

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

**Urbanizing the North-eastern Frontier: The Frontier Intelligentsia  
and the Making of Colonial Queenstown, c.1859 – 1877**

**By Megan Voss**

University of Cape Town

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

of

The University of Cape Town

JULY 2012

## **ABSTRACT**

The rich and varied literature on the eastern Cape frontier has not yet reached the north-eastern frontier of the mid-nineteenth century. Urban centres and towns have also been largely ignored. Moreover, the perspective of the Anglophone intellectuals in these towns has rarely been analysed, and has instead been subsumed within a uniform 'frontier voice'. These intellectuals were a unique force, who positioned themselves at the forefront of shaping the British aesthetic of the settler-colonial town, informing the nature of segregation and creating a moral discourse which framed the agricultural endeavour and the institution of law and order in Queenstown. While not the only important actors in the drama of colonization along the north-eastern frontier, this frontier intelligentsia played a significant role in the making of the colonial order in this area. By promoting literary societies, museums, volunteer organizations and education (both formal and civic), as well as through the inclusion of articles of literary and scientific interest, the local Queenstown press situated itself at the forefront of the creation of this Queenstown intelligentsia. This thesis thus uses the Queenstown press to not only recreate the ethos of the district's intellectuals, but to narrate interactions between the area's amaXhosa and white inhabitants.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Anne Mager, for her guidance, ideas and critical eye. I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the financial support I received from the National Research Fund (NRF), without which the writing of this thesis would not have been possible. This project is dedicated to my miracle, Lily India, whose fight for life in her first few months gave me the inspiration to carry on through the most difficult moments.

University of Cape Town

## **CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	5
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
The rhetoric of improvement and the making of place in Queenstown	22
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
White places, Black spaces: the origins of segregation in colonial Queenstown	46
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
Mission land and farms: agriculturalists, tenants and 'citizens' in Queenstown	71
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
Conquered spaces, legal landscapes: violence and Queenstown's resident magistrate system	106
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	
Settler-colonial Queenstown and beyond	128
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	135

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an account of the perceptions of a 'frontier intelligentsia' as articulated in the *Queenstown Free Press* and the *Queenstown Representative*, two competing newspapers in the frontier village of Queenstown in the mid-nineteenth century. This frontier press produced a collection of stories about the everyday interactions between the isiXhosa-speaking peoples and European settlers on the Cape's urbanizing north-eastern frontier. The narrative is located in the district of Queenstown, in South Africa's eastern Cape. North of the Amatola Mountains, at the base of the Bongolo Mountain and bordered by the waters of the Kei River, this area was originally traversed by 'bands of roaming hunter-gatherers', who inhabited the nooks and crevices of these mountain labyrinths, and whose presence is etched into the rocks located in the surrounding mountains. The abaThembu first came into the area when chief Bawana, attempting to avoid war with the amaNgwane, settled near Lukanji (Hangklip).<sup>1</sup> Dutch farmers began arriving in the area at the same time. Sources indicate that the relationship between the San and the abaThembu in the region were far from amicable, and by the 1850s the last San stronghold in the area had been destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1850 and 1853, the north-eastern frontier was the site of much of the fighting in the eighth frontier war (War of Mlanjeni), which Jeff Peires describes as the "longest, hardest and ugliest war ever fought over one hundred years of bloodshed on the Cape Colony's eastern frontier".<sup>3</sup> In 1853, at the close of the war, Queenstown was formed as part of a rampart of frontier defence, in the land confiscated from the anti-colonial contingent of the abaThembu. J.C Warner, the

---

<sup>1</sup> This thesis does not use either of the colonial terms for abaThembu, "Tambookie" or "Tembu", but rather umThembu (when referring to one person) or abaThembu (when referring to a group), except when quoting from contemporary sources.

<sup>2</sup> W. Stanford, *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford* (Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1958), p. 4. In his *Reminiscences* Stanford claimed that the disturbances of 1878 to 1881 resulted in the complete decimation of this culture (Stanford, *Reminiscences*, p. 46).

<sup>3</sup> J.B Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981), p. 12.

Wesleyan missionary at Glen Grey, first proposed the idea of a town and the settling of the district.<sup>4</sup> Sir George Cathcart, Governor of the Cape from 1851 to 1853, took up the idea enthusiastically, believing that the only way to prevent the “rebel Tambookies” who had been expelled from returning to their land was to settle the area with Europeans. The project, which was thereafter to be referred to as the Cathcart System, granted arable land to able-bodied men who had distinguished themselves in the previous frontier war, on certain conditions. Grantees, as they were known, were required to be at the ready at all times for defensive service, to muster annually on the Queen’s birthday, and to be able to “furnish, when required, one armed and mounted man for each thousand acres of [additional] land he may possess”. In order to promote integration English and Dutch farmers were placed, as far as possible, in a mixed fashion.<sup>5</sup> From its inception, then, the nascent settler-colonial town was constituted as a marker of British imperialism. And in the shadows of this ambitious project lurked the ever-present memories of a brutal and bloody war.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> QFP, 18 Oct, 1964

<sup>5</sup> G. Cathcart, *Correspondence of Lieut.-General the Hon. Sir George Cathcart, K.C.B.: 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 of South Africa* (London, Murray, 1857), pp. 161-64. In 1866 the grantee regulations were redrafted (QFP, 27 November, 1866), and by 1867 little interest was shown in the muster, the press reporting that only 10 or 12 fieldcornetcies were still involved (Rep, 13 May, 1867).

<sup>6</sup> For some white settlers the fear and misunderstanding was overwhelming. Ann Shepstone, wife of the Kamastone missionary, hints in her diary at the isolation and depression she experienced living in the area after hostilities had ceased in 1853: “O that the residue of men would give their hearts to Him who giveth to all so liberally but alas Africa appears to be filled with an ungrateful people, cold and dark in trespasses and sins [...] Oh who but Thou canst tell the solitariness of a missionary’s wife.” (A. Shepstone, *Ann Shepstone’s Journal* (transcript, Cory Library), p. 13)



**FIGURE 1: Map of Queenstown, showing the proposed boundaries of the new District (formerly North Victoria) and the Tambookie Location in 1853. Source: Cathcart, *Correspondence* (see footnote 5)**

Around 40 000 pardoned and 'loyal' amaThembu were allocated a large stretch of land to the north of Queenstown, the Tambookie Location, while amaMfengu allies were accommodated roughly 20 miles south-west of the town in the vicinity of the Wesleyan mission station of Kamastone, and along the Oxkraal river, around the site of the LMS (London Missionary Society) mission of Hackney.<sup>7</sup> Two Locations, named Kamastone and Ox Kraal, respectively, sprung up in the area. The Moravian Mission of Shiloh, which had been taken over by a group of 'rebels' who had joined

<sup>7</sup> The term 'amaMfengu' is used, rather than the colonial term "Fingoes", except when quoting from contemporary sources.



the amaXhosa against the colony in the war, was south-east of the Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations, and near to the military outpost of Whittlesea.<sup>8</sup> Just 8 miles north of the town lay another Wesleyan Mission Station, Lesseyton, which became the site of an African Location in the mid-1860s.<sup>9</sup>

WGB (William George Brookes) Shepstone was appointed as the town's first civil commissioner. Known for his heroics during the seventh frontier war ('War of the Axe') in 1846 and his role in the battle of Whittlesea against the Shiloh 'rebels', the battle which resulted in amaTshatshu chief Maphasa's death and victory for the colonial forces, Shepstone was also part of a family of prominent colonial officials.<sup>10</sup> Shortly after Queenstown's establishment, in 1855, the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police (FAMP) was formed. The force served to protect the European population from the Africans over the border.<sup>11</sup> Made up of a conglomerate of German, Irish and English immigrants as well as locals, the FAMP quickly became the target of widespread criticism. Their efficiency was constantly questioned, and tales of

---

<sup>8</sup> Whittlesea was established in 1834, during the sixth frontier war. Originally used as a military outpost, Whittlesea remained a very small settlement throughout the period under study. A visitor in 1872 described the village as "a tiny little place, with a decent inn and a few mud houses surrounding a little mud church" (QFP, 2 February, 1872).

<sup>9</sup> Lesseyton was situated in Indlovokazi (she-elephant) below Hangklip. The missionary station was settled before 1846 by the abaThembu contingent of the Haslope Hills missionary station (*Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1850, p. 74). The inhabitants, siding with the colonial forces in the wars of 1846 and 1851, were granted a "location", and before Cathcart left for the Crimean War, the land was measured up, and entrusted to the "Board of Commissioners for the Improvement of the Native Populations."<sup>9</sup> (P.J Lombard, *Die Stigting en Vroeë Geskiedenis van Queenstown (1853-1859)* (Archives Year Book for South African History 15<sup>th</sup> year, vol. 2, 1951, Pretoria, Government Printer, 1952), p. 163). In 1866 chief Tabata and his two sons were allotted the three principal farms around the mission station. In 1857 an Industrial Institute was established at Lesseyton.

<sup>10</sup> The civil commissioner's father was the resident missionary at Kamastone, while his brother, Sir Theopolis Shepstone was the "Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes" in Natal. (R. Gordon, *Shepstone: the role of the family in the history of South Africa, 1820-1900* (Cape Town, A.A Balkema, 1968)) Maphasa was Bawana's son.

<sup>11</sup> The FAMP was used during the cattle-killing in order to "push the Gcaleka Xhosa back from the Kei", and was, according to Price, utilized as an institutionalized "commando system" (R. Price, *Making empire: colonial encounters and the creation of imperial rule in nineteenth-century Africa* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 341).

drunken officers harassing townspeople, frequent desertion, and rumours of illicit trading from the police camps littered the local papers.<sup>12</sup>

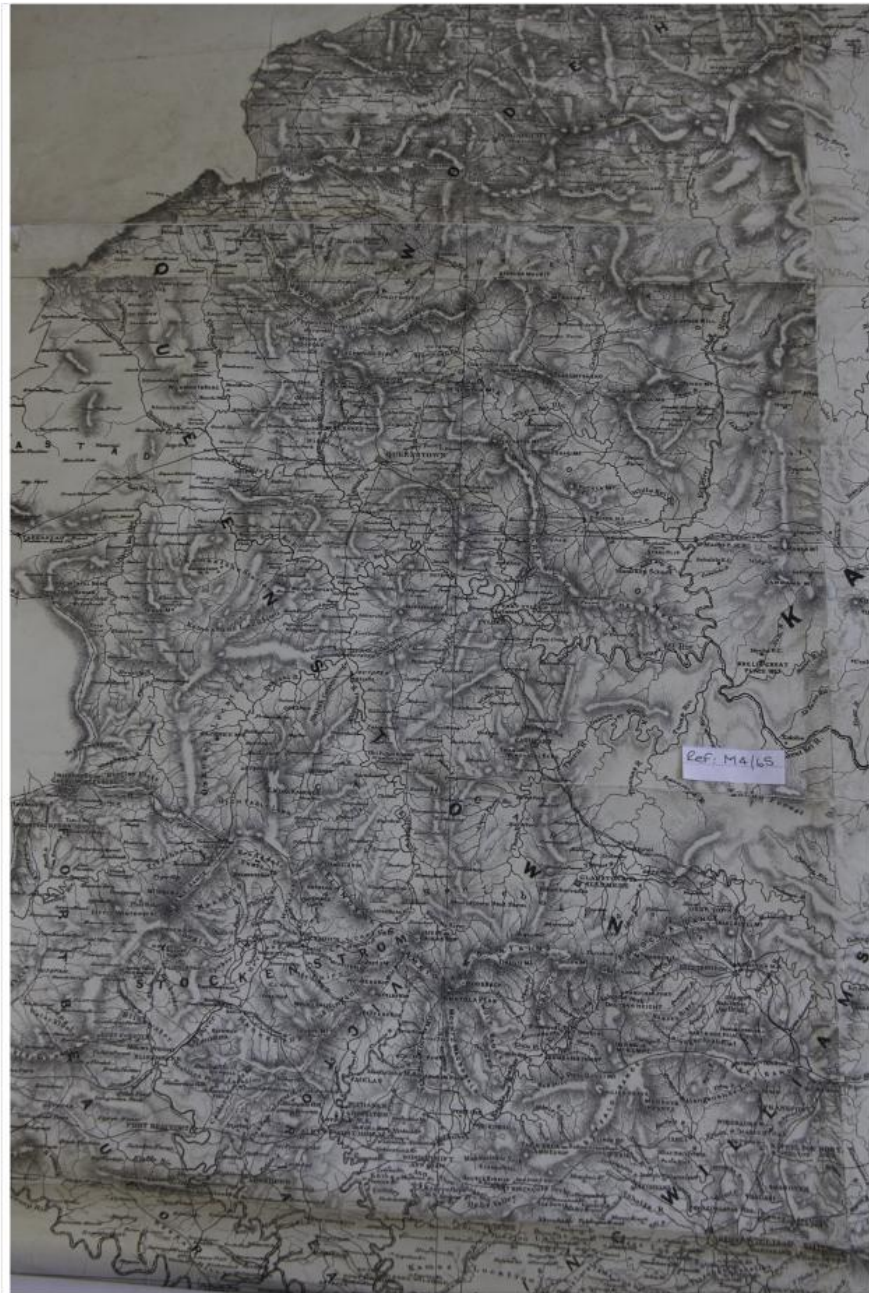
In 1857 the district was divided into six wards – the municipal area of Queenstown (1), the Queenstown, Bongolo and Ingobo field-cornetcies and the Tambookie Location (2), Grootvlei field-cornetcy (3), Upper Swart Kei, Whittlesea and Shiloh field-cornetcies and the Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations (5), and the Mapassa field-cornetcies, numbers one and two (6).<sup>13</sup> At the same time the area was witness to the tragedy of the cattle killings, which resulted in the starvation and death of tens of thousands of the area's amaXhosa inhabitants.<sup>14</sup> By 1859, then, only six years after the establishment of the colonial-settler town, Queenstown, on the north-eastern frontier, the amaXhosa polities in the area had been fractured by war, starvation and economic collapse, while the district had been neatly apportioned into fieldcornetcies, wards, African Locations and private farms. The 1860s north-eastern frontier thus ushered in a phase of more insidious colonial control for the isiXhosa-speaking people of the north-eastern frontier. This era of eastern Cape frontier history drastically changed the nature of interactions between Africans and colonists, and it is at the level of social interaction and everyday life, then, that the most important intercultural dialogues, which would inform the future of the colonial order in this pivotal part of the eastern Cape, were thus occurring.

---

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, QFP, 24 February, 1863; QFP, 10 March, 1863; QFP, 16 June, 1863; QFP, 28 July, 1863; QFP, 18 August, 1863; QFP, 10 November, 1863; QFP, 23 February, 1864; QFP, 30 January, 1866; QFP, 25 October, 1870; QFP, 6 May, 1873; QFP, 7 July, 1874, QFP, 6 May, 1875. The *Free Press* suggested that the force's inefficiency might have had something to do with the low rate of pay they received, which forced them to take on other work while they should have been performing police duties (QFP, 23 November, 1859). The police force was similarly castigated for over-zealous arrests of innocent members of the public, one article accusing them of "patrol[ing] the district in gangs and with their guns and helmets strik[ing] an amount of awe into the aboriginal population more than we can think of" (QFP, 30 January, 1866).

<sup>13</sup> A. Greaves, "Tell me of Komani: A history of Queenstown" (Queenstown and Frontier Historical Society, 1987), p. 62

<sup>14</sup> Jeff Peires' *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1989) remains the definitive history on the event and the factors leading up to it. For recent debates see the *Special Issue of African Studies*, 67 (2), 2008.



**FIGURE 2: Map of the District of Queenstown, including the principal sites in this study, 1860. Source: M4/65, Cape Archives**

Frontiers in general have been a major theoretical concern of historians since Frederick Jackson Turner's seminal essay on the American frontier, "The

Significance of the Frontier in American History”.<sup>15</sup> Martin Legassick’s still-pertinent revisioning of this frontier thesis in what Nigel Penn calls a “paradigm-smashing seminar paper” in 1970 put South African frontiers on the map of theoretical frontier studies.<sup>16</sup> Moving away from the notion of the civilization versus savagery nexus that had characterized Turner’s thesis, Legassick argued that interactions on the frontier were not only characterized by racial violence, but were part of a process of acculturation between Europeans and Africans. Legassick highlighted the frontier as a site for *inclusions* as well as exclusions, and pointed to the dearth of analysis on the effects of the frontier on African societies.<sup>17</sup> Since the Legassick ‘turn’ historians have concurred that the frontier was less an impermeable boundary than a transition zone, and that, to varying degrees, transgressions, rather than divisions characterized this area. Their research has sought to find a more suitable alternative to the ‘frontier thesis’ by examining a variety of interactions along different frontiers at different times.<sup>18</sup> Today the debate has gone far beyond this. Indeed, it seems rather obsolete to point to the fact that frontiers were areas of cross-cultural encounter and transition rather than neat lines indicating the successful progress of modernity on the African landscape. Similarly, while any frontier study cannot now negate that these zones were imbued with pasts that were “inscribed with meaning before the

---

<sup>15</sup> See F.J Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, Holt, 1953) for a copy of this essay.

<sup>16</sup> N. Penn, ‘The northern Cape frontier zone in South African frontier historiography’, in L. Russell (ed) *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous-European Encounters in Settler Societies* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> M. Legassick, ‘The frontier tradition in South African historiography’, in S. Marks and A. Atmore (eds) *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa* (London, Longman, 1980)

<sup>18</sup> Prominent among these studies are J. Peires, *The House of Phalo: a history of the Xhosa people in the days of their independence* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981); N. Mostert, *Frontiers: the epic of South Africa’s creation and the tragedy of the Xhosa people* (New York, Knopf, 1992); S. Newton-King, *Masters and servants on the Cape eastern frontier, 1760-1803* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999); N. Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier: colonist and Khoisan on the Cape’s northern frontier in the 18<sup>th</sup> century* (Cape Town, Double Storey Books, 2005); C. 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, 1999); Price, *Making empire*. For a discussion on the effect of Legassick’s thesis on these works, see Penn, ‘The northern Cape frontier zone’, pp. 19-41.

passage of the new order” they were, at the same time *new spaces*.<sup>19</sup> It is as places of rapid change and experimentation that they have held, and will continue to hold, such fascination for historians. They were also, however, places where people, amidst what we can now see as exceptional circumstances, continued to live an everyday existence. The ‘big events’ narrative sometimes occludes this very obvious point.

The north-eastern frontier remains a lacuna in these studies on the eastern Cape and the frontier. Queenstown itself has received scant attention in eastern Cape historiography and has been the focus of only two major academic studies – the one a 1951 M.A thesis on its early history, the other an economic study for a Ph.D dissertation written in 1990.<sup>20</sup> Towns and cities in general have been neglected in eastern Cape frontier histories, notable exceptions of which are Sean Redding’s 1987 Ph.D thesis on the Making of Mthatha and Richard Marshall’s 2008 M.A thesis on Grahamstown’s socio-cultural history.<sup>21</sup> Penelope Edmonds points out that this trend can be attributed to the assumption that ‘the frontier’ is located elsewhere, out on the fringes of the colony.<sup>22</sup> Edmonds uncovers how city space in Melbourne, Australia and Victoria, British Columbia during British colonialism was naturalized,

---

<sup>19</sup> L.F Braun, ‘The Cadastre and the colony: surveying, territory, and legibility in the creation of South Africa, c. 1860-1913’ (Ph.D thesis, Rutgers, 2009) Braun also argues that “the frontier as a concept is virtually irrelevant” (p. 13), and in so far as it carries the ideological baggage of ‘founding myths’ and geographical narratives of progress and civilization it indeed is. Most recently Richard Levine, in his 2011 biography of African missionary, Jan Tzatzoe, has recast the frontier as a “border region”, a place characterized by its Africanness (R. Levine, *A living man from Africa: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa chief and missionary, and the making of nineteenth-century South Africa* (New Haven Connecticut, Yale University Press, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Lombard, *Die Stigting en Vroeë Geskiedenis van Queenstown (1853-1859)*; R.J Bouch, ‘The colonization of Queenstown (Eastern Cape) and its hinterland, 1852-1886’ (Ph.D thesis, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> S. Redding, ‘The Making of a South African town: social and economic change in Umtata, 1870-1950’ (Ph.D thesis, Yale University, 1987); R. Marshall, ‘A Social and Cultural History of Grahamstown, 1812 to c1845’ (M.A thesis, Rhodes University, 2008). Marshall confirms that urban histories located in the eastern Cape, particularly those concerning small towns, are few and far between, and most fairly outdated.

<sup>22</sup> P. Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2010) p. 6

and argues that the interactions in these urban landscapes are crucial to our understanding of how colonialism was negotiated in contested space.<sup>23</sup>

One of the aims of this thesis is to tell the story of the making of the colonial order along the north-eastern frontier, and to illuminate amaXhosa/settler relations in the urbanizing settler-colonial centre of Queenstown. Rather than a simple narrative, however, it seeks to do so through an exploration of the frontier press. Histories focusing on the eastern Cape colonial press have been disappointingly parochial, and none has been able to get beyond the press as a site for discourse analysis. The *Grahamstown Journal* has been the main focus for these studies, the most recent of which is Robert McKend's treatise on the "imagined world [...] constructed by the *Journal*" over a five-year period.<sup>24</sup> McKend's thesis, while a fantastic evocation of the growth of a middle-class frontier mindset in the early nineteenth century eastern Cape, has missed the rich opportunities that the colonial press offers. Newspapers, like other colonial resources, are full of bias, rhetoric and subterfuge, but they are also repositories of empirical gems and often provide much more detail about living conditions and individual lives, emotions and experiences than official records do. In the case of Queenstown, for example, the municipal archives are dry receptacles of lone, abrupt sentences amidst gaping wildernesses of empty months. The local press, however, includes detailed minutes of municipal meetings, arguments between members and letters from the public, which would otherwise have completely disappeared from the historical record.

Not only have these studies missed the opportunity to get at the *experience* of the frontier that this source provides but there is also very little examination of the variety of perspectives contained within the press. Newspapers are indeed wonderfully rich 'breeding grounds' for the development of different perspectives, comprised as they

---

<sup>23</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*.

<sup>24</sup> R. McKend, "A journal among them": colonial discourse and the creation of an imaginary community in the Graham's Town Journal, 1881-36' (M.A thesis, UCT, 1997), p. 20

are of editorials, correspondence and sundry other articles and inserts, all brandishing their own 'voice'. Historians referring to the eastern Cape press have in general, however, presented the press as the articulation of a collective frontier identity. Noel Mostert, in his epic history of the eastern Cape describes the *Journal* as "the forceful voice of the frontier colonists", and Adam Lester's more culturally-oriented volume on the creation of settler identities in the eastern Cape, although a nuanced critique of *transnational* identities, misses the mark when it comes to the identities espoused in specific newspapers.<sup>25</sup> This becomes decidedly clear when he refers to Godlonton, the editor of the *Journal*, as the "settler spokesman".<sup>26</sup> Levine's *Jan Tzatzoe*, claims that the

"*Journal* crystallizes the sentiments of many of the British settlers in the eastern Cape border region, who have begun to demand greater access to land and African labor, and more overt protection from Xhosa attacks, real and imaginary. Godlonton embodies the agitated state of his audience, voicing their complaints in vituperative language that is freighted with racial overtones."<sup>27</sup>

These generalizations say more about the lack of sufficient investigation into the colonial press, than the calibre of the works quoted here, which are necessarily motivated by different research agendas.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, it has clearly become commonplace to 'read' the press as espousing a unitary and fixed ideology. The press, at least in Queenstown, presents discordant visions of frontier life. While the cries for African land and labour are definitely there, this voice co-exists with others, which resist the dominant discourse. The fear and loathing so often characterizing the tone of the colonial voice exist alongside dissenting voices and ideologies of co-existence, inter-dependence and mutual gain.

---

<sup>25</sup> Mostert, *Frontiers*, p. 648; A. Lester, *Imperial Networks: creating identities in nineteenth-century South Africa and Britain* (London, Routledge, 2001).

<sup>26</sup> Lester, *Imperial Networks*, p. 189.

<sup>27</sup> Levine, *Jan Tzatzoe*, p. 94

<sup>28</sup> Lester, for example, is concerned with showing how specific local settler identities were formulated within a colonial-settler network, while Levine has applied creative history to the life of one of the eastern Cape's intermediaries.

Saul Dubow's most recent publication, *A Commonwealth of knowledge*, offers a more useful lens with which to examine the colonial press in Queenstown. In his investigation into the roots of South Africanism Dubow links the creation of knowledge-based institutions in the Cape to the growth of a specific Anglophone national identity. Dubow researches, in part, the role of the *Cape Monthly* in constructing a group of Cape intellectuals, which he terms the "colonial intelligentsia". These intellectuals had a significant impact on the development of 'South Africanism' and the growth of white political ascendancy, but, argues Dubow, their role has been downplayed by historians in the aftermath of Apartheid.

Dubow contends that the *Cape Monthly Magazine* "stroved to foster a moral as well as a commercial community and to give a distinct public voice to the rising middle-class intelligentsia", and thus played a fundamental role in harnessing a network amongst intellectuals in the Cape.<sup>29</sup> Although he also claims that the *Cape Monthly* was unique in this regard because the publication had a small, elite circulation, this study evidences otherwise. Dubow's examination of the impact of literary and scientific institutions, and the *Cape Monthly* on this "colonial intelligentsia" have parallels to a similar process occurring in Queenstown. It will be argued that the local press in Queenstown was governed by a similar ethos and that the Queenstown intellectuals, the "frontier intelligentsia", utilized the local press as a public platform for their ideological musings and exhortations in much the same way as the "colonial intelligentsia" in the Cape. Moreover, it will be argued that Queenstown's intellectuals, and their town-based, middle-class voice was integral to the process of urbanizing the north-eastern frontier, and the nature of the colonial experiment in this area. This study does not confine itself to the town, but examines the rural areas and farmlands of Queenstown within the context of this urbanizing frontier identity. As Penelope Edmonds points out, it was through the municipalities of towns that the

---

<sup>29</sup> S. Dubow, *A commonwealth of knowledge: science, sensibility, and white South Africa, 1820-2000* (Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 118



colonial order was first enacted on space, which was then radiated to the far-flung places on the immediate border.<sup>30</sup>

By the mid-1860s Queenstown had two rival locally-produced papers, the *Queenstown Free Press* and the *Queenstown Representative*. The *Queenstown Free Press* (QFP) was established in 1859 by a new arrival to the town, David Barrable, an Englishman from Essex.<sup>31</sup> Only 24 years old when he arrived in Queenstown to start a commercial printing press, Barrable was rapidly drawn into taking up civic responsibilities. He was persuaded to start a newspaper, joined the town's municipal committee, and finally became mayor in 1881. The first edition of the *Free Press* in 1859 included a prospectus that advanced the unified settler community that Cathcart had envisaged:

"We do not forget that many of [the Dutch] have, conjointly with their English comrades, borne the heat and burthen of the day in the van of civilisation on our border, and within sight of the many hordes of savages which surround us."

Barrable's paper was not always particularly popular with the Dutch, or the farming community in general. In 1873 the president of the farmers' association, Joseph Gadd, wrote in to the *Free Press*, accusing the paper of taking "frequent opportunities of indulging in unworthy sneers at [the farmers'] expense", and issuing "statements which tend to disturb the harmony that exists between all classes in this Division."<sup>32</sup> In 1875 the *Free Press* explained its stance as "*Liberal yet Conservative*", a stance the paper felt would "ever gain to our side the moderate and the wise whose policy will be to avoid extreme and violent measures."<sup>33</sup>

In 1865 the *Queenstown Representative* (Rep) was established as a weekly newspaper by a Mr Linwood, a journalist from London and a keen amateur dramatist

---

<sup>30</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 12

<sup>31</sup> Barrable first lived in King William's Town and then East London. He was a member of the Wesleyan Church, and involved in the cricket, athletics and football clubs (*Queenstown Daily Representative Centenary Issue*, 21 September, 1953). In 1875 Hellier took over editorship from Barrable.

<sup>32</sup> QFP, 9 September, 1873

<sup>33</sup> QFP, 11 March, 1875

who came to South Africa for health reasons.<sup>34</sup> The *Queenstown Representative* became the *Free Press*' competitor, until 1903 when the *Free Press* was bought out by the owners of the *Representative*, F.C von Linsingen and A.K McPherson.<sup>35</sup> While the *Representative*'s style was less liberal and overtly sensationalist, espousing an obvious antipathy for Africans, these newspapers shared similar views on frontier politics and race relations. They were thus business competitors rather than ideological rivals. "The *Representative*" the paper stated in its first editorial,

"will be, in the first place, devoted to the candid expression of the views of Frontier colonists on all matters effecting the treatment of the native population both within and beyond the colonial boundary; and the conduct of her Majesty's representative, whether as Governor or High Commissioner, will be freely and fiercely – but, we trust, not coarsely – criticized."<sup>36</sup>

The editorial lectured the inhabitants of the north-eastern frontier to "for their own sakes, treat the native races with kindness and forbearance".<sup>37</sup> The *Representative* received complaints from the public too, especially regarding its scurrilous tone. One such letter, commenting on the detailed reports of criminal cases, including those on adultery, accused the paper of being a "filthy tell-tale".<sup>38</sup> It is not possible to locate circulation figures, but it is clear that these newspapers both sought to nurture a readership in the town, the farming areas and the mission stations amongst literate Africans.<sup>39</sup>

Both Barrable and Linwood were part of institutions of knowledge, order and control along the north-eastern frontier. Moreover, while Barrable was younger and trained

---

<sup>34</sup> Greaves claims that shortly after establishing the paper Linwood returned to England, and his brother took over as editor (Greaves, 'Komani', p. 12).

<sup>35</sup> No author, 'The Press in Queenstown', in *The Hexagon: Journal of the Queenstown and Frontier Historical Society* (2, 1991), pp.28-31

<sup>36</sup> Rep, 4 November, 1865

<sup>37</sup> Rep, 4 November, 1865

<sup>38</sup> QFP, 20 March, 1866

<sup>39</sup> Wesleyan missionary EJ Barrett pointed out that many of the Africans living on mission stations had access to the *Free Press* (QFP, 19 May, 1868). In the government report on the Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations of 1875, it was noted that "[a]n English paper is [...] taken by one man" (G16 - '76, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*, p. 89). This newspaper may possibly have been one of the local Queenstown papers, and would most probably have been passed around the community.

on the frontier, he shared with Linwood a spatial conception of empire that was local as well as global. Their ideas for the urban identity of the north-eastern frontier seem to have been a hybrid between bourgeois ideals from the metropole revised in a local, African context. These editors thus provided an intellectual space for a particular contingent of the Queenstown community to debate, discuss and share ideas. Although for the most part the contributors to the press remained anonymous, which makes an exact break-down of their composition difficult, the continued success of both papers, the show of support for the causes championed in the editorials, and the simultaneous growth of knowledge-producing societies within the town point to the existence of a fairly substantial grouping of Queenstownites who can be said to have shared in the perspective of a frontier intelligentsia. The influx of an immigrant population, largely from Britain, including commercially-enterprising men and educators such as the Morum brothers, Ebenezer Crouch, the ever-resourceful Yorkshire-born Alfred Newsam Ella, and pedagogist Frederick Beswick, no doubt boosted the growth of this middle-class entrepot, whose interests extended beyond the concerns of drought and war.

This frontier intelligentsia, who utilized the press as a forum for the creation of a moral universe along the north-eastern frontier, it will be argued, was characterized by many of the same traits as Dubow's "colonial intelligentsia". It endorsed an English, masculine, urban, locally-produced ideology, which was pro-education, pro-missionary and pro-technological advancement. It thus supported, and advocated for, the production of knowledge and the establishment of literary and scientific institutions, from debating societies to hospitals, from museums to telegraphic communication. The press adopted a pedagogical stance, often lecturing the community on how to live and interact. And like Dubow's "colonial intelligentsia", the

frontier intelligentsia “wrapped itself in the apparently neutral virtues of reason, progress, and civilization”, while promoting a “politics of the middle-ground”.<sup>40</sup>

This frontier intelligentsia defined in and through the press, was mainly concerned with two things: the creation of a progressive society and regulations around how to live on the frontier. The two issues melded, and relations with Africans came to be explicitly explained through the rubric of development of land, architecture and agriculture, the creation of literary and scientific institutions, widespread education and the formation of an obedient, christianised labour force. This view of Africans sets the frontier intelligentsia apart from the “colonial intelligentsia” detailed by Dubow. The “colonial intelligentsia”, Dubow explains, were less concerned with how to cope with Africanness until later in the 1870s.<sup>41</sup> The intellectuals in Queenstown, on the other hand, utilized a rhetoric of ‘rights as learned privilege’, setting up schemata around difference, even as they preached assimilation, the press employing trope images of Africans and Dutch in advancing a particular intellectual settler identity. In this sense, Africans become rhetorical devices in the Queenstown intellectuals’ articulation of self.

The ideas expressed in the press changed from the 1860s to the 1870s, as did the material circumstances of interactions in the district. While the 1860s were characterized by a certain amount of freedom for Queenstown’s African inhabitants, the 1870s saw the drafting of more repressive legislation and greater enforcement of existing legislation. The frontier intelligentsia increasingly laid claim to moral justifications for segregation and exploitation of Africans in the colony throughout this period. It will be shown how the ethos of the frontier intellectuals was paramount in the creation of a frontier society in Queenstown, and that ideas formulated within the

---

<sup>40</sup> Dubow, *A commonwealth of knowledge*, pp. vi-vii

<sup>41</sup> Dubow, *A commonwealth of knowledge*, pp. 110-11

urbanizing space of the town had very real ramifications for the relations between Africans and Europeans within the district as a whole.

