events of our lives are imbued with emotion, both at the time of experience and in retrospect."<sup>904</sup>

Of equal importance is Peires's observation that the Kat River people saw their spilled blood as "the price they paid for their land", which had to be "made free". Their blood was seen as washing the ground clean of previous owners' claims, and erasing the debt they owed to those who had given it to them".<sup>905</sup> The idea of indebtedness to the government—not even Godlonton could accuse them of not deserving Kat River—and to past owners, is profound and worthy of further exploration.

Place—and its story,<sup>906</sup> celebrated in the Paradise-Lost trope since the forced removals—and ongoing struggle are constant presences throughout the interview, with the drive-walk-about format sharpening them. Physically, the dark amphitheatre, and valleys once peopled with friends and family, dominated the interview, with the "best grazing in the country," and the mountains providing the life-giving water that runs—bearing Hymie's surname—through his farm to Tamboekiesvlei. There is pride and joy in the natural resources, but Hymie stresses the hardships of the coloured community—their poverty, lack of electricity, the continually-deferred dam, new school, clinic, shop and agricultural training and support. Although Hymie maintains that the ANC "have been good to us," the future looks uncertain as further squatters move into the area, requesting RDP housing, while the Tamboekiesvlei land claims remain unresolved.

During our interview-journey Hymie pieced together various strands of Kat River history; Maqoma's dispossession in 1828/9, Kat River rebels' forfeiture of their land in 1852, the 1980s forced removals, and the current possibility of Kat River coloured people losing their land to other post-apartheid claimants. The reality of the dispossessions was driven home by not only hearing and seeing them enacted in the landscapes and built environments in which they occurred—and in which they may reoccur—but there was a sense of imminence as history continued to unfold around us and a sense that time was running out.

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<sup>904</sup> Fivush, "Children's Memories," *Memory and Emotion*, 265.

<sup>905</sup> J. Peires, "Piet Draghoender's Lament", conference paper, "The Making of Class", The History Workshop, The University of the Witwatersrand, 9-14 February, 1987, 2-3.

<sup>906</sup> Compare Sean Field, *Oral History, Community and Displacement: Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, (New York: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2012), 37–41, on place in his interviews with displaced coloured people in the Western Cape.

In the meantime, the Kat River people are keeping the memories of their forbears alive, using legal documents, stories and songs passed down by family and friends and newspaper cuttings as cues, and testimony to interviewers.

The different ways in which the interviewees assimilate, interpret, and pass on their information are shown by their choice of genre (narrative and performance or a combination of both), language, tone, and gesture. Common traits in the interviews are the glorification of the past and their heroes, and the way in which the interviewees also emerge, consciously or unconsciously, as protagonists in their narratives.

Ironically, all dispossessions in this part of the country have been driven, or are being driven, by “rectification.” Maqoma in 1828, and the rebels in 1852, were “punished” and “black spots” removed from white areas in the 1980s to “rectify” matters along the lines of white supremacy. And currently, the government is “rectifying” apartheid injustices by redistributing land.

One of the sobering observations arising from this study is the certainty with which each administration seems to have pursued—and continues to pursue—their more-or-less arbitrary rectification, and the extent to which each buttresses its decisions with explicit or tacit appeals to ethnic or racial purity. The generational dispossessions and the turmoil occasioned by them bond diverse claimants together, honing their resilience and determination not to be robbed again of their land. It remains to be seen if their efforts will be rewarded and the Sisyphean cycle of events of this extraordinary valley can be broken.

## Chapter 21: Remembering Tamboekiesvlei and Groepeskloof: Lodewyck (Oom Wykie) Loots and Salome Groepe

### Remembering Tamboekiesvlei, Oom Wykie Loots<sup>907</sup>

Lodewyck Loots, a descendant of original Kat River settlers, was born in 1931.<sup>908</sup> His father was John Henry Loots, and his grandfather was Oupa [Grandfather] Lodewyck Loots. John Henry Loots, who had three sons—of which Oom Wykie is the eldest—bought lots 1, 6, and 9 in Tamboekiesvlei for them.<sup>909</sup>

When Wykie was young his father took a little black boy into the family and brought him up as one of his children. The child arrived at their house one day, looking for work, and Wykie’s father took pity on him. His Xhosa name was Thembikile but the Loots family had him baptised in the Hertzog DRC as John Loots.

Young John lived with the Loots family and went to the Tamboekiesvlei school with John Henry’s children, Wykie, Kronie, and Gawie. When Wykie and John were in Sub B [Grade 2], the headmaster, Mr Bailey, told them that John had to leave the school because he was *’n naturel* [a native]. This was during apartheid times. John Henry Loots was furious. “If John has to leave,” he said, “then my children will also leave!” He took them all out. And they had no further education.

Wykie and John then worked on the family farm in Tamboekiesvlei. Later, they went to work at General Motors and the Ford factory outside Port Elizabeth. They worked there for a few years, sending money home from their fortnightly wages—as all working children did then. When the labour strikes started in Port Elizabeth, Wykie came home.

John stayed in Port Elizabeth, working for a transport service. He never married. Although he died in Port Elizabeth he was buried [as requested] in Humansdorp beside Gawie Loots [his adopted brother]. John’s biological brother, Mangalise, worked on Mr Taylor’s citrus farm, Paradise, near the Training Centre in Upsher. There was a nice dam and windmill there.

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<sup>907</sup> Interview with Wykie, Tamboekiesvlei, 15 November 2014; additional details provided telephonically on 21 March 2016. As the author found Oom Wykie’s diction difficult to follow, Hymie acted as translator.

<sup>908</sup> Hermanus Loots and Gert Lootz [sic] were granted land in the Mankazana [near Alice]. Ross, *Borders*, 304. Oom Wykie may be a direct descendant of one of them.

<sup>909</sup> This comprised 1 140 acres and was originally Christian Groepe’s ploughland.

On his return to Kat River, Wykie got a job as a watchman at the tobacco co-operative in Balfour. After saving his money for some time, he was able to buy an old Ford lorry. When the tobacco co-op closed in Balfour—this business “stopped when the Ciskei fell down”—Wykie used his lorry to transport tobacco from Kat River to Hankey and Patensie, to where the co-op had moved. After his father died, Wykie looked after his mother, who was known to all in Tamboekiesvlei as Auntie Gertie.

Wykie got married late in life—at the age of 60—to Louisa Dixon from the Adam Kok area [Kokstad].<sup>910</sup> Wykie continued to look after his mother until she died. Wykie is still living on the lot in Tamboekiesvlei that he inherited from his father. Apart from seeing to his farming, he has been helping Hymie with the family land claims.

### **Review**

The stand taken against the apartheid policy of separate schools by the coloured man, John Henry Loots, is remarkable—as was his taking the young Thembikile into the family. It is testimony not only to the family’s kindness and unqualified acceptance of him, that Thembikile wanted to be buried beside his adopted brother.

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<sup>910</sup> The founding father of the Griqua, who were “descended from remnants of the original Grigriqua Khoikhoi of the Western Cape coastal belt”. The first Adam Kok was allegedly a manumitted slave who bought his freedom from his master, N. Laubser, and established himself as a farmer on Stinkfontein in the Piketberg district”. Penn, *Forgotten Frontier*, 167. Kok’s followers migrated to the north of the Orange/Gariep River, and in 1863 they formed Kokstad in what is currently KwaZulu-Natal.



Figure 57 Thomson Street, Hertzog, 2011

### **Salome's story: Salome Groepe, youngest daughter of Hymie and Esme Groepe<sup>911</sup>**

I was born in Kroomie on 1 January 1987, shortly after my parents moved from Tamboekiesvlei [owing to the forced removals]. I remember before we moved back my father and his brother always went to meetings with Mr Derek Hanekom, and my late uncle Manny [Loots] would fly in from Johannesburg. Me and my mom would sit up until my father got home late at night. Sometimes he would fetch me from school in Fort Beaufort and I would go with him to the farm and get home only after five or six o'clock. They started a project on the farm and my father went up there to help watch over everything. They built two or three big reservoirs for water and created a pipeline through the farm where people would collect the water from the taps every Friday when Uncle Norman pumped. Each household paid R10 for enough water for the week. However, the pipes were damaged and later on thieves stole the taps and the project went under. Water is now again collected at the river in a drum with a donkey wagon.

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<sup>911</sup> Salome emailed her story to the author on 3 March 2016. The round brackets are hers.

We were all very excited to move to Groepeskloof. My father built a three bedroom flat where we would live temporarily until the big house was finished. I walked to school from the Kloof to Hertzog every day. On days when it rained heavily we couldn't attend school because of the mud and water that gathered in the drift.

Sometimes the sun would be hot and I would stop at the houses in Tamboekiesvlei. Aunty Evelyn always had cold water (I don't know how she managed to keep it that cool). The late Aunty Nellie and her late daughter, whom we called Chokkie, would invite me in for some tea, even on a hot day, and sometimes mashed potato and *roosterbrood* or samp and beans. Sometimes her kids would walk halfway with me, sometimes all the way home, and I would walk halfway back with them when it was almost sunset.

Sometimes my father would give me a lift on his bicycle. Or if he was going somewhere, I would get a lift with the car. He fixed a friend's bakkie once and when we drove to school we had a head-on collision with Uncle Eric's bakkie. He came to look for his horses up in the kloof and because the road was so small and had a curve, we couldn't see them coming and hit them. My head hit the windshield and my father's helper on the back of the bakkie flew over the roof and landed in the bush. Funnily enough, he was better off than me. My father carried me home and brought me back to consciousness—he had first-aid training long ago when he worked in P.E. My father took his car and drove all of us to the hospital in Fort Beaufort, I had a slight concussion and a sore knee, that was about it. On another day my father gave me a lift with his bicycle and the tyre burst as we were going downhill. We both jumped off and laughed all the way to school—my father has a good sense of humour.

Sometimes I would catch a lift home with one of the donkey wagons when they went up to the Kloof to chop some wood. There was a guy named Kopat. He had some crazy donkeys. Every now and then they would blindly run off the road and into the bush and we would all jump off and run away before he asked us to help him drag them back to the road.

I learned so much about nature and its beauty. One day I came from school and heard people whistling as if they were calling someone. It got louder as I walked further, so I hid under a bush, my heart pounding because I was scared that I was being followed. I waited to see where it was coming from. After a long time I looked around, and saw three *dassies* [rock-hyrax] sitting on a rock not far from me, and I realized they were making the sound. My mother sometimes came to fetch me halfway. She was scared of Dudu, a guy who was herding cows up in the Kloof. He wasn't mentally stable and he later drank poison and died. Sometimes I would walk home and a *duiker* [small antelope] or rabbit would cross the road

and sometimes I would have to move a large tortoise out the road, just in case it got hit by a car or donkey wagon. On hot days snakes would sometimes lie in the road. I would sit down and wait for it to move or find my way around it through the bush.

On my way home I would stop and eat the sap that comes from thorn trees—we called it glue because it's sticky, but it was sweet. Or I would eat what we called *droggies*, a blue berry that is sweet but leaves your mouth dry—be careful to pick the right one because some are poisonous—or *skarsies*, a berry shaped like a three-leafed clover. Sometimes I would get caught in a thunder storm and would run home in the slippery mud. I was once caught in a hail storm. Luckily, I had an umbrella and I wasn't that far from home. I ran as if my life depended on it. Once you pass the last houses there is nothing but bush. I would sometimes hike up in the mountain and sit on one of the big rocks and just read or lie down and enjoy the sun.

When my Auntie Delina (late Uncle Charlie Groepe's wife) moved to the farm [Groepeskloof] I moved in with her. I would stay there till Friday, and if I missed my parents I would walk home and visit them. There was a large camp [paddock] below Auntie Delina's house. Before we moved to the farm they ploughed and planted mealies, pumpkins, potatoes, onions and other crops in that field.

Later on, Uncle Abraham (Anna Pringle's father) and the late Uncle William (Wills) Loots bought some ostriches and kept them in that camp. Me and my cousin, Charlene, would take a shortcut to school through the camp. We would watch where the ostriches were, and walk either through the middle or close to the fence of the camp. Sometimes they were on the other side of the camp. Once they noticed us or the shiny buckles on our shoes or schoolbags, they would come running towards us. In fear of being attacked and kicked by them, we would jump over the fence and walk on the rough side of the camps. Later on we learned to tie a cloth to a long stick and scare them—anything taller than them would frighten them. Sometimes we would walk over and watch Uncle Abraham. He would feed them with mealies over the fence and, when they were close enough, he would grab one by the neck and pull a sock over its head. [In] this way he could collect the feathers and sell [them]. They sold the eggs as well.

On Wednesday Mrs Cloete would come from Maasdorp and sell fresh peaches out of her car boot. And, every Friday, Yvonne's Liquor would drive to the farm and collect everyone's empty bottles and crates and sell liquor to those who wanted. Auntie Nora (Uncle Wills' late wife) had a little shop where we would buy sweets and *bompies*—about one cup of frozen juice in a packet. She also sold paraffin and various other household items.

Sometimes she would sleep, and we had to knock at the door at the shop until she woke up—she had sugar diabetes. Aunty Mammie had a small black-and-white television that ran on a car battery, and every afternoon all the young people would walk to her house to watch “Days of our Lives” and “The Bold and the Beautiful”. Her house was one of the last houses in Tamboekiesvlei before the Kloof.

Sometimes when we walked to school the sun would be so hot [that] we would sit under a thorn tree, if we could find one—just to rest a little. There were large flat spiders which would run across the road, chasing us. We would run and run, until my mom told me [that] if I stand still, the spider will stop in my shadow—it’s looking for shade. My mom never really went to school but she can read, write and count like a varsity graduate.

When I was in Std 5 [Grade 7] in winter, Mr Anthony Venter, who was the principal at Hertzog Primary [School], got a donor for ingredients. And he cooked us some nice soup with soft meat in a large iron pot on an open fire every Wednesday at school. Each of us would bring our own mug and enjoy some nice hot soup, either in class or, if the sun was out, we would sit on the grass. Not all of us could afford to wear a uniform; some, if not most of the kids, wore casual clothes to school. Mr Venter and his wife drove all the way from Fort Beaufort with two or three other teachers to teach us at Hertzog.

