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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

COAL CAPITAL: THE SHAPING OF SOCIAL RELATIONS IN THE STORMBERG, 1880-1910

PhD

PAT GIBBS
330289

Supervisors:
Professor Phillip Bonner
Dr Noor Nieftaqodien
Professor Anne Mager

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Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of the interaction of a variety of communities that coalesced around the coal fields in the environs of the town of Molteno in the Stormberg mountains, during the late Victorian period and the first decade of the 20th century. An influx of mining and merchant capitalists, bankers and financiers, skilled miners and artisans from overseas and Thembu labourers from across the Kei River flooded into what had been a quasi-capitalist world dominated mainly by Afrikaner stock farmers, some English farmers and Thembu and Khoi sharecroppers and labourers.

It also examines the brief life-span of a coal mining enterprise, which initially held out the hope of literally fuelling South Africa's industrial revolution, and its relationship with the economically and socially significant railway, which it drew into the area.

This capitalisation of an early capitalist zone on the northern border of the Cape has demanded an analysis of the intersecting economies of mining, farming and urbanisation as well as of the race, class and ethnic formations generated by this interaction. In delineating the day-to-day minutiae of events, this thesis seeks to reveal a microcosmic view of the fortunes and identities of the associated communities and to present a distinctive, regional study of a hitherto unknown and early aspect of South Africa's mineral revolution.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Patricia Anne Gibbs

---------- day of ----------, 2014

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of Johannes Meintjes, artist and author, who wrote to preserve the stories of Molteno and who loved the Stormberg

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to my supervisors, Professor Phil Bonner and Dr Noor Nieftagodien, and to my co-supervisor at UCT, Professor Anne Mager. I have been very fortunate to have benefitted from their intellectual guidance. Professor Mager deserves my enormous gratitude for her incisive criticisms and her rapid responses to my every query. Under her tutelage, I believe that I have learned much. I am also indebted to Professor Bonner and Dr Nieftagodien for accepting me onto their research programme 'Local Histories, Present Realities: Addressing Current Problems by Recovering South Africa's Lost Local Pasts'. Even though the project was conceptualized around Mpumulanga, Limpopo and Gauteng, my Eastern Cape focus was welcomed. In this regard, I must also thank Ms Zahn Gowar, the Senior Administrator of the History Workshop, whose sharp efficiency quickly solved every query I had and dissolved the problem of distance.

I also want to thank the National Research Foundation (NRF) Chair in History for its generous funding over a period of three years. It gave me an opportunity to explore a world removed in time that eventually came to feel as though it existed alongside of me. I only hope that my research has fulfilled the NRF's expectations.

Jeff Peires also deserves special mention for his kindness in always being ready to share his vast expertise and keen insights with me. The staff of the Wits University Library and Historical and Literary Papers, particularly Zofia Sulej, was extremely helpful with my enquiries. Gloria Cooper deserves thanks for her fastidious transcriptions of the interviews as does Emile Coetzee for translating the whole of Johannes Meintjes' *Dorp van Drome* from Afrikaans into English. My great thanks also goes to Callum Anderson for the hours he patiently put into formatting the thesis, entering maps and photos for me and creating a professional finish to the document. Francky Herbst and Dr Robert Herbst deserve mention for printing chapters for me when I had limited access to a printer.

My heartfelt thanks go to the people of the Stormberg: busy farmers who made time for me such as Sandy and John Stretton, Paul Mortlock, both Jan Aucamps, Derric Fuller, Dudley Price, George Moorcroft, Sean Bryant and Hannes van Zyl. Verne Cockin of Kei Mouth gave me a lengthy interview and a roast lunch. Mr. Dlamini of the Molteno Municipality introduced me to a number of informants including Mrs Koto, Rose Buttlend and Mrs Noto. Topsy Beukes at the Sterkstroom museum gave me an interesting overview of some of the notable inhabitants of former years. Although, in the end, I did not use certain interviews

because of the shifting perameters of the study, I would like to record my apologies and thanks to the informants. They include Chief Ngangomnlaba Matanzima at Qamata, Chief Zwelenqaba Mgudlwa at Engcobo, Monde Makhambe at Lesseyton, Dennis Simanga at Sterkstroom, Adam Karelse's group and Poppie Wagenaar at Molteno, Mr Dyani at Sterkstroom, Mr Jamela at Cofimvaba and Ntombi Ndlula in Queenstown.

Finally, I want to thank my beloved family in Cape Town, Liam, Janine, Sade and Erin for accommodating me for long periods while I visited the Cape Town Archives.

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List of Abbreviations

CAD	Cape Archives Depot, Cape Town
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Archives, Port Elizabeth
SBA	Standard Bank Archives, Johannesburg

Figure 1. View of Molteno



Source. A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, Molteno, Bamboesberg-Uitgewers, 1964, p.3

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

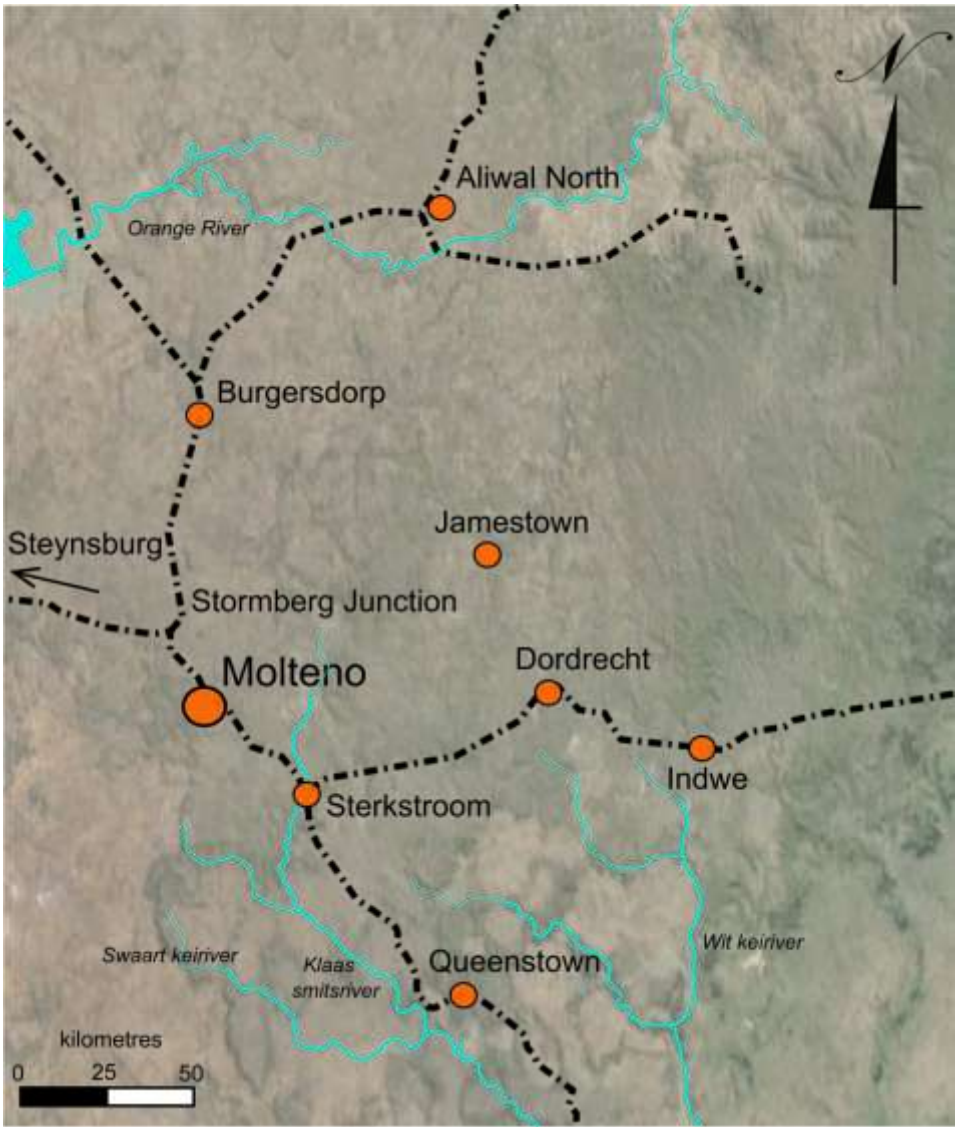
The central question posed by this thesis is relatively straight forward: How does capitalism begin, and take root beyond the main economic centres of the Cape in the nineteenth century? What part do small towns play in this process? To answer this question, this thesis analyses the economic and social dimensions of communities that coalesced around one of the earliest colonial coal mining industries in South Africa and which flourished briefly in the Stormberg Mountains in the North Eastern Cape colony during the late 19th century. Coal mining was a catalyst for a plethora of new interactions across this terrain. Analysis will encompass the interaction between the 'old' agrarian and the new mining and urban sectors as industrial capital became established on the margins of the broader Cape economy. The study begins in 1880 when coal mining companies became established and ends in 1910 when the industry was virtually over.

The Stormberg coal mines straddled the western reaches of a massive coal bearing reef which stretched in a north easterly direction as far as the Drakensberg. Coal finds had been made in the area since the 1850s but by the 1880s, formal mining companies and the town of Molteno were established and, shortly after, the eastern line of the Cape railways was diverted to the area. The town of Molteno was situated on the Stormbergspruit at 5347 feet above sea level in what was then the Albert District. It also lay 84 kilometres to the North West of Queenstown, which had been established in 1853, some 20 years earlier than Molteno, and was now the commercial hub of the region. Only 28 kilometres away from Molteno, in the direction of Queenstown in a basin at the foot of the Stormberg, lay the small settlement of Sterkstroom which was established in 1872 as a church centre.[1] Sterkstroom was situated in the Klaas Smits Field Cornetcy of the greater Queenstown District, but being so close to the coal reef, it also attempted to participate in coal mining. While Molteno provides the main urban focus of this thesis, Sterkstroom is also included in the study because of its proximity to and its participation in coal mining, and because its inclusion provides a wider view of the activities in the area. Across the Kei River to the east, lay the Tambookie Location (later Glen Grey), which was made part of the Queenstown District in 1853, and Emigrant Thembuland, consisting of Xhalanga and St Marks, which was incorporated into the Transkeian Territories

[1] Both towns today fall under the Inkwanca municipality in the greater Chris Hani Municipal District.

in 1877.[2] The coal mining town of Indwe contemporaneously mined the same coal bearing range as Molteno 108 kilometres to the east.[3]

Figure 2. Location map showing the major towns in the study area.



Source: Queenstown 3126, Chief Directorate: Surveys and Mapping, Mowbray 2006

The period saw major changes wrought in the region by the new capital. The town of Molteno and its mining camps, and to a certain extent the nearby town of Sterkstroom, quickly became populated with a number of diverse groupings consisting of British, Scottish and Welsh immigrants, English speaking merchants and farmers from the southern and

[2] G.M. Carter, T. Karis and N.M. Stultz, *South Africa's Transkei. The Politics of Domestic Colonialism*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1967, p. 76

[3] All these early districts now fall under the Greater Chris Hani Municipality: Queenstown is part of Lukhanji Municipality, Glen Grey and Indwe are in the Emalahleni Municipality, Xhalanga is in Emalahleni and St Marks is in the Intsika Yethu Municipality

eastern parts of the Cape and abaThembu from across the Kei River. Restrictive administrative changes were being imposed on the recently conquered abaThembu in the nearby Transkei reserves. This, with overcrowding and famine, was already beginning to force them into the Stormberg region and elsewhere for work. These groups entered a region populated mainly by Afrikaner, but also by some English, sheep farmers, and some Thembu and Khoi tenant farmers and labourers. A number of Sotho also entered from the Free State. The pastoral economy of farming, which was based mainly on wool but also retained pre-capitalist features of subsistence and barter, was irrevocably drawn into this regional transformation. The interface of different races, ethnic groupings, cultures and economic sectors in a common space around coal mining, was to lead to struggles over power, ideologies, culture, space and health. The railway that was laid to the coal fields had a major impact on the area and ultimately linked Molteno to the diamond fields of Kimberley. By 1910, the coal industry had almost collapsed, and the Victorian 'colonial moment' was over. This thesis will examine the relatively brief coal rush to the North Eastern Cape during the late 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century in order to analyse the complex social relations which arose from the interaction of the three economic sectors of coal mining, towns and farming.

Despite the richness of this historical moment, there has been no academic literature written on the subject, creating three major lacunae. The first relates to coal mining in the Stormberg. Only Alan Mabin has discussed Molteno mining to some extent as part of the spread of capitalism in the Cape in the second half of the 19th century.[4] In his articles on Indwe, he examines the roles of various interested parties such as business, the Cape government, land owners and land occupiers and ultimately, the conversion of rural land through the loss of land tenure by local peasant farmers, into what became the first company town in South Africa.[5] Richard Mendelsohn's book, *Sammy Marks: The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal*, covers the establishment of the Transvaal coal fields and other enterprises by Jewish entrepreneur, Sammy Marks.[6] There is also a body of work on the Natal coal fields primarily

[4] A. Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism, Intensification and Expansion in the Economic Geography of the Cape Colony, South Africa, 1854-1899', PhD thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1984, pp. 226-227, pp 304-307

[5] A. Mabin, "Land Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities ; Indwe 1880-1920", University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, February, 1987, pp. 1-14; A. Mabin, "Capital, Coal and Conflict: The Genesis and Planning of a Company Town at Indwe", *Contree*, 34, 1993, pp. 21-31

[6] R. Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks: The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal*, Cape Town, David Philip in association with Jewish Publications, South Africa, 1991

by Ruth Edgecombe and Bill Guest.[7] Thus it is evident that coal mining history and its wider implications have been relatively neglected in South African historiography especially when compared to the vast body of literature written on the mineral discoveries and social transformations in Kimberley and on the Rand.

Secondly, there has been nothing written on the Molteno-Sterkstroom region except for a number of colourful, amateur histories produced between the late 1960s and the 1980s by local inhabitants, such as Johannes Meintjes and Hennie Aucamp. While they are useful in providing details, clues and personal knowledge, they are limited to the interests and perspectives of the writers and usually of a sketchy, sentimental and subjective nature.[8] Only Elise Wagnaar has written an academic study of the early settlement of peoples between the Stormberg and the Orange River between 1820 and 1860.[9] The academic historiography of the wider Eastern Cape remains overwhelmingly concerned with the frontier wars, missionaries and settlers, creating a demand for the analysis of alternative Eastern Cape spaces such as covered by the thesis of this topic.

Finally, little academic research has been done on the small towns of South Africa perhaps revealing an assumption that they are unimportant.

Many small towns are well- served by amateur histories which provide a superficial chronicle of events, memoirs and glossed-over portraits of leading fugures.[10] For example, Meintjes' book on Molteno, filled with bits of information, is frustratingly lacking in analysis.[11] At the same time, there is only a handful of scholarly works on small Cape towns. These include Richard Marshall's social and cultural history of early Grahamstown and Richard Bouch's economic history of the colonial establishment of Queenstown. Bouch shows how the source of the town's economic strength came not from capital from the Cape, but from its strategic position between East London and the north as well as its proximity to the highly productive

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[7] R. Edgecombe and B. Guest, *The Constancy of Change - A History of Hlobane Colliery* 1898-1998, (The Vryheid, Natal, Railway Coal and Iron Company, Vryheid, 1998); R. Edgecombe and B. Guest, "The Natal Coal Industry in the South African Economy. 1910-1985", *The South African Journal of Economic History*, Vol 2 (2), 1987, pp. 49-70; B. Guest, "Financing an Infant Coal Industry: The Case of the Natal Collieries, *South African Journal of Economic History*, Vol 3 (2), 1988, pp 40-60

[8] J. Meintjes, *Stormberg: A Lost Opportunity: the Anglo-Boer War in the North-Eastern Cape Colony, 1899-1902*, 1st ed., Cape Town, Nasionale Boekhandel, 1969; J. Meintjes, *Frontier Family, A Chronicle of a South African Farm, Its Homestead and its People*, Central News Agency, Dassie Books, n.d.; J. Aucamp, *'n Baksel in Die More : Boerestories uit die Stormberg*, Kaapstad, Tafelberg

[9] E. Wagenaar, 'A Forgotten Frontier Zone – Settlements and Reactions in the Stormberg Area Between 1820 – 1860', MA, Rhodes, 1973

[10] For example, *Sterkstroom – Commemoration Album, 1875-1975*, Sterkstroom : Sterkstroom Munisipaliteit, 1975; C. G. Grenville, *Graaff-Reinet: A Cultural History, 1786-1886*, Cape Town, TV Bulpin, 1975

[11] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome: Die Geskiedenis van Molteno, 1874-1974*, Molteno, Munisipaliteit, 1974

farmers of the Transkei. Thus his work provides significant economic context for the study of Molteno's mining industry.[12] Sean Redding's thesis on Mthatha, 'The Making of a South African Town: Social and Economic Change in Umtata, 1870-1950', has emphasised the importance of the themes of conflict and tension - between white and black, colonisers and colonised, in-migrants and townspeople and the elite and the proletariat - for a social urban history.[13]

More significant for this thesis are the studies of towns established by mining companies. Alan Mabin's articles on Indwe, Philip Bonner and Karin Shapiro's article on Pilgrim's Rest, and Lance van Sittert's article, "'Velddrift': the making of a South African company town", are pertinent.[14] Bonner and van Sittert's works discuss the formation of company towns in the 20th century, indicating a range of forms in the establishment of company towns in the newly industrialising world.[15] Bonner and Shapiro show that the creation by the Transvaal Gold Mining Estates of a company town for whites as well as a company estate for blacks at Pilgrim's Rest, were strategies to commandeer labour at a time when the Rand was exerting a strong, centripetal pull on labour and imposed "a grid of control over Pilgrim's Rest's white population.[16] This resulted in the exploitation of the white population, high costs of land, insecurity of tenure, restrictions on economic initiative and virtually no sense of autonomy. Control over blacks on the estate was achieved by the retention of tenant farming. Thus, the company town of Pilgrim's Rest was achieved by two interlocking and contradictory systems.

Van Sittert discusses rural urbanization through the growth of informal coastal and riverine fisheries at Velddrift and Laaiplek which were eventually dominated by two companies during the Second World War. However, here there could be no 'grid' of control as in

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[12] R. Bouch, 'The Colonisation of Queenstown (Eastern Cape) and its Hinterland 1852 – 1886', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of London, 1990; R. Marshall, 'A Social and Cultural History of Grahamstown, 1812 to c1845', MA, Rhodes, 2008; S. Redding, 'The Making of a South African Town: Social and Economic Change in Umtata, 1870-1950', PhD, Yale University, 1987; R. White, 'Small Town South Africa: The Historical Geography of Selected Eastern Cape Towns and Current Development Initiatives Within Them', Phd thesis, M.Soc.Sc. Geography, Rhodes University, 2004; A Greaves has produced a small amateur work on Queenstown, A. Greaves, "Tell me of Komani : A History of Queenstown," *The Queenstown and Frontier Historical Society*, June 1987

[13] S. Redding, 'The Making of a South African Town', 1987, p. 4, pp 14-16

[14] P. Bonner and K. Shapiro, "Company, Town, Company Estate: Pilgrim's Rest, 1910-1932*", Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol. 19, No. 2, June 1993, pp. pp. 171-200; L. van Sittert, "'Velddrift': the making of a South African company town", *Urban History,* Volume 28, No. 2, August 2001, pp. 194 – 217; A. Mabin, "Land Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities", pp. 1-14; A. Mabin, "Capital, Coal and Conflict", pp. 21-31

[15] P. Bonner and K. Shapiro, "Company, Town, Company Estate*",* p. 199; the 'norm' is defined by J.D. Porteus and cited in L. van Sittert, "'Velddrift': the making of a South African company town", p. 195

[16] P. Bonner and K. Shapiro, "Company, Town, Company Estate", p. 176

Pilgrim Rest's company town: unlike the Transvaal Gold Mining Estates, the company firstly required the support of the newly created local government infrastructure, and secondly, it did not succeed in stifling town politics. The company asserted its influence over the economy through an alliance with local merchants.[17]

Closer to Molteno, Mabin indicates how a government grant of 25 000 morgen in the 1890s to the Indwe Railway, Colleries and Land Company in exchange for the building of a railway line to Sterkstroom, resulted in the creation of the first company town in South Africa. Coal mining industry, rooted in land ownership, was able to resort to successive bouts of expelling tenant farmers from the land or to convert them into part time mine labourers.

While the town of Molteno was launched by the entrepreneurial capital of George Vice, no company town emerged. Rather, Molteno developed through an ambiguous coalescence of organic growth and patriarchy with little control over the mining camps that sprung up on the farms where the mines arose. This thesis responds to van Sittert's call for histories of mining towns "as a peripheral urban form".[18]

Approach to the problem

This thesis will analyse social relations and economic interaction between the three economic sectors of mining, farming and urban mercantile interests in the towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom. While a Marxist perspective might assume that the economic sectors mirror the social relations, it does not follow that individuals or interest groups within each of the sectors passively conformed. Thus it is hoped that attention to the diversity and tensions between individuals and communities will deepen the analysis both for Marxists and non-Marxists.

Coal mining and the coal town of Molteno arose in an essentially rural terrain. While the histories of larger cities seldom contain great emphasis on their hinterlands, it is contended that rural towns are deeply embedded in their agrarian context with commonages and roaming livestock providing the visible symbols.[19] Indeed, Redding, in his study of Mthatha, has maintained that the town is the hub of its hinterland and depends on the hinterland

[17] L. van Sittert, "'Velddrift': the making of a South African company town", pp. 202-207, p. 216
[18] Ibid. p. 195
[19] V. Bickford–Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town*, Cape Town, Cambridge University Press, 1995; N. Worden, E. van Heyningen, V. Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of A City: An Illustrated Social History*, Cape Town, David Phillip, 1998

supplying food. Town and countryside are therefore tightly interlinked.[20] He also demonstrates the value of small towns as foci for interaction between the hinterland and the big cities. Indeed, production by local farmers was a prominent function of the new urban economies of Molteno and Sterkstroom. Dewar states, "Small town development and increased agricultural productivity are fundamentally interrelated: neither can occur in a sustained way without the other."[21] Richard White's geographical thesis on small town South Africa also addresses the symbiosis between the hinterland and towns.[22] So too, Mabin argues in his Phd thesis that even the development of diamond mining at Kimberley was a function of internal imperatives within the Cape economy and included changing conditions in pastoral production.[23] In a sense, therefore, the social history of coal mining and the towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom may be viewed in part as 'agrarian history': towns (and mines) have to be analysed within their agrarian context and in this case the three sectors are deeply interconnected.

Although coal mining emerged on the rural periphery of the Cape economy, Mabin has shown that no developments on the periphery, neither diamond mining in Griqualand West or gold mining on the Rand, occurred in a vacuum. He has constructed an exhaustive analysis of the organic development of the Cape economy which leads us to the periphery of the Cape boundaries and beyond. This was the result of economic and entrepreneurial processes which laid the foundations of the Industrial Revolution in South Africa within the Cape in the second half of the 19th century. It was facilitated through the spread of the railway, communications, transport and banking and by the movement of people, money and materials. Most of this was fuelled by Britain which had become a global powerhouse due to its initiation of the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent development of steam driven machines, manufacturing and its dominance over shipping routes.[24] British capital was raised by the Cape government for railway investment and channelled through banks established in the boom of the 1860s, but the bulk of the money invested in the Cape colony came from companies floated in Britain by mining entrepreneurs in the Cape.[25] Easily the greater part of British investment went to the railways and mines and virtually nothing to agriculture or

[20] S. Redding, 'The Making of a South African Town', p. 10.
[21] D. Dewar, 'Small Towns in Development: A South African Perspective', DBSA, Development Paper 122, June 1996, p.5; also DW. Myburgh, 'The origins of Towns in the Eastern Cape Midlands, *Contree, Journal for South African Urban and Regional History,* no 4, July 1978, p. 25
[22] R. White, 'Small town South Africa', 2004, pp. 21, 23
[23] A Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism', p. 21
[24] Ibid., p. 26.
[25] Ibid., p. 37

manufacturing.[26] Neither did the Cape government lend development credit to farmers until 1910.[27] This conditioned development in the colonies in that, until 1900, the Cape economy was dominated by merchants and miners and reflected in a predominance of merchants in parliament.[28] The competition between these interest groups was fundamental in the shaping of the Eastern Cape economy and social relations.

Thus, tied mainly to Britain as a producer of primary products and an importer of manufactured goods until well after 1900, the Cape colony was clearly bound up in the British mercantilist system which would work to its disadvantage during global slumps.[29] The Stormberg, like much of the Eastern Cape, had a thriving wool industry which had grown substantially between 1840 and 1870. However, imports, including food, exceeded exports to the extent that a poor balance of payments, together with the collapse of diamond prices in the early 80s and a severe drought propelled the economy into a slump in 1880. The effects of the slump, which lasted until 1886, were deepened as the Cape experienced the effects of a depression which afflicted Britain from 1873 to 1896, due to increased international competition between emerging industrial nations.[30]

Mabin maintains it was similar factors in the 1860s which further stimulated entrepreneurs to seek new economic opportunities and locations.[31] Through accumulation of territory and the wool boom, farmers who could afford to do so, built dams and wells, fencing windmills, and therefore could retain their flocks. Those who fell by the wayside formed the earliest 'poor white' population.[32] Northward expansion occurred between 1868 and 1872, followed by a commercial boom paving the way for capitalisation of the diamond industry.

The pastoral economy's growth facilitated the growth of capital and the need for railways. Indeed, the final direction of the railway was based on getting livestock to the ports as long term wealth of the country was perceived to be in the pastoral economy and not in diamonds.[33] While Purkis has written about the expansion of the railway and labour problems and Pirie's thesis analyses racial segregation on the trains, it is the intention of this thesis to examine how the railway helped to transform the Stormberg societies through which it

[26] A Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism', pp. 39-40
[27] R. Bouch, 'The Colonisation of Queenstown', pp. 65-66
[28] J.L. McCracken, *The Cape Parliament, 1854 – 1910*, London, Clarendon Press, 1967, p. 56
[29] A. Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism', p. 28, 48
[30] Ibid., pp. 27-48
[31] Ibid., p. 100
[32] Ibid., p. 107; C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, London, Heinemann, 1979, p. 5
[33] A Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism', p. 124, p. 157

travelled.[34] Pirie's article on white labour employed on the railways between 1873 and 1924, however, provides an insight into this sector of the railway environment.[35] The telegraph system was taken over by the government in 1873, prefiguring the railway system with banks being the biggest customers. Thus the expansion of the railway, communications and capital saw the formation of new towns such as Molteno, and of urban systems, where towns were linked to each other by roads, railway, trade and also banking.[36]

Wagenaar has shown how, in the meantime, the District of Albert had been established when the colonial governor, Sir Harry Smith, extended the district of Cradock as far as the Klaas Smits River in 1847 and, in 1848, added the eastern area between the Stormberg Spruit and the Kraai River and up to the Orange in the north. This was an area then consisting of 3914 white inhabitants with Burgersdorp established in 1846 as the capital. The District was divided up into quitrent farms, usually between 2 500 and 3 000 morgen.[37] After the 8th Frontier War of 1850 to 1853, Queenstown was established as a military buffer on the eastern border of the Cape. The abaThembu had to forfeit land and were confined by Sir George Cathcart to the Tambookie Location which lay between the White Kei and the Indwe Rivers.[38] The length of the Klaas Smits and Swart Kei Rivers was then settled by whites.

Bouch's thesis on Queenstown, which covers the first 30 years of its history, shows how this town thereafter became the core of an urban system. However, in one way, its formation contradicts Mabin's analysis of the systematic expansionism of the Cape economy since it was established as a military buffer town.[39] Bouch corroborates Mabin's thesis by revealing how entrepreneurs certainly capitalised on opportunities that emerged. Firstly, Queenstown developed because it was well positioned on the principal wagon road from the seaports of Port Elizabeth and East London to the Orange Free State, and able to capture trade from the north as well as becoming an important market for productive black farmers in the Trankei. The settlement of Queenstown provided further impetus for the wool industry, which in turn

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[34] G. Pirie, 'Racial Segregation on Public Transport in South Africa, 1877-1989', PhD Thesis, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1990; A. Purkis, 'The Politics, capital and labour of railway building in the Cape Colony, 1870-1885, PhD Thesis, Oxford University, 1978

[35] G. Pirie, "White Railway Labour in South Africa, 1873-1924" in Robert Morrell (ed.), White but Poor Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880-1940, Pretoria, Unisa, 1992, pp. 101 – 114

[36] A Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism', p. 165

[37] E. Wagenaar, 'A Forgotten Frontier Zone', p. 94; quitrent farms, which were paid for annually in lump sums, were brought in by the British government to replace loan farms after 1813

[38] It was incorporated into the colony; The Tambookies was the name given by colonists to Thembu living to the east of Wodehouse; the Tambookie Location was known by the abaThembu as *Clavenya*, Interview with Chief Matanzima, 27 August 2008; T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa. A Modern History*, 2nd ed. Southern Book Publishers, 1989, p. 136.

39 R. Bouch, 'Queenstown's Early Years', *Grahamstown Historical Society*, No. 222, pp 24-25

saw the town become an important agricultural, wool trading and distribution point and ultimately the economic epi-centre of the region.[40] Local banking developed in Queenstown as early as 1859 and the Standard Bank set up a branch in 1873.[41] Six years later, the railway arrived completing the essential linkages of an urban system, one that was to provide a secure base for the similar expansion of Molteno.

Although Mabin dismisses the integrative role of newspapers in the building of urban systems as compared with the strength of economic forces, Benedict Anderson's classic work written in 1983, outlines the more intangible construction of national identity through the notions of how communities imagine and express themselves.[42] He shows how communities in Europe began to imagine national identities (and the emergence of new conceptions of time) through the advent of 'print capitalism'. Empire building, especially relevant for capitalisation in the Cape, was the 'last wave' of nationalism – what Anderson calls the 'russification' of the empire - where new imagined communities grew out of new corporate bureaucracies, commercial markets and hierarchies.[43] These also built on 'print capitalism' which emerged in Queenstown, via English newspapers as early as the 1860s. Megan Voss shows how the Queenstown Daily Representative and the Queenstown Free Press became a powerful force in the region in speaking for the politics of mining, expressing the culture and social norms of the ruling classes and forging a self-conscious identity among, specifically British, settler groups.[44] The English papers, in fact, become a voice in this thesis.

However, as the aim of this thesis is to provide an in-depth analysis of the social relations around the mines, it therefore draws heavily on the insights of the seminal work of the revisionists since the 1980s. These works, in tracing local patterns of rural transformation and accumulation, have demonstrated the need for the prioritising of local specificity.[45] While the

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[40] R Bouch, 'The Colonisation of Queenstown', pp 28-86

[41] Ibid., p. 50, p. 52

[42] A Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism', p. 126; B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on The Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London : Verso, 1983

[43] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 140; p. 159

[44] *Queenstown Free Press*, 3 January 1890; M. Voss, 'Urbanising the North-eastern Frontier: the Frontier Intelligentsia and the Making of Colonial Queenstown, c.1859-1877', University of Cape Town, MA Thesis, 2012.

[45] T. Keegan, *Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa: The Southern Highveld to 1914,* Braamfontein, Ravan Press, 1986; S. Marks and R. Trapido, (eds.)*The Politics of Race, Class, and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa,* London: Longman, 1987; S. Marks and R. Rathbone, (eds), *Industrialization and Social Change in SA: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness*, London, Longman,1982; W. Beinart, P. Delius and S. Trapido, (eds.), *Putting a Plough To the Ground, Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa. 1850-1930,* Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986; Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the SA Peasantry*, 1979; T. Keegan, *Facing the Storm: Portraits of Black Lives in Rural South Africa,* Cape Town, David Philip, 1988; P. Bonner, I Hofmeyr, D. James and T. Lodge, (eds.), *Holding Their*

early work was structural in approach, the Oral History Project of the Wits African Studies Institute, which produced a vast collection of oral histories or histories 'from below', modified the perspectives of the earlier theories.[46] Local communities, for example, were seen not merely as passive victims of change, but as agents of history who also played a role in manipulating or trying to manipulate events. They also warn that the linkages between agriculture and other forms of production must be taken into consideration, since different forms of accumulation can intersect to fuel agrarian transformation. This underlines the rationale of the integrationist approach adopted in this thesis.

Beinart and Delius highlight the unevenness of rural economic change and warn against broad generalizations: "the study of rural society emphasizes the way in which individual agency, social differentiation, and regional characteristics meshed with broader patterns to condition the course of change".[47] This is particularly apt in the period of flux between 1880 and 1910 when the foundations of capitalist farming were still being laid. Without the assistance of the state, economic initiative was pioneering, diverse and sometimes opportunistic. This also applies to discussion of the urban and mining sectors in the Stormberg.