Space is the organizing principle in the structuring of this study. The structure mirrors the layout of Queenstown. Like the hexagon in the centre of the town, and the roads which branched off from it, this thesis begins at the centre of the district, the town itself, slowly moving towards its edges, and ending at Queenstown's furthest reaches, the Tambookie Location. Throughout, it attempts to answer, amongst others, the following questions: What perspective emanated from the press, how did it differ from other 'frontier voices', and in what ways did it inform relations along the north-eastern frontier? What information can be gleaned from the press, and how can this resource be utilized to illuminate frontier interactions?

Chapter one introduces both the town and the frontier intelligentsia's 'rhetoric of improvement' as enunciated in the press. Specific reference to how this 'spirit of progress' constructed the urban settler landscape and peopled spaces, both in the press and the town itself is made. It traces the development of private property, green spaces and educational facilities, and examines how British notions of landscape created the foundations of the settler-colonial town. This serves as a preamble to the discussion in subsequent chapters.

The second chapter deals with the press coverage of the African presence in Queenstown, discussing accounts of increasingly segregated town space, and the Municipal Location south of the town. The discussion thus moves outward from the town into the African location on its margins to examine how, and in what ways, evocations of space and the rhetoric of improvement were applied to the African community in Queenstown. The chapter highlights the role of Queenstown's intellectuals in determining the nature of material segregation within the colonial-settler town.

Chapter three moves to press articles on the mission stations and Locations of Kamastone and Ox Kraal and the farmlands of the Queenstown district. The discussion tracks the development of agriculture in the district, competition between African and white farmers, land tenure and the debate around African citizenship. The frontier intelligentsia's support for African agricultural improvement and the allocation of rights to specific African inhabitants constantly jarred with the perspective of the surrounding farmers.

Chapter four moves to the boundaries of the district and the colony, including the Tambookie Location, and looks at how the frontier intelligentsia approached landscapes marked by fear and conquest. This is accompanied by an analysis of how the intellectual perspective influenced the development of ideas on law, order and violence along the north-eastern frontier. The most detailed picture we get of relations along the frontier from colonial sources is often concerned with crime, and the local Queenstown press is no different. Reportage on theft, homicide and trespass was a dominant feature in the *Free Press* and the *Representative*, which allows this study to not only examine the frontier intelligentsia's ethos around punishment and violence, but to also narrate the everyday experience of conflict within the district.

## CHAPTER ONE:

### The rhetoric of improvement and the making of place in Queenstown

This study began with a map of 1850s Queenstown. A map that attempted to lay hold of the land through cartographically representing it, one of the foremost “weapons of imperialism”, but which merely illustrated the degree to which this north-eastern frontier was still unknown and uncharted when Queenstown was established.<sup>1</sup> The map shows a place full of ‘nothing’, empty white spaces with very few place names scattered around in a haphazard manner, a place needing to be settled, planted, populated and secured. The frontier intelligentsia, through the Queenstown *Free Press* and *Representative*, advocated for a particular kind of colonial settlement in Queenstown, one based on English notions of education, rights and progress, and framed by a ‘rhetoric of improvement’ that applied to both the physical and conceptual contours of the Queenstown landscape. The rhetoric of improvement imposes a cultural construct onto a barren, neutral landscape comprised of objects of nature. The landscape that preceded the settler incursion in Queenstown was evoked to set up a dichotomy – ‘before’ was merely the opposite of ‘after’. However, before European settlement, the landscape was far from empty, silent or unaltered, and had already been assigned meaning and significance. The abaThembu referred to the area as Kwa-Komani, named after the man who lived at the site of the town before the outbreak of the eighth frontier war, and rock art in the surrounding mountains attests to the long history of San occupation.<sup>2</sup>

In its promotion of the rhetoric of improvement in the public domain, the Queenstown press was at the forefront of constructing the ethos of the frontier intelligentsia, and creating a network of intellectuals in the town. In their discussions of landscape these intellectuals were involved in the

---

<sup>1</sup> B. Harley, cited in M. Sparke, “Between Demythologizing and Deconstructing the Map: Shawnadithit’s New-found-land and the Alienation of Canada”, in *Classics in Cartography: reflections on influential articles from Cartographia* (West Sussex, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2011), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The use of the word Komani in the naming of the river running along the southern extremity of the town, by the colonial community was a reappropriation of the word within a colonial context, and thus associations to indigenous ways of conceiving of the landscape were recalibrated rather than endorsed.

making of place, and also in formulating a very specific settler identity; in a sense, they were negotiating their Africanization.<sup>3</sup> As Dubow continually points out, the relationship between this intelligentsia and the landscape was borne out of local (African) conditions, and the scientific bodies of knowledge about this landscape contributed to the future creation of a particularly South African identity.

This chapter tracks the construction of the urbanizing landscape of Queenstown as a nexus of colonial control within the district, by examining the discursive process by which this frontier intelligentsia negotiated the African landscape, took cognitive ownership of it, and erased its Africanness through an appeal to British aesthetics and bodies of knowledge. This endeavour involved much more than the “colonizing eye”, and as Saul Dubow warns, some analyses can get rather side-tracked by discussion on the ‘western gaze’, without examining the very real impact this discourse had on landscape and people.<sup>4</sup> The study thus aims to examine the links between the discourse constructed by the frontier intelligentsia in the press as well as the material reality it commented on. Throughout the late 1860s and 1870s this fledgling frontier intelligentsia in Queenstown attempted to articulate its knowledge of and control over this landscape beyond an ‘imaginary universe’ through the advocacy of, commentary on, and participation in building projects, literary and scientific societies, agricultural development, schools and public beautification projects. It was also very much concerned with regulating peopled spaces in the town, by providing guidelines for appropriate behaviour in private and public spheres, and rules around inclusion and exclusion.

The first step in this process of dispossession involved the negation of previous meanings and signifiers attached to land, followed by the inscribing of (new) associations. The landscape that the Queenstown settler met with was considered to be a “wilderness”. As William Cronon has so forcibly argued in his seminal essay on landscape as a construct, the connotations of ‘wilderness’ in this

---

<sup>3</sup> Dubow, *commonwealth of knowledge*, p. 4

<sup>4</sup> Dubow, *commonwealth of knowledge*, p. 15.



sense were “‘deserted’, ‘savage’, ‘desolate’, ‘barren’ – in short, a ‘waste’”.<sup>5</sup> An early 1860s article in the *Free Press* described the site of Queenstown during its ‘wilderness period’ as “a lonely spot, its solitude unbroken, its wilderness silence undisturbed”.<sup>6</sup> In this way the African landscape was at once defined by what it lacked – people, sound, artifice - and therefore naturalized. This wilderness, in its messy, unstructured, idle and natural state embodied everything that was wrong about Africa, and thus justified its own domination. Cronon continues:

“ Whatever value it might have arose solely from the possibility that it might be “reclaimed” and turned toward human ends—planted as a garden, say, or a city upon a hill. In its raw state, it had little or nothing to offer civilized men and women.”<sup>7</sup>

This process of change was very much fuelled by the rhetoric of improvement, which characterized landscape as “the opposition of colonial (rationally organized) space and African (sensual and inferior) space.”<sup>8</sup> “Herein lies the distinguishing mark of civilisation,” the *Free Press* explained,

“that it develops the resources of the land, and unfolds the capabilities of man to meet circumstances such as we are speaking of. To barbarism belongs the unchanged existence, or taking the chance, of things and events; hence its stationery character without progress.”<sup>9</sup>

Adopting a commentating role, the press played a pivotal role in selecting and disseminating ideas around how land should be read and transformed in Queenstown. In the early days of publication the *Free Press* commended Queenstown’s colonial inhabitants on making something meaningful out of ostensible nothingness. By 1859, the start of the primary narrative in this study, the town was six years old, and the *Free Press* in one of its first editorials, waxed lyrical about the rapid progress the town had made: “[t]he greater part of this district, six years ago, was a wilderness, inhabited only by ruthless savages and wild beasts, now the town alone possesses property to the value of 44 000 pounds, increasing each day as it grows older.”<sup>10</sup> Transforming indigenous land into private property was at the heart of successfully implementing the colonial order along the frontier, and property

---

<sup>5</sup> W. Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature”, in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York, W.W Norton & Co., 1995), p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> QFP, 22 March, 1864.

<sup>7</sup> Cronon, “trouble with wilderness”, p. 2

<sup>8</sup> Crais, *White Supremacy*, p. 133

<sup>9</sup> QFP, 28 September, 1859

<sup>10</sup> QFP, 26 January, 1859

values thus became a register of progress.<sup>11</sup> And again, that same year, the editorial pointed to the newly ordered landscape:

“This district was the abode of the renowned warriors of the Tembu, reputed to be the most brave, at the same time the most ruthless of the [Xhosa] tribes ... Now the country around is dotted over, throughout its entire breadth, with farm houses, ploughed lands, and waving fields of corn and grain, and a town in its centre valued at 50 000l. to 60 000l.”<sup>12</sup>

This rhetoric of colonialism enacted on space was not only the preserve of editorials in the local press, it was part of a broader trend that sought to situate the colonial observer in a commanding position. A traveller with a bird’s eye view of the district in 1859 commented on the sharp contrast the grantee farms made with the “bare harsh looking veldt, which made the previous stage so excessively monotonous”.<sup>13</sup> Africa was the past, these descriptions concurred, and colonial Britain the future.<sup>14</sup> As Glenn Hooper highlights, this act of transforming the landscape was repeated again and again by colonialism, “remodeled by colonists, not just because it needs to be contained, yield a profit or support the community who live there, but because it is also regarded as a very visible marker of ownership and authority.”<sup>15</sup>

While the monotony and obfuscation associated with ‘veld’ in this nihilistic reading of Africa may have been difficult to unpack, the increasingly domesticated landscape offered commentators familiar visuals to break the uniformity, thus creating a discourse through which to view and express what they were looking at. As Paul Carter has argued in his classic work on nineteenth-century Australian colonialism, “by the act of place-naming, space is transformed symbolically into a place, that is, a space with a history”.<sup>16</sup> Queenstown’s ‘history’ essentially began, then, with its name, Queenstown. Named after Queen Victoria, the word ‘Queenstown’ itself effectively linked this small

---

<sup>11</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 11

<sup>12</sup> QFP, 29 December, 1859

<sup>13</sup> QFP, 19 January, 1859

<sup>14</sup> J. O’Brien, “‘They are so frequently shifting their place of residence’: land and the construction of social place of Indians in colonial Massachusetts”, in M. Daunton and R. Halpern (eds) *Empire and Others: British encounters with indigenous peoples, 1600-1850* (place, U. Pennsylvania Press, 1999). O’Brien makes this point in reference to the British reconstruction of Indian land in the mission town of Natick.

<sup>15</sup> G. Hooper, *Landscape and Empire, 1770-2000* (England, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), p. 2

<sup>16</sup> P. Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. xxiv

place along an oft-neglected frontier zone in Africa to the highest signifiers of British civilization, the royal institution. The *Free Press* constantly invoked this link, asserting that through this act of naming, the town's responsibility to attain future glory had been proclaimed. "We must keep up our reputation", stated an editorial, "The name which the town bears, calls upon us to see that we make it a pretty place, and as desirable a residence as possible."<sup>17</sup> Naming of spaces and geographical features did not thus only serve to occupy the blank spaces on the map of Queenstown, but was at the heart of assigning and stabilising meanings, by situating the foreign landscape within a referential system composed of familiar vocabularies and borrowing from a shared historical tradition. This "spatial punctuation" created a discourse that allowed the African landscape into the realm of language, and gave those implementing the colonial order the ability to assign co-ordinates to place, to differentiate between here and there, to delimit and define conquered and 'yet to be conquered' lands, and, ultimately, to endow colonization with the necessary tools to move through the wilderness.<sup>18</sup>

The process of naming also served to imbue the strange landscape with *new* meanings, associated with specific constructs and memories, and differences. "Colonists", as one writer has argued, "were compelled to make the new landscape their own, to employ familiar visual idioms in the construction of a coherent national identity at once separate from the colonized Other, yet not wholly dependent on the metropolitan landscape they had abandoned."<sup>19</sup> And, as Crais points out, "struggles over the land embraced issues such as the construction of identity, and remembrance and forgetting."<sup>20</sup> For example, Bowker's Kop, named after the general who had participated in four eastern Cape frontier wars, displaced the Boer name 'Koegelbeenkop', named for a San fighter who was wounded in the knee, and would forever conjure up the horrors of war along the frontier, and the African as enemy. In this way geographical features, once wild and African, became signifiers of

---

<sup>17</sup> QFP, 10 July, 1874

<sup>18</sup> Carter, *Botany Bay*, pp. 67-8

<sup>19</sup> R.P Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over livelihood and nature preservation in Africa* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998), p. 18

<sup>20</sup> Crais, *White Supremacy*, p. 149

colonial strength and reminders of African savagery.<sup>21</sup> And in this particular instance, a disembodied agent of colonial rule was forever peering down on the subjugated subjects below, a surveyor, all-seeing and a symbol for an emerging local identity. So too, the roads which spread through the town were named after key colonial players in the establishment of Queenstown, and again commemorated the coming into being of this once wild place. Shepstone street memorialized missionary and magisterial endeavour and the heroics of the battle of Whittlesea; Cathcart Street brought to mind the governor who created Queenstown as part of a settler cordon on the north-eastern frontier; Zeiler, one of the first commissioners, represented the Dutch contingent, while Robinson road forever reminded the inhabitants of the surveyor who subverted symmetry to create a hexagon in the quest for a model defensive town.<sup>22</sup>

Africans who blended into the disorder were concealed in this discourse of the wild landscape. This 'taming of the wild' discourse had implications not only for the progress of this frontier district, but for the safety of its inhabitants. "The land itself is much of it in its original wild condition" a *Free Press* editorial pointed out, "affording numberless opportunities for the concealment of marauders and for the successful practice of habitual robbery."<sup>23</sup> The 'dark recesses' of an uncivilized landscape were wild *and* African. A letter to the *Free Press* from "one of the unfortunate farmers" affected by this 'malady' accused African stock thieves of using the mountainous terrain to hide and look out for pursuers.<sup>24</sup> The landscape as hideout was a particularly terrifying image, the "bush and kloof" preventing the surveillance and control of land "thinly populated by Europeans".<sup>25</sup> The press also claimed that the surrounding hills were used as look-outs by Africans on the run.<sup>26</sup> In the early 1860s

---

<sup>21</sup> The son of an 1820 settler couple, Thomas Holden Bowker commended himself during the eighth frontier war, commanding the burgher force that successfully defended Whittlesea against the Kat River and Shiloh anti-colonial attack in 1851. (Greaves, *Komani*, p. 204)

<sup>22</sup> The Hexagon reproduced the laager formation and was intended to act as a protective look-out in the event of an attack against the town.

<sup>23</sup> QFP, 21 April, 1863

<sup>24</sup> QFP, 15 September, 1862

<sup>25</sup> QFP, 21 April, 1863

<sup>26</sup> QFP, 24 November, 1863

Queenstown was still in a state of transformation, and the wilderness threatened to overcome the process of constructing a British town.

The frontier intelligentsia were, however, very much concerned with creating a specifically African colonial culture, one which “presumed the universality of ‘western’ scientific knowledge and sought to roots its ideas, institutions, and systems in an African context.”<sup>27</sup> As the landscape became less ‘wild’ and more reassuringly familiar, the curiosity of the frontier intelligentsia, and their quest to generate knowledge about the world they inhabited, incited the press to advocate for more societies concerned with the natural environment of Queenstown. George Stow’s archaeological forays into the surrounding mountains was one of the earlier scientific endeavours of the Queenstown community.<sup>28</sup> Increasingly, the press pointed to the taxonomic riches of indigenous fauna, flora and natural minerals surrounding the town waiting to be discovered, analysed, catalogued and categorized.<sup>29</sup> This “intellectual desire to comprehend South Africa, its land and its peoples, helped to generate a sense of collective settler identity and ownership.”<sup>30</sup> In this way, the landscape became “a hybrid element of a hybrid colonial culture”.<sup>31</sup>

As early as 1860 this Queenstown intelligentsia struggled to situate Queenstown within a greater network of national (linked to Cape Town) and intra-national progress and knowledge production. “Could not QT do something towards the general weal?” the *Free Press* asked in reference to the Great Exhibition of 1862. “It would look well for a District, only 10 years previously the abode of savage barbarism,” the editorial continued, “to take its place amongst the civilized countries of the world.”<sup>32</sup> It appears that much had been done to create this Africanised identity by the frontier intelligentsia in 1870s Queenstown, as an 1872 editorial on the differences in Christmas in

---

<sup>27</sup> Dubow, *commonwealth of knowledge*, p. 13

<sup>28</sup> A geologist by profession, Stow was responsible for recording some of the San rockart in the Queenstown area in a series of sketches.

<sup>29</sup> The discovery of coal on a farm in Queenstown in the late 1860s, for example, garnered much attention in the press.

<sup>30</sup> Dubow, *commonwealth of knowledge*, p. 118

<sup>31</sup> C. Gosden, cited in D. Byrne, “Nervous Landscapes: Race and space in Australia”, *Journal of Social Archaeology*, vol. 3(2), p. 173

<sup>32</sup> QFP, 19 September, 1860

Queenstown and England, proclaimed that with the “green mimosas” and “the glorious sun” “merry hearts can send forth their joyous peals, and festive boards be spread and old and young enjoy their Christmas cheer with as much delight as is ever done in old ancestral hall, or cottage home of dear old England.”<sup>33</sup>

Alternatives to this colonially constructed landscape were absent from the pages of the press in the nineteenth century. In 1953 Ms Mina Tembeka Soga wrote an article on the African role in the creation of Queenstown for the *Queenstown Daily Representative*.<sup>34</sup> While Mina Soga imbibed many of the colonial visions of the landscape, and her words are redolent of the paper’s past rhetoric on progress, she did construct a somewhat different history from that in the early editorials of the Queenstown press. Staring out from the pages of the centenary edition in her bowler hat and jacket, and bounded by the caption describing her as a “moderate leader of African thought”, Mina Soga offers a neat corollary to colonial visions within Africa, a sympathetic African reading of the colonial. For example, Mina’s rendition claims that Queen’s Drive was named after Queen Nonesi, queen regent of the abaThembu.<sup>35</sup> It also explained the influx of African people into the town as a consequence of drastic environmental, and social, change following the severe drought of 1862. This drought, according to Mina, resulted from the imprisonment of Tilo, the rainmaker.<sup>36</sup> It is not clear how many others shared her ideas, but what matters is that there were alternative versions of this founding history alive in Queenstown’s African communities. While the colonial order turned African

---

<sup>33</sup> QFP, 24 December, 1872

<sup>34</sup> A mission-educated schoolteacher, Soga was involved in missionary work and social advocacy in the Queenstown African community (G. H Anderson, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York, Macmillan, 1998), p. 630); M. Soga, ‘Role of Africans in Queenstown’s Development’, in *Queenstown Daily Representative Centenary Issue* (22 September, 1953).

<sup>35</sup> Nonesi was the daughter of the amaMpondo chief Faku, and wife of the abaThembu paramount, Ngubencuka.

<sup>36</sup> Tilo the rainman, who was imprisoned during the 1862 drought, was explained as the cause (QFP, 21 October, 1862). When rain did finally arrive the *Free Press* claimed that the abaThembu explained it as an act by Tilo to soften the hard, dry road as his feet were sore (QFP, 20 December, 1862). The colonial legal system explained it as insanity (QFP, 2 December, 1862).

into British, and created a colonial settler heritage proclaimed by street names and buildings, Soga's account points to the possibility of a more multi-layered view of landscape construction.



FIGURE 3: Map of Queenstown, 1879 Source: A980, Cape Archives

### Ordering, beautifying and commodifying landscape: Constructing British Queenstown

The material component to the discursive and linguistic process of colonial translation of the African landscape was manifested in roads, colonial architecture, public spaces and farmed land. The press

celebrated the British character of this increasingly constructed landscape. A mid-1860s editorial vaunted:

“Where, throughout the colony, is the district which can boast the progress made by this district in so short a time? Which district in the colony is populated by men braver, more intelligent, and more enterprising than the Queenstown Grantees? Where, in the colony, is there a district more thoroughly English than this? – and being English, as we are, how can we help being brave, intelligent and enterprising?”<sup>37</sup>

This rising class of Anglophone frontier intellectuals was new, progressive, forward-moving. “The old colonial half barbarous existence” claimed the *Free Press*, in asserting this identity, “can no longer meet the wants of the population”.<sup>38</sup> Through the annals of the local press, this group of Queenstown inhabitants exhibited an enormous sense of duty and pride in creating an ordered town which, through its conscious manipulation of the landscape, became a register of this progressive spirit.

At the epicentre of the town stood the hexagon, around which the physical structure of the community was laid out. Designed as a defensive structure, the hexagon was intended to house a tower and revolving cannon and to constitute a central meeting point for the grantees’ annual muster. The cannon never made it to the site at the centre of the hexagon, and the town pump was placed there instead. Its defensive purpose was translated into a social one: the site was used for musical entertainments and the morning market. Ironically, bereft of its defensive capacity, the hexagon did not so much promote the entrenchment of the colonial order, as it did to aesthetically perpetuate the disordered messiness of a more African landscape. In the view of the press it was an “eccentricity” responsible for “ugly angles” which would forever “mar the beauty of symmetry, so pleasing to the eye of the stranger visiting a town.”<sup>39</sup> The hexagon denied Queenstown the ordered right angles of an English town, and in its disfigurement threatened retrogression, a move back into wilderness. This ever-present fear of disorder and the vulnerability of the young settler society of Queenstown was key in the creation of a quasi-British town identity.

---

<sup>37</sup> QFP, 19 July, 1864

<sup>38</sup> QFP, 28 September, 1859

<sup>39</sup> QFP, 18 March, 1875



While the activity of naming was largely concerned with securing the conceptual co-ordinates of place, architecture reconstituted the African landscape in a more visible way. The settler population sought reassuring signifiers of Britishness to create a sense of belonging in this very alien African landscape. Architecture, as Crais has argued, “excluded and defined as it reshaped the landscape.”<sup>40</sup> The establishment of an English settler town had consciously rearticulated the use of space in its delineation of public and private spheres. By February 1853 the newly-established town comprised thirty houses, all of which were required to be fenced off to demarcate boundaries of property.<sup>41</sup> Thus this spatial division between the public and the private was enforced from very early on, and the ideals of private property etched into the contours of the townscape. Dubow highlights how this process sought to overlay British notions of space onto the less-spatially segregated Dutch layout.<sup>42</sup> A self-aggrandizing article on the architectural make-up of mid-1860s Queenstown detailed how “the mud hovel and hut have given way to the substantial edifice of brick and stone”.<sup>43</sup> In its quest to assert the British character of Queenstown, the press also perceived local Dutch architecture as vulgar, lacking in aesthetic sensibility. The belfry of the Dutch Reformed Church struck “the beholder with its suitability for the tragedy performed by that renowned actor, the hangman” commented the *Free Press*.<sup>44</sup>

By the mid-1860s there was a decided change to the physical space that Queenstown occupied. There was a town hall, five chapels, four hotels and a Mutual Benefit Society Hall.<sup>45</sup> The *Free Press* pontificated a couple of years later -

“Considering the few years our *dorp* has been in existence we cannot but be surprised at the number and elegance of its buildings [...] With the exception of one or two tumble-down tenements, we hold that our main street might challenge competition with any frontier town in the colony.”<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Crais, *White Supremacy*, p. 137

<sup>41</sup> Cathcart, *Correspondence*, p. 206; Greaves, *Komani*, p. 8

<sup>42</sup> Dubow, *Commonwealth of Knowledge*, p. 26

<sup>43</sup> QFP, 22 March, 1864. In the 1870s maps of Queenstown still included “mud hovels” yet “to be destroyed” (see figures 3 and 4).

<sup>44</sup> QFP, 24 June, 1862.

<sup>45</sup> QFP, 25 July, 1865; Rep, 3 March, 1866

<sup>46</sup> QFP, 22 January, 1867

This flurry of exuberant settler activity was put under severe strain over the next decade. Sanitation problems posed the biggest challenge in the town, and by the late 1860s the river at the entrance to the town had become an unofficial dumping site for refuse, several rubbish heaps were growing, with no signs of future removal, and “dung hills” marked its two main entrances.<sup>47</sup> Letters to the press illustrate the annoyance that townspeople experienced with regard to the dead animals, filth and stink that permeated the town, and the dangerous sluits and holes in the roads. Some complained that the river was an “open sewer”, the reservoir a “dirty horsepond” and the town wells “little better than a good drain”, while others pointed out that the streets were blocked by animals, Africans and bales of wool, making it difficult for “respectable females” to move around the town.<sup>48</sup> A *Free Press* editorial in the early 1870s reprimanded the town authorities for allowing the sanitary facilities to become “filthy”, “abominable”, “poisonous and contagious”, a “positive evil” threatening to infect the community.<sup>49</sup> Controlling Africans, as chapter two will highlight, was integral to the solution of this problem in the minds of the frontier intelligentsia. The editorial also located the issue of sanitation within the emergence of a localized town identity and civic pride:

“We pride ourselves upon our town being very pretty, and so it undoubtedly is in many respects, but it can scarcely strike a stranger so, who visits it for the first time and makes his entrance [...] . First impressions are lasting, and however much he may admire our nicely planted streets, town gardens, dwellings and stores, he will not forget in his estimate of us, the foul sight he first saw.”<sup>50</sup>

Although the *Free Press* claimed to promote “the useful before the ornamental” it also became zealously involved in spearheading attempts to ‘beautify’ the town.<sup>51</sup> Two public areas in particular, the burial ground and the site for a botanical garden, formed the foci of this effort. The burial ground, described by a *Free Press* editorial as “a disgrace to the community”, was strewn with “patches of wild cotton plants, and thorny scrub”, and had no pathways. “[O]rder seems quite wanting”, remarked the *Free Press* editor, who reminded the Queenstown public that “[o]f all the

---

<sup>47</sup> QFP, 30 April, 1869; QFP, 27 September, 1870

<sup>48</sup> QFP, 28 October, 1870; QFP, 4 November, 1873; QFP, 13 February, 1872

<sup>49</sup> QFP, 22 August, 1871

<sup>50</sup> QFP, 22 August, 1871

<sup>51</sup> QFP, 22 August, 1871

lovely spots of modern cities these are the choicest and nothing is perhaps a better index of modern refinement than the assiduous care with which these silent homes are tended.”<sup>52</sup>

Order implied taming the wild landscape, transforming the native flora, and creating familiar English gardens. “Nature herself is so wild in this part of the universe that unless art comes to her assistance she soon loses her charm”, the *Free Press* lamented.<sup>53</sup> In 1865 the press envisaged a people’s park, “[e]legant women doing bows and arrows [...] men leisurely smoking and lounging”, the “verdure of the rising grass”, “velvet lawns”.<sup>54</sup> “The public” urged the *Free Press*, “long for some spot rather more romantic and suggestive than our eternal veldt”, and though nature in Queenstown is “possibly beautiful in her ruggedness”, “[t]here still linger in our minds however some faint shews of fondness for fine and delicate touches.”<sup>55</sup> The African wilderness was thus not so terrifying as it had once been, but still required working. The gardens were planned by George Stow and the first trees were planted on 12 August 1868.

Not all the townspeople appreciated this aesthetic utilization of space. In the view of the press, their disrespect hastened its return to a wilderness. In September 1868 an editorial reported that somebody was destroying the young trees in Victoria Gardens at night.<sup>56</sup> The following year several editorials and articles detailed the imminent demise of the garden. Thefts of trees and neglect, resulted in one correspondent claiming that “the garden, that might have been so fair, is, itself, a howling wilderness!”<sup>57</sup> The botanical garden “does not look in quite so flourishing a condition as we should like to see it”, claimed a *Representative* editorial of 1869, while a *Free Press* editorial a month later warned that the garden would soon be nothing more than a bed of weeds if something was not

---

<sup>52</sup> QFP, 27 September, 1870. It appears that, at least in the 1870s, Africans utilized a separate burial ground near the Municipal Location to the south of the town (QFP, 26 November, 1874)

<sup>53</sup> QFP, 19 December, 1865

<sup>54</sup> QFP, 19 December, 1865

<sup>55</sup> QFP, 30 August, 1867

<sup>56</sup> QFP, 1 September, 1868

<sup>57</sup> QFP, 26 October, 1869; Rep, 20 August, 1869

done to prevent “nature encroaching”.<sup>58</sup> Implicit in this discourse was that Africanness consistently threatened to engulf these carefully ordered spaces.

The *Free Press* continued unabated throughout the 1870s, and amidst increasing financial encumbrances, in its call for more proponents of gardening and the planting of trees and flowers. An editorial in 1869 recommended the establishment of a horticultural and floricultural society which would stimulate the growing of flowers in town gardens, while another, a few years later, argued that it was “a matter of great importance that Queenstown should have a Botanic Garden”, not just as an ornament, however, but also as a nursery for trees, linking attempts at beautification to an embryonic conservationist discourse.<sup>59</sup> By 1874 the *Free Press* was actively engaging with plans to increase revenue for improving the town. The fact that Queenstown was located on “a bare flat, with little that is picturesque around it” was even more motivation to take decisive action in transforming it, perhaps by planting trees along a “grand avenue”, providing the townspeople with opportunities for scenic drives or “delightful walk[s]”.<sup>60</sup> The ‘nothingness’ of the African landscape was a well-used rhetorical device in the press’ rallying cry for beautification, but increasingly, the constructed landscape also became tied to a particularly Anglophone diaspora, and an emergent Queenstown identity as enunciated in the press: “Englishmen love trees and treeplanting wherever they go”, wrote the *Free Press* as an encouragement for Queenstownites to do the same.<sup>61</sup>

### **Unifying and educating: Peopling landscape in Queenstown**

The press charged itself with playing a leading role in the transformation of the bodies and minds of Queenstown’s inhabitants by extending the ‘taming the wild’ discourse to discuss issues of the peopled landscape and public spaces of Queenstown. In order to transform the landscape, people,

---

<sup>58</sup> Rep, 24 September, 1869; QFP, 22 October, 1869

<sup>59</sup> QFP, 27 April, 1869; QFP, 12 November, 1872

<sup>60</sup> QFP, 23 June, 1874

<sup>61</sup> QFP, 10 February, 1874

eulogized the press, should be industrious and productive, and yield riches under the constant forward motion of progress and improvement. The *Free Press* in particular cajoled the public into developing a “go-a-head spirit”.<sup>62</sup> “*Forward, we say, forward*” proclaimed an 1859 editorial.<sup>63</sup>

“‘Onward’ being our motto, endeavour, each in our own sphere, to hasten the progress of our own Division of Queenstown, by temperance, industry and prudence” urged the *Free Press* in 1860.<sup>64</sup>

Since the Queenstown European demographic was diverse – “English, Dutch, Scottish, Irish, French Germans, Swiss” - the frontier intellectuals, adopted an inclusive rhetoric that sought to construct a localized settler culture based on shared traditions and mutual aspirations. To this end the press promoted an identity of inclusivity, homogeneity, and the pursuit of knowledge. “*We are ourselves and not others, we go together, we pull together*” [...] we are one people, yet of many fathers.”<sup>65</sup>

This rhetoric sat uneasily with the imposition of a British aesthetic on the landscape of the town, and as Dubow has argued the prevailing assumption was “that English language and culture were in the ascendant and that Dutch was a declining asset in political and public life, whatever its cultural value in the private or social sphere”.<sup>66</sup>

The press increasingly cast the Dutch as redolent of everything that was backward and idle in Queenstown’s settler development. They were admonished for not fostering education, attending public meetings or joining institutions, and for apathy to the spirit of improvement.<sup>67</sup> The stereotype of the indolent Dutch was utilized more often as a rhetorical device to evidence the importance of improvement, than for its veracity. For example, in an editorial on the benefits of pedestrianism and athletic exercise the Dutch farmer’s body became a site for the discourse on progress. He was not “the healthy, robust men that farmers are in England and Scotland”, and his body was “overgrown,

---

<sup>62</sup> QFP, 6 July, 1859

<sup>63</sup> QFP, 19 October, 1859

<sup>64</sup> QFP, 13 March, 1874

<sup>65</sup> QFP, 23 January, 1861. At the same time, stories in the press pointed to a rather more discordant reality. See for example the account of the brutal beating of two German policemen by a group of local Englishmen (QFP, 3 October, 1860)

<sup>66</sup> Dubow, *commonwealth of knowledge*, 117

<sup>67</sup> See, for example, QFP, 7 April, 1863; QFP, 16 April, 1872

with long sharp angular bones, and sadly deficient in muscular development.”<sup>68</sup> The Dutch farmer epitomized everything that was counter-productive in the mind, body and soul of Queenstown; he was the antithesis of order and progress. By the early 1870s this discourse of difference supplanted the earlier allusions to equality. Calls for translation at the divisional council meeting were met with the response that the Dutch “need to know this is an English colony; and that if they are to prosper to the full; and enjoy all its social and political advantages they must become Anglicised as speedily as possible”. The editorial promoted the view that “in process of time the two races [Dutch and English] will blend in one harmonious whole.”<sup>69</sup> Under the auspices of assimilation the press thus constructed a rigid vernacular around inclusion and exclusion.