We later moved to the house where my father lives now. On school holidays I would go home and help my father plough and plant and look after the livestock. I learned to drive a tractor. After that my dad taught me how to ride a motorbike, and only later I learned to drive a car. I started High School in King William’s Town when I was in Std 6 [Grade 8]. There was no high school on the farm. I wrote letters to my parents and sent it with an uncle who went home regularly. He had a taxi so we saved costs by going home only on school holidays.

## Review

Salome’s descriptions of Hertzog, Tamboekiesvlei and their erstwhile inhabitants are unique, and could be said to provide a Kat River version of Jane Austen’s *Highbury*.<sup>912</sup> The characteristics and foibles of the people, their generosity, innovation, capacity for enjoyment of the simplest things, and irrepressible sense of humour, seem to have bound them together and enabled them to endure what would currently be regarded as privations. Their acceptance of one another, including Dudu (who would probably not have been part of their community

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<sup>912</sup> See Jane Austen, *Emma*.

in postmodern times, but sent to an institution) is testament to the effect of their non-judgmental upbringing and all-embracing nature. Finally, Salome's excitement, as a child, of moving "back home" after the 1980s removals, complements the more contained adult versions of the event.

## Chapter 22: Custodians and pioneers: Kathleen du Preez and Tom Pringle

My first interview with Kathleen du Preez and Tom Pringle took place at the former Hertzog Dutch Reformed Church—a venue that they suggested.<sup>913</sup> This was the church in which Christian Groepe’s children were baptised in 1830 and where he married his children’s mother, Johanna Alida Arends(e), as his first wife on 28 February 1831.<sup>914</sup>

Initially the colonial government had granted land in Balfour, and later in Hertzog, for a church building and *pastorie* (manse); and the minister and sexton, respectively, were granted their own erven. Additionally, land in lower Hertzog (near where Olive Schreiner lived later) was provided for elderly parishioners.<sup>915</sup>

The parishioners that I interviewed were not of original Kat River settler stock and had subsequently bought or inherited their own erven, what they refer to as *grondjies* [smallholdings]. In Tom’s case, his father bought land from the Groepes, who had sold off portions of Christian Groepe’s land in that area at various stages. Some of the *grondjie* owners have additional sources of income, with Tom running a small shop on his property.

### The first interview<sup>916</sup>

For Tom, born in 1937, and Kathleen, born in 1933, the Kat River Rebellion was not of much interest, apart from the fact that the Hertzog church building—as attested to by the front door plaque and bullet holes in the wood—survived several frontier wars. The *hoeksteen* [foundation stone] was laid on 4 June 1834 but construction was interrupted by the outbreak of the sixth frontier war (1834-5), and the building was only completed in 1845. In itself, the

<sup>913</sup> All of the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans and translated into English by the author.

<sup>914</sup> Johanna Alida died in Tambookiesvlei in 1838, and Groepe married his second wife, Margaret(h)a Loots. Johanna Alida Arendse had been refused permission to marry Christian Groepe earlier as she could not speak English—the language in which the catechism had to be recited in order to qualify for church membership, which was necessary for a church marriage. Owing to the difficulties of obtaining a licence from the Grahamstown Matrimonial Registry (a 1-2 day journey by horse/oxcart) with the marriage certificate costing 5 shillings, 6d.) many people lived “in concubinage”, CA LG 6, Thomson to Stockenstrom, 27 September, 1830. To assist couples wishing to marry, D’Urban issued a proclamation on 25 June 1835, appointing Capt A. B. Armstrong, JP, as the first president of the newly-created Marriage Registry in Fort Beaufort. Thomson also taught English in his adult literacy classes, contrary to the government’s wish that they learn Dutch. In 1830 Thomson mentioned baptising 11 adults, the infant children of Groepe, Eckhardt and Arends, and marrying one couple “upon a Matrimonial Contract Certificate and publication of Bans”, with another in the offing. CA LG 6, Thomson to Stockenstrom, 27 September 1830, 34, quoted by Visagie, “Groepe”, 37-9.

<sup>915</sup> Information supplied by Hymie Groepe, telephone conversation, 31 October 2016.

<sup>916</sup> Conducted in Hertzog, Kat River, 10 March 2012.

church stands as a reminder of divine protection, as the edifice survived the wars of 1846-47 and 1850-53, during which substantial damage was sustained by other Kat River properties.<sup>917</sup>

In the churchyard, Tom proudly shows me the belfry with the bronze bell cast in Scotland and inscribed with the date, 1873. We enter the church via the *konsistorie* [vestry]. It is dim inside, with small window panes providing the only light. Tom points out the portraits of the Rev William Ritchie Thomson and his successors, the former depicting a venerable patriarch with a flowing beard. Neither Kathleen nor Tom was aware of animosity existing between the Reads' and Thomson's congregations.

From beneath a rickety staircase, Kathleen pulls out a custom-made yellowwood chest with a silver *Nagmaal* (Holy Communion) set and *doopbak* (baptismal bowl) in velvet-lined hollows. Communion plate—and especially those designed by William Butterfield—were popular ecclesiological gifts then in England and her colonies.<sup>918</sup> This set was donated in 1873 to the Hertzog Dutch Reformed Church by the widow of the Kat River surveyor, W. F. Hertzog—'*n geskenk van sy vrou* [a present from his wife], as Kathleen put it.<sup>919</sup> Carefully, she lifts the plate and cup from their hollows and sets them on a small table, where they sparkle with a brilliance that belies their age. As I discovered later, Kathleen keeps them and other silver in the church in their pristine state.

While we walk around the church and look at the imposing pulpit, the old pipe organ (which they don't have money to repair) and the pews, Tom—a lay preacher like his father—laments the dwindling congregation. From Thomson's time until a few decades ago, he says, the church would be packed to the rafters.<sup>920</sup> Now only a funeral fills it. The current poor attendance, he explains, is exacerbated by young Kat River people leaving the valley after finishing school.

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<sup>917</sup> Read, 79.

<sup>918</sup> See Thelma Gutsche, *The Bishop's Lady* (Cape Town: Howard Timmins, 1970), 127.

<sup>919</sup> W. F. Hertzog surveyed the allotments of the original Kat River settlers. His widow made the donation in 1873. She died in 1888.

<sup>920</sup> As early as 1830 there were 70 Sunday school pupils. Visagie, "Groepe", 37-9.



Figure 58 Tom Pringle and Kathleen Du Preez, 2011 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

From the gallery I look down on the pews and imagine how they would have looked during a Sunday morning service in Groepe's time. The men and women would probably have sat separately, with the men standing for the Bible readings and prayers, and the women sitting straight-backed in their starched best with their children, rising for the singing of the psalms and unceremoniously pulling up sleeping children. The minister, deacons and sexton would have been men, but perhaps a woman would have been allowed to play the organ.

When I rejoin Kathleen and Tom below, they show me the yellowwood pews that they are stripping of unsightly brown paint. As we discuss restoration, they speak of the need for funds to fix the leaking gutters. The congregation is poor. And, since 1994 it has received no government funding for maintenance, although it is still a national monument.

I am impressed by Kathleen and Tom's devotion to the church.<sup>921</sup> And I leave the interview believing that nothing much has changed since colonial times, apart from the

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<sup>921</sup> It is currently known as the VGK, *die Verenigde Gereformeerde Kerk* [the URCSA, the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa].

declining congregation. Gender roles are not much altered, with Tom as the lay preacher and Kathleen keeping the church clean and the silver polished.

## **Kathleen**

In a follow-up interview in May 2012, Kathleen explains that she was born in Cradock and met her husband, a Kat River man, at a rugby tournament in Bedford. After marrying him in Cradock in 1958, she moved to Hertzog, where she lived with her husband on his *grondjie*. Since his death in 1996, she has continued to live here. Kathleen had six children, five sons and a daughter. Since her arrival in Kat River, she has been involved in the Hertzog church.

**KdP** We clean the church every Friday. I bring the lady who cleans my house to help and I check that everything is in place. I open the church every Sunday and I lock up afterwards. I also preach. There are three of us lay preachers—Oom Tom Pringle, Oom Wykie Louw and me. We take turns; Oom Tom one week, me the next, and Oom Wykie the following week.

**SB** I didn't realise that you are also a lay preacher! Did you have to study to become one?

**KdP** (laughs) *Nee* [No].

**SB** You must know your Bible well?

**KdP** *Op my eie manier* [In my own way].

**SB** How often do you celebrate communion and who takes the service?

**KdP** *Nagmaal* is once a month. A minister from Fort Beaufort comes.

**SB** Is there still a church choir?

**KdP** Not since 1996. My [late] husband was a member of the church choir. There are too few people now for one.

**SB** How many people attend the Sunday services?

**KdP** It depends on the weather. If it's good, there are many people. If it's cold, there are few—about ten or eleven. You see, people have to walk. And not everyone is healthy. Very few people have transport.

**SB** Do you walk?

**KdP** *Ja*, I walk. I live about a kilometre from the church—there, near the graveyard. Oom Tom gives me a lift home from church. He has a *bakkie*.

In another interview Kathleen speaks about the death of her son and youngest child.

**KdP** My son, Graham, was 26 years old. He was working in East London at the time. He was killed when someone drove into him. He was killed instantly. It was a Saturday night. He was in a car—it was his own car. A man drove through a stop street and into him. . . I was only told about it the next day. The people in Fort Beaufort came to tell me.<sup>922</sup> . . . His body was brought back and buried here—in the Tamboekiesvlei graveyard.

**SB** How did you cope with the tragedy?

**KdP** I have faith in God. My faith was very strong. And it was the Lord who brought me through. Many people prayed for me—they came to my house and prayed for me. And I prayed too . . . It was his time to go. And I trusted in the Lord . . . It took a long time to get over it.

**SB** Did you have counselling or any other help?

**KdP** A few times I went to the doctor. And my faith and prayers helped.

I felt humbled and honoured that Kathleen had confided in me, and wished that I could have responded better. Having not been bereaved at that time, it was difficult to know what to say.

### **Tom: “*Alles is stil daai annner kant*” (Everything is quiet [on] the other side)**

In follow-up telephone conversation with Tom in May 2012, he tells me that his *oupa* [grandfather] was Henry Cornelius Pringle, a descendant of Thomas Pringle.<sup>923</sup> When I ask Tom if there had been contact with the white Pringle family, he answers in the negative.

He explains that he was born in Bellvale (adjoining Hertzog) and grew up on his father’s *grondjie*, where he still lives today, growing potatoes, pumpkins, butternuts and cabbages. Like Hymie, he speaks about the way in which his father and their neighbours lost their land to whites, with *die prokureur van Seymour* [the Seymour lawyer] cropping up several times in his conversation.

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<sup>922</sup> Neither Kathleen nor any of my coloured interviewees in Kat River have landlines. The death occurred before Kathleen had a cell phone.

<sup>923</sup> Thomas Pringle was the leader of the Scottish party of the 1820 settlers. A poet, he was the co-editor with John Fairbairn of the *South African Commercial Advertiser*. He was also a member of the Church of Scotland. On the first Sunday on their farm, Glen Lyndon, in the Baviaans Valley, Pringle held an outdoor church service, at which they sang the hymn, “O God of Bethel”. Pringle left the Cape Colony in 1826. See Thomas Pringle, *Narrative of a Residence in South Africa* (London, 1835, repr., Cape Town: Struik, 1966), 35-7 and Randolph Vigne, ed., *The South African Letters of Thomas Pringle* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 2011), 35-37.

During the wars, Tom says, many people left Kat River and those who remained had a hard time. But when things settled down, people came back and wanted land. During this time, because of a new boundary law, Kat River people were forced to erect fences they could not afford. This caused them to get into debt and Fenner-Solomon—who knew exactly who was in debt—called them in and made them sell their land to him. Screwing his face into a ferocious expression, Tom impersonates “Sollie” by barking, “*Ek wil my geld hê!*” [I want my money!] And so the Hertzog, Bellvale and Cathcartvale people lost their land to whites.

The emotion this recalled for Tom was strong; there was resentment and bitterness in his voice. (We did not talk about the 1980s expropriations, although Kathleen told me that they had suffered by being extremely underpaid for their land.) When I asked Tom if they had also submitted a land claim, he said, *Ja*, they had submitted both individual and communal claims, “*maar alles is stil daai annner kant* [but everything is quiet from that side].”

### **Interim review**

As in Hymie’s interview, the sense of place in the first interview with Tom and Kathleen was palpable. Their investment in what was then the Hertzog Dutch Reformed Church and their desire to conserve it physically and spiritually was passionate, but it concealed personal concerns. If the interview had ended there, my lasting impression of Kathleen and Tom would have been of them only as custodians of the church—as valuable as this is in itself.

During the first interview Tom was wearing smart-casual clothes and Kathleen a cleaning overall. Neither she nor Tom mentioned that she was also a lay preacher. Did they forget to do so? Was Kathleen too modest to tell me? Or would it have been seen as upstaging Tom? Was Kat River still a patriarchal society?

I did not ask these questions at the time and neither did I probe the silences in Kathleen’s account of Graham’s death. We did, however, speak briefly afterwards about the comfort Kathleen finds in looking forward to being reunited with him in heaven.

In her analyses of love letters written during World War 2 between couples (some of whom were in Jewish concentration camps) who were separated and realised that they would probably not survive another meeting, Luisa Passerini noted that the writers “look[ed]

forward to future realities” by being able “to project a message of union. . . beyond the violence . . . and oppression”.<sup>924</sup> In her own way, this is what Kathleen seems to be doing.

### **“*Ons preek kwaaiër as die mans!*”: final interview with Kathleen**

In a final telephone interview on 22 February 2016, Kathleen spoke further about her roles in the Hertzog church. When her husband died in 1998, she was elected as *ouderling* in his place. No one contested it. She remained the only woman *ouderling* at Hertzog until 2015, when Elsie Jewell and Anna Pringle were also elected to the office. Now all three of them are elders and take turns at preaching. They have also been elected to the church council.

They are not allowed, however, to wear trousers to church as the church council forbids it. (The younger women do, though.) When I asked Kathleen why they don’t challenge what appears to be a sexist ruling,<sup>925</sup> Kathleen explained that she is nearly 83 years old and has never worn trousers. She does not feel comfortable wearing them, she grew up like this. She also voluntarily wears a hat or headscarf when she preaches. Would some feminists describe this as cultural editing?<sup>926</sup> Or is it a case of following to the letter 1 Corinthians 3: 6 and Leviticus 22: 5? Whatever the reasons for their stance, the three women elders do not seem to see the regulation as cramping their style.