Beinart and Delius also point to the fact that the subtleties of resistance need to be analysed. Although organised rural resistance only emerged during the second half of the 1920s as shown by Bradford, early resistance, say Beinart and Delius, generally consisted of withholding labour and diverting mobility, processes certainly applicable in the Stormberg.[48] Where insecurity of tenure for blacks led to tension, court records for Molteno reveal that they often also pursued litigation. Another form of resistance, according to Clifton Crais, was stock theft which was a perennial source of conflict between white farmers and blacks throughout the 30 year period. Such theft, especially when it involved the mutilation of

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Ground: Class, Locality And Culture In 19th And 20th Century South Africa, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1989; B. Bozzoli, (ed.), *Class, Community and Conflict. South African Perspectives*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987; and in the same tradition, a decade later, C. van Onselen published *The Seed is Mine:The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894-1985*, Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1996.

[46] Early structuralists were M. Morris, 'The Development of Capitalism in South African Agriculture: Class Struggles in the Countryside' in S. Marks and A. Atmore, (eds.), *Economy and Society in pre-industrial South Africa*, London, Longman, 1980; M. Lacey, *Working for Boroko: The Origins of a Coercive Labour System in South Africa*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1981

[47] W Beinart and P Delius, *Putting a Plough to the Ground.*, p. 16

[48] H. Bradford, *A Taste of Freedom. The ICU in Rural SA, 1924-1930*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1988, p.1; Beinart and Delius, *Putting a Plough to the Ground*, p 45

animals, was indicative of resistance to overall dispossession and disempowerment of blacks.[49]

Revisionist rural studies, influenced by Shula Marks, Stanley Trapido and the Wits History Workshop, have almost wholly focused on the Highveld and in the Transvaal.[50] This thesis, while utilising their approaches and insights, provides a micro-history of mining, rural and urban processes and their interconnections in a specific constellation of events in the North Eastern Cape.

Themes

Coal mining and railways

The major area of concern in the research which has been undertaken for this thesis is the establishment of coal mining and the associated social relations generated by the industry. The nature of its modest establishment by entrepreneurial settler capital is explored as well as its promising relationship with one of its two major clients, the diamond mines at Kimberley. The emergence of coal mining in the Stormberg is also crucially bound up with the expansion of the railway which accelerates local urban and agrarian accumulation. However, it is also consistently undermined by the erratic demand of its other major customer, the Cape Government Railways. Much cheaper coal from Sammy Marks' company, Lewis and Marks, at Viljoensdrift in the Transvaal, continually contested the viability of Stormberg coal for the eastern railway. Ultimately this, together with the greater economic pull of the Rand gold mines on local labour, brought an end to coal mining in the Stormberg

However, as some historians have observed, globally coal often led to 'skewed development' of the area. Charles Perry points to the danger that coal owners may resist local developmental investment that might reduce access to coal and, by dominating the political terrain, may often help to corrupt local politics.[51] Although the Molteno mines had little enough influence on the metropoles, exploitative practices like the Truck system whereby mine labour was only paid in tokens redeemable at the company store affected merchants negatively and locked labour into high prices and debt. The mining camps also replicated the

[49] C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865*, Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 1992 , pp. 147-149
[50] R. Ross, A.K. Mager and B. Nasson, (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Vol 2, 1885-1994*, Vol. 2, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 7-9
[51] C. Perry, "Coal Production and Socioeconomic Development in Southern Appalachia: The Case of Eastern Kentucky", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 11, No. 2 , August1982, p. 196

'dark side' of the late Victorian capitalism of Britain's mining towns; for example, the presence of shanty houses and congested living, which were often havens for the incubation of smallpox and gave rise to crimes such as murder and rape. Meanwhile, labour relations, shaped by the influx of overseas white miners and black labour from the Transkei, become racially defined by skills levels. Unrestricted by compounds, coal miners relied on their relative autonomy in terms of desertion or stock theft.

A seminal consequence of the mines was the arrival of the railway in Molteno and Sterkstroom. One of the most powerful intrusions - physically and symbolically - it represented a kind of moving border, running as it did almost parallel to the geographical and riverine boundary of the Kei. The railway played an ambiguous role. In a positive sense, it physically linked the Stormberg region to the coastal ports and the Rand and drew the mines, the towns and their agrarian hinterland quickly and more firmly into the flow of capitalist opportunities through transport of goods and livestock. In drawing the British-funded railway through Molteno, the coal mines helped to shape the very direction of British Imperial capital. The railway also impacted on the social relations of the societies through which it ran, continually featuring in the local imagination, from the time inhabitants of the region fought for the line to come to Molteno to it becoming a strategic factor in the South African War and to its ever increasing role in the export of stock.

In another sense, the railway had a negative impact, in that it divided the 'society of the railway' by exacerbating class differentiation and also elicited animosity from many Afrikaner farmers who opposed the related stock theft and the subsequent changing systems of credit from merchants.[52] So too, the railway ultimately destroyed transport riding, initially made profitable in the region by the expansion of the wool trade and by coal discoveries. This was especially so when the railway penetrated to the Rand. Pirie shows that the Cape Government Railways and Cape politicians had a hand in finally manipulating transport riders out of existence.[53]

The railway also helped to fragment black, rural society by transporting migrants away from the congested Transkeian reserves to the harsh industrialism of the gold mines in the North

[52] Thanks to Professor Bonner for the term, the 'society of the railway.'
[53] G. Pirie, "Slaughter by Steam : Railway Subjugation of Ox-wagon Transport in the Eastern Cape and Transkei, 1886-1910", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 26 (1993), 319-43;T. Keegan, *Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa*, p. 36

and the segregated Harbour Board camps at the ports.[54] Donald Pirie evocatively describes how before 1920, railway transportation of miners to and from the Rand mines occurred in abominable conditions in enclosed cattle trucks, known as the Bombela, transferring them from rural pastoralism to a 'troglodytic existence', foretelling of deep captivity to come. The railway thus became a powerful metaphor "for conveying both men and meaning".[55] Conversely, the railway was also the means of conveyance back to the small towns of the tragic human refuse of sick or dying miners from the gold mines.[56] The railway functions as another metaphor linking the coal mining area to the Rand mines, 'the new North', and to the Eastern frontier, 'the old South'. It signifies the drawing of Molteno into the broader contemporary processes of the 20th century. Thus, the role of the railways in dividing and integrating, impeding and enhancing, and fragmenting and innovating culture, is important in understanding the evolution of identity in the Stormberg.

Small towns

A key area of concern in this thesis is the small towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom. At the time of their founding, a rash of towns was occurring across the region such as Steynsburg to the west in 1872, Maraisburg in 1873 (renamed Hofmeyer in 1911), and to the east, Jamestown in 1874, Barkly-East and Maclear. Later Indwe was founded in 1895. Across the Kei, the centres of Southeyville, Lady Frere and Cofimvaba emerged a little later as white-run administrative centres.[57] However, unlike most towns, neither Molteno nor Sterkstroom grew spontaneously out of the farming context. Molteno was directly created by entrepreneurial capital to establish supportive infrastructure for the coal mines, while Sterkstroom was qualitatively different in origin, character and development. Something of a backwater, it was started as a church centre but attempted to feed off the new regional growth in business opportunity. Molteno took on a complex relationship between autonomy and the patriarchy of its founder, George Vice, unlike the company towns of Indwe, Velddrift or

[54] P. Maylam, "The Rise and Decline of Urban Apartheid in South Africa", *African Affairs*, 89, No. 354, January 1990, pp. 57-63
[55] G. Pirie, "Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4, December 1993, p.730
[56] Cape Archives Depot, PAH 35, 1/11, Sterkstroom Lock up, Assistantt District Surgeon, C. Robertson to Assistant Resident Magistrate, P.G. Fischer, Sterkstroom, 28 October, 5 December 1910
[57] I. Evans, *Bureaucracy and Race. Native Administration in South Africa*, University of California Press, 1997, p. 176; J Coulter, *They Lived in Africa*, Port Elizabeth, 1988, p. 95

Pilgrim's Rest, where companies owned the land and exerted or attempted to exert much control over relations over inhabitants.[58]

Redding defines a town as a centre which has a settled population and which exhibits some degree of economic specialisation and concentration.[59] Yet, the highly 'merged', interpenetrative social character of towns enabled Molteno and Sterkstroom to become arguably the most intense sites of interaction between different communities of all the sectors in the Stormberg. Incipient economic growth and a diversification of capital attracted a diverse population of white skilled miners from as far afield as Britain. Administrators, business people, wool brokers, transport riders, store owners, hotel proprietors, artisans, millers, magistrates, doctors, speculators, auctioneers, general agents, newspaper men, brickmakers, housewives, teachers, poor whites, Thembu farmers and seasonal labourers from east of the Kei, converged into a common space. Such a growing population density generates, as Bickford Smith asserts for cities, a complex material culture, involving a corresponding social hierarchy.[60] Complex tensions and accommodations arise between ethnicity, race and class, the tools for which, Bickford Smith argues, should include its social, economic, governmental, spatial and perceptual dynamics.[61] Indeed, this thesis aims to reflect both the spatial, hierarchical and ideological encounters between classes, races and ethnic groupings within the towns, their socio-economic relations with the surrounding coal mines and rural communities and the resulting perceptual dynamics.

English settlers, as Giliomee asserts, seized most of the new opportunities in the towns of the Cape colony. Along with Jews from Europe, the English established stores and merchant houses and founded sophisticated industrial and financial companies and banks.[62] Certainly, Molteno was built on English mining and merchant capital, English local government and on Victorian culture. Given what Anderson might term 'the shared fatality' - or the affinity built across classes - of the concentrated areas of small towns, a self-conscious English dominance elicited a strong sense of superiority over other ethnic groups.[63] This superiority was informed by specific notions of respectability based on attachment and visible loyalty to the

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[58] P. Bonner and K. Shapiro, "Company, Town, Company Estate", pp. 171-200; L. van Sittert, "'Velddrift': the making of a South African company town", pp. 194 – 217; A. Mabin, "Land Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities", pp. 1-14; A. Mabin, "Capital, Coal and Conflict", pp. 21-31

[59] S. Redding, 'The Making of a South African Town, p. 10.

[60] V. Bickford Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town*, p. 19

[61] Ibid., p. 6

[62] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners, Biography of a People*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2003, p. 194

[63] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp.152-4.

British Empire and the Protestant ethic of salvation through hard work and accumulation. Achievement bought the material trappings of class and reinforced the performance of Victorian cultural norms in typically Victorian societies, rituals and sports. Yet, merchants and financiers were constrained by their dependence on outside markets for colonial products, by their association with the farmers who produced their main commodities, by the inefficiency of the railways and the economic slumps of the mines.[64]

Attempts to establish a high level of respectability on the frontier of empire was continually subverted by a number of factors such as criminals and opportunists who tended to seek out a refuge on the fringes of the colony. Also, culturally and racially alien black communties in the town, the sprawling mining camps around the Victorian enclave, the urban locations and the mixed, insanitary areas in town challenged Victorian notions of propriety. In the urban locations which consisted of a more permanent population, a sector of the so-called 'school people', usually mission-educated Mfengu, clearly aspired to attach themselves to the Empire in very complicated and contradictory ways through education, church, church choirs and sport. Andre Odendaal has clearly outlined the emergence of this group. However, British attitudes to this were grounded in ambiguity: to civilize blacks was good, but to permit interracial amalgamation was not.[65] Unfortunately, while domestic workers must have played a significant role in the area, these are not readily visible in the sources I consulted.

Increasingly, however, it was the swelling numbers of poor whites in the towns in the 1890s, especially in Sterkstroom, which would further subvert notions of urban 'respectabilty' and determine much of the racialised shaping of class in the 20th century. However, there has not been enough attention paid to their emergence, especially in the small towns. The essays in Robert Morrell's book, *White But Poor*, while helpful, do not deal with poor whiteism in the Cape or before 1900, except for Pirie's chapter on white railway labour since 1873.[66] Marijke du Toit has produced a body of work dealing with Afrikaner women's organisations, particularly the Cape-based Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereeniging established soon after the war in 1904. This organization paid special attention to the elevation of poor whites, particularly involving the strengthening sense of *volk* identity and the Afrikaans language. [67]

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[64] A Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism', p. 89

[65] A. Odendaal, *The Founders: The Origins of the African National Congress and the Struggle for Democracy*, Jacana Education, 2012, pp. 23 - 39

[66] R. Morrell (ed.),, *White but Poor. Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880-1940,* Pretoria, Unisa, 1992, pp. 101-114

[67] M. du Toit, 'Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism: A Social History of the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging (The Afrikaans Christian Women's Society)', PhD, UCT,1996**;** M. du Toit, "The

Towns were also undermined by disease and felt acutely vulnerable in times of outbreaks often brought by migrants travelling on the railway. In Randall Packard's work on tuberculosis (TB) in South Africa, he reveals that early Bantu migrations to Southern Africa brought with them levels of TB which were rapidly activated by increasingly poor nutrition due to colonial incorporation, declining access to land and population congestion when conditions of overcrowding and bad sanitation occurred.[68] Thus, the congested reserves were vast incubators of disease, such as TB, silicosis, smallpox, typhoid, typhus and venereal disease, as were the mining compounds on the Rand. Particularly, the authorities of Queenstown and Sterkstroom, the boarding points for many migrants, were concerned to protect whites from migrant blacks whom they feared might introduce threatening diseases. Swanson's thesis that urban segregation was formulated around the 'sanitation syndrome' after the turn of the century, is endorsed as early as the 1890s by Queenstown municipal records which indicate the pressing concerns of townsmen about the intrusion of 'black diseases'.[69] Such barriers, although shaped by the political and social context of the time, reinforced the idea in the white community of blacks as 'the other'. The small towns or '*dorpe*', therefore, were sites of great vulnerability as they played a significant role as receptors of disease and segregation and as part of a nexus involving native distress in the reserves and life threatening conditions on the Rand mines.

The Stormberg towns at the turn of the century inhabited a colonial moment, in the sense that the towns were almost quintessentially Victorian microcosms, in a region surrounded by Afrikaner farmers and black migrants who, unlike at Johannesburg's inception, were not yet a substantial, permanent presence in these towns. However, when the coal mines died, Molteno's 'colonial moment' was quickly eclipsed. While Molteno was generated by the mines, it nevertheless began to assume a locus of control outside of the mines with active merchant activity, a rigorous and typically Victorian social life and specific dreams of what the future might look like.

Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: Volksmoeders and the ACVV, 1904-1929", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 29, Number 1, March 2003, pp 155 – 176; M. du Toit, " 'Die Bewustheid van Armoed'; The ACVV and the Construction of Afrikaner Identity, 1904-1928', *Social Dynamics*, Volume 18, Number 1, 1992, pp 1-25

[68] R. Packard, *White Plague, Black Labour. Tuberculosis and the Political Economy of Health and disease in South Africa*, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1989

[69] CAD, 3/QTN 1/1/1/8, Council Minutes, 19 June, 18 December 1894; M. Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900- 1909," *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1977, p. 387

Farming

Although the terrain offered running fountains, sweet pasturage and warm wet summers to early farmers, it had been largely devoid of any settlement until the 1820s because of its harsh geography and a subtropical highland climate bordering on semi-arid, with extremely harsh winters often with snow and frost until November. There were also droughts, plagues of locusts and a lack of firewood. More importantly, there had been ongoing conflict between immigrant trekboers and marauding San who used it as a summer hunting ground and a place of refuge from Boer commandos.[70] Thus, by the 1870s, despite a particularly healthy climate for human and animal habitation, few settlers had ventured to the Stormberg.

However, by 1880, the area had become strategically important and more populated since it was situated between the new and rapidly burgeoning diamond mining area of Kimberley to the West, Queenstown to the south east and the Orange Free State to the North. The district had grown into an established wool producing and (Merino) sheep farming area suitable for smaller farms.[71] Plentiful sweetveld which dominates the *vlaktes* and *vleis* and numerous fountains made it a good stock farming district obviating the need for trekking, unless there was an ongoing drought.[72] The industry had seen a massive increase in exports between 1840 until 1870 due to the rapid rise in demand from the British market.[73] By 1860, the Cape and Australia replaced Germany as the chief suppliers of the British wool market with wool continuing to head the list of South Africa's agrarian exports until the 1930s.[74] Thus, prior to the discovery of coal, the Stormberg contributed to the Cape colony's most important agricultural export, and through wool, was linked to the international economy.[75]

However, farming struggled with a number of severe challenges, both ecological and economic. One of the early 20th century historians, WM Macmillan, pointed out that challenges occurred within the general inefficiency of the agricultural and pastoral industries caused by lack of skills, good judgement and scientific information leading to a growing

[70] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, pp. 2-7
[71] E. Wagenaar, 'A Forgotten Frontier Zone', pp. 163-4.
[72] J. Meintjies, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 7; Sour grasses, to which stock was taken in the summer, are found on the high lying areas, while sweet grasses, Ibid.
[73] South African Wool Board, *An Illustrated World History of the Sheep and Wool Industry*, Pretoria, 1970, p. 108; W Beinart and P. Coates, *Environment and History The Taming of Nature in the USA and South Africa*, Routledge, London, 1995, p. 57
[74] W. M. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem and its Historical Development*, Pretoria, The State Library, 1974, p. 34; W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation*, pp 12-13.
[75] South African Wool Board, *An Illustrated World History of the Sheep and Wool Industry*, p. 108; W Beinart and P. Coates, *Environment and History*, p. 57; E. Wagenaar, 'A Forgotten Frontier Zone', pp. 163-4.; W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation*, pp 12-13; H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 194

crisis in pastoral farming. Many could not accumulate capital, were reliant on credit, indebted to traders and lost their access to land.[76] Mabin points out that class differentiation occurred as early as the major recession of the 1860s which encouraged many to utilize wagon cartage.[77] The hardest hit were those farmers who consitutted the *bywoner* class, itinerant farmers possibly possessing a small flock of sheep and using grazing rights granted to them by landowners.[78] Some were beginning to drift to the towns forming the so-called 'poor white' class.

When coal mining and the railway penetrated the Stormberg, new transformations occurred in the agrarian sector. Firstly, after the debilitating and long-lasting economic recession from 1880 to 1886 dissipated, the value of property in the environs of the railway increased. Products from the region, such as wool and livestock, could be transported far more quickly to the ports or northwards to the Transvaal, as could the imports that fostered merchant activity. Wagon riding was stimulated by the need for delivery of commodities from train stations to their destinations. Wage labour on the mines and the railway lines increased the demand for agricultural products and also spending power in the region. Capitalist farmers from areas like Bedford, Alice and Adelaide were attracted to the area, while the visionary and wealthy Halse family developed a number or rail-related farming enterprises, including the Tennyson Settlement.

However, as some farmers accumulated capital and others struggled, class stratification accelerated. No longer did some merchants need to extend credit to smaller farmers while those who had turned to wagon riding were ultimately undermined by the capacity of the railway after the 1890s. Court records provide some insight into the struggles of tenant farmers to remain on the land. As, the class of bywoners grew, so did the drift to the towns.[79]

The white lower class in the Stormberg was bolstered by the interspersal of black groupings of labourers, sharecroppers and labour tenants, who were forced into an 'underclass' below them through the variety of discriminatory government legislation, economic differentiation and social bias. Blacks lived in locations on farms and on government Crown lands, the latter

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[76] W.M. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem*, p. 44; his subsequent work incorporated the integral role of black farmers, see WM Macmillan, *The Cape Colour Question*: *A Historical Survey*, London, Faber & Gwyer, 1927

[77] C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, 1979, p 5 cited in A Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism', p. 107; .Standrd Bank Archives, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', ARCH 1/1/MTN, p. D1

[78] E. Wagenaar, A Forgotten Frontier Zone', p. 38; H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners,* pp. 320-32; WM Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem,* p. 44

[79] W. M. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem,* p. 48.

usually allowing only limited tenure and subject to hut tax.[80] However, although much autonomy existed among black sharecroppers and labour tenants in terms of easy mobility across farms and between farms and mines, they were constrained by pass laws and Location Acts.

Another major impact of the new rail and coal capital, according to farmers, was a huge increase in stock theft, although this was clearly often perpetrated by the more poorly paid farm labour. Farmer associations called for restrictions on access to alcohol, the tightening of passes, more police, the treadmill and transportation.

Meanwhile, the advent of the coal/rail nexus exacerbated ethnic polarisation between English and Afrikaners. Although colonial Afrikaners were largely loyal to the British crown, Afrikaner Nationalism had been on the rise for much of the 19th century.[81] Giliomee highlights a struggle around ethnic survival, infused with religion and the interrelationship between language and nationalism.[82] The emergence of the *Albert Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging*, which quickly allied with the Afrikaner Bond at the beginning of the 1880s, also did much to foster nationalism around the Burgersdorp area and to some extent in the Albert countryside.

In addition, the sheep disease, scab, while having little relation to the new industrialism of the district, had also been causing extensive opposition from many Afrikaner farmers. Mordechai Tamarkin asserts that scab became a major political issue between Afrikaner and English farmers, illuminating strong ethnic divisions.[83] Giliomee indicates that dipping instigated civil disobedience and ideological contention amongst Afrikaner farmers, even to the point of creating a serious political crisis against the Bond leadership in 1895.[84] But the resolution of scab was also a class issue in the Stormberg: poorer, mainly Afrikaner farmers resisted Scab legislation, while more progressive farmers, usually but not always English, supported it.[85] Such tensions between white groups were increasingly epitomized by the political grouping of Afrikaner Bond branches and Divisional Councils on the one hand and the English-based Molteno Chamber of Commerce and the Molteno Farmer Association on the other.

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[80] Other than town related sites, larger rural areas like Glen Grey or sections of Xhalanga and Southeyville, were also referred to as 'locations'.
[81] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 225.
[82] Ibid., p. 216
[83] M. Tamarkin, *Volk and Flock: Ecology, Identity and Politics among Cape Afrikaners in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2009
[84] H.Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 226
[85] Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Archives, G1-'94, Report of the Scab Disease Commission, 1892-4

This history, then, is about 'a colonial moment' which happened in the context of South Africa's rapid mineral revolution and where specific processes coalesced in particular ways that made this moment unique. In a triangular constellation of spaces, the mines, farms and towns, processes such as the critical evolution from agriculture to coal and the emergence of Molteno as a new town and its relationship with other towns, combined to generate a particular colonial moment in the early phase of the mineral revolution before the advent of gold.

Methodology and research process

The methodology of this thesis is that of 'social history', that is, it focuses on the experiences and social structure of ordinary communities and individuals rather than on powerful individuals, such as leaders and politicians. The sources that most facilitated this research were newspapers, archival court records, the Standard Bank Archives and, to a small extent, oral interviews.

The most beneficial source category was the predominantly English newspapers of the area. These papers supplied a wide range of political, social and economic information about the area and the people within it. Not only was national and regional news provided but also detailed local news with editorial opinions and court proceedings giving greater clarity on issues particularly relevant to the newspaper buying, community. General reporting reflected a variety of minute details from coal mining to information on local notables to claims that the newspaper was the moral guardian of the community. Advertisements provided useful information on who the merchants were and the type of goods and prices on offer.

The newspapers also serve as a prism of current English thought, discourse, political and social norms. Editorials, jokes, gossip columns and rumours reveal insights into current styles of humour, and the racism and discrimination of the upper classes that do not appear in municipal minutes and court records. They clearly reflect a sense of who 'the other' was perceived to be, namely the Afrikaner farmers and blacks. Some texts were often blatantly rude and insulting about the Afrikaner such as the reference to Boer farmers as "the bucolic dynasty of ignoramuses".[86] Nevertheless the editors were evidently enlightened and fairly liberal men of their time, offering clear insights into the intricacies of situations, such as trade

[86] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 26 September 1902

and political issues and articulate criticism when, in their view, excessive moral and racist transgressions occurred.

However, the problem with the papers of this period was that they reflected the ideology of the dominant classes. Thus black people tend to appear only through the lens of labour, crime and disease which, in the absence of many Native Affairs (NA) files, has made it very difficult to access the agency of individuals beyond the dominant class and give a balanced picture of the Stormberg region. White women only appeared as members of Ladies Societies, organisers of bazaars and concerts and teachers, while black women only appear as victims of rape or participants in drunken brawls. Also, all too often, the printed word tends to fudge complicated issues, particularly those connected with negotiations with the Cape Government Railways such as coal rates which evidently completely bewildered some journalists.

The Cape Archives have been another major repository of sources for this thesis, especially with regard to such inventories as the Criminal Records of the various Magistrates, the Central Government Railway, The Medical Officers of Health for the various towns, the Public Administration for Health (PAH) files, the Public Administration for the Secretariat (PAS) files, the Colonial Office Correspondence and Voters' Rolls. Court records were particularly invaluable because, on the one hand, civil court cases offered a view into the financial wrangles between not only, for example, shopkeepers and low income transport riders, but also between black tenant farmers and landlords. It is particularly striking that many such black farmers took their white landlords to court. Thus, in the case of Maart and others, contention over transgression of resources, are very detailed. On the other hand, criminal records reveal animosities or violence between groups or individuals. However, since there was not a Resident Magistrate in the Molteno area until 1893, there is an absence of records prior to that date, leaving a gap in this study's analysis of the early years.

Discovering the Standard Bank Archives half way through the research process was an unexpected surprise as it provided year by year records about the economic situation in the three sectors which have been the focus of this study. Moreover, it indicated how the Bank was a facilitator and role player in the unfolding developments and gave detailed information about the financial status of a great number of individuals in and around the two towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom.

Oral history is a highly useful tool in the production of social history. The Wits Oral History Workshop in the 1970s demonstrated the wide validity of oral history in tracing transformations across the countryside. It also allows the specificities needed in regional studies. Keegan has indicated how solely relying on government publications can lead to an assumption that state decisions were automatically always able to shape the lives of people on the ground. Thus consideration of life histories can reveal "a far more complex, ambiguous and multifaceted process of change."[87] This thesis has drawn on a small clutch of interviews conducted in the Stormberg.

Available documents often said more about the role of white official policies than ordinary people or those who were part of the labour force. While there is much to discern between the lines in documents, the experiences of the governed, the patterns of settlement, their health, even the broad outline of their responses, little is available about the truth of their own experiences, and the internalised meanings given to these experiences. The very obscurity of black voices is made particularly poignant by a laudatory letter to the local Assistant Resident Magistrate of Molteno by black mining contractors published in *The Albert Times* in 1897.[88]

Yet, oral history can be difficult for a number of reasons: trying to find enough voices to make a substantial difference; informants' subjectivity; inaccuracy because of selective memory, confusion over chronology, the experience of brutality or memory lapses (although follow up interviews and corroboration with written sources can help with this); the intervention of hearsay and myth and imbalance in the relationship between an interviewee and interviewer. The former might withhold information if some mistrust exists and also because of a notion that language problems are restricting communication. Finally, transcriptions can also be a problem especially if done by someone not conversant with the historical background.

However, although oral history has its limitations, the interviewer's awareness of these can pre-empt distortion, so that it remains a capable and dynamic methodology to discover 'hidden'or undocumented histories of ordinary people. Personal viewpoints, testimonies and private beliefs were effective for assembling a nuanced picture of the multitudinous ways in which the area was settled and unsettled, and greatly enhanced understanding of how identities were formulated out of association and fragmentation. Differing views of the same events ultimately reveal the complexity and subjectivity of the history's 'truth'.

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[87] T. Keegan, *Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa*, p.xvi
[88] *The Albert Times*, 3 November 1897

White farmers with long established geneaologies in the area, shed a personalised light on the origins of white settlement in the area from the Dordrecht Road, through the Penhoek Pass, Boesmanshoek down to Tarkastad and Bulhoek. Some, such as John Stretton, George Moorecroft and Dudley Price discussed in detail early accumulation patterns of their forebears, the nature of the veld and farming practices.[89] Sean Bryant, who married into the Halse family, gave important information on the Halse's establishment of their largest farm, Carnarvon, their role in establishing the Sterkstroom water supply, their interest in continuing the Sterkstroom railway to Natal, as well as their association with Cecil John Rhodes.[90] Derric Fuller, a farmer near Sterkstroom, was able to reflect on aspects of Sterkstroom and his grandfather, Frank Fuller, who had been a wool broker before becoming a labour recruiter until the 1950s.[91] In Molteno, Mrs Koto, Rose Buttlend and Mrs Noto all gave partial life stories on their origins, work and family experiences but only snippets could be used because of their lack of knowledge of family geneaology and their inability to take their narratives as far back as the turn of the 19th century.[92] Thus, the oral interviews represent both epic family lineages and individual histories of lesser duration.

Terminology

The terminology of Dutch is used in 19th century newspapers until about the 1890s by which time the use of 'Afrikaner' is more common, though not constant. Thus for reasons of continuity and simplicity, the term 'Afrikaner' will be used.

abaThembu is used to refer to the nation, while individuals or small groups are referred to merely as Thembu.

First names are used where possible and initials when first names are not unknown.

Outline of subsequent chapters

Chapters Two to Four cover the periods 1880 to 1899. Chapter Two starts with an explanation of the establishment of the coal mining industry in the Stormberg by George Vice and its promising relationship with one of its two major customers, the diamond industry at Kimberley. Coal mining is also shown to be pivotal in determining that the railway was

[89] Interviews, John Stretton, Strydfontein, Molteno, 29 November 2011; George Moorcroft, 30 November 2011; Dudley Price, Uitkyk, Molteno, 29 November 2011
[90] Interview, Sean Bryant, 2 October 2009
[91] Interview, Derric Fuller, Sterkstroom, 16 April 2009
[92] Interviews, Mrs Koto, Molteno, July 2008; Rose Buttlend, Molteno, July 2008; Mrs Noto, Molteno, July 2008

diverted from its originally proposed course to Dordrecht going instead through Molteno in 1884. In 1892, due to a convergence between the needs of Molteno and Cecil John Rhodes' desire for access to colonial coal, a junction line was also built from Molteno to Middleburg thus linking Molteno to the diamond fields. These developments formed a powerful nexus which stimulated the growth of the mines and the town of Molteno. However, the quality of the Molteno coal was inferior to the Indwe mines and to imported English coal and more expensive than coal from the Transvaal. For these reasons, the Cape Government Railways, the mines' biggest customer, was erratic in its orders from Molteno, charged high transport rates for coal and after 1906 consistently ordered less. Ultimately, the huge labour demands of the Rand gold mines sealed the fate of the coal mines from 1908 onwards. Social relations on the mines are analysed with regard to the work structure, the racial hierarchy based on skills division and exploitative practices. The lack of complete control over the labour force, evidenced by an inability to limit labour's access to alcohol, stock theft and desertion, is discussed.

Chapter Three describes the establishment of the towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom, the beginning of merchant capital, associated social relations and the growth of a vibrant English Victorian society in Molteno. It highlights how the attempt to impose Victorian norms in the middle of the Stormberg veld was consistently undermined by coexistence with sprawling insanitary mining camps, an alien black culture, the presence of opportunists, the growth of poor whites and the threat of epidemics. It also seeks to establish exactly how the urban spaces were related to the mining and agrarian context.

Chapter Four analyses the response of farming to the capitalist imperatives of mining, the railway and towns. Class stratification partly generated by ecological problems and economic recessions is first examined. A transformation engendered by the facility of the railway is juxtaposed with disadvantages which reveal reasons for further class differentiation. Positive changes to agriculture are examined - quicker transport, more diversification, the increase in the price of property and a general transformation in commercialisation. Negative impacts that resulted in the growth of the 'poor white' problem and stock theft are explored. Such factors tended to manifest along ethnic lines and bred opposition to English merchant and mining capital and financial institutions like the Chambers of Commerce that accompanied capitalisation. These cleavages emphasized existing ethnic opposition to scab legislation and were increased by the wider political polarization in the years leading up to the South African War.

Chapter Five examines the impact of the South African war which played out in this region bordering as it did on the Orange Free State Republic. Special attention is given to its impact on opportunities and losses experienced by the societies of the mines, farms and towns and the manifestation of ambiguous loyalties. The disenfranchisement of Cape rebels after the war, along with a paucity of compensation, fanned local animosities. However, the livelihood of mining proprietors, miners, townsmen and particularly farmers were deeply affected by the war. Thus, the aftermath of the war up to 1906 is also examined to focus on economic, social and ideological reconstruction.

Chapter Six covers a period from 1907 to 1910 which sees the failure of the coal mines due to declining orders and, by 1908, an aggressive recruitment of labour for the gold mines from the area. In 1911, the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company closes its doors and although small mines continue the total output is significantly decreased. The chapter explores the relationship of the failure of mining to the rise of farming and the relatively easy transition of the towns to farming centres.

The society of the coal mines of Molteno was written in order to map a forgotten, microcosmic part of Cape history. Yet, it is unavoidable that, in a thesis on a regional social history such as this, many more themes are opened up for future research. The topics that had to be employed to bind this history together, whether they be sheep farming, education, seasonal labourers, the role of banking in small towns, poor whites or opportunists, all beg further exploration. These issues will be integrated into the regional history and help to build the macrocosm.