While cracks began to appear in the press’ development of a unified settler society, from the mid-1860s the call for more formalized and all-inclusive educational facilities in Queenstown were heightened. Queenstown’s first school, Prospect House Academy, was opened in 1858 in Shepstone Street by C.E Ham. In the following few years several small educational establishments were opened in Queenstown, but most suffered from a scarcity of students.<sup>70</sup> The press was not deterred. In 1866 the *Free Press* defined education as the quintessential factor in separating animal from human, savage from civilized. Comparing the education of man to the domestication of buffalo and dogs, this discourse extended the ‘taming the wild’ discourse to encompass white society.<sup>71</sup> Not only did education assist man in avoiding “the gross pleasures of sense”, but it made “man more a man after it than before”. Of course, this view of education was Anglo-Saxon, modernist and masculinist. Thus, “[a]ll the difference between the wise and refined Brahmin, and the debased and enslaved Pariah; all the difference between the best educated Englishman and the natives of New Zealand, ignorant,

---

<sup>68</sup> QFP, 16 June, 1868

<sup>69</sup> QFP, 13 August, 1872

<sup>70</sup> Greaves, ‘Komani’, p. 25

<sup>71</sup> Education was deemed to be of even more importance precisely because of the ‘wildness’ and ‘savagery’ that surrounded the ‘oasis’ of the settler-colonial town (see, for example QFP, 1 February, 1860).

savage, cannibalistic as they are”, preached the *Free Press*, “comes of this circumstance: one has had a better education than the other.”<sup>72</sup>

A letter to the press in 1865 claimed that education was one of the most essential requirements “for the well being of a community”, and chided Queenstown parents for not taking the opportunity to properly educate their children. “[P]arents and guardians, are generally speaking, so mindful and forgetful of the duty they owe to their offspring, that if they send their children to school at all it is very irregular, perhaps only 3 days out of the week, which is both unjust and unfair to teacher and scholar” claimed the writer.<sup>73</sup> An editorial in 1867 aimed to inculcate in parents the necessity for education to start early and continue for several years.<sup>74</sup> “Even here in Queenstown, which prides itself on its intelligence, and which undoubtedly is a place where one could expect to find education duly appreciated, there is sad neglect” stated an 1869 *Free Press* editorial. Within the town itself, the editorial estimated that only one in four school-going age children was receiving any kind of education.<sup>75</sup> “Parents”, the editorial exhorted, “This is the dawning hour to your children, and now is their springtime. If they miss their present opportunity, remember, they will miss it for life.”<sup>76</sup> A few months later, the editor of the *Free Press* declared that education meant “increasing the mental and moral power of the State, adding to our virtue and intelligence, and the more these abound the greater must be our family, social and political welfare.”<sup>77</sup> Education thus envisaged, required time, energy, perseverance and regularity – the cornerstones of the rhetoric of improvement – and promised rich rewards in return.

Moreover, these conversations around access to education had a very tangible spatial aspect. In

1869 an article in the *Free Press* estimated the number of children attending school at no more than

---

<sup>72</sup> QFP, 23 January, 1866

<sup>73</sup> QFP, 24 October, 1865

<sup>74</sup> QFP, 21 June, 1867

<sup>75</sup> QFP, 5 January, 1869

<sup>76</sup> QFP, 5 January, 1869, quoted in the *Free Press* editorial from a speech in Alice.

<sup>77</sup> QFP, 6 April, 1869

62, while the remainder were frequently seen playing in the streets of the town.<sup>78</sup> While the press called for children to be in schools “young scamps” vandalizing public property and creating noisy midnight revelries made the public streets their home.<sup>79</sup> When a “free school” was established in 1870 the *Free Press* pointed out the advantages this would reap for the town itself. It had aided in “enticing the little boys from the streets and alleys of the town”, “tended to stop many petty thefts of fowls, eggs, and fruit” and “raised the morality of these urchins”.<sup>80</sup> The streets were cleared of nuisances, private property was safer and the social condition of the youth was improved – education had a decidedly positive effect on the landscape, both social and physical.

The “larks” continued, however, and breaking windows became a particular favourite of these “mischievous lads”<sup>81</sup>, while all town festivities were accompanied by “fire balls, tar barrels and bon-fires, robbing and plundering all the back yards in Town for anything and everything that will burn.”<sup>82</sup>

By the mid-1870s Queenstown was still filled with “street Arabs or gutter children”, who were “growing up not only in ignorance, but with every chance of becoming idle and dissolute in their habits, and of no much use to themselves or anyone else”.<sup>83</sup> The editorial comment continued to argue for the benefits of education as an intrinsic part of the prosperity of a community, and the cornerstone of progress. A meeting of the Free School resulted in the formation of a female Benevolent Society that would trawl the alleyways of Queenstown, identifying street children and persuading their parents or guardians to let them attend the school. The paper called for donations of clothes from the community in order that these school children be appropriately-clad.<sup>84</sup>

The press advocated for the widespread diffusion of both formal *and* civic education in Queenstown. Advertisements, notices of meetings, minutes of meetings, reports and discussions on anything to

---

<sup>78</sup> QFP, 16 February, 1869

<sup>79</sup> QFP, 2 August, 1870

<sup>80</sup> QFP, 4 November, 1870

<sup>81</sup> QFP, 20 January, 1871. Also see QFP, 29 August, 1860; QFP, 19 February, 1862; 26 Feb, 1862; QFP, 5 August, 1862; QFP, 12 August, 1862

<sup>82</sup> QFP, 4 November, 1873; QFP, 24 February, 1871

<sup>83</sup> QFP, 7 April, 1874

<sup>84</sup> QFP, 7 April, 1874



do with institutes or knowledge-based societies filled the pages of the local papers. The press also actively canvassed the inhabitants of Queenstown to establish new and join existing institutions and societies. In the late 1850s and early 1860s most of Queenstown's civic education centred around periodic debates, lectures and travelling entertainments. "We should like to see more of these intellectual reunions" the *Free Press* stated hopefully. "It would tend to throw us more into each others company, and altogether give a better tone to society in general."<sup>85</sup> Societies were, more often than not, short-lived – the library lectures fizzled out, and when they were conducted were so poorly-attended the press felt obligated to chastise the public for their "great want of courtesy". Nonetheless, the press continued to support initiatives to establish spaces for generating and sharing knowledge. The proposal of a literary institute in 1865 was met with enthusiasm from the *Free Press* – it would, argued the paper, assist in "getting the rough edges of [the townsman's] character taken off by meeting with his fellow men in a friendly way, and by having access to a healthy and improving class of literary productions." The *Free Press* attempted to include farmers who had an hour to "drag out" in town by pointing out the "shelter and amusement" that the rooms of the society would afford them.<sup>86</sup> The proposed project was "no party or clique affair", and coalesced with the frontier intelligentsia's view of education as a means to refine the untidy 'wildernesses' of the mind.<sup>87</sup>

In the 1870s, while still encouraging membership in societies, the press was less confident that anyone would heed the call. While the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society was still around in 1870, the *Free Press* warned that its foundation was "hardly settled enough for us to say that it is out of danger" of meeting the same fate as previous cultural groups.<sup>88</sup> The editorial saw in the future the rise of an educated class of frontiersmen, born in the weekly meetings of these societies, and promoted the quest for knowledge as an avenue for power: "The educated farmer, merchant and

---

<sup>85</sup> QFP, 17 February, 1863

<sup>86</sup> QFP, 17 October, 1865

<sup>87</sup> QFP, 17 October, 1865

<sup>88</sup> QFP, 26 April, 1870

mechanic will find then the value of intellectual superiority, not merely in the pleasures of knowledge, which are great of themselves, but in the secular advantages they give them over their ignorant brethren.”<sup>89</sup> The model of this educated class of men was based on that in Britain, and the press zealously attempted to reproduce it in this north-eastern frontier town in South Africa. The Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Society was still in existence two years later, and a communicated article stressed the importance of hard work in the attempt at progress. “The power of self improvement” claimed the writer, “is one of the richest gifts with which we have been endowed by a munificent Creator”, and proceeded to call the young men of Queenstown to join the society’s winter sessions for some “thoroughly intelligent and brilliant social intercourse, and a “mental gymnasium” for the development of “strength of thought”, the outcome of which would “secure to its possessor a high place in the estimation of the community in which he lives.”<sup>90</sup>

As in Victorian Britain, the library and the museum constituted public spaces advocated as particularly useful repositories of knowledge. The Queenstown Cathcart library, established in 1859 was “one of the most important of [Queenstown’s] public institutions”.<sup>91</sup> “[T]here are few things more intimately connected with the welfare of a community than its Public Library”, proclaimed the *Free Press*, who constantly encouraged a love for reading in the Queenstown public, and increased membership by the literate country inhabitants, through detailed minutes of the annual meetings and inclusion of lists of new acquisitions.<sup>92</sup> “Next to public libraries, perhaps even before them”, argued an editorial in the late 1860s, museums “form the most powerful instrument for imparting instruction.”<sup>93</sup> The press thus decided that Queenstown needed a museum. In an editorial ambitiously entitled “Museum for Queenstown” the *Free Press* envisioned a space where the progress of the town and colonial culture could be documented and displayed. The *Free Press*

---

<sup>89</sup> QFP, 26 April, 1870

<sup>90</sup> QFP, 5 April, 1872

<sup>91</sup> QFP, 3 August, 1869; QFP, 15 January, 1862

<sup>92</sup> QFP, 29 July, 1870

<sup>93</sup> QFP, 1 September, 1868

imagined the space as a showcase of nature and “the trophies of [man’s] conquests over nature, showing what his art and skill have done, as well as his gradual, step by step progress, from a savage state to one of enlightenment”, a place where the crude artifacts of African custom could be preserved for when the African races “have become extinct or civilized”.<sup>94</sup> The editorial even suggested that agricultural exhibits be created to educate the Queenstown farmers.

Queenstown’s defensive position along the north-eastern frontier was also utilized by the press to encourage the formation of societies that would promote the unification of Queenstown’s farming and urban communities, and instill in its members discipline and a progressive spirit. From its establishment in 1859 the *Free Press* began advocating for the creation of a volunteer rifle corps in the town, to be utilized not only for defensive purposes, but also as a vehicle for education and exercise for the youth.<sup>95</sup> Early the following year the rifle corps was established, but by the middle of the decade was no longer active. A letter to the press in 1865 claimed that the voluntary movement needed to be revived as “[i]dleness is the mother of all evil.”<sup>96</sup> In 1866 a rifle association was formed, and the press transferred its hopes of creating a well-armed, skilled protective force to the newly-formed society:

“No one can deny the importance of encouraging an institution like the present. Situated as we are on the extreme border, and within a couple of hour’s ride of a powerful tribe of natives, it is imperative that we should be prepared for any emergency. [...] Rifle Associations conduce more to this end than even the maintenance of an armed and disciplined body of Volunteers”, eulogized a *Free Press* editorial. Maphasa’s son, Gongubele, was in the audience of a rifle association shooting practice in 1867. “Such visits as these, with the information acquired, will do no harm to the young chiefs of Kaffirland”, stated an article in the *Free Press*. “It will shew them how little would

---

<sup>94</sup> QFP, 1 September, 1868. Dubow, in his discussion on ethnographic collections displayed in a similar way in the Natural History Museum in Cape Town, cautions that this should not be read as imbuing “the full freight of scientific racism before the start of the twentieth century” (Dubow, *commonwealth of knowledge*, p. 59)

<sup>95</sup> QFP, 26 October, 1859. See, for example, QFP, 24 October, 1860; QFP, 12 December, 1860

<sup>96</sup> QFP, 25 April, 1865 (original in italics).

be their chance of success in any future contest between the two races.”<sup>97</sup> The Rifle Association came to stand for everything the frontier intelligentsia advocated – “a spirit of perseverance of the old country”, “inaugurating a most beneficial change” “to keep up with the demands of our age”, “one of progress”, by inculcating in the farming community a desire for concerted practice and improvement and creating an armed force in the case of war, without focusing on warfare itself. All that was wanted now, the *Free Press* mused was a Gymnastic Association, to induce exercise of the limbs as well as the eye.<sup>98</sup> The *Representative* too lent their support to the creation of a volunteer corps, although claiming that any fear of war at present was based merely on “stupid rumours”.<sup>99</sup>

In 1870, as the metropole’s resolve to remove troops from the Cape colony was seemingly imminent, the Queenstown volunteer rifle corps was re-established. While defence rested in the Burgher Act of 1855, which compelled all able-bodied men between the ages of twenty and fifty to register themselves and to be ready for service if another frontier war broke out, from 1856 men were allowed to enroll themselves in a voluntary corps instead of the Burgher force. The press vociferously advocated the former: “In the Burgher Act, no provision is made for drill or discipline of any kind”, which the press felt was needed to form an efficient, united and skilled protective force against possible attack in the future.<sup>100</sup> The volunteer corps was re-established in Queenstown shortly after, but by the end of the year the *Free Press* had decided that “volunteering, as carried out in England, is unsuited to our scattered agricultural population”.<sup>101</sup> Problems continued to beset the reformed society – the guns which members had bought from government would only be dispatched to Queenstown on condition that they were stored together in the civil commissioner’s

---

<sup>97</sup> QFP, 22 October, 1867. The show of force afforded by colonial shooting matches and witnessed by chiefs and other Africans was a recurring theme in the late 1860s press. See, for example, QFP, 24 January, 1868; QFP, 20 March, 1868; Rep, 23 March, 1868

<sup>98</sup> QFP, 5 November, 1867

<sup>99</sup> Rep, 12 November, 1869. The press felt themselves responsible for offering inhabitants credible news, rather than rumours that might incite unnecessary panic.

<sup>100</sup> QFP, 24 May, 1870

<sup>101</sup> QFP, 16 December, 1870

office and the volunteer corps was not supported by a very large contingent of police officers (Queenstown was allocated only eight privates and one corporal).<sup>102</sup>

In 1874 when rumours of Sarhili, the powerful amaGcaleka chief, inciting hostilities in the Transkei reached town, the volunteer corps again received attention from the press. "A strong demonstration in the Volunteer line" the *Free Press* asserted, "will do much just now to curb those natives who are for ever indulging in warlike intentions", and the article carried an advertisement about a volunteer corps meeting taking place in the town hall the following evening.<sup>103</sup> The press adopted its familiar pedagogical stance, urging parents to "encourage their boys to join the corps – just for the healthy exercise it will afford."<sup>104</sup> A letter to the press later that year claimed that as the shooting matches in the town were of such a dismal nature "it is seriously to be hoped that the *Volunteer* practice will be of a different order", and an article later that month reported that the bi-monthly drill had been very poorly-attended the day before.<sup>105</sup> By the end of the year the corps had still not received their guns, and an article in the *Free Press* stated that with the lack of firearms, the drills had started "to give the appearance of a stale joke to what commenced in animated earnest."<sup>106</sup> During the 1870s the volunteer corps suffered the same fate as many of Queenstown's fledgling societies.

By 1876 the value of property in the Queenstown district was more than £485 644.<sup>107</sup> By the late 1870s Queenstown had a hospital, a refuse collection system, a telegraph line and was well on its way to a railroad, which eventually came in 1880. During an 1875 missionary tour of the Queenstown district the view from the Katberg was described thus: "Nothing is wanted but a Thames to make the landscape complete".<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> QFP, 7 February, 1871

<sup>103</sup> QFP, 12 June, 1874

<sup>104</sup> QFP, 11 August, 1874

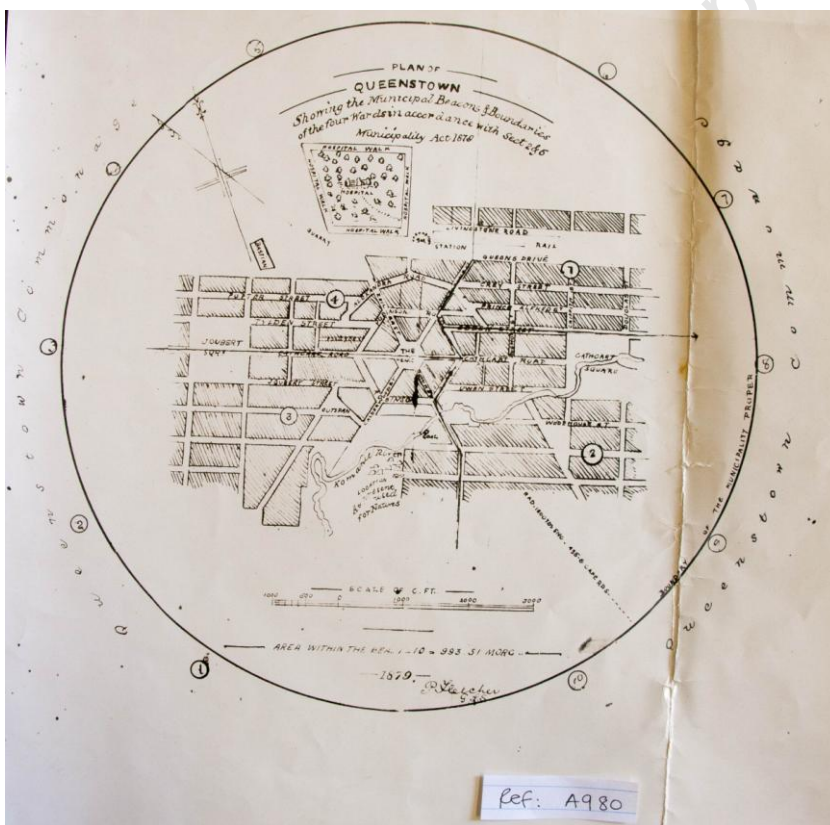
<sup>105</sup> QFP, 12 October, 1874; QFP, 29 October, 1874

<sup>106</sup> QFP, 2 November, 1874

<sup>107</sup> Greaves, 'Komani', p. 64

<sup>108</sup> *Wesleyan missionary notices*, 1876

For the frontier intelligentsia education and knowledge-production clearly constituted significant places of socializing, sharing and disseminating that served as visible registers of progress. Townspace was constructed utilising a British “cartographic language”, which aimed to convert African land into a tamed landscape, complete with British aesthetics, notions of private property and the progressive spirit of an educated, united populace.<sup>109</sup> This process naturalized the settler-colonial town, and, as Dubow asserts, “the language of improvement and civilization served to legitimate the colonial enterprise in the eyes of the colonists themselves”.<sup>110</sup> The vulnerability of this nascent settler town was thus concealed within a socio-spatial construct that spoke of progress, taming, transformation and civilization. With its masculinist rhetoric the press invoked the embodiment of the imperialist endeavour, *Civis Britannicus*, who carried with him “the seeds of these institutions [which he] scattered abroad wherever [he] may locate.”<sup>111</sup>



**FIGURE 4: Queenstown in 1879. Source: A980, Cape Archives**

<sup>109</sup> Byrne, 'Nervous Landscapes', p. 172

<sup>110</sup> Dubow, *commonwealth of knowledge*, p. 24

<sup>111</sup> QFP, 10 April, 1861

## CHAPTER TWO:

### White Places, Black Spaces: the origins of segregation in colonial Queenstown

As Penelope Edmonds has argued, “towns and city spaces” were “vital contact zones” between European settlers and indigenous communities.<sup>1</sup> While the frontier intelligentsia naturalized the process of converting indigenous land into a settler-colonial town through an intricate development of English socio-spatial constructs and signifiers, it relegated Africans to ‘spaces’ that through their disorder, wildness and impermeability had yet to become fully-fledged places. The group of amaMfengu grantees who had been living in the town during the 1850s was removed to a separate area south of the Komani River, the Municipal Location, in the early 1860s.<sup>2</sup> While Africans and Europeans ostensibly occupied separate spaces the socio-spatial line between them was constantly transgressed, and Queenstown was never as ‘white’ as the press often portrayed it to be. Africans were not prevented from entering the town, with or without clothes, congregating at the Hexagon or imbibing at the local canteen. The frontier intelligentsia did not endorse formal segregation, but rather employed a ‘language of difference’ to assimilate Africans into, and segregate them within, the Queenstown townscape.<sup>3</sup> It was not so much that Africans should not be in the town, the press discourse claimed, but that they should be doing *other things* and acting in *different ways* while there. This rhetoric preached assimilation based on a system of ‘rights as responsibility’ that was tantamount to inequality, and usually exceedingly pejorative. The discomfiting contradiction at the heart of the frontier intelligentsia ethos was that Africans were included at the same time as they were excluded.

---

<sup>1</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> Rivers were often used as convenient boundary lines between indigenous and European communities. Edmonds discusses how they became “transitional” zones, and the land which bordered them “nervous spaces that were not yet property” (Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 133). The Komani River was used for bathing by Africans in the Municipal Location, but as the river came very close to the town on the eastern side of Owen Street the municipality began fining those who swam above the drift (see figure 3).

<sup>3</sup> As Byrne has pointed out, real segregation could not be properly enacted on the landscape until it had been situated within the cadastral system (Byrne, ‘Nervous Landscapes’, p. 170)

This chapter examines the increasingly segregated streetscape of urbanizing Queenstown, as well as the creation and control of the Municipal Location on the town's outskirts, in the context of the frontier intelligentsia's rhetoric of improvement. Regulations controlling how people lived in the Municipal Location were framed and sporadically enforced from the mid-1860s. Accusations of slum conditions in the Location by the press justified the frontier intelligentsia's call for increased legislation and control over the Location and Africans in the town. In this discourse idle bodies (ie. those who refused to labour for whites in the town) became synonymous with pestilence and disease. Africans in Queenstown, however, frequently resisted the role the settler-colonial town accorded them. Instead, they continued to utilize space, resources and 'their bodies' in familiar ways. The frontier intelligentsia also resisted more extreme frontier views, and while the press spearheaded attempts to coerce the residents of the Municipal Location into labour contracts and to stabilize boundaries separating them from the town, even in the 1870s they supported those involved in independent agricultural activities, and advocated for the granting of more land to Location residents for grazing.

### **Urbanizing Africans on Queenstown's peripheries: the Municipal Location**

It is not entirely clear how the Municipal Location was established, but it was probably first inhabited by the amaMfengu community who were originally granted land in the kloof in the northern section of the town, for their loyal efforts on the side of the colonial forces in the eighth frontier war.<sup>4</sup> The municipal records are vague and incomplete. The only information about the origins of the Municipal Location in these records is that after being moved in 1859 the amaMfengu community who had already cultivated the ground could continue to use it for a nominal rental, but for six months only, and Jack, who had acted as an informal superintendent of the community, was officially hired as such in 1859.<sup>5</sup> In late 1859 a *Free Press* editorial reported that there had been two

---

<sup>4</sup> Rep, 9 June, 1866

<sup>5</sup> Files of the Resident Magistrate of Queenstown, 3/QTN, vol. 1/1/1/1, 17 October, 1859; Files of the Resident Magistrate of Queenstown, 3/QTN, vol. 1/1/1/1, 7 November, 1859



or three small clusters of Africans living on the town commonage for quite some time, who had been utilizing part of the land to grow crops. The difficulty, in the view of one writer, was that these Africans showed no subordination to white attempts to impose order: they “acknowledge no regulations but their own, and no particular authority except their head man, who, we believe, considers himself occupying the office of chief constable here in the town.”<sup>6</sup> The amaMfengu were allocated erfes in Ebden Street in exchange for the land they had vacated to the north of the town, and were given the choice to settle there or in a private location. For some unknown reason the amaMfengu grantees did not settle in Ebden Street, but instead moved across the river and formed the nucleus of what was to become the Queenstown Municipal Location.<sup>7</sup>

By the mid-1860s there was a thriving community on the banks of the Komani, and soon an amalgam of amaMfengu, abaThembu, Basotho and amaGcaleka came to live there. There is evidence that the population was mutable in the 1860s, and that it was fairly easy for newcomers to settle there from other parts of the district or colony. A petition signed by inhabitants in the Location in 1867 makes mention of the fact that the Location included a transient population of people who “almost comes here (sic) every day from the outside places”.<sup>8</sup> This variegated demographic led to conflict. On Christmas Day, 1865, the *Representative* reported on a “shindy” between visiting amaXhosa from rural areas and the location inhabitants.<sup>9</sup> In 1865 a case heard in the Queenstown Magistrate Court involved the assault of Jafta, a Basotho man, by Piet and Klaas. After Jafta was beaten and stabbed several times by his assailants, “Maquella”, one of the Location’s first residents, drove the attackers off. At least three times in 1865 the Basotho and abaThembu inhabitants reportedly came to blows. The press claimed that the increased competition for jobs occasioned by the influx of landless and

---

<sup>6</sup> QFP, 14 September, 1859. Africans in positions of power in the town were constantly castigated for being arrogant. Many European inhabitants, including the Queenstown intellectuals, felt particularly uneasy when confronted by Africans who wielded colonially-endorsed power.

<sup>7</sup> QFP, 19 October, 1859; QFP, 26 October, 1859. The vacated lots in Ebden Street were finally sold at the beginning of 1862, and the money realized given to the amaMfengu grantees. Amongst the buyers were the Trustees of the Independent Church and the Masonic Brethren (QFP, 22 January, 1862).

<sup>8</sup> QFP, 2 July, 1867

<sup>9</sup> Rep, 30 December, 1865

impoverished Basotho was the cause, while the municipality put it down to the fact that the canteens adjoining the Location were permitted to trade late into the night.<sup>10</sup> These interpretations only hinted at the underlying problem – the Municipal Location housed a disparate group of people attempting to forge a community and adjust to a very new, quasi-urban lifestyle. The Africans who settled here to make new lives and exploit opportunities that proximity to the settler-colonial town provided brought with them a range of varied cultural traditions, allegiances and memories. Some of the earliest inhabitants would have lived through the horrors of the eighth frontier war, while others would have arrived shortly after the cattle-killing episode, from the fractured, impoverished Xhosa-speaking communities north of the town. Many of these Africans who forged new lives on the tumultuous periphery of Queenstown set down permanent roots. Mina Soga points out that descendants of many of the original inhabitants – the Mapete’s, the Dosi’s, the Soqelo’s and the Tilo’s - still lived in the Location in the 1950s.<sup>11</sup>

Based on occasional reports in the press and the threadbare municipal records, we can compile only a very rough outline of life in the Municipal Location in early Queenstown. Houses were constructed in a traditional manner from the thorn bushes in the area, and Africans utilized the local timber resources, despite attempts to prevent them from doing so.<sup>12</sup> Location residents pursued a range of agricultural and economic activities. The press highlights how Africans harvested the local wood reserves, which they then sold as firewood on the Queenstown morning market. Many residents owned stock, while others continued subsistence farming. In 1863, for example, a group of Location inhabitants requested permission from the Municipality to cultivate a section of land adjoining the Location.<sup>13</sup> The Location also provided opportunities for entrepreneurs. Mina Soga claims that

---

<sup>10</sup> QFP, 14 November, 1865. The offenders were sentenced to two years hard labour and 25 lashes. The municipal reports clearly contained a little ‘fudging’, as it was claimed that in one of these fights a municipal commissioner was able to single-handedly relinquish all fifty combatants of their knobkerries.

<sup>11</sup> Soga, ‘Role of Africans’

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, QFP, 4 April, 1865; Rep, 25 September, 1866; Rep, 13 October, 1866; Rep, 11 March, 1867; Rep, 14 October, 1867

<sup>13</sup> The matter was never broached again in a municipal meeting, which reflects both the ineffectual workings of the municipality in the 1860s, as well as the limits of the Queenstown municipal archive

traditional beer was brewed from the location's inception, and the press refers to at least one woman who was involved in the making and selling of beer.<sup>14</sup>

Frequent complaints in the press, although expressed in hyperbole, regarding the "noise of heathen dances", "[p]ractices the most revelling [...] said to be carried on night after night", suggest that many Africans in the Location continued to engage in traditional activities, including dancing and traditional healing.<sup>15</sup> Christian worship occurred alongside beer-brewing, African dancing and the activities of traditional healers. From the early 1860s day schools were established for children in the Location by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and Reverend Waters started Sunday services for the adult inhabitants.<sup>16</sup> The Wesleyan Church established a chapel for Africans in the town, which was moved to the Location in 1873. Segregation did not render the Municipal Location on the edge of Queenstown a purely indigenous space; rather it developed as a hybridized Afri-colonial space, an increasingly urbanized place that was, as Edmonds puts it, "produced by colonization".<sup>17</sup>

For the first few years of its existence the inhabitants of the Location were left very much to their own devices. One of the clearest indications of this is how the Location was mapped. Up until the 1880s the location featured on town maps as a squashed drawing of five or so huts, or an empty space with a hurried scrawl reading 'Native Location huts' (see figures 3 and 4). This was clearly not an accurate representation of a population reaching far into the hundreds.<sup>18</sup> Another indication is the fact that boundaries and protocols around the utilization of town space continued to stymie officials in the town during the 1860s. The commonage was situated around the outskirts of the town, and the southern section was easily accessible from the Municipal Location. Press coverage

---

<sup>14</sup> A resident of the Municipal Location, Sarah, was found guilty of selling traditional beer without a licence in 1871. It is unlikely that any Africans would have been awarded licences to sell alcohol in the first place, and the increased prosecution of those who were doing so, would have hampered production (Rep, 1 September, 1871) See, also, QFP, 23 September, 1873

<sup>15</sup> QFP, 2 July, 1867. The press often spoke of traditional African practices in terms of a moral contagion that threatened to seep across the river and into the town.

<sup>16</sup> QFP, 22 July, 1862. Reverend Waters established the St. Mark's Mission Station in the Transkei.

<sup>17</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, pp. 196-97

<sup>18</sup> See census figure discussion in QFP, 28 March, 1873

paints a picture of relatively unhindered access to grazing land by African stock-owners. When a dispute arose between some amaMfengu and one Trollip (who was the proprietor of the woolwash establishment) for impounding stock grazing on the commonage, the municipality was not entirely sure how to proceed. They reimbursed the money Trollip had extorted from the amaMfengu to have their cattle released, but they couldn't be sure that the residents were "allowed to graze so many [goats] on the commonage" in the first place.<sup>19</sup> The following year a correspondent to the press claimed that there were some three hundred "bucks" (most probably goats), fifteen horses, and several oxen belonging to the Location inhabitants currently pastured on what was essentially municipal land. The correspondent wanted to know whether Africans from the Location had "a right to keep stock on the commonage, and, if so, in what numbers".<sup>20</sup> A letter to the *Free Press* by 'Ratepayer' in 1868 stated that Africans themselves were also continually crossing the river and living outside the boundaries of the Location.<sup>21</sup>

This relative independence frustrated the frontier intelligentsia, who saw it as a hindrance to the ordered, progressive Anglophone town identity it was ambitiously formulating for Queenstown. The Queenstown intellectuals, through the press, proscribed vastly different living arrangements for the Africans in the Municipal Location. When the location was first established the *Free Press* advocated, for the sake of progress and civilization, that square houses, rather than rondawels, be built.<sup>22</sup> By reconfiguring the circular patterns of African settlement within the regular angles of the cadastral grid, the frontier intelligentsia sought to superimpose European principles of private property and the separation of public and private realms onto African space. In 1862 the *Free Press* reported that:

"We notice with pleasure that the Municipal Commissioners have lately effected great improvements at this location, by causing the natives to build their houses in straight lines, and keeping the same further apart than before."<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Rep, 21 July, 1866

<sup>20</sup> Rep, 11 March, 1867

<sup>21</sup> QFP, 24 November, 1868

<sup>22</sup> QFP, 26 October, 1859

<sup>23</sup> QFP, 22 July, 1862

It was another six years, however, until the physical transformation of the Location received much attention in the press or in municipal meetings. An 1868 article in the *Free Press* on “Our Native Location” marked a turning point in the frontier intelligentsia’s articulation of African places. The article described the Municipal Location and African spatial constructions as a collection of huts “jumbled together with scarcely any regard to order or regularity”, this ‘lack’ leading to a “disorderly mass”.<sup>24</sup> This was partly an aesthetic issue, and partly one to do with control. Crais details how bureaucrats attempted to draw Africans “‘out of the bush’ and into ‘the pale of society, and consequently within the possibility of improvement’” by encouraging them to build in neat, easily-navigable straight lines, rather than in the obfuscating circular patterns of the African homestead.<sup>25</sup> The ‘grid’ brought “regularity to perceived chaos” and marked, according to Edmonds “the transformation of Indigenous land into European property”.<sup>26</sup>

The press also brought issues beyond the re-ordering of African landscapes into the wider domain of public discourse. Of key concern to the intellectuals involved in defining the socio-spatial boundaries “which shall make our Native Location a respectable location” were protocols around disease, sexual promiscuity, and labour.<sup>27</sup> In debates around these issues, which were to become increasingly conflated, the space of the Municipal Location became “a heterotopia to ideas about ordered urban space.”<sup>28</sup> To this end discussions on the Location aimed as much to create order in the Queenstown settler landscape as it did to assign meaning to the African ‘spaces’ that it incorporated. The 1868 article marked its discursive entry into the Location with a description of the “heaps of dirt and filth

---

<sup>24</sup> QFP, 6 October, 1868

<sup>25</sup> Crais, *White Supremacy*, p. 151. Arguments that attempt to constitute the Queenstown Municipal Location as *African-ordered* space in opposition to colonial evocations of space in the town fail to encompass the hybrid nature of the urbanizing African populace in this newly-established colonial-settler town and risk perpetuating the dichotomies imbibed by the colonial press, between savagery and civilization, order and disorder. Edmonds argues that these locations should instead be seen as countersites (Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 142-43)

<sup>26</sup> Byrne, ‘Nervous Landscapes’, p. 172; Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 84

<sup>27</sup> QFP, 6 October, 1868

<sup>28</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 192

[...] scattered up and down". "Dirt", as Mary Douglas has argued, "offends against order".<sup>29</sup> It also served to obscure the existence of anything else *but* this inherent disorder. "The appearance presented by the whole is disgusting, and eyes and nose are alike intimidated from venturing far".<sup>30</sup> Like the African landscape from which it was hewn, the Location existed within the colonial-settler imagination precisely because of what it lacked. The Municipal Location thus presented the frontier intelligentsia with the same problem the African wilderness had – no familiar structures with which to linguistically access the landscape. This in turn had implications for the application of improvement, order and control in the Location.