When I raise the topic of gender equality in Kat River, Kathleen explained that everyone is equal—men and women— but it’s only been the case in recent years. She says she is satisfied with her status and authority in the community. As she put it, with a smile in her voice, “*Ons preek kwaaiër as die mans!*” [We preach more boldly/angrily than the men!”]

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<sup>924</sup> ‘But sometimes it is able to project a message of union – not of fusion – beyond the violence that allows people to endure current oppression and look forward to future realities. Lusia Passerini, “Connecting Emotions: Contributions from Cultural History”, *Historein*, vol 8 (2008), 126. <http://www.nnet.gr/historein/historeinfiles/histvolumes/hist08/historein8-passerini.pdf> retrieved 9 May 2015.

<sup>925</sup> Perhaps thereby falling into the white feminist trap. See anthropologist Sondra Hale’s warning not to “impose the feminist process” on one’s interviewees, in *The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, eds, Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (New York: Routledge, 1991), see Susan Geiger, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*, 19, 2 (1994), 501.

<sup>926</sup> See Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack on “experience in a culturally edited form”, in “Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses” in *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, eds, Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (New York: Routledge, 1991), 24. Compare the different ways in which women “receive and interpret the social models of femaleness produced and controlled by institutions such as the family and the church”, and which they perpetuate or challenge when they are the “producers and controllers,” in Marie-Francoise Chanfrault-Duchet, “Narrative Structures, Social Models, and Symbolic Representation in the Life Story,” *Women’s Words*, 82.

## Chapter 23: “It was a strange place to me”: Friemersheim interviews

### Physical location

Friemersheim is located some 14.5 kilometres north of Klein Brakrivier in the foothills of the Outeniqua Mountains.<sup>927</sup>

### Climate

Friemersheim normally receives about 531 mm of rain per year, with rainfall occurring throughout the year. It receives the lowest rainfall (28 mm) in June and the highest (63 mm) in March. The monthly distribution of average daily maximum temperatures shows that the average midday temperatures for Friemersheim range from 17.7°C in July to 28°C in January. The region is the coldest during July when the mercury drops to 5.4°C on average during the night.<sup>928</sup>

### Background to the interviews

My first round of interviews with Kat River/Stockenstrom people who had moved to Friemersheim and returned to Stockenstrom was conducted telephonically. In November 2014 I met them and two new interviewees in Tamboekiesvlei.

It was hot and dry. The October rainfall—necessary for ploughing—had been poor. Few streams were running, the vegetation looked dry and seemed depleted since my previous visit in 2012, with fewer spekboom<sup>929</sup> but more goats foraging alongside the tarred road. The commonages in Blinkwater and Tamboekiesvlei were bare and dusty from overgrazing and

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<sup>927</sup> Information provided by Stephen Davey, email communication to the author, 26 February 2016.

<sup>928</sup> [http://www.saexplorer.co.za/south-africa/climate/friemersheim\\_climate.asp](http://www.saexplorer.co.za/south-africa/climate/friemersheim_climate.asp) Accessed 26 February 2016.

<sup>929</sup> The degradation of spekboom has been shown to result in decreased infiltration of rainwater through the soil, decreased soil moisture content, and increased surface runoff, leading to erosion. See G. M. Lujik, R. M. Cowling, M. J. P. M. Riksen, and J. Glenday, “Hydrological implications of desertification: Degradation of South African semi-arid subtropical thicket”, *Journal of Arid Environments*, 91 (2013), 14-21.

the cattle I saw looked thin. It brought to mind the observations of Sheona and Charlie Shackleton, that “most of the commonages in South Africa are in poorer ecological condition and so deliver fewer ecological services”.<sup>930</sup> There was also a notable increase in human population at Tamboekiesvlei, where more squatters seemed to have taken up residence in abandoned houses or in shacks. As a result, there were probably more livestock in the area. I met my interviewees in the Tamboekiesvlei community hall, which offered some respite from the heat. The small building of unplastered brick had open rafters, small windows, a raised dais, and old benches and desks in which the Kat River people had sat when Hymie and Oom Wykie had helped them to complete their forms in the 1980s, whilst Anna Pringle cooked *vetkoek* outside. I had brought some cake and drinks and there was a festive atmosphere. Most of the interviewees had walked to get there. Uncle Tom brought some in his bakkie.

### **“It was a big shock for me”: Anna Pringle<sup>931</sup>**

**SB** How long have you been in Kat River, Anna?

**AP** Since I was eleven years old. I was born in Pearston, Somerset East. My maiden name was Smit—Smith, but the “h” was dropped, I don’t know when. We lived on a farm called *Ounek* [Old Neck]. My father was working under the white farmer that lived there. I was about 11 years old when we moved to Tamboekiesvlei—near the church.

**SB** Where did you go to school prior to this?

**AP** When I was eight years old I went to the school in Jansenville. I was living with my grandparents there. We went by feet, but sometimes we got a lift on the back of the farmer’s lorry. . . We left my grandparents (their name was Hector) in January and came to Tamboekiesvlei in 1967. My father bought land from Mr Casson . . . the one who owned the shop on the corner.<sup>932</sup> I met my [first] husband, Mr Noonan, here in Tamboekiesvlei. I was

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<sup>930</sup> This being the result of “the lack of interest of municipalities in sustaining the commonage areas”. Sheona E. Shackleton and Charlie M. Shackleton, “Not Just Farming: Natural Resources and Livelihoods in Land and Agrarian Reform”, in *Land Divided, Land Restored*, eds, Ben Cousins et al., 201.

<sup>931</sup> Telephone interview, 10 June 2014; face-to-face interview, Tamboekiesvlei, 27 November 2014.

<sup>932</sup> Mr P. M. Casson arrived in Tamboekiesvlei as a young man and established shops at Seymour, Maasdorp, and Tamboekiesvlei. The first two still exist, under different owners and names. Casson married Ellen Kramm, a coloured woman from Tamboekiesvlei. According to Hymie Groepe, he worked very hard and sent money back to his family in India. Later, while moving to Durban, the Casson family were involved in a fatal collision with a bus on a road-rail bridge near Mount Frere.

nineteen years old when we got married in the Tamboekiesvlei Catholic Church. He was a Catholic.<sup>933</sup> He died when he was 44 years old—of a heart attack. After seven years I married Mr Pringle, Uncle Tom’s brother.

**SB** When did you move to Friemersheim?

**AP** In 1987. And I left [Friemersheim] in June. I went to my sister in PE [Port Elizabeth] for a while and then I came back to Tamboekiesvlei in 1998.

**SB** Why did you come back?

**AP** You must have an income. I had no job and no income [in Friemersheim]. Without that you will struggle. My husband received a disability grant, because he was disabled. Things went wrong there [at Friemersheim]. They take it away [the disability grant]. So we had no income. No grant. No job. No nothing. No food to eat. I have to go to work for one rand a day for the council [municipality] to clean the graves. And I worked for five rand a day on the land in Blanco, reaping broccoli. In that place rain can fall any time of the day. The rain falls, and you get wet and sick. Then sometimes I worked in the shoe *fabriek* [factory] [in Great Brak]. But then they said you must choose—*fabriek* or grant. And I lost both. In Friemersheim you start to get enemies. You got friends . . . you also got enemies. And friends can be cruel.

**SB** Why did you go to Friemersheim?

**AP** Because of the homelands, and *mos* (that kind of thing. In Tamboekiesvlei you can have your own animals. In Friemersheim you must put them on a rope. There is no grazing field. The lifestyle was difficult there. Here I can farm with my chickens and goats and slaughter my own meat. In Friemersheim I have to go buy wood or gas. . . We stayed on state land. Like a location.<sup>934</sup> The houses were close together. We couldn’t farm— you can only farm with chickens in your own yard. There was no grazing. And you had to keep pigs in a camp. It was a big shock for me. It was not nice for me. The previous people [of Tamboekiesvlei]—my own people—turned their backs on me there. It was everybody for themselves. The people were selfish. People get tired if you say, “Give me some sugar.” In the old days you could go and ask for a cup of sugar and they would give it to you. Not anymore. And my husband could not work.

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Their young daughter and her dog—allegedly the sole survivors—were rescued from the river by Xhosa people who accommodated them. Hymie Groepe, telephone conversation with the author, 27 March 2016.

<sup>933</sup> On several Catholic families relocating to Friemersheim, the Nationalist Government converted the Tamboekiesvlei Catholic Church into a crèche.

<sup>934</sup> A dense sub-economic area in which black/coloured people lived during apartheid.

**SB** What were the people of Friemersheim like?

**AP** Some of them went to church. Most of them liked to drink. Wine is cheaper there—very much easier for you to get it there. It was a strange place to me. My in-laws were with me there. But my father was on this side [Tamboekiesvlei]. So I came home. I didn't have food, and my father was here. I carried my father and my brothers after my mother died [she was 45]. I carried them. On my back . . . I spent half a year in PE [Port Elizabeth]. Then in 1990 I came back [to Tamboekiesvlei]. Oh, it was to me very good— very good for me to be back home! I could start farming [again]. And I could build my own house. I could milk, myself, get eggs for myself, and slaughter my own meat.

**SB** Was your father still alive when you came back?

**AP** My father was still alive but he got cancer. He died eleven years ago. We managed to get our grant back and my children's money back. I had two casual jobs.

**SB** Were your children also unhappy in Friemersheim?

**AP** I can't say if they were unhappy. You know, children run and play with other children.

**SB** Did they go to school there?

**AP** They went to a government school in Brak River. But they were happy to come back to Tamboekiesvlei. Life was difficult for me in Friemersheim. I had to travel early to the *fabriek* in Great Brak on a bus. For three months I worked there. I left at 7 am and got back past 7 pm. I had to work overtime. Life in Friemersheim was not the same as here. I also reaped mealies and potatoes for white people in Blanco. Some of the people [from Tamboekiesvlei] were bricklayers and painters in Mossel Bay. I belong here [in Tamboekiesvlei]. I will die here. And be buried here.

Although Anna was not born in Tamboekiesvlei she spent much of her life there and was attached to it and its people. Friemersheim spelled loss and alienation for her—she missed family members, her former agricultural livelihood, her husband's disability grant, and her old friends “turned their backs” on her. She also found its climate fickle and linked getting wet in the rain to sickness.

Anna also stressed that they were worse off financially in Friemersheim. She had to work long hours as a farm labourer/factory worker and had to buy fuel whereas previously she grew her own crops, ran poultry, pigs and a few dairy cows, and wood was plentiful. She was also forced to choose between a government grant and small factory wages. As she summed it up, “There was no work, no food, no nothing.”

Anna’s protest at losing her commons is a typical refrain in Marxist case studies which highlight the “tak[ing] of the ground under the feet of the women whose pig-keeping, chicken minding and vegetable patch depended on common right”.<sup>935</sup> Anna was also frank about her reason for moving to Friemersheim—to avoid forced assimilation by having to live amongst “another nation” by remaining in Stockenstrom after it became a bantustan. There was a strong sense of community in Tamboekiesvlei, the disruption of which the government apparently discounted or ignored. The moves to Friemersheim, however, presented other problems. Anna not only lamented her loss of independence and livelihood but separation from her father and younger brothers for whom she had formerly cared. After her mother’s death, as she put it, “I carried them on my back”—a metaphor that carries South African connotations of nurture.<sup>936</sup>



Figure 59 Anna Pringle’s house in Tamboekiesvlei

<sup>935</sup> Linebaugh, *Stop Thief*, 37.

<sup>936</sup> Traditionally, Xhosa, Thembu and Mpondo mothers carried their babies on their backs, as did young female childminders. Observations of the author in the Ngcobo, Komgha and Qolorha areas, 1964-2015. See also Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, 155, and Joan Broster, *Red Blanket Valley* (Johannesburg: Hugh Keartland Publishers, 1967), 6.

**“They chopped his shoulder with the *panga*”: Christo Noonan<sup>937</sup>**

**CN** My parents owned land in Tamboekiesvlei. We were staying on top of the land [living on the land], my grandparents’ land, Lot 10. People were struggling for land . . . I was there [in Tamboekiesvlei] for about 13 or 14 years.

**SB** Tell me about the forced removals.

**CN** They came and loaded us up so fast. The trucks were here to move us to Friemersheim. The trucks came suddenly. I don’t know why it was so sudden. It looks as if we were forced out of the place. We just put on our stuff—on the trucks, on the back. Some people went in buses. Some people left stuff, stoves and other things, in the house.

**SB** How did you manage in Friemersheim?

**CN** Some of the Friemersheim people helped us. They made us food and stuff. We had debt. Some of us have to buy things. They gave us little money for our land here [in Kat River].

**SB** Did you have houses at Friemersheim?

**CN** Yes. Cement-block ones, plastered outside and backwashed. We got two bed or three-bedroom ones. But only a small portion of land. . . It was very troublesome there. The Friemersheim people started fighting . . . they brought buses [of people] from Mossel Bay to fight with us. . . Young and old. With *pangas* [machetes] and knives. They climbed onto our [asbestos] roofs. And they made a hole in the roof and they threw down a gas bottle—a 14kg one—into our house. Then they lit a piece of paper to throw down—to start a fire in the house. [They had opened the tap on the gas bottle before dropping it into the house]. I was with my *oupa* and *ouma* in the house and I ran up and quickly closed the gas bottle. My one cousin, Claude Arends, was chased. They chopped his shoulder with the *panga*. An ambulance took him to hospital in Mossel Bay.

**SB** Did anyone inform the police?

**CN** Yes, the police came out that day.

**SB** How would you describe the people of Friemersheim?

**CN** There was very many differences between them [and us]. The people were not friendly at Friemersheim. They were nasty to us. They thought we were going to take their land.

**SB** How did you find the school in Friemersheim?

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<sup>937</sup> Telephone interview, 30 September, 2014; face-to-face interview, Tamboekiesvlei, 27 November, 2014.

**CN** The school was all right. But some of the teachers had nasty ways. They would hit you, maybe for nothing. You just do nothing wrong and they hit you. We made a couple of friends. Some of them were nice to us. Two friends were decent—very nice—to us. The Speelmans and Geldebloms.