CHAPTER 2 - THE OPENING OF THE COAL MINES AND THE COMING OF THE RAILWAY, 1880 – 1899

The discovery and availability of coal was a profoundly formative factor in the social history of the Stormberg and its immediate environs. Contemporaneous with the launch of diamond mining and predating the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886, it must have provided the hope for local entrepreneurs that Stormberg coal could become the powerhouse of a South African Industrial Revolution as had happened around coal in Britain earlier in the century. Diamond mining, railway building, nascent manufacturing in the coastal towns of the Cape and households all needed coal.[1] In the Stormberg, coal would attract investors into a predominantly agricultural and pastoral economy and bring together a variety of different social groupings who sought to make a living off the new mining frontier. This chapter will examine how coal mining in the Stormberg was established, how it extended the reaches of colonial capitalism from the coastal areas to the interior of the Cape, established the town of Molteno and diverted the railways to the town. More importantly, it will also examine the social relations that developed at the mining and railway camps which mirrored the structure of the new industrial capital.

The establishment of coal capitalism and the railway

The development of mining ventures in the Stormberg was begun by moderate settler capital during a phase between the 1850s and the 1870s which saw the expansion of capitalism in the Cape and when the Cape government encouraged prospecting for minerals. Given that the Cape and Kimberley were using expensive Welsh and British coal, coal prospecting was especially important. The Search for Minerals Act was legislated and a rash of discoveries ensued.[2] In 1854, old copper mines at O'Kiep in the Northern Cape were reactivated, diamonds were discovered south of the Orange River near Hopetown in 1867, coal discoveries were made at Indwe by E.J. Dunn in 1873 and 1878 and gold rushes occurred at Knysna in 1876 and later at Prince Albert in 1891. Coal was also found across the Vaal River at Viljoensdrift in 1878.[3]

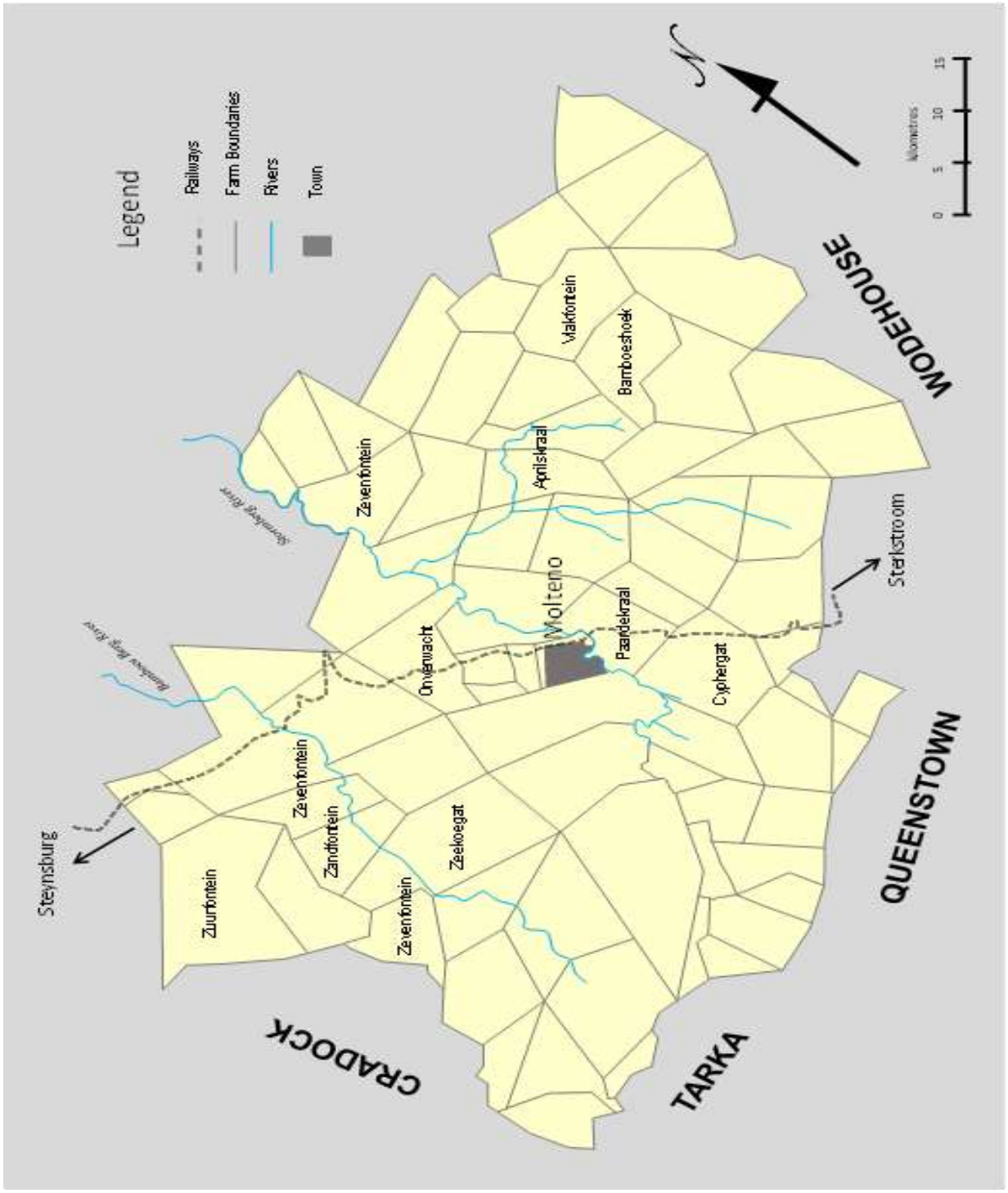
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[1] A. Mabin, "Capital, Coal and Conflict: The Genesis and Planning of a Company Town at Indwe", *Contree*, 34, 1993, p. 22

[2] Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Archives, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, 1859; Newspapers and archival documents of the 1880s are scattered with references to prospecting for minerals in all sorts of localities: there were even rumours of lead near King Williams Town.

[3] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome: Die Geskiedenis van Molteno, 1874-1974*, Molteno Munisipaliteit, 1974, p. 18; http://on-the-rand.co.uk/Key%20Events%20In%20South%20African%20Mining%20History.htm;

Figure 3. Location map showing main farms and farm boundaries in the Molteno district, 1900.



Source: compiled from CAD, M3 2089, Divisional Map of Molteno, 1900

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http://www.thegreatkaroo.com/listings/tourism_info/western_cape/great_karoo/prince_albert; B. Lau, (ed.), *The Matchless Copper Mine in 1857, Correspondence of Manager, C. J. Anderson*, Vol. 1, Windhoek, National Archives SWA/Namibia, 1987, p.vi; Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, 1859

By 1860, the Stormberg-Bamboesberg intersection was acknowledged as the south western tip of a coal bearing reef occupying a total area of about 128 000 square kilometres. This ran in a north east direction from Molteno through Aliwal-North, Glen Grey, Indwe, Cala, Elliott and Engcobo up to Maclear and even beyond to Mount Fletcher and Matatiele in the Transkei. The coal reserves appeared to be virtually inexhaustible but, according to Meintjes, the geological structure of the district consists of maximum reserves of approximately 26.5 million tons.[4]

Many 1820 settler descendants were to enter the area as traders, artisans, potential businessmen or prospectors. One of these, the trader, George Vice, became aware of coal on John Grovè's farm, Cyphergat in 1859 and was keen to exploit it. At this time, the deposits in the Transvaal and Natal were not yet known. The existence of coal was also known among locals with some farmers already attempting to extract surface coal. In 1859, the Government Blue Book reported: "The coal burns well with a little wood and averages three shillings per 100lbs."[5] Vice bought Paardekraal in January 1865, on which he opened the Penshaw mine, and the neighbouring farm, Onverwacht, in August 1868. In a district where wood was a scarcity, he had immediate success, although the coal was reported to be low grade and not easy to burn. In the meantime, mining had also started at Cyphergat in 1864 and attracted an influx of people to the area, who erected houses of corrugated iron and wooden planks. As a settlement, Cyphergat thus predated Molteno by ten years.[6] In 1874, Vice carved out a town from his farm, Onverwacht, naming it after John Molteno, the first Prime Minister of the Cape, who had fought with him in the 7th Frontier War or War of the Axe (1846-47).[7] This would fuel mineral development, commerce and the capitalisation of the area.

The next official reference to mining in the Stormberg is a statement by the Burgersdorp Chamber of Commerce in 1879, indicating a nascent industry consisting mainly of George Vice's enterprises, some rudimentary coal extraction by local Afrikaner farmers and a mine in the Queenstown district, possibly at Sterkstroom.[8] By now, Vice had one mine on Paardekraal and another about ten miles to the north of Molteno, some 400 feet down the side of the Stormberg Mountains facing the Orange River. In 1880, with a small labour force of

[4] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome: Die Geskiedenis van Molteno, 1874-1974*, Molteno Munisipaliteit, 1974, p. 71
[5] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Government Blue Book, 1859.
[6] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 68
[7] This war was one of eight frontier wars fought in the eastern Cape between Imperial British troops (including settlers, Khoi, Mfengu, and Boer commandos and local Xhosa or, in this case, abaThembu; the naming of Molteno may have also had something to do with the fact that the Prime Minister was involved in launching the railway system
[8] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, 1880, p. S6

eight to 12 men, both of his mines produced about 300 tons of coal per month valued at £2 per ton. This output was conveyed by wagons to several towns of the Colony, the Free State and the diamond mines at Griqualand West where it was sold mainly for steam engine purposes.

Meanwhile, given the limitations of burning sheep and cattle dung for heat, local Afrikaners, such as du Plessis of Romansfontein and Henning of Onverwacht, also recognised the market potential of coal on their farms and took it to nearby towns for sale.[9] By 1879, coal on 18 farms was being tested by the Mining Surveyor. However, most farmers were reluctant or unable to outlay the expense of exploring seams and sinking drives into the earth. They merely extracted surface coal and, since Stormberg coal was full of shale and waste, were barely able to cover the costs of extraction and transport. *The Queenstown Representative* reported:

> 'About half a dozen loads of coal arrived in Queenstown from the Stormberg and after great difficulty sold on the market for 1s 6d to 1s 9d per 100 lbs. The miner complained bitterly that he lost money by these loads. He pays 1s 6d for the carriage alone, in addition to the cost of delivering it at the pits mouth. But it was very poor quality filled with shale and waste and is useless for heating purposes.'[10]

More significantly, coal on John Grove's farm at Cyphergat just outside Molteno, was officially proclaimed to be of 'superior quality' at the end of 1879. Described as 'the nearest approach as yet known in appearance to English coal', it was, in fact, to become the mainstay of the Stormberg coal region.[11] The recent activity near Molteno quickly excited recognition of the mineral value of the Stormberg. The Burgersdorp Chamber of Commerce claimed:

> 'that the division of Albert has rich and extensive coal deposits; that the coal contains a large percentage of carbon, and consequently of heating power; that the only obstacles to its becoming of more utility are the difficulties presented by the mode of transport now in use; and that the coal has been proved by official trials to be suitable for locomotive purposes, by supplying the engines with specially constructed fire boxes.'[12]

Our understanding of the early workings of the mines in the 1880s is reliant on information provided by a visiting journalist to the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company more than a decade later and Alan Mabin's discussion of the social relations of coal extraction at Indwe.[13] The journalist reported seeing some old workings, "gigantic cavities of capital sunk beyond

[9] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, 1880, p. S6
[10] *The Queenstown Representative*, 22 January 1880.
[11] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, 1880, p. S6
[12] Ibid., p. S6.
[13] A. Mabin, 'Land, Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities, Indwe 1880-1920', University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, February, 1987, pp.8-9; *The Albert Times*, 25 April 1894.

recovery".[14] These had been worked by "previous authorities who did not believe working in the dark and so removed 20 or 30 feet of top so as to work a few feet of coal in the day light."[15] These cavities had no protection around the openings, leading *The Albert Times* to caution, in the ambiguous liberalism of the period, that if a "stray native" dropped in, he would be killed.[16] These surface works could have been attempts by farmers in the 1880s.

Nevertheless, when drives were sunk, the seams of the Stormberg mines revealed themselves to be narrower than those of Indwe or the seams of Viljoensdrift which averaged 2.7 metres thick.[17] In 1885, *The Queenstown Representative* referred to seams here of four, six and 14 inches while, in 1894, *The Albert Times* reported seams of four, eight and 16 inch seams interspersed by three to four inch layers of shale.[18] In any event, these seams were relatively narrow and interspersed with too much shale, which made the coal low grade and not easy to burn and costly to work.[19]

Figure 4. Molteno. Entrance to a coal mine



Source: CAD, AC 7894

[14] *The Albert Times*, 25 April 1894
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] R. Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks: The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal*, Cape Town, David Philip in association with Jewish Publications, South Africa, 1991, pp. 9, 11, 15
[18] *The Queenstown Representative*, 21 August 1885; *The Albert Times*, 25 April 1894.
[19] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 70

Figure 5. Molteno coal mine with loading apparatus



Source: CAD, AC 7338/68

By this early stage, competition had already developed between Stormberg and Indwe, the coal of which was mined by the Indwe Coal Mining Company, "a partnership set up by Dordrecht merchant-farmers". However, Indwe coal was generally judged superior for steam purposes by both the colonial government and the Queenstown market as it did not have the shale present in Stormberg's coal.[20] Yet, until 1895, Indwe was at a great disadvantage being far from the railway line and a competitive struggle was to continue between the two mining areas for the duration of the coal mines.[21] Within this context and given mining's need for large investment capital, in 1881 and 1882, a number of joint stock companies, established in terms of the Limited Companies Act, No 23 of 1861, and consisting of merchants and landowners, began to alter the shape of the colonial economy.[22] The Great Stormberg Coal Mining Company was established in 1882 with its headquarters in East London. In the same year, the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company was founded. Having managed to secure 7 494

[20]A. Mabin, "Capital, Coal and Conflict", p. 23; *The Queenstown Representative*, 24 February 1880.
[21]*The Queenstown Representative*, 17 February 1880.
[22] A. Mabin, 'Land Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities', p. 3

acres of Grove's farm for £30 000, it was floated by securing 40 000 shares of £1 each from a wide spread of shareholders across the colony especially from Burgersdorp, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Cecil John Rhodes also bought 250 shares at the outset, forming a small but significant link between the company, Kimberley and de Beers. Later, the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company incorporated investment from other coal companies like Wallsend, a Natal-based company. The directors of the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company were local notables mainly from Burgersdorp, including Daniel Kannemeyer, an auctioneer, and Francis Tennant, a wholesale merchant, multiple entrepreneur and now MD of the company.[23]

Closely intertwined with coal production in a regional triangle of industry was the economy of the Kimberley diamond mines. Prior to the discovery of diamonds in 1867, the inland towns of the Albert and Queenstown districts had looked to the ports of Port Elizabeth and mainly East London as their outlet. They now looked to Kimberley. Not only did Kimberley provide a market for their agricultural goods, but Griqualand West suffered from a dearth of wood, the cost of which became prohibitive. By the early 1880s, fuel made up one third of their total mining costs.[24] While Sammy Marks, coal entrepreneur and co-owner of the Viljoendrift coal fields in the Transvaal, had briefly experienced a prosperous time in early 1882 supplying the Kimberley mines with coal, his rates were reduced when the quality of his coal decreased after the death of his mine manager, George Stow.[25] This was the very time the Stormberg mines emerged. They also hoped that they would soon supersede English coal. Thus, a number of local coal companies were later to have their head offices in Kimberley. The interest was reciprocated as a number of companies and individuals, based in Kimberley, hoped for the development of cheaper colonial coal and became substantial shareholders in Molteno coal companies.

The third leg of the regional nexus was the railway, a powerful marker of progress in the region – physically and symbolically. Bringing mixed feelings to the Stormberg region, the railway caused mine owners, merchants and townspeople to have great hopes of further development. However, others had misgivings regarding the intrusion of modern British capital, and the control and unimaginable changes it could impose. This was immediately true for those struggling to keep their hold on the land and who had turned to wagon riding as a

[23] Cape Archives Depot, LC 12, Limited Companies: Act 23 of 1861. Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, 1882; the Cyphergat company was established at the same time that Sammy Marks floated his company, 'The South African and Orange Free State Coal and Mineral Mining Association', with £75 000, R. Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks*, p.11; *The Queenstown Free Press*, 30 September 1896
[24] R. Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks*, p 11.
[25] Ibid., p. 27.

means of survival. It was also true for those who worked in the associated infrastructure such as inns, wagon repairs and blacksmithies.[26] Such people, according to the historian, Macmillan, were now forced into a pioneering role, feeling themselves *"*compelled to move further and further before the railways and are thus the means of opening up ever more distant land…."[27]

Nevertheless, a window of opportunity for the region was opened by the arrival of the railway which began uniting town and country, coast and hinterland with the mines and harbours of the Cape Colony**.** As Mabin has shown, the expansion of trade and capital northwards now drew the railway lines out of the environs of Cape Town where it had been geared mainly to catering for settlers, officials, holiday makers, business people and creating linkages from the seaports to their agricultural hinterlands. Cape railway construction was launched in earnest, after the formation in 1872 of the Cape Government Railways and was extended to connecting prime agricultural, industrial and commercial nodes to each other.[28] The first major routes to be opened were those linking Cape Town to De Aar, designated the Western System, and Port Elizabeth to De Aar, known as the Midland System. These were both completed on 31 March 1884. Thereafter, the Western line was pushed rapidly northwards, reaching the Griqualand diamond fields in 1885 and Mafeking in 1894. The eastern line, running northwards from the port of East London, reached Queenstown in May 1880.

The railway also had potential to draw the Stormberg out of a pre-capitalist system towards the capitalist orbits of the coast and Kimberley. Since the railway itself ran on coal, its importance in the Stormberg thus became inextricably intertwined with the coal mines. For the coal region, the railway would supply a steady market for coal and cheap, regular transport for what is a very bulky, low-value commodity.[29] Thus, the early 1880s was a tense time for inhabitants of the Albert and Queenstown Districts as they awaited government testing of the coals which would determine whether the line from Queenstown would go northwards to Jamestown, north- north- east to Dordrecht or north-north-west to Molteno, and also whether Middleburg and Indwe should be connected to it. Mabin outlines the political battles played out in parliament between Cape Town merchants and those of Port

[26] Interview, John Stretton, Strydfontein, Molteno, 29 November 2011
[27] W.M. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem, and its Historical Development*, Pretoria, The State Library, 1974, p 59.
[28] G. Pirie, "Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 19. No. 4, Dec 1993, p. 716
[29] R. Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks*, p. 16

Elizabeth as to which direction the railways should take.[30] A Railway Vigilance Committee was even set up in Queenstown to monitor developments.[31] Wealthy notable, Edward Halse of the farm, Carnarvon, also became an important supporter for a Sterkstroom-Molteno line as his farm would lie close to the route. A Standard Bank Report of 1882 cited that:

> 'The feeling along the frontier in favour of working the various coalfields is undoubtedly strong...the precise direction which the contemplated extension of the border railway will take is yet uncertain and the payability of the coal mines is far from being definitely ascertained ... the rival mines, viz:-the Great Stormberg, Cyphergat, Paardekraal and Indwe are each widely puffing their superiority to the others, and it is not yet clear which of them will prove to be the most successful.'[32]

In 1881, during the onset of the severe economic recession of the 1880s, Molteno received a great boost to its economic prospects when the Cape government decided to extend the railway line from East London via Molteno and Burgersdorp rather than through Dordrecht. However, the existence of the Molteno coalfields either side of the line's trajectory was clearly a significant reason for this. Given Indwe's proximity to Dordrecht, this was a great blow to the Indwe Company who then turned to larger entrepreneurs for finance in order to build a railway from Imvani to Indwe as part of a land deal with the Cape government. Regarding Molteno, the Standard Bank reported in 1884:

> 'the long prevailing drought in the East of the Cape Province has retarded progress but the railway has lifted expectations… ere long, not only the coal fields at Molteno but Basutoland via Aliwal North will be brought into close communication with the coast. The colliery companies are now under contract with the railway authorities and Colonial coal is thus for the first time having a fair trial.'[33]

After the Cape Government Railways' Eastern line reached Queenstown in 1880 and Sterkstroom in 1882, it extended across the harsh gradients of Boesmanshoek reaching Molteno in 1884. The Eastern Cape now had tantalisingly closer links to the Northern Cape and the Kimberley diamond mines. Stormberg merchants, farmers and mine owners also had easier access to nearby towns and the ports, although they were often confronted by dauntingly long delays at stations of up to three hours. The delays were particularly hard on female passengers, complained the press, as unlike men, they not could alight and drink

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[30] A. Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism, Intensification and Expansion in the Economic Geography of the Cape Colony, South Africa, 1854-1899', PhD thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1984, pp. 148-158
[31] *The Queenstown Representative,* 14 September 1880
[32] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, (eds.), *The Confidence of the Whole Country, Standard Bank reports on economic conditions in Southern Africa, 1865-1902*, Johannesburg , Standard Bank Investment Corporation, 1987, p. 127
[33] Ibid., p. 155

something at McCalgan's Hotel in Sterkstroom. Instead the women arrived cold and hungry and were better advised to take the cart.[34]

More importantly, a strongly reciprocal relationship between the railways and the mines began with the allocation of coal contracts to the Molteno mines. Most mines in the Molteno area could supply coal directly into railway trucks while the Cape Government Railways, for its part, could now look forward to a steady and easily accessible supply of steam coal.[35] By 1885, the railway also reached Burgersdorp and Aliwal North. Thus the mines, as a key supplier of coal, determined not only the very direction of the railways through their provision of its coal, but would be a factor in the success of the Eastern line as an economic venture.

Supported by these developments, the accumulation of local capital forged ahead. Considerable excitement was generated in Molteno, when a new mine was opened in August 1884 a few miles out of town on a farm bought by 'some American gentlemen who are well acquainted with mining engineering'. The defiant mantra, which would be heard for the next decade and a half, was proclaimed by a Molteno correspondent to the *Queenstown Representative*: *"*the coal is as good if not superior to Indwe coal." In 1884, coal production at Cyphergat, Molteno and Fairview together yielded about 9 000 tons but jumped to 14 233 tons in 1885.[36] The Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, meanwhile, claimed the capacity to deliver in almost unlimited quantities. Only 300 yards from the railway, the mine had now been connected to the main line with a siding so that the locomotives could take their coal from the pits' mouth. It also sub-let farm land that the company occupied on the basis of their proximity to the railway.[37] By 1886, the company was selling coal over a radius of 125 kilometres, increasing the employment of both black and white and paying dividends of 2.5% in 1886 and 1887.[38] During early 1886, coal contracts were concluded with the Molteno mines for between 300-500 tons per month at a rate of 16s – 17s per ton and, according to a Standard Bank Report, "the doubts that have existed as to the adaptability of that coal for railway purposes have now been dispelled…. It is exclusively used on the Eastern line,

[34] *The Queenstown Representative,* 22 July 1884
[35] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 169; A. Mabin, "Land, Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities ', p.4
[36] However the price seems to have dropped to between 10s to 20s per ton, Blue Book, Cape of Good Hope, 1885, p. 37
[37] *The Queenstown Representative*, 26 February 1884
[38] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 70; *The Queenstown Representative*, 21 August 1885; 10 August 1886; 9 August 1887

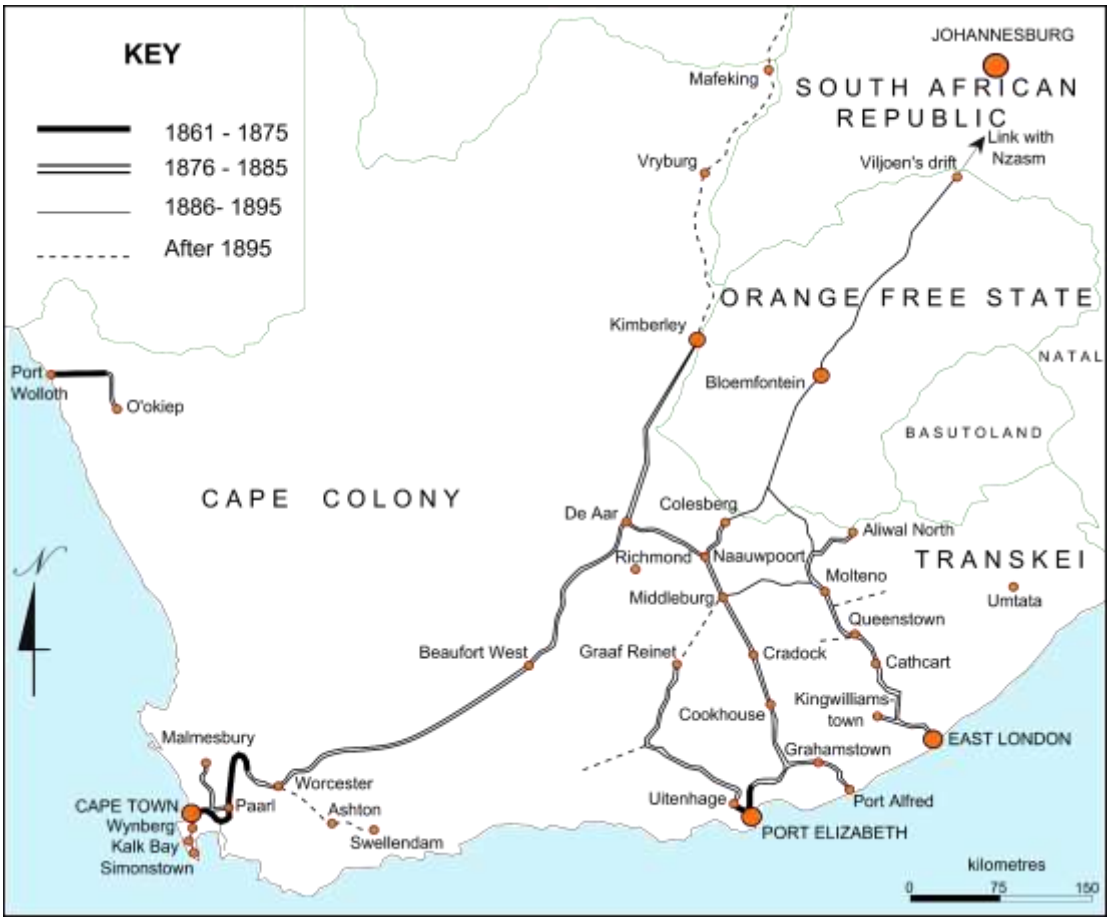
admittedly the most difficult of the three systems to work."[39] Although the Great Stormberg Coal Company died a premature death due to 'a deplorable lack of energy and a failure of capital', it was taken over by the indefatigable George Vice. Always seeming to eschew partnerships, he worked the mine much more energetically than his predecessor had, improved the quality of the coal and applied for a railway line to run from the main station up Thricole Street to his new acquisition.[40]

Focus on Kimberley by both the Stormberg and Indwe coal mines determined that the next issue of paramount importance was to link the Eastern with the Midland line via Middleburg and also to Indwe. But by December 1885, the Midland and Western systems had reached Kimberley, rapidly forcing down the price of Stormberg coal which still had to rely on more expensive wagon transport to Kimberley.[41] However, junction lines from Middleburg and from Indwe would integrate Cape coal into the railway system throughout the colony and allow the Cape mines to compete with the imported article. Thus towns along the Eastern line punted for the junctions to occur nearest to their own areas. While Molteno had the natural advantage of being on the coal seam and of being on a direct line between Indwe and Middleburg, Queenstown, the economic epi-centre of the region, wanted the junctions to meet the eastern line lower down at its own station or near Imvani further south to give the town easier access to the more valued Indwe coal.[42] The *Queenstown Representative* agreed:

> 'the supply at Indwe seems to be practically inexhaustible, approximately 40 000 000 tons, while the facilities are so great that they could maximize the output to an almost unlimited extent without enhancing the cost of working. The cost of the coal at the Indwe mines is at present 7s to 8s per ton but owing to the necessity of using bullock wagons to take the coal to the nearest point of the railway the cost rises to 28-29s per ton.'[43]

[39] It was the most difficult of the three lines due to the hilly terrain, A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 191
[40] *The Queenstown Representative*, 28 July, 4, 26 August, 1884
[41] Ibid., 8 December 1885; A. Mabin, 'Land, Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities', p. 4
[42] *The Queenstown Representative*, 26 September 1884
[43] Ibid., 7 July 1885

Figure 6. Map of the towns and railways in the Cape Colony until 1899



Source: A. Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism, Intensification and Expansion in the Economic Geography of the Cape Colony, South Africa, 1854-1899', PhD thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1984, p. 6.

At a public meeting, John Frost, Member of Parliament for Queenstown, argued that a more southerly junction to Middleburg would provide the easiest gradient.[44] It would also replace the slower wagon transportation of salt from the productive pans at Maraisburg and grain imports from the Eastern Cape to the markets of the Transkei.[45] However, others feared that if the railway was connected at or near Sterkstroom and then taken on to Tarka and Cradock, it would bring Port Elizabeth (on the Midland line) into a much more competitive position with East London, efface the latter and eventually render the eastern line a white elephant.[46] While Stephens, Chief Locomotive Superintendent of the Cape Government Railways, acknowledged the superiority of Indwe coal for locomotive purposes, he had reservations about Indwe's distance from the Queenstown station which would not only push up the price

[44] *The Queenstown Representative*, 17 March 1885
[45] Here the annual salt requirements were large, especially around Ugie, owing to the nature of the veldt, Ibid., 26 March 1886.
[46] Ibid., 17 March , 21 April 1885

but limit its contribution to the eastern line to 3 000 tons a month. Molteno, on the other hand, was on the direct line from the port of East London through to Burgersdorp.[47] The whole question of junction lines was delayed when the Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works, James Sivewright, urged the government to consider the financial depression and that coal might be found in De Aar on the Midland line.[48] Sivewright was to do much in the coming decade to draw interest away from the Stormberg mines and towards the Transvaal.

Expanding horizons

In 1886, when gold was discovered on the Rand, the local impact was relatively low key as compared to some other regions. While Mabin refers to the flight of capital from the Cape to the Rand after the discovery of gold, this was not so in the relatively underdeveloped Stormberg. If anything, it merely raised hopes of a spin-off. More significant was the fact that coal mining and the Cape Government Railways were being challenged by the negative political impact of gold mining. The new wealth of the ZAR enabled them to plan a railway to Delagoa Bay and avoid reliance on the Cape colony. Coal was so entwined with the economy of the Cape railways that the prospect of the completion of the railway was extremely disturbing to both enterprises. The two northern republics would soon be able use the lines to Delagoa Bay and Natal which competed with the colony for trade.[49] Similarly, although demand for fuel by the gold mines could have offered a promising outlet for Stormberg mines, this was eclipsed by the exploitation of coal mining at Boksburg 1888. This virtually eliminated the Transvaal market from the Cape mines which were still challenged by English coal.

Adding to the woes of the coal mines, the Cape Government Railways started buying Viljoensdrift coal from Sammy Marks' company, Lewis and Marks. The coal was good quality, cheap and burned well in the fireboxes of the engines**.** Thus imperatives were heightened for Stormberg coal to reduce its transport costs to remain competitive and an option on other lines, as well as for the construction of the junction line to the Midland system.[50]

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[47] *The Queenstown Representative*, 21 August 1885.
[48] Ibid., 28 May 1886.
[49] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 11 February, 9 August 1887.
[50] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 191; Mabin, 'Land, Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities', p.4.