A key concern to the frontier intelligentsia and to the town commissioners was the sanitizing of this dirty, disorderly African space, as well as the Africans who inhabited it. The town's Africans and issues around sanitation were initially synonymous, and "native" and sanitary affairs were coalesced into one municipal body – clearly control of Africans was deemed to be part of the overall management of stray pigs, refuse and dirt. In the late 1860s the highly-charged terms 'disease', 'contamination' and 'containment' were added to the lexicography drawn upon to discuss Africanness in Queenstown. This was part of a very real process that sought to investigate sanitation conditions in the Location and prevent the spread of disease into the 'European' part of the town. This sometimes resulted in forced removals or destruction of houses. The municipal "native committee" reported in 1867, after one of the first Location inspections, for example, that "some huts which were in a filthy condition had been pulled down". During the inspection, orders had also been given that "not more than one family should occupy any one hut."<sup>31</sup> According to Crais the "undifferentiated space" of African communities made actual control of Africans difficult for colonial powers, and allowed for "the perpetuation of 'illegal customs'", such as cohabitation between

---

<sup>29</sup> M. Douglas, *Purity and danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo* (London/New York, Routledge, 1966), p. 2

<sup>30</sup> QFP, 6 October, 1868

<sup>31</sup> Rep, 14 Oct, 1867

unmarried men and women, and polygamous relationships.<sup>32</sup> Under the auspices of improving slum conditions municipal authorities were thus justified in entering the Location, and forcibly enacting changes on the physical and socio-cultural landscape. This “increased surveillance and medicalization of colonized peoples increasingly came to be enmeshed in ideas about racial hygiene and embourgeoisement”, and the African body was cast as the villain in the performance of progress and improvement.<sup>33</sup> Rumours of disease brewing in the Location frequently spread through town, the municipal commissioners contributing to the public panic by devoting large chunks of meeting time mulling over “the filthy habits of the natives”.<sup>34</sup> These sanitation drives, which were gaining popularity across the British Empire, were essentially exercises in the exertion of control over urbanizing African bodies and spaces in the colonial town, and thus implicated in increasing racial segregation. The process of sanitizing the African location on the edge of the town followed a similar trajectory to the ‘taming the wild’ process, and thus tied in neatly with the frontier intelligentsia’s evocation of the rhetoric of improvement.

Of perhaps even more concern to the frontier intelligentsia’s construction of a model African society based on the ethos of progress and improvement was the productivity of the inhabitants of the Location. The Municipal Location was initially intended as a convenient labour source for the town. The original African inhabitants had been granted the land on condition that they acquired employment in the town. “Magallah”, for example, was employed by the market master and town clerk from 1858 until at least the middle of the 1860s. The site of the Location proved to be somewhat inconvenient for town employers, as the river was frequently too full for their African servants to cross. It seems, however, that the Location residents were not to be coerced into seeking permanent employment in the town anyway. Based on the constant complaints by the press regarding the dearth of workers, and the numbers of stock utilising the commonage for grazing, it is

---

<sup>32</sup> Crais, *White Supremacy*, p. 138

<sup>33</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 243

<sup>34</sup> Rep, 18 September, 1874.

safe to assume that many continued with subsistence agriculture, hiring themselves out when necessary. In 1866, for example, scarcity of food in the Municipal Location “due to partiality of the rain” forced many of the inhabitants to contract themselves.<sup>35</sup> This rush to contract did not last, and by 1868 complaints of the shortage of labour were again *en vogue*. One farmer, according to a press report, travelled from one end of the location to the other and couldn’t find one person willing to work for him.<sup>36</sup> The same month the press complained about the independent Location Africans:

“We see the natives in our streets sitting or lolling about, idling their time and yet they will not work. A visit to their own locations will show them sitting in dozens around their huts, drinking beer and talking of the good-bad times in prospect, and yet they will not work.”<sup>37</sup>

This labour shortage and moans about labour in the press suggest that Africans also had some control over working conditions, which came into conflict with colonial notions on working hours, contracts and pay. For example, the *Free Press* complained in 1865 that an African “being requested to drive a cow from here to the Umvani, a distance of 12 miles only, [...] demanded the *very small sum* of six shillings sterling for the job, impertinently exclaiming, that he had food enough and to spare and did not quite see the use of working for the ‘baas’.”<sup>38</sup> Africans in the town were frequently accused of banding together to blacklist unpopular employers and advising newcomers not to work for more than a certain amount.<sup>39</sup> An 1872 editorial asserted that African workers made their own decisions as to “the time they will serve; and the amount of wages they want”.<sup>40</sup> The *Representative* continued the litany, accusing female servants of refusing to work past two in the afternoon, and urged the municipality to put into place a referral system whereby domestic workers would have to present a certificate of good conduct in order to obtain work at usual wages.<sup>41</sup> While allowing for the

---

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, QFP, 13 January, 1866; QFP, 15 May, 1866

<sup>36</sup> QFP, 3 November, 1868

<sup>37</sup> QFP, 17 November, 1868

<sup>38</sup> QFP, 9 January, 1865

<sup>39</sup> QFP, 12 July, 1870

<sup>40</sup> QFP, 19 November, 1872

<sup>41</sup> Rep, 17 January, 1873. Females from the Location were most probably required at home to tend to the gardens and the children. When many men left the Location in the diamond rush of the 1870s their responsibilities would have become more cumbersome, and would have included the herding and care of stock too.



requisite exaggeration inherent in these descriptions, these editorials suggest that 'work' was a term both masters and servants in Queenstown were attempting to control and define, and that Africans resisted the role that the press had assigned them through the creation of informal labour unions and desertion.

From the early 1860s the municipality organized periodic pass raids into the location in retaliation. Those classified as "native foreigners", ie. Africans from outside of the colony, were required to be in possession of a pass when moving into or within the colony, which would stipulate where they were going to, and how much stock was legally entitled to accompany them.<sup>42</sup> Those contravening these pass laws were liable for a jail sentence of around one month.<sup>43</sup> Peires highlights that until the 1848 amaXhosa were given passes in order to look for work, which gave them a fair amount of freedom as to where they would work and for how long. Ordinance 3 of 1848 repealed several clauses in the legislation, and the amaXhosa "were firmly indentured to particular employers before they even entered the Colony, without necessarily specifying the wages they would be paid."<sup>44</sup> The case in Queenstown suggests that several Africans entered the colony without passes in the 1860s. A farmer's letter in 1862 suggests that passes were not destroyed by town employers after they had been utilized, thus allowing the document to be lent out to others.<sup>45</sup> While this may have been an exaggeration, pass-less amaXhosa could, to a degree, evade censure from authorities in the 1860s. Most Location raids resulted in the arrest of any Africans found without a pass, who were subsequently released if they agreed to be contracted. One of the first raids by the Mounted Police was met with "boisterous demonstrations" by the residents, who were clearly not happy about this intrusion.<sup>46</sup> The pass laws were one of the few tools at the disposal of officials and police to exert pressure on Africans who refused to support the emerging capitalist economy through wage labour.

---

<sup>42</sup> Residents of the Tambookie Location were also required to be in possession of a pass when leaving the confines of the Location if they didn't have a certificate of citizenship.

<sup>43</sup> "Myagana", for example, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment for contravening the pass laws in October 1859 (QFP, 2 November, 1859)

<sup>44</sup> Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 168

<sup>45</sup> QFP, 17 June, 1862

<sup>46</sup> QFP, 29 November, 1864

Application of the pass laws increasingly justified arrests, confiscation of stock and their removal from the environs of the town.

### **Coercion and control in the Municipal Location, 1868 - 1877**

From the late 1860s the local press was at the forefront of attempts to coerce Africans into restrictive labour contracts and more 'appropriate' (read *unAfrican*) living arrangements. The Queenstown press advocated a twofold approach, combining legislative measures and forcible means to enact this change on the "filthy", "lazy" African inhabitant.<sup>47</sup> Their suggestions frequently cajoled the municipality into action, which is not surprising given that the editor of the *Free Press* was on the municipal board. In 1868 the *Free Press* recommended a registration system for African labourers. The system would fix the hourly and yearly rate of pay for African workers on a scale in accordance with experience, and all Africans wishing to work would only be able to receive employment after registering.<sup>48</sup> Later that year the *Representative* outlined a similar system whereby all registered Africans would wear a label identifying them as such, and that any inhabitants found refusing to work would be removed from the town.<sup>49</sup>

By the early-1870s there was a definite interplay between ideas presented in the press and the increased resolve on the part of the municipality to check the town's African community. In 1872 new municipal regulations for the town Location were drafted.<sup>50</sup> Amongst the numerous clauses, the regulations stipulated that all houses were to be built in straight lines with at least twenty yard gaps between each structure, and that a tin ticket detailing the number and row of the hut was to be clearly displayed. The owner or occupier of each hut would be required to pay a monthly hut tax of one shilling and sixpence at the town hall between twelve and three in the afternoon, failing which, a further sixpence would be added to the tax due. All rubbish was to be deposited in a central

---

<sup>47</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 209

<sup>48</sup> QFP, 3 March, 1868

<sup>49</sup> Rep, 14 December, 1868

<sup>50</sup> QFP, 21 February, 1873

location and only people with written permission from the board were permitted to graze any stock on the commonage.<sup>51</sup> The regulations simultaneously sought to combat sanitation problems, inculcate an appreciation for private ownership in the inhabitants and refashion the landscape orthogonally. Added to these byelaws was the stipulation that anybody infringing any of the regulations would be removed from the location and their hut destroyed.<sup>52</sup> The municipal commissioners effectively endowed themselves with the power to legally enter 'private' African spaces. In discussing these regulations, the *Free Press* envisaged the African inhabitant as a wayward child, and argued that strict rules were necessary in order to control Africans, so long as they were "fair". The editorial castigated the municipality for the "lax regulations" which had previously allowed the Location to "become a resort for lazy, drunken, thievish rascals" and supported the byelaws which would eradicate "accumulations of filth" and "heathenish rites" and transform the space onto a "regular", "clean" community of "respectable natives" "working in the town". "The new rules proposed, if passed and strictly enforced", stated the editorial, "will fully carry out our idea of what a native location ought to be." The *Free Press* pointed to the role it had played in bringing about these changes through discussion in previous editorials.<sup>53</sup> The new regulations were finally passed in February 1873 with few alterations.<sup>54</sup>

These ambitious attempts clearly met with resistance. In 1874 A vitriolic *Free Press* editorial advocated stricter regulations for the "lazy, filthy wretches" who were "allowed" to congregate in the Municipal Location while the townspeople suffered from a scarcity of domestic labour.<sup>55</sup> The municipality heeded the call and resolved to procure labour from the municipal location at an October 1874 municipal meeting.<sup>56</sup> By 1875 the municipality had formulated another set of labour regulations which would severely hinder African's choices around working conditions. The

---

<sup>51</sup> QFP, 6 December, 1872; Rep, 6 December, 1872

<sup>52</sup> Rep, 21 February, 1873

<sup>53</sup> QFP, 10 December, 1872

<sup>54</sup> QFP, 21 February, 1873

<sup>55</sup> QFP, 2 June, 1874

<sup>56</sup> QFP, 29 October, 1874

regulations stipulated that every African entering the town be registered and be required to pay a registration fee and wear a tin ticket with his or her number on it. Wage rates were fixed, and any African refusing to work for these sums would be forcibly removed from the town.<sup>57</sup> Pass-less Africans also found themselves progressively more hemmed in and accountable to the colony's strict pass laws. In the 1870s almost every sitting of the district court included cases of pass law infringements, and the inhabitants of the Municipal Location continued to suffer from periodic police raids.<sup>58</sup> In 1870 a large police force surrounded the Municipal Location, fired their guns to bring "the inmates from their huts" and arrested all those without a pass, forty to fifty inhabitants, while eighty-three Africans were arrested for being without passes during a raid in May 1873.<sup>59</sup> These raids are a clear indication of the link between the enforcement of pass laws in the 1860s and 1870s and the procurement of labour from Africans living in the Municipal Location. In 1875 when a raid of the location resulted in the arrest of twelve abaThembu, six amaMfengu, two amaNgqika, one umGcalekca and one umZulu who were not in possession of a pass, those who were found to have employment were merely fined, while those not were sentenced to two weeks imprisonment with hard labour.<sup>60</sup>

While Location raids continued, and increased regulations sought to pressure Africans into more 'acceptable' behaviour, Location residents grazed their stock on the commonage, practiced traditional customs, and continued to frustrate European town employers.<sup>61</sup> The ability of the municipal board to control the Africans living in the Location in terms of the way in which they used the land, and to enact the new regulations, was indeed of limited success. The first problem the press identified had to do with conducting a census of the population of the Location. 153 huts and

---

<sup>57</sup> QFP, 8 July, 1875. The new regulations were criticized for not taking into account the difference between "native foreigners" and "native citizens". The issue around "native citizens" is discussed in chapter three.

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, Rep, 9 June, 1871; Rep, 5 June, 1874; In 1875 in particular, the courts were filled with Africans brought up on charges of being without passes – see, for example, QFP, 4 March, 1875; QFP, 11 March, 1875; QFP, 12 April, 1875; QFP, 15 April, 1875; QFP, 29 April, 1875; QFP, 6 May, 1875.

<sup>59</sup> QFP, 1 April, 1870; Rep, 16 May, 1873

<sup>60</sup> QFP, 13 March, 1875. The colonial term "Gaikas" referred to amaNgquika.

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, Rep, 28 April, 1871; QFP, 12 November, 1872; QFP, 25 February, 1875; QFP, 20 December, 1875

125 people were counted in the Location in 1873, but the *Free Press* claimed that around 500 Africans were employed by the townspeople, and that, even compensating for those who lived on their employer's property, the number of inhabitants counted must have fallen far short of the actual number who resided there.<sup>62</sup> The press was exceedingly preoccupied with numbers of Africans and the threat that unregistered, uncategorised individuals posed. The issue, too, was that the municipal regulations would fail to encompass over half the population of the Location. In 1877 new regulations were again in the process of being drawn up, and the *Representative* claimed, in an exaggerated and unpleasant tone, that the Location residents continued to evade the authority of the Queenstown municipality:

"Nobody knew when they came, or when they went, or what was the number of them; where they built their huts, or how they dressed. The unpainted beauty of heathendom had full scope for displaying its particular attractions, and the hand of the law only descended when some savage split a brother savage's head with a Kerrie."<sup>63</sup>

#### **Africans in the town: segregation on the Queenstown streetscape<sup>64</sup>:**

Africans featured prominently in Queenstown's streetscape during the 1860s and 1870s, and they did so in a manner that subverted the colonial construct of bodies in space. Two African men smoked pipes on a town wall, refusing to work, while others threw multi-racial parties in abandoned warehouses, and another wandered the town without pants. Africans chose, to a large degree, what to wear, where to go and what to do in this new settler-colonial town. For many colonial commentators, including the frontier intelligentsia, Africans were synonymous with the wild landscape they had encountered when they arrived. They were disordered, idle and "in their natural state", and thus seen to be unconscious actors in the drama of colonization. Africans existed inside landscape, while the colonist directed from without. Artist George Dashwood painted two streetscapes of Queenstown in the mid-1870s, both of which included African labourers in the

---

<sup>62</sup> QFP, 28 March, 1873

<sup>63</sup> Rep, 5 June, 1877

<sup>64</sup> This term is borrowed from Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*.

scene, thus setting up a difference between those viewing (and organizing) landscape and those who were interiorized, African, a part of that landscape.<sup>65</sup> The Queenstown press situated itself in a very similar position, attempting to not only move Africans within the colonial townscape, but to codify them in similar ways to the African landscape they were ostensibly a part of. Africans constantly represented disruption, and threatened the order of the settler town. While assimilationist, the Queenstown press thus struggled with the problematic anomaly of the African presence in the white settler-colonial town.

There was also a fairly sizeable population of people of mixed race or Khoi-descent in Queenstown in the 1860s.<sup>66</sup> At least one brothel, “kept by a colored woman” operated from the area near the river, and the *Free Press* reported that “a vagabond set of Hottentot men and women” would often take over empty houses in the vicinity of Stubbs Hotel, which were then utilized as the headquarters for a crime ring or the location for debaucherous gatherings.<sup>67</sup> Why should the Africans be made to “go over the river’ [while] these people be allowed to roam at pleasure in the town” asked the *Free Press*.<sup>68</sup> The complaints were thus not essentially about separating, but rather assimilating or eradicating difference.

Throughout the 1860s it seemed to be rather commonplace for this multi-racial demographic to gather socially. When a group of amaMfengu, abaThembu and Khoisan inhabitants appropriated Bouwers’ store, which had been standing unoccupied for some time, for an evening of dancing to the accordion, the *Free Press* claimed that as it was a most civilized affair, “so long as the place is not

---

<sup>65</sup> Reproductions of these paintings can be found in a 1950s tourism brochure, No author, ‘Queenstown’ (Cape Town, Cape Times Ltd., 1953)

<sup>66</sup> In 1865 the census recorded 342 Africans, 130 “coloureds” and 753 whites as resident in the town (Greaves, ‘Komani’, p. 8). The classification of this varied demographic frequently posed problems for authorities. Hubert Wood, an African American man from Philadelphia, for example, lived with his children in Queenstown, and sent them to the English Sunday school in the town. After coming back from a stint at the diamond mines in 1874 he was furious to be told that his children would have to start attending the Sunday school for Africans in the Location (Rep, 25 August, 1874)

<sup>67</sup> QFP, 3 October, 1860

<sup>68</sup> QFP, 9 December, 1862

damaged, and the peace is not disturbed, they should not be interfered with.”<sup>69</sup> When black spaces in white places mimicked whiteness, then, they ceased to be abhorrent. A follow-up letter regarding the event, from “A private observer” claimed that to his shock many of the town’s “most influential men” had been in attendance.<sup>70</sup>

The picture that emerges of early 1860s Queenstown is one of racial othering, if not formal segregation. For example, the Prince of Wales’ marriage in 1863 gave rise to a day of festivities in the town, including running races, sack races, bobbing for treacle buns and ‘the greasy pole’. Although the African and European races were conducted separately, and the Africans attempting the greasy pole were described in the *Free Press*’ report as inciting intense amusement in the European audience, no-one questioned their right to be part of this community celebration. Some “mischievous blacks” were blamed for the premature lighting of the bonfire, however, and by the end of the editorial the rhetoric equating Africanness with disorder prevailed.<sup>71</sup>

Even in the 1870s, when a more openly hostile reaction to Africans in the town permeated reports in the papers, limited and controlled interracial socialising was encouraged by the frontier intelligentsia. The church and the sports field were deemed appropriate spaces for this controlled interaction. According to “Temple Nourse”, an occasional contributor to the *Free Press*, there was an element of hypocrisy in the stance of “a few who will work cheek by jowl with a darkie to find a diamond who would shrink from him in a place of worship” and congratulated those Queenstownites who had cast off “the fetters of prejudice” to participate in a cricket match with an African team from St Mark’s Mission Station”.<sup>72</sup> The *Free Press* gave an account of the match the following week. “One of the most pleasing features of the game to our minds”, claimed the report, “was the nice spirit in which it was carried on by both sides [...] everyone behaved as a gentleman.”

---

<sup>69</sup> QFP, 12 July, 1864

<sup>70</sup> QFP, 16 August, 1864

<sup>71</sup> QFP, 5 May, 1863

<sup>72</sup> QFP, 1 November, 1870

The paper was disappointed that some 'so-called' intelligent men in the audience thought that the European side was "bemeaning" themselves by playing against Africans. The paper felt that these matches tended to "promote kindly feelings between [Africans] and English" and "must attribute such feelings to that abominable prejudice which would raise impassable barriers between one race and another." The article also pointed out that many of the men in the St Mark's team were highly educated, well-travelled men who could put some of the district's European inhabitants to shame.<sup>73</sup>

The *Free Press* was clearly separating itself from those who saw essentialist differences between white and black, and were prepared to admit *certain* Africans into its exclusive community. The moral code that the Queenstown frontier press was constructing, then, was also decidedly different to that coming from certain sectors of the community. A letter from a Dutch farmer, Coetzee, for example, saw the creation of an "iron mountain" to separate the Africans from the Europeans as the only way to order inter-racial relations along the north-eastern frontier.<sup>74</sup>

Although the St. Mark's cricketers conducted themselves appropriately in the public sphere of the sports field, Africans continually transgressed propriety in other public spaces. The most 'natural' physical manifestation of 'wilderness' was the unclothed body, and the sight of naked African bodies became an increasingly contentious issue, particularly after municipal byelaws had designated nakedness illegal in 1862.<sup>75</sup> The red-clay covered, beaded men who "troop into town, view our noble relics and stately buildings, lounge about our highways, perform their particularly graceful dances in our bye-ways" usually did so with no clothes on, commented an 1867 *Free Press* editorial.<sup>76</sup>

Africanness juxtaposed with the colonial landscape clearly jarred with the *Free Press'* evocation of space, and came to signify disorder and aberrance. In the press the town was pictured as an oasis of civilization, and while Africans could dress as they pleased outside, the press felt that "they ought to

---

<sup>73</sup> QFP, 4 November, 1870

<sup>74</sup> QFP, 28 April, 1863

<sup>75</sup> Municipal commissioners and town police seem to have battled to enforce this regulation throughout the 1860s.

<sup>76</sup> QFP, 26 February, 1867



be made to conform to the regulations when within it.”<sup>77</sup> The *Free Press* did indeed call for more rigid enforcement of the municipal legislation - “If one or two examples are made of sheep skin covered [Africans] before our Magistrate and the servants and members of the Board keep their eyes wide open to see what is to be seen on the Cathcart Road”, the editorial suggested, “we shall soon be freed from the hateful nuisance.”<sup>78</sup> White, English inhabitants were not spared the wrath of the *Free Press*’ litany either, and were lambasted for their own debased antics “in *puris naturalibus* on the municipal banks of the Komani!”<sup>79</sup>

African bodies were not only associated with aesthetic disorder, but also with social degradation: “On many of our farms where native servants live and are either clothed or naked in the same way as in their own country, the degrading influence they are exerting over white children is very marked.”<sup>80</sup> “Our children”, the paper continued, “can get no good from seeing such spectacles.”<sup>81</sup> The wilderness threatened, in this way, to engulf the refinement of the mind, and to stultify any progress education had previously enacted. “[O]ther causes” the editorial continued, “have no doubt tended to this lamentable result, [...] but intercourse with savages, if only by the ears and eyes has perhaps been the chief agent.”<sup>82</sup> The press even blamed what they deemed the ‘degeneracy’ of the Dutch settlers on this moral contagion caused by naked African bodies.<sup>83</sup>

Canteens were also uneasy spaces in the minds of Queenstown’s settlers. Queenstown had several canteens, including one facing the Municipal Location. Liquor licences were generally awarded to canteen and hotel-owners on condition that alcohol wouldn’t be sold to Africans.<sup>84</sup> Most ignored this proclamation and inhabitants tended to protect the interests of canteen owners and hotel-keepers

---

<sup>77</sup> QFP, 26 February, 1867

<sup>78</sup> QFP, 2 June, 1868

<sup>79</sup> QFP, 30 January, 1866

<sup>80</sup> QFP, 2 June, 1868

<sup>81</sup> QFP, 2 June, 1868

<sup>82</sup> QFP, 2 June, 1868

<sup>83</sup> QFP, 2 June, 1868

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, QFP, 16 December, 1867; QFP, 24 March, 1868

by downplaying criticisms and suggesting ways to control, rather than inhibit, African consumption of alcohol.<sup>85</sup> In 1872 a petition signed by sixty-seven inhabitants of Queenstown was sent to the civil commissioner. The petition claimed that the “drunken and half-naked natives idling about the canteens” were conducive of a detrimental effect on both the European children, and those other children, the “better disposed natives”. The petition requested that canteens be forced to open onto private yards rather than public spaces, and that these “disgraceful sights” thus be “hidden”.<sup>86</sup> The sight of vice was often deemed to be worse than the actual vice itself. This rhetoric, although abhorrent to the modern-day reader, was about eradicating *Africanness* rather than Africans. The naked body, like the wild landscape, needed to be adorned with symbols of civilized culture, and in this way its transformation could be enacted into a productive and useful entity. An 1875 editorial, for example, stated that it was through the ocular organs that Africans themselves would progress, as “the decency and deportment of appearances are incentives to correct living and well doing”.<sup>87</sup>

In this discourse Africans also constituted a threat to the ordered division between the public and the private. Crais has detailed how English farmers built their houses on top of hills, not only to designate dominance, but to create a divide between the European farmhouse and the African labourers. While English farm names also served to create a boundary, albeit conceptual, between the farmer’s property and the African land outside, many farms remained unfenced in Queenstown during this period, and the visible boundary lines, except for a few land beacons, were essentially obscured. Africans continually transgressed these boundaries, through the colonially designated crime of trespass. Byrne and Edmonds both argue that indigenous people came into white spaces to resist colonial demarcations of space. Whether they did so consciously or not, trespassing was of

---

<sup>85</sup> Commentators and the press subsequently quashed complaints about the canteen facing the municipal location (QFP, 6 June, 1865)

<sup>86</sup> QFP, 30 July, 1872. A similar objection was raised by Loxton, whose house in the village of Whittlesea in the Queenstown District faced Langfield’s Hotel, and “the feelings of the females of his family were often outraged at what they could not sometimes avoid witnessing”, sights which included “scenes of drunkenness, violence and indecency” by the African patrons (QFP, 18 March, 1875)

<sup>87</sup> QFP, 18 March, 1875

particular concern to Queenstown's settler community, both on farms and in the town. Byrne sees the act of entering European homesteads "as a systematic refusal of the boundaries of the cadastral system, a refusal to acknowledge its legitimacy, a constant prodding and testing of its resolve."<sup>88</sup> Edmonds reads trespassing as a sign that indigenous inhabitants "were not passive historical subjects" who "negotiated increased incursions onto their lands by sometimes sharing these spaces and, at other times, by subverting them."<sup>89</sup> In 1875, for example, an umThembu labourer came into his employer's kitchen to demand his unpaid wages, and instead found himself tied to a chair, rough-housed and then taken to the Queenstown resident magistrate. His employer claimed that the man had bitten his thumb (after being tied up) and that his wife had sustained a scratch to her face.<sup>90</sup>

Edmonds argues that the constant disruptions through crime in the colonial town by the colonized served to destabilise "the boundaries of public order and emerging white space" in a similar way.<sup>91</sup> Reports of petty crime and theft in Queenstown litter the press of the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>92</sup> Although usually without requisite evidence, these crimes were often blamed on Africans. However, accusations against inappropriate behaviour in the town were also directed at homeless, drunk, thieving or 'loafing' whites - mainly Germans or Dutch - too, and it would be erroneous to endow this discourse with an exclusively racial aspect.<sup>93</sup>

Africans also transgressed boundaries in terms of increased familiarity with European inhabitants. "We are fully convinced that native insolence in this part of the world knows no bound" stated a *Free Press* article of 1867. A European man and his wife were walking to the Wesleyan Chapel along

---

<sup>88</sup> Byrne, 'Nervous Landscapes', p. 181

<sup>89</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 150

<sup>90</sup> QFP, 25 January, 1875

<sup>91</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 150

<sup>92</sup> See, for example, QFP, 1 July, 1862; QFP, 3 February, 1863; QFP, 28 April, 1863; QFP, 30 June, 1863; QFP, 1 September, 1863; QFP, 2 February, 1864; Rep, 28 April, 1866; QFP, 15 May, 1866; QFP, 22 June, 1866; Rep, 18 August, 1866; Rep, 29 December, 1866; QFP, 15 January, 1867; QFP, 14 May, 1867, blue; QFP, 21 January, 1868; Rep, 24 September, 1869; QFP, 17 May, 1870; QFP, 15 July, 1870; QFP, 10 January, 1871; QFP, 9 May, 1873; QFP, 26 June, 1874; QFP, 14 January, 1875; QFP, 21 July, 1875

<sup>93</sup> See, for example, Rep, 1 April, 1867; Rep, 5 October, 1868; Rep, 26 May, 1871

Robinson road when they came across two Africans. “These sauntered easily up to the approaching party”, explained the article, “and when close at hand one of them, with a look of irrepressible admiration chucked the lady under the chin!”<sup>94</sup> In the 1870s reports of “native insolence” in the press increased enormously. The *Representative* proposed that the band concerts be moved to the public garden, and that steps be taken to “prevent the noisy rabble of blacks and dirty boys who are at present of so much annoyance during the band playing, entering the garden.”<sup>95</sup> In 1873 the *Free Press* claimed that they had received constant complaints about Africans (and others) speeding through town, and endangering the lives of children.<sup>96</sup> The same year the *Representative* claimed that “[a]ssaults by natives [had] become of late rather too frequent to be pleasant”, citing one instance in which a Mr Hay, who was sitting in front of the Masonic Hotel, was threatened by a man with a knobkerrie when he refused to supply him with alcohol. Hay beat the aggressor with a sjambok and then took him to the police station.<sup>97</sup> The *Free Press* reported similar stories, claiming that women were becoming an especial target of “native impudence”, in one case an African spitting in the face of a farmer’s wife.<sup>98</sup> Accounts of “cheeky” Africans verbally abusing former employers and other Europeans in the town also increased.<sup>99</sup>

Insane Africans, drunk Africans, angry Africans. These characters all start peopling the columns of the 1870s Queenstown press, as well as Queenstown’s streetscape. One of the latter paraded Ebdon Street in the early hours of the morning “shouting death and murder to all Englishmen and institutions.”<sup>100</sup> Along with petty thieving and trespassing a common concern for the frontier intelligentsia, and many of the town’s white residents, were Africans with no obvious business to perform in the town. Prowling, loitering and loafing became collocations to be utilized with the term

---

<sup>94</sup> QFP, 5 March, 1867

<sup>95</sup> Rep, 24 September, 1869

<sup>96</sup> QFP, 2 May, 1873

<sup>97</sup> Rep, 23 December, 1873

<sup>98</sup> QFP, 23 November, 1873

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, QFP, 23 September, 1873; QFP, 10 February, 1874; 25 February, 1875

<sup>100</sup> QFP, 28 November, 1873

African.<sup>101</sup> In short, Africans became a nuisance. Their excrement bothered the residents of Owen Street, their “nightly revelries” disturbed the sleep of those in the southern section of the town, their smell offended European litigants in the courthouse.<sup>102</sup> Like the Aboriginal in Edmonds’ study, the African was, essentially, characterized as misplaced when discovered on the Queenstown street.<sup>103</sup> By figuring the African body as a newcomer or an intruder in this urban landscape the fact that he/she had been dispossessed by the town itself was evaded. The press championed a system which would further dislocate the African presence in Queenstown: a system of labelling unemployed Africans with registration tickets worn around the neck. The wearer would be forced to comply with any request for labour or face expulsion from the town. According to a municipal commissioner the plan would compel “the worthless rascals who now loiter and lounge about the corners of our streets to work for their bread and meat; instead of filching their food from the different kitchens in town”.<sup>104</sup>

Attitudes towards Africans in 1870s Queenstown were hardening. The nervous anxiety at the heart of the colonial endeavour was exacerbated by the fear of a burgeoning urban African population. According to the 1875 census almost 1 000 Africans were living in the town.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, although the discussions were ostensibly about *African* space the frontier intelligentsia, through press commentary and pedagogical moralizing, was also very much concerned with formulating and advancing a particular settler socio-spatial identity. Nowhere is this clearer than in discussions around the ‘intimate frontier’ or Byrne’s “landscape of the night”, places where people could engage in inter-racial sex. In a rare article, “No accounting for taste”, the *Representative* made its stance on the issue clear. The article revealed that a white woman had been living with an African man and

---

<sup>101</sup> QFP, 7 January, 1868

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, QFP, 25 March, 1875; QFP, 30 August, 1870

<sup>103</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 122

<sup>104</sup> Rep, 14 December, 1868

<sup>105</sup> QFP, 25 March, 1875

their child in the Municipal Location.<sup>106</sup> In framing the white woman's actions as lacking in refinement the frontier intelligentsia distanced themselves from the 'immorality' of the act. Less than a year later the press was advocating for a night police to "inspect the location at night", to prevent "nightly revels" and the activities of "idle vagabonds".<sup>107</sup> As Edmonds has argued, while the "spatial contours of whiteness are shaped by property and the law [...] whiteness is also about sex, bodies, and preserving ideas about fictive racial purity that never existed."<sup>108</sup> The carefully whittled contours of whiteness were exceedingly fragile in settler communities, and the anxiety around the permeability of racial and class boundaries, and 'dilution' of this 'purity' were inextricably bound up in discussions on miscegenation, and thus generally avoided by the frontier intelligentsia.

While in the 1860s a tone of patronizing affection for Queenstown's African community could be discerned in the press, the 1870s reports were imbued with greater approbation, accompanied by increased regulations of, and resistance by, the residents of the Municipal Location and Africans occupying Queenstown's streetscape. The frontier intelligentsia remained assimilationist in this period, and attempts to de-Africanise the landscape without excluding Africans themselves became embroiled in heightened use of physical force, such as Location raids, pass arrests and forced removals. From the 1870s there was indeed a more concerted effort to induce Africans to perform according to an increasingly scripted urban landscape. The way in which Africans transgressed spatial boundaries and codes of decorum was of great concern to the frontier intelligentsia as it threatened to destabilize the entire foundation upon which the settler town had been constructed. The unregulated, disorderly, idle African in his 'natural state' was the antithesis to progress and 'go-aheadism' and thus signified the fragility of the fledgling colonial order in Queenstown. Africans (or Africanness) did not just disappear however much 'white'-washed images willed them to. While

---

<sup>106</sup> Rep, 5 April, 1872. According to the article she had also "brought a charge of rape, or attempted rape, against a native two or three circuits back, and got him sentenced to two years' hard labour." The wording of the sentence makes it clear that her rapist and the man she lived with were not the same person.

<sup>107</sup> QFP, 28 March, 1873

<sup>108</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 166

colonial artist Dashwood thus optimistically clothed his African subjects and placed them beneath heavy yokes bearing pails of water, the reality, clearly, was very different.