**SB** Was there a church in Friemersheim?

**CN** We are Catholics—on my grandfather's side. There wasn't a Catholic church there so we went to the one in Mossel Bay. Quite a few Catholic families did that. We started the Catholic Church in Friemersheim. It is still there.

**SB** What did you do in your free time?

**CN** We have nothing to do over there. My mother brought a couple of chickens. You have only your plot. My father did not work. He was disabled. It was bad because a lot of people get hurt emotionally. For entertainment we went to the neighbours—the Bantams—to watch TV. We played soccer in the street. And rugby in the veld. It was a very struggling time. ..

**CN** My mom went to work on the land because there was not other work to do. Sometimes she worked in the shoe factory at Watsons, in Great Brak. The youngest child [Christo's sister] was about two or three. There was my aunt on my father's side [who looked after her]. . The weather is different there. Here it is dry weather, there it is damp. A lot of people got asthma. My aunt and uncle and her son, and some of my cousins got asthma. And my grandfather and my grandmother, they both died in Friemersheim.

**SB** When did you move back to Tamboekiesvlei?

**CN** We moved back after a year to Tamboekiesvlei, the whole family—mother, father, brother and sister. We lived with my mother's sister's family, the Smiths. My dad was a builder. He built a house for us next door. My mother remarried.

**SB** What did you do after you left school?

**CN** I got married to Mirelda [from Friemersheim] and we stayed in Mossel Bay. And then I went to work in King William's Town . . . and then [we came back to Kat River]. We started planning a land claim. We are struggling to get our land back. Finance is the big thing now. We put in a claim for the whole lot of our families, Lot 10. We want to get the land back. But [other] people are here, they have a grip on the land. But we have the papers. Maybe they will fight . . . that's what I'm thinking. More and more people are coming and squatting. And there are only a couple of lands.

Christo was the only interviewee to have memories of Friemersheim as a young adolescent. Either he has a sanguine disposition or the passing of time has ameliorated the *angst* he may

have experienced during and after the removals. Thus, he spoke with emotional detachment about their being rushed out of Tamboekiesvlei, the beatings at school, and the *panga* and gas bottle attacks. Repetition, however, is informative. Three times he used the word “nothing”: twice to stress that there was no reason for the corporal punishment (which suggests that it bothered him) and the third time to emphasise the boredom at Friemersheim. He spoke quietly and modestly of saving his grandparents’ lives during the gas bottle attacks, and credited some families at Friemersheim for being “decent” to them.

Owing to lack of employment in Tamboekiesvlei, Christo was staying in Durban with his sister, Leeann, when I spoke to him early in 2016.



Figure 60 Christo Noonan, 2014 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

### **“My mother cried to come back”: Melvin Stirling Melvin Stirling<sup>938</sup>**

**SB** Why did you go to Friemersheim, Melvin?

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<sup>938</sup> Telephone interview, 30 September 2014; face-to-face interview, Tamboekiesvlei, 27 November 2014.

**MS** The reason was that we thought life would be more comfortable, easier, there. We were having a hard time with the water here in Kat River. We didn't have taps. We had to go with donkey carts to fetch the water [from the river]. We thought we would have better lives at Friemersheim, so we went there. But we found there was no land there and many of our people got sick, got asthma. My *niggie* [cousin/niece] died there.

**SB** Did they take her to the doctor?

**MS** Yes, she went to the hospital at Mossel Bay and they took her by helicopter to the ICU in Port Elizabeth. She died there. Many of the people had asthma there [at Friemersheim]. . No, I did not get asthma but I got treatment [for lung problems] afterwards.<sup>939</sup>

**SB** Did you miss the Kat River community?

**MS** Most of the people from Kat River went to Friemersheim. But the people there did not like us. They were very *bakleierig* [always looking for a fight]. They made fires. And they had knives and stones. The old people stayed at home because they threw stones. Old people don't like *rowwigheid* [thuggery].

**SB** Did you report this?

**MS** Yes. There was a police station at Great Brak. They caught some of the people.

**SB** When did you return to Kat River? And why did you come back?

**MS** In the 1990s. To find a place. My mother was not happy. She cried to come back. So my brother and I went to fetch her . . . Our old house was still there, but my father built a new one. We had a few cattle. They grazed on our own land. Eleven or twelve Brahmin. And a few goats and chickens. . . my mother lived for eight years after we got back to Kat River. River. . . No one really fitted in, adapted there [at Friemersheim].

Melvin explained that the move to Friemersheim was motivated by the belief that life would be better there. The drawcard was water on tap, which they lacked at Tamboekiesvlei. However, “[t]here was no land and work was scarce”, at Friemersheim, people developed asthma and the “old people”, frightened by the violence, stayed indoors. Noting his mother’s unhappiness, he took her back Tamboekiesvlei.—another instance of filial compassion amongst my interviewees.

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<sup>939</sup> He explained later that this was due to his having worked at a chemical factor afterwards in Markman Township at Aloes, near Port Elizabeth.



Figure 61 Thomas Overmeyer, 2014 (Photograph: S I Blackbeard)

### **“They said the place belongs to them”: Thomas Overmeyer<sup>940</sup>**

Thomas was in his twenties when he moved to Friemersheim. His father, who owned lot 3 in Kat River, worked as a carpenter making coffins in Seymour. He died when Thomas was very young; leaving “seven brothers and two sisters”. Thomas’s mother was given a social grant.

**SB** How big was your lot in Kat River?

**TO** Well, you see, you have fields that you plough and they are yours. And your cattle graze on community land. You have rights to it—there, where the church is.

**SB** Did you also become a carpenter?

**TO** I also went into carpentry. I went to Jo’burg [Johannesburg] to learn the trade, worked for a company, then moved to another. Upgraded.

**SB** Were you back in Kat River when the forced removals occurred?

**TO:** Yes, I was staying with my girlfriend and her family.

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<sup>940</sup> Telephone interview, 4 August 2014; face-to-face interview, Tambookiesvlei, 27 November 2014.

**SB** How did you hear of Friemersheim?

**TO** There was this reverend from here [Kat River], he organised everything. Everyone sold their property. You had no choice to where you want to go. You have to decide for yourself. There was no help— only for those who went to that side [Friemersheim]. The reverend father worked for the government, and he organised it. . . I went there on my own, to work. I moved because my girlfriend and her sister moved there. And my brother.

**SB:** Did you get work there?

**TO:** Yes. First at Mossel Bay and then at George. I worked afterwards for Mossgas. The company hired us as welding men.

**SB:** Where did you live in Friemersheim?

**TO:** House no. 8, Protea Street. The government built houses for us. Nice houses. There is ground there that the church of Hertzog bought but we could not use it as it was bought in the name of the government. It was theirs and they didn't transfer it to us. So no one could move onto it. They were planning to build on it.

**SB** What was life like in Friemersheim?

**OT** There was xenophobia against the Kat River people. We had to fight sometimes . . . on the weekends. They [the Friemersheim people] went to a few of our houses and smashed them. Trying to get the people out of the houses. They don't like strange people there.

**SB** Were you taking work from them?

**TO** No, we were not taking work from them. They said the place belongs to them. It was also church ground before and they sold it to the council, the local government. You could not plough fields where you were staying.

**SB** How many Kat River people moved there?

**TO:** About a hundred. All living together in one area. They saw us as *inkommers* [outsiders].

**SB** How else did they make you feel unwanted?

**TO** On Saturdays when they were drinking they were just looking for a fight. Wine was cheap there. When you came there it was damp and wet. It made people drink more. Lots got asthma. Some of the older people died of it.

**SB** What happened to the people who got asthma?

**TO** They were taken to hospital in Mossel Bay. By ambulance. . . I stayed there for ten years. I did carpentry for homes, roofs and supported me and my girlfriend. The people didn't accept you. They never mixed with us. It's much better now [being back in Kat River].

**SB** Why did you move back?

**TO** Here [in Tamboekiesvlei] you can farm. It's peaceful. No one bothers you. Somebody would swear at you if they passed you in the street [in Friemersheim].

**SB** Did you have a social life in Friemersheim?

**TO** Me and my brother and our girlfriends would go to the sea to get out of the place. We didn't have family there. We were Catholic. There was no Catholic church there. The preacher came out on a Sunday and we had church in one of the homes.

Thomas intimated that was little choice for the Tamboekiesvlei people who were forced out of Kat River and mentions the Hertzog Dutch Reformed Church's role in initiating the Friemersheim plan. He implied that the church minister was in league with the government, "The reverend father worked for the government, and he organised it." Jeff Peires confirmed that there were rumours of this at the time.<sup>941</sup>

Thomas explained that they couldn't move onto the land that the Hertzog church bought in Friemersheim because "it was in the name of the government" and "they didn't transfer it to us." If this were the case, it is extraordinary that the Kat River people were encouraged to move there. One can only conjecture how the error—if that's what it was—occurred. Whatever occasioned the debacle, it was a blow to the newcomers.

In binaries, Thomas described the situation in Friemersheim: the *inkommers* versus "that side". He explains that they weren't accepted because they were strangers, and the people feared that they would take their land—thus maintaining that contestation for land—not work—drove the violence. In order to escape it, he and girlfriend went to the sea over the weekend. He stressed the density of the area in which they had to live in Friemersheim, remarking on the contrasting peacefulness of Tamboekiesvlei. He admitted, however, that the houses they were given in Friemersheim were "nice". Like the other interviewees, he adopted a collective voice, saying, "We had to fight." Owing to the scarcity of work in Kat River, when I spoke to him in 2015 Thomas was commuting weekly to Ngcobo (in the former Transkei) where construction and carpentry skills were in demand.

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<sup>941</sup> Telephone conversation with Jeff Peires, August 2014.

**“A nice place for a holiday”: Leeann Kay, youngest child of Anna Pringle.<sup>942</sup>**

My life in Friemersheim was not much, as I was small [young] when my parents where living there and when we moved back to the farm [Tamboekiesvlei]. I went back in 2000 to do Grade 9 at Groot Brak Secondary School. I only stayed for that year in Friemersheim, and went back [to Tamboekiesvlei] in 2001 to continue my studies in East London, as it was too far from home. I am still in contact with my family in Friemersheim. I would say Friemersheim is a nice place to go for holidays. The young people of Friemersheim need a lot of motivation as, in the last couple of years, drugs and alcohol have taken over and led to a few suicides and suicidal thoughts.

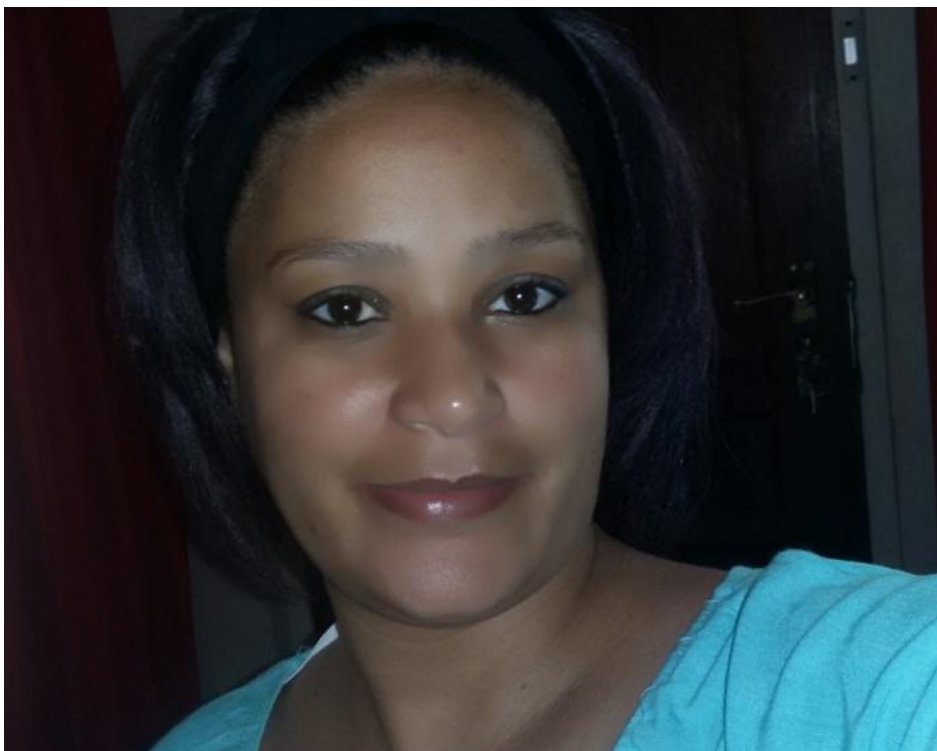


Figure 62 Leeann Kay (Photograph: A N Other)

### **Concluding remarks**

There was general consensus among my interviewees that the Friemersheim project was a disappointment. They lost their former independence and agricultural lifestyles and had to work as wage labourers, factory workers, or artisans. Several of them contracted asthma, one

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<sup>942</sup> Email communication to the author, 22 March 2016.

lost a government grant, and most spoke of the xenophobia. The damp climate and accessibility and cheapness of alcohol, caused people to drink more—it must be remembered that they came from a more or less dry Kat River Settlement—causing some to lose friends or grants as it became a problem.

Many of the newcomers left families in Tamboekiesvlei. Although their forced removals did not all constitute the “shattering of relationships” that Sean Field observed elsewhere, there was a general sense of sadness and dislocation. Field also noted that the breaking up of relationships caused the disappearance of “folklore, urban legends, traditions, and other forms of oral storytelling”.<sup>943</sup> While none of my interviewees told traditional community stories like Hymie, they were creating new legends—urban legends, about stone-throwing and *panga* and gas bottle attacks, with (implicitly) themselves as heroes.

Whilst I have argued elsewhere<sup>944</sup> that the Friemersheim removals—which affected the culture, religion, health, and economic existence of the Tamboekiesvlei people—could be seen as exemplifying aspects of Raphael Lemkin’s genocide description in “Axis Rule”,<sup>945</sup> as well as the theories of Henry Huttenbach<sup>946</sup> and Barbara Harff and Ted Gurr,<sup>947</sup> I have found it necessary to revise this conclusion.