Indeed, when in July 1888, the government confirmed that the Stormberg junction, 11 miles north of Molteno, would be the departure point to Middleburg, prospects of an economic boom loomed in the coal region. The announcement was met with great celebration by Molteno. A ball was held in the lavishly decorated Good Templars' Hall built by George Vice in 1884 to house the International Order of Good Templars (IOGT).[51] This was a movement he worked fervently to uphold, but one which was not always met with the support of the Molteno inhabitants. The ball was backed by the Molteno Brass Band with dancing continuing until the small hours of the morning.[52] More significantly, business optimism was rampant and a flurry of new mining activity began. Nascent conglomerates emerged suggesting an attempt to form a monopoly over the railway trade and an escalation of investment. The Fairview mine, which had lagged in 1886, was resuscitated in September 1887 with Cyphergat capital.[53] It was channeled through certain Fairview lessees who were also shareholders in the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company and 'whose dividends have been so handsome as to encourage the simultaneous development of the neighbouring Fairview'.[54]

Links with English capital were also made by local mining entrepreneurs like John Kerr, a local farmer and MD of the Fairview Mine, who went to England in 1891 to raise capital to float a new mine and subsequently established the new Aberdeen Coal Estates next to Cyphergat.[55] He proposed to acquire a 20 year lease on a block of farms, consisting of Spioenkop, Klipfontein, Poortje and three portions of Kaffirskraal, on which the company would be situated. It was advertised as being close to the Cyphergat and Fairview companies and the eastern system of railways, and would be traversed by the proposed line from Molteno to Indwe. The company estimated finding coal to a depth of 100 feet and, by sinking an incline shaft as opposed to the usual 'openings along the outcrop of coal', they would reach the coal within a surface cover of 60 to 70 feet. This would enable it to give at least double the amount of working face than the ordinary drives could give. With a suitable engine to haul the material up the incline shaft, the Company boasted that at the very lowest calculation, the coal would yield 3 000 tons per acre, giving a total of 51 million tons. Moreover, with the coal's high productivity, strong heating power and low amount of shale, they hoped to be more cost effective than English coal at Kimberley. As soon as the junction

[51] This was a movement that had been established in America in the 1850s, but had made its way to the colonies by the 1870s
[52] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 13 July 1888.
[53] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, 1888, p. 219
[54] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 25 May 1888.
[55] Ibid., 24 February 1891.

to Middleburg opened, they would also be available to supply the Cape Government Railways and, when fully developed, company dividends would equal at least 25%.[56]

Table 1. Production of coal in the Albert District and Indwe, 1884-1889

		ANNUAL PRODUCTION IN TONS					NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES				
	1884	**1885**	**1886**	**1887**	**1888**	**1889**	**1885**	**1886**	**1887**	**1888**	**1889**
Cyphergat		7033	15650	11000		13000	95	100	113		115
Molteno		4200	3000	3000	30000	6000	50	50	30		46
Fairview		3000	No return	3600	together	5000	27	No return	19	70	50
TOTAL	**9000**	**14233**	**18 650**	**17600**	**30000**		**172**	**150**	**162**	**70**	
Indwe		2250	2 348	2414	2820	2254	30	30	35	25	30

Source: Cape of Good Hope, Blue Books, 1887, p. 219; 1888, p. 219, 1889, p. 243

Such developments also encouraged the Sterkstroom district to prospect for coal. Deposits were found on the Jonas Kraal and Hex River farms, on Carnarvon by the Halse Brothers and on Brodie's farm, Klipkraal.[57] While previous explorations on the Sterkstroom commonage had revealed problems of intersecting trap dykes (intrusions of igneous rock cutting across the coal strata), a Queenstown syndicate reopened an old drive in May 1891.[58] Reports were highly optimistic. Merging seams were found which would provide coal seams thicker than anywhere outside the Indwe basin. According to Thomas Bain, the Geological Surveyor, coal development especially to the east of Sterkstroom looked promising and could even obviate the need for the Indwe line. This would be a boon to the Queenstown district and, harped the press, if known earlier, could have caused the Middleburg junction line to meet at Sterkstroom.[59] Accordingly, 35 erven were advertised for sale in Sterkstroom as being close to the railway. It was also punted that the commonage was one big coal bed and that the

[56] *The Queenstown Free Press*, Affadavit, Alex Laurie, 20 January 1891.
[57] NMMU, G 52-'91, 9 August 1890; *The Queenstown Free Press*, 2 January, 14 April 1891; CAD, LND 1/356, L4850, 13, 16 December 1890.
[58] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 5 May 1891.
[59] Ibid., 12 May 1891.

railway was coming soon from Indwe. At this juncture, and full of confidence, all of the aforementioned Sterkstroom ventures, as well as the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, attempted to sell their operations to the government. This move was of considerable concern to Colonel Frederick Schermbrucker, Member of the House of Assembly for the Eastern Cape and Managing Director of the Indwe Railway, Colleries and Land Company, which was poised to do the same.[60]

During the growing excitement at the impending connection to Middleburg, Vice built a railway a mile and a half long from just north of the Molteno station to his mine, and held a celebration to mark the opening. A large social party from Queenstown visited the mines in special carriages, complete with a saloon, and was met at the Molteno station which, like the town, was festooned with flags. Molteno townsmen joined the train and accompanied the party to the mine. A welcoming party consisted of about 60 "Kaffirs each armed with "a pick and an axe and executed a kind of a war dance" while "a collection of Kaffir women, with their faces painted for the occasion, sang and danced till further orders." A party of about 50 or 60 then adjourned to John Kerr's home where George Vice presided over a lavish luncheon. The present government, the achievements of Molteno and the mines were all toasted and thanked by various speakers, after which the inevitable ball was held.[61] Two months later, the Colonial Secretary, Mr Sauer, whose efforts had brought about the sanction of the Middleburg-Molteno line, was similarly feted at a dinner in Molteno by the mayor, leading citizens, the clergy and a number of local medical men.[62]

Finally, in 1892, the junction line was opened between the Stormberg junction and Middleburg on the Midland system. One hundred and fifty men of the region and border towns - politicians, clergy, doctors, lawyers, bankers, merchants and landowners - assembled for the predictable formal luncheon. In the evening, a torchlight procession and a bonfire brought proceedings to a close. A detachment of the Cape Police kept order, presumably to deal with the presence of mine labourers who now numbered just under 1000.[63] Besides linking East London to Cape Town by only two days of rail travel, the junction finally gave the Molteno coal district direct access to Kimberley and other important markets and a chance to supersede English coal at Kimberley.[64] Stormberg coal production soared by over

[60] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 1891, p. 40
[61] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 13 February 1891.
[62] Ibid., 21 April 1891.
[63] Ibid., 11 March 1892
[64] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 304.

40% during the first six months of 1893, while ouput by the Cyphergat Company paid shareholders dividends of 10%.[65] Sieraadsfontein, started by Jones and Robert Blount who bought mining rights from L van Zyl in 1890, also began producing in 1892 and for some time supplied large quantities of coal to de Beers at Kimberley. In 1893, John Elliot leased the Penshaw mine from Vice on a 100 acre portion of Paardekraal, situated 2 ½ miles south of Molteno across the Stormbergspruit. He reckoned that he was winning the coal for less than 10s per ton.[66] The Standard Bank inspector reported:

> 'At present three mines are being worked close to the town and I have it from very good authority viz JG Elliot – nephew of Sir G Elliot, a practical miner and shrewd keen north countryman that if the price of coal is to be forced down to 12s 6d per ton by the government though this is not likely for some time to come, even then the mines can be worked at a profit. And he says that if the present owners cannot make the mines pay, there will be lots of able men ready to take their places, and with more modern ideas and appliances work the mines at a profit.'[67]

Penshaw's coal was commended by Stephens, the Chief Locomotive Superintendent of the Railway, for its pure and unadulterated quality. It was quite different, he noted, to much of the early Stormberg coal.[68] Contat mine, too, was at its most optimistic for new sales at Kimberley: assessments at Kimberley and Cape Town rated their coal 87.5% as good as English coal.[69] Rail sidings were extended to the Looperberg mine, superseding the bullock cart, while the railway station was one of the busiest on the line and underwent alterations.[70] Stormberg too grew into a busy settlement with a bank at the station, a school, a post office, a few shops, a butchery, houses for railway officials, a railway café and the Corner House Hotel, later named the Somerset Boarding House. For a time, the Hotel became a health haven for people with chest problems, as in the case of Matjesfontein, and was often filled with occupants.[71]

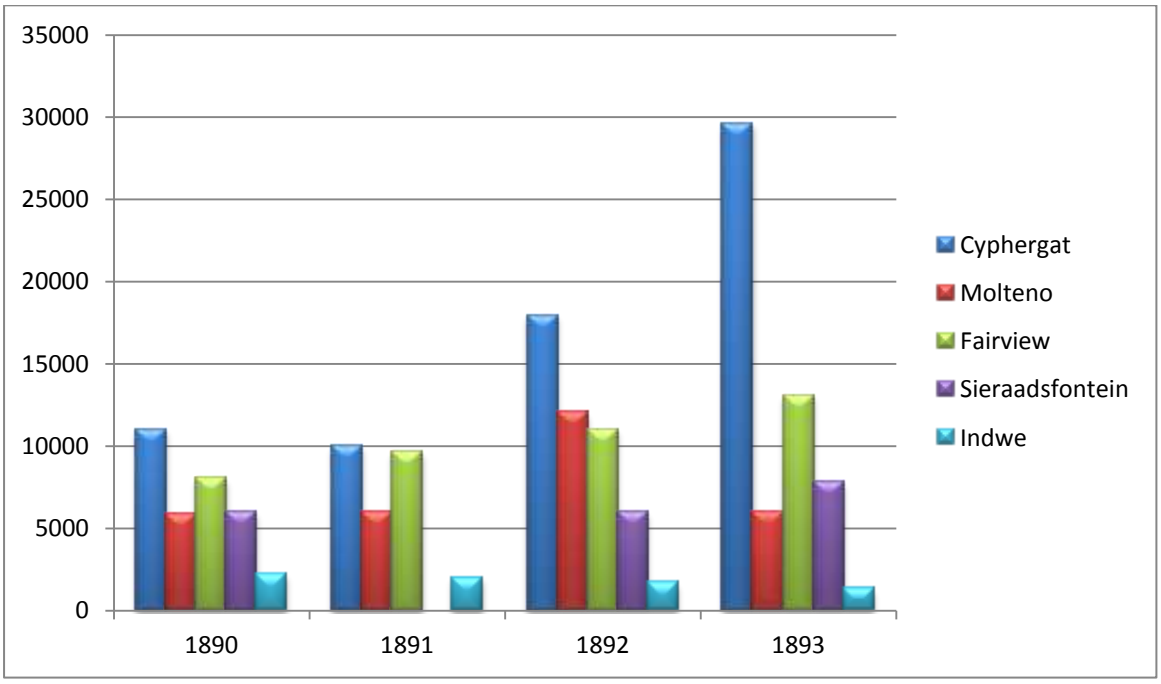
In 1892 then, the Stormberg coal industry was at its height with both production and the labour force nearly doubling. Recognition of Stormberg coal was now forthcoming from Kimberley. Representatives from the Midland Collieries Syndicate based in Kimberley, travelled to Sterkstroom by train, to develop their existing mine situated at the nearby Hex

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[65] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 337.
[66] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 15 October 1889
[67] Standard Bank Archives, INSP, 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 5 October 1893
[68] *The Albert Times*, 7 February 1894
[69] Ibid., 7 March, 4 April 1894
[70] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 1 August 1893; SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 5 October 1893
[71] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 73

River and within months had sunk another shaft.[72] Early in 1894, de Beers reported that its entire coal supply came from the Stormberg Mountains, chiefly from Cyphergat, since "the completion of railway connections and the reduction of carriage has placed Colonial fuel within our reach at a very considerable reduction on former cost." Confirming these developments at a de Beers general meeting, Rhodes stated, " we are now taking colonial coal, and taking it moreover at a saving as compared with English coal of £60 000 per annum."[73]

Figure 7. Regional production of coal in tons, 1891-1893



Source: Cape of Good Hope, Statistical Registers, 1892, p. 248; 1893, p. 241; 1894, p. 241.

On a tour of the Cape coalfields in early 1894, Gardner Williams, the General Manager of de Beers, reported that the greater part of Stormberg coal was well suited to the new class of boilers he had lately introduced. This was because of the high yields of gas which was suited to sustaining a long flame for boilers.[74]

[72] *The Albert Times*, 5 September, 12 December 1894
[73] Ibid., 31 January 1894
[74] Ibid., 21 March 1894

The ambivalence of the Cape Government Railways to Stormberg coal

Even so, the mines at Stormberg had been consistently challenged by a lack of skilled labour and worst of all, an inferior product.[75] In 1889-1890, the Cape Government Railways employed an inspector to check the screening of coal, while the government, judging from remarks made in Parliament, mainly retained Stormberg coal in deference to local sentiment. Also of concern to the Molteno mines was that the imports of English coal had multiplied seven fold between 1887 and 1891 and had generated over £100 000 for the Cape Government Railways from de Beers for its carriage.[76] Thus, at the very height of the Stormberg industry, official warnings were being sounded as to the quality and cost of the coal and the government began putting a check on Stormberg orders until a Select Committee had investigated its value.[77]

Stephens, the Chief Locomotive Superintendent, persuaded his General Manager, CB Elliott, that based on the excessive levels of waste in Cyphergat's coal and its high price of £1 per ton, he should drop Fairview and Molteno coal (Vice's) and decrease the intake of Cyphergat's coal to 1 500 tons per month, renewable only on a three monthly basis. He should then utilise 7000 tons per month from Viljoensdrift which was nearly half the cost of Stormberg coal. This would expose Cyphergat to healthy competition with Viljoensdrift.[78] However, given the coal prices demanded, despite the doubtful quality, perhaps local mine owners had, with the proximity of both the eastern system and the advent of the junction line, begun to think they had a monopoly on the Eastern line. Francis Tennant, Managing Director at Cyphergat, either unaware of the looming Viljoensdrift competition or imagining that Stormberg mines had a monopoly, suggested a new three year contract, still at the high price of 20s per ton.[79] However, Elliott, acting on Stephens' suggestions, informed Tennant of the new arrangement.[80]

But the significance of coal for the prosperity of the town was too large to let the situation lie. In July 1893, the Molteno Chamber of Commerce joined the fray, challenging the contention of Sivewright, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works, that the Stormberg mines

[75] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 5 May 1891; A. Mabin, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 293
[76] A. Mabin, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 315
[77] NMMU, G 64 –'93, Stephens, Chief Locomotive Superintendent of the Railways to Elliot, General Manager of the Railways, p. 10
[78] Ibid., Stephens, Chief Locomotive Superintendent, 28 October, 1892, p. 11-12; Stephens to Elliott, 10 November 1892, pp. 24-25; 23 February 1893, p 13
[79] Ibid., Letter, Tennant, Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, 18 November 1892, p. 12.
[80] Ibid., Letter, Assistant General Manager to Managing Director, Cyphergat, 29 November 1892, p. 12

were not capable of supplying the railways when, in actual fact, the government had reduced their orders.[81] The answer typically given at this stage was that the question was going to be submitted to a Select Committee. According to the Standard Bank, this was with a view to favouring increased consumption of Cape coal on the Cape railways.[82] Indeed, in 1892, the Select committee decided that coal for use in the Cape should be drawn as far as possible from the Cape, even at an additional cost of 1/10th over and above the cost from mines outside of the colony.[83]

Nevertheless, possibly due to internal disorganisation, the Cape Government Railways also displayed substantial erraticism in their ordering policy. This compromised the ability of the mines to meet orders for important customers like Kimberley and to command regular skilled labour.[84] Also, despite the supportive recommendations of the Select Committee, the railways continued to demonstrate their preference for Sammy Marks' coal at Vereeniging. Perhaps because of this, Jones and Blount sold their mine, Sieraadsfontein, to Hyman Woolf, who seemingly unaware of the price war, again blithely offered coal to the Cape Government Railways at 20s 6d per ton, delivered in trucks at Molteno. Stephens declined.[85] Other mines were offered smaller orders and at considerably lower prices. The mines of Woolf and Vice even closed down for a time, while others had to work short time or restrict further infrastructural development.[86] The drop in contract prices aroused the concern of not only the mines but the commercial interests in town, since lower wages for miners meant reduced buying power.[87]

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[81] NMMU, G 64 –'93, Telegram, Molteno Chamber of Commerce to Commissioner of Crown Lands, 9 July 1893, p. 20

[82] Ibid., Telegram, Elliott to Molteno Chamber of Commerce, 11 July 1893, p. 20

[83] NMMU, A.6 – '93, Cape of Good Hope Blue Book, Report of the Select Committee of Coal for Railway Purposes, August 1893, pp. xi; However, Sammy Marks also found the Cape Government Railways a demanding customer, having to discard as much as 30 per cent of all the coal hauled from underground in order to satisfy their requirements, R. Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks : The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal*, Cape Town, David Philip in association with Jewish Publications, South Africa,1991, p. 50.

[84] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 25 July 1893; NMMU, G 64 –'93, Letter, Pope to Elliott, 6 January 1893, p. 25; Letter, Stephens to General Manager of the Railways, 2 May 1893; Letter, Difford, Assistant General Manager Railways to Vice, 19 May 1893, p. 15; Letter, Assistant General Manager Railways to John Kerr, 13 June 1893, p. 16; Letter, Difford to MD of Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, 13 June 1893, p. 16-17; Letter, Kerr to General Manager of the Railways, 20 June 1893, p. 18; Letter, Difford to Kerr, 13 July 1893, p. 20; Letter, Difford to Kerr, 24 July 1893, p. 21; Letter, Difford to Traffic Manager, 24 July 1893, p. 21; Letter, Difford to Chief Locomotive Superintendent, 20 May 1893, p. 15; Letter, Difford to Traffic Manager, 24 July 1893, p. 21.

[85] NMMU, G 64 –'93, Letter, Hyman Woolf to Elliott, 10 March 1893, p. 26; Letter, Stephens to Elliott, 1 May 1893, p. 27.

[86] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 16 August 1894.

[87] *The Albert Times*, 10 January 1894

Another disadvantage was that, unlike the Indwe mines, Stormberg mining lacked support in Parliament.[88] Indeed, Albert's parliamentary representation consisted wholly of Bond members who were divided on the merits of coal capital. Perhaps it was for this reason that John Kerr stood for election to the Legislative Assembly at the beginning of 1894. Kerr's manifesto was, as to be expected, focused on the coal question, a low carriage rate for coal and opposition to the excessive duties imposed on colonial coal by the Transvaal.[89] However, out of the four candidates for the Albert District, in du Plessis, a pro-coal Bondsman, and Jotham Joubert, an anti-coal Bondsman, were elected.[90]

In March, the Chambers of Commerce from East London, Queenstown, King Williams Town and Molteno met with the Cape Government Railways to appeal for larger orders at better prices and for cheaper rail rates. The railways took a hard stand, making it clear that, given the quality of coal, the price of even 15s a ton was too high. CB Elliott, General Manager of the Cape Government Railways, challenged coal owners to try to find a better seam of coal so they could compete with the quality Indwe coal which only cost 7s 6d, per ton and with Viljoensdrift coal, which was also cheaper at 12s 6d. Further, the trains only used 1.5 tons of Viljoensdrift to two tons of Stormberg coal. [91]Even the Standard Bank maintained that it barely cost the coal owners 10s per ton to get the coal out and, when the owners learned to be content with smaller profits, the fields should show a progressive output.[92] CB Elliott, cleverly playing on the much debated issue of the Cape Government Railways' loyalty towards Cape coal, stated bluntly, "from a commercial point of view it would pay us to give up Stormberg coal at once".[93]

The battle for survival was ceaseless and dejection set in. *The Albert Times* ruminated, "Comment on this is needless. The industries of the colony are thus rejected and ruined by an intriguing government, while a foreign state reaps the benefit... meanwhile, our mines are practically closed down, and trade is at a very low ebb."[94] By March, even de Beers seemed to be reconsidering the value of Stormberg coal. Cecil Rhodes, head of de Beers and Cape Premier at the time, secretly slipped into Molteno, visited the mines and met with Noah

[88] *The Albert Times*, 28 February 1894
[89] Ibid., 24 January 1894
[90] Ibid., 31 January 1894, 3 March 1894, 2 September 1896
[91] Ibid., 11 April 1894
[92] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 16 August 1894.
[93] *The Albert Times*,11 April 1894
[94] Ibid., 27 March 1894

Deary and George Vice.[95] A year later, reports filtered through that Rhodes was no longer happy with Stormberg coal and had joined Laing, now Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works, and Sivewright as its public opponents. He had stated to the Cape Times that Cyphergat coal was hopeless because of its very thin seam and excessive shale and that de Beers was only using it because it fitted with the sentiment of the country. Tennant angrily challenged Rhodes, pointing out that in an official report presented to Parliament in 1892, Tilney had stated that the fast mail train did very well on exclusively Cyphergat and Fairview coal. Also, continued Tenannt, why had Rhodes then stated that £60 000 had been saved by substituting Cyphergat for English coal? Rhodes had also made allusion to the small output of Stormberg coal, but the slow progress was entirely due to erratic orders by the government.[96] The Stormberg mines could put out a combined total of 100 000 tons a year and lose less through pulverising than did Lewis and Marks, Sammy Marks' company.[97] Nevertheless, at this juncture, de Beers invested with the new Indwe Railway, Colleries and Land Company (IRC & L) to help finance the proposed railway line from Indwe to Sterkstroom.[98]

In the meantime, Rhodes, as Premier, had managed to secure the connection of the Cape Railway to the Transvaal by promising Kruger that he would fund the struggling Delagoa Bay line. While this was potentially good for the Stormberg in terms of exports, it would also benefit Marks' coal at Vereeniging. Indeed, the opportunistic Sivewright, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works, who had been sent to negotiate with Kruger about the line, struck up a close relationship with Sammy Marks. When the line reached Johannesburg in 1892, not only did the line go right through Sammy Marks' coal fields, removing his need to rely on wagon transport, but Sivewright had given him a contract to supply 8 500 tons per month for five years at 11s. An outcry from the eastern members of the Cape Parliament opposed this foreign contract asking why not Indwe coal if Stormberg was inferior and did Sivewright perhaps have business interests in Vereeniging coal? The deal had been brokered even though a high tariff had been applied to Cape coal by the Transvaal.[99] Blount, of the Sieraadsfontein mines, complained, 'this government looks outside its borders'. [100]

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[95] *The Albert Times*, 11 April 1894
[96] Ibid., 15 May 1895
[97] Ibid., 20 June 1894; coal was also pulverized into a fine powder, which it was believed would burn almost as easily and efficiently as a gas, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pulverized_coal-fired_boiler
[98] A. Mabin, "Capital, Coal and Conflict", p. 24.
[99] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 11 July 1893; *The Albert Times*, 22 May 1895
[100] *The Albert Times*, 25 April 1894

In the end, it was parliamentary representation that modified the Sivewright-Marks deal. Colonel Schermbrucker challenged Laing, 'well known for being against Free State and colonial coal', and Sivewright, for secretly negotiating with Lewis and Marks.[101] Schermbrucker contended that one ton of Welsh coal did what two tons of Viljoensdrift coal did.[102] The subsequent debate in the House of Assembly resulted in a victory for the advocates of colonial coal with government coal contracts being thrown open to public tender.[103] Laing was prevented from protecting his favoured Lewis and Marks whose five year contract was now slashed to two years, while Laing attempted to pressure the house by saying that Lewis and Marks might just shut up their business if they did not get their terms. Compared to Laing, moaned the press, "the much anathematised Sir James Sivewright was a guardian angel of the Border coal industry."[104] Ultimately, parliamentary opposition prevented sanction of the deal and in 1894, Sivewright left parliament under a cloud. Yet, at the end of the year, the coal contract with Lewis and Marks jumped from 102 000 to 126 000 tons per year.[105] Out of the Cape Government Railways's annual consumption of 208 000 tons, the Stormberg was only supplying 21 000 and England, 31 200 tons.[106]

Now, diminishing faith in the coal industry was creating a disturbing trend in that, in 1894, key mining proprietors were leaving Molteno for Rhodesia. By 1893, Rhodes' British South Africa Company had opened up Rhodesia and paved the way for the further expansion of English merchant capital. John Elliot of Penshaw travelled to Bulawayo where he bought a farm, sold his mine to a Kimberley syndicate in 1896 and relocated to Bulawayo in 1897. Noah Deary took over the management of the mine.[107] Elliot reported that Bulawayo was as large as any interior town in the colony "and would soon become the rallying point of every Britisher …..[and] the northern country would become the backbone of the country."[108] John Kerr also sold his mining and commercial interests, including his store at the Fairview mine to Noah Deary, in order to relocate to Johannesburg. He was forced to let go of his house, decribed as "one of the finest properties in Molteno". It was a severe loss to the Stormberg as both Kerr and Elliot had been significant help in Molteno's 'darkest days of the coal neglect

[101] *The Albert Times*, 13 June 1894
[102] Ibid., 22 August 1894
[103] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno,16 August 1894.
[104] *The Albert Times*, 27 June 1894
[105] Ibid., 28 November 1894
[106] Ibid., 24 October 1894
[107] Ibid., 30 May, 11 July 1894; the syndicate had interests in the Bultfontein diamond mines near Kimberley; CAD, CGR 2/1/445, 500/28 38993, Molteno – Removal of Coal from Mines, Penshaw Colleries to C.B. Elliot, 23 March 1901; SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 31 August 1896
[108] *The Albert Times*, 9 June 1897

by the government', and guided Molteno through the competitive economic terrain with Lewis and Marks and the IRC & L Company in Indwe.[109] In 1895, Thomas Pope, general agent, merchant, farmer and former Mayor since 1883, also left for Bulawayo where he had secured a post in a London based company.[110] In 1897, John Barry, commercial broker owned 'a considerable amount' of property in Mashonaland and large interests in gold companies which had been floated in London. Robert Ewan, an **e**nergetic general dealer in Sterkstroom, opened branches in 1896 in Mochadi and Palapye in the British Bechuanaland Protecorate, in connection with the railway extension from that point northwards.[111] Charles McCalgan, who managed the Commercial Hotel in Sterkstroom for his mother, also owned a farm in Rhodesia by 1898 worth about £180 and several stands in Johannesburg.[112] In 1896, Contat Colliery, which had doubled its size in the previous three years, was sold for £130 000.[113]

Meanwhile, mine owners, who were intent on remaining in the Stormberg, exploited the private market by dropping their prices. Vice, for example, was selling large quantities of coal at a reduced cost of 15s a ton to private orders from as far as Lady Frère, Barkly East and Cathcart.[114] Tennant, too, was determined to diversify by making full use of all of the company's resources. He thus advertised a three year lease of farm land at Cyphergat which supported two dwellings and a shop, emphasising "its proximity to the mines [which] ensures a profitable trade in stock, cereals and garden produce with the large native mining population and European residents at Cyphergat."[115] The company also launched the Cyphergat Brick and Tile Company in 1894 which produced glazed face and fire bricks, South Africa's first earthworks sewerage pipes, ornamental tiles and garden and chimney pots. Given the availability of coal and excellent fire clay deposits, reputedly comparable with the very best Japanese clay, the tiles and sanitary ware became some of the best in the colony. By 1899, the company employed a labour force of approximately 25 blacks drawn from the coal works and three skilled European artisans, and owned three kilns fired with coal from the mines. An automatic brick making apparatus helped produce a weekly output of 20 000 bricks, much of which helped build Cyphergat's infrastructure and, from 1904, the

[109] *The Albert Times*, 4, 18 July 1894
[110] Ibid., 29 May 1895
[111] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 14 September 1897
[112] Ibid., 11 October 1898
[113] Ibid., 5 August, 25 November 1896
[114] *The Albert Times*, 6 June 1894; SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 16 August 1894.
[115] *The Albert Times*, 20 June, 12 September 1894

town and mills of Molteno.[116] The pipes were recommended for irrigation and drainage of roads and lands and supplied the diamond mines in Kimberley, the gold mines in Bulawayo, the Free State government, the Indwe Coal Mines, the East London Municipality, the Phillipstown Municipality and the Cape Government Railways.[117]

Also, like mine owners like Vice in Molteno and Sammy Marks at Vereeniging, the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company established a tree plantation possibly to provide wood for mine props and increase the value of the company property. A large tract of ground was planted with 6 000 trees in January 1896, while the company also offered mining rights on parts of their unworked property to other mining interests and grazing rights to farmers. These activities brought in capital which nearly covered the entire salaries bill of the company indicating how diversification could shore up mining enterprises.[118]

Meanwhile, further problems loomed for the Stormberg mines. A political crisis occurred in 1895/6 in the form of competition between the Transvaal and the Cape over the carrying trade to the Transvaal. When the owners of the Transvaal's railway line to Delagoa Bay, the Dutch owned Nedelandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatschappij, opened the line in 1894, the Cape Government Railways slashed its rates in order to compete. The Nedelandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatschappij then raised its freight charges from the Rand to the Vaal border. This resulted in the Cape railways unloading goods at the Vaal and taking them the rest of the way by ox wagon to which Kruger responded by closing the drifts in October 1895. The Cape Government Railways was then faced with a blockage of cargo and rolling stock at Vereeniging, Johannesburg and at the Cape ports. Rolling stock was rushed empty to those places not stopping to take coal in the Stormberg and in some cases, running out of fuel.[119] Extremely erratic orders ensued from day to day. On the very day that Laing signed a small contract of 850 tons with the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, he asked for an extra 1 000 tons from Cyphergat and Fairview. Before they had even delivered the agreed amounts they were again contacted by the Cape Government Railways for an additional 1000 tons each.[120] A Cape Government Railways report stated that the border railway was working from hand to mouth, no town having more than a day's supply,

[116]*The Albert Times*, 20 October 1894; CAD, PWD 1/2/97 B 83, Cyphergat Coal Mining (and Pottery) Co., Report on Manufacture of Earthenware Pipes, by Percy Aspenden, Chief Inspector, Public Works Department, 23August 1899; *The Molteno Advertiser*, 4 July 1908; J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 69
[117]CAD, PWD 1/2/97 B 83, Cyphergat Coal Mining (and Pottery) Co., Report, 23 August 1899.
[118]*The Albert Times*, 29 July 1896; R. Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks, p*. 80
[119] *The Albert Times*, 10 June 1896
[120] CAD, CGR, 2/3/1, Minutes of Meetings of Railway Officials, Town Council, Railways, Chamber of Commerce, Burgersdorp, 21 September 1895

while Queenstown and Burgersdorp were sometimes cleared out completely. Urgent despatches were sent to Cyphergat and, to keep the trains running, coal intended for Kimberley was diverted to the railway. The clear lack of government policy towards Stormberg coal was counter-productive for the mines whose output depended on planning ahead. Previously abandoned mines had to be reactivated at great cost. Also, about one third of the company's white and black labour force had been put off which, as Lawrie complained:

> 'has caused many to seek work elsewhere and has brought in the goldfields as a competitor … Many skilled natives finding their way there and getting higher wages have started work, so that now I find many of the trained natives who are working here, and whom we are desirous of retaining, are attracted to the goldfields by the prospect of higher wages.'[121]

The labour shortage was only eased when the threatened closure of the gold mines after the Jameson Raid led to miners returning to the Cape coal fields. Industrial expansion, which should have been a gradual process, was crowded into the short space of a couple of months and what should have been a source of revenue, now led to hurried, expensive restructuring. Even so, the mines which had previously been able to produce 5 000 tons in June were now only able to produce half that quantity.[122] The depressing consequence, complained Molteno, was that "the expansion of the mines is retarded… and the permanent prosperity of the mining industry is seriously imperilled."[123]

The threat, too, to Molteno of Indwe's superior coal rising to pre-eminence through the planned building of the Indwe-Sterkstroom line, now became a reality and a boon for Sterkstroom, if not for Molteno. The line, nevertheless, had an erratic beginning. For several years, speeches and telegrams intimated an imminent beginning so that "the rival combustible was already in imagination ousting the local product from the market".[124] *The Albert Times* captured Molteno's nervous defiance:

> 'There are various rumours abroad as to the development of the Indwe line... but we don't believe that our coal owners are going to be discouraged by that! … it will stimulate them to make greater improvements… in fact the new system for contracting for coal is in every way designed to call into being greater skill, greater energy, and greater enterprise.'[125]

Looking forward to the business generated from the junction, the Sterkstroom correspondent to *The Albert Times* crowed, 'the hotels are doing splendid business', 'Lots of workmen are

[121]Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, Director's Report: 31 July 1895 cited in *The Albert Times*, 3 June 1896
[122]*The Albert Times*, 1 July, 29 July 1896
[123] Ibid., 10 June 1896
[124] Ibid., 7 February 1894
[125]Ibid., 24 January 1894

waiting at Sterkstroom to start work on the line', "The coal industry is flat but we are expecting improvement after the railway is completed" and "the building trade is at present brisk".[126] When work commenced in early 1895, it caused quite a stir in the town with navvies at work all along the line, and merchants scrabbling to fulfil the orders and wants of the contractors. As in the mid 1880s, the line was constructed by George Pauling who let the work out to contractors in portions of one mile.[127] He was an engineer, a major builder of railways in Britain, resident partner of Firbank and Company, and a reckless entrepreneur and opportunist. [128]

Indwe's output now jumped from 1400 to 9850 tons.[129] Enviously, if inaccurately, Tennant pointed out that the Indwe Railway, Colleries and Land Company had been assisted with a large government subsidy in cash and land. He also referred to 'transparent political influence'which fostered their growth at the public expense, whereas Cyphergat had not one member in parliament with a direct interest in it. Mindful of his Port Elizabeth shareholders, Tennant reported to the Port Elizabeth Telegraph that Indwe was being paid more than the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company.[130] Indeed, at the same time as their erraticism with Stormberg orders, the Cape Government Railways entered into a contract with Indwe at 5 000 tons per month for six months in 1896, a result which was expected to double when the local railway line was completed.[131] D**e** Beers reduced their annual order from Cyphergat from 2 000 tons to 1 000 tons monthly, and by mid 1896, Indwe coal supplied all de Beers orders, completely effacing the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company.[132] Clearly Indwe had become a distinct threat to Molteno coal.

Nevertheless, despite competition, the years 1895 to 1897, saw a period of renewed activity and optimisim. The total number of tons produced by the Stormberg mines in 1895 was 76 744 (Lewis and Marks was 126 000 in 1895) with an accompanying cash expenditure of over £30 000 for labour and materials which added materially to the prosperity of the Albert

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[126] *The Albert Times*, 9 May, 28 November, 12 December, 25 April 1894
[127]Ibid., 30 January 1895
[128] G. Pauling, *Chronicles of a Contractor. Being the Autobiography of the late George Pauling*, ed. by David Buc, Constable and Co. Ltd., 1926, p. 89
[129]*The Albert Times*, 29 July 1896
[130]Ibid., 6 March 1895
[131] CAD, CGR, 2/3/1, Minutes, Meeting Town Council, Molteno Chamber of Commerce and Railways, 21 September 1895.
[132] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, 12 February 1896, p. 389; A. Mabin , "Land, Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities", p. 10

district.[133] The prospects of the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company were improving, with shares having multiplied 18 times since the inception of the company.[134] Another shaft was sunk on the north side of Cyphergat farm and soon after three or four more large companies were floated at Cyphergat.[135] Tennant had become something of a local hero since it was mainly he who had expanded the coal industry in the face of difficulties with the government.