This chapter has attempted to utilize the press to recreate interactions between Africans and Europeans within the urbanizing centre of the north-eastern frontier. It has shown that early colonial Queenstown was not a formally segregated town, and that Africans had relative freedom to engage in traditional activities and to live fairly independent lives. It has also suggested, however, that a very specific urban identity was evolving in the Municipal Location that brought together a disparate group of people who forged bonds, and animosities, over their shared struggle in negotiating an increasingly repressive British townscape. It has also aimed to highlight the role of the frontier intelligentsia in formulating guidelines for inter-racial integration and segregation in Queenstown. The ideas presented in the public forum of the press went beyond the realm of the discursive and informed the nature of future interactions between Africans and Europeans in Queenstown. The frontier intellectuals were thus key in the creation of the segregated urbanizing frontier and the tone of race relations in colonial Queenstown.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### Mission land and farms: agriculturalists, tenants and 'citizens' in

#### Queenstown

This chapter is situated in Queenstown's farmlands. It tracks the development of African agriculture in the district in the context of the amaMfengu Locations of Kamastone and Ox Kraal and the resultant jealousy emanating from the surrounding white farmers. A discussion on the relationship between farmers and Africans in Queenstown would be incomplete without an accompanying examination of the tenant communities who lived on white farms in the area. African citizenship is also integral to this discussion - it was initially the amaMfengu in the district, considered to be colonial allies, who had been granted land in the colony and accorded the status of citizens in 1857, and it was in debates around African rights that the white farming community became the most vituperative toward their amaMfengu neighbours. While the frontier intelligentsia's perspectives on African agriculture and land use differed markedly from the farmers in the district, it will be shown that they too contributed to the eventual decline in African farmers' productivity and access to citizenship rights by perpetuating specific tropes and fallacies. For the frontier intelligentsia Africans 'deserving' of citizenship were those with "an interest in the soil". By the end of the century, however, neither citizenship nor "the soil" would be within easy reach for Queenstown's African inhabitants.

"The town" a *Free Press* editorial proclaimed, "could not live without the district, and the district", the paper continued, "would soon slip into a semi-barbarous state were there no centre like the town."<sup>1</sup> Much of the frontier land "in listless lumpiness, is waiting for the plough; the vast grass lands every spring invite flocks and herds to crop the superabundant herbage" an 1860 editorial claimed temptingly, invoking

---

<sup>1</sup> QFP, 9 September, 1873



Crais' sensual (feminine) African landscape, available and inviting male entry.<sup>2</sup>

"[N]ow we must become *growers, propagators, fathers* of herds", another editorial urged a little more forcibly, but again endowing progress with a masculine quality.<sup>3</sup>

The press, applying its rhetoric of improvement to the agricultural landscape of Queenstown dedicated large swathes of space in its broadsheets to the issue of agricultural advancement. A *Representative* editorial celebrated colonial improvement of the district:

"Only twelve or thirteen years ago, the [Africans], 'clad o'er with' – barbarism, roamed at their own free will from the Katberg to the Kei, and Kafir corn and mealies were the only crops that the district produced. Now [...] In all directions we see fine farms, considerable flocks, large tracts of cultivated land, and many other signs of progress, which is as real and unmistakeable as it has been rapid."<sup>4</sup>

The press took it upon itself to educate the farming community through articles on scientific approaches to farming and the use of agricultural technology.

While the press indulged in fantasies of agricultural prowess, Queenstown farmers floundered. They struggled to gain legal title to their land, they lacked the resources to mechanize their farms or procure African labour, and they were beset with drought, frosts, floods and locusts, which carried off much of their unsheltered stock and young crops. Many would become prosperous in the 1890s, but during the 1860s and 1870s even better-off farmers resorted to sharecropping and tenancy relationships with Africans to secure a steady supply of labour.<sup>5</sup> These struggles informed their interactions with African landowners, tenants and mission station residents. Many farmers, fearful of African competition, were vocal in their call to restrict African access to land, agricultural development and citizenship rights.

George Weakley, a local farmer who took a leading role in attempting to create stricter legislation around cattle thefts felt that "giving natives small plots of land will

---

<sup>2</sup> QFP, 31 October, 1860; Crais, *White Supremacy*, p. 133

<sup>3</sup> QFP, 19 October, 1859

<sup>4</sup> Rep, 3 March, 1866

<sup>5</sup> R. Bouch, "Farming, capitalization and labour in a newly colonized area: Queenstown, 1852 - 1886" (Cape Slavery and After Conference, University of Cape Town, 1989), p. 11

[not] cause them to view the interests of Europeans as their own.”<sup>6</sup> The intellectuals in Queenstown saw in limited African agricultural progress the basis of a peaceful frontier and ultimate assimilation of Africans into ‘civilized’ society.<sup>7</sup> Many townspeople agreed. A letter from “Progress” advised the European community of Queenstown to “draw [Africans] closer [...] so that their interests and prosperity may be identified with ours; then many of the imaginary difficulties will vanish, and all communities may yet be united under one great and strong government, as part of the British Empire.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Black land, white jealousy: Agriculture and land tenure in the Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations**

The settlement of amaMfengu in the area that became the Kamastone and Ox Kraal locations of Queenstown began roughly a decade before the establishment of the town. In December 1847, after the War of the Axe, the area was annexed to the Cape Colony, and the mainly amaHlubi and amaMfengu group, under chiefs Zimema and Sobekwa, were incorporated into the colony.<sup>9</sup> Chief Kama of the amaGqunukwebe and his followers were allowed to settle on the land as a reward for their loyalty to the colonial forces. In the early 1850s Reverend William Shepstone of the Wesleyan Church formed a mission station in the area named ‘Kamastone’, a

---

<sup>6</sup> QFP, 2 August, 1864

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, QFP, 3 October, 1871

<sup>8</sup> QFP, 7 November, 1871

<sup>9</sup> Zimema was instrumental in defending Whittlesea from attack during the eighth frontier war, but was killed shortly after when trying to retrieve some cattle which had been taken in the attempted siege (J. Ayliff and J. Whiteside, *History of the Abambo generally known as Fingos* (Butterworth, 1912), p. 50; R. Bouch, ‘The Oxkraal and Kamastone Mfengu Locations near Queenstown, 1853-1888: An outline of their internal economy and their people’s response to colonially-directed changes in land tenure’ (ISER seminar, Rhodes University, 1987), p. 1. Bouch states that the nucleus of the amaMfengu community in the area that was to become Kamastone and Oxkraal was a disparate grouping including people who came from as far away as the Tzitzikamma (‘The Mfengu Revisited: the 19<sup>th</sup> century experience of one Mfengu community through the eyes of historians and contemporaries’, in *The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries* (Vol. 17, No. 42), p. 83).

portmanteau combining the names of the missionary and the chief.<sup>10</sup> During the eighth frontier war the attack on Whittlesea threatened the Kamastone settlement, but colonial resistance prevented any incursion into the mission station or the surrounding area. Ox Kraal, named after the Ox Kraal River, was located around the Hackney Mission Station, and established by the London Missionary Society prior to the creation of the division of Queenstown.<sup>11</sup>

In 1853 the British moved Kama into the colony, onto land that had recently been usurped from the amaNgqika, in order that the English farmers in the area would have 'friendlier' Africans for neighbours.<sup>12</sup> Kama left with his followers, but around 3 000 amaMfengu remained in Kamastone, preferring, according to mission records, to stay at the site of the mission rather than follow Kama and live under the rule of a chief.<sup>13</sup> Many of these amaMfengu were British allies located there after the war of 1853. Shepstone also remained at the mission station where he divided the land into arable plots for the 306 families living in the Ox Kraal Location and 366 families in Kamastone. In 1855 missionary records estimated that the mission station, the surrounding location, and the four out-stations comprised between 4 000 to 5 000 people.<sup>14</sup>

The validity of the category 'Mfengu' has been an on-going debate in South African historiography for the past twenty years. Some have argued that the term is merely a colonially-constructed category, and refers, not to a distinct Xhosa-speaking lineage, or to a landless group of amaXhosa, but to a mutable grouping of people who sought

---

<sup>10</sup> QFP, 13 June, 1873

<sup>11</sup> QFP, 8 January, 1867. From the mid-1870s the term Hackney starts being used interchangeably with Ox Kraal. See, for example, Rep, 27 February, 1874

<sup>12</sup> Kama and his followers were relocated to a piece of land along the Keiskamma River, about 12 miles east of Alice, and very close to the newly-established town of Middeldrift. *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1854, pp. 40-41

<sup>13</sup> *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1854, p. 41

<sup>14</sup> *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, January, 1855

refuge from the Mfecane in the Natal region. Timothy Stapleton refers to 'Mfengu' as a pseudo-ethnicity, and points to the colonial influence in the construction of this identity, while recent research by Poppy Fry postulates that "fingo-ness", as she refers to it, "developed out of a lifestyle and worldview that emphasized agriculture and trade, and rejected established systems of Xhosa authority".<sup>15</sup> Fry's argument is very much concerned with endowing the amaMfengu themselves with the construction of identity, which Stapleton does not, and therefore presents a rather more compelling argument. This study suggests that regardless of whether the term 'Fingo' was invented by colonial officials or not, in their shared experience of colonialism the amaMfengu of the eastern Cape created their own specific and distinct identity.

The existence of a much more variegated demographic in the amaMfengu Locations of Queenstown, however, adds a problematic dimension to the study of "fingo-ness". Research points to the existence of numbers of emancipated slaves, Khoisan, abaThembu, Basotho and amaNgqika inhabitants in the Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations from the early 1850s.<sup>16</sup> Stapleton argues that newcomers into amaMfengu settlements in the 1850s and 1860s would have been easily amalgamated and "relabelled" as amaMfengu by colonial officials. This hypothesis does not readily fit the case of mid-nineteenth century Queenstown. For one, there existed a large amount of antagonism between different ethnic groups in the locations. Moreover, the source material for Queenstown very explicitly distinguished between the amaMfengu residents and other ethnicities living there.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> T. Stapleton, 'The Expansion of a Pseudo-ethnicity in the eastern Cape: reconsidering the Fingo "exodus" of 1865', in *International Journal of African Historical Studies* (Vol. 29, No. 2, 1996); P. Fry, 'Siyamfenguza: the creation of Fingoness in South Africa's Eastern Cape, 1800-1835', in *Journal of African Studies* (36:1, 2010), p. 1

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1854; *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1862; *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1863; QFP, 13 November, 1861; QFP, 6 September, 1864; QFP, 15 November, 1864; QFP, 4 February, 1873; QFP, 22, April, 1875.

<sup>17</sup> For details see references in footnote above.

Up until the mid-1870s the number of inhabitants connected to the Wesleyan missionary station of Kamastone did not exceed 400. Within the mission-educated, Christianized community of Kamastone and Ox Kraal of the 1860s and 1870s the Pamla family emerged as particularly successful intermediaries.<sup>18</sup> The frontier intelligentsia retained a pro-missionary and pro-African education outlook throughout the period under study. The missionary narrative, however, excludes many of the locations' residents, who were more likely to be found tending stock or ploughing/hoeing their land than attending Church or the various dayschools connected to the Wesleyan mission. Frequent letters and editorials in the press about beer-drinking, nakedness and "heathen activities" in the Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations confirm that the missionary influence in the 1860s was limited.<sup>19</sup>

The 1850s and 1860s Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations were characterized by a system of 'clanship' which, according to Bouch, was not necessarily based on ancestry alone, but rather on the leader's ability to control and distribute resources.<sup>20</sup> In the 1860s the amaMfengu superintendent identified six chiefs – Sobekwa, Umhlondhleni, Zulu, Mayekiso, Tsume and Dondo, and four headmen – Umrubato, Vumazonke, Matshoba and Sishuba.<sup>21</sup> Land tenure in the Kamastone and Ox Kraal locations remained communal throughout the 1860s and most of the 1870s, until the

---

<sup>18</sup> Charles Pamla, Kamastone's African minister during the 1860s and 1870s, accompanied Reverend Taylor's mission and helped to translate abstract Christian religious imagery into isiXhosa idiom (QFP, 29 March, 1875; W. Taylor, *Christian Adventures in South Africa* (London, Jackson, Walford and Hodder, 1867), pp. 233-34). Of course, these mediators did not only provide literal translations, but helped Africans and Europeans to access one another's cultures, albeit motivated by religious conversion. These intermediaries were sanctioned by the colonial press, as the people who would drive their communities towards civilization. In many ways they were caught within a proscribed colonial identity, but were also situated in a powerful position in terms of accessing colonial rights and influencing the course of Christianity in the eastern Cape. In the 1870s Charles Pamla's son, educated at the Heald Town Institute, was the teacher at the "Kamastone School". The *Free Press* described him as "perfectly polite to all, he keeps his place, which alas! Few of the educated or semi-educated natives know how to do" (QFP, 24 February, 1874)

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, QFP, 2 March, 1859; QFP, 16 February, 1864; QFP, 3 September, 1867; QFP, 1 October, 1867; QFP, 22 October, 1867

<sup>20</sup> Bouch, 'Oxkraal and Mfengu Locations', p. 5

<sup>21</sup> CO 3062, Cited in Bouch, 'Oxkraal and Mfengu Locations', p. 4

survey of 1877, although colonial interference around land use, settlement and resource allocation before then would have caused some socio-economic disruptions.<sup>22</sup> The initial survey conducted in 1848, before large-scale white settlement started in the area, had demarcated very general boundaries for the locations which were never recorded.<sup>23</sup> The establishment of Queenstown in 1853 upset the use of land in the two locations, and created the start of a 'colonial problem' for the African inhabitants. Prior to white settlement the locations had flexible boundaries, but as white farmers encroached, so the inhabitants of Kamastone and Ox Kraal began to experience difficulty in utilizing the land in the way in which they were accustomed to. In particular cattle were constantly wandering on to surrounding farms and impounded. The Rugtes Vlaktes on the western flank of the Ox Kraal Location was a particularly disputed area, and throughout the 1860s it was a source of antagonism between European and amaMfengu farmers, who utilized it as grazing ground.<sup>24</sup>

When Governor Wodehouse visited the two locations as part of a tour of the Queenstown district in 1864 he received deputations from the inhabitants. The chief grievance was shortage of land. The amaMfengu wanted to be moved – they were

---

<sup>22</sup> Braun, 'The Cadastre and the Colony'; p. 138; Bouch, 'Ox Kraal and Kamastone Mfengu Locations', p. 5. Both Braun and Bouch examine the survey in detail. The Kamastone settlement, in the early 1860s contained "huts or kraals in every direction", a traveller to the area in 1863 noted, "without system for the future", suggesting that inhabitants built in various communities within the Location.

<sup>23</sup> This was referred to as the "Loxton line", after one of the surveyors, and would prove to be a contentious issue in the 1870s.

<sup>24</sup> A notice in the *Free Press* in 1862 by William Butler of Poplar Grove, the expansive farm on the border of Kamastone, threatened to sell two sheep which had trespassed onto his farm if they were not claimed within three weeks in order to "defray expenses" (QFP, 23 Dec, 1862). In 1864, for example, "M'Dinge" laid a charge against an English farmer, James Phillips, from the Upper Zwaart Kei, for stealing and rebranding a horse which "M'Dinge" had let run in the Rugtes Vlaktes with four other of his horses (QFP, 28 Mar, 1865). In 1867 a farmer, labeling himself "X,Y,Z" claimed that a group of amaMfengu from Kamastone had taken possession of part of his farm. He apparently warned them on several occasions that he would soon be needing the land they were using and would thus have to impound their stock if they refused to move. Not heeding this warning, the farmer went to confiscate their stock, only to find over 200 head of cattle and horses, along with several troops of sheep and goats, under the charge of four men, who chased off the farmer (QFP, 3 Sep, 1867). Bouch confirms that convenient access to grazing land was restricted as land around the Locations was sold off to white farmers ('Kamastone and Ox kraal Locations', p. 3)

clearly feeling the pressures of their own burgeoning population, and the encroaching white farmers. The special reporter covering the visit in the *Free Press* cynically remarked that the grievance was “all fudge, as they can waste annually hundreds of muids of grain in beer-making and making themselves intoxicated, besides the thousands of bags they sell every year.”<sup>25</sup> This image of the wealthy amaMfengu “agriculturist” became a trope perpetuated by the optimism of press reports.<sup>26</sup> The *Free Press* editorial of 4 May 1859, for example, asserted that the amaMfengu “possess some of the finest land in the country, are fast becoming rich”, and had by 1863, according to a *Free Press* article “become the possessors of so much accumulated property.”<sup>27</sup> “[T]he natives, and more particularly the Fingoes”, commented an 1865 *Free Press* article, “are prospering”.<sup>28</sup> An 1866 editorial pointed to the competition they offered the white farming community and claimed that “[i]t is a fact that while the European population of this colony have been losing money and time the Fingoes have been amassing wealth and territory.”<sup>29</sup> The editorial also pointed out that the “native agriculturist” produced wheat and cereals of comparable quality to the European and “the wool which he gathers from his flocks is not so inferior at present but that it may become superior in a very short time.”<sup>30</sup> The *Representative*, in an article on African wealth in Queenstown, claimed that the poorest Africans in the district were “better off than the lower class of Europeans.”<sup>31</sup> The article estimated that the Africans in Queenstown obtained from the colony around 11 000 pounds annually.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> QFP, 15 March, 1864

<sup>26</sup> Bouch argues that this mythical image of amaMfengu “super-industriousness” and wealth pervaded not only local press reports, but “The Native Affairs Secretariat in Cape Town” and historiography itself (“The Mfengu Revisited, p. 85)

<sup>27</sup> QFP, 4 August, 1863. A small insert in the *Free Press* at the end of 1864, however, claimed that the Ox Kraal residents were on the brink of starvation (QFP, 27 December, 1864)

<sup>28</sup> QFP, 12 December, 1865

<sup>29</sup> QFP, 3 April, 1866

<sup>30</sup> QFP, 3 April, 1866

<sup>31</sup> Rep, 19 May, 1866

<sup>32</sup> Rep, 19 May, 1866

Bouch argues that this image obscured the reality of acute class stratification between rulers in the Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations and average inhabitants.<sup>33</sup> While the ordinary Queenstown amaMfengu suffered rather than prospered under colonial rule, so prolific was the use of this mythical image that it stoked the jealousy of the white farming community. When news that Zulu, one of the amaMfengu chiefs, was to be given a farm along the sources of the Zwaart Kei, a white Queenstown inhabitant complained that the chief had “been in receipt of Headman salary for many years, and in occupation on easy terms of the best tract of land in the district.”<sup>34</sup> “The Exeter Hall philanthropists may talk as they please about the ill-usage of the poor blacks”, commented another, “but, really, this hardly looks as though they were in any very unfortunate position”.<sup>35</sup> The Press continued to goad the farmers:

“It would, perhaps, shame some of our white farmers if they found that the natives were more industrious, more energetic, and more alive to the interests of the colony than the majority of the members of the superior and dominant race.”<sup>36</sup>

The jealousy of white farmers was not confined to the amaMfengu Locations in Queenstown, but was directed at any Africans showing signs of increased agricultural production. White farmers were quick to discredit this progress by conjuring up another trope – the thieving African. The Tambookie Location was a popular target. A visitor to Queenstown in the early 1860s described the agricultural activities of the Tambookie Location in admirable terms, the traveller “gratified to find that almost invariably the pick had given place to the plough and land [was] being cultivated more extensively.” To his surprise he identified some crops of oats and wheat.<sup>37</sup> ER Bell, a prominent ‘agriculturalist’, a champion of white farmers, and a regular contributor to the *Free Press*, put the increase of wool production in the Tambookie Location in 1863 down to an increase in the thieving propensities of its

---

<sup>33</sup> Bouch, ‘Mfengu revisited’, p. 83

<sup>34</sup> QFP, 17 February, 1874. Zulu was Sobekwa and Zimema’s heir in the Ox Kraal Location.

<sup>35</sup> Rep, 19 May, 1866

<sup>36</sup> Rep, 26 August, 1867

<sup>37</sup> QFP, 2 June, 1863



inhabitants, as well as those in the Transkei. The increase from 60 bales sold in Queenstown in 1862 to 800 in 1863, argued Bell, was proof enough of his assertion.<sup>38</sup>

White traders in the Locations were also quick to protect their own interests. A trader from the Tambookie Location angrily replied that Bell had his figures very mixed up. *Each* of the seven traders in the location had bought 60 bales of wool from the African producers the previous year, he corrected Bell. He also claimed that around 24 000 head of cattle had been legitimately transported from the colony into the Transkei by returning servants, which fully accounted for the 800 bales sold in Queenstown that year. “The parties having sheep for shearing, and those stealing from the farmer”, concluded the trader, “are totally different persons”.<sup>39</sup> Bell replied within a week. The fact that the traders in the Tambookie Location had purchased more than 200 bales of wool in 1862, and that only 50 were sold in Queenstown, means that they must have trade connections in Whittlesea or King William’s Town, he retorted. If the amount sold in Queenstown had increased to 800 then it could be logically deduced that trade with other towns had too increased, which raised the amount of wool, and thus sheep, in possession of the African producers. Bell also commented on the absurdity of claiming that African shearers could not also be thieves.<sup>40</sup> Another irate letter signed “cautious”, challenged Bell’s figures, claiming that no more than 400 bales of wool came from the direction of the Transkei in 1863.<sup>41</sup> The figures disputed by Bell, the trader and “cautious”, as well as their opinions on sheep stealing are not easy, or necessary in this context, to verify, but a few conclusions can be drawn here – there was an increase in wealth and production

---

<sup>38</sup> QFP, 16 June, 1863

<sup>39</sup> QFP, 23 June, 1863

<sup>40</sup> QFP, 30 June, 1863

<sup>41</sup> QFP, 30 July, 1863

of wool in the Tambookie Location in the 1860s, at the same time as there was a competitive backlash protecting the interests of white farming in Queenstown.<sup>42</sup>

Although the *Free Press* hosted the debate, it was more concerned with promoting an ethos of improvement and progress and continued to support African economic pursuits, in the face of the growing frustrations of farmers. The press took it upon themselves to market African agricultural and industrial development in congratulatory articles. When one of the *Representative's* journalists ran into an African man on the street selling “splendidly made” horsehair hats which “were anything but clumsy in shape” he concluded that “every encouragement should be given to local industries of this kind.”<sup>43</sup> The *Free Press* took this support one step further. When an African Kamastone resident experimented with the growing of linseed, the paper made a sample available at their offices for interested townspeople.<sup>44</sup>

The frontier intelligentsia also utilized the press to advertise projects it felt would support African agricultural development. EC Jeffrey proposed, in early 1864, the creation of “Native Agricultural Society”, and the people of Kamastone and the Tambookie Location, under EJ Warner, showed great interest, 90 people pledging thirty pounds for the first show.<sup>45</sup> Soon after this Warner resigned as superintendent and nothing further was done until the *Free Press* carried the suggestion in an editorial the following year.<sup>46</sup> Two months later the “Queen’s Town Native Agricultural

---

<sup>42</sup> Bouch confirms this by stating that “[e]conomic change accelerated” during the early 1860s in the Tambookie Location. By the mid 1860s around thirty ploughs were being utilized by the inhabitants, and wool production was increasing (R. Bouch, ‘Glen Grey before Cecil Rhodes: how a crisis of local colonial authority led to the Glen Grey Act of 1894’, in *Canadian Journal of African Studies* (vol. 27, no. 1, 1993), p. 4)

<sup>43</sup> Rep, 8 October, 1869

<sup>44</sup> QFP, 20 January, 1866

<sup>45</sup> Jeffrey emigrated to South Africa when he was 18, and set up a business in Kamastone in 1853. He was involved in education and the Wesleyan Church, and became superintendent at Kamastone in 1873.

<sup>46</sup> QFP, 28 February, 1865. The agricultural Show for white farmers was promoted from the Queenstown press’ inception. “No district, we feel assured could better support and keep up an

Society” held its first show at Kamastone, but it was open to all Africans in the district.<sup>47</sup> The *Free Press* celebrated the Kamastone show, contending that “[a]mong the many efforts made to elevate the social position of the native classes, none are more likely to be successful than the establishment of Agricultural Societies amongst them”, and encouraged Queenstown’s white community to support the cause.<sup>48</sup>

The press’ follow-up article presented a carefully-constructed narrative of civilization triumphing over savagery, an evocation of the aspirations of the colonial project writ large, and another landscape in which to envision the rhetoric of improvement. The eye-witness report style allowed the *Free Press*’ white readership entry into this African realm and mediated their experience. The reporter set the scene, filling the commonage with cattle, horses and their African owners. The contributors included 17 people from Ox Kraal and 31 from Kamastone, as well as 10 from Lesseyton and 28 from the Moravian Missions of Shiloh and Goshen. In the background he placed the familiar faces of some Queenstown farmers, as well as many women from the surrounding communities of Whittlesea and Poplar Grove. The Africans began the day by performing a “native dance”, much to the chagrin of the reporter, who described the dancers as “a motley group of savages”. “The men”, the reporter detailed, “were decorated with a necklet of what appeared to be hyena tails, and a girdle of the same around the waist, each tail drooping about 12 inches”.

Accompanied by a bunch of feathers attached to their foreheads this ‘girdle’ comprised their total of bodily covering. The women wore beaded karosses and were

---

agricultural association than QT – composed almost entirely of a young and enterprising English population, each one anxious to excel his neighbour”(QFP, 1 June, 1859). The Queenstown Agricultural Society, formed in 1859, arranged its first show in 1860, which, according to the press, was a resounding success (QFP, 11 April, 1860). Calls for support of the association continued in the 1860s, and the press alternately chastised (“We should like to see a little more of this spirit in our Queenstown farmers, especially among the Dutch”(QFP, 11 April, 1865)), boasted (“Why in this frontier district of the colony ploughing with two horses might have been seen years ago; in fact from the first year of our existence, but then *we* are a go-ahead people” (QFP, 28 July, 1863)) and cajoled (“Help those who desire to help themselves, and we are sure QT will not fail”(QFP, 10 October, 1860))

<sup>47</sup> The advertisement appeared in the *Free Press* edition of 18 April, 1865

<sup>48</sup> QFP, 2 May, 1865

“smeared all over” with red clay. Savagery as spectacle followed in the tradition of the nineteenth-century travel-writing “idea of the world as a stage”.<sup>49</sup>

At the same time the reporter noted that visible progress was beginning to alter the landscape, “many improvements” having been made in the location, “old houses replaced by new, one or two very credible shops well built”.<sup>50</sup> The ‘heathen dances’ stood in stark contrast to the civilizing influence of European architecture and agriculture. The article thus served as a micro-narrative of colonization – by its culmination the heathen ‘native’ had been transformed into the civilized figure of John Dondo, “the richest man in the location”, who led a cheer “for the queen”.<sup>51</sup> The masses of savages who “responded to in such a manner as we thought Englishmen alone could” were refashioned into the likes of Joshua Sishuba and Jonas “Mkajima”, families who became synonymous with African agricultural progress in Queenstown during the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>52</sup> The image of the wealthy African farmer and ‘Native Agricultural Shows’ were markers of the success of colonialism. As an expression of a particular Queenstown urban identity, this view differed sharply to that of the white farmers in the district.

The following year coverage of the show received centre-place in the editorial column of the *Free Press*. Many participants from the 1865 show had left the Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations for the Transkei, where they had been granted land, and those who remained had suffered from a drought. Many of the same names dotted the prize list, however – the Nakins from Shiloh and Bambanis from

---

<sup>49</sup> Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers*, p. 116

<sup>50</sup> QFP, 2 May, 1865

<sup>51</sup> Dondo clearly was a man of some importance and wealth. Either he or a family member was a chief in the Location, and during the agricultural show he came away with the prize for best bull and best pipe. He ended the day off with a speech thanking the organizers on behalf of the inhabitants of Kamastone.

<sup>52</sup> Sishuba was also either a headman or the family member of a headman in the Location. The Sishubas remained an influential family in the Queenstown community, and held strong ties with the Church until at least the 1950s (Soga, ‘Role Of Africans’). Jonas “Mkajima” (Mgijima) was most definitely the father of Enoch Mgijima, the leader of the Israelites during the Bulhoek Massacre of 1921. See footnote 10, pp. 131-132.

Lesseyton featured prominently.<sup>53</sup> “The [agricultural] institution” claimed the *Free Press*

“serves a political purpose as well as a moral one. It inculcates a spirit of industry and emulation among our border natives, and gradually weans them from those habits which have been provocative of the colony’s greatest discomfort.”<sup>54</sup>

The *Representative’s* coverage declared that “in some respects, the show would have done the highest possible credit to any agricultural society, whether European or native, in the colony.”<sup>55</sup> Civil commissioner Griffith used the occasion to motivate the farmers to conduct further improvements. “The government”, he reprimanded, “will not help people who do not try to help themselves. I hope when I see you next year to notice an improvement in your stock, and to see more of it exhibited.”<sup>56</sup>

The Kamastone agricultural show, like the European farmers’ show in Queenstown itself, seems to have disappeared in the latter half of the 1860s. When press coverage began again in the early 1870s the show for Africans had moved outside the colony to the St. Mark’s mission station at Tsomo.<sup>57</sup> In the *Free Press’* 1877 report of the St. Mark’s show 47 men were given membership to the district’s “improvement Society” having property worth more than 50 pounds, and were informed that their duties would be to “list improvements in his locality each year and to assist red natives nearby who are endeavouring to raise themselves in the scale of civilization.”<sup>58</sup>

In 1873, the Queenstown Agricultural Show was revived and African participation limited to certain categories. This, the *Free Press* felt was “a move in the right direction”, and if it induced Africans “to improve and take care of their grain it will be a

---

<sup>53</sup> William Bambani received land at Lesseyton for his loyal participation in the eighth frontier war. By 1868 Bambani and most of his sons had died from what was most probably TB (QFP, 28 April, 1868)

<sup>54</sup> QFP, 31 March, 1866

<sup>55</sup> Rep, 31 March, 1866

<sup>56</sup> Rep, 31 March, 1866

<sup>57</sup> QFP, 30 May, 1873

<sup>58</sup> QFP, 20 April, 1877

benefit to them as well as to the community at large.”<sup>59</sup> The sentiment was in keeping with the frontier intelligentsia’s granting of ‘rights’ as rewards for Africans who met certain criteria, and who contributed to the general progress of the town and district. When reports that many farmers had withdrawn their subscriptions to the agricultural show because of the inclusion of prizes for Africans, the *Representative* too offered its support for any measures that encouraged African agricultural pursuits.<sup>60</sup> The *Representative* chastised those who were against the inclusion of African produce in the show. “[I]t would be manifestly unfair” pointed out the article, “to withdraw the prizes offered to native producers at the eleventh hour.”<sup>61</sup> In the end Africans were permitted to participate in the show. It is not clear how many availed themselves of the opportunity, as the Nakin family from Shiloh appear to have been awarded all the prizes allocated for Africans.<sup>62</sup>

The image of the wealthy amaMfengu farmer endured throughout the 1870s in the Queenstown press. Jacob Mquandi (Mcandi) or Onverwacht, was singled out by a traveller as “the best specimen of a prosperous civilized Fingo” along the north-eastern frontier.<sup>63</sup> He had bought two farms near the Ox Kraal Location after accumulating a sizeable amount of stock on the mission station.<sup>64</sup> Another press report described Mquandi (Mcandi) as “not unique” in this regard.<sup>65</sup> At the same time the press doggedly pursued the goal of individual tenure for the amaMfengu residents, which they prophesized would lead to prosperity and encourage them “to improve what will now become their individual property.”<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> QFP, 5 December, 1873

<sup>60</sup> Rep, 23 January, 1874

<sup>61</sup> Rep, 17 February, 1874

<sup>62</sup> The prizes for “best hard wheat” and “best flour” went to John Nakin, while Daniel Nakin had the “best meal” and “best peaches” (Rep, 20 March, 1874).