Although they may have been seen as “surplus people”, there is no evidence that the Nationalist Government “intended to destroy in whole or part” this “communal ... ethnic group” of Kat River coloured people. If anything, their troubles at Friemersheim seem to have welded them together and increased their determination to return to Kat River. Some of them developed asthma but in severe cases the sufferers were taken to hospital by ambulance

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<sup>943</sup> Sean Field, *Oral History, Community and Displacement: Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 43.

<sup>944</sup> Susan I. Blackbeard, “It was a strange place to me: cultural genocide at the Kat River Settlement,” paper presented at the annual INoGS (International Network of Genocide Scholars) Conference, Cape Town, December 2014.

<sup>945</sup> Lemkin described genocide as, “A coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups . . . the objectives . . . [being the] disintegration of the political and social institutions of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence [and] . . . personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of individuals belonging to such groups.” Raphael Lemkin, “Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress” (Washington, D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), ix, 79-95.

<sup>946</sup> “Genocide is any act that puts the very existence of a group in jeopardy”. Henry Huttenbach, “Locating the Holocaust on the Genocide Spectrum: Towards a Methodology of Definition and Categorization” in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 3, No.3 (1988), 294. See also 289–303.

<sup>947</sup> “Genocides and politicides are the promotion, execution and/or implied consent of sustained policies by governing elites or their agents . . . that are intended to destroy in whole or part, a communal, political or politicised ethnic group”. Barbara Harff and Ted Gurr, “Towards Empirical Theory of Genocides and Politicides: Identification and Measurement of Cases since 1945”, *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 37, No. 3 (1988), 359-71.

or helicopter. Similarly, the police came and arrested people during the xenophobia attacks. It must also be remembered that none of the people who went to Friemersheim were forced to do so. Their displacement from Kat River, Friemersheim experiences, and lack of employment on their return to Tamboekiesvlei, however, seems to have had the effect of making some of the younger people rootless.<sup>948</sup> Leeann Kay remarked on the substance abuse in Friemersheim, and the depression and suicides amongst the young people. This is not to say that Friemersheim is different from any other small, more-or-less isolated community in South Africa, but it was a marked contrast with River/Stockenstrom.

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<sup>948</sup> Or it may simply be the manifestation of a common global symptom in a world that has lost much of its former perceived stability.

## Chapter 24: *Spirito rebello*: Interviews with the late Hermanus (“Manie”) Gabriel Loots, alias James Stuart<sup>949</sup>

### First interview

Before I interviewed Manie Loots I read the unpublished interviews that V. C. Malherbe conducted with him in 1998.<sup>950</sup> Bearing these in mind, and Hymie’s references to Manie helping the Tamboekiesvlei community, I began my interview with Manie by requesting him to tell me something about it, and what progress they were making with the land claims. I also asked him what he knew of the Kat River Rebellion, what he was doing to help his people in Kat River, and his part in the struggle against apartheid. Although I knew him as Manie, I have used the initials HL [for Hermanus Loots] in the interview.

**HL** We worked out a development plan to upgrade the roads and bridges in the area and build a dam in Tamboekiesvlei, me and Wykie Loots. There is a catchment area south of Groepeskloof . . . My whole family has a background of resistance—the entire Kat River Valley fighting against the English. In 1853 there was a court-martial—Colonel Sutton in charge of it—and local people appearing before him in rebellion against the Queen. Some were sentenced to death and some were exiled . . . My grandmother, Margareta Jacoba Loots, was the second wife of Christian Jacobus Groepe. My sister is named after her.<sup>951</sup>

Yes, we are trying to reclaim our lands [in Kat River]. We’ve been waiting for years and nothing concrete has happened. Now we are getting fed up. We have given all the proof required, family names and title deeds. By the way it’s being handled it’s not going to go

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<sup>949</sup> Telephone interview with Manie Loots, 12 July 2012, with a follow-up interview soon afterwards, and a final telephone interview on 8 August 2015. The review was written while Manie was still alive. Some of the tenses have subsequently been changed and footnotes added.

<sup>950</sup> V. C. Malherbe, unpublished interviews with Hermanus (Manie) Loots, 14/ 4/1998 and 8/2/1999, when Manie was a member of the first ANC parliament. At this time Manie was planning a conference on the Kat River people and the rebellion, which he hoped would take place in June 1999. He mentions it in both interviews with Malherbe. In the second Malherbe interview (8/2/99) Manie was “working through the red tape to get the dam built in Kat River”. At that stage Manie’s mother was still alive (she was 91 years old), and people who had left Kat River during the forced removals were moving back. Andrew Arends, who had not left Kat River, was still alive—although he was “very old”.

<sup>951</sup> According to Hymie Groepe, Manie was very close to his sister, Margaretha Jacoba Loots. Until the 1960s the three Loots brothers, Manie, Wills and Joey, and their sister all had houses in Tamboekiesvlei—“so close that you could talk from kitchen to kitchen”—in what was affectionately known as Lootskraal. [This is not to be confused with Lootskraal on the farm Maatskappy, near Rooddraai, where the Loots family originally lived.] Telephone conversation with Hymie Groepe, 13 November, 2016.

anywhere. We are having a meeting tomorrow in Hertzog with the provisional director of Land Affairs. It's a community claim [that we are submitting]—all the people in Kat River have appointed a land claims committee. All five of the people on it are from Tamboekiesvlei. The entire area is 2 100 morgen [1 900 ha] and is from Groepeskloof in the south, right through to Hertzog, southwest of Mankazana Valley, and north to Seymour and Lushington.

I left South African in 1964 and went to Odessa. I was in the Ukraine for 18 months and two and a half years in Moscow. We had military and political training. In three months we had to learn the Ukrainian language. It was very cold, minus 40 degrees. They supplied us with warm clothing. We stayed in barracks at the academy.

I was out of South Africa for 30 years. I was also in Mozambique and Zimbabwe and even Namibia. I could speak Portuguese and Ndbele-Zulu. I got married in Madagascar and returned to South Africa in 1990. I was one of the first people to return to South Africa after the unbanning of the ANC. I felt quite lost. I didn't know the Afrikaans language anymore, and could only speak Zulu. I had to relearn Afrikaans. I was on the Parliamentary Committee in the referendum and in the first parliament of 1994. I left in 1999. I was sick and tired of it. I was an activist, and debating was too cumbersome. So I decided to move on. . . I was on the Constitution Committee of Defence and involved in the context of the sunset clauses in the agreement—the constitution that was adopted ten or twelve years ago.

**SB** Have you been involved in the Khoisan Movement?

**HL** Yes, I was part of the Khoisan Union Movement. At that time I was in Cape Town and I attended some of the meetings in Tamboekiesvlei around 1996. Mr Little in Cape Town was leading it. There was a big meeting in Cape Town in 1998—called the Khoisan Movement—to discuss culture, rights and property. I was quite active, and then it all became too intellectual. And when things do that, they lose their power. So I decided to move on . . .

My goal is to see the land finally returned to the rightful owners in Tamboekiesvlei, and the whole of Kat River Valley. We need to solve the problems once and for all. And for that we need a fighting spirit!

## Second interview

A few months later I had a second interview with Manie Loots. There were some lacunae in the first narrative that required addressing, such as why and how he entered the struggle against apartheid. But Manie Loots was difficult to get hold of. I had almost given up hope when, out of the blue, he called me early one Thursday morning.

**SB** How did you become involved in the struggle, Manie?

**HL** I am a descendant of the Kat River people, the Loots and Groepes—my great grandmother was a Loots, and she married Commandant Groepe. I was politicised from an early age. I joined the ANC quite early—from about the age of 15 or 16. And I am still in the ANC—for nearly 60 years now.

**SB** Tell me about your schooling.

**HL** I completed my matric in Eat London and went to work in Cape Town. And from there I went to Jo’burg. In Cape Town I got involved in the ANC, and in Jo’burg in the late 1950s. Things were very tough then. Black people were treated like animals—in the streets and in their homes. It became clear to me that the only way we could promote our political views and policies was if we took up arms. We had a leader in Nelson Mandela. And Oliver Tambo—he really articulated the views of many in the country. Like the idea of Umkhonto we Sizwe. I was one of the first people to join, one of the earliest members. Once I joined I was instructed to leave the country. I left in order to receive proper training, with the view to come back. I hoped it would be a short time. But it turned out to be a very long time [in exile].

**SB** Was it difficult to leave your family?

**HL** To be honest, I didn’t think much about it at the time. They asked me, “Where are going?” “Algeria,” I said. They thought I was joking. I left 19 May 1964 and returned in May 1990 . . . My father had passed away. And one of my brothers. And there were some kids that were young when I left that were married. And there were new people born.

**SB** To go back to your schooldays, did you start school in Tamboekiesvlei?

**HL** Yes. I attended school at Tamboekiesvlei. Till Std 6 [Grade 8]. And from there I went to Grahamstown, where I studied under the leadership of Mary Waters. It was a small building next to the railway station—only two classrooms. Professor Morton and Professor Gerber from the university [Rhodes] were also there. Professor Gerber taught us maths. There were also a number of graduates [from the university] who came to do some practicals [practical teaching] there.

**SB** Who financed the school?

**HL** It was a subsidiary of Rhodes University. And the church—the Anglican Church—was also involved.

**SB** Were you made aware of the struggle at the school?

**HL** Yes. Below the school—in the basement—was a tailor’s shop with two African men in it. One was a hunchback. The leader of the two was Gilbert. I can’t remember the name of the hunchback. They were visited [patronised?] by professors and the police and the army.<sup>952</sup> This was in 1952. And there were demonstrations in Grahamstown, led by the ANC. The demonstrators were fired on by the police with tear gas. I spoke to the two tailors and they said what happened. They said they were demonstrating against the government—against apartheid—and some of the people were killed and others were severely handled by the troops. The one—the hunchback—was so bad he could not come to work for two days. That was my first education into the struggle [against apartheid]. During the course of that year (1952) there were other demonstrations and the defiance campaign.

**SB** Did you take part in it?

**HL** No. Later I went to the John Bisseker High School in St John’s Road, East London [where he matriculated]. I joined up with the ANC in East London but they—the student body—were not so organised. After that I went to Cape Town and became politically involved. I worked in the soil testing laboratory for the CPA [Cape Province Administration] in Capilo Street in Cape Town. I just walked in and got a job. Before you build a road you have to test the soil to see if it’s clay or loam, or what the water content is. They trained us there. There were ten of us, all young and from all over South Africa—Transkei, Eastern Cape, Cape Town. . . No, I was not so actively involved in politics then. I worked there for two years and then I went to Jo’burg. I was about 20 at the time. In Jo’burg I joined the SA Congress of Trade Unions via the SA Food Canning Workers’ Union.

**SB** Weren’t unions banned then?

**HL** We should not have survived the government onslaught but we did. I was banned [in 1964] for five years by the Minister of Justice, B. J. Vorster. I was told to leave [the country] by the ANC.

**SB** Would you regard yourself as having been involved in the class struggle?

**HL** I was a worker. Only later, when I left South Africa and went to Moscow and the Ukraine, did I become aware of the class struggle. In South Africa it was a struggle against apartheid.

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<sup>952</sup> This was one of the points I did not have time to clarify with Manie.

**SB** In the Ukraine you were trained by Russians?

**HL** Yes.

**SB** Did they teach you the theories of Marx and Engels?

**HL** Yes . . . Sometimes in English and sometimes in Russian, through an interpreter.

**SB** Did you get to practise the theories and tactics of revolutionary warfare?

**HL** No. It was all just theory there . . . When I came back [to Africa] I was commander of a [ANC] camp in Angola. Joe Modise was the commander in chief. I worked under him. Then I went to [north-east] Zambia and was commander—the general—of a big camp there.

**SB** How big?

**HL** About 15 000 to 16 000.

**SB** Did the responsibility weigh on you?

**HL** It was heavy responsibility. I was there [in Zambia] about six years. . . We had quite a few engagements in the bush . . . [Manie was reluctant to talk about these.].

**SB** Did the Russians supply you with weapons?

**HL** Yes, the Russians supplied us with weapons and ammunition.

**SB** Which I believe, together with the webbing and other equipment, were superior to the South African ones. Did you get your arms, ammo, and kit via Mozambique?

**HL** Yes, and Angola.

**SB** Was your life ever in danger?

**HL** Yes, a couple of times. There is a lot that I can say . . . [Again, Manie seemed disinclined to elaborate.]

**SB** And all this time your family had no idea of where you were or what you were doing?<sup>953</sup>

**HL** Yes.

**SB** It must have been very lonely.

**HL** Yes, it was lonely.

**SB** And when you returned to South Africa and your family found out where you had been and what you had been doing, what was the reaction? Were they proud of you?

**HL** (with a smile in his voice) I suppose so. . . I was lucky my mother and father were still there.

## Review

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<sup>953</sup> During his absence from South Africa, the premises of Manie's relatives were frequently searched for information about him, including Hymie Groepe's house. "We could never talk about him, not even at night!" Telephone interview with Hymie Groepe, 13 November 2016.

On reflecting on my interviews with Manie Loots, I found the over-riding motif to be that of *spirito rebello* (the rebel spirit), similar to that described by Alessandro Portelli in his interviews with Peppeloni. The latter, a communist factory-worker and jack-of-all trades from Terni, Italy, displayed a rebellious spirit from childhood—raiding as a boy the apricot tree of his allegedly nasty landlady—and becoming a highly politicised worker, which he remained all his life.<sup>954</sup>

In Manie's case, his early politicisation seems to have been inspired by stories that his grandmother told him as a boy about the Kat River Rebellion, with which he readily identified. His encounter as a young man with the two black tailors in Grahamstown seems to have sharpened this rebel spirit, and developed in him a strong sympathy for the South African working classes who were pitting themselves against apartheid policies by participating in local demonstrations. Until he went to the USSR, though, he was not familiar with the term class struggle. If I understood Manie correctly, it appears that the two tailors were playing a double game—taking orders for uniforms from the police and army, and thereby making money from the structures they were trying to undermine.

As a worker in Johannesburg in the 1950s, Manie joined the South African Congress of Trade Unions via the SA Food Canning Workers' Union. This strengthened his affiliations with the class struggle, although he was still focused on opposing apartheid. Manie's being inspired by the famous struggle leaders, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, and his becoming one of the earliest members of Sizwe Umkhonto, further developed his *spirito rebello* and led to his banning by B. J. Vorster, and his subsequent exile.