Testing and boring forged ahead by syndicates, mine owners and farmers. [136] In 1896, the Syndicate Construction bored for coal at Kaffirs Kraal just 5 miles to the east of Cyphergat and struck a bed of fine, hot clay, 100 feet thick within 30 feet of the surface which was supposed to be exceptionally good.[137] Individuals bought mining rights on farms and then found contractors to work the drives.[138] Hymen Woolf called for tenders to produce between 1 200 to 1 500 tons of coal per month in three operational shafts at his Sieraadsfontein mines.[139] T. Hiscocks started his own mining explorations and 'trounced other mines' in producing a sample of coal which was reputedly very suitable for blacksmithies. On the same farm, coal was also found under a river bed at a depth of 90 feet below the known seam.[140]

The Cape Collieries was also begun during this period when Theron from Aliwal North, acquired mining rights on Zeekoegat and surrounding farms, about 10 miles to the west of Molteno. He floated a company consisting of investors mainly from Johannesburg and Cape Town.[141] In 1898, they had a far larger order from the Cape Government Railways than other Stormberg mines and at a sizeably higher rate (22 000 tons at 18 s a ton). However, perhaps Theron and Hallimond, the general manager, overreached themselves, because by 1899 the Standard Bank reported that the Cape Collieries company did 'very badly and are much embarrassed'.[142]

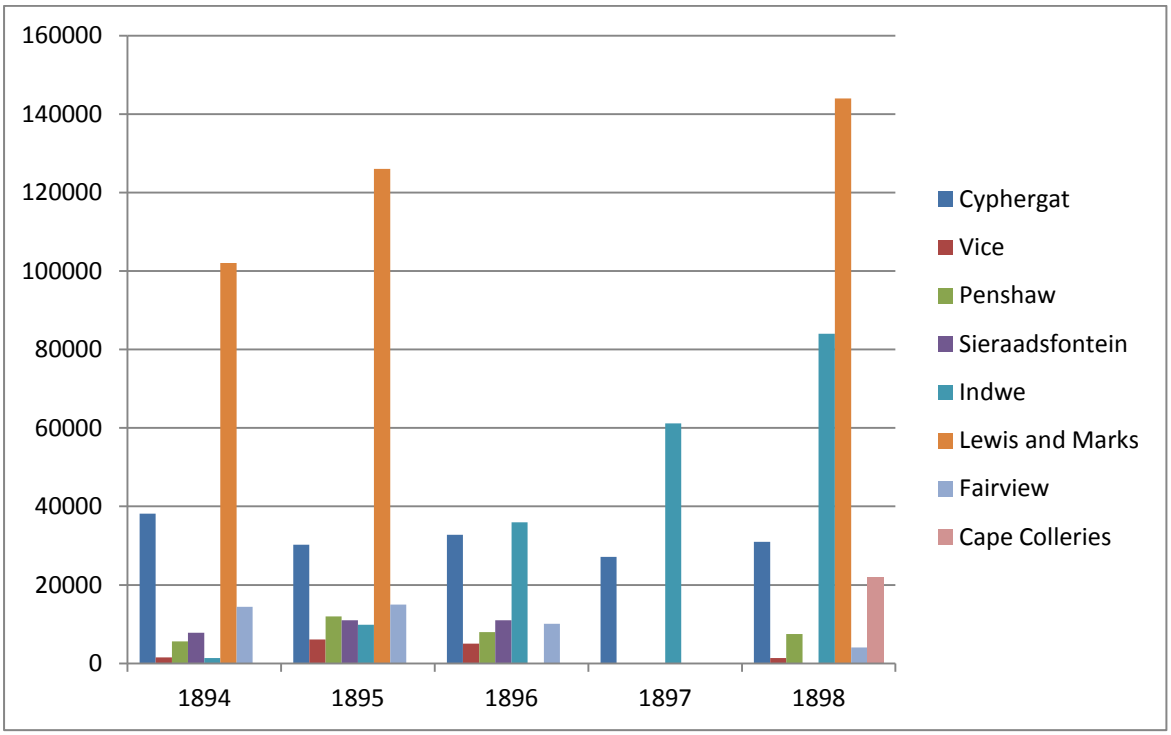
While this climate of renewed optimism was productive, it was also fertile ground for opportunists. George Barker of Molteno, who prospected in the Albert district, purported to be a qualified British engineer and maintained he had found gold on two of his properties.

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[133] *The Albert Times*, 29 July 1896, 3 March 1897; the Standard Bank reported 74 000 tons, SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 25 June 1895
[134] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, 13 February 1895, p. 368; *The Albert Times*, 30 September 1896
[135] *The Albert Times*, 17 June 1896
[136] Ibid., 12 August 1896, 29 January, 8 April, 15 July, 12 August 1896; 2 June 1897
[137] Ibid., 8 April 1896
[138] Ibid., 15 July 1986
[139] Ibid., 29 January 1896
[140] Ibid., 2 June 1897
[141] Ibid., 30 June 1897, 20, 27 October 1897, 2 March 1898
[142] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, 8 February 1899, p. 457

Barker also hired himself out to detect coal with the proviso that if nothing was found he would only be paid half his quoted price. In its assumed role of public guardian, the paper watched and challenged him continually.[143] Although Barker submitted his certificates to the paper on demand, he would not submit them to two mining companies as suggested by the editor.

Figure 8. Coal output in tons of the various Stormberg companies, Indwe and Lewis and Marks, 1894-1898



Sources: *The Albert Times*, 27 June 1894, 29 July 1896, 3 March 1897; 23 February, 21 August 1898; A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, 12 February 1896, p. 389, 8 February 1899, p. 457; SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 22 October 1898

The Cape coal industry again struggled from 1897 to 1899 due to erratic ordering by the Cape Government Railways and because the colonial government was still taking a far greater volume of coal from Lewis and Marks.[144] While they ordered 48 000 tons from three Stormberg mines in February 1898, they ordered three times that amount from Lewis and Marks.[145] The government also accepted 84 000 tons of Indwe coal, nearly double the Stormberg order, at a more expensive price than Cyphergat's prices.[146] Thus, as the century

[143] *The Albert Times*, 3 February 1898
[144] CAD, PWD, 1/2/97, B 83: Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, Minutes, 26 July 1899
[145] *The Albert Times*, 23 February 1898.
[146] Ibid., 21 August 1898; SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 22 October 1898

drew to a close, the rumblings of an approaching war between the British Empire and the northern Boer republics echoed the deep concerns of the coal industry.

Social relations on the coal and rail nexus

Coal and the railway were fundamental in shaping social relations in the Stormberg. 'The coal rush' rapidly became the central factor in Molteno's growth, providing work for an influx of coal contractors, sub contractors, individual prospectors, brokers, coal and law agents and black labourers from the Transkei. Also drawn into the ambit of the coal industry were local farmers whose lands straddled seams underground and who, either struggling to pay their quit rents, or merely having surplus land to lease, saw a financial opportunity. Instead of relying on the contribution of itinerant bywoners or sharecroppers, they could now utilise the more lucrative option of leasing coal rights to hopeful coal companies or contractors. Conversely, mine owners utilised the farms on which they mined by running their own stock and employing large numbers of miners to work these farms in between shifts.[147] It is also clear from the Attorney General records during the South African War that a number of *bywoners* gravitated to the mines.[148]

Within the mines, Mabin indicates that there would have usually been a skills division along racial lines, within and between different sections of work. While white skilled workers at Indwe and elsewhere were often mainly Cornish, skilled immigrants and mining management at the Molteno and Cyphergat Coal Mining Company mines were mainly from Wales, Scotland and the North East of England.[149] There was, however, a shortage of skilled labour which plagued the Stormberg mines.[150] The skills hierarchy operated within a wider framework of managers, contractors and sub contractors. Managers ran mining operations and secured a labour force. Many had vast experience and were much in demand, such as DW Jones, who had had 26 years mining related experience before he came to the Stormberg and worked at the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, Fairview and Sieraadsfontein. W.T. Hallimond had come to Molteno 16 years prior to take charge of the doomed Great Stormberg Coal Mining Company but resurfaced at the new Cape Colleries in the late 1890s. Itinerant to a degree, many managers and contractors would later move to the coal fields of

[147] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 60
[148] CAD, AG 3487, Part 1, Preliminary Examinations, High Treason, 1900-1905.
[149] Cornish men worked on the bridge at Cala, *The Queenstown Free Press*, 13 December 1889.
[150] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 314.

other territories in South Africa, such those of the Transvaal.[151] This was in marked distinction from miners, merchants or farmers whose interests were more entrenched in the local terrain.

Below managers, were usually white contractors who lived on the property, were paid by the ton and who often sub-let again to other white or black contractors. Richard Hinds, for example, contracted George Smith to mine coal at Fairview for 10s per ton. They worked different drives on the same property and Smith had to pay for his own necessities, such as lard oil for mining and mealies for the 'boys' who worked on the mines. Samuel Gregory, from a contracting family in the Indwe-Stormberg region, was a mining contractor for most of the nineties, operating as Gregory and Strais at Cyphergat.[152] The Hillhouse family from the UK was notable in the region, at times contracting to Indwe, and "at other times working on the Indwe Company's payroll."[153] John Hillhouse was a mining engineer at the Aberdeen mines on Spioenkop in 1891.[154] But as Mabin shows, complex interactions occurred between contractors and skilled and unskilled labour at Indwe which may, again, be suggestive of practices at Molteno and Cyphergat:

> 'They [the contractors] were supposed to work to the plan of the mining manager, but conflict frequently erupted between these levels in the hierarchy. There were usually company-hired teams at work, under the supervision of company employees, in some areas of the mine while contractors' teams would be at work elsewhere. Although the structure of relationships at work differed between these two models, the same people frequently moved back and forth between them (though not across levels in the hierarchy). African workers might work for a time directly in the employ of the company, and then spend a spell doing much the same work under a contractor … A fairly rigid hierarchy can thus be observed in the division of labour, with a degree of fluidity in the particular expression of relationships.'[155]

Unskilled labour consisted mainly of seasonal labour from the Transkei, partly Thembu living in the Cape Colony since the disaster of the Cattle Killing and also local Khoisan who were populous in the area.[156] Numbers were not particularly large in the early 1880s with government records only indicating 172 miners in total in 1885 at the Molteno, Cyphergat and Fairview mines, which must have included all races (see Table 1). Of the 52 registered voters in the village of Cyphergat in 1885, seemingly about 30 of these names consisted of

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[151] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 69

[152] CAD, 1/ MTO 2/1/1, Records of Proceedings, 1894; Clarence Wakeford took it over in 1894 when Kerr left the district, 1/MTO 2/1/4, Civil Cases, Case No 27, March 1897

[153] A. Mabin, 'Land, Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities', p. 10

[154] CAD, CCP 11/1/26, Voters' Roll, Ward, Bamboesberg, 1891

[155] A. Mabin, 'Land Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities', p. 9

[156] Seasonal labour is common to other coal mining centres such as in Bihar, India, where Das Gupta has described a semi-migrant labour force with little access to formal resistance structures, R. Das Gupta, "Migrants in Coal Mines: Peasants or Proletarians, 1850s-1947", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 13, No. 12, December, 1985, pp. 19-28

black and Khoi/ coloured men with two Chinese and one Indian who could have been shopkeepers. As the labour force at Cyphergat was about 95 in number in this year, according to the Government Blue Book, one can assume that there were also between 50 to 60 non-voting workers here.[157] This sector inhabited the cramped spaces of the coal shafts, hewed the coal face with pickaxes, loaded the trucks for the coal to be hauled up through the shallow shafts, contended with the ever-present threat of rock falls, escaping gases and inflows of water and worked daily with oil lamps attached to hard hats which gave off more fumes than light.[158] The large amount of waste in the Stormberg mines meant that hard labour was required if the mines were to be worked effectively.[159] Condemning the mining pits, W. C.Scully, at one time a Magistrate in the region, wrote, "Human life, among these miners, is often as much a waste product as is the material forming the dumps".[160] Outside the mines, groups of black men and women had to sort coal from the waste using sorting screens and size it to ensure a separation between household and steam coal. These teams would have been supervised by a few black or white men.

Black miners at Cyphergat were housed in a large camp. As no earlier source is available to describe their living quarters in the 1880s, this must be deduced from the 1894 report of *The Albert Times.* This described rudimentary conditions in the locations at Cyphergat's Looperberg mine, situated three miles from Molteno. Describing the 'architecture' as 'about as bad as can be seen in Africa', the report cites dwellings, congregated in the vicinity of the mines as being "composed of huts or kraals of various designs….some wattle and daub… [or the] 'more civilized galvanized iron type' or again the discarded coal sack type….. there is no board of control over the architecture as is proposed for Molteno township."[161] A store existed close to the drives, which was managed for a Queenstown firm by T.W. Hartley and where 'everything the native needs can be obtained from a bag of meal, to a sheep, from a pair of moleskin 'unmentionables', to a tickey's worth of beads.'[162]A building was erected which was used as a school and meeting house for black miners. Housing for whites at Cyphergat was also in short supply, leading to congested living conditions.[163] Miners at

[157]CAD, CCP 11/1/14, Voters Roll, Ward 7, Bamboesberg, 1885
[158]*The Queenstown Representative*, 21 August 1885; Francis Tennant quoted in *The Albert Times*, 1894; J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 70
[159] A. Mabin, 'Land, Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities ', pp. 8-9
[160] W.C. Scully, *Transkei Stories*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1974, p. 183
[161]*The Albert Times*, 25 April 1894
[162] Ibid., 23 May 1894
[163]Ibid., 3 April 1895

Fairview were housed in stone buildings roofed with galvanized iron.[164] Beinart's comment on the mining towns of frontier settlement cautions against regarding them as part of an 'eleutherian flight from industry':

> '[mining towns]may seem quaint today but at their height they were as harsh and environmentally dismal as any 19th century industrial region. The 'mom and pop' pick, shovel and pan operation, was in fact the grinding edge of industrial and urban intrusion in many unsettled frontier regions.'[165]

The railway, meanwhile, also promoted growth and integration, physically uniting both sides of the Kei in drawing people into a common mode of transport, developing the commerce of the region by facilitating the import and export of goods, promoting white farming and commerce and in fostering a cultural milieu in the colonial towns on the line. After the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in March 1886, it also drew speculators and gold seekers into Queenstown on their way to a new world full of hope to the north as well as labour recruiters who sent runners into the Transkei.

However, it also fragmented lives by facilitating the removal of thousands of black Transkeians from the congested and increasingly impoverished Transkeian reserves, to the harsh industrialism of the Rand, the Orange Free State mines and the southern ports.[166] Men were drawn out of their pastoral lifestyles by the need for cash, under the auspices of the Native Affairs Department and local Resident Magistrates, and transported to the harsh underground conditions of the gold mines.[167] Indeed, the arrival of the railway line to Johannesburg in 1892 gave labour from the Transkei easy access right through to the Rand, ironically adding to the profitability of the Cape Government Railways's Eastern line. At first, migrancy was utilised voluntarily by rural blacks to sustain homesteads and thus became embedded in rural society as a rite of passage. The dehumanising form of transport was just the beginning of the harsh mining experience: black miners would gravitate to the towns west of the Kei to board the trains and undergo an alienating medical test here and segregated accommodation from township blacks. Thereafter, Pirie describes how the transportation of miners until 1920 occurred in abominable conditions in 'bombela' or enclosed cattle trucks, which transferred them from rural pastoralism to a 'troglodytic existence' underground. In

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[164] *The Albert Times*, 25 November 1896
[165] W. Beinart and P. Coates, *Environment and History, the Taming of Nature in the USA and South Africa*, p. 59
[166] P. Maylam, "The Rise and Decline of Urban Apartheid in South Africa", *African Affairs*, 89, no. 354, January 1990, p. 60
[167] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 2 August 1887

this way, the railway became "a powerful metaphor" for the underground hardship of the mines to come.[168]

The railway works also attracted criminals, especially due to the presence of cash at these outposts. In July 1883, an Indian working on the Boesmanshoek section of the line was robbed and killed by two co-workers.[169] These men were later executed in Queenstown, an event described in a grimly detailed and strangely detached report by *The Queenstown Representative*. The presence of money at the various sub contractors' huts also tended to attract theft. In 1884, a tramp, Richard Paddock, was charged with stealing £50 from Geoffrey Sherriff, a sub-contractor for Sutherland and Wise, on the extension from Sterkstroom.[170]

The harshness of the working conditions on the coal mines and on the railway line was mirrored by the exploitative labour practices of contractors. A key form of this was the iniquitous 'truck system', a form of debt bondage.[171] While the line between Queenstown to just beyond Sterkstroom had been constructed by contractors Abry and Wright and Sutherland and Wise, the rest of the line to Molteno and the extension line to Aliwal North was laid by Geoffrey Pauling.[172] In 1884, the company employed 900 men on the Aliwal line who, sub-contractors and labourers both, were forced on pain of dismissal, to buy at exhorbitant prices from contractors' shops established along the railway and supplied by the 'tommy shop' train.[173] Paid at the rate of between two and three shillings per day, railway labourers may have been remunerated, as were Stormberg coal miners, in the form of coupons redeemable only at the 'company store'.[174] For Pauling, the Truck system was a clever business move. Recollecting his earlier days when building the Waai Nek tunnel near Grahamstown, he wrote:

> 'Having no money, I was face to face with the eternal problem of finance, but I got out of the difficulty by arranging with a good firm of merchants in Grahamstown to put up a store at the tunnel to supply my men with provisions, and other necessities and luxuries of life, and I was

[168] G. Pirie, "Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines", p. 730
[169] *The Queenstown Representative*, 25 March 1884
[170] Ibid., 12 February 1884
[171] The word *truck*, derived from the French, '*troquer'*, meaning 'to exchange' or 'to barter'. The system became widespread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as industrialisation left many poor, unskilled workers without other means to support themselves and their families, but has been widely criticized as exploitative and similar in effect to slavery, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truck_system
[172] *The Queenstown Representative*, 19 September 1884
[173] Railway works had recently been contracted out by the Cape Government Railways; the railway was to reach Aliwal North in 1885; *The Queenstown Free Press*, 11 July 1893
[174] *The Queenstown Representative*, 17 February 1885; J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 3; Kimberley miners and harbour workers in Cape Town were also put on the coupon system

> shrewd enough to make it a condition that they should give me financial assistance to get the work started and that they should also pay me one third of the store profits.'[175]

In 1895, when working on the Sterkstroom-Indwe line, the profits made by storekeepers on the railway construction works were so great that it was possible for Pauling to raise the capital he required by selling the monopoly of the catering rights. [176]

The Cyphergat Coal Mining Company also utilised the 'truck' system. Wages were paid in coupons, which were metal disks with the letters CCC (Cyphergat Coal Company) and the amount engraved upon it. Again, the tokens could only be exchanged at shops belonging to the mine owners such as those of AR Gardiner and managers Joe Muir and Alexander Lawrie.[177] Criticised by many locals as a form of slavery, the popular song about the truck system in American coal mines, "Sixteen Tons", evokes the experience of debt bondage, with the lines "You load sixteen tons, what do you get, another day older and deeper in debt, Saint Peter don't you call me 'cause I can't go, I owe my soul to the company store." [178]

Since the practice was ostensibly one of free exchange, whereby an employer would offer something of value (typically goods, food or housing) in exchange for labour, it may also have been seen by some locals as comparable to the system of labour tenancy so prevalent in the region (see Chapter 4). However, many local merchants and farmers were antagonistic towards the 'Truck system', since it deprived them of a substantial amount of trade that they had been expecting from the railway's large labour force. One farmer who had a hotel and shop on his land on the Steynsburg side of Molteno was prevented from trading with railway workers despite the fact that the line cut right through his veld. Amidst other annoyances, oxen and other stock belonging to the railway grazed freely on his land and a company shop was set up on his farm, where the men were compelled to buy at prices fully 25% more expensive than store prices.[179] *The Queenstown Representative*, meanwhile, either defending the interests of local merchants or merely reflecting the complexity of English liberalism within a racially based class system, raged against this 'legalized tyranny' in which:

> 'the large contractor being fortuitously circumstanced for systematized and adroit speculation , employs the screw, at the most moderate computation, at least 100% over and above his legitimate profits, out of the sweat and ignorance of his labours (sic)… disgust and abhorrence

[175]G. Pauling, *The Chronicles of a Contractor*, p. 27; he also exploited a clause in the contract for the Sterkstroom-Aliwal North line where he was able to extract £17 000 from the Cape Government Railways as initial working capital
[176]Ibid., p. 89
[177] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 71
[178] http://www.lyricsmode.com/lyrics/t/tennessee_ernie_ford/sixteen_tons.html
[179] *The Queenstown Representative*, 8 April 1884

> at what I feel to be a pernicious , an iniquitous and abominable system of unfair trade, and a prolific source of all manner of unjust and dishonest dealing between those who carry out large contracts – especially railway contracts – and those who are employed by them… In England it is universally condemned as an illegal traffic.'[180]

Transkeians were caught in a double bind, trapped between the exploitative 'truck system' on the railway and the coal mines on the one hand, and famine in Glen Grey and the Transkei on the other, which was propelling many into the colony to look for work. Yet, intense dissatisfaction among employees often led to resistance in the form of desertion especially when crops were good in the Transkei.[181] In April 1884, labour left the works in the hundreds and spread the message of discontent throughout the Transkei. *The Queenstown Representative* reported that "In one day last week, 250 kaffirs obtained passes from the Resident Magistrate's office in Aliwal North. You cannot blame them when they have to pay 60 shillings for mealies at contractors' shops while they are selling in town at 16 shillings."[182] And again: "Railway 'kaffirs' have again left the railway works and Mr Warren is now trying to get them to work for money and their keep included which might avoid the evils of the trucking system."[183]

Labour also attempted informal resistance by the use of 'go slows' or theft. In January 1885, as many as 30 men were brought to prison by Pauling for idling and neglecting to go to work. Among them was a shepherd of a neighbouring farmer who was suspected of negotiating with the men to sell them some of his farmer's sheep.[184] Labourers were accused of laziness, since they disappeared in the winter and those that remained 'fight shy of the cold weather'.[185] But again, the quasi-liberal *Queenstown Representative* again defended their position:

> 'Some say they could work on the railway line, but they are lazy, but this is not the truth: natives have been deceived about these works and they were in many instances employed – sometimes 200 miles away from their homes – under conditions which actually left them in debt, when their term of engagement was up, and they either had to beg or steal until they got back to the kraals... This is rather an indignant resentment of unfair treatment… we have a crisis on our hands regarding the natives. Meanwhile there is a famine on the land.'[186]

The autonomy of labour, as evidenced by their freedom to desert, to determine their own frequency of attendance and duration of supply, to leave when crops in the Transkei

[180] *The Queenstown Representative*, 19 August, 1884
[181] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 17 February 1893
[182] *The Queenstown Representative*, 8 April 1884
[183] Ibid., 13 May 1884
[184] Ibid., 30 January 1885
[185] Ibid., 29 July 1884
[186] Ibid., 6 October 1885

demanded their attention or when small pox scares occurred, provided an inherent structural threat to the mining industry.[187] This was in stark contrast to the diamond mines at Kimberley where compounds established since 1885, rigorously enforced regular work attendance. It was also despite the fact that wages in Molteno in 1894 were between £3 and £4 per month for black workers (and £4 to £7 per week for white). But there were also times, as has been noted, when the Cape Government Railways orders were reduced or erratic, and labour had to be dispensed with. At one time the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company attempted to employ coal cutting equipment not only to lessen costs but also to be independent of migratory labour, but the venture was not a success.[188] Thus, the press observed, "the native question is as ever a prominent one and coal mining in the past has suffered from the irregularity of the supply of native workers."[189]

The issue of black access to alcohol at the end of the 19th century also raised the question of labour control. As Crush and Ambler have demonstrated, it was part of the larger question of labour control by employers, security concerns for settlers and sales by the wine producers of the Western Cape.[190] The use of binge drinking either at month's end, or on weekends, would be followed by a drop-off of attendance at work. Given that the total labour force (including a small percentage of whites) was 1593 in 1894, this clearly served to obstruct capitalist imperatives. The Molteno paper, which seldom attempted to put on a liberal face, commented that "things are dull at the mines after the pay as usual –His Higness the Savage will have his booze."[191] Continuing in the same vein, it referred to the 'thick skull of the native', his 'small brain' and his notions that a periodic booze fling was necessary to get rid of any disease.[192] The work ethic, complained the press, adhered to the seasonal patterns of rural life. One month the native miner might stay away from the canteen and work hard. Another month, he might not work well as he had "been having a fuddle on a more extended scale than usual and the amount of coal turned out per native is perfectly absurd. There is no accounting for the

[187] R. Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks*, p. 50; NMMU, G3-'94, Report of the Labour Commission, Cape of Good Hope Blue books, 1893-4, Vol 3, p. 198; A. Mabin, "Land, Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities", p. 10
[188] *The Albert Times*, 25 April 1894
[189] Ibid., 1 August 1894
[190] see 'Introduction' in Crush, J. and C. Ambler (eds.), *Liquor and Labour in Southern Africa*, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 1992, pp. 13-15, and also R. Edgecombe, 'The Role of Alcohol in Labor Acquisition and Control on the Natal Coal Mines, 1911-1938', in Crush, J. and C. Ambler (eds.), *Liquor and Labour in Southern Africa*, p. 195
[191] *The Albert Times*, 14 February 1894
[192] Ibid., 25 April 1894

ways of the Kaffir."[193] The government meanwhile attempted to balance these concerns. Thus total prohibition was not an option.

The Stormberg collieries, where all the 'boys' were paid at the close of a week, attempted to implement their own solutions to the high rate of Monday morning absenteeism. Thus, the owners of Cape Collieries planned to pay their miners monthly instead of weekly, the month being reckoned from the day each miner entered the employ of the company. Also, since hundreds of blacks and a large number of whites would be employed at Zeekoegat, eight or nine miles distant from any licensed house, the Cape Collieries endeavoured to get the regulation of the drink supply into their own hands. In applying for a retail wine and spirit license, the colliery swore vigilance in maintaining an adequate and sober supply of black labour. Many local residents opposed the proposal since it could start a precedent with all the mines giving rise to competition, cheaper prices and a break down of social control.[194] However, the Cape Collieries obtained their license while Tenant proposed that a canteen should be in an enclosed compound.[195]

Yet, at the same time, some positive results regarding the shaping of a regular work force were discernible, in that many labourers who had been previously employed in the Stormberg mines, created a growing pool of trained people to draw on with an ever increasing disposition on their part to apply for work in the mines.[196] The use of black sub-contractors improved the labour supply as they were able to maintain a steadier supply and soon the mines were worked by an ever larger proportion of unskilled black to skilled white labour. In 1894, Lawrie reflected that, "During the year natives have come and gone from their homes as frequently as ever but the native sub-contractors have generally been able to arrange for new hands coming from Kaffirland to replace those going away, so the mines were more regularly worked than before."[197]

During this period, the grant of individual tenure to black land holders came to be looked upon by some in the Cape colony as a possible means of increasing labour.[198] This led to the survey of locations, allotment of individual tenure and the imposition of taxes. These strategies culminated in the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and were supplemented by earlier

[193] *The Albert Times*, 28 February 1894
[194] Ibid., 9 February 1898
[195] Ibid., 9 March 1898
[196] Ibid., 1 August 1894
[197] Ibid., Extracts from the Report of Mr Lawrie: 1 August 1894
[198] S. Van der Horst, *Native Labour in South Africa*, London, Frank Cass, 1971, p. 117

vagrancy, 'masters and servants' laws and passes. However, these were long term solutions and in 1895, Tennant wrote to his old schoolmate from Port Elizabeth, John Dunn, who had become the close confidante of the Zulu chief, Cetshwayo, asking him to exert his influence and help arrange 30 Zulu labourers to be sent to Cyphergat for a year's trial. Tenannt wrote:

> 'We do get native labour here; but in consequence of our proximity to the native border we have no hold on the men. [As] soon as they have got into the way of work and collected a few shillings in wages, they clear out leaving us to commence afresh with a gang of novices. This causes stoppages in the work and renders the working of the mine unnecessarily laborious. We have been informed that the Zulus working in gangs under headmen on railways and the waterworks of the Colony have been found more reliable and give greater satisfaction.'[199]

Dunn replied that conditions were too unstable to procure labour and, with hypocritical understatement given his recent participation with the British in the undoing of the Zulu kingdom, it was because the English government was no longer trusted by the Zulus.[200] After the Jameson Raid in 1895 when the gold mines were threatened with closure and, again, in November 1896, when wages were reduced at the Rand mines, an increase of labour occurred at the coal mines.[201] However, mining labour was again severely handicapped by the Rinderpest in 1897 when many returned to the Transkei to attend to their cattle.[202]

A further factor in the lack of control over the work force, like the coal mining centres in Natal and Witbank, but in contrast to the compounds of Kimberley's aggressive industrialism, was that the overcrowded, dismal dirty shanties of Molteno's mining camps allowed women and children.[203] At Fairview, the black population totalled about 600, including 300 miners, the remainder being the women and children of the miners. Coal picked up from the 'slack tips' by women and children, kept out the unbearable cold of the Stormberg winters. At Contat mine in 1896, 36 women were employed daily to sort the coal.[204] At the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company in April 1894, the population of black employees consisted of 500 to 650 miners, also with a large contingent of women and children.[205] Thus, the social patterns of the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company were complex in that alongside their leasing of land to tenant farmers and other mining companies, they also housed mine labourers with dependants.[206]

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[199] *The Albert Times,* 28 August 1895
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid., 18 November 1896
[202] Ibid., 2 June 1897
[203] P. Bonner and K. Shapiro, "Company, Town, Company Estate", pp. 173-174
[204] *The Albert Times*, 25 November 1896
[205] Ibid., 25 April 1894; Other mines employed between 20 to 175 miners
[206] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Statistical Register, 1894, p. 241

However, indications of women's physical vulnerability in the mining camps are indicated in court records. Women performed the usual domestic chores for their families, or hired themselves out to work as domestic servants for black miners, with some miners clubbing together to make the payments.[207] A number of miners also had as many as three wives present. Other women provided sexual services for miners on the basis of complex arrangements, as revealed in the case of Breakfast who was charged with the rape of Anna, wife of Booi, a labourer on Onverwacht. The prisoner's defence was that he thought she was the wife of Andries to whom 'he had made compensation'.[208] Similarly, Mary, who lived with and cooked for Coyani Buffel and five other men at Vice's location, found herself in a precarious situation in 1896. She made an extra living by holding 'tea meetings' where music was played, beer and cakes made from kaffir corn and meal were served and an entrance fee charged. When a dispute arose over a loan she had reputedly made to Coyani, it resulted in her expulsion from his hut on pain of a beating, indicating the fragility of living arrangements and the threat of violence for women at the mining camps.[209] One of Claas Jeto's three wives was beaten or raped and, in September 1897 alone, there were at least two rapes.[210] Biltan, a former mine worker, raped Faki, a married woman living at Sandfontein, as she walked to the coal mine towards evening carrying milk cans and a baby on her back. Nyamana, a miner of Cyphergat was charged with rape and assault after following Rosa into the hut of a neighbour, attacking her with a stick and raping her. Women's vulnerability is underlined by the relatively mild sentences given of between two and three years with 25 lashes.[211]

Indeed, a culture of drunken violence prevailed in the camps, usually around beer drinks, territorial issues as in the case of Elliot's miners, who had a stick fight with miners from Sieraadsfontein, or over women.[212] Some white miners participated in beer drinks, and the drunken accusations and brawls that went with them. Knife fights were a regular occurrence among blacks at Cyphergat creating a problem for the small amount of gaol space available.[213] By 1897, Molteno contributed the largest number of criminal cases at the circuit

[207]CAD, 1/ MTO, 2/1/1, 1894, File 115
[208]*The Albert Times*, 10 April 1895
[209]CAD, 1/MTO , 2/1/4, Civil Cases, Case no 6, Mary vs Coyani Buffel, 20 January 1897
[210]*The Albert Times*, 15 April 1896
[211] Ibid., 29 September 1897
[212]CAD, 1/MTO 1/1/1/1, Criminal Records of Proceedings, 1894; *The Albert Times*, 12 October 1898
[213] Ibid., 20 May 1896

court for Albert held at Burgersdorp with 30 arrests made at Cyphergat from March to July alone.[214]

While the justice system was clearly accessible and relatively fair to all classes, there emerged a specific appreciation on the part of miners for John Shand, Assistant Resident Magistrate, in Molteno. Aware of the merits of displaying 'respectable' Victorian behavior in a strictly controlled class system, the following, carefully constructed address was presented to Shand by black miners from the mines of Vice and the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company:

> 'On behalf of the natives of the district we want to show you our gratitude … Since your arrival here we have most keenly watched your proceedings when dealing with cases brought before you… You have been very fair and just to all. When one is guilty you have punished accordingly and when one is innocent you have acquitted likewise. Justice is all we require, not oppression or partiality….we beg to say we are thankful to government for appointing such an official like you to such an important place where there are 1000s and 1000s of natives to be dealt with. Accept dear sir this small gift from us as a token of respect and recognition of your equity as Magistrate to both rich and poor, white and black.'[215]

Signed by John Nike, foreman at Vice's coal mine, Henry Kokolo, sub-contractor at Cyphergat and several others, it was also announced that in future Shand would be known as *Mlamleli*, 'the mediator'.[216] Shand responded by expressing his surprise, and requesting their forebearance if he sometimes made mistakes. Paternalistically, he added that they "were working in a strange country and no longer under the rules of their chiefs … [and]… must obey the laws of this country and the just commands of [their] masters and not steal." He undertook to do his best to rich and poor, black and white.[217]

Given the harsh working conditions, health was also severely compromised. Lung damage from coal mining occurred even though reports were few. An inquest on Klaas, a 45 year old miner at Vice's mine, for example, revealed that his lungs were perfectly black and impregnated with coal dust.[218] Moreover, the lack of court records or official reports indicating death or injury from mining accidents as compared with reports in the first decade of the next century is suspicious. While the local press referred frequently to mining accidents, fatal and otherwise, on the Rand, there was no such mention of accidents in this period at Molteno.[219] Tennant, too, reported in 1896 and 1899 that there were no accidents at Cyphergat although, according to the Inspector of Mines in 1899, there had been 11 fatal

[214] *The Albert Times*, 18 August, 8 September 1897
[215] Ibid., 3 November 1897
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid., 10 November 1897
[218] CAD, 1/MTO 1/1, Inquest, File 19, 5 November 1900
[219] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 30 January 1891

accidents in the coal mines of the colony, being about one life for every 17 000 tons of coal produced.[220]

The scarcely habitable dwellings in the mining camps, together with the freezing cold of winter, gave rise to a high rate of chest complaints and a high death rate in children. But smallpox was always an overriding threat. Highly contagious, if close contact occurred, the horrifying and disfiguring disease had killed an estimated 400,000 Europeans per year during the closing years of the 18th century, and was responsible for a third of all blindness.[221] In 1884, smallpox spread from Sterkstroom to the labour camps at the Stormberg coal mines, where the nearly 200 miners living in squalid, congested conditions, as at the brick kilns and the railway camps, were most vulnerable. In all, 40 cases of the disease, nearly all black patients, were identified at Cyphergat. Since the poorer classes who tended to live in camps or locations were most at risk of disease they became an easily identifiable threat to the towns.