<sup>63</sup> QFP, 15 April, 1873

<sup>64</sup> Bouch, ‘Mfengu Revisited’, p. 86

<sup>65</sup> QFP, 15 April, 1873

<sup>66</sup> QFP, 6 March, 1868

In 1875 the *Free Press* calculated the “actual money value of 24 617 pounds 16 shillings and 6d over and above the value of property in 1865” in Kamastone. The paper also noted that 56 brick houses had been built in Kamastone over the past ten years.<sup>67</sup> This advancement was mirrored in official reports. Hemming, the new civil commissioner noted in his annual report of the same year that vast tracts of land had been cultivated in the Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations since he had last visited the area, and that the inhabitants, in general, used “European clothing and household appliances” including “plates, knives and forks, and furniture.”<sup>68</sup> The report calculated the population at 6212, the total stock value at 112,007 pounds, and the number of ploughs at 331. The increase in wheat production and introduction of ploughs in the Locations added to the reconfiguration of gendered labour. While women used hoes, the men operated the ploughs, and “a general complaint among the men is that the English have made their wives lazy”.<sup>69</sup>

As Bouch points out the 1877 survey of the locations “dealt a severe blow to the cohesive power of clanship and probably to family kinship-based economic bonds centred on the homestead as well.”<sup>70</sup> Although the archival records do not offer much in the way of the average inhabitant’s experience of this process, Bouch’s findings point to the post-1877 period as a new era in the lives of those living in Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations, and the land survey as a watershed moment in this process. In particular the residents were cut off from necessary grazing ground and cultivation suffered through the allocation of small individual allotments which broke up communal land.<sup>71</sup> Shortly after, the superintendent of the Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations predicted a bleak future of famine and starvation for the people in the

---

<sup>67</sup> QFP, 12 April, 1875

<sup>68</sup> G16 – ’76, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*, pp. 85-6

<sup>69</sup> G16 – ’76, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*, p. 88

<sup>70</sup> Bouch, ‘Oxkraal and Kamastone Mfengu Locations’, p. 4

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 16-18

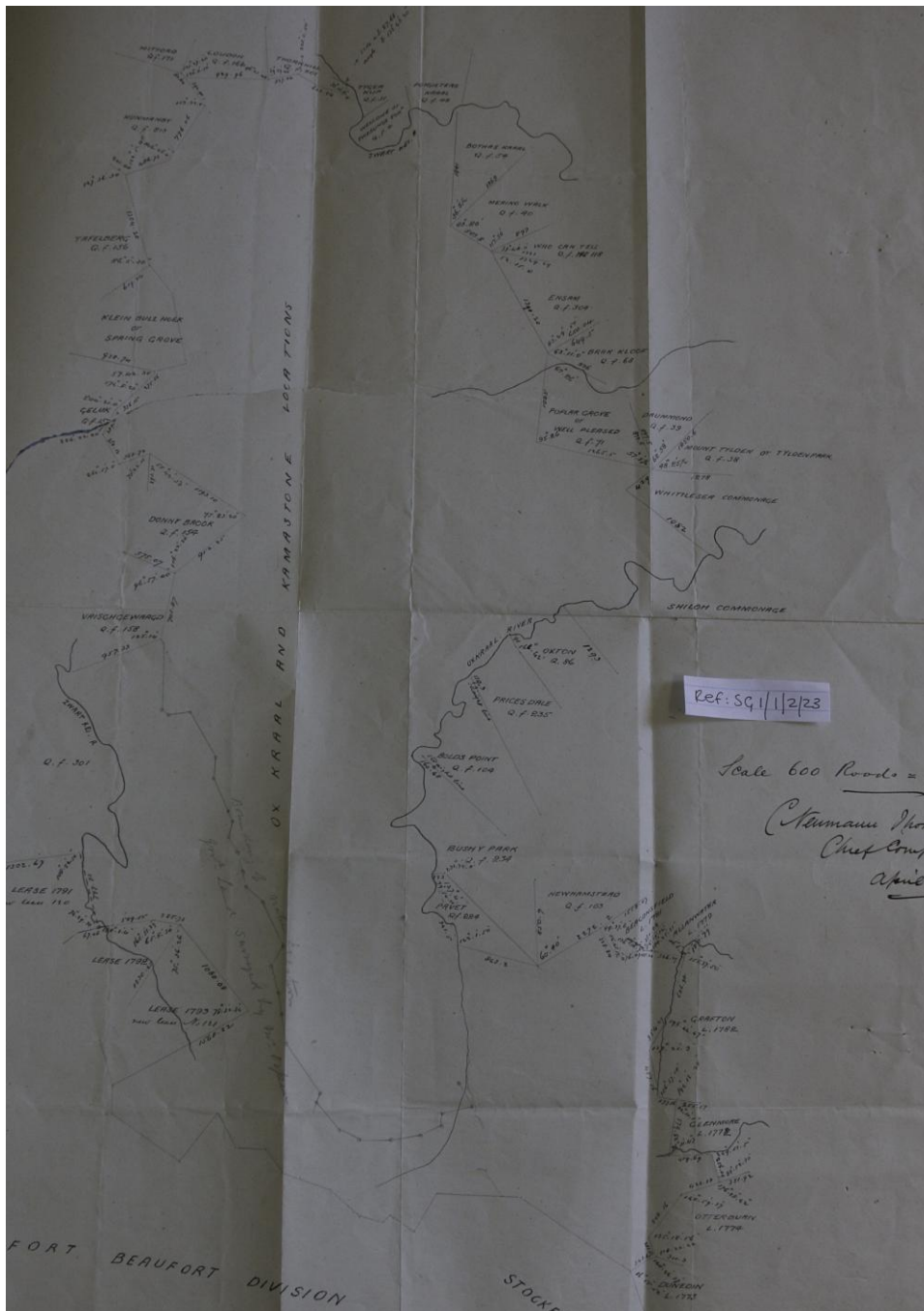
Locations.<sup>72</sup> While this would have resulted in an increase of labour for the surrounding white farmers, this was not the future envisaged at the apotheosis of the press' optimism. By inflating the incidence of wealth in the amaMfengu community, however, the press unwittingly provided fodder for the enforcement of the survey regulations, the allocation of more land to white farmers and increased taxation that became too onerous for an already battling community to bear.

University of Cape Town

---

<sup>72</sup> G17 - '78, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*, p. 49





**FIGURE 5: The Kamastone and Ox Kraal Locations around 1877, showing the surrounding farms, mainly owned by white farmers. Source: SG 1/1/2/23, Cape Archives**

## **White farms, African squatters: tenancy, 'vagrancy' and African landownership**

Outside of the mission lands and designated African Locations there were limited opportunities for Africans to own land.<sup>73</sup> Most Africans lived on the white farmlands of Queenstown as servants or tenants. The press' support of land granting and agricultural stimulus to Africans in the district's locations contrasted with their ideas on groups of Africans who lived fairly independently on tenant farms. These tenant communities, according to Bouch, were integral in supplying labour to white farmers and were utilized as an exchange of land for services rendered.<sup>74</sup> Until the mid-1870s no legislation existed to regulate these tenant communities, or "private locations", as they came to be known, and inhabitants were identified as "squatters". Some tenants paid rent, some lived on the land in exchange for occasional labour, while others entered into sharecropping agreements.<sup>75</sup> An 1859 *Free Press* editorial pointed out that some farmers had as many as thirty Africans to one European residing on their farm as uncontracted servants.<sup>76</sup>

Zeiler, a farmer in the Zwaart Kei field-cornetcy, gave rations to all Africans on his land, whether servants or tenants.<sup>77</sup> Crais details how Africans living and/or working on white farms may have read the giving of 'gifts' (ie. rations) as part of a familiar 'clientage system'. The clientage system was based on reciprocity and redistribution, whereby tenants or servants "would begin to have natural claims to a portion of the

---

<sup>73</sup> Apart from the amaMfengu grantees in the town there is mention of Jacob Makenthlana (QFP, 1 August, 1860), and Makabana of the farm Retreat (Rep, 29 September, 1871). The farm in the FC Roydon or Upper Zwaart Kei field-cornetcy, owned by "two emancipated slave-men", probably refers to AB and W February, whose quitrent farm titles for "Parliament" had been sitting at the civil commissioner's office for some time by 1862 (QFP, 9 April, 1862). African landowners were accused of supporting squatters on their land to fulfill the conditions of occupancy for grantee farms (SC 1 '64, *Select Committee Report on Cattle Thefts*, p. 39) or thefts in their neighbourhood (Rep, 7 January, 1867)

<sup>74</sup> Bouch, "farming, capitalization and labour", p. 11

<sup>75</sup> One article claims that half the yields were given to the owner (QFP, 2 May, 1871)

<sup>76</sup> QFP, 9 March, 1859

<sup>77</sup> SC 1 '64, p. 39

livestock of their patron". Africans may therefore have stolen stock when the farmer reneged on his responsibilities.<sup>78</sup> When "Toise Pekani" was arrested for the theft of a horse in 1872, for example, he claimed that he had taken it in lieu of the wages his master had not paid him.<sup>79</sup> "Pekani" received two years hard labour for his crime.

In these tenant relationships Africans could generally continue to utilize land and organize communities in familiar ways, and were often offered complete independence, both of which received criticism. In 1861 the *Free Press* had "the great pleasure" of publishing a letter from an irate farmer, who claimed that his neighbour, whom he pointed out was a fieldcornet, had allowed 7 or 8 Basotho to live on the edge of his farm. The fieldcornet apparently gave them freedom to live as they liked, and called on them periodically to work for him, paying them in cash.<sup>80</sup> The press was clearly discomfited by these unregulated communities and described them as composed of "prowling vagrants or squatters."<sup>81</sup> In press reports we gain brief glimpses of these mid-nineteenth-century tenant communities as they brewed beer and held traditional dances.<sup>82</sup>

Farmers consistently accused tenants of theft. A farmer providing testimony to the 1865 commission defined squatters as "*unauthorised* residents on Government or private property", but asserted that in "a few instances in [Queenstown], *authorised* native residents on private property are no better than squatters – having no apparent means of supporting their families honestly."<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, it was these communities of uncontracted, unregistered, uncatalogued Africans who were responsible for the majority of cattle thefts.<sup>84</sup> A letter written to the *Free Press* asked farmers not to allow African "squatters" who only received pay or food when asked to

---

<sup>78</sup> Crais, *White Supremacy*, pp. 155-56

<sup>79</sup> QFP, 19 March, 1872

<sup>80</sup> QFP, 2 October, 1861

<sup>81</sup> QFP, 9 March, 1859

<sup>82</sup> QFP, 25 August, 1868

<sup>83</sup> SC1 '64, p. 42

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

work, onto their land, as they were thought to be the perpetrators of thefts on neighbouring farms.<sup>85</sup> In 1865 there were still complaints abounding about farmers who allowed a “parade of people on the farm”. “[W]hile some of them are hired by the year”, claimed “a farmer”, “the greater portion, although duly contracted, are in fact only squatters.”<sup>86</sup>

Throughout the 1860s there is evidence that this “unauthorised” squatting, to use contemporary farmer terminology, was fairly widespread in Queenstown, and not easy to control.<sup>87</sup> The press never wavered in their dislike for these mobile communities who suspiciously avoided cultivating the land. They represented aberrance, and were the antithesis to progress in the district. A *Free Press* editorial claimed that African squatters were allowed to “grow rich in flocks and herds, paying nought for land, and not even contributing a share towards the expenses of the District in which they live.”<sup>88</sup> “Travel through the country, and in out-of-the-way places you come upon a hut or two” claimed a pro-vagrant law editorial. These small communities, argued the press, were thieving settlements: “There are no gardens near, no kraals, and yet you find three or four fat, sleek, polished fellows basking in the sun, gorged to the chin” argued the editorial.<sup>89</sup> This was far from the reality experienced by many of these groups, who faced the threat of eviction and sometimes violence. In 1859 a group of squatters had been living on a farm in the district, but were forced to move when the farmer burnt down their huts. The *Free Press* editorial was quick to qualify the farmers’ actions: “That they lived by pilfering” the editorial claimed, “is certain from the fact that they cultivate no land to raise

---

<sup>85</sup> QFP, 6 December, 1864

<sup>86</sup> QFP, 2 May, 1865

<sup>87</sup> In 1860, while on the road to Hangklip, for example, a correspondent referred to these ‘squatter’ communities as an “eyesore” (QFP, 2 May, 1860). In a municipal meeting Mr Ridgeway raised concerns about the erection of a hut by some “natives” near the boundary of Griffithville, a new suburb in Queenstown (Rep, 20 October, 1866).

<sup>88</sup> QFP, 15 December, 1868

<sup>89</sup> QFP, 6 June, 1871

food.”<sup>90</sup> What the editorial saw as “licenced vagrants”, those who carried permits from the colonial authorities, “migrat[ing] from place to place” may merely have been a group of dispossessed Africans trying to find gaps within the increasing hegemony of the cadastral grid.<sup>91</sup> Sometimes the results were worse. In 1863 a farmer near Tylden shot an African who was “squatting” on his farm. A scuffle had occurred and, according to the farmer, his gun accidentally went off.<sup>92</sup> The wounded man later died, and the farmer was put on trial for manslaughter.<sup>93</sup>

Tenancy was a similarly precarious living arrangement for Africans, as they had no ‘legal’ title to the land they occupied and could be moved without warning. For example, in 1871 a farmer on the Zwart Kei evicted his African tenants, and after giving them three days’ notice to leave the premises, tore down their kraals.<sup>94</sup> This process was endorsed by the press, who equated tenant communities with illegal ‘squatting’, and, in effect aided in criminalizing the Africans who inhabited them. This discussion thus took place within vocal advocacy for a revised vagrancy and squatter law and increased legislation to regulate private locations. An 1865 *Free Press* editorial argued that a vagrant law was the key to an effective ‘native improvement’. “It would oblige the idle squatter without means of his own to seek employment or go to prison”.<sup>95</sup> It would also ‘catch’ “the number of Hottentots and Slaves who are found as squatters (without any means of obtaining an honest livelihood) all over the country.”<sup>96</sup> The press identified locations and mission stations as in need of stricter squatting regulations too. “We have a large number of natives in [this district], one third of whom are not known to the authorities, and who are subject to none of the

---

<sup>90</sup> QFP, 9 March, 1859

<sup>91</sup> QFP, 9 March, 1859

<sup>92</sup> QFP, 20 January, 1863

<sup>93</sup> QFP, 27 January, 1863

<sup>94</sup> Rep, 12 May, 1871

<sup>95</sup> QFP, 31 January, 1865

<sup>96</sup> QFP, 31 January, 1865

headmen on the different locations” a lengthy article claimed.<sup>97</sup> Headmen were accused of giving only the numbers of immediate followers, without including these “wanderers” when asked. “Thus many are neither acknowledged by the headmen, nor brought under the influence of the Government, and these in many instances are the disturbers of peace and the promoters of confusion.”<sup>98</sup>

When a squatter’s bill was introduced in 1871 to severely curtail these private locations, the *Free Press* again presented the idea that ‘squatters’ – the press preferred this term to ‘tenants’ - on private farms routinely stole from neighbouring farms and indulged in “evil practices”.<sup>99</sup> A pro-vagrant law editorial a few months later confidently asserted that “[i]t will be found in nine cases out of ten that the thefts of stock are committed by natives who have no settled domicile, either squatters on private or Government property, or wanderers about the country.”<sup>100</sup> “These men” a *Free Press* editorial spat, referring to the uncontrolled African body, allowed “to roam freely about” could “wander or squat about, no one forbidding them”. “On all sides” the editorial asserted, “there is proof that these characters are up to no good.”<sup>101</sup> By associating Africans within the district’s farmlands to connotations of “evil practices” and wrongdoing the frontier intelligentsia was actively making a case for increased surveillance and restriction of African communities within the district’s farmlands. “Thus every squatter on private property would be accounted for”, the editorial explained, and “would be known and easily watched.”<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> QFP, 9 February, 1864

<sup>98</sup> QFP, 9 February, 1864

<sup>99</sup> QFP, 2 May, 1871

<sup>100</sup> QFP, 6 June, 1871

<sup>101</sup> QFP, 2 June, 1874

<sup>102</sup> QFP, 6 June, 1871

Advocacy finally achieved success. The 1876 Location Act targeted these tenant communities. The Act defined a private location as a grouping of more than 10 huts in one square mile located within the colony. According to a *Free Press* editorial the

“inspection of ‘locations’ on private property will be useful in checking the increase of squatting injurious to a neighbourhood [and] will be of considerable value to the honest and respectable natives, protecting them alike from the annoyance of idle and disorderly people hanging about their neighbourhood and the eating up of their veldt and injury to their gardens by stock, whose owners have no rights of grazing or any right whatever to be there.”

The editorial described the Act as “good and sensible” and “one which will tend to prevent stealing and encourage orderly and industrious habits amongst the native people of this country.”<sup>103</sup> The keywords in this editorial set up a very obvious dichotomy between ‘squatting’/‘idle’/‘disorderly’ and ‘inspection’/‘orderly’/‘industrious’.

Through the press the frontier intelligentsia formulated the category of ‘squatter’ as the holdall receptacle for disordered Africanness. Like the town’s ‘loiterers’ and the Municipal Location’s ‘heathens’ these unregulated and unsupervised African communities would continue to encumber the press’ conception of how Queenstownites should live, and where. Africans who had lived quite comfortably on white farms would increasingly face eviction as farmers attempted to avoid periodic inspections and resultant taxation.

### **White rights, Black Citizens: Redefining Citizenship for Africans in Queenstown.**

The final denouement in the saga of white jealousy and amaMfengu advancement came to a head in the context of the ‘citizenship’ debate. This would eventually lead to the annulment of the limited rights Queenstown’s colonial African populace had experienced in the 1860s. The frontier intelligentsia was complicit in this, albeit inadvertently. As the Cape colony continued to encroach on amaXhosa land during the nineteenth-century frontier wars, the status of displaced Africans and those who

---

<sup>103</sup> QFP, 15 June, 1876

had been incorporated into the colony was a key issue in the everyday maintenance of control in the frontier zone. Endowed with a paper certificate in 1857, and ostensibly accorded the same rights as European colonial subjects, the amaMfengu in Ox Kraal and Kamastone were technically not required to carry a pass when moving around the colony, and could buy land, possess a firearm and register to vote, if they held the requisite property qualifications.<sup>104</sup> Other Africans who could provide proof of more than five years residence in the colony, with no more than a three month prison sentence at any one time, were also eligible to receive a certificate from 1864. By 1865 Warner had granted over 200 of them to residents of the Tambookie Location.<sup>105</sup>

The system governing African citizenship was so vacillating, experimental and ambiguous in the 1860s that people in positions of power were unclear how to apply these legal categories in practice. While African citizenship has been understood, as Chanock points out, within the rubric of “citizens but not altogether citizens”, this was a later conception that has been deterministically applied to the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>106</sup> While it is now clear that Africans were, and had always been, second-class citizens, until the pass laws commission published its recommendations in 1883, and there still existed independent chiefdoms in the area, citizenship for Africans was a contested category, in Queenstown at least, understood in different ways by different people. The Queenstown intellectuals sincerely grappled with the

---

<sup>104</sup> In the nineteenth-century the Cape had a non-racial franchise based on a property qualification of 25 pounds, which was very low by British colonial standards. In theory, then, any African male ‘citizen’ with the correct property qualification was eligible to vote. The difficulty for Africans to gain title to land and their limited ability to purchase land outside of designated areas, however, would have severely hampered the majority’s access to this right. Gun ownership, as well as the purchase of land, were also subject to various changes in legislation. Most historians have described the certificate of citizenship as giving its holders a “quasi-citizenship status” (Braun, ‘Cadastre and the Colony’, p. 88). This becomes very apparent in retrospect.

<sup>105</sup> SC1 ’64, p. 68

<sup>106</sup> M. Chanock, *The Making of South African Legal Culture, 1902-1936: Fear, Favour and Prejudice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 244



status of colonial Africans, and initially very consistently argued for tangible citizenship rights, beyond pass exemption, for bearers of certificates.

For the frontier intelligentsia the distinction between African 'citizen' and 'foreigner' was paramount. Without these categories it would have been very difficult for them to pursue the goal of assimilation. Concomitant with their 'rights as responsibility' ethos and 'rhetoric of difference', these frontier intellectuals only advocated the granting of certificates/rights to Africans who could demonstrate that they subscribed to the progressive agenda of the intellectuals. When it started to become clear that the certificate of citizenship did not guarantee these credentials the press' support for them waned. This becomes obvious in an examination of both the perspective and language used to frame the citizenship debate within the 1870s press. This eventually contributed to the associated demise in rights for Queenstown's African 'citizens'.

The white farming community did not suffer from the same uncertainty. In 1864 the Queenstown farmers petitioned the government to restrict Africans and to strip them of their rights as citizens. This was one of the few instances in 1860s Queenstown of an organized and unified stance by local farmers who, by their own admission, had little time to follow official procedures or gather together for meetings, and thus evidences the increasing hostility the Queenstown farmers exhibited towards Africans in the district, due to a lack of labour, and increased competition from African farmers. The petition based its demands on accusations of rampant crime by the district's Africans. The farmers criticized the African citizenship regulations in several important regards. Firstly, they argued that African citizenship should not be equated with freedom of movement through the colony. Secondly, they hoped to see a more thorough inspection system implemented, which would require Africans to pay an annual registration fee on renewal of their certificate, and to report to an authorized officer on a monthly basis to "exhibit [the] certificate". Thirdly, they argued

that the certificate of citizenship should include the number of stock legally in possession of the bearer, in much the same way as a pass did.<sup>107</sup> The petition was thus a complete revisioning of the 1857 Act, which had accorded Africans in possession of a certificate of citizenship, in theory at least, equal rights to their European counterparts in terms of status and movement.

When Act 17, “An Act for amending the Law regarding Certificates of Citizenship”, was passed later that year it included many of the suggestions raised in the Queenstown Farmers’ 1864 petition.<sup>108</sup> Africans with certificates of citizenship would henceforth be required to carry passes when moving within the colony, and their certificates would require annual renewal.<sup>109</sup> After the passing of the act there was an increase in the issuing of certificates of citizenship to what the press termed “deserving natives”. The *Free Press* claimed that 1 620 were issued by March 1865, nearly 150 of them on one weekend.<sup>110</sup> The issuing of certificates did not, however, serve to subdue the emotion of the Queenstown amaMfengu communities. At a large meeting of inhabitants of the Kamastone Mission Station regarding this call to give up their certificates of citizenship, the words of the headmen spoke to a far more important element of this new legislation:

“they had been told that the former certificates were to make them *white men*, but he saw there was distinction made amongst white men, one white man could go where he liked, and with what he liked, and he had no question put to him, another *white man*, or one who was told that he would have the same freedom as a white man must have a pass wherever he went, what was the use of being *white men*.”<sup>111</sup>

This example offers us a small, albeit mediated, glimpse into African conceptions of race and difference in 1860s Queenstown. By invoking whiteness as a permeable category, and not one based on skin colour, the Africans at this meeting were constructing their own system of inclusion and exclusion in settler-colonial

---

<sup>107</sup> QFP, 23 February, 1864

<sup>108</sup> QFP, 7 Jan, 1868

<sup>109</sup> QFP, 7 January, 1868

<sup>110</sup> QFP, 28 March, 1865

<sup>111</sup> QFP, 8 November, 1864

Queenstown. It also suggests that in the 1860s African certificate-holders did not perceive their rights in the colony to be any different to those of non-African citizens.

The press was similarly piqued by the conflicting notion of freedom that the new bill espoused and stressed their support for equal rights for African citizens. "...the holder thereof is not a free man, why then call him a citizen, why tell him that [he] is one thing, when every day life shows him that he is something else." "We always thought" the editorial continued,

"that a citizen was at liberty to go where he had any calling, without further pass or notice, that he was at liberty to move his property when and where he would, that he was at liberty to engage himself to any master, either as daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly servant, without application to any authority, or binding himself by contract, but we have evidently been mistaken..."<sup>112</sup>

A communicated article asked "If the Government see fit to make him a free citizen [...] what right has the Government to place any restriction on his movements?"<sup>113</sup>

"We think the pass system may be much simplified by making every citizen free and independent in his movements", the article argued.<sup>114</sup>

The frontier intelligentsia supported these calls for equal rights for African citizens, but did not advocate endowing everyone with citizenship status:

"Let Certificates of Citizenship be given to men that can be recommended by those who KNOW them as worthy of such, and having property to entitle them to such a privilege – then HAVE DONE WITH THESE MEN – give them the liberty of an Englishman",

argued the *Free Press*.<sup>115</sup> "We shall by this means", another article explained, "make a proper division between the good and the bad, we shall attach the good more firmly to our interests, and we shall induce many who are now living in a loose and careless way, to bestir themselves to seek the same privileges."<sup>116</sup> "We have always held the opinion that, the issue of these certificates should have been given

---

<sup>112</sup> QFP, 8 November, 1864

<sup>113</sup> QFP, 10 May, 1864

<sup>114</sup> QFP, 10 May, 1864

<sup>115</sup> QFP, 24 May, 1864

<sup>116</sup> QFP, 8 March, 1864

as *rewards* to the men who could have been recommended by competent persons as *honest*, industrious persons, not to any fellow that choose to present himself” a *Free Press* editorial exhorted later that year.<sup>117</sup> The ideological underpinning of the Queenstown intellectuals’ ethos, displayed in the 1860s press, then, was not based on turning Africans into second-class citizens, but rather turning Africans into what they saw as “deserving” citizens.

In 1866 an umThembu man attempting to utilize a cancelled certificate of citizenship belonging to another man, highlights the possibility that opportunities could have existed for African “foreigners” or non-citizens to acquire citizenship status.<sup>118</sup> The ‘rights as responsibility’ ethos that characterized the press’ advocacy for equal rights based on exclusive membership thus became increasingly shaky from the mid-1860s. In fact, it was precisely arguments in favour of this system that, rather ironically, signaled its demise. In April 1865, one of Queenstown’s most vocal settlers, ER Bell, suggested doing away with certificates of citizenship altogether since they could be “bought or sold, lent or hired, or stolen, as most agreeable to parties”.<sup>119</sup> Magistrates became notorious for awarding citizenship to Africans without fully investigating whether the applicant was of “desirable character” or not.<sup>120</sup> These accusations, rather than precipitating more stringent citizenship qualifications and regulations, served to destabilize the category of “African citizen” altogether. The constant harangue and the inefficiency of the system lent support to the claim that African citizens should *not* enjoy equal rights with European citizens. “...will the Government please to inform us” a *Free Press* editorial on citizenship asked, “how we are to distinguish between friend and foe, how we are to know who are colonists

---

<sup>117</sup> QFP, 15 November, 1864. In 1863 the *Free Press* had also supported the annual renewal system for certificates of citizenship (see, QFP, 6 October, 1863), but appears to have rethought their position on this clause by 1864.

<sup>118</sup> Rep, 4 August, 1866

<sup>119</sup> QFP, 4 April, 1865. It was widely believed that the forging or stealing of certificates of citizenship was rampant (see, for example, QFP, 12 June, 1861; QFP, 4 August, 1863)

<sup>120</sup> QFP, 23 February, 1864

and who are not, who can be interrupted, and who cannot”?<sup>121</sup> By both hosting and participating in this public forum around the authenticity of the certificate of citizenship as a signifier of colonially-sanctioned African citizenship the Queenstown press actively contributed to a process which would ultimately result in the reduction of African citizenship rights.

Act 22 of 1867, “An Act to amend the Law relating to the issue of passes to and contracts of service with natives, and to the issue of certificates of citizenship, and to provide for better protection of property” repealed those clauses of the 1864 Act which required holders of certificates of citizenship to renew their certificates on an annual basis, and to carry a pass when travelling into, out of, or within the colony.<sup>122</sup> However, other important changes with regard to citizenship rights were occurring which would have a detrimental effect on the holder’s ability to exercise these rights. It began in the pages of the press. While there was in the 1860s a distinction made between the term “free pass” and “certificate/ticket/deed of citizenship” they began to be used interchangeably in the 1870s.<sup>123</sup> A letter to the *Free Press* in 1874, linking the labour shortage to the “system of issuing tickets of citizenship to native foreigners” culminated with a reference to the ticket as a “free pass”.<sup>124</sup> At a meeting of around sixty Queenstown farmers held at Tylden at the end of April 1874, one farmer thought that convicted criminals should lose their right to citizenship, the document being referred to both as a ‘free pass’ and a ‘ticket of citizenship’.<sup>125</sup> This was accompanied by subsequent blurring between the categories of citizen and foreigner. In 1875, for example, ‘John Parker’ was charged with being in the colony without a pass. On producing “an old piece of parchment, which appeared to be an old certificate of citizenship” he was told he would be given a second chance to get a

---

<sup>121</sup> QFP, 6 November, 1866

<sup>122</sup> QFP, 7 Jan, 1868

<sup>123</sup> See, for example, the two terms used to designate separate classifications in QFP, 14 July, 1868.

<sup>124</sup> QFP, 13 February, 1874

<sup>125</sup> QFP, 5 May, 1874

pass for a year with “his master”.<sup>126</sup> The certificate of citizenship was dismissed. The reports of Municipal Location raids in the 1870s, and the attempt by the municipality to force every resident into labour contracts whether a citizen or not, as detailed in chapter two, also highlights the increasing elision between citizen and foreigner. The 1860s concept of African citizenship was clearly being challenged and reformulated on a more extensive basis.

The intellectuals’ stance that advocated equal rights for all citizens was being reconfigured in two specific regards in the 1870s: the purchase of guns and the franchise. An article around the former in the *Representative* stated:

“now that certificates of citizenship were issued, Jack was as good as his master – if not better. In possession of one of these documents, after having obtained the necessary permit, a native can purchase a gun. And what is to prevent his going into Kafirland, disposing of it, and returning and purchasing others at different points of the Frontier?”<sup>127</sup>

The article went on to advocate the withdrawing of the African citizen’s right to purchase firearms. Later that year a similar editorial on the gun trade appeared in the *Free Press*. The article claimed that over the past couple of weeks it had become a common sight to see Africans wandering the streets of Queenstown with firearms. “How they were allowed to have them we do not exactly know”, pondered the *Free Press*, “save it be by their right as British subjects.”<sup>128</sup> The editorial mirrored the sentiments of the *Representative* – “The desire to possess fire-arms by the natives, British subjects, or foreigners” should be suppressed by law.<sup>129</sup> The press vacillated on this issue. The following year the *Free Press* responded to reports on gun smuggling, claiming that “all the natives throughout the whole of South Africa be at liberty to buy guns, powder and shot” as they did “not believe that this freedom would render life and property in the least less secure than at present”, but would “add much to the revenue.”<sup>130</sup> The *Free Press* stated that Africans primarily bought

---

<sup>126</sup> QFP, 11 March, 1875

<sup>127</sup> Rep, 5 January, 1872

<sup>128</sup> QFP, 5 November, 1872

<sup>129</sup> QFP, 5 November, 1872

<sup>130</sup> QFP, 18 November, 1873

firearms for hunting, and chastised the anti-firearm policy of the Transvaal.<sup>131</sup> William Storey confirms that in the 1870s “gun ownership [became linked] to broader policy debates about citizenship”.<sup>132</sup>

A *Free Press* editorial in 1871 felt that the present franchise allowed “large numbers of natives to become electors” who were misused by “electioneering agents”. By raising the franchise, then, the editorial argued, African inhabitants would be done a service, “freeing them from a duty for which they are unqualified in the estimation of their best friends.”<sup>133</sup> A follow-up editorial on “native representation” claimed that “out of every hundred native voters, not five are able to form any correct idea either of the qualification of a candidate put before them, or what line of policy he ought to pursue as being beneficial to the country.”<sup>134</sup> One correspondent claimed that the African vote could be obtained through bribery with money, beer or brandy.<sup>135</sup> The press thus sought to infantilise the African citizen in order to justify a restriction of his rights. The logic employed by the paper was similar to that around citizenship. All those who were qualified to vote should not be denied the right, rather the qualification should be utilized to create a more exclusive enfranchised population. The property qualification should be raised, argued the *Free Press*, but citizenship should still include “the intelligent and enterprising among the natives”.<sup>136</sup> In this way, both citizenship and the right to vote would be accorded carefully selected Africans, *ideal* colonial Africans. The Hackney mission station in Ox Kraal, for example, was “remarkable for sobriety and honesty” according to the paper, and contained eighty registered voters.<sup>137</sup> It is probable that few exercised the right. An article in an 1871

---

<sup>131</sup> QFP, 18 February, 1873

<sup>132</sup> W. Storey, ‘Guns, Race, and Skill in Nineteenth-Century Southern Africa’, in *Technology and Culture* (October 2004, Vol. 45), p. 704

<sup>133</sup> QFP, 5 May, 1871

<sup>134</sup> QFP, 31 October, 1871

<sup>135</sup> QFP, 30 January, 1874

<sup>136</sup> QFP, 9 Sep, 1875

<sup>137</sup> QFP, 29 March, 1875

edition of the *Representative*, for example, pointed out that although the Bongolo ward included 37 registered African voters, none had actually ever voted.<sup>138</sup>

Arbitrary decisions reached by ill-informed committees made up of white farmers were often the cause of denying propertied Africans this right. A formal objection to many residents from the Tambookie Location who had registered to vote was put together by the Queenstown farming community in the 1870s. GA Fincham, a prominent farmer and field-cornet, erroneously argued that there was no evidence that these Africans had ever been given certificates of citizenship in the first place.<sup>139</sup> It is clear that certain colonial Africans who had had access to citizenship certificates in the late 1860s now struggled to utilize the rights associated with them. The ideals of equal rights for African citizens that the *Free Press* had advocated almost a decade before were thus no longer applicable in practice.

In 1883 Hemming's deposition to the "Select Committee on the Pass Laws of the Colony" confirms this hypothesis. In giving testimony to the committee Hemming referred to the certificate of citizenship as a "certificate of respectability" and claimed that to a limited extent the certificate had become a pass. As evidence of this assertion he gave examples of men being arrested for not carrying their certificate even when within walking distance of their homes. He also claimed that many agents demanded a sum of 3 guineas to administer a certificate.<sup>140</sup> The findings of the committee highlighted the fact that the benefit of the certificate later on in the century was only in that it allowed the bearer to forego the hassle of obtaining a pass when travelling.

The view that African and European citizens should enjoy equal rights was propagated in the mid-1860s by the frontier intelligentsia through commentary in the

---

<sup>138</sup> Rep, 24 November, 1871

<sup>139</sup> QFP, 5 May, 1874. It is a pity that the abaThembu under question were not there to state their case, as it would have given us added insight into the relationship between the paper certificate and the practical application of rights for African citizens.