Manie's rebel spirit seems to have been tutored and honed in the USSR through the political and military training he received there, and given full rein in the camps which he commanded in Africa. The same rebel spirit, perhaps, induced him to marry a Madagascan-born woman in defiance of the Mixed Marriages Act 55 of 1949, an apartheid law that prohibited marriages between people of different races or ethnicities. The *spirito rebello* could also have helped him to forget, whilst absent from South Africa, the language of oppression, Afrikaans. When he relearned it—by choice—in post-apartheid South Africa, it was a language that was becoming increasingly distanced from apartheid associations, and usable for promoting democracy.

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<sup>954</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, SUNY Series in Oral and Public History (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 119-125.

Manie's rebel tendencies did not evaporate with the advent of the new administration. When he had a seat in the first democratic parliament in South Africa he became equally frustrated. As he put it, "I was an activist. And debating was too cumbersome. So I decided to move on." Although there are many differences between Manie and Peppeloni—in their political alliances, *modus operandi*, and the course of their lives—their *spirito rebello*, innate anarchism, or the *rebelliousness inside us* [Portelli's italics] grew in both until it reached "an emancipation, a more mature consciousness".<sup>955</sup>

Andries Botha, the field-cornet from Buxton who was convicted of high treason in the infamous trial of 1851/2, was another son of the Eastern Cape who manifested "inside rebelliousness". This was demonstrated in his refusal to hand back his men's blankets on return from commando duty,<sup>956</sup> his outrage at his people being burnt out from Buxton in 1850, and his refusal to fire on the rebels—amongst whom were his own people. As such, Hymie's appraisal of him is correct; Botha *was* a rebel. And he suffered terribly for it. He was tried for high treason in the Supreme Court in Cape Town under Judge Wylde, and sentenced by the jury, together with other rebels, to be hanged, although this sentence was later commuted to hard labour for life. Unlike Manie Loots, although Botha returned to Kat River, he lived in poverty and obscurity, dying unknown, his fight for his people's rights forgotten. I find it significant that Manie was building a new house for himself in Tamboekiesvlei when I spoke to him—demonstrating his ties to and affection for the place in which he grew up, and showing his solidarity with his people.

In his narrative, Manie claimed that his rebel spirit was inherited—"My whole family has a background of resistance"—and he hyperbolically describes all Kat River people as rebelling in 1851: "The entire original Kat River community rebelled." Manie's raising of the ordinary to epic proportions is reminiscent of Hymie's heroic presentation of the Kommandant's feats. This seems to have been more than wishful thinking, and rather the way in which they saw it. Although, when I spoke to him, Manie no longer espoused the more anarchist tactics of his youth, he conveyed the impression that his "fighting spirit" had not abated: "We need to solve the problems once and for all . . . and for that we need a fighting spirit!"<sup>957</sup>

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<sup>955</sup> Portelli, *Luigi Trastulli*, 133.

<sup>956</sup> Van Wyk, *Ou Man*, 13. Compare Nigel Worden and Clifton C. Crais, *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and its Legacy in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994) 289-312. Peffer's men surrendered their blankets, Read, xiv.

<sup>957</sup> As I was to learn after his death, Manie's *spirito rebello* was tempered with justice and mercy. He was too modest to tell me that he had saved the lives of many ANC cadres in 1984. After a low-key

In my second interview with Manie, his disillusionment with the land process was evident, and he was wracking his brains for alternative ways to “solve the problems once and for all”. In my final interview with Manie in early August 2015, he said that he had been in communication with the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Gugile Nkwinti, who had not been averse to hearing his case. Manie was continuing the dialogue. . .

After becoming very ill in September 2015, Manie Loots passed away in Pretoria on 25 January 2016. The official memorial service took place in the Johannesburg City Hall on 3 February 2016, and the official funeral on 6 February 2016 at St Mungo’s United Church, Bryanston, Johannesburg. The late Manie Loots is survived by his widow, Mrs Nosulo (Josephine) Loots.

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mutiny in an ANC camp at Viana, outside Luanda, there was a “brutal crackdown”, with the high command demanding the summary execution of all those involved in it. In February 1984 Oliver Tambo sent Manie, then known as James Stuart, to lead a five-person inquiry into it. After interviewing the troops held in the Quatro camp and high-security prisons in Luanda, he produced the Stuart Report, justifying the grievances of the mutineers—they were living in appalling conditions—and advocating clemency for them. Thus the accused escaped massacre. The report, however, was suppressed for 9 years. For further details, see Martin Plaut, “James Stewart—the ANC fighter who spoke truth to power”, 1 February 2016. Quoted in South African History Online, towards a people’s history  
<http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/james-stewart-anc-fighter-who-spoke-truth-power-martin-plaut-1-february-2016>.

## Chapter 25: Economic and ecological sustainability of Kat River

It is hardly necessary to reiterate the central role of the commons in the lives of the Kat River people: how officials misappropriated it, and how the Kat River settlers underestimated its sustainability by sharing it with too many clients. The commons, which was missed by all my interviewees who moved to Friemersheim, was shown to have furnished not only a livelihood but a way of life. And, as such, it was tied up with family, memories and emotions, and its absence affected their well being. If anything, these interviews demonstrate that when the commons are taken away from people whose life has centred on them, they became bored, depressed, or sick. As Peter Linebaugh described it:

The commons is often outside of the realm of buying and selling or the realm of the commodity; it is where life is conducted face to face. The commons is neither a gift economy nor potlatch. No, not everything is free, but yes, everything may be shared. It is a place of reciprocities.<sup>958</sup>

Using scientific methodology, from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards environmentalists have been examining the commons; collecting data and samples, testing them and comparing and contrasting areas and eras in order to ascertain sustainability of the ecosystems which are becoming increasingly threatened, and making recommendations for halting their decay and conserving what remains.

Kat River has not evaded scrutiny, with local universities, such as Rhodes University in Grahamstown, having provided several of the researchers who have made its environment the subject of their study/projects. Before mentioning some of their findings, it is necessary to describe what had been happening to the environment in Kat River since it became a homeland in the 1980s.

By 1995 some 263 properties in Kat River had been sold to black farmers, with only 2 farms being sold to white farmers in 1996. Many of the ex-labourers remained on expropriated white farms after the 1980s although they were not able to continue the same level of farming. During a survey in Kat River in 1996 it was found that there was general confusion about land tenancy and many of the residents on the land had no official titles. The

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<sup>958</sup>Linebaugh, "Some Principles of the Commons". See also Linebaugh, *Stop Thief*, 18-32, and *The Magna Carta Manifesto Liberties and Commons for All*.

same survey showed a 60 percent rate of unemployment in the Kat River Valley.<sup>959</sup> With the huge influx of people since then it must be very much higher now in 2016. Owing to poverty incurred by area becoming a bantustan/homeland in the 1980s, by 1996 the majority of the population in Kat River was relying on state support for their survival.<sup>960</sup> There have, however, been some attempts from the private sector to assist people in Kat River.

## **HACOP**

As much of the land inhabited by black people since the 1980s had been left to lie fallow and become unproductive,<sup>961</sup> in 1995 a farming project entitled Hertzog Agricultural Cooperative (HACOP) was set up on land the government supplied on a ten-year lease basis. This comprised 60 ha near Fairbairn and some land in Hertzog. A local self-help scheme, its aims were to educate and empower members of the community to produce fresh vegetables for the local market and nearby towns, use the agricultural land optimally, and generate a living for each member. Members had to purchase 100 shares at a cost of R1 each.<sup>962</sup> A full time extension officer was assigned to the project. Owing to various problems, including lack of tractors for ploughing, transport for produce to the periodic market in Seymour, and the local retail market being very limited, the Fairbairn/Seymour project struggled.

The Hertzog project foundered for other reasons. According to my interviewees, their families did not participate in the project because the Hertzog church lands were being used without the church's permission. Further, the person in charge of this project, a charlatan who claimed to be a preacher, "ran away with all the money invested from the Hertzog project".<sup>963</sup> The Sisyphean cycle of exploitation by individuals continues.

## **Tamboekiesvlei water and land projects**

In 1996 the Kat River Valley Water User Association and the Kat River Catchment Forum were set up, with both organisations being supported by the Kat River Research Group from

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<sup>959</sup> E. Nel and T. R. Hill, eds, *An Evaluation of Community-Driven Economic Development, Land Tenure and Sustainable Environmental Development in the Kat River Valley* (HSRC, 2000), 53.

<sup>960</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>961</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>962</sup> *Ibid.*, 61 ff.

<sup>963</sup> For their protection, the interviewees remain anonymous.

the Department of Geography at Rhodes University”.<sup>964</sup> The Water Research Commission (WRC) was established to incorporate Kat River villagers into the broader Kat River Catchment Scheme through the Kat River Water Users Association, with Professor Kate Rowntree from the Rhodes University Geography Department setting up a forum to facilitate it.<sup>965</sup> Around the same time, two separate projects were launched to assist Kat River smallholders.<sup>966</sup>

When I asked Hymie Groepe in April 2016 how these projects had helped them in Tamboekiesvlei, he replied as follows:

They took measurements and made markings for the dam and irrigation furrows but the WRC ran out of money and nothing happened. But Kate [from the LandCare Project] did help us fill up the dongas in Tamboekiesvlei with stones. The stones are falling out again now and the erosion is very bad. The government also promised to send agricultural implements and tractors to plough our lands. But they didn't come. And when they did, it was too late [in the season for sowing/planting].

Apart from the abortive attempts of the WRC to supply the Tamboekiesvlei people with water, the temporary assistance provided by the LandCare project, and the plan to send tractors to plough their fields—which was unsuccessful, owing to its tardiness—it appears that there has been little support for the Tamboekiesvlei coloured community.

## Degradation of the commonages

During my visit to Kat River in November 2014 I noticed that commonages at Blinkwater and Tamboekiesvlei were bare from overgrazing and the cattle were thin. It marked a severe contrast from the same commonages in 2011, which were green and lush. It brought to mind the observations of Sheona and Charlie Shackleton, that “most of the commonages in South

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<sup>964</sup> Researchers comprised Jane Burt, Alistair McMaster, and Professor Kate Rowntree. <http://www.wrc.org.za/Lists/Knowledge%20Hub%20Items/Attachments/3819/TT%20295-07-PREFACE.pdf>

<sup>965</sup> See Lani Holthausen, “Water, the Tie that Binds the East Cape Community”, *The Water Wheel*, Catchment 22, January/February 2006. [http://www.wrc.org.za/Knowledge%20Hub%20Documents/Water%20Wheel/Articles/2006/01/WaterWheel\\_2006\\_01\\_Kat%20River%20p%2022-25.pdf](http://www.wrc.org.za/Knowledge%20Hub%20Documents/Water%20Wheel/Articles/2006/01/WaterWheel_2006_01_Kat%20River%20p%2022-25.pdf)

<sup>966</sup> Interview with Hymie Groepe, 10 April 2016.

Africa are in poorer ecological condition and so deliver fewer ecological services”.<sup>967</sup>

Tamboekiesvlei was bare, dusty and the fences clogged with litter and plastic bags. There was a notable increase in human population at Tamboekiesvlei, where more squatters seemed to have taken up residence, some with their stock.

The degradation I witnessed seems to typify what seems to have been occurring throughout South Africa. As M. Timm Hoffman summed it up in 2015:

In a national review of land degradation carried out at the end of the twentieth century, most agricultural extension officers and resource conservation technicians in South Africa viewed the communal areas as among the most degraded land in the country. High levels of erosion, a general loss of quality vegetation cover and high incidence of alien plant infestation were all cited as evidence of degradation. Furthermore, the perception of the majority of these report witnesses was that the rate of poor governance, lack of state support and continued in appropriate land use practices, including high stocking rates.<sup>968</sup>

To illustrate environmental degradation observed by the author, photographs taken of Lower Blinkwater at the end of 2011 are contrasted with photographs of the same area in July 2016. (See the end of the chapter.)

## Water

In my first interview with Hymie Groepe I admired the fast-flowing Groepesrivier that ran from the mountain, behind Hymie’s house and down to Hertzog to join the Kat River. At that stage the Kat River was also flowing strongly, owing to good rains. Pools lay in the fields and the colonial furrows were running. The whole place was redolent with water and green pasture—a veritable paradise. It was easy, when Hymie sang his song, *O Katrivier*, to identify with it. However, unknown to me, there were already problems with the water in other more densely-populated areas in Kat River.

In 1996 a detailed analysis of the chemical and bacteriological quality of the water at “all the water sites in Fairbairn and Hertzog” was undertaken. Its findings revealed that

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<sup>967</sup> This being the result of “the lack of interest of municipalities in sustaining the commonage areas”. Sheona E. Shackleton and Charlie M. Shackleton, “Not Just Farming: Natural Resources and Livelihoods in Land and Agrarian Reform”, in *Land Divided*, 201.

<sup>968</sup> M. Timm Hoffman, “Environmental Change in Twentieth-Century South Africa & its Implications for Land Reform”, *Land Divided*, 57.

some sites were suitable for human consumption but others were “unsafe” owing to the high amounts of enteric bacteria and leached fertilizer chemicals.<sup>969</sup> With the recent increase in human population in the Hertzog and Tamboekiesvlei area, the lack of waterborne sewerage, and the poor delivery of the Mpofu municipality, the water has become much less potable, and the health of the people further compromised. In early November 2016, on several people becoming ill in Tamboekiesvlei from drinking the local water, “government trucks” were being sent out twice weekly with “drums and tanks of clean water” for the residents to drink.<sup>970</sup> It remains to be seen what permanent measures will be taken to address this serious problem. It appears that if plans are not formed soon to control the influx of people and stock into Tamboekiesvlei and other stressed areas of Kat River, not only the commons but the ecological system/environment will be at risk, as will the health of the people and stock.



Figure 63 Lower Blinkwater, 2011 (photograph S I Blackbeard)

<sup>969</sup> Nel, et al, *An Evaluation of Community-Driven Economic and Sustainable Environmental Development in the Kat River Valley*, 226.

<sup>970</sup> Telephone conversation with Hymie Groepe, 11 November 2016.