In July 1894, when smallpox reappeared in Queenstown, the coal industry was immediately threatened and instituted the vaccination of black Cyphergat miners.[222] White residents made strident calls for the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company to sort out the overcrowding and to erect some tanks and pumps to alleviate the water situation at Cyphergat.[223] By November, Cyphergat was under quarantine to prevent smallpox spreading to Fairview's camp, which was only 1 ½ miles away, and to Molteno, which was 10 miles away.[224] By the end of the month, cases at the Lazaretto at Cyphergat jumped from 12 to 16, putting a premium on accommodation and necessitating the purchase of tents.[225] Vaccinating and the destruction of infected huts proceeded and the help of Dr Archer Isaac, the District Surgeon, was enlisted at both Fairview and Cyphergat mining camps.[226] Despite the emergency, the District Surgeon was seen infrequently in Cyphergat in 1894, and in 1895 when there were a couple more

[220]CAD, PWD 1/2/97 B 83: Cyphergat Coal Mining (and Pottery) Co., Report, 23 August 1899
[221]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smallpox#Cause
[222]*The Albert Times*, 25 July
[223]Ibid., 27 October 1894
[224]Ibid., 3, 21 November 1894
[225] Ibid., 21, 28 November 1894; the lazaretto was usually a two roomed brick building the joint property of the government, the Municipal and Divisional Councils and set up as a hospital in order to isolate cases usually of smallpox, CAD, MOH 372, C97B
[226] *The Albert Times*, 14, 21 November 1894

cases.[227] By 1896, he had been absent for as long as 12 months, this, despite the outbreak affecting the coal industry to the extent that labour fled to the Transkei.[228]

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to explain the nature of the coal industry in the Stormberg and its links with the small town of Molteno, merchant capital and the eastern line of the railway. It has also illustrated the transformation of local economies from a quasi-capitalist agrarian context to a wage labour one. In the Stormberg, coal had a close connection to the railway and together, they provided a powerful stimulus for a new society to develop. The sprawling mining camps encircled the Victorian enclaves of Molteno and Sterkstroom, raising security and health fears as well as issues of control, restriction and separation. Significantly, mining compounds did not develop at Molteno as they did on the Kimberley diamond fields. Thus the labour supply was erratic with miners often leaving to attend to their crops in the Transkei or in resistance to exploitative practices like the Truck system.

When the railway linked the Stormberg to Middleburg, Molteno was drawn westwards into the orbit of the diamond fields at Kimberley. Coal was emerging as the important sub strata of a future industrial centre in the minds of local accumulators creating the promise of a South African industrial revolution and the incorporation of the deep interior of the Cape into the orbit of expanding capitalism. However, at the height of their success, the coal producing communities of the Stormberg saw the official vision of the coal industry being preferentially extended to Indwe and especially Viljoensdrift. Also, the absence of a clear policy by the Cape Government Railways and their subsequent erratic treatment of the colonial mines made expansion and efficiency difficult. Indeed, the inclination of the colonial state to rely on Vereeniging Cape coal which could be disrupted at any time by a recalcitrant Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek may even have been an additional strand in the northwards expansion of British Imperialism and the outbreak of war in 1899.

[227] Ibid., 6 November 1895
[228] Ibid., 14 November 1894, 3 April 1895, 8 January 1896

CHAPTER 3 - THE URBAN ECONOMY OF COAL, 1880-1899

Although George Vice created the town of Molteno for personal gain and maintained a patriarchal relationship with it, he did not take personal or company control, as happened at Indwe or Kimberley, where the mines were situated on two farms owned by the London and South African Exploration Company.[1] Also, as Southall has stated, "where development comes from outside, the resulting urbanisation is exploitive. It is only where the stimulus to urban growth results in activity primarily by the people and for themselves that small scale urbanization may be beneficial locally".[2] Thus, the town was allowed to follow a free organic growth path. A number of Molteno mine owners invested in merchant ventures and identified with a wide variety of urban interests. Soon the town developed its own commercial and social locus of control and evolutionary identity. Incipient economic growth and a diversification of capital also attracted a multi-faceted population of administrators, financiers, store owners, hotel proprietors, artisans, millers and newspaper men from as far afield as Britain and Xhosa speaking labourers from east of the Kei into a space of common economic interest. Indeed, the highly 'merged' (interpenetrative) character of towns allowed Molteno and Sterkstroom to become the most intense sites of social interaction between different communities of the coal region. Thus, this chapter will explore the way in which the small towns were created and impacted upon through the advent of the 'coal rush' and the railways and how they became locales where social relations were played out and, to some extent, 'fixed' by the turn of the century.

The political economy of the towns

Molteno was strategically located by Vice on the road between Queenstown and Burgersdorp and approximately halfway between East London and Bloemfontein. It was also situated on a highly suitable flat location and drained by the Stormbergspruit. On 27 May 1874, 250 plots were auctioned at prices ranging from £3 to £76, the total amount of £5 115, giving Vice a sizeable profit over his original purchase price of £70 for the farm. Streets were named after Molteno's cabinet and a town committee began its administration from 1 January 1875,

[1] Indwe was the first company town to be founded in South Africa, A. Mabin, "Land, Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities ; Indwe 1880-1920', University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, February, 1987, p. 2; R. Turrell, *Capital and Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Fields, 1871-1890*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 65

[2] A. Southall, "Small Urban Centres in Rural Development: What else is Development other than helping your own Home Town? *African Studies Review, Small Towns in Africa Revisited,* Volume 31, Number 3, 1988, p.5 cited in R. White, 'Small Town South Africa: the historical geography of selected Eastern Cape towns and current development initiatives within them', Thesis, M.Soc.Sc. (Geography), Rhodes University, 2004, p. 23

laying out plots for municipal service sites, legal offices, a gaol, the commonage and for stone and clay works.[3] Setting the tone of benefactor for the years to come, Vice set aside five plots for the Molteno undenominational School and 10 erven each for the Gereformeerd, Episcopalian, Wesleyan and Independent Churches.[4] At a later stage, a Jewish Synagogue and a Jewish orphanage were built. In 1875, there were only five houses and seven huts and tents. It is thus probably safe to assume that the population of 43 males and 27 females included all races.[5]

Table 2. Population of the three principal ports and three inland towns of the Cape Colony, 1865, 1875

TOWN	1865	1875
Cape Town and suburbs	37 800	45 200
Kimberley		13 600
Port Elizabeth	10 800	13 000
Graaff Reinet	3 900	4 600
Queenstown	1 200	2 300
Molteno		70

Source: S. van der Horst, *Native Labour in South Africa*, p. 94; Cape of Good Hope Blue Book,1882

Although Meintjes merely portrayed Vice as benefactor and 'father' of the town, he was also a shrewd entrepreneur. Aside from his consideration of a variety of urban needs, Vice kept control of all crucial resources in the urban centre, reserving rights for himself and his descendants to all coal or minerals found in the town or on the commonage.[6] He also ensured that plots donated to the churches and the school had to be used within ten years or returned to him. He controlled the water resources. After completion of his Paardekraal dam, he committed to a daily provision of 20 000 gallons of water, for which every erf holder had to pay him 30s annually, 25% of which went to the municipality. Vice transported it from the Paardekraal dam through pipes over a great distance to the town, while the Town Committee was responsible for the pipe system in the town itself.

Sterkstroom, on the other hand, grew out of the need by locals for a church in the Klaas Smits Field Cornetcy in the district of Queenstown. In 1875, a group of farmers, including the

[3] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome: Die Geskiedenis van Molteno, 1874-1974*, Molteno Munisipaliteit, 1974, p. 25
[4] *The Albert Times*,16 January 1895
[5] Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Cape of Good Hope Blue Book,1882, Part V, Census of 7 March 1875, p. 749
[6] Rhodes University, Cory Library, Folder 1 of 2, BRN 140891, MS 18 315, Deed of Sale, 1874

Lombard family who had been in the area since 1840, sold water erf number 480 consisting of 1500 morgen to the Dutch Reformed Church Council. This was for the use of *nachtmaal* (a quarterly church meeting in towns for farmers from the hinterland) to save the locals having to go to Cradock.[7] Commonages and outspans were established and sowing lands leased out. Six streets running north to south were named after the original church councillors. Sterkstroom was in the centre of a wool producing area and was also to rise to some importance as a railway junction. At various times, the hope was also entertained that it might become a coal-producing centre. However, Church control was to establish a retrograde ethos in the town for years to come.

Now, Molteno and Sterkstroom could provide the rural sector with more accessible markets, commodities and the distribution of manufactured goods for the hinterland. Molteno, in particular, would dramatically change the economic and social landscape by its reciprocal relationship with the mines. This connection between urban and rural was reflected not only in the towns' immediate physical proximity to farms and in the dual role of many townsmen as farmers, but most graphically in the towns' inclusion of commonages. These provided grazing rights for the stock of ratepayers, sewing lands probably for the growing of fodder for livestock, outspans and temporary kraals for the travelling public and the use of supervisory rangers. Each proprietor or occupier had the right to graze 12 oxen, two cows, three horses or mules and 10 sheep on the town commonage. Blacks, however, also had to be erf holders in order to have grazing rights, thus drawing a line between land holding blacks and squatters.[8]

Nevertheless, an increasing population in Molteno and the arrival of growing numbers of black labour for the mines and the impending railway directly contributed to calls for urban organisation, security and infrastructural control. This included applications for monthly periodical courts, Justices of the Peace, District Surgeons and ultimately municipal status. In 1880, a periodical court for Molteno was granted because the 36 miles to Burgersdorp caused serious inconvenience and expense in bringing offenders to justice.[9] Thereafter, a Justice of the Peace was granted in 1883 to deal with police matters in between the visits of the court.[10]

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[7] The village consisted of 66 square roods by 96 square feet; the group consisted of Jacobus Johannes van Zyl senior, Willem Abraham Lombard, Johannes Lodevicus van Heerden, Johannes Jacobus Pretorius, Jacobus Martinus Le Grange, Antonie Christoffel Lombard, Pieter Jacobus van Zyl and Albertus Johannes Venter, CAD, PAS 2 / 350 L83a Control of Natives, Sterkstroom, 1911

[8] Cape Archives Depot, 3/SSM 1/1/1/1, Sterkstroom Council Minutes, 12 May 1903, 30 August 1904

[9] CAD, CO 4210, M 27, Petition from Molteno Inhabitants,1880

[10] CAD, CO 4225, M 105, Letter, George Vice to Colonial Secretary, Tudhope, 30 December 1882

The duties of this office were confined to a 10 mile radius around his home and included imposing justice and meting out fines and short term imprisonments.[11]

The need for infrastructure, particularly to deal with sanitary issues, led to the establishment of the Molteno Municipality by 1883 in terms of Act no 45 of 1882. The boundaries extended to the south west of the Stormbergspruit, the farm Spreeukloof, a portion of Vice's farm Onverwacht and a commonage.[12] By 1884, Molteno had four churches - a Dopper Church, an Afrikaner Reformed Church, a Wesleyan Church and an English Church - 10 shops and stores, three hotels, the Good Templars Lodge, some 80 houses mostly built of brick with corrugated iron roofs and a few very good stone buildings. The municipal valuation in 1884 was £18 522 15s and increased by another 14% in the second half of the year.

Embryonic populations occupied the newly mapped out towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom. In the absence of census data for these centres, one has to rely on the voters' rolls. In 1884/1885, Molteno and Sterkstroom consisted of 56 and 70 male voters, respectively, which perhaps could be extrapolated to about 200 in Molteno and about 280 for Sterkstroom when adding non voting men, women and children. There were also 172 miners at the surrounding Cyphergat, Fairview and Molteno mines.[13] However, all banking, and most purchasing of manufactured goods and wool trading was done in Queenstown.[14] Between 1882 and 1884, the Standard Bank was regularly asked to open a branch of the bank at Molteno but wanted to wait for confirmation of the extension of the railway lines which would develop the coal fields before it would do so. The bank projected:

> 'The place looks prosperous but is small and much of its present vitality may disappear, after the opening of the line to Burghersdorp - i e unless the coal mines work out to greater things than they have hitherto done…The number of Accounts obtainable here would for the present not exceed say 40 or 50.'[15]

In 1881-82 the value of landed property north of Queenstown increased considerably as a direct result of the news that the railway line was to be extended from Queenstown through Sterkstroom and Molteno to Burghersdorp and Aliwal North.[16] In 1882, Sterkstroom inhabitants also appealed for J. Bertram to be installed as a Justice of the Peace as the

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[11] *The Queenstown Representative*,18 June 1886; CAD, CO 4213 A22, 7 April 1881; Sir Alfred Milner also appointed J. Meintjes, JP for the Bamboesberg in 1900, J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 54
[12]CAD, 3/MTO, 1/1/1/1, Minutes of the Town Clerk, 1884-1890; CO 4234 , 10 March 1883
[13] CAD, CCP 11/1/16, Voters Roll, Electoral division of Queenstown, 1884
[13] CAD, CCP 11/1/14, Voters Roll, Electoral Division of Albert, 1885
[14] Standard Bank Archives, B. Conradie,'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno'**,** ARCH 1/1/MTN, pp. 1-3
[15]Ibid., p. 3
[16] Standard Bank Archives, B. Conradie,'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno'**,** p. D2

population was "daily increasing" and erven in the town were "almost daily changing hands".[17] However, these appeals came during one of the worst depressions that the colony had experienced so that Bertram was forced to accept the position as an unpaid agent. Crime had increased, he said, disputes and grievances needed redress and the poor gaol accommodation had to hold prisoners for minor offences which otherwise could be promptly disposed of.[18] In 1883, Sterkstroom voters also petitioned for municipal status to replace church control, since the Afrikaner Reformed Church collected all taxes and did little or nothing in the way of improvement.[19] However, a municipality was to only take over from the Church board in 1898.

Despite teething concerns and the economic recession, excitement mounted as the northward trajectory of the railway grew nearer. It reached Sterkstroom in 1882, and by 1884 government auctioneer, D.G. Kannemeyer reminded purchasers of the daily increasing prosperity of Sterkstroom.[20] Thirty erven were sold at prices ranging from between £15-20 on the quitrent system.[21] Meanwhile, in Molteno, property sales, such as that of the Molteno Hotel, were advertised on the basis of Molteno's strategic position at the juncture between the northern and southern arms of the railway, at the centre of the coal mining industry and, somewhat hopefully, at the future junction of the Midland and Border (Eastern) lines. Forward looking entrepreneurs, like Thomas Bailey, and King and Company of King Williams Town, opened branches in Molteno, in anticipation of two new railway lines from Indwe and Middleburg converging on Molteno rather than lower down at Imvani or Sterkstroom.[22] The town, promised George Sichel, General Agent from Burgersdorp, was bound to 'become one of the most bustling and money making centres of the colony'.[23] When the line finally arrived in Molteno in September 1884, it was met with great celebrations. Significantly, about 100 men at Vice's mine cheered the first train as it arrived while speeches were made about the quality and unlimited quantity of coal available for the Cape Government Railways. Among the many present at the ensuing celebrations were Geoffrey

[17] CAD, CO 4227, S3, Memorial from Inhabitants of Sterkstroom requesting J.P. Bertram to be Justice of the Peace, 3 1 March 1882
[18] CAD, CO 4230 B 100, J Bertram to Colonial Secretary, 27 October 1883, Resident Magistrate to Colonial Secretary, 24 November 1883
[19] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 1 October 1895; the boundaries of the town lay within the limits of the quitrent farms of Jonas Kraal and Kraaidoorns, CAD, CO 4237, S 20, 2 March 1883
[20] *The Queenstown Representative*, 15 July 1884
[21] Ibid., 22 July 1884
[22] Ibid., 30 September 1884
[23] Ibid., 8 April 1884

Pauling of Firbank and Company, contractors for the Aliwal extension, T. R. Price, Traffic Manager on the Eastern system, town councillors, medical doctors and other local notables.

As infrastructure was launched, and the towns' projected hopes about coal expanded, a predominance of English urban dwellers ensured that Britain's Victorian culture was transplanted into the towns of the Stormberg veld. The dominance of entrepreneurial English capital also began to be reflected in the, albeit flimsy, structures of local power. Giliomee asserts that the English seized most of the new opportunities in the towns of the Cape colony, becoming the first land speculators, engineers and artisans.[24] In 1885, all 56 male voters in Molteno and 85% at the mining centre of Cyphergat were English speaking.[25] This included those keen to exploit mining opportunities, shops and hotels.[26] Also the English occupied all positions of Mayor until 1899, all but one of the first councillors and all Molteno town clerks until 1897.[27] Possession of the Molteno Town Council was of paramount importance to English townsmen, and later smug comments by the English press about the maintenance of the council as a bastion of English heritage must have created ethnic rifts.[28] The professional classes in Molteno such as the doctors and 'General agents' (lawyers, attorneys and debt collectors and those dealing with land transfers and even auctions of land and animals), were also mainly from Britain.[29] However, Justices of the Peace were recruited from English inhabitants as well as Afrikaner farmers.[30]

Justice was implemented by Circuit Courts, presided over by judges, which only visited larger centres like Queenstown, Burgersdorp and Aliwal North.[31] But by 1893 there was enough activity in Molteno for the Cape government to appoint an Assistant Resident Magistrate who functioned under the supervision of the Civil Commissioner and Resident

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[24]H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*. *Biography of a People*. Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2003, p. 194

[25] CAD, CCP 11/1/16, Voters Roll, Electoral division of Queenstown, 1884; CAD, CCP 11/1/14, Voters Roll, Electoral Division of Albert,1885.

[26] *The Queenstown Representative*, 5 Jan 1886

[27] Mayors were Vice from January 1884 till August 1884; J. Manley, from August 1884; J. Jennings, from December 1884 - 1885; J Manley again from November 1885 to 1886; G. Vice again from July 1887 until August 1888; T. Pope in August 1888 and the longest serving, JW Pinnoy Mayor from December 1895 to at least February 1899; a Afrikaner mayor, P. Hattingh, was installed in 1899, J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 28; CAD, 3/MTO, 1/1/1/1, Minutes of the Town Clerk, 1884-1890, 1884; town clerks were T. Kelly 1884-1887; J. Brown 1887; E. Hall, 1888-1897; J. de Klerk from 1897 (the termination date of his post is not known), J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 28

[28]*The Albert Times,*14 August 1895

[29] Ibid., 2 June 1885, 6 October 1885

[30]Barrable, Edwin Hall, Noah Deary, Robert Badnall, LB Broster, JAJ Vermaak, William Archer-Isaac, PJ Cloete, D Mackenzie, PJ Hattingh and FC Greyvenstein (no dates)., J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 51

[31] *The Queenstown Representative*, 8 August 1884, 10 February 1885; the jury system was in place in the colony, with men 21-60 years of age eligible for jury duty. A case was tried after a magistrate had heard it and , reported positively to the Attorney General who may then indict the case, Ibid., 16 June 1885

Magistrate at Burghersdorp. He presided over the periodical court and, like the District Surgeons and Location Superintendents, over the provincial implementation of government policy. This included structures like the School Board, the Police and the Department of Health. He also occupied honorary positions in various societies.

But the most prominent mark of English settler capital in Molteno was personified by George Vice himself, 1820 settler descendant, mining proprietor, town founder, first mayor, property owner, farmer and legend in the making. Molteno was to revolve much around his personality, land ownership, wealth and patriarchal power so that he quickly became known as the 'father of Molteno'.[32] He not only established the first coal mines, but made contributions to churches and educational institutions and in an effort to meet the belief that Molteno could be the basis of a wheat growing area, especially given the easy access to coal, launched the first steam mill in 1883.[33] Vice also opened a wool washing facility to cater for surrounding sheep farmers. His 'empire' was consolidated by producing 15 children over the span of two marriages.[34] This rather large progeny determined that there were many successors to the Vice empire which, in the light of ongoing altercations between the townspeople and George Vice, tended to be known scathingly as 'the royal family'.

Meanwhile, in Sterkstroom, the voters' roll of 40 English and 33 Afrikaner male voters in 1884 indicates that, in total, there may have been a more or less equal division of Afrikaner and English in the broader population of the Klaas Smits District.[35] This deviation from the colony's urban demographic could have been because the town was predominantly an Afrikaner Church town and a small agricultural and wool trading centre.[36] That Sterkstroom also had more voters than Molteno was possibly due to the earlier arrival of the railways there and also its proximity to the flourishing hub of Queenstown. However, the key political and merchant positions here were, like Molteno, held mainly by English speakers. One was Thomas Bailey, for example, father of the later Randlord, Abe Bailey and grandfather of Jim

[32] J. Meintjes, *Dorp Van Drome*, p. 21
[33] The mill built by Italian stone masons, is a replica of the church in Molteno, Italy; it is rumoured that the Molteno family was originally Italians, Interview, J. Aucamp, Dordrecht Road, July 2008; it was made free of charge to churches for eighteen months , J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 27
[34] His first wife Sarah bore nine children, Albert Charles (who leased part of Paardekraal), Herbert, Charles, Clem, Percival George, and four others. These last four all died within a space of 18 months between 1878 and 1880. Perhaps, not surprisingly given her large number of offspring, Sarah also died early at the age of 54 in 1883. Two years later he married Charlotte Wynne from Fort Beaufort, a woman 20 years his junior. She bore five sons and a daughter, the family being installed in a house covering six plots
[35] This is assessed purely on the names, CAD, CCP 11/1/16, Voters Roll, Electoral division of Queenstown, 1884
[36] R. White, 'Small town South Africa', p 26; the Afrikaner farmers paid their tab at stores once a year

Bailey who was to become editor of Drum magazine.[37] In the late 1860s, he had moved his family from Cradock to Queenstown and spread his commercial ventures throughout the area.[38]

Along with the English, Jews from Europe, originally itinerant traders in the interior, tended to establish themselves as hoteliers and shop keepers.[39] The Woolf family was in evidence in Molteno and Cyphergat by 1885. Aaron Woolf emigrated with his wife, Hannah, from what was then Petergof in Poland, and operated as a hotelier and general dealer at Cyphergat.[40] Aaron's brother Hymen and his wife, Anna, were the proprietors of the hotel and Hymen also rented part of Onverwacht in 1885 on which he ran a coal mine. William Woolf, a nephew of Hymen and Aaron also came to Cyphergat in the 1880s and became the owner of refreshment rooms at Stormberg Junction.[41] 'Issuer of Process' in Sterkstroom was JW Kirchner, a Jew and general agent, who dealt in property transactions. The social position of Jews in relation to the rest of the community was anomalous: reminisced Meintjes, Jews were friends in life with English and Afrikaans alike, but segregated in the Molteno cemetery.[42]

The small populations in such towns also offered the opportunity for individuals to assume a multiplicity of roles, for example, the general merchant, Allan McKenzie, who rented the Silkstone Collieries. Opportunities were especially available for competent administrators and business people, or clearer visible importance for those aspiring to prominence. In 1883, the list of duties of the first appointed Town Clerk in Molteno, W.E. Kelly, demonstrates the multiplicity of public roles capable people could accrue in a small town. His duties, an object of some humour in the local paper, were the following: Town Clerk, Market Master, Location Superintendent, Receiver of Rent for Brick Makers, Stone Quarries and Sand, Registrator of Births and Deaths, Secretary of the School Commission and Town Constable.[43]

While a few artisans, such as blacksmiths and farriers, were Afrikaners, the majority of skilled artisans - builders, undertakers, tailors, bakers and blacksmiths - were mainly English until the early 1890s.[44] Court records also provide fleeting insight into the lives of labourers. Afrikaner whites and coloureds made their living as brickmakers, cart drivers and dam

[37] *The Queenstown Representative,* 7 March 1884
[38] *The Albert Times*,16 May 1894
[39] H.Giliomee, *The Afrikaners,* p. 194
[40] *Jewish life in the South African Country Communities,* vol. 1, Published by The South African Friends of Beth Hatefutsoth,, 2002, p. 298 ; Petergof is now Petrodvoretz in Russia
[41] *The Albert Times,* 9 October 1895
[42] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 48
[43]*The Queenstown Representative,* 29 August 1884
[44] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, Molteno, 16 August 1894

makers. Their limited financial capacity often induced them to offer terms of barter.[45] Brickmaker Andries Meintje bartered 5000 bricks for a horse and October Oliphant, paid his five labourers with 10 000 burnt bricks, delivered.[46] Philip Snyman worked as a shunter at the station but, having a wagon and donkeys, also conducted cartage and, in this way, attempted to work off the family account at Albert Peters' Cash Store.[47] The wage labouring class, while consisting of a small number of Afrikaners, was mainly composed of descendants of dispossessed Khoi and Thembu immigrants from the Transkei. The latter formed a growing component in Molteno and Sterkstroom due to the advent of the mines and railway and congregated in the Municipal location, in informal settlements in the town, squatter camps near the brick kilns but mainly in the coal mining and railway camps just outside the town. Thus, while the English occupied the dominant classes from merchants down to artisans, Afrikaners in Molteno and people of colour tended to form the lumpenproletariat.

Ideology and identity

Within the emerging town of Molteno, Victorian Protestant notions of the causal connection between capital accumulation and moral behaviour on the one hand, and spiritual salvation on the other, fostered a social order based on economic profit and social respectability. These values were imbedded in the social fabric of the towns, espoused and actively monitored in the Queenstown and Molteno newspapers and guarded over by prominent townspeople.[48] This ethos was given powerful material shape in the Freemasons' lodge built by the prosperous English speaking residents of Molteno. A fraternal institution dating back to the Late Middle Ages in Britain, it was thus a powerful social manifestation in Molteno of 'Empire'. Its central aims were charitable work within the community, moral uprightness based on Christian beliefs as well as the internal maintenance of loyal societal bonds. Similarly, the International Order of Good Templars (IOGT) had related moral aims. A typically Victorian organisation established to cleanse urban slum areas of the evils of drink, it began in America in the 1850s and spread to the colonies, including South Africa, in the

[45] CAD, 1/ MTO 2/1/1, Civil Cases, Records of Proceedings, File 164, December 1894; File 111, 1 October 1894
[46] Ibid., File 167, December 1894; File 143, 8 November 1894
[47] Ibid., File 125, 22 October 1894
[48] The newspapers of the district since 1868 included *The Albert Times* which, when established in Molteno, became the *Albert Times and Molteno News*. In addition to this there were also the *Burgersdorp Gazette*, *The Border Mining and Farming News* (in Molteno since 1899), *The Stormberg Collier, the Advertiser-Stormberger* and *The Stormberger*. Molteno's second local newspaper, *The Molteno Advertiser*, dates from of 1906 and was published and printed by G.E. Deary. In 1916 it became *The Advertiser-Stormberger* and was then published and printed by N.J. Nixon and was independent from *The Stormberger* which was established in 1915., J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 55

early 1870s. The Molteno branch was spearheaded by George Vice who conducted a campaign against laziness, degradation and especially the misuse of alcohol.[49] However, his success was mitigated by the flourishing bars of the two hotels of the town, one at the Central Hotel, which later became a men's club and the other at the Phoenix Hotel. The hotels also played a huge role in providing functions for the social life of the town.