<sup>140</sup> A15 - '83, *Report of the Select Committee on the Pass Laws of the Colony*, pp. 7-8



press. This was challenged by many of the district's white farmers. As accusations that Africans could gain access to these rights through manipulation of certificates of citizenship gained credence so the term African 'citizen' became destabilized, as did the rights associated with it. By charting the use of specific terms in the Queenstown press of the 1860s and 1870s it can be clearly discerned that African citizens and foreigners became less and less distinct categories. This was not only a discursive struggle, then, as the language utilized to categorize Africans had very tangible ramifications in practice. Before the annexation of the Transkeian territories in the latter half of the nineteenth-century the certificate of citizenship was utilized to distinguish between colonial Africans ("deserving" of rights) and those from over the border.<sup>141</sup> When this distinction was no longer necessary, citizenship became less about 'difference' between foreigners and colonists and more about race. And while certificates of citizenship continued to be utilized, they no longer signified the bearer's status as a citizen, in the true sense of the word. They became, rather, what some argue they had always been – merely a pass.<sup>142</sup>

This chapter has charted white farmers' opposition to freehold for Africans on mission stations, to tenant farming and to African 'citizenship' rights. All three were integral to colonial Africans, and in particular the amaMfengu, negotiating lives in Queenstown. It has differentiated between the perspective of frontier farmers and the town-based intellectuals. The latter pursued a vehemently pro-assimilationist doctrine, and attempted to improve what they perceived to be the backwardness of African tradition. However, without the requisite imagination and reflexivity to truly understand the consequences of their ideas when put into practice their rigid criteria for inclusion were too improbable for Africans to attain. It was in their fallacious evocations of a prospering African community, and their Anglophone, bourgeois

---

<sup>141</sup> D. Hindson, *Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987), p. 19

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19

conceptions of appropriate behaviour, then, that they contributed to the ultimate impoverishment of the district's African communities.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### **Conquered Spaces, Legal Landscapes: violence and Queenstown's resident magistrate system**

This chapter is concerned with the creation of legalized violence, the colonial monopolization of fear and the role of colonial legal discourse in conquering, subjugating, controlling and assimilating Queenstown's African population into an ordered and urbanizing frontier zone. It charts discussions in the press to highlight the frontier intelligentsia's outlook on 'acceptable' violence, conceptions of justice and the role of colonial authorities in ruling over the district's African communities. Under British control the frontier form of violence against Africans was legitimated and centralized in the hands of the colonial power and enforced through the colonial courts and the resident magistrate system. The local press, with its 'rhetoric of conquest' was at the forefront of debates on how best this could be achieved. Predicated upon fear, ideas around justice and punishment were formulated within the context of real and imagined aggression in the district. The stories the white settlers told themselves about the Africans they lived with were often bleak and nightmarish, their sable brethren "baring their teeth", decimating their stock and plotting their deaths, "the sword of Damocles" swinging precariously above their heads.<sup>1</sup>

The continued everyday violence stemming from memories of bloodshed played itself out on the urban landscape of the town, and on the farms of Queenstown's rural hinterland. The colonial legal system legitimated much of this violence, justified harsher punishment of Africans, and increasingly barred Africans from seeking redress through either the customary or colonial courts. The Tambookie Location, however, became the major geographical site where the horrors of the colonial frontier imagination took root, and where the rhetoric of conquest could still be vividly enunciated.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> QFP, 29 June, 1866

<sup>2</sup> This would have had much to do with the fact that even after surveying parts of the location in the late 1860s and inspecting it in the early 1870s relatively little, according to Braun, was actually known about it (Braun, 'Cadastre and the Colony', p. 100).

The *Representative* described the Tambookie Location as “the source of the great fear of our old and young settlers”.<sup>3</sup>

The Tambookie Location was formed at the close of the eighth frontier war, when three branches of the abaThembu kingdom – the AmaGcina under Tyopo, part of the Qwati under Ndhlela, the amaHala chief Ndarala and the abaThembu regent Nonesi - were identified as loyal to the colony, and were given a large tract of land between the White Kei and Indwe Rivers in what was to become the northern extent of the Division of Queenstown. Among them were settled various disloyal but pardoned groups of amaXhosa and abaThembu, including the followers of Maphasa. The Tambookie Location was placed under the colonial agency of Joseph Cox Warner. Glen Grey, the site of a Wesleyan Mission Station, was the seat of colonial administration in the Tambookie Location. The Location was to be bounded on the west by the Bram Neck Range, and the east by the Indwe and Kei rivers.<sup>4</sup> According to Cathcart, the abaThembu occupying the Tambookie Location were “perfectly satisfied” and “most grateful” for the allocation of land.<sup>5</sup> However, some European farmers in the area still hankered after land which had been allocated to the pro-British abaThembu, and continued to apply for it.<sup>6</sup> In 1854 there were an estimated 20 000 abaThembu in the location.<sup>7</sup> Livestock producers appeared to do well. In 1865 the press reported that around 2000 goats, over 200 cattle and 38 horses were granted passes to be moved to the Tambookie Location. It was also reported in the mid-1860s that the number of traders in the location had increased ten-fold over the past few years, which “must be to a great extent dependent upon the wool produce of the location.”<sup>8</sup>

This chapter begins with the dual legal system applied in the Tambookie Location. The discussion then turns to the distinction between civil and criminal law, and the link between press reports,

---

<sup>3</sup> Rep, 13 November, 1869

<sup>4</sup> Cathcart, *Correspondence*, p. 240

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 205

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p.205

<sup>7</sup> *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1854, p. 192

<sup>8</sup> QFP, 1 June, 1866

violence and the experience of colonial law in Queenstown and the Tambookie Location. The basic premise of the argument which follows is that the frontier intelligentsia's contribution to debates around the legal system in Queenstown aimed to divest traditional authorities of their power, to assimilate Africans into the colony, to legalize certain forms of violence, and, ultimately, to quash the last remaining African resistance to colonial rule in the district. This coalesced neatly with the intellectuals' ideas on assimilation, obedience, education, rights as responsibility and justice, as promoted through press reports.

### **Law and order in the Tambookie Location**

Warner, the superintendent of the Tambookie Location occupied his post until 1865 when he took up the position of British Agent in Emigrant Thembuland, and his son became the new resident magistrate in the Tambookie Location. By the mid-1860s the resident magistrates – Warner was a superintendent, but endowed with the same responsibilities - had the power to “remove squatters, to issue passes for the driving of cattle, to supervise the marriage customs of native law, and to punish natives who could not prove their innocence of cattle theft when spoors of stolen cattle were found near their kraals.”<sup>9</sup> In everyday matters, he administered customary law, referring more serious cases of theft, and those of “witchcraft”, rape and murder, to the magistrate at Queenstown and to the Circuit Court run from the Supreme court at Grahamstown. These resident magistrates operated autonomously, however, adjudicating over African civil cases utilizing an admixture of colonial and customary law. This often meant that individuals came before two different courts and different systems of law for the same offence, as the *Free Press* observed:

---

<sup>9</sup> Price, *Making Empire*, 340. This, as Price continues, was in conflict with “the basic provision in British law of the presumption of innocence”. The ‘spoor laws’, which allowed groups of armed farmers to trace the spoor of missing cattle to the nearest kraal and demand repayment had been in existence since the early 1800s, and was still in practice in 1860s Queenstown. A notice printed in the *Free Press* in 1863 by the “Tambookie Agent”, Warner, admonished farmers for tracing spoor themselves without reporting the theft to the authorities (QFP, 15 September, 1863). While the ‘spoor laws’ were still recognized, the power to apprehend thieves was increasingly wrested from the hands of farmers and allocated to appointed colonial officers, a process which was at the heart of cementing colonial order along the north-eastern frontier.

“we remember frequently to have heard the prisoner in the dock tell the judge when called upon for any statement he may wish to make, that he does not see why the Judge should punish him, - that he has already paid for his theft – that Mr Warner has taken such and such stock from him in compensation, &c.”<sup>10</sup>

The press argued that Warner was completely justified in his actions, as “[t]o enforce Colonial Law on natives [...] in every minor case, whether the parties consent to have it dealt with by [African] Law or not, would be manifestly impolitic and inexpedient.”<sup>11</sup> What existed, then, was a type of ‘melting pot’ of laws, an increasingly complex and heated combination of ingredients that didn’t quite seem to integrate together smoothly, with a number of amateur ‘cooks’ trying desperately to make it do just the opposite. As Martin Chanock points out, during the nineteenth-century the British colonial government was still experimenting with the “most effective mechanism of control of conquered people” and debates centred around how much African legal tradition should be incorporated or adapted into the colonial legal landscape.<sup>12</sup>

This blend of laws did not only characterize cases adjudicated in the Tambookie Location, but also in the African civil cases which came before the colonial court in Queenstown. In 1864 an African man approached the Queenstown magistrate. He had, he explained, lately paid a number of cattle for a wife. Assured that negotiations had been completed successfully, he was more than dismayed when his new wife reneged on their agreement, deciding that she would not live with him. It was a legal matter which he hoped the Queenstown Magistrate could assist him with. The magistrate struggled to find a similar precedent in colonial law, and after consulting with legal officials in Cape Town for assistance was told that the case could not be settled in a colonial court. Throughout the 1860s, however, the Queenstown court increasingly came to officiate over cases involving *ukulobola* - “Our courts are continually pestered with cases of native men claiming cattle from the fathers of women they have had for wives, but who for some reason or other have left their men and returned to their

---

<sup>10</sup> QFP, 13 June, 1865

<sup>11</sup> QFP, 13 June, 1865. This issue around direct and indirect rule in the locations garnered much debate in the press. See, for example, QFP, 21 March, 1871

<sup>12</sup> Chanock, *Making of South African Legal Culture*, p. 245

homes”, claimed a *Free Press* article.<sup>13</sup> As it was customary for the fathers of women who had left their husbands to return the cattle, or *ikhazi* (bridewealth), given to the new husband upon the commencement of the marriage, these cases indicate that traditional practices were often not honoured in the African communities of the Tambookie Location and greater Queenstown District at this time.

Traditional healing, referred to as “witchcraft” in the press also posed a problem for the colonial courts. Nekani, an amaMfengu rainmaker, for example, was brought to book by a bevy of abaThembu clients, who, after paying the rainmaker a parcel of sheep in exchange for rain, were incensed when the promised rain did not arrive. In this case, what would normally have fallen outside of the confines of the colonial legal system was neatly ‘repackaged’ as a case of embezzlement, and thus deemed fit for adjudication in a court of law.<sup>14</sup> “White judges”, Martin Chanock has said, “used a promiscuous and unsystematic amalgam of legal ideas in dealing with the cases involving African custom that came before them.”<sup>15</sup> The only official guideline on African law available to magistrates was an “insubstantial book” put together by Chief Commissioner John Maclean and published in 1858, that amounted to little more than a collection of colonial opinions on African traditional courts.<sup>16</sup> These opinions, Chanock argues, coalesced with general ideas around African’s lower state on the evolutionary scale. All of this uncertainty resulted in much confusion and exposed many Africans to arbitrary sentences and punishments in the courts of Queenstown.

In 1864 the district was further unsettled by what the press came to term as “the Tambookie Move”. The Tambookie Location had posed great difficulty to colonial control, and settler desire for land in the district was pressing. Land north of the Kei was freed up by colonial secretary Richard Southey

---

<sup>13</sup> QFP, 28 November, 1871. Also see, Rep, 15 September, 1866; Rep, 19 April, 1876; Rep, 21 April, 1871

<sup>14</sup> Rep, 2 December, 1865. Also see Rep, 22 March, 1869 for another similar case. “Gatyana” from the Tambookie Location, was charged with “receiving a portion of [...] stock under false pretences” and sentenced to eighteen months in prison after taking a payment of stock from “Zinzili” in exchange for “making rain”. Cases of ‘witchcraft’ in general proved more difficult for the colonial courts to judge unless ‘theft’ or homicide could be inferred.

<sup>15</sup> Chanock, *Making of South African Legal Culture*, p. 244

<sup>16</sup> Chanock, *Making of South African Legal Culture*, p. 250

when he confiscated land from Sarhili, the belligerent amaGcaleka chief. Southey directed all the colonial abaThembu to move across the Indwe into what was to become “Emigrant Thembuland”. The decision to relocate the abaThembu was not met with unanimous compliance, and only some abaThembu agreed to the move.<sup>17</sup> Those who remained were to come under magisterial rule. “Fingoland” and the Idutywa Reserve below Emigrant Thembuland were resettled with amaMfengu from the crowded colonial locations so that there would be a solid frontier line of ‘friendly’ Africans bordering on white farms in the Queenstown district. In the short term, the tumult caused by abaThembu resistance and unsupervised movements of amaMfengu through the frontier districts and into Fingoland made the Queenstown settlers jittery and added much to the resolve to place greater power in colonial authority.

The system instituted to enforce the colonial legal system rested in resident magistrates who were appointed to African Locations from the mid-1850s as a way to divest power from chiefs, introduce colonial law into the Locations, and “incorporate customary law into the imperial political system.”<sup>18</sup> These magistrates, then, performed an integral function in the “civilizing” of colonial African subjects, and were part of the process of subjugation and assimilation of Queenstown’s African population. As Price argues, the resident magistrate system was implemented to “guard against any possible revival of chiefly power”<sup>19</sup>, which at the time still remained a possibility. Magistrates became key actors in the final stages of asserting British dominance over the amaXhosa.

---

<sup>17</sup> The “Tambookie Move” was hotly debated in the Queenstown press, and the debate quickly turned personal. Amidst the mud-slinging, which pitted town against country, the *Free Press* against the *Representative*, the municipality against the divisional council, the frontier intelligentsia ultimately revoked their support for the move, arguing that it was not just or legal. This view coalesced with the frontier intelligentsia’s construction of an assimilated colonial populace who had access to rights, resources and land. For details of the debate see, for example, QFP, 8 March, 1864; QFP, 29 March, 1864; QFP, 26 April, 1864; QFP, 25 April, 1865; QFP, 23 May, 1865; QFP, 30 May, 1865; QFP, 29 August, 1865; Rep, 4 November, 1865; Rep, 18 November, 1865; Rep, 2 December, 1865; QFP, 5 December, 1865; Rep, 16 December, 1865; QFP, 19 December, 1865; QFP, 19 December, 1865; Rep, 23 December, 1865; Rep, 30 December, 1865; QFP, 2 January, 1866.

<sup>18</sup> Crais, *White Supremacy*, p. 201

<sup>19</sup> Price, *Making Empire*, p. 340



In the early 1870s, after the Tambookie Location had been surveyed and land apportioned to several loyal headmen appointed by Judge, the Queenstown Resident Magistrate, periodical courts were established in the Tambookie Location.<sup>20</sup> The *Representative* complained that these periodical courts supported the continuance of traditional customs in the locations, as they dealt with inheritance and *ukulobola* issues.<sup>21</sup> The periodical courts were meant to be held monthly, but there is evidence that they were only held a few times a year.<sup>22</sup> While the choice to use customary or colonial law at these courts still rested with the individual magistrates, and would until after the “Commission on Native Law and Custom” of 1883, the Queenstown press became more adamant that African customs needed to be completely eradicated. “The morality of the natives where they are beyond British control” stated an 1871 *Free Press* editorial, “is bad – bad in the extreme.” The only solution to the continued rampant “vice and crime of every conceivable nature” the editorial could see was “destroying the influence of the Chiefs, and bringing the people more immediately under Colonial rule.”<sup>23</sup> The resident magistrate system and the use of colonial law were thus advanced as part of a moral discourse around civilization and improvement, a course of action that was in the ‘best interests of all’. The press did not advocate a system of indirect rule in the future, but envisioned a time when Africans (‘good’ Africans) could be assimilated into colonial Queenstown society. The same month the *Free Press* began to create a definitive ‘roadmap’ to the complete eradication of chiefly custom in the colony, albeit with measured caution. “No vacillating, changing measures, no yielding to Native prejudices, no winking at Native abominations, no making of laws and allowing these beings in transition to break them with impunity” the *Free Press* commanded.<sup>24</sup> The first suggestion was offered the next month. The editorial believed that the colonial courts should stop adjudicating over *ukulobola* issues. “We have no right as a civilized people” preached

---

<sup>20</sup> In 1871 the northern half of the Tambookie Location was included within the new district of Wodehouse.

<sup>21</sup> Rep, 2 June, 1874

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, report on a meeting held by farmers and traders in the Tambookie Location around the creation of a Resident Magistrate position in the Location (Rep, 31 December, 1877)

<sup>23</sup> QFP, 20 October, 1871

<sup>24</sup> QFP, 10 October, 1871

the editorial, “to acknowledge such a system.”<sup>25</sup> The Kamastone superintendent disagreed with the paper’s position. He argued that the colonial government had “tried to force our laws upon them, which are in many ways unsuited to their present condition, and have passed their own laws by, laws thoroughly understood by the people – laws certainly more effective to keep them from many crimes.”<sup>26</sup> An 1874 *Free Press* editorial, mirroring the general confusion over the use of colonial and customary law, conceded Jeffrey’s point in relation to African marriages. By only acknowledging colonial marriages, the paper agreed, the law was indeed creating great problems for African wives.<sup>27</sup>

It has been argued that the colonial legal system opened up avenues for the prosecution of cases that customary law did not provide for. In particular, “women used law as a resource in struggles over property [...] and also over authority over their own bodies, invoking symbols and ideas, negotiating meanings, asserting positions, and reconstructing understandings of gender.”<sup>28</sup> At the same time it created a bifurcation between civil and criminal cases which often worked against African litigants. A perusal of cases of attempted rape brought by African women against African men, for example, points to a rather less favourable reality for African women in the colonial court system, who more often than not found their rape charges dismissed, or their perpetrators released.<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Thornberry argues that violence against African women was often relegated to the private sphere of the family, and was not deemed a punishable offence in colonial courts, as were other acts of more ‘public’ violence.<sup>30</sup> In 1865 a rather complex case emanating from Ox Kraal, stemming from a traditionally-sanctioned act of compensation for a rape, found its way to the Magistrate in Queenstown. ‘Zakwe’, a woman residing in the location was charged with assaulting

---

<sup>25</sup> QFP, 28 November, 1871

<sup>26</sup> QFP, 21 March, 1871

<sup>27</sup> QFP, 19 June, 1874

<sup>28</sup> M.J Daymond, *Women writing Africa: the southern region* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 2003), p. 12

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Rep, 28 September, 1868; Rep, 15 September, 1871

<sup>30</sup> E. Thornberry, ‘Sex, violence, and Family in South Africa’s Eastern Cape’, in E.S Burrill, R.L Roberts and E. Thornberry (eds) *Domestic Violence and the Law in colonial and postcolonial Africa* (Athens/Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2010), p. 121. Thornberry discusses, in particular, cases involving *ukuzuma*, rapes occurring at night or while a woman is sleeping.

another woman, 'Nosess', with a knobkerrie. While the case was being heard in the Queenstown courtroom, it transpired that the assault was related to the taking of cattle without consent as retribution for the alleged rape. The Resident Magistrate was irate, and new proceedings were initiated against all parties involved, including two wives of the amaMfengu chief, "M'Potuli", "as an example that natives were not, and would not be, allowed in this district to carry out their own laws, when these were in conflict with Colonial Law, and tended as in this case to lead to breaches of peace and violence."<sup>31</sup> A case of rape was not pursued. As Thornberry asserts, "[i]n the eyes of British colonial officials, the desire for compensation was incompatible with recognition of the crime of rape", and thus African women had to choose between seeking criminal charges or compensation, not both.<sup>32</sup> African women may in fact have found more opportunities for justice in the customary court.

An 1876 case illustrates just how little redress the colonial court did offer African women in nineteenth-century Queenstown. According to the magistrate's records, a young African woman, "Mosapi" from the Ox Kraal Location was married by her father to an old man in the community. Discovering that she had been married off, Mosapi ran away and spent the night in the veld. The following morning her uncle and brother tracked her down, beat her and returned her to her new husband. She spent a month living with him, enduring daily beatings with a sjambok as she refused to conjugate their marriage. She managed to escape again, spending three nights in the mountain, when hunger drove her back to her father's house. After another beating she escaped to the mission station where her case was brought to the notice of colonial officials and the men responsible for assaulting her were arrested. The woman's uncle and brother, after paying a 10 pound fine, were released. The case was not brought to trial at the following circuit court, and her husband was not charged at all.<sup>33</sup> When Justice Dwyer criticized the judgment the local Queenstown press was quick to defend Queenstown's magistrate. While the *Representative* could understand Dwyer's objection

---

<sup>31</sup> QFP, 13 June, 1865

<sup>32</sup> Thornberry, 'Sex, violence and family', p.127

<sup>33</sup> QFP, 20 April, 1876

to “the sale of a young girl to any old man, so long as he can pay for her”, “[t]he case was one of simple assault, and compared with many we are accustomed to hear of, was a light offence”.<sup>34</sup> The paper was more concerned to draw attention to the lack of prosecution of certain inhabitants whose violent brawls were constantly disturbing the ‘public’ peace of the neighbourhood than with a ‘private’ domestic violence suite which more properly belonged within the civil proceedings of the quasi-customary resident magistrate’s court in the location itself.<sup>35</sup>

It was also not the beating that the *Representative* took issue with, but the fact that Mosapi was exchanged for cattle. The article claimed that many cases involving the custom of *ukulobola* were still being adjudicated over in the Queenstown court, in the 1870s, and that “in the event of the girl refusing to live with her purchaser, judgements have been given against the father, ordering a restitution of the price paid.”<sup>36</sup> The following month the paper drew attention to the lack of uniformity when adjudicating over cases involving Africans in the resident magistrate’s courts. “Similar cases come on in two towns; the judgements are quite incompatible with one another, and in many cases actually contradictory.” The paper explained that some resident magistrates chose to ignore customary law, while others still acknowledged it, and tried an “untidy” admixture between the colonial and customary.<sup>37</sup> By the 1870s increasing numbers of Africans in the district, however, were choosing to use the colonial courts for redress.<sup>38</sup>

### **Crime, violence and punishment**

While magistrates sought to control Africans through adjudication over what were categorized as civil cases utilising adapted and interpreted ‘customary’ laws, Roman-Dutch law was used in criminal

---

<sup>34</sup> Rep, 10 May, 1876

<sup>35</sup> Rep, 10 May, 1876

<sup>36</sup> Rep, 19 April, 1876

<sup>37</sup> Rep, 10 May, 1876.

<sup>38</sup> John Iliffe claims that the fact that so many amaXhosa willingly brought disputes to colonial courts so soon after conquest illustrates the Xhosa’s “preference for legal action over vengeance or feud.” (J. Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 155). Iliffe claims that the three most common forms of defamation carried from the precolonial to colonial context were accusations of theft, witchcraft and female promiscuity. See, for example, QFP, 12 July, 1870; Rep, 15 September, 1871; Rep, 21 March, 1873; Rep, 30 September, 1873.

cases, largely in an effort to protect property rights.<sup>39</sup> Many Africans brought to the courts of Queenstown were confused. Jonas and Booy of the Tambookie Location, for instance, asked why, after admitting guilt to stealing horses from “Umyazele,” “Xosana” and “M’bain” and having already paid a fine of eight goats, they should still be punished. They were sentenced to three years hard labour.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Magwaxaza, pleading guilty to sheep stealing, but, stating that he had since paid for the sheep, was also surprised to be sentenced to a year’s hard labour, accompanied by 25 lashes.<sup>41</sup> Many of the prisoners pleaded guilty without knowing what the repercussions would be. Booy, alias Tonis, styled a “determined looking villain” by the *Free Press*, stole fifty goats from farmer George Filmer, and was both fined and sentenced to five years imprisonment. Vowing vengeance as he left the dock, he stated that he would steal again from Filmer after being released from prison.<sup>42</sup> The press was more amused at the following objection:

“A[n] [African] was, a few days since, brought in charged with horse stealing. On its being enquired of him whether he had anything to say before committal, he admitted that he had stolen the property alluded to, but as this had since been stolen from him he imagined that the last thief took the guilt upon his shoulders! The argument was most logical, but failed to impress the Magistrate.”<sup>43</sup>

Magistrates took upon themselves the task of ‘educating’ Africans, and pedagogical performances in the way of a reprimand by the judge were common. In 1865 August or “Cotsha”, an umThembu, was charged with receiving stolen goods, in this case a bull belonging to Stephanus Fouchee. “Cotsha” pleaded guilty, but stated that he didn’t know that what he had done was a crime. The judge was unmoved, and sentenced him to three years imprisonment with hard labour, coolly advising him to tell all his friends in order to prevent them from committing the same crime.<sup>44</sup> When Jantje, another umThembu youth, discovered some clothes on the Bongolo Nek, he gave them to his parents to keep in their kraal, where they were subsequently found during a police search. The magistrate explained that finding and keeping something without endeavouring to find the real owner was

---

<sup>39</sup> Thornberry, ‘Sex, violence and family’, p.125

<sup>40</sup> QFP, 15 November, 1864

<sup>41</sup> Rep, 17 March, 1866

<sup>42</sup> QFP, 10 July, 1866

<sup>43</sup> QFP, 10 July, 1866

<sup>44</sup> QFP, 12 September, 1865

tantamount to theft. “Did not he (the prisoner) think that in what he had done he had been guilty of stealing? To this the prisoner replied with the utmost *naivete*, that was for his worship, and not for him to decide!” The magistrate sought to teach the difference between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, and Jantje was given three months, and his parents a severe reprimand regarding their role in the crime.<sup>45</sup> In contrast, in 1871 a case of sheep stealing stymied the presiding judge. As the three abaThembu men who were brought up on the charge had restored the stolen sheep, plus twelve extra to the owner, the judge “expressed grave doubts as to the legality of these men being tried for the crime, after making restitution.”<sup>46</sup> It is clear that Africans attempting to negotiate their lives in the colony were constantly battling against an alien legal system, whose rules alluded them. The issue of stock theft illustrates this most clearly.

Stock thefts by Africans, “the crying evil” as the press termed it, became a ‘truth’ which needed no evidence, and which provided a neat justification for the necessity of violence. In empathizing with the frontier farmer, the *Free Press* claimed it was “aware that he suffers from the existence of a race having no fixed theory with regard to honesty, and whose code (now almost become a faith) is to plunder the white man whenever opportunity occurs.” The writer added that, “there is more stock lost in a year in the Eastern Province than could be decently accommodated on all the pasture lands between Table Mountain and Bain’s Kloof.”<sup>47</sup> The modern-day reader can only respond with incredulity while reading the number of cases recounted in the contemporary Queenstown press that were riddled with gaping holes and based on flimsy evidence yet still resulting in a guilty verdict for the African defendant. The case of Zwartbooy, charged with stealing 34 head of cattle, is one such example. Zwartbooy’s defence, that he needed to take a cow across the colonial boundary, but couldn’t let his master’s cattle out of his sight, so was taking them with him to drop off his cow, “was an ingenious one”, claimed the *Free Press*.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> QFP, 12 June, 1866

<sup>46</sup> Rep, 17 March, 1871

<sup>47</sup> QFP, 12 June, 1866.

<sup>48</sup> QFP, 9 October, 1866

Accompanying the trope image of the African stock thief were conflicting ideas over whether crime was as rampant as some claimed it to be. The 1864 select committee on cattle thefts failed to obtain a list of returns of thefts from all the farmers in the Queenstown District, particularly those in the Kamastone area. Their representative George Weakley explained that this was a consequence of fear, fear that the squatting “Hottentots” and Kamastone amaMfengu, allegedly the main culprits would exact their “revenge in mutton” if the farmers were to implicate them in any criminal activity.<sup>49</sup> However, Jeffrey, backed up by 27 farmer signatures, claimed that the Kamastone farmers were not responsible for these thefts and that only one case of theft had been traced to the Kamastone location.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, according to some members of the Queenstown community “many, if not most, of the alleged classes of stock-stealing must be attributed to stockstraying”. Servants were also often paid in stock, which would have made it difficult to distinguish which were which.<sup>51</sup> Hermanus Mahonga, son of headman Petrus Mahonga, wrote from “the other side of the question”.<sup>52</sup> Hermanus was extremely concerned that a report regarding an accusation of theft in the *Free Press* appeared to be levelled at his father. Hermanus claimed that De Wet, whose sheep were stolen, had no proof, except his word, that the sheep he claimed from Petrus were actually his, both men owning sheep with the same ear marks.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> QFP, 2 August, 1864

<sup>50</sup> QFP, 16 August, 1864.

<sup>51</sup> QFP, 18 April, 1873. Additionally, in response to the farmer’s petition of 1864, an “observer” commented on the problems of disguising farmers’ markings of livestock. He noted that “doubtless there may be instances in which stock are so disfigured when stolen, but the question is, are there not times in which the farmers are in the habit of paying [Africans] with sheep and goats, so stripped of both ears in order to enable the servant to recognise his property among those of his master, especially in lambing season when servants are hard to be got, and when they are generally paid in ewes beforehand?” (QFP, 1 March, 1864)

<sup>52</sup> The Mahongas were an amaMfengu family, and part of the African elite in Queenstown who benefitted from their colonial connections. When the Tambookie Location was surveyed, Petrus Mahonga and his son Hermanus, were allocated land at Glen Grey and Petrus was awarded a petty chieftainship. Johannes Mahonga, Hermanus’ brother was the first Wesleyan African minister in the Queenstown Division. He began his candidacy in the Idutchwa Reserve, at a small sub-station of Clarkebury, (QFP, 21 August, 1868) and went on to become the minister at the mission station at Lesseyton. According to missionary notices, Petrus’ farm was an extensive two thousand five hundred acres, on which he had built a “large and beautiful house” worth £400 (*Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1870, p. 133)

<sup>53</sup> QFP, 12 March, 1862

While “stock theft” was a colonial criminal category, it may have been read in several different ways by the ‘thieves’. There is evidence, in some cases, of retribution as motivation for ‘theft’. Xelitoli, for example, claimed that he stole two oxen, three cows, two heifers and one calf from Marthinus Johannes Lombard as the latter would not pay him his wages.<sup>54</sup> A 13-year old son of headman Jolimvaba, who resided close to the Bongolo Mountains admitted to stealing four sheep after receiving harsh treatment at the hands of a farmer near Hangklip.<sup>55</sup> The jury did not look kindly on what they saw as immoral vengeance, and Xelitoli was charged with five years imprisonment.

The African as “stock thief” informed the everyday violence between settlers and Africans in Queenstown. Following Spurr, one can read this image as “inspired by the fear and loathing that lie at the heart of classificatory systems presented as the products of rational thought”.<sup>56</sup> As the *Free Press* continually argued, “[m]any and many a case of theft and aggression is passed over by the farmer, not from apathy as some suppose”, but because “[h]e has to ride perhaps twenty, thirty, and in some cases forty miles to the seat of justice”. The farmer had therefore to choose “either to let the offender transgress with impunity, or subject himself to the finger of the law, by taking the matter into his own hands”.<sup>57</sup> It is perhaps safe to assume that many took the latter course, without the magistrate in Queenstown being any the wiser, and the farmlands surrounding Queenstown were the site of a large degree of violence. The image of the thieving African allowed the colonial imagination to run rampant. At one point, a group of farmers began devising plans to gather “in a body and [exterminate] the first kraal of [Africans] found with stolen oxen and sheep” while townsman, Brown, on finding a young black ‘lad’ stealing the ripe fruit from his peach tree confessed that he was tempted “to tie him up to the tree he seemed to have taken such a fancy to, and at intervals during the night to lay into him with a sjambok.”<sup>58</sup> The press contains many inferences that

---

<sup>54</sup> QFP, 12 September, 1865

<sup>55</sup> Stanford, *Reminiscences*, p. 46

<sup>56</sup> D. Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: colonial discourse in journalism, travel writing, and imperial administration* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1993), p. 77

<sup>57</sup> QFP, 9 February, 1864

<sup>58</sup> QFP, 26 January, 1864; QFP, 2 February, 1864



'lynch law' was applied on farms within the district, without anyone's knowledge. Farmers argued that they were driven to this violence. "I think if this kind of fun continues much longer", one farmer wrote to *The Free Press*, "the farmers will be under the painful necessity of shooting the thieves where ever they find them."<sup>59</sup> The *Free Press* advocated that "everything be done in a calm and proper spirit", and did not advise "anything being done unconstitutionally". However, they did concede that "if protection is not afforded, you are not to be blamed for protecting yourself."<sup>60</sup>

The examples of farmers 'protecting' themselves were terrifyingly common. In 1860 a shopkeeper, without warning, shot a man attempting to steal a blanket from his store. The burglar was sentenced to one year's hard labour, while the storekeeper was exonerated.<sup>61</sup> In September 1863 a local farmer, Isiah Staples, on finding some of his stock missing decided to plant a spring-gun under the gate, not so much to deter, as to wound anyone who committed further depredations on his flock. A young African man, attempting to break in through the gate was subsequently shot. Staples was able to trace his way to the attempted thief via the blood trail from his property to a kraal. He took the thief into town, where the Resident Magistrate sentenced him to one month's hard labour. Many observers were up in arms. How could a thief be given such a light sentence? Others, however, felt that Staples had been the one to get off lightly, as the magistrate could easily have put him on trial for the shooting.<sup>62</sup>

The Frontier Armed and Mounted Police (FAMP) too, acted violently. When tales of FAMP brutality reached the public it became clear to the press that an 'acceptable' degree of violence had not yet been ascertained. In 1865 three privates in the FAMP, David Leech, Xaber Muller and Charles Itner were charged with assault for shooting Witbooy or "Hili", a horse-herd, in the leg. The prisoners claimed that they knew of no rule laid down as to what to do in the case of a suspected felon fleeing

---

<sup>59</sup> QFP, 15 September, 1862

<sup>60</sup> QFP, 26 January, 1864

<sup>61</sup> QFP, 24 November, 1863

<sup>62</sup> QFP, 8 September, 1863; QFP, 6 October, 1863; QFP, 10 November, 1863; QFP, 24 November, 1863; QFP, 1 December 1863; QFP, 8 December, 1863

the scene, but were “of the opinion the guns were given them to capture at all hazards” and that “men were blamed if they were remiss in their duty”. Witbooy, whose wound was allegedly not too severe, recovered enough to state his case in front of the court: he had been attempting to separate the horses of the police, from those under his care, when Itner came up and started herding all of the horses, including Witbooy’s, towards the police camp. Itner then attacked Witbooy with a stick and when the latter ran away, he fired three shots in his direction. The jury returned a verdict of not guilty, “but expressed surprise that the rules of the corps were not more definite to guide police in the execution of their duty.”<sup>63</sup>

Two years later a more serious case was heard in the Queenstown court. After three convicts effected their escape while being transported to the Katberg in 1866, the police set up a blockade on the road into the Transkei. On seeing an African man “approaching a mare and foal” he was pursued and shot. He died shortly after and the private who had fired the shot, Thomas Smith was charged, the *Representative* stated incredulously, with culpable homicide. It turned out that the man who was shot had been in the colony in order to assist an ailing brother, and had run due to the fact that he wasn’t in possession of a pass. “In two instances, therefore, had he infringed the law; and, however his death, under all the circumstances, may be lamented, it is scarcely fair to attribute blame to the police, who acted in strict pursuance of their instructions”, the *Representative* explained.<sup>64</sup>

Notwithstanding this sympathetic reporting, however, the frontier intelligentsia still remained highly critical of farmers taking the lives of Africans, and adopted a middle-ground between those who sought to prevent the shooting of Africans evading escape, and the indiscriminate torture of defenceless Africans. When Queenstown farmers suggested that more power be put into the hands of field-cornets in 1866 a *Free Press* editorial cautioned: “[W]e know the utter contempt with which the farmer regards the black thief, the value he sets upon his carcuse [sic] and the desire that he feels to ‘pot’ the scoundrel.” However, the editorial cautioned that “[i]t would be by this very

---

<sup>63</sup> QFP, 12 September, 1865

<sup>64</sup> Rep, 14 January, 1867

feeling, engendered by the absence of restraint, that farmers would be guided to commit acts legalized by the power deputed to them, but fatal to the policy of the colony at large.”<sup>65</sup> In 1867 a case of the latter came up in the circuit courts of Grahamstown. After discovering that his servant had stolen a lamb from his flock, a ‘master’ spent the next eighteen days torturing his servant, by alternately tying him up by his wrists to a tree, and forcing him to spend several hours waist-deep in an icy nearby river. The *Representative* was clear in their admonition of the farmer:

“We are well aware – only too well aware! Of the difficulties with which a Frontier farmer has to contend; but we do not think that those difficulties will be lessened by the infliction of gratuitous cruelty on natives, or by a denial of justice to the black man”.