Figure 64 Lower Blinkwater, 2016 (photograph S I Blackbeard)



Figure 65 Lower Blinkwater, showing the old Blinkwater siding, 2016 (photograph S I Blackbeard)

## Chapter 26: Conclusion

In evaluating the two ideologies on which it is argued that the Kat River Settlement was based—cultivation and militarism—their early importance has been shown and it has been found that they have endured, albeit in ameliorated forms, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Interviews with coloured people from Groepeskloof, Tamboekiesvlei, and Hertzog provide evidence that cultivation is still an ideal, and many of them are still able to sell some of their produce locally. Similarly, they have not lost their militaristic spirit since the Kat River Rebellion, as evinced by the number of Stockenstrom volunteers and levies which served in local wars between 1878 and 1884, those who served in the Cape Corps during the two world wars, and those who currently display a fighting spirit to get their land back.

Although there is no money for building tangible memorials, by means of a variety of primary and secondary sources the Kat River coloured people are keeping the memories of their forebears alive, as well as persevering with their land claims and struggling to keep abreast with ever-changing legislation in this regard. Legal documents and diagrams, old photos, stories of people and events, songs, and recipes handed down from family members or friends provide the cues to their memories and evidence to the interviewee.

The different ways in which the interviewees assimilate, interpret, and pass on their information is revealed in their choice of genre—narrative/song/enactments or a combination of them—and their language, tone, and gestures. Common traits are their glorification of their heroes (such as Christian Groepe and Christiaantjie) and the past, frustration and anger at what they had to suffer and are continuing to suffer, and their ardent desire for their land claims to be recognised. And, willy-nilly, in telling/enacting their stories and continuing to fight for the recognition of their land claims, each interviewee emerges more or less as the protagonist, willing to do all in their power to regain the land for which, according to Draghoender and Hymie Groepe, their forebears “paid with their blood”. Whereas earlier Kat River people did so by fighting for the British in frontier wars, the Anglo-Boer wars and the two World Wars, and by surviving the Great Depression and Rinderpest,<sup>971</sup> there is currently a similar struggle to retain their land, despite the cost.

From the beginning Kat River Khoikhoi/coloured people had to fight for their freedom and their land against Xhosa attacks, vagrancy bills and officials who coveted their

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<sup>971</sup> See Antjie Krog, “Baas van die plaas/Izwe lethu: Essay in fragments and two villanelles exploring different relationship to land in some indigenous poetic texts”, *Land Divided*, 210, 228.

commons, racism and other forms of discrimination from colonists and burgher forces, and dispossession by colonial officials, unscrupulous lawyers and commercial farmers, and the apartheid government in the 1980s.

The Kat River Rebellion and the 1980s removals remain the defining historical moments for my interviewees, together with their land claims. The coloured people who remained in Stockenstrom after the demise of the Kat River Settlement had to contend with changing demographics, the effects of two Anglo-Boer Wars, two world wars, successive global and local depressions, droughts, stock diseases and epidemics, invasive plants, and pressure to sell their land to commercial farmers. Although there were small booms such as tobacco and ostriches, from which a few benefited, their inability to enter the commercial economy caused increasing poverty and dispersion, and slumps created rural insolvencies.<sup>972</sup>

A number of Kat River coloured people, however continued to make a small living from their land during the Nationalist Party's administration, when they were still more or less assisted by government/municipal agricultural and veterinary services, or by white farmers sharing agricultural and veterinary information and resources. This small but constructive interaction between white and coloured farmers in Kat River, which is usually overlooked, has been mentioned.

Other local white women and men have been assisting coloured people and black emerging farmers for more than twenty years. Yvonne Brown, who was born in the area, has been running a shop in Blinkwater and helping emerging black citrus farmers with their citrus. Chris Lombard, who was also born in the area and is trusted by the locals, is committed to helping struggling coloured and black stock farmers who find it difficult to attend stock sales. They don't have the races (channels along which the cattle move), loading systems (concrete ramps) or the transport (tractors and trailers) to do so. Instead, as Chris explained, using Anna Pringle, who is respected as a community leader, as a spotter/contact person, he goes to the stock owners, who often live in remote areas, to collect or deliver the cattle, paying them in the form they prefer—by cash or cheque. As he puts it, "We're all struggling, and we must all help each other."<sup>973</sup> This, and other positive interaction between white and coloured farmers in Kat River which do not make the headlines, needs to be taken

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<sup>972</sup> Beinart, *Putting a Plough*, 107.

<sup>973</sup> Telephone conversations with Chris Lombard, 15 December 2017 and 21 January 2018.

into account, proving what Legassick argued, that frontiers are not always places of conflict but places of positive patron-client interaction and social interchange.<sup>974</sup>

The role played by Kat River women during the convict agitation at the Cape, as supporting their rebels partners in the eighth frontier war, standing up to the destructive burgher forces at the Battle of Fort Armstrong, and eventually taking the initiative in ending the war by surrendering. Neither has the agency of Kat River women diminished, with Tamboekiesvlei/Hertzog women currently serving on land claims committees and as church council members and lay preachers, where, according to Kathleen du Preez, they preach more boldly than the men.

With minimal resources and government support, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Kat River coloured people have also had to cope with ecological degradation, the decay of their commons, erosion, and polluted water. Although they are doing their best to sustain their environment in the face of these problems, since 1994 the main focus for my coloured interviewees has been the land claims process.

In February 2014 the Restitution Bill was hurried through Parliament; and in May 2014, on the eve of the elections, the ANC promised further land restitution. They also agreed to consider accommodating pre-1913 land claims and explore exceptions for particular categories of claimants like the Khoisan, who constitute the only truly indigenous people of South Africa.

In 2014 it was also decided to reopen the land claims process for a further five years. This led to doubts that extending the cut-off date for land claims to June 2019 would expedite the settling of outstanding claims.<sup>975</sup> Apart from what was seen as the political unfeasibility of the plan,<sup>976</sup> an inadequate budget, and the unrealistic expectations that the Amendment Act could arouse,<sup>977</sup> former coloured Kat River landowners feared that the State Land Lease and Disposal Policy (SLLDP) could result in their remaining in perpetuity as tenants of the

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<sup>974</sup> M. Legassick, "The frontier tradition in South African historiography", *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, 68.

<sup>975</sup> In late 2013 the outstanding claims from the 1990s amounted to 20 592, with only 9 000 at the investigating and negotiation stage. It was wondered if it were possible to settle these outstanding claims, as well as deal with the flood of new claims, with an allegedly unrealistic budget for such a task. As Cheryl Walker maintained, to finalise the outstanding claims alone—"finalisation" being the full implementation by the state of all its financial and land acquisition responsibilities—could take a further 35 years. Cheryl Walker, "Restitution Unbound", *Land Divided*, 242-4.

<sup>976</sup> See Ben Cousins, "Towards Agrarian Reform", *Land Divided*, 269.

<sup>977</sup> *Ibid.*, 239-243.

state.<sup>978</sup> And some feared that they would be coerced again into “selling their land to the government” with the dubious honour of remaining on the land as lease holders/caretakers?<sup>979</sup> As Hymie Groepe put it, “We don’t want the caretaker agreement the government is offering us—we want the deed of transfer!”

There were also rumours in September 2014 in Tamboekiesvlei that claimants were being encouraged to “make one solid stand and sell up and [the government] would pay them out”, and that those who sold would have to pay high rates to live on their land. It was also rumoured that bribes were being accepted for the issue of titles;<sup>980</sup> and that the only way to succeed was to hire a lawyer to represent them in court—something the interviewees could not afford.

During September and October 2014 a number of squatters moved into Tamboekiesvlei, allegedly requesting RDP houses. The Minister of Land and Agricultural Affairs assured the coloured people that their claims would soon be finalised.

Owing to the long delay in settling the claims, the Tamboekiesvlei community began increasingly to depend on their kinsman, the then elderly, ailing Manie Loots, to use his influence on their behalf. Sadly, he passed away early in February 2016 during allegedly promising negotiations with the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform, Gugile Nkwinti.

In mid November 2016 one of the author’s interviewees was delighted to report that a government-appointed delegation had held a first round of meetings in Tamboekiesvlei. It appears that the people were requested to supply further documentation supporting their claims, and that there had been discussion about compensation for the inadequate prices received for their land in the 1980s, and *tranegeld* (literally tear-money), compensation for the trauma and inconvenience caused by the expropriations. There also seems to have been

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<sup>978</sup> According to Theo de Jager, the SLLDP “confirms that land distribution will not involve the transfer of land from white to black ownership, but the government will buy farms and lease them to beneficiaries . . . Here again, different land rights are proposed for different classes. ‘Emerging’ commercial farmers will lease for a period of 30 years, renewable for a further 20 years, and thereafter have the option to become owners of the land. But former farm workers and labour tenants as well as small-scale and ‘subsistence’ farmers will never have the option of becoming land owners; they are to remain tenants of the state in perpetuity”. Theo de Jager, “Land reform: the view from commercial agriculture”, *Land Divided*, 140. See also 120-44.

<sup>979</sup> See Aninka Claassens, “Law, Land and Custom, 1913-2014: What is at Stake Today?” in *Land Divided*, 80-84.

<sup>980</sup> Cheryl Walker described the “suggestion of corruption pervading the process to some (unknown) degree” as “worrying” but it is “difficult to establish how well-founded they are”. Cheryl, Walker, *Land-Marked: Land Claims and Land Restitution in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jacana Press, 2008), 206.

talk of agricultural assistance if they stay on the land and plant stipulated crops. It is not clear if or when they will be granted titles to the land that they formerly owned but were forced to sell in the 1980s, but they were assured that they would get them in due course.

*Fiat justitia ruat cælum!*<sup>981</sup>

**THE END**

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<sup>981</sup> Let justice be done though the heavens fall!

## Appendix 1: Andries Stockenström

Andries Stockenström was born on 6 July 1792 in Burg St, Cape Town, to the Swede, Anders Stockenström and his wife, Maria Gertruyda Broeders.<sup>982</sup> After picking up “some grammatical Dutch and French and arithmetic”, Andries was sent to an “excellent boarding school” run by the Englishman, Weaving, in Cape Town.

On Anders Stockenström being appointed Secretary of the District of Swellendam—the last outpost of the Colony—the young Andries accompanied his parents there. As there were no schools there, Andries was sent back to Cape Town to board with his father’s friend and countryman, Egidius Benedictus Ziervogel.<sup>983</sup>

In 1803 Governor-General J. W. Janssens and Commissioner General J. A. W. Uitenhage de Mist appointed Anders Stockenström as landdrost of Graaff-Reinet. A “mere village” at the time, and the former headquarters of the Patriots during the Burghers’ Rebellion, it was then “peaceful, content and commercially prospering”.<sup>984</sup>

To assist his father (there were now six children), Andries acted as his supernumerary clerk and accompanied him on his circuits. This involved travelling from Graaff-Reinet to Worcester, and experiencing burgher hospitality. Unusually for one so young, Andries observed in their hosts “the absence of that domineering spirit which might be looked for as conspicuous in a country where slavery existed together with a very despotic say over the aborigines”.<sup>985</sup> While visiting Samuel de Beer’s farm (later, Prince Albert), Andries met Lt-Col Richard Collins of the 83rd Regiment, whom Governor Lord Caledon had appointed as commissioner general and sent to investigate Xhosa occupation of the Gamka. Collins requested that Andries join him and Dr Cowdry (assistant surgeon to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Regiment) on their excursion to the Orange River and to Gcalekaland, as guide and interpreter. Anders consented, and thus began Andries’s oeuvre to public life, which included meeting the Rharhabe chief Ngqika, his son, Maqoma, and the Xhosa paramount chief, Hintsá, his brother, Burhu.

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<sup>982</sup> Anders Stockenström was born in 1757 in Filipstad, South Sweden, to Anders Anderssen Stockenström—the mayor of Filipstad and inspector of mines—and Catharina Margareta Ekman. After working on the mines until 1778, he immigrated to the Cape Colony.

<sup>983</sup> Hutton, *Stockenström*, 1:29.

<sup>984</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:19, 32. Stockenström had no qualms in describing the former Graaff-Reinet inhabitants as “factious and turbulent”. *Ibid.* On the burgher uprising and expulsion of Landdrost Maynier in 1799, *ibid.*, 19-27. See also J. S. Marais, *Maynier*, 23-35, 109.

<sup>985</sup> Hutton, *Stockenström*, 1:33-34.

Andries was also invited with Anders to talks in Cape Town on the proposed expulsion of the amaXhosa from the Zuurveld. Here, Andries was offered the post of deputy landdrost of Clanwilliam, and a commission in the army—both of which his father declined on his behalf. Andries was then appointed postmaster of Graaff-Reinet, and twice sent to persuade Chief Ndlambe to vacate the western side of the Fish River.

Andries' military training began in 1811 when he was gazetted ensign in the Cape Corps. Soon afterwards, he was offered a position by the Duke of Wellington—via Lord Fitzroy Somerset, via Collins (then in Portugal)—in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the 83rd Regiment. Although flattered, Andries had to forego the opportunity as Sir John Cradock (Caledon's successor) needed him to help Colonel Graham expel the amaXhosa from the Zuurveld. Thus began Andries' first deployment on active service. He was to command a post on Brak Rivier against Bruintjies Hoogte, while his father went to the Tyhume to inform the imiDange in the Zuurberg that no hostility was intended against them and to secure their neutrality. Andries was then ordered to command the Graaff-Reinet burghers, and on his father's return, act as his aide.

Andries and his men took up a position north of the Zuurberg near the ruined farmhouse of one Botha. On Anders joining them, some burghers maintained that the amaXhosa had bought the Zuurberg from the Dutch. Nevertheless, Anders had to carry out orders and persuade the Dange chiefs to leave the area, and was determined to do so “without bloodshed.” Before leaving, he drank a final cup of coffee, shook hands all round and said, “God be with you”. At 2 pm the next day a Xhosa runner brought news that Anders' party had been attacked on the narrowest part of Doring Nek, between the Wit Rivier and the Kournay [Coernay].<sup>986</sup> Fourteen of the party of 41 were massacred, including Anders Stockenström. The latter was buried under a tree on the east-inclining slope near where he was killed.