The Protestant ethic was also supported by the churches in Molteno, as mentioned on p. 72.[50] However, the Wesleyan church seems to have had the biggest hold on the Sterkstroom community.[51] Anglican services were only held in Sterkstroom when reverends from the Railway Mission visited from Queenstown perhaps because of there being a lesser percentage of English in Sterkstroom than Molteno.[52] While the churches extended their role among the urban communities with music concerts and picnics, the rural nature of the district demanded rigorous physical adaptation by the early ministers like Thomas Spargo whose effort in maintaining close contact with his dispersed flock is evident in his description of his travelling routine to a colleague:

> 'I leave Molteno on horseback about ten 'o'clock on the Saturday and after three or four calls on the way reach Sterkstroom about 2. p.m. From two till six 'o' clock I visit among the English Congregation for conversation on the state of work and prayer. On Sunday I preach to the half-castes at 9 a.m. and go from there into the English service at 11. I mount immediately after dinner and ride to Haasjes Kraal - eight miles from Sterkstroom to visit two or three farming members of the English Congregation, and get back to Sterkstroom about 3 p.m., and on to Molteno by six 'o'clock where the children are waiting for me to join them in their Band of Hope Meeting. This you will admit is about as much as one man will do.'[53]

Similarly, the challenges of maintaining social cohesion in such towns on the periphery of Empire encouraged the implementation of binding cultural strategies. Aside from the usual community activities of sports days, cricket, hockey, tennis and croquet matches, piano and violin concerts, variety concerts, mock eistedfodds, day long picnics, taking large groups by

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[49] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 21

[50] His successor was Abraham Pepler who led the congregation from 1899-1925, J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 45; *The Queenstown Free Press*, 27 January 1888; *The Albert Times*,16 May 1894

[51] The Wesleyan church was actively allied to the private imperial ambitions of people like Cecil John Rhodes. In 1891, the Wesleyan Missionary Society accepted £100 a year from Rhodes, the then Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, to set up a mission in Mashonaland and in 1892, Rhodes allocated plots for the Wesleyan Church all over Rhodesia, *The Queenstown Free Press*, 10 April 1891, 29 March 1892

[52] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 9 February 1892; 6 July 1888; *Sterkstroom – Commemoration Album, 1875-1975*, Sterkstroom : Sterkstroom Munisipaliteit, 1975, p. 99

[53] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 27 March 1891; Letter by Spargo, dated the 30 September 1884, cited in J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, pp. 130-131; Spargo was the first person to seize George Vice's offer for free plots, and the first person who supported the idea of a church for blacks. Spargo worked hard to collect the £1650 which was needed to build the Wesleyan church because the congregation only started with nine white members. Yet some Afrikaans speaking farmers donated to the church building fund. The corner stone was laid on the 7 of July 1883, J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 131

ox wagons to neighbouring farms, served as a prominent social institution.[54] Intellectual pursuits in Molteno included the establishment of a library in 1887 by Dr Archer Isaac and a literary society launched in the Good Templar Hall for men to attend debates, readings and lectures.[55] The towns also developed communal responses to individual events. Much of the Molteno population, for example, turned out to participate in a day long festivity at the opening of the Railway school at the Stormberg Station. Visiting public figures or departing residents would often be honoured with a turn out of almost the entire population at the stations or at farewell celebrations.[56] In fact, the trains that came in and departed three times every day and three times per night seemed, a visitor in 1897 observed, to be the only entertainment.[57] So too, the periodical court held by Garcia in Sterkstroom became an important event to the extent that 'we find that most of the Europeans make it a sort of holiday to attend and hear what's going on.'[58] Isolation also determined cross-regional social interaction, such as race meetings, which took place at Sterkstroom and were served by a special train taking race-goers from Queenstown and back at half price fares.[59] However, given the intimacy of social relations inevitable in small villages, much was known about each other, and what was not known was filled in by rumour. Often the newspapers would mention that a "whisper has been heard that..." or report on an upcoming event, such as the imminent departure of someone from town, only to have to retract it again.[60]

Imagining community: the Middleburg junction and the rise of Molteno, 1888

Two years after the railway arrived, gold was discovered on the Rand in March 1886. Whereas it lifted the colony out of the recession, there was now a significant reorientation of capital from the Cape ports to the North.[61] The Standard Bank voiced its concerns that the development of the colonial coal fields was likely to be retarded by the excitement around the gold discoveries.[62] Certainly, by September, gold mining syndicates were already being formed in the region to invest in gold mining, while some individuals were selling up and

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[54] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 65
[55] *The Queenstown Representative*, 7 July 1885; *The Albert Times*, 18 April 1894
[56] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 7 April 1891
[57] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 29
[58] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 6 July 1888
[59] *The Queenstown Representative*, 9 March, 12 March 1886
[60] *The Albert Times*, 10 June 1896, 6 July 1898
[61] *The Queenstown Representative*, 17 August 1886; A. Mabin, 'Land Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities, p. 4
[62] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country Standard Bank Reports on Economic Conditions in Southern Africa, 1865-1902*, Johannesburg, Standard Bank Investment Corporation, 1987, p. 201

leaving for the North.[63] In the late 1880s, Queenstown had spawned the Stilfontein, Colorado and Bradford syndicates. A syndicate was formed in 1895 at Molteno to work the farm, Sterkfontein, near Krugersdorp in the Tranvaal, while another syndicate bought 58 claims near the same place.[64] The promise of rewards on the Rand also induced certain opportunists like J. van Rooyen to lure unsuspecting Afrikaner farmers into a fraudulent scheme.[65]

However, the development of the coal industry and its partner, the railways, continued to have the most significant impact on the prospects of Molteno townspeople, on their sense of identity and their imagined future. With the help of a newly created Chamber of Commerce pressurising Parliament, Molteno was confirmed in July 1888 as the crucial junction for the Middleburg line.[66] The rail link to Kimberley was now secured, linking both mines and towns. In October, Sterkstroom welcomed Gordon Sprigg who had fought for the railway and confirmed their support for him in the coming elections.[67] New mines, like Penshaw and Aberdeen, opened and business optimism in the region escalated. Molteno's population also began to grow and increased in 1889 to 125 males and 139 females giving a total of 264 inhabitants. It is not clear whether these were only whites or all races. In Sterkstroom there were 172 white and 181 black males, and only 64 white and 23 black females, giving a total of 440. Clearly, the male population in Sterkstroom still far exceeded that of women while the white population was in the majority.[68]

Meanwhile, the abundant coal was available to launch steam driven industry. Merchants of the region had long imagined the growth of local industry. As early as 1884, *The Queenstown Representative* had stated, "would the monies received from the home markets, be invested in the Stormberg coal mines, from whence would arise the copper and iron foundry, the steam mill, the manufactory, and the conversion of colonial wool into fabrics for home clothing and the foreign market."[69] Again in 1887, came the appeal: "We don't just need farmers … we need manufacturing communities."[70] Indeed, the regional availability of resources such as grain, coal, the railway, stone and access to water, permitted new industrial aspirations of the rail-connected coal towns. Although the only industry mentioned by the Government Blue book for 1888 for the Albert district was three woolwasheries, in the 1880s, an array of mills

[63] *The Queenstown Representative*, 14 September 1886
[64] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 1 March 1889; *The Albert Times* 22 May 1895
[65] *The Albert Times*, 8 April 1896, 12 January 1898
[66] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 4 February 1887
[67] Ibid., 12 October 1888
[68] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, 1888, pp. 295, 297
[69] *The Queenstown Representative*, 29 August 1884
[70] Ibid., 7 October 1887

around Molteno, Sterkstroom and Queenstown had begun to break the skylines of the sprawling towns. Meintjes maintains that there were a total of seven in Molteno while, between 1884 and 1888, *The Queenstown Representative* mentioned the Queenstown Flour Mills, the Welcome Mill, Saunder's Mill at Sterkstroom and the Carnarvon Flour Mills on the Halses' farm, Carnarvon. All built with plant and machinery imported by individuals from England, these mills, which catered for local farmers and supplied local markets, were perhaps the most graphic urban symbol of the connection between the grain bearing hinterland, the urban spaces and the coal mines of the Stormberg.[71]

However, by 1888, the majority of grain was still going to the King Williams Town Steam Mills to be milled, which paid farmers low prices but still charged consumers high Cape Town prices.[72] This led to a reliance on large amounts of duty free imports of flour from America and Australia through East London. There was also an incapacity to produce good flour. Hellier, a Bond candidate for parliament, argued that the focus should be less on a protective wheat duty and more on the establishment of better mills: "Good mills could make flour out of the hardest wheat, but our mills don't know how to do it…thus we have had to import £78 000 of wheat."[73] Similarly, *The Queenstown Free Press* opined: "we are an excellent grain producing district but without a market… although there are criticisms that the grain is not good enough, create the market and the cultivators will rise to the occasion."[74]

Perhaps in response to these calls, the opening of the junction, the prevalence of wheat in the region and the mass of waste coal that was efficient for burning in steam mills, a sophisticated, five storey high branch mill of the King Williams Town Steam Mill was opened in Molteno in 1892. Employing about 30 to 40 men, half of whom were white, it thereby contributed to employment and the cash flow in town.[75] Significantly, the mill was launched by the Governor of the Cape, Henry Brougham Loch, at a luncheon at the opening of the Molteno-Middleburg line as a sign of things to come.[76] The presence of 150 men including local politicians, such as Thomas Bailey, merchants from all the border towns, clergy, doctors, lawyers, bankers, landowners and civil commissioners from as far afield as King Williams Town, endorsed the importance of the new mill to the region. The belief was

[71] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, 1888, p. 218; J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 32; *The Queenstown Representative*,, 22, 26 February, 21 March 1884; 15 November 1887
[72] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 20 July, 23 November 1888; *The Queenstown Representative*, 27 March 1888
[73] *The Queenstown Representative*, 25 September 1888
[74] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 15 March 1887
[75] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 5 October 1893
[76] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 27 January 1891, 15 March 1892

that when the mill started turning out quality ground corn, it would create a wider demand and in turn stimulate local production.[77] Opined the Standard Bank:

> '[The mill]... is destined to do all the milling business of the frontier districts north of Queens Town, while it will be the means of bringing many farmers from Dordrecht, Barkly, James Town and Herschel here to sell their wheat and thus greatly increase trade... it is believed that upwards of 100,000 bags of wheat will pass annually through the mill.'[78]

The finalisation of the link to the western railway line also raised the hope that the mill would capitalise on the Johannesburg trade but the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek put paid to that by imposing a heavy protection duty on meal and flour. Nevertheless, being situated centrally for easy distribution, the mill continued to do a good trade with Kimberley and other large towns around the Cape. After it was electrified in 1894, the mill worked night and day to complete orders.[79] Farmers were advised as to the best kind of wheat to grow that was suitable for roller milling purposes and, as the company was paying cash, began to reap greater quantities.[80] In 1895, the mill had revolutionised wheat farming in the surrounding districts, and Wodehouse, a district to the North East, had become the second biggest grain producer in the Colony when its wheat production quadrupled as a direct consequence of the mill.[81] By 1899, the mill was crushing some 2000 bags of wheat weekly with a more extensive output than in King Williams Town.[82]

Meanwhile other mills continued to mushroom consolidating the wealth of industrious British immigrants. In Sterkstroom, in 1893, John McLean and his son, 'frugal money making men', erected the new Auchtermuchty Steam Mills, a name suggestive of his native Scotland.[83] His mill saved Sterkstroom farmers the heavy drag up Bushman's Hoek to Molteno and also stimulated Sterkstroom's economy.[84] John Mc Kinnon enlarged and refurbished the Dutch Flour Mills (*Hollandsch Stoom Molen*) at Molteno offering free delivery of wheat to and from the station.[85] The positioning of the mills all along the lines of the railway and close to the mines raised the hope that the demand for coal must certainly increase.[86] Thus, by the

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[77] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 11, 15 March 1892
[78] SBA, B. Conradie, "The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', June 1891, p. D5
[79] *The Albert Times* 12 December 1894.
[80] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 25 June 1895
[81] The King Williams Town Steam Mill was only demolished in 1949, J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 34; *The Albert Times*, 4 April 1894; 8 May 1895
[82] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 9 September 1899
[83] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Lists of Liabilities, Sterkstroom, 6 October 1900
[84] *The Albert Times*, 10 January, 14 March, 25 April 1894
[85] Ibid., 11 July 1894
[86] Ibid., 6 June 1894

mid 1890s, the transition from itinerant threshers moving from farm to farm with their threshing machines to flour mills in the region was well advanced.

At this time of burgeoning optimism, new entrepreneurial accumulators like Noah Dallaway Deary, who was to be a key commercial figure in the town, arrived in Molteno. Educated in Scotland, he came to South Africa in 1879 and Molteno in 1888. Originally arriving to liquidate the branch of the firm Savage and Sons, he stayed and shrewdly carried on raising funds for the business under his own name, even though it was doubtful that he had the authority to do so.[87] Described by the Standard Bank as a cantankerous customer, he continued to run the business until 1934, became manager of the Penshaw mine and came to be recognised as one of the leaders of the mercantile community of the town. He also participated in various social and financial institutions, such as the Molteno Mutual Building Society, established in 1892.

When the junction finally opened in 1892, Molteno was possibly at its apex. Coal output leaped from 25 600 tons in 1891, to 47 000 tons in 1892 and by the next year to 57 650 tons. Business was burgeoning. Sterkstroom's day was to come in a few years time when work on the Sterkstroom-Indwe line began. Now inhabitants of the region referred proudly to Molteno as the 'coal town'. Government confidence manifested itself in the erection of public buildings to house the magistrate's court and the post and telegraph services. Major stores from Queenstown and Burgersdorp opened branches at Sterkstroom and Molteno, and J.W. Felgate opened a branch of a London-based firm in 1895, importing goods from London and Paris.[88] Many merchants were also commission agents for coal. The railway station at Molteno was one of the busiest on the line, alterations were made to the station at the end of 1893 and property owners close to the line exploited sale opportunities.[89] The African Banking Corporation and Standard Bank opened branches at Molteno in 1894. Severe competition erupted between General Agents, whereas there had been little space for duplication of this occupation in 1886.[90] Property in Molteno was now valued at £33 567, an increase of 50% in three years, and farms were highly sought after, selling at 25/- to 30/- per

[87] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 31 August 1896
[88] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 20 January 1893, 4 January 1894; Bailey's was a store a few miles north of Queenstown, *The Albert Times* 29 August 1894
[89] SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', p. D6; *The Queenstown Free Press,* 6 February 1891
[90] *The Queenstown Representative,* 5 January, 26 February 1886; *The Albert Times,* 16 January, 27 March 1894, 16 September 1896; the Sterkstroom branch of the Standard Bank was opened in 1892, A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 313

morgen.[91] Aspiring local politicians, such as E. Jukes Knight standing for election in the Albert district, included support for the mines and for a docile labour force in their manifestos.[92]

With economic growth, diversification ensued. A Stormberg Mineral Water Works supplied aerated drinks.[93] Hairdresser, Sultan Lazarus, reputed to have been hairdresser to Theophilus Shepstone, based in Burgersdorp, now opened a branch in Molteno.[94] The commercial traveller was also a regular visitor to the district.[95] With the increase in the immigrant population, skilled trades in Molteno multiplied, including those of hoteliers, masons, building contractors, carpenters, a baker and an'exemplary' tailor.[96]

Multiple opportunities existed for professional people, such as Edwin Hall, who ran Hall and Hope in Molteno, who forged a successful partnership with C.A. Schweizer in Burgersdorp. His bills represented stock sales, financial loans and agency work.[97] He was also the Molteno agent for M. Kannemeyer, the Government Land Surveyor and auctioneer in Burgersdorp, the agent for half a dozen other companies, as well as being the Town Clerk.[98] Such opportunity for officials irritated certain residents, one of whom challenged the ability of Hall to do justice to his municipal post.[99] Over a period of 55 years, Hall extended his roles even further, becoming mayor in 1901, secretary of the school committee, a founder member of the Molteno Building Society, the choir leader of the Methodist Church and, for forty years, the "Deputy Sheriff" of Molteno.[100]

The optimism of the period created a fertile environment for Molteno inhabitants to imagine a wider future for themselves. Such imaginings found voice at celebratory functions. In April 1891, J. W. Sauer, the Colonial Secretary, who had had much to do with parliamentary approval of the junction, was duly feted at a dinner at Molteno by the mayor, leading citizens, the clergy and medical men. He congratulated the town on its bright prospects and, given its

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[91] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 2, 5 February 1892; A Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 313; NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, 1892; The value of municipal property was £21 090 in 1888, NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, 1888, p. 295
[92] *The Albert Times,* 16 January 1894
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid**.,** 28 November 1894
[95] Ibid**.,** 25 July 1894
[96] CAD, 1/ MTO, 2/1/1, Civil caes, Records of Proceedings, 6 October 1894; *The Albert Times*, 4 January, 25 April, 26 September , 20 October 1894
[97] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, Molteno, 5 October 1893
[98] *The Albert Times*, 7 November 1894
[99] Ibid., 24 July 1895
[100] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome,* p. 125

pure mountainous air, its potential as the sanitorium of the frontier.[101] Indeed, the belief that Molteno and the Stormberg Junction had potential as a convalescent centre because of the good climate continued to grow.[102] In March 1894, Olive Schreiner and her husband, Samuel Cronwright, stayed overnight in Molteno at the Phoenix Hotel and were the guests of JG Elliot, prominent owner of the Penshaw mine.[103]As an asthmatic, Schreiner also talked about Molteno's possibilites as a recuperative centre. Inspired, *The Albert Times* urged action, maintaining "that the barren and bleak character which our town bears… may belong to the past" especially as the water supply was looking hopeful and many shade trees could be planted.[104] According to Meintjes, Molteno did become known as a centre for convalescents with various chest ailments such as asthma or TB and drew many important, well educated English newcomers who eventually contributed to the cultural life of the town.[105]

Mirroring the commercial confidence of the 1890s, Molteno's society agenda expanded and intensified. An increasing number of social societies and typically Victorian cultural pursuits proliferated. Inhabitants were active in the Lawn Tennis Club, Harvest Festival Club, cricket and football clubs, the Debating Society, church concerts and society balls which were often given for visitors to town or on important occasions.[106] Molteno now sported an, albeit weak, theatrical group, the Molteno Amateurs. However, travelling theatrical groups, such as the Stanfields, provided a higher standard and brought deafening applause when on one occasion, Mrs Stansfield sang amorously to the 'father of Molteno' as "my own true love", to which he reciprocated by kissing her hand.[107]

Regional social and class connections were perpetuated by, for example, the Cinderella Club in Molteno, thought by some to have snobbish admission criteria to 'their illustrious club'. It terminated its season with a ball attended by up to 150 people from Burgersdorp, Queenstown and Steynsburg.[108] Supported by a six piece band from Queenstown, dancing (walzes and the like) went from 8 pm to 2.30 am, interrupted by a brief refreshment break at midnight and completed by the walk home.[109] Juvenile dances were held on the following

[101] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 21 April 1891
[102]*The Albert Times*, 21 February 1894
[103] Ibid., 21 March 1894
[104] Ibid., 27 March 1894
[105] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 47
[106] *The Albert Times*, 30 January,13 February, 8, 22 May, 25 September, 6 November 1895
[107] Ibid., 16 March, 28 September 1898
[108] Ibid., 12 June 1895
[109] Ibid., 9 October 1895

nights.[110] The social tradition of community gatherings at the station to welcome or bid farewell to public functionaries also continued.[111]

In honour of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, in 1897, George Vice, who, by now, was the wealthiest man in Molteno, allocated 10 erven to the town for a recreation ground at a large public meeting. The town was decorated and entertained by a procession of representatives from athletic clubs, public and private schools, the Civil Service, volunteers, representatives from the mining companies and the general public. After the recreation ground was opened, it was followed by a picnic in Vice's plantation, fireworks in the evening and a grand ball given by Vice. As tradition dictated, a Juvenile Ball was held the next night with over 500 invited guests.[112]

The growing diversity of Victorian life in Molteno was captured in a collection of vivid photographs by photographer and pharmacist, Ambrose Lomax. Originating from England, he trained as a pharmacist in Queenstown in 1885. In 1894, he set up his own pharmacy in Molteno as well as the Rembrandt Studio.[113] Here he left behind a collection of photos of people of all ages and races who had coalesced around the coal town of Molteno, including large family groups, rugby teams, scholars, black inhabitants in Victorian attire, debating societies, athletic societies, rams and cattle, wedding cakes and even corpses in their caskets.[114] He also photographed buildings, the laying of cornerstones, the interior of churches and shops, houses and street scenes and sometimes even supplied the Cape Times with photographs. When the British took control of Molteno during the Boer War, he photographed British soldiers mounted on their horses, in groups at the Stormberg station, at funerals, in front of buildings or standing in lines in front of his studio to have their pictures taken to send home to Britain. The variety of his photographs, taken between 1894 when he arrived in Molteno until 1909 when he left, offer not only a multi-faceted view of a town's history at the apex of its development but, given the unsmiling faces, the stiff poses and the ornate outfits, a reflection of the stern propriety of Victorian values. Indians, coloureds and blacks who were included in the collection had clearly also absorbed the outward trappings of the clothes and manners of British Victorian culture.[115]

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[110] *The Albert Times*, 15 September 1897
[111] Ibid., 9 October 1895, 24 June 1896
[112] Ibid., 26 May, 2 June, 23 June, 1897
[113] Ibid., 18 April 1894
[114] A. Lomax, *Portret van 'n Suid-Afrikaanse Dorp*, Molteno : Bamboesberg-Uitg., 1964
[115] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, pp. 152-154

These photographs, once taken as personal records, have become historical documents not only containing information about the period, but the interior world of the subjects. For the viewer, over a century later, the ordinary becomes extraordinary – people, undeniably once real and ordinary to themselves, become a fascinating testimony to a reality long gone.[116] "Photography allows us to live in historical reality". But the photographs also become imbued with the concerns of the viewer. [117] Examined over a century later, we are presented with a range of people, deeply steeped in the norms of Victorian society, somewhat surprising to the viewer, given that they belong to a mining society on the periphery of the Cape. The white subjects of Lomax's camera vividly convey the pomp, formality, severity and class consciousness of their time and place, through stiff postures and unsmiling faces, so removed from our present democratization and post modern world of photography. Wives stand behind seated husbands, or husbands stand protectively behind families. There is a confidence that denotes control over the environment and the colonized, and certainty over the future.

However, whereas the camera in colonial society usually reflected the 'othering' of blacks, usually in an indigenous context, or in subordinate positions, such as servants or grooms, Lomax's photos have incorporated black subjects, albeit for only a few moments in time, into respectable Victorian society.[118] On condition of visual assimilation, blacks have in fact been rearranged by the Victorian gaze. Yet, the black subjects in Lomax's photographs simultaneously took up "the poses which they themselves wished to project."[119] They, like the whites, were 'dressing for posterity'.[120] Such portraits are about the subjects' consciousness of their desired relationship to society.[121] Indeed, in a mining town with many rural, migrant labourers, the European technology of photography was, for educated black townspeople who aspired to join respectable Victorian society, an immediate and convenient vehicle to do so.

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[116] M. Banks and R. Vokes, "Introduction: Anthropology, Photography and the Archive", *History and Anthropology,* Vol. 21, No. 4, December 2010, p. 346
[117] H. Waters, 'Colonial Photography in Nineteenth Century Grahamstown: An analysis of the Dr W.G. Atherstone Bequest', Extended essay submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for M. A., Fine Art, Rhodes University, January 2000, p. 3, p. 20
[118] Ibid., p. 13
[119] T. Ranger, Review Article, 'Colonialism, Consciousness and the Camera', *The Past and Present Society*, Oxford, No. 170, 2001, Downloaded from http://past.oxfordjournals.org/ at University of Cape Town on March 14, 2014, p. 203, p. 206
[120] H. Waters, 'Colonial Photography in Nineteenth Century Grahamstown', p. 25
[121] T. Ranger, Review Article, 'Colonialism, Consciousness and the Camera', pp. 207-208

Figure 9. J.W. Felgate and family

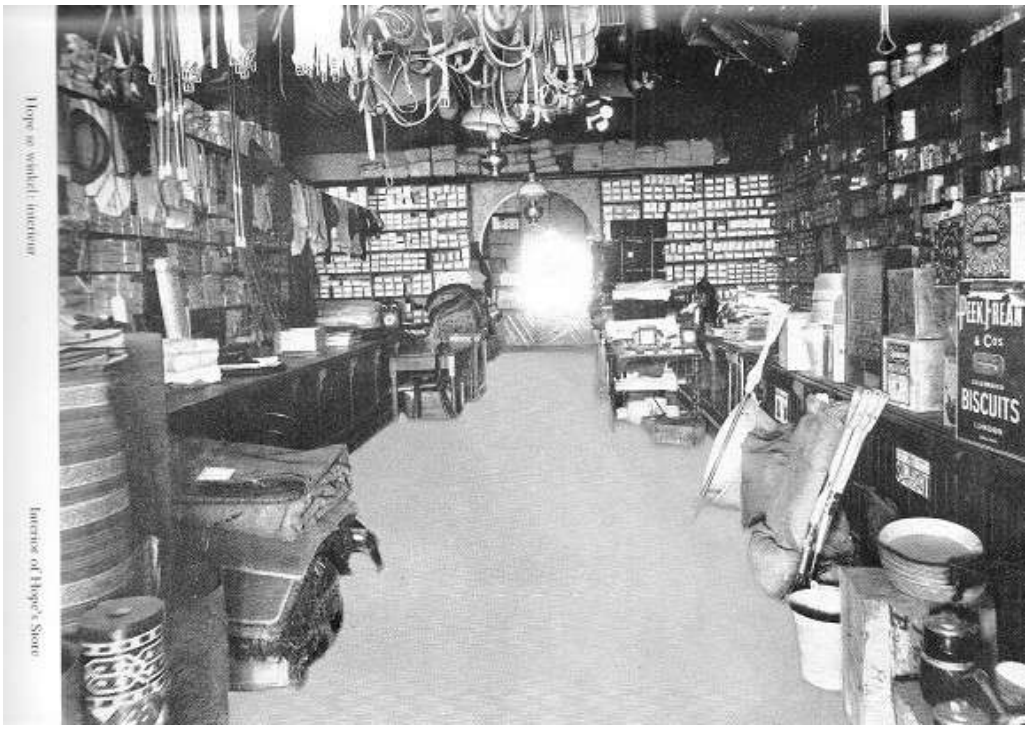


Mnr. J. W. Felgate en gesin

Mr. J. W. Felgate and family

Source. A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, Molteno, Bamboesberg-Uitgewers, 1964, p.110

Figure 10. Interior of Hope's store



Source. A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, p.13

Figure 11. Mr and Mrs Gibson



Source. A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, p.100

Figure 12. Picnic



Source: A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, p.35

Figure 13. The Olivier sisters



Source: A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, p.63

Figure 14. Native congregation



Source: A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, p.12

Figure 15. Constable Jonas and family



Source: A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, p.125

Figure 16. Moses



Moses

Source: A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, p.125

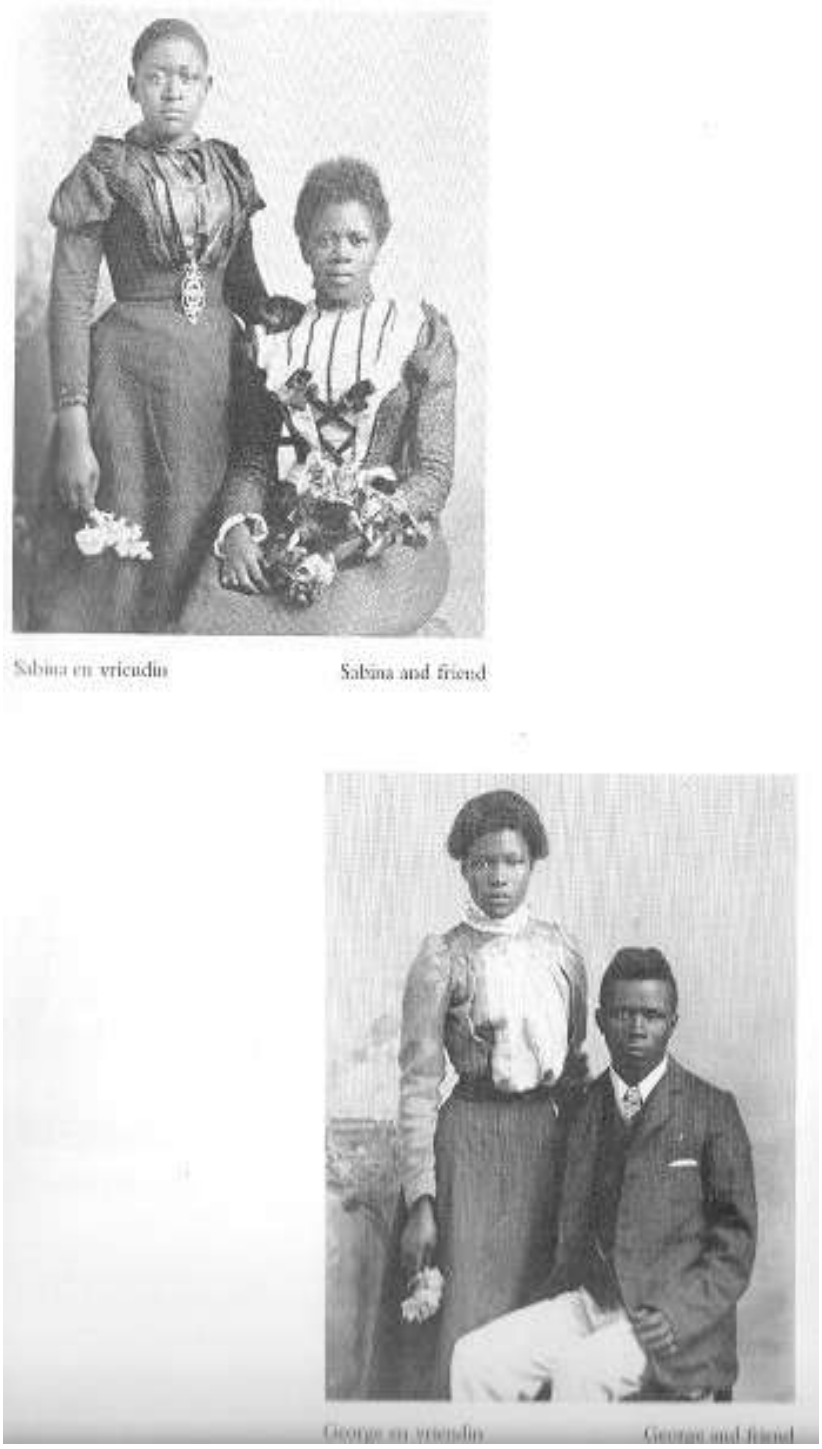
Figure 17. Mr Packiry and family



Mnr. D. Packiry en gesin Mr. D. Packiry and family

Source. A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, p.123

Figure 18. Sabina and friend; George and friend



Source. A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, p.124

Meanwhile, the small villages that had sprung up around the stations and the mines in the Stormberg replicated Molteno's social activity, albeit on a smaller scale. At Cyphergat, life for the white community seemed good and shot through with optimism. There were soon enough people to support three shops, a football team and athletic meetings. The colonial ambience was apparent in the tennis parties held at the Muir's house, the dances and concerts in the Cyphergat Hotel attended by people from Molteno and Sterkstroom and the strong social connections with Molteno.[122]

The optimism of Molteno was also mirrored in the expansion of education. The Molteno Undenominational Public School had been established as a one roomed building with a reed roof under the auspices of the Municipality as far back as 1874 with a subsidy from the Colonial government. However, Duff has illustrated how education in the interior of the Cape was tied into the increase in poor whiteism in the 1870s, which led to a vociferous and urgent public debate in the Cape around the low quality of education for white children. Children were seen to be the agency through which poor white class could be improved. In 1878, most children were in the lower standards of the Cape's educational system. In 1883, it was estimated that 80% of poor and rural white children were in Standard One or below, which meant they could barely read or write.[123] One third was at mission schools, which also catered for black education.[124] Thus there was a growing concern about the upliftment of poor whites through their children. Such children needed to be educated thus progressing past the status of their impoverished parents.[125] They also needed to be raised above the educational level of blacks who were receiving very often excellent education at mission schools like Lovedale and Healdtown.[126] Thus, Afrikaner Bond congresses often adopted resolutions opposing education for blacks.