The editorial also criticized the jury who had acquitted the farmer for his crime. “We assert”, proclaimed the paper, “that even-handed justice is to be meted out to all of Her Majesty’s subjects, of whatever creed, class or colour”. Or else, it warned, another war would be the probable result.<sup>66</sup> The *Free Press* concurred.<sup>67</sup> Another article argued that although the white man was superior to the black man it did not mean that the former could “shoot, hang, imprison, rob, these men or beings just as we please”.<sup>68</sup> When a case involving the severe beating of three servants in Tarkastad after they were discovered with their hands on a local farmer’s saddle and bridle came to the attention of the Queenstown press in 1869 the *Free Press* reiterated their criticisms of gratuitous violence. Being “the height of wool season, with no hands to spare”, although the farmer should have sent the men to the magistrate in Cradock, the *Free Press* editorial pointed out, one “can easily understand how the sufferers took the law in their own hands.”<sup>69</sup> The newspaper was uneasy to let the matter rest here, however, as fundamentally, they believed that “[l]ynching is not creditable to us as British subjects.”<sup>70</sup> The ambivalent voice displayed here characterized much of the press’ commentary on members of the community ‘taking the law into their own hands’. Although they allowed that

---

<sup>65</sup> QFP, 11 September, 1866

<sup>66</sup> Rep, 13 May, 1867

<sup>67</sup> QFP, 21 May, 1867

<sup>68</sup> QFP, 9 April, 1867

<sup>69</sup> QFP, 7 May, 1869

<sup>70</sup> QFP, 7 May, 1869

circumstance may have deemed certain violent acts necessary, they were uncomfortable with what this uncontrolled violence might spell for the hegemony of British law and order.

By the 1870s violent responses to alleged thieves became increasingly legitimated by the press, who had worked out a 'guideline' for violence by reframing the question within a legal context. The debate became less that Africans should not be punished physically than that this punishment be meted out through official channels, that could regulate when and how much punishment should suffice in each case. Press commentary on cases of shooting Africans was accompanied by a focussed resolve to motivate for changes to the law relating to the issue. In 1871 the case of a Uitenhage farmer on trial for manslaughter inspired a lengthy editorial on the colonial law around the shooting of suspected stock thieves, which rested on legislation from the 1830s. The editorial's main complaint was with the ambiguity of the law, and that interpretations which were made "at one trial [were] reversed at another."<sup>71</sup> The frontier intelligentsia promoted a moral discourse that upheld violence, so long as it was legally-justified and consistent. A *Free Press* editorial from later that same year advocated for the creation of more "petty" magistracies to "prevent farmers and others from taking the law into their own hands, as they now too often do, and which, however excusable under present circumstances, is far from beneficial to our social welfare."<sup>72</sup> "A farmer" writing into the *Free Press* in 1872, suggested that the remedy for stock thefts and "those farces - the trial of a man for shooting a[n] [African] in the act of stealing his property" would be to allow the shooting of thieves at night due to reduced visibility and "an application of the lash as they would not forget the rest of their lives" if caught in the act during the daytime.<sup>73</sup> When a young farmer by the name of Humphreys was arrested for murder after shooting an African "in the act of stealing from a kraal near Alice" later that month, a group of sympathetic farmers and townspeople from Queenstown met in the town hall to draw up resolutions regarding the law around shooting African stock thieves. Those present argued that the killing of any African discovered amongst stock

---

<sup>71</sup> Rep, 17 February, 1871

<sup>72</sup> QFP, 16 August, 1870

<sup>73</sup> QFP, 20 August, 1872

between sunset and sunrise based on a “*bona fide* belief that he was there with a felonious attempt” should be deemed an act of “justifiable homicide”.<sup>74</sup> The editorial of the *Representative* the following day supported the arguments raised at the meeting, declaring that there was definitely “some defect in the law requiring amendment”. The editorial spelled out the press’ stance:

“[W]here a human being, whether white or colored, is slain, there ought to be a full and searching enquiry into the circumstances [that...] show that the homicide took place under circumstances which the law deems to be justifiable”.<sup>75</sup>

The press advocated changing the law to protect farmers from prosecution. Meetings of agitated farmers discussing alterations to the law continued in the aftermath of the Humphreys case.<sup>76</sup> The press also defended the position the Queenstown farmers had taken. An article later that year explained that farmers did not want “*carte blanche* to shoot any native found on their veldt” but simply legislation that prevented them from having to risk their lives in the capture of thieves.<sup>77</sup>

Acts of violence were also concerned with enforcing obedience and subjugation of African workers. Adopting its usual ‘middle-ground’ stance, the press did not support the ill-treatment of workers. It did, however, sympathize with farmers who meted out ‘justice’ on “insolent”, “idle” or “negligent” workers in other violent ways. In 1864 a farmer in the Queenstown district employed a youth who became “so saucy and lazy” that the farmer tied him up with a reim. After escaping, the farmer chased him on horseback with a whip, brought him back to the farm “where no doubt he received a sound whipping which he certainly deserved”.<sup>78</sup> On another occasion John McDonald employed an umMfengu from Ox Kraal for a month. The farmer, suspecting his servant of stealing sheep refused to pay his wages. The herdman retaliated by refusing to finish his day’s work. Incensed, McDonald followed the man to his own hut, about a mile and a half from the house, tied him up, dragged him back to the house and proceeded to beat him with a sjambok.<sup>79</sup> According to a sympathetic article

---

<sup>74</sup> Rep, 30 August, 1872

<sup>75</sup> Rep, 30 August, 1872

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, Rep, 29 November, 1872

<sup>77</sup> Rep, 8 November, 1872

<sup>78</sup> QFP, 12 January, 1864

<sup>79</sup> QFP, 25 October, 1864

in the *Free Press* “no jury would bring a man in guilty of assault, who justly punished his servant for misconduct.”<sup>80</sup>

More serious cases also garnered sympathy from the press. A farmer named Hesselman, on finding his umThembu herd stealing sheep, emptied 14 bullets into his fast escaping back. According to some abaThembu in the vicinity Hesselman had shot the herd as punishment for mixing his master’s sheep with those of another. The badly-injured ‘fugitive’ was tracked down by the police to the kraal of Carolus, “the mulcted constable of the former British Resident in Tambookieland” about six miles from Glen Grey, but by the next morning had escaped again. The *Representative* commented that his flight “from the officers of the law would seem to indicate a conscience ill at ease.”<sup>81</sup> At an 1875 circuit court hearing Amina Kalifa Bassier was charged with causing the death of a 10-year old servant, Mietjie. The girl had a bad heart and lungs and the beating with a plank had hastened her death. The jury found Bassier guilty of culpable homicide and she was sentenced to three years hard labour. The *Free Press*, however, thought Justice Dwyer’s sentence too harsh, claiming that many a time they could have found themselves near the position of the prisoner.<sup>82</sup>

While the frontier intelligentsia advanced the case for laws that increased opportunities to justify violent acts, calls in the press for greater utilization of corporal punishment made the law itself inherently violent, and were an integral cog in the increasingly powerful colonial machine. According to one *Free Press* editorial Africans were not scared enough of colonial law, while in another, two fictional African characters laughed after being sentenced in the Queenstown magistrate court.<sup>83</sup>

“[W]ithout fear, or in other words, unless the native fears us, we cannot hope to govern him

---

<sup>80</sup> QFP, 12 January, 1864

<sup>81</sup> Rep, 23 December, 1865; QFP, 23 December, 1865

<sup>82</sup> QFP, 28 October, 1875. Judge Dwyer was not very popular in Queenstown. He often came to blows with juries, and on one occasion lost his temper after a jury failed to return a guilty verdict in a case involving a field-cornet who had shot and killed an African while attempting to arrest him. “Trial by jury”, the *Free Press* lectured, “is an Englishman’s safe-guard of his life, and property, one of his dearest privileges, handed down to him from the far past; and no Judge has a right to try to over-ride a jury’s verdict.” (QFP, 23 September, 1875)

<sup>83</sup> QFP, 9 February, 1864; QFP, 21 November, 1860

properly, or obtain security for ourselves” warned an 1864 article.<sup>84</sup> Part of the fear and paranoia that lay at the heart of imperialism was not only that the colonized would recoup their power, but that the force of imperialism would weaken.

The press advocated the ‘fixing’ of this aberrant African inhabitant through more legalized forms of violence. Violence in the guise of punishment. Magistrates were allowed to sentence repeat offenders to a whipping of not more than 36 strokes, if they were found guilty of a crime more than once within a two-year period. In 1864 Ordinance Number 5 reiterated that corporal punishment was only for non-whites, and that no white criminal could be flogged. Although it was common to sentence Africans found guilty in colonial courts to a whipping, either in lieu of or in addition to a jail sentence, the infliction of corporal punishment was a decision made by the presiding judge, and was not mandatory. Through numerous editorials and articles the local press advocated for the utilization of this violent means of punishment as part of the creation of the ideal African Queenstownite. It justified this violence by advancing a pseudo-scientific rhetoric around Africans’ insensitivity to physical pain, through the image of the “proverbially thick” African skull, the violence of African nature and the “prison as resort” rhetoric.<sup>85</sup> This justification for, and promotion of, legalised ‘corrective’ violence against Africans was one of the frontier intelligentsia’s more insidious contributions to the continued experience of violence along the north-eastern frontier.<sup>86</sup>

While the making of the colonial order in Queenstown was informed to a large degree by the settlers’ fear of another African uprising, fear was also a tool utilized by this fledgling colonial order

---

<sup>84</sup> QFP, 31 May, 1864

<sup>85</sup> See, for example, QFP, 17 February, 1863; QFP, 24 January, 1865; QFP, 7 February, 1865; QFP, 12 June, 1866; QFP, 28 September, 1866; Rep, 20 October, 1866; QFP, 7 January, 1867; Rep, 19 April, 1876. Jail conditions at this time, however, were less than commodious. While the press advanced the “prison as resort” image, the reality was anything but. The Queenstown jail was a dark, crowded and unventilated dungeon, where prisoners lived next to piles of their excrement and a makeshift hospital. Many of these prisoners were merely awaiting trial, some waiting almost a year until their ‘real’ sentence would begin -in one case, an eight year-old boy, arrested on charges of culpable homicide, spent three months for his trial before being sentenced to a one-week jail term (Rep, 15 September, 1871). While the press bemoaned the ‘kind’ treatment of Africans in prison, the reality of numerous escape attempts points to a rather different reality. See, for example, QFP, 18 March, 1873.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Flogging’ was often touted as a ‘cure’ or ‘remedy’: see, for example, QFP, 25 June, 1867; Rep, 16 March, 1868; Rep, 28 September, 1868

to induce Africans to behave in the ways proscribed for them. By addressing the issues of an acceptable degree of violence and the role of colonial law and chiefly courts, the press actively participated in justifying increased repression of Queenstown's Africans under the guise of 'justice', 'legality' and 'morality'. While the local Queenstown press was attempting to create a moral discourse around violence, one which institutionalized the bloodshed of the frontier within the legal categories of law and punishment, its discussions on the shooting of Africans and the use of colonial and customary law also allow us to glimpse the violent experience of some of Queenstown's colonized. In the press, these discussions took on the form of a 'rhetoric of conquest' and violence, punishment and law became synonymous with the cementing of colonial control. However, by blurring the boundaries between discipline and violence these discussions also point to the contradiction in the frontier intelligentsia's ethos - their measured tone and assimilationist ethos served to obscure their support of, and capacity for, acts of violence and dispossession.



## **CONCLUSION**

### **Settler-colonial Queenstown and beyond**

This thesis has attempted to show how a frontier intelligentsia was fostered along the north-eastern frontier in the aftermath of the eighth frontier war. This group, it has been argued, formed a distinct collective of town-based intellectuals, whose ethos can be discerned through an examination of the local press. Discussions on landscape, the rhetoric of 'progress', and the growth of knowledge-based institutions in Queenstown (chapter one), increasing racial segregation and the creation of African spaces on the outskirts of the town (chapter two), conflict between African and European farmers in the vicinity of the amaMfengu mission stations (chapter three) and the experience of violence and colonial law (chapter four) have been utilized to define the contours of this frontier intelligentsia. The discussion has been taken a step further, suggesting ways in which the frontier intelligentsia in Queenstown played an important role in informing the nature of colonial/African relations in the district and along the north-eastern frontier. Methodologically this study has attempted to demonstrate the benefit of examining the local colonial press when narrating the everyday lives of people living along the eastern Cape frontier.

At its most ambitious then, this thesis has also aimed to recreate, in part, the past of a hitherto neglected frontier of the Cape – the north-eastern frontier in the mid-nineteenth century. It has told the story of how the establishment of colonial Queenstown reconstituted land-use and access to resources in the area, it has charted the early growth of Queenstown's African township community and increased segregation, and the role of frontier experiments in formulating the rule of law and order, and grappling with issues of how to incorporate the customary into the colonial legal landscape, in particular within the context of the more far-flung areas of

the frontier, the Tambookie Location. It has contrasted this to the issues over land ownership and rights in the amaMfengu Locations of Kamastone and Ox Kraal.

While these discussions suggest that Africans still had access to a certain degree of independence from colonial rule in this early chapter of Queenstown's history, throughout the 1870s this relative independence waned. In 1877 the ninth, and final, frontier war (War of Ngayechibi) was to rage just beyond Queenstown's boundary. The war, which pitted the amaGcaleka under Sarhili and amaNgqika under Sandili against a joint amaMfengu, colonial force had ended by 1878. Sarhili was defeated, Sandili was dead, and the remaining vestiges of amaXhosa independence destroyed. Most of the Transkei was formally annexed to the Cape colony the following year, and the frontier war chapter of the eastern Cape's history was officially over.<sup>1</sup>

Queenstown itself remained unscathed, and the post-frontier war period saw an unfettered municipality, endowed with municipal status, enacting more dramatic changes to the district's socio-cultural landscape. With telegraphic communication since 1875 and the construction of a railway in 1880 linking Queenstown to the diamond fields and the port of East London, the town came to be situated within a network of trade, commerce, culture and transnational ideologies. The railroad also aided in increasing African migrant labour on the mines, while reducing the necessity for, and thus the livelihoods of, African transport-riders.<sup>2</sup> The 'utopia' expressed by the frontier intelligentsia through the annals of the local press was more likely to be realized in this next era of Queenstown's history.

This had significant repercussions on the African population of the town. While Africans had lived somewhat independently in the Location in the 1860s, and to a

---

<sup>1</sup> C.M Paulin, "Small wars" and British expansion in Southern Africa: 1877-1880', in *White Men's Dreams, Black Men's Blood: African Labor and British Expansionism in southern Africa, 1877-1895* (Trenton, NJ, Africa World Press, 2001), p. 59

<sup>2</sup> C. Crais, *The Politics of Evil: magic, state power, and the political imagination in South Africa* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 117

lesser degree in the 1870s, the 1880s ushered in an entirely different phase in its development. In 1880 the original Municipal Location was washed away by a flood.<sup>3</sup> A new one, Sidikidi (meaning unmethodical), was established afterwards. Mina Soga claims that although residents were allowed to build “each one to his own fancy”, an Inspector by the name of Barnes was appointed to control any other ‘fancies’ the residents might have had. The 1880s also saw a more divided African population in the town, promoted by the allocation of a separate area for Basothos called Ezingxandeni (meaning at the square houses). Many were migrant workers from Tarkastad to the west of Queenstown. Shortly afterwards, parts of the Location were surveyed and by the turn of the century the river had become an impermeable line between blacks and whites.<sup>4</sup> The Location of the next century featured prominently on town maps as a series of straight lines in a neat, grid-pattern.

In contrast, by 1880 many amaMfengu had been forced to abandon agricultural activities and leave the confines of their Locations in Kamastone and Ox Kraal to find work on the surrounding farms.<sup>5</sup> The survey, coupled with a decade of serious drought, and the imposition of overdue taxes served to impoverish almost everyone living in these locations. It also resulted in the complete reorganization of the political economy of the community. Moreover, in the first nine months of 1882 fifteen colonial amaMfengu were arrested in Queenstown for contravening the pass laws, these “vexatious and arbitrary proceedings” suggesting that certificates of citizenship were now next to worthless.<sup>6</sup> Despite “severe overcrowding and skewed distribution of productive resources”, claims Bouch, any prosperity that had existed in Kamastone and Ox Kraal in the seventies was but a distant memory by the close of the century.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> This was the second Nogumbe (flood) (Soga, ‘Role of Africans’). The first occurred in 1874 and had resulted in similar destruction of the Municipal Location, although plans to resettle the community were never carried out by the municipality.

<sup>4</sup> Soga, ‘Role of Africans’

<sup>5</sup> G20 – ’81, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*, p. 108

<sup>6</sup> G8 – ’83, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*, pp. 112-13

<sup>7</sup> Bouch, ‘Kamastone and Ox kraal Locations’, 18

Much of the legislation throughout the rest of the nineteenth century was aimed at curbing African rights even further. The Queenstown amaMfengu were ordered to hand in their firearms after the Peace Preservation Act of 1879. According to the 1882 report on African Locations in Queenstown, the “loyal Colonial Tembus of Lesseyton, and the Fingoes of Ockraal and Kamastone, have naturally felt much soreness at being disarmed, and amongst many of them this Act [...] is a constant theme of complaint.”<sup>8</sup> The codification of African customary law after the 1883 “Commission on Native Law and Custom” and the Glen Grey Act of 1894, which disallowed land-holders in the area from voting, contributed to a more repressive environment for Africans living in the district. Between 1881 and 1885, as historian Colin Bundy confirms, “several location acts were passed in the Cape with the aim of reducing the numbers of ‘idle squatters’ (ie., rent-paying tenants economically active on their own behalf) on white-owned lands” and legislation was more vigilantly enforced.<sup>9</sup> While “trespassing” and “squatting” on white-owned land was also still possible in 1870s Queenstown it became increasingly difficult as the century progressed.

The charting of increased oppression of Africans in the Queenstown area in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is not to be understood as offering a neat trajectory from chaos and disorder to progress and ultimate success for the colonial endeavour. The later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were, in fact, also characterised by rapid African politicisation and resistance to colonial rule, most notable in Queenstown in the Bullhoek Massacre of 1821.<sup>10</sup> Africans were never, as

---

<sup>8</sup> G8 - '83, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*, p. 112

<sup>9</sup> C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1979), p. 78.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Edgar situates the massacre within the worsening conditions of land shortages, drought and disease experienced by people living in Kamastone in the early twentieth century. When Enoch Mgjijima, disenchanted by the racial practices of the Wesleyan Church and plagued by headaches and religious visions joined the Church of God and Saints of Christ (CGSC) in 1912, he quickly amassed a following of similarly frustrated Africans in Kamastone and Shiloh. By the end of the decade, having been excommunicated by the parent CGSC church in America, Mgjijima's teachings became increasingly focused on his millenarian visions, which foretold of a violent

the colonial endeavour had presented them, merely unconscious repositories for the basest desires of colonialism.

Rather, the value in looking at what happened next lies in its ability to further illuminate the ethos of the frontier intelligentsia in mid-nineteenth century Queenstown. This perspective, while pejorative never consciously narrated the future detailed above. However obvious it appears to us now, it was not then a *fait accompli*. The intellectuals in Queenstown did not foresee, or hope for, widespread colonial African poverty or the creation of an oppressed group of second-class citizens without access to education. Instead they prophesied that “the more probable fate of the black man is, that he will be absorbed” and assimilated.<sup>11</sup> This is not to say that they were innocent bystanders or selfless philanthropists. The frontier intelligentsia configured such unequal and rigidly defined codes around belonging that Africans had very little chance, in retrospect, of ever being accepted into this elite settler society. As Africans continued to disappoint the bourgeois ideals of ‘go-aheadism’ and productivity, so the intellectuals sought, through the press, to improve, change and, ultimately, ‘de-Africanise’ them. They utilised various means to motivate for increased regulations – whingeing editorials, public meetings, advocacy, debates, and the more insidious devices of images, rhetoric and analogies.

Furthermore, the construction of the settler-colonial town has legacies which still inform the use of urban space today. In South African towns and cities the narrative of Apartheid, important as it is, has somewhat obscured the foundations of racially-segregated urban spaces which were formulated within the tumultuous period of the

---

clash between white and black. He encouraged his followers, known as Israelites, to settle on a stretch of land near his home in Ntabalenga (Bullhoek), a sub-station of the Kamastone Location, in order to await the fulfillment of his prophecy. The state, viewing this illegal occupation of land as a direct challenge to their rule, sent in a group of armed policemen to forcibly remove Mgijima’s followers. In the massacre which followed almost 200 Israelites were killed by police. See, R. Edgar, “The Prophet Motive: Enoch Mgijima, the Israelites, and the Background to the Bullhoek Massacre”, in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, (vol. 15, no. 3, 1982), pp. 401-422.

<sup>11</sup> QFP, 7 October, 1870

frontier wars. Anglophone intellectuals have too been subsumed within a narrow reading of the press that makes very little attempt to unpack the apparent homogeneity of the 'frontier voice'. The frontier intelligentsia in Queenstown, it has been argued, were no bit-part players in the drama of colonisation along the north-eastern frontier. They constituted a significantly vocal grouping that spearheaded very tangible and specific changes in their community by utilising a modulated rhetoric and appealing to intellectual notions of political representation and appropriate behaviour. The press became the forum for the articulation of this voice as well as a record of how the intellectual ethos played itself out in the everyday environment of the north-eastern frontier.

It is to one of these 'every' days, a cold winter's afternoon sometime in early July 1868, that we now turn. A light snow had just begun to fall. It coated the window of Crouch's deli, concealing the potted hams and jars of quince jelly beneath a light splattering of wet ice on glass. It turned Cathcart Street into a sludgy snowfield, crunchy underfoot. It spared neither the hexagon, nor the town pump, and proceeded to dust the entire town with "myriads of snow flakes". The snowfall had occurred at an opportune moment – the inhabitants of the town had recently won the right to a half-day holiday on Wednesdays, and many were trawling the streets looking for something to do. At some point someone must have lent down, shaped a hard clump of snow into a ball and aimed it at an unassuming bystander, for very quickly the town was engaged in a full-blown snow fight. The playful snow-throwing eventually turned into a battle between the black and white inhabitants. The snowballs, packed hard and containing pebbles and bits of solid matter from the muddy roads were like large icy rocks, resulting in "a black eye or two, and at least one bloody nose". The battle continued for a good few hours, until the black group, defeated, according to the *Free Press*, was "driven across the river to the location."<sup>12</sup> This tale of seeming

---

<sup>12</sup> QFP, 10 July, 1868

frivolity, found in the pages of the *Queenstown Free Press*, presents us with an exquisite micronarrative for the reconfiguration of British rituals within this newly-urbanizing African place. At once we have the image of co-dependence and separation, the joy of participation in a shared recreational activity, with the underlying connotations of animosity and innate difference. It is, too, a tale of violence. And one which still characterizes our towns, and our press, today.

University of Cape Town

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **PRIMARY SOURCES - NEWSPAPERS**

*The Queenstown Free Press, 1859 – 1877*

*The Queenstown Representative, 1865 – 1877*

*Queenstown Daily Representative Centenary Issue, 21 September, 1953*

Soga, Mina. 'Role of Africans in Queenstown's Development', in *Queenstown Daily Representative Centenary Issue* (22 September, 1953)

### **PRIMARY SOURCES – GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

G16 – '76, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*

G17 – '78, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*

G20 – '81, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*

G8 – '83, *Blue Book on Native Affairs*

SC 1 '64, *Select Committee Report on Cattle Thefts*

A15 – '83, *Report of the Select Committee on the Pass Laws of the Colony*

### **PRIMARY SOURCES – FILES OF THE RESIDENT MAGISTRATE OF QUEENSTOWN, CAPE ARCHIVES**

3/QTN, vol. 1/1/1/1, *Minutes of Council Meeting*, 17 October, 1859 (Cape Archives)

3/QTN, vol. 1/1/1/1, *Minutes of Council Meeting*, 7 November, 1859, (Cape Archives)



**PRIMARY SOURCES – WESLEYAN MISSIONARY NOTICES, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SOUTH AFRICA, CAPE DEPOT**

*Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1854 – 1876

**UNPUBLISHED PRIMARY SOURCES, CORY LIBRARY**

Shepstone, Ann. *Journal of Ann Shepstone* (transcript, MS7596)

**PUBLISHED PRIMARY SOURCES**

**Cathcart**, G. *Correspondence of Lieut.-General the Hon. Sir George Cathcart, K.C.B.: 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 of South Africa* (London, Murray, 1857)

**Taylor**, William. *Christian Adventures in South Africa* (London, Jackson, Walford and Hodder, 1867)

**BOOKS**

**Anderson**, G.H. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York, Macmillan, 1998)

**Ayliff**, J and Whiteside, J. *History of the Abambo generally known as Fingos* (Butterworth, 1912)

**Bundy**, Colin. *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1979)

**Carter**, Paul. *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989)

**Chanock**, Martin. *The Making of South African Legal Culture, 1902-1936: Fear, Favour and Prejudice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001)

**Crais**, Clifton. *White Supremacy and Black resistance in pre-industrial South Africa: the making of the colonial order in the eastern Cape* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999)

**Crais**, Clifton. *The Politics of Evil: magic, state power, and the political imagination in South Africa* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002)

**Daymond**, M.J. *Women writing Africa: the southern region* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 2003)

**Douglas**, M. *Purity and danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo* (London/New York, Routledge, 1966)

**Dubow**, Saul. *A commonwealth of knowledge: science, sensibility, and white South Africa, 1820-2000* (Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 2006)

**Edmonds**, Penelope. *Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2010)

**Gordon**, R.E. *Shepstone: the role of the family in the history of South Africa, 1820-1900* (Cape Town, A.A Balkema, 1968)

**Greaves**, A. 'Tell me of Komani: A history of Queenstown' (Queenstown and Frontier Historical Society, 1987)

**Hindson**, D. *Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987)

**Hooper**, Glenn. *Landscape and Empire, 1770-2000* (England, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005)

**Iiffe**, John. *Honour in African History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005)

**Lester**, Alan. *Imperial Networks: creating identities in nineteenth-century South Africa and Britain* (London, Routledge, 2001)

**Levine**, Roger. *A living man from Africa: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa chief and missionary, and the making of nineteenth-century South Africa* (Connecticut, Yale University Press, 2011)

**Lombard**, P.J. *Die Stigting en Vroeë Geskiedenis van Queenstown (1853-1859)* (Archives Year Book for South African History 15<sup>th</sup> year, Vol 2, 1951, Pretoria, Government Printer, 1952)

**Mostert**, Noel. *Frontiers: the epic of South Africa's creation and the tragedy of the Xhosa people* (New York, Knopf, 1992)

**No author**, 'Queenstown' (Cape Town, Cape Times Ltd., 1953)

**Neumann**, R.P. *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over livelihood and nature preservation in Africa* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998)

**Newton-King**, S. *Masters and servants on the Cape eastern frontier, 1760-1803* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999)

**Peires**, Jeff. *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981)

**Peires**, Jeff. *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1989)

**Penn**, Nigel. *The Forgotten Frontier: colonist and Khoisan on the Cape's northern frontier in the 18<sup>th</sup> century* (Cape Town, Double Storey Books, 2005)

**Price**, R. *Making empire: colonial encounters and the creation of imperial rule in nineteenth-century Africa* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008)

**Spurr**, David. *The Rhetoric of Empire: colonial discourse in journalism, travel writing, and imperial administration* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1993)

**Stanford**, Walter. *The Reminiscences of Sir Walter Stanford* (Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 1958)

**Turner**, F.J. *The Frontier in American History* (New York, Holt, 1953)

## **THESES**

**Bouch**, Richard. 'The colonization of Queenstown (Eastern Cape) and its hinterland, 1852-1886' (Ph.D thesis, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1990)

**Braun**, Lindsey Frederick. 'The Cadastre and the colony: surveying, territory, and legibility in the creation of South Africa, c. 1860-1913' (Ph.D thesis, Rutgers, 2009)

**Marshall**, Richard. 'A Social and Cultural History of Grahamstown, 1812 to c1845' (M.A thesis, Rhodes University, 2008)

**McKend**, Robert. "'A journal among them": colonial discourse and the creation of an imaginary community in the Graham's Town Journal, 1881-36' (M.A thesis, UCT, 1997)

**Redding**, Sean. 'The Making of a South African town: social and economic change in Umtata, 1870-1950' (Ph.D thesis, Yale University, 1987)

## **JOURNAL ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS IN BOOKS**

**Bouch**, Richard. "Farming, capitalization and labour in a newly colonized area: Queenstown, 1852 - 1886" (Cape Slavery and After Conference, University of Cape Town, 1989)

**Bouch**, Richard. 'The Oukraal and Kamastone Mfengu Locations near Queenstown, 1853-1888: An outline of their internal economy and their people's response to colonially-directed changes in land tenure' (ISER seminar, Rhodes University, 1987)

**Bouch**, Richard. 'The Mfengu Revisited: the 19<sup>th</sup> century experience of one Mfengu community through the eyes of historians and contemporaries', in *The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries* (Vol. 17, No. 42), pp. 81-9

**Bouch**, Richard. 'Glen Grey before Cecil Rhodes: how a crisis of local colonial authority led to the Glen Grey Act of 1894', in *Canadian Journal of African Studies* (vol. 27, no. 1, 1993), pp. 1 - 24

**Byrne**, Denis "Nervous Landscapes: Race and space in Australia", *Journal of Social Archaeology*, (vol. 3: 2), pp. 169 – 193

**Cronon**, William. "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature", in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York, W.W Norton & Co., 1995)

**Edgar**, Robert. "The Prophet Motive: Enoch Mgijima, the Israelites, and the Background to the Bullhoek Massacre", in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, (vol. 15, no. 3, 1982), pp. 401 - 422

**Fry**, Poppy. 'Siyamfenguza: the creation of Fingoness in South Africa's Eastern Cape, 1800-1835', in *Journal of African Studies* (36:1, 2010), pp. 25 – 40

**Legassick**, Martin. 'The frontier tradition in South African historiography', in S. Marks and A. Atmore (eds) *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa* (London, Longman, 1980)

**No author**, 'The Press in Queenstown', in *The Hexagon: Journal of the Queenstown and Frontier Historical Society* (2, 1991), pp. 28 - 31

**O'Brien**, Jean. "They are so frequently shifting their place of residence": land and the construction of social place of Indians in colonial Massachusetts', in M. Daunton and R. Halpern (eds) *Empire and Others: British encounters with indigenous peoples, 1600-1850* (place, U. Pennsylvania Press, 1999)

**Paulin**, Christopher. "Small wars" and British expansion in Southern Africa: 1877-1880', in *White Men's Dreams, Black Men's Blood: African Labor and British Expansionism in southern Africa, 1877-1895* (Trenton, NJ, Africa World Press, 2001)

**Penn**, Nigel. 'The northern Cape frontier zone in South African frontier historiography', in L. Russell (ed) *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous-European Encounters in Settler Societies* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2001)

**Sparke**, M. "Between Demythologizing and Deconstructing the Map: Shawnadithit's New-found-land and the Alienation of Canada", in *Classics in Cartography: reflections on influential articles from Cartographia* (West Sussex, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2011)

**Stapleton**, Timothy. 'The Expansion of a Pseudo-ethnicity in the eastern Cape: reconsidering the Fingo "exodus" of 1865', in *International Journal of African Historical Studies* (Vol. 29, No. 2, 1996), pp. 233-250

**Storey**, William. 'Guns, Race, and Skill in Nineteenth-Century Southern Africa', in *Technology and Culture* (October 2004, Vol. 45), pp. 687 – 711

**Thornberry**, Elizabeth. 'Sex, violence, and Family in South Africa's Eastern Cape', in E.S Burrill, R.L Roberts and E. Thornberry (eds) *Domestic Violence and the Law in colonial and postcolonial Africa* (Athens/Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2010)

University of Cape Town