Andries—henceforth Stockenstrom (the spelling he chose)—had no time to mourn. Col Graham ordered him to the Sundays River mouth to meet the Tulbagh burghers and march them to the Upper Bushman's River, join the Graaff-Reinet contingent, and drive the amaXhosa from their strongholds in the Kabooga [sic] Poort across the Fish River. Thereafter he assisted Lt-Col Graham in fortifying the Fish River. Stockenstrom was 20 years old at the time.

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<sup>986</sup> Khoikhoi for narrow mimosa bush. G. S. Nienaber, et al, *Southern African PlaceNames*, HSRC (Durban/Pretoria: Butterworth Press, 1983).

Stockenstrom was gazetted captain in the Cape Corps in 1814 and appointed deputy landdrost of Graaff-Reinet under Landdrost Fischer. Stockenstrom's most odious task was to enforce Caledon's proclamation of 1809, which allowed oppression of the Khoikhoi. Doing what he could to "mitigate their sufferings" with the support of "some very good people", Andries clashed with the conservatives.<sup>987</sup>

During the 5<sup>th</sup> frontier war, the Cape government supported Ngqika (as agreed in 1819) against his uncle, Ndlambe, at the battle of Amalinde on the Kommetjie flats, near present day Dimbaza. Stockenstrom deplored the role he had to play in it. Thereafter Lt-Col Brereton led a cattle-recovering commando into Xhosaland, while Stockenstrom and his burgher commando covered the head of the Kat and Koonap Rivers.

In 1819 Ndlambe's forces, led by the war prophet Makana, invaded the Zuurveld and attacked Grahamstown. On Makana's surrender to Stockenstrom, the latter offered him his titled wagon as accommodation, until forced to hand him over to Colonel Willshire,<sup>988</sup> whom he thought dealt "unfairly and cruelly" towards Makana. Thereafter, Stockenstrom participated in the clearing of insurgents from the dense Fish River bush—a dangerous and onerous task.<sup>989</sup>

In 1818 Stockenstrom was sent on a political mission to Griqua Town—where emigrant Griqua from the frontier had established themselves on the Orange River—to investigate Griqua attacks on the "Bosjesman" (Briqua and Koranna).<sup>990</sup> It was probably at this time that Stockenstrom met the people that he invited to settle in Kat River.

Although relations were initially amicable between Stockenstrom and the Cape Governor, Lord Charles Somerset,<sup>991</sup> an altercation occurred concerning a grant that Sir Rufane Donkin had given Stockenstrom in the Baviaans River Valley, which Somerset wanted for Col Graham. Stockenstrom was subsequently granted land in the Kaga (Somerset East) district.<sup>992</sup>

In 1828 Stockenstrom married Helena Elsabe Maaström, the daughter of the manager of the government-owned Lombard Bank in Cape Town, and named his farm in the Kaga, Maaström, a combination of his and wife's names. That same year, Stockenstrom was

<sup>987</sup> See Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 1:79-84 and 2: 461.

<sup>988</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 117, 120.

<sup>989</sup> *Ibid.*, 119-122.

<sup>990</sup> *Ibid.*, 185-87. Stockenstrom's sympathies were on the side of the victims. He considered (i) dispatching troops to the Orange River, (ii) bringing the Griqua back into the Colony, or (iii) "seizing" Coenraad Buys, their leader, in an attempt to restore law and order. *ibid.* A few years later Stockenstrom was sent again to the Orange River.

<sup>991</sup> For example, concerned about Stockenstrom's health, Somerset advised him to go to Cape Town "without delay to have the advantage of Dr Barry's very extraordinary skill". *ibid.*, 141. See also 107.

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*, 167-175.

appointed Civil Commissioner of the Eastern Districts. Owing to his ill-defined role and what he perceived as his undermining by Major (later Colonel) Henry Somerset—Lord Charles' son and Commander of the Eastern Forces—Stockenstrom resigned in 1833 and left the Cape for Stockholm.

In 1835 and 1836, Stockenstrom was called to London to give evidence before Buxton's Select Committee on Aborigines. In 1836, Lord Glenelg persuaded him to return to the Cape as Lieutenant-General of the Eastern Districts and introduce the Glenelg/Stockenstrom Treaties.<sup>993</sup> The latter, which replaced D'Urban's treaties, abolished the Reprisal System, recognised the autonomy of the Xhosa chiefs, and proclaimed equal justice for all races. Owing, inter alia, to governor and settler obstruction, the treaties foundered.

Sir Peregrine Maitland's alteration of the Glenelg Treaty and other factors contributed to the War of 1846-47, after which the new Cape Governor, Sir Harry Smith, annexed further Xhosa territory to the Crown. During this war, Stockenstrom, who had been dismissed or resigned in 1839, was appointed Commander of the Burgher Forces, a position that he filled until the end of the war.

In 1848 Stockenstrom went to London to protest against Smith's frontier policy. In 1852 he resigned his position in the Legislative Council and returned to Maastrom. Soon afterwards, Andries Botha arrived and asked him to plead for the restoration of his land. Stockenstrom complied and wrote to the Secretary of Government.<sup>994</sup>

In March 1851, Stockenstrom sailed for England with Fairbairn to lobby for a "free and fair franchise" at the Cape.<sup>995</sup> On the eve of his departure, Richard Paver, who had been appointed to look after Maastrom, warned Stockenstrom that it had been surrounded "by the enemy".<sup>996</sup> Later, during Stockenstrom's absence a shed containing timber on Maastrom was set alight and the estate razed. Stockenstrom believed that the culprits were not the amaXhosa—Sandile had pledged to protect Maastrom—but some of the anti-Stockenstrom

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<sup>993</sup> Lord Glenelg, Charles Grant, was the son of Charles Grant Sr, the leader of the Clapham Sect, of which Wilberforce had been an illustrious member. These treaties were of a piece with the humanitarian approach of the Clapham Sect. Grant Sr had been a member of the Church Missionary Society (of the established church) and was an abolitionist. Glenelg was secretary to the acting governor at the Cape in 1806. His undersecretary was James Stephen, friend of Wilberforce and Hannah More, and also of the Clapham Sect. See also Keegan, 193.

<sup>994</sup> In a letter dated 11 July 1851. Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 330.

<sup>995</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>996</sup> Duminy, *Paver*, 112.

faction.<sup>997</sup> Although “pressed by his friends to take legal action against the British officer thought responsible for the fire”, Stockenstrom refused,<sup>998</sup> holding that the arsonists were “persons who were determined that he should not escape the same losses that other colonists suffered.”<sup>999</sup>

On returning to Maastrum to “reconstruct something for the family”, Stockenstrom found that he did not have the means to do so. To make good his losses, he sold off a third of Maastrum for the establishment of the town of Bedford.<sup>1000</sup> This proved to be a successful speculation, providing Stockenstrom with sufficient income for the last decade of his life.<sup>1001</sup>

Representative government was granted and, to Godlonton’s chagrin, Stockenstrom’s property qualification of £25 was accepted. The elections took place in 1854. Despite smear campaigns, Stockenstrom headed the poll for the Eastern Districts, with 6 800 votes. Godlonton came second, with 4 530 votes.<sup>1002</sup> Most of Stockenstrom’s supporters came from the Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Graaff-Reinet areas. Despite his haughty demeanour and acerbic tongue, he had a large following of English and burghers, many of whom had enjoyed his hospitality.<sup>1003</sup>

During his speech at the opening of parliament in June 1854, Stockenstrom defended the Kat River Settlement, ending with a diatribe against the maladministration of the prior 50 years, during which the government had turned “every friend into an exasperated foe”.

Stockenstrom attended three sessions of parliament (1854, 1855 and 1856), travelling each time from Maastrum to the Cape.<sup>1004</sup> During the first session he demanded enquiries into land forfeited by the Khoikhoi after the Kat River Rebellion. During the second, he urged an enquiry into Mfengu and Xhosa dispossession—a motion that was accepted. He also motivated an enquiry into war scares at the end of 1854, insinuating that they were driven by speculation and profiteering by the Godlonton party.

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<sup>997</sup> See Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 312 and Duminy, *Paver*, 26. On another occasion, when 15 warriors occupied Maastrum, no support was forthcoming from the burgher camp on the nearby Goba River. *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>998</sup> J. L. Dracopoli, *Sir Andries Stockenström: 1792-1864: The Origins of the Racial Conflict in South Africa* (Cape Town: AA Balkema, 1968), 180.

<sup>999</sup> Duminy, *Paver*, 26, see also fn 40.

<sup>1000</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 312.

<sup>1001</sup> Dracopoli, 181.

<sup>1002</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>1003</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>1004</sup> Losing 8 horses to distemper during the 1855 trip. Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 313.

Burnt out by a lifetime of struggle against his enemies,<sup>1005</sup> Stockenstrom resigned his seat in 1856. After a two-year delay the reports he had requested were produced, proving that the government had broken their promises to the Khoikhoi. His resignation was met with both celebration and regret. Amongst his other achievements, Stockenstrom had introduced divisional councils and succeeded in getting the burgher force laws revised. A keen stock farmer, he promoted stud breeding in the Graaff-Reinet area, supported the agricultural society, helped establish an agricultural college and the first insurance office in the area.<sup>1006</sup>

Graaff-Reinet organised a lavish farewell for Stockenstrom before he left permanently for England, where he enrolled his sons at King's College. Owing to chest problems, Stockenstrom spent the winters in Italy. He returned for a final visit to the Cape with his daughter and her husband in October 1860. He was given a rousing welcome. Old friends in Algoa Bay placed carriages at his disposal. And, on visiting Bedford, Somerset East, Pearston, and Graaff-Reinet, he was astonished at the “most unbounded goodwill and sympathy [that] was exhibited, as if I were still in my ancient glory”.<sup>1007</sup> He was also requested to open a college, and a church in Adelaide, which he was unable to do.

It was Andries Stockenstrom's last visit to South Africa. He returned to England exhausted. He died in London on 15 March 1864, at the age of 72, in the presence of his wife. He was buried at Kensal Green.

## Appendix 2: Ntsikana

It is not surprising that the amaCirha use Ntsikana to support their land claims. Neither is it the first time that his name has been invoked for political purposes.

Ntsikana's grandson, Burnet Gaba—the son of William Kobe Ntsikana—started the Ntsikana Memorial Church, initially called the Twatwa Memorial Church, in 1909. Thereafter the Ntsikana Memorial Association (NMA) was formed by the “modernising Xhosa elite”; inter alia, Walter Rubusana, John Knox Bokwe, Nathaniel Mhala, Meshach Pelem and Bertram Xiniwe. This provided a “ready symbolic authority” for formalising

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<sup>1005</sup> Among the many accusations against him were a murder charge, and setting up an unconstitutional travelling expense account for his trip to London to promote representative government—both of which he disproved. Stockenstrom also suffered from not being compensated for losses incurred as Lieutenant-Governor, and from not having received his half-pay pension as captain.

<sup>1006</sup> Hutton, *Stockenstrom*, 2: 446-7.

<sup>1007</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 483.

organised Xhosa unity, at a time when amaMfengu were celebrating their unity by instituting Fingo Emancipation Day.<sup>1008</sup> Badges, a flag, and a national Ntsikana Day, elevated Ntsikana to the position of a Xhosa patron saint.<sup>1009</sup>

In 1943, Burnet Gaba—the son of William Kobe Ntsikana—raised money for a tombstone for Ntsikana’s grave at Thwatwa. The Hleke people at Pirie<sup>1010</sup> supported this, with their headman donating two sheep. The “church people” were the main subscribers to the black marble tombstone, which bears the inscription: *Isikumbuzo Sika Ntsikana Senziwe Lusapo Lwake Nama Hleke* (The Memorial of Ntsikana by his Grandchildren and the Hleke tribe).<sup>1011</sup>

The development of homeland politics in the late 1960s, together with growing ethnic competition in the Ciskei, led to the revival of the SNMA. During the first five years of the “New Deal”, Mfengu Chief Mbandla was politically very powerful. Lennox Sebe of the Rharhabe Xhosa used the Ntsikana movement to broaden his power-base in the run-up to the 1973 elections. But the pietism (seeking peace, security and harmony between the races) of the old guard began to ebb before the more aggressive goals of the younger Black Consciousness movement. Nonetheless, hundreds of Africans from Ciskei, Transkei, and other parts of South Africa gathered at Pirie for the Ntsikana celebrations of 1972.

The amaCirha, who stressed Ntsikana’s importance as an ancestor, erected a preaching place beside his headstone at Thwatwa. From 1975, the Ciskei Government gave the SNMA an annual grant of R200 towards their festivities. After a change in policy in 1976, the government began to suppress ethnic celebrations and Intaba kaNdoda was established as

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<sup>1008</sup> Hodgson, “Ntsikana”, 402-3.

<sup>1009</sup> Ibid., 408. See also 411: “In his presidential address at the commemoration in East London in 1910, Pelem spelled out the aims of the NMA fully for the first time, giving greater direction to the movement. At this stage their purpose was as much political as religious . . . Pelem believed that they must forget their denominational differences and follow his [Ntsikana’s] call in working towards unity as a black nation”. [At that time, “Xhosa” embraced the amaXhosa, Thembu, Pondo and Mpondomise].

<sup>1010</sup> For the Pirie (Mgqakwebe) connection with Ntsikana. see Hodgson, 426-7. The Pirie mission was founded in 1830 by the Rev John Ross of the Glasgow Missionary Society on the site where Dr Van der Kemp preached. Hodgson believed that this was where Ntsikana “first heard the word of God”. Ibid., 426.

<sup>1011</sup> Hodgson, 446. Burnet Gaba Ntsikana, who was born at Pirie and educated at Lovedale, started the Ntsikana Memorial Church (NMC), first called the Thwatwa Ntsikana Memorial Church, at Pirie after he had a dream in 1901 telling him to establish it. Some of his followers comprised amaCirha but all were of the Rharhabe clan. The NMC was modelled on the Presbyterian Church and used its liturgy, together with the Rharhabe hymn book. Ibid., 427.

the national shrine.<sup>1012</sup> It has subsequently been defaced and dismantled as it carries Apartheid connotations.

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<sup>1012</sup> Hodgson, 462-4.

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#### Abbreviations

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CO	Colonial Office
[ ]	Command Paper
GH	Government House
HA	House of Assembly
HC	House of Commons
LG	Lieutenant Governor
AG	Attorney General
DSGEP	Deputy Surveyor General Eastern Province
A or Acc	Accessions

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