In 1891, only 38% of the school going population was white, while 62% were coloured or black scholars in the Cape.[127] Yet, a new second class school was built in Molteno that year, consisting of standards one to six and a 'highest class'. Although Dutch was allowed as a medium of instruction after 1882, English remained the medium of tuition at the Public

[122] *The Sterkstroom Budget,* 10 August 1899
[123] S.E. Duff, "Saving the Child to Save the Nation: Poverty, Whiteness and Childhood in the Cape Colony, c.1870-1895", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2, June 2011, p. 232
[124] H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2007, p 191.
[125] S.E. Duff, "Saving the Child to Save the Nation", p. 244
[126] Ibid., p. 235
[127] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 29 May 1891

School in Molteno, and Dutch was only taught as a subject along with History, Geography and Holy Scripture.[128]

By the late 1890s, in the Albert Division, there were 36 government schools. In the Molteno area, the disparate range of schools suggests a lack of political organisation in education. In Molteno itself, aside from the public school, there was also an 'evening' school, a Poor School, an English Church for blacks and a Wesleyan Native Church in the Location. Cyphergat had a third class school and a Wesleyan Native Church school as did Woolf's mine.[129] Over 60% of teachers were women while some of the men may have been somewhat itinerant. Joseph Squires, for example, was a teacher on the farm, Wonderhoek, in 1891, some years after he had lost his job as 'issuer of passes' in 1884 and his property in 1885.[130]

However, there were also a large number of farm schools, which had been allowed by the Department of Education in 1882, and third class schools spread across various farms catering for the prevalence of children of farmers and bywoners isolated on farms.[131] The initiators of the farm schools were local farmers, for example, Paul Rorich established a 'Free School' on Grootzeekoegat which was well attended 'by the poorer Afrikaner children of the town'.[132] Often these were relatively ineffective because pupils were unable to attend school due to the demands of farm work, or because parents, who were largely illiterate, did not value education for their children or trekked away during times of drought or hardship. The English medium of tuition was an added difficulty. [133]

In line with improved education for whites, in 1892, the Education Department recommended the issue of compulsory education for whites in its final report, as well as school boards in certain towns and allowances for the use of Afrikaner and English in examinations.[134] However, while the Afrikaner Bond Congress held in March 1893 in Queenstown called for free education for poor whites, they opposed compulsory education. This was partly because family labour was needed on farms at certain times, but may also have been an ideological reaction to yet further impositions of English control. This view was supported by N. F. De Waal, the Colonial Secretary, as the population was so scattered. He felt saddened that so

[128] *The Albert Times* 16 January, 24 July 1895
[129] Ibid., 18 May 1898
[130] CAD, CCP, 11/1/26, Voters Roll, Electoral Division Albert, Ward 5, Lower Stormberg, 1891; *The Queenstown Representative*, 26 February 1884, 6 March 1885
[131] S.E. Duff, "Saving the Child to Save the Nation", p. 233
[132] *The Albert Times*, 30 January 1895
[133] S.E. Duff, "Saving the Child to Save the Nation", pp. 232-233
[134] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 27 May 1892

many whites could not go to school, unlike "Lovedale where thousands and thousands were thrown away on black education and teaching people to write their own passes".[135]

Given the failure to impose compulsory education and the inefficacy of farm schools, Duff has shown how official anxiety over dissolute, idle youths, uneducated and neglected in the interior of the Cape, culminated in the Destitute Children Relief Act of 1895. This legislation provided for the definition of what was expected from white children, and for destitute children to be taken into custody by magistrates, who would then place them in industrial or boarding schools or arrange for them to be apprenticed. Duff argues that, in a society that equated blacks with idleness, this was a response to turn poor white youths into productive members of society.[136]

By 1898, there was still no compulsory education and many schools had been closed because of the Rinderpest or by uneducated farmers whenever difficulties arose. The usual excuse was that a teacher could not be found, or children had to help parents with trivial chores.[137] However, the Albert Teachers Association voted unanimously in favour of compulsory education for towns and villages and for the establishment of school boards. Later that year, an Education Bill proposed school boards which would keep registers and enquire into cases of whites who were not attending school, to ensure better school attendance.[138] In 1899, the Sterkstroom Council asked the government for a grant to build a Poor School.[139]

Further intervention in the upliftment of poor white children appeared in the form of the Railway School at the Stormberg Junction. Consisting of one teacher, the school was opened at the Junction in 1898 by J. Cuthbert, the Railway Education Officer. The usual festivity accompanied the event including outdoor sports, prizes, the arrival of a train loaded with Molteno well wishers, a concert and a dance of waltzes, quadrilles, mazurkas, pas-de-quatne, Highland-Schottische, las vas and the circassian circle till the early hours.[140] Cuthbert's opening speech reflected the dire state of children in such isolated communities:

> 'The contact of the more mercurial section of railway children with the sterner facts of town or even village life, seems to result in rapid deterioration. Children on entering school are familiar with many forms of obscenity and with coarse and foul language to which they listen from infancy in the melancholy circle of their home, with its hardships and mean shifts. It need hardly be aid that such are the most difficult to deal with and their moral (sic) is of greater

[135] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 17 February 1893
[136] Duff, "Saving the Child to Save the Nation", p. 244
[137] *The Albert Times,* 18 May 1898
[138] Ibid., 15 June ,10 August 1898
[139] *The Sterkstroom Budget*, 24 August 1899
[140] *The Albert Times,* 26 October 1898

> importance than their intellectual training. From the nature of their surroundings and their isolated condition they are beyond the pale of any church and the highest type of refinement they meet is at school. Much responsibility thus attaches to the teacher…[who must be] genuine, earmest, truthful.'[141]

Molteno's progress continued, despite a brief downturn at the end of 1894 due partly to the drop off in coal orders from the Cape Government Railways and the temporary closure of Vice's mines. New shops opened and Molteno saw itself on the verge of a boom.[142] The value of town properties was now £39 000 – a 15% increase on the previous year, which suggested very little slowing down.[143] Claims were made that Molteno had advanced more than any other town of its size in the colony in the last five years, having added to its valuation roll the sum of £20 000 in new buildings since 1890. Signs of monopoly capital in the form of commercial mergers also appeared.[144] Penshaw Colliery was constructing large works at Paardekraal, while mining operations in other parts of the district were opening up.[145] The Cape Collieries was launched in 1896 and loads of barrows and goods were leaving town every day on mule wagons. By 1897, Molteno had 13 or 14 stores now and consisted of about 700 inhabitants of all races.[146]

Sterkstroom, however, without the benefit of established coal mines, barely participated in the boom. More importantly, the village was still in the hands of the Afrikaner Reformed Church which did little or nothing in the way of improvement as there was no constituted authority for regulating village matters.[147] It had dwindled to an unimportant village of some 300 whites and blacks – now only half the size of Molteno - with only three stores of any importance and dependent upon a comparitively small farming community. There was no resident Civil Commissioner and a monthly court was held by the Magistrate of Queenstown. The building trade lagged and railway officials and wages had been reduced.[148] By 1897, in a town where a large number of the inhabitants made a living by cultivating small plots of ground, the population consisted of 'a rather impecunious class of people'. The large number

[141] *The Albert Times*, 8 June 1898
[142] Ibid., 10 November 1894
[143]Ibid., 25 July 1894
[144] Ibid., 12 June 1895
[145] Ibid., 31 March 1897
[146] Ibid., 13 January, 15 September 1897; SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 16 October 1897
[147] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report , Sterkstroom, 1 October 1895
[148] *The Albert Times*, 10 January 1894

of artisans in Sterkstroom, including blacksmiths, builders, masons, carpenters, brickmakers and wagoners, in comparison to Molteno was testimony to the economic level of the town.[149]

However, in 1895, the line from Sterkstroom to Dordrecht and the Indwe coal mines was finally begun, giving some respite to the economy of the struggling town. An influx of surveyors, contractors, artisans and gangers (black and white) arrived in the town. White gangers earned double the wages of black gangers. Both races were usually housed in railway cottages.[150] Some had been engaged in cartage work, possessing a wagon and oxen, but had taken the new opportunity of the arrival of the railway to increase their income.[151] Hoteliers and entrepreneurs, like Mrs E. Cheston, who carried on a bakery, did very well with contractors on the Indwe railway line.[152]

Finally, in 1898, the Church sold the rights to the land on which the town was situated to a newly formed Municipality and an Assistant Resident Magistrate was installed.[153] Thereafter, municipal status launched a period of good building development. A Building Society and a local newspaper, *The Sterkstroom Budget*, were established in which Queenstown stores began to advertise their wares.[154] Exuberance was unrestrained. Sterkstroom was described as going ahead 'in leaps and bounds' and, given its proximity to the coal mines, much optimism was harboured that it would become a very busy centre.[155] The Standard Bank Inspector reported: "Since the Church relinquished its control a better class of person may be seen and the price of erven is improving. Several new houses have been erected … the prospects of town and village are favourable."[156] Certain entrepreneurs rose to prominence such as the brothers, John and Jurie Wessels, who were well known farmers and stock dealers and dabbled in coal prospecting in the area. The Elliott Brothers, a branch of General Law Agents from a Cradock company, were well-to-do money lenders and auctioneers of animal stock

[149] *The Albert Times*, 14 September 1897
[150] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank , Liabilities Lists, Sterkstroom, 1 October 1895; 15 August 1896
[151] Ibid., 11 October 1898
[152] Ibid., 1 October 1895
[153] *The Sterkstroom Budget*, 25 February 1899; *Sterkstroom – Commemoration Album*, 1875-1975, Sterkstroom, Sterkstroom Municipality, 1975, p. 13; However, the Municipality quickly descended into difficulties in a dispute with the Kerkraad (Church council) over a shortfall of 195 morgen transferred to them by the Church. In the end the Council decided to pay the full amount in an effort to relieve the taxpayer of legal costs, SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 14 January 1899
[154] *The Sterkstroom Budget*, 7 September 1899
[155] Ibid., 14 January 1899 .
[156] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 26 August 1899

bought from the Wessels brothers. Thomas Halliday, who hired the Commercial Hotel, also had a farm worth £3500 in the Tarkastad district.[157]

Challenges to Victorian sensibility

Yet, despite the intrusion on the veld of a sophisticated, Victorian culture in Molteno and its prized value of social respectability, this was strikingly juxtaposed with anomalous elements that threatened to undermine the town. The water system in Molteno, the most fundamental municipal resource, was anything but secure under George Vice.[158] While Meintje's highly useful, but rather triumphalist, history lauds Vice, contemporary antagonism to him was rife, perhaps because of his excessive power, but especially over the water supply, as established in Clause 18 in his original sale of land to the Municipality. The supply, which was promised to be unfailing from his Paardekraal spring to the south of the town borders, was always erratic so that, in 1894, John McKinnon was doing a roaring trade supplying water by the barrel from his well. One recorded comment was, 'When the tanks ran dry we were absolutely dependent on him'.[159] Overestimating the capacity of his dam, Vice also undertook to supply the railway and the roller mill, there being nothing in clause 18 to prevent this. Thus, townspeople would just get used to a plentiful service when they were repeatedly thrown back on the cart and barrel service.[160] Vice was challenged by the local paper as being the one man who has "the sole right of supply and the only voice on it. We are inclined to believe he receives £25 per month for it and in these hard times dons the most elaborate display of shirt front, in fact almost an advertising laundry".[161]

In 1894, the municipality had taken a government loan of £2 000 to establish a water scheme which renewed hopes that trees could be planted to enhance the town as a recuperative centre and "that nature's element will overcome that of *Vice*."[162] But this supply was also not reliable in droughts and the dam ran low again. Were the councillors scared to complain to the 'city father', wondered *The Albert Times*? Outside the precincts of the municipal building we hear councillors talk of a law suit and then we hear rumours that these same people keep

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[157] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 26 August 1899, 6 October 1900; *The Sterkstroom Budget*, 7 January, 14 October 1899; SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, 11 October 1898
[158] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 13 February 1891
[159] *The Albert Times*, 28 Feb 1894
[160] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 13 January 1905
[161] *The Albert Times*, 6 May 1896
[162] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 5 October 1893; *The Albert Times*, 25 July 1894, 13 January 1897

quiet in council.[163] Molteno inhabitants sought relief for their frustrations with Vice in humour and witticisms. When a fire broke out at Barrables' forage store, the market bell was rung and most of the townspeople quickly turned out. One wag quipped that as water was considered an intoxicant by Vice or the municipality, whiskey had better be used.[164] But humour turned to gloom when one of the oldest residents, John Wilkinson, a locomotive inspector, contracted terminal throat cancer. The lack of water and the unsanitary state of the town came into question as causes of recent sicknesses.[165] In 1899, Dr Archer-Isaac, the district's physician, declared the water to be unsuitable for human consumption.[166] Over the years, new water schemes would be implemented amid continuing struggles.[167]

Issues of control between Vice and the Municipality also extended to other resources. Their relationship turned sour about a dispute relating to the borders which separated Municipal land, the commonage and Vice's private property. His rights on municipal land were also examined such as the removal of gravel, stone, and soil, the building of houses at the mines, the expansion of his land and the constructing of roads. Later on a question was raised about his right to construct railway lines at any place of his choosing. Vice had for some years been extending the line of the railway leading to his various coal mines until it stretched to almost the extreme western boundary of the commonage, allegedly making a serious encroachment on the grazing rights of ratepayers who demanded compensation. Vice finally attempted to keep the peace by making a proposal to the Municipality that he would grant extra ground for grazing purposes and pay a royalty of 1d per ton for his own coal and 2d for other parties whose coal was conveyed over the railway line in dispute.[168]

Sterkstroom's infrastructure was even worse. In 1884, the police force was described as negligible, infrastructure weak and facilities often shabby. A police report on 'public houses' at Sterkstroom reported that neither John Daly's Royal Hotel nor Charles MacCalgan's Commercial Hotel had any bathrooms and only one pit toilet in the yard. Neither was straw bedding provided for travellers' horses.[169] In 1899, Sterkstroom remained a fairly marginal village as evinced by the fact that the business of the Standard Bank was still, almost entirely

[163] *The Albert Times*, 17 February 1897.
[164] Ibid.
[165] CAD, CCP 11/1/26, Voters List, Electoral Division Albert, Ward Bamboesberg, 1891; *The Albert Times* 31 March 1897
[166] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 31
[167] Ibid.
[168] *The Albert Times*, 9 February 1898; Schreiner's written responses were usually in favour of George Vice, according to Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 122
[169] *The Queenstown Representative*, 5 August 1884; 12 May 1885; *The Queenstown Free Press*, 8 March 1892

with the farming community.[170] There were few cultural events in evidence, a great shortage of police, struggles to find water, poor sanitary conditions and a prevalent threat of disease.[171] Sterkstroom also had a number of disreputable characters like Dr Veitch who was prone to gambling, insolvency and debt.[172]

The dull and provincial social ethos of life in Sterkstroom also presented a disjuncture with nearby Molteno's notion of respectable Victorian society. In 1884, Sterkstroom's ethos was graphically outlined, particularly for women, by the correspondent for *The Queenstown Representative*:

> '[W]e have a mixed population it is true, but the prevalent notions like politics [and] conversation are essentially English. Yet a social lethargy, which is not English, is predominant. No courtesy interchange between houses is considered important to social unity; pleasant periodical reunions in a semi-public place are hardly ever considered necessary; thus our social organisation is *tabula rasa* (write on it anything you want). Men meet and hob-nob in bars but the social life of our women is a dreary and miserable farce… I will remark though that little narrowness and silly pride is the gangrene of South African life. The person who has a position in the village where society is scarce, entrenches himself behind a little barricade of conceit and says in effect, 'my neighbours are not good enough'.[173]

The masculinity of Sterkstroom was underlined by the complaint: "in this quiet and obscure corner… we are being impinged on by the railway both negatively and positively … much drinking goes on… there are two hotels, three drinking bars and one billiard room", while at the wedding of John McCalgan and Emma Coetzee, the 30 or 40 friends of the bridegroom were mostly bachelors.[174] Although social life 'was still difficult', a dance was held in October 1884 by 'the bachelors of Sterkstroom' with Firbank and Company especially well represented.[175]

Perhaps it was therefore the gender imbalance and consequent boredom which contributed to a number of reports on the destructive behavior of youths. Or perhaps, as historian Chisholm points out, it was "the structural changes in the Cape economy and society ... [which] had seen the growth of ... impoverished whites and proletarianised blacks in the smaller towns of the Eastern Cape" which led to vagrancy, begging and crime.[176] Such changes had given birth to a labouring population, many of whose children were no longer being adequately

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[170] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 26 August 1899
[171] *The Sterkstroom Budget*, 14 January, 22 April 1899
[172] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 11October 1898; CAD, 1/ SSM 2/1/2, Civil, Record of Proceedings, 29 June 1899
[173] *The Queenstown Representative*, 5 August 1884
[174] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 22 July, 30 September 1884
[175] Ibid., 28 October 1884
[176] L. Chisholm, "The Pedagogy of Porter: The Origins of the Reformatory in the Cape Colony, 1882-1910", University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute, African Studies Seminar Paper, April 1885, p. 4

controlled either on the farm or on the towns, and may have caused local instances of deviant behaviour.[177] On Guy Fawkes Day in 1884, for example, youths went on a rampage, burning gates, wagons, fencing, barrels and fruit trees.[178] On another occasion, 'gay young sparks' drove a councillor's horses down the street at night.[179] The social watchdog, the newspaper, commented that most young men in the town left their future welfare to chance and, instead of utilizing their evenings productively, gravitated to the billiard room after work. Social clubs were suggested.[180] A few years later, on New Year's Eve in Sterkstroom, a young 'miscreant' created a huge bonfire of tables that had been left in the market square.[181]

The marginal position of women in Cape society, and even more so in such border zones, is indicated in their absence in power structures such as town or school councils. However, teaching was one of the few occupational outlets for women either employed in schools or as governesses. In 1891, a female teacher in the Molteno government school could earn £85 a year.[182] Sometimes university educated governesses taught subjects like music, drawing and water colours.[183] Women experienced severe social challenges with the only other respectable outlets to alleviate boredom being women's agricultural societies, church societies, church choirs, church committees which organized fundraising bazaars or dances and, later, the British Loyalist League. Women also experienced financial vulnerability where, for example, a husband's estate was often left to a son rather than the widow.[184] Loneliness could further marginalise women as, given the professions of certain men, wives could be left for long periods of time on their own. Geoffrey Pauling, the railway engineer on the Sterkstroom line, often left his wife in Queenstown for six months at a time as he traversed the colony, while wives of cartage contractors could face a particularly hard struggle.[185] The wife of Miles, a transport rider from Bushmanshoek, who was left with a large family to care for when he was away, died after one of his departures.[186]

Women were also constrained by the morality of the time so that newspaper editors considered that it was their responsibility to censor what was printed. *The Albert Times* editor

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[177] L. Chisholm, "The Pedagogy of Porter", p. 21
[178] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 21 November 1884
[179] *The Albert Times* 17 April 1895
[180] Ibid., 29 May 1895
[181] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 20 January 1891
[182] Ibid., 31 March 1891
[183] Ibid., 4 January 1887
[184] CAD, 1/ MTO 2/1/1, Civil Cases, Records of Proceedings, File 125, 22 October 1894
[185] G. Pauling, *The Chronicles of a Contractor being the Autobiography of the Late George Pauling*, Rhodesiana Reprint Library, Vol. 4, Bulawayo, 1969, p. 64
[186] *The Albert Times*, 24 October 1894

pronounced, "I am paid to watch the interests of the public".[187] When *The Queenstown Representative* cited 'the filth' of the events of a local divorce case, the editor urged that 'the more decent reader should turn his attention away.'[188] However, when Sarah Vice divorced Herbert Vice, nephew of George Vice himself, the details of his illicit cross-racial affair in their house with a domestic worker, Johanna January, could not be ignored. January pleaded that Herbert had solicited her for some time.[189]

Social order was also compromised by crime, especially in Sterkstroom as opposed to Molteno. Perhaps this was because of the male dominated population and absence of family life or perhaps the picture is skewed because the only surviving newspapers for the early 1880s are the Queenstown papers which reported on Sterkstroom and not Molteno. But it was also because land dispossession in the Transkei fuelled starvation from Braam Nek down to the Indwe River in St Marks.[190] Indeed, proximity of the Sterkstroom area to the border of the Kei River meant that some black criminals on the frontier had the advantage of escaping to the nearby Transkei where, with little difficulty, they could meld into tribal groupings. Yet despite this, some policemen doggedly pursued their quarry. In 1885, Corporal Newton of the Cape Police brought in a man accused of killing another by beating his brains out with a stone at a canteen just outside Sterkstroom. The corporal had found him after a three day search in the Transkei.[191] But in the absence of court statistics until 1893, the experience of crime from the black perspective in this period has to be sketchy and impressionistic.

Gaols were also notoriously flimsy in 19th century South Africa. The Sterkstroom gaol was described as 'a noisesome, pestilential hole' and was absurdly fragile.[192] In August 1884, in Sterkstroom "some natives broke out of the lock up with comparative ease'.[193] Three months later, Jan was charged with breaking out of the 'lock up' at Sterkstroom even though he was handcuffed at the time.[194] Only in 1895 were improvements to the gaol begun so that short term prisoners did not have to be sent away and in Molteno, the Chief Constable called for

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[187] *The Albert Times,* 15 September 1897
[188] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 18 January 1887
[189] *The Albert Times,* 28 September 1898; Herbert Vice died in 1900 during the Boer War, http://www.eggsa.org/library/main.php?g2_itemId=1791702&g2_page=2
[190] *The Queenstown Representative,* 10 April 1885; 5 January 1886
[191] Ibid., 12 June 1885
[192] Ibid., 8 January 1884
[193] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 11 September 1888; another complaint was about the extraordinary powers of RMs in the Transkei which they did not have in Europeaan communities, Ibid., 14 December 1888; see also C. van Onselen's representation of flimsy jails in *Masked Raiders: Irish Banditry in Southern Africa: 1880-1889,* Cape Town, South Africa, Zebra Press, 2010; *The Queenstown Representative,* 19 August 1884
[194] *The Queenstown Representative,* 16 December 1884; *The Albert Times,* 6 February 1895

three more men to keep order at night when drunken blacks left the canteens.[195] The village was particularly vulnerable, he thought, due to the large numbers of miners employed at the coal mines. They would get drunk and riotous and constables who had been at work 12 hours a day could not be expected to also keep order at night.[196]

However, white crime, due to the severe economic recession, was a frequent factor in the 1880s which also threatened to undermine Molteno's social order. In 1884, white men robbed Blackbeard's store seemingly in the hope of finding the till's takings which, however, had been removed at close of business. Another group of white men, described by the paper as a 'class of loafers' were obviously desperately hungry. They came up the railway line with the claimed intent of working for Firbank and Company on the Aliwal North extension. However, after the first installment of rations, they all disappeared.[197] Perhaps Julius Muller, a general storekeeper in Sterkstroom, was trying to stave off financial failure. He was arrested for arson for setting his store alight to claim insurance money and was imprisoned for five years.[198]

By 1887, social problems were increasing in Sterkstroom to such an extent that 59 criminal cases had come before the Periodical court. But it was not only the numbers, but the level of depravity that pushed the Resident Magistrate, Garcia, to threaten to stop the Court, complaining to the Colonial Secretary that:

> 'The majority of cases brought before me were of a most disgusting character revealing a state of immorality amongst certain people there which one could hardly have believed possible in so small a community. Even little children were brought as witnesses to prove or disprove language foul and disgusting in the extreme. It was in summing up in one of the cases that I remarked that I really believed it would be in the interest of the community if the court were abolished and which would, at any rate, prevent parents from dragging their little children into court to give evidence in such cases.'[199]

However, the interface between black and white in the towns based on unequal labour relations raised further issues of control. These especially related to residential spaces, liquor, crime and health. From 1888, when the new line to Middleburg was confirmed, concerns emerged in Molteno about the large number of additional men who would be employed on the junction lines, and in the new mines in the Stormberg. In 1890, petitioners called for more police and a Resident Magistrate, since the last time the magistrate visited, he opened court

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[195] *The Albert Times*, 22 May 1895
[196] Ibid., 7 August 1895
[197] *The Queenstown Representative*,13 January, 1885
[198] Ibid., 5 August 1884; 23, 26 June, 29 September 1885; SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom Branch, 15 August 1896
[199] CAD, CO 4264, J3, Memorial Received, George Judd, 29 March 1888.

with no less than 27 prisoners.[200] However, as has been stated in Chapter Two, it was alcohol that was at the apex of crime, security and labour control, all of which impacted closely on the local economy. This, in turn, was part of a wider debate between the Western Cape wine and brandy farmers who fought against prohibition of sales to blacks, and miners, farmers and industrialists in the rest of the colony who were either for prohibition or for licensed control.[201] While employers could not afford to have labour disrupted by Monday morning stayaways or under-performance through alcohol abuse, it was also clear to those who proposed licensed control that prohibition could cause labour to migrate elsewhere. How to control drinking was the problem.

In 1894, Molteno was serviced by two hotels where black miners could get alcohol at two shillings per bottle. However, when John Manley applied to open a bottle store with alcohol at half price, much criticism was unleashed. Good liquor, for example brandy at two shillings, was preferable to cheap fiery Cape Smoke. It was also better for blacks and for Molteno's interests, than 'raw and maddening drink' at a lesser sum.[202] If Manley's bottle store was allowed to open, it would lead to more drunkenness, less work, more fights and robberies and the expense of a larger police force, ran the argument. The hotels, which made their money by the sale of alcohol, would then go into decline and visitors decrease. Even if it meant more money for Molteno, there would be "lazy niggers lying about in the day and sheep stealing at night."[203] Thus, paradoxically, while there was a concern to restrict the sale of alcohol, there was also a silent admission that black consumption of alcohol helped to prop up the economy of Molteno.[204]

The notion of licensed control as opposed to outright prohibition found expression in further ambiguities. Many residents aimed to reduce drink in the town of Molteno while allowing it at nearby Cyphergat and other mines. The number of railway tickets issued to blacks bound for Molteno on one weekend was about 400. The Cyphergat bottle store run by Hanna Woolf six miles away was seen by many, including the Molteno Good Templar Lodge, as a necessary evil to keep the labour there and out of Molteno. A petition, including many labour employers, overwhelmingly supported the Cyphergat licence which was finally given to

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[200] CAD, CO 4272, M 59, Petition from Inhabitants of Molteno to Sauer, Colonial Secretary, 3 October 1890
[201] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 2 June 1891
[202] *The Albert Times,* 28 February 1894; 'Cape Smoke' was made from the husks of the grapes with tobacco, cayenne pepper and Natal rum added, R. Turrell, *Capital and Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Fields*, p. 188
[203] *The Albert Times,* 14 March 1894
[204] Ibid., 27 June 1894

Hanna Woolf to the relief of Molteno inhabitants.[205] When Manley also received a licence for his bottle store in town, it was immediately challenged in the Supreme Court and finally overturned.[206] Thus, in Molteno, alcohol regulation came to identify certain 'labour spaces'.

However, in the town of Molteno, drinking areas were not yet segregated and fights, exacerbated by alcohol, also occurred between blacks and lower-income, usually younger, white Afrikaners, perhaps because the latter felt economically vulnerable. Yet, one incident in the yard of the Phoenix Hotel reveals the existing fluidity of racial attitudes among whites of different ethnicity at the end of the 19th century in small towns. Antonie Mare, a young white farmer of the district, who had been drinking at the hotel, attempted to prevent two black men from entering the unsegregated urinal in Henry Gibson's yard saying, 'you niggers must go out until the white men are finished.' Andries, a 'canteen boy' at Gibsons, retorted, 'you verdonde Boer wat meen jy daar me' ['you damned Boer, what do you mean by that?'] and remonstrated that the urinal was for everybody. A fight broke out which was joined by two more young white farmers and, by the end of the fight, a crowd of about 40 or 50 blacks. However, when Private Johannes van Niekerk of the Cape Police clearly intended to take only the black fighters to the police camp, hotelier Gibson suggested the Afrikaners should be taken too. English justice, in this case, was also untainted by racism as Antonie was found guilty.[207]

Some black communities presented less of a threat and were co-opted into the lower echelons of respectable colonial society by virtue of their education or Christian membership. Andre Odendaal has also shown that a sector of the black population, usually consisting of Mfengu, mission educated 'school people', were keen to appropriate western culture and Victorian values. These were best provided for in the fora of church, education and sport.[208] Bonner points out that urbanisation, bourgeois aspirations and racial oppression were the reasons for keen participation in these institutions, while British Imperial administration, the army, missions and private school were the conduits. From the colonialist's point of view, cricket was the main 'imperial game' fostered, particularly by missions, to instill the Imperial values of team work, sporting behavior and civilization.[209] Vidacs goes further arguing that sport

[205] *The Albert Times*, 21 February, 21 March 1894, 31 March 1897
[206] Ibid.,3 June 1896, 16 May 1894, 10 February 1897
[207]CAD, 1/MTO 1/1/1/1, Criminal Records of Proceedings, Case 46, 1894
[208] A. Odendaal, *The Founders: The Origins of the African National Congress and the Struggle for Democracy*, Jacana Education, 2012, pp. 23-39
[209] P. Bonner in R. Ross, A.K. Mager and B. Nasson, (eds.), *The Cambridge History of South Africa, Vol 2, 1885-1994*, Vol. 2, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 312-313

was the vehicle for "colonial ideas and needs for order and discipline among the dominated populations".[210]

Although there was almost no information in the local press about black participation in sport in the Stormberg, the church featured prominently in the Molteno Location. For example, in May 1896, under the patronage of the Church of England and Mayor Pinnoy, J. S. Mbongwe, a policeman, held a choir evening in a packed hall to raise money to build a church in the Molteno location. With the concert dominated by English hymns, the evening was brought to a close by the singing of 'Rule Brittania' and 'God Save the Queen'.[211] Later that year, a well attended meeting was held in Molteno's court room to launch the church by means of a financial partnership between blacks and whites with Mbongwe elected Secretary and leading townsman, Noah Deary, treasurer. The church was seen as a potent tool to divide respectable blacks from criminal (heathen) blacks. The chairman, Dr Browne, pronounced that it was a disgrace that Christianity had not paid more spiritual attention to blacks. As the Molteno district was being opened up to a big coal industry and large numbers of labour, "the church", he said patronisingly, "would raise the native from the depth of degradation which many might fall into if allowed to be ignorant and left to the mercy of themselves… 98% of native crime was by heathen natives."[212]

In a period when epidemiology and access to vaccines were limited, small towns felt extremely vulnerable to disease. Blacks were singled out by colonists as posing health threats so that increasing controls were developed to divide the lives of urban communities. Indeed the Cape colonial border of the Transkei, paralleled as it was by the railway snaking northwards, was fraught with social hazards for both migrants and townsmen and was crossed, often fatally, by great numbers of Transkeian labourers going to the mines on the Rand. In line with Swanson's notion that much urban formation around the turn of the century was formulated around the 'sanitation syndrome', the threat of these diseases being transferred by the railway into white areas and black urban locations was a constant concern to local authorities.[213]

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[210] Bea Vidacs, "Through the prism of sports: why should Africanists study sports? *Afrika Spectrum* 41, Vol. 3, Institut für Afrika-Kunde, Hamburg, 2006, p. 334, http://scholar.google.co.za/scholar?q=related:4SwkG3eZ8EEJ:scholar.google.com/&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5 accessed 18 March 2014

[211] *The Albert Times*, 6 May 1896

[212] Ibid., 12 August 1896

[213] M. Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900- 1909, " *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1977), pp. 387-410

Yet these fears need to be grounded against the larger issues of social, economic and political forces in the shaping of industrial South Africa. The theoretical framework supplied by Randall Packard in his *White Plague, Black Labour*, a study of Tuberculosis in the South African context, maintains that neither contemporary theorists and local medical practitioners who upheld the 'separatist' notion of black bodies being virgin territory for disease, nor the revisionist theory that the demands and congestion of the mines inflicted TB, silicosis, venereal and other diseases, reflect the true facts.[214] Packard, in fact, contends that early Bantu migrations to southern Africa brought with them levels of TB which were rapidly activated when conditions of overcrowding and bad sanitation occurred, as in the congested reserves, locations and the mining compounds. It was particularly the compounds that became a huge source of re- infection for the rural areas, like the Ciskei and the Transkei in the first decade of the 20th century. Here, increasingly poor nutrition due to colonial incorporation, declining land, population congestion and the consequent move to maize instead of sorghum or millet, also impacted on the health of people in the reserves making them even more susceptible to TB and other diseases.[215]

Indeed, the effects on black health of colonial dispossession validated colonists' fears, made the regular outbreaks of smallpox a greater difficulty to deal with and also created great panic and tension between the towns. When smallpox broke out in Sterkstroom in late winter in 1884, a stir erupted in Queenstown for fear of its own vulnerability due to easy access by rail.[216] The disease had erupted among workers on Andries Botha's farm at Kitterhoek near Sterkstroom, only 16 miles from Queenstown. The hut was burned down but without a Public Health Act, those who burnt the hut were liable for prosecution.[217] Ten days later, Sterkstroom discovered they had eight more cases of smallpox among unvaccinated coloured farm workers. As a part of the Queenstown District, Sterkstroom was irate that no medical attention or directions were offered by Queenstown and accused its authorities of insular and even racist thinking:

> 'Isn't it a farce that Queenstown should make solemn preparations for preventing smallpox when the doctors do nothing to prevent the spread? …but surely they have to when there is an epidemic? The District Surgeon should act in conjunction with the Sanitary Inspector and appoint a Medical Officer of Health… Queenstown has appointed a medical officer and all is

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[214] R. Packard, *White Plague, Black Labour. Tuberculosis and the Political Economy of Health and disease in South Africa*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1989, p. 22

[215] R. Packard, *White Plague, Black Labour*, 1989

[216] *The Queenstown Representative*, 19 August, 1884 ; In temperate areas, the number of smallpox infections were highest during the winter and spring, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smallpox#Cause

[217] *The Queenstown Representative*, 19 August 1884

> ready. But the disease [in Sterkstroom] can now approach and nothing is being done to stop it. … Dr. Berry seems satisfied with that if the sick are outside of Queenstown and are coloured.'[218]

It was left up to George Judd, the Klaas Smits Field Cornet, to deal with the sick and the lazarettos set up on Kittershoek and Naudesfontein. The authorities of the Afrikaner Church asked Judd, now also appointed as Sanitary Inspector by Queenstown, not to come into the village while in charge of the lazaretto. The bizarre state of affairs at Sterkstroom was criticised by the editor of the *South African Medical Journal* who also reported that, although the Medical Officer of Health for the district went regularly to the Lazaretto, he halted some 100s of yards away and was met by Judd who kept a respectable distance from the medical officer, reported on the symptoms and received directions for treatment. This usually consisted of washing both patients and their clothes in baths of carbolic acid and water.[219] While the Public Health Act of 1883 made provision for vaccination, it was not free.[220] In the end, there were three smallpox deaths at Kittershoek.[221]

The disease then spread from Sterkstroom to the labour camps at the Stormberg coal mines. In August, the Council, fearing an outbreak in Molteno, asked the government for the appointment of a doctor, a delivery of lymph and a financial contribution to build a lazaretto. When smallpox was confirmed in the Municipal location in late October and in Vice's location, the lazaretto was moved closer to the Municipal Location. There was only one death, but difficulties and confusion around policy caused the towns to become nervously defensive about their municipal boundaries and apportion blame for the encroaching disease. Queenstown proclaimed that Molteno had done nothing to set up a board of health or take steps to isolate victims.[222]

Situated close to the Transkei border and to the railway, Queenstown had very specific difficulties to deal with. Six months later, when there was another outbreak of smallpox spreading over the region as far as St Marks in the Transkei, Queenstown complained that patients were coming into town from Molteno, Glen Grey and St Marks and they had to bear the costs and the danger. However, amendments to the Public Health Act of 1883 allowed

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[218] *The Queenstown Representative,* 29 August 1884
[219] Ibid., 13 January 1885
[220] The cowpox vaccine introduced by Jenner in 1796 only became common practice by the end of the 19th century. Improved vaccines and re-vaccination led to a substantial reduction of smallpox in Europe and North America, but smallpox remained almost unchecked everywhere else in the world, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_smallpox
[221] *The Queenstown Representative,* 12 September 1884
[222] Ibid., 28 October 1884

free vaccinations for those who could not pay and, by 1889, research had indicated that carbolic acid was useless as a disinfectant.[223] Smallpox appeared again in 1887 and, in 1893, the Under Colonial Secretary (UCS) notified the Queenstown Council that smallpox was spreading from Johannesburg and they should be on the alert for any suspicious cases.[224] The Council was particularly concerned that the location should not become a source of further contamination and that immediate attention be given to the vaccination of all inhabitants of the Location and the establishment of a Lazaretto.[225] Finally, in May 1894, smallpox arrived in Queenstown.[226]

The vulnerability of the border towns to such regular and virulent onslaughts of smallpox and other diseases, especially given the lack of legislative and scientific support in the 1880s, led to improvised segregatory measures. Labour recruiters were now no longer permitted to use the show ground in Queenstown to house miners in transit to and from the Rand, while the railways were asked for a rough shed to isolate blacks during their brief stay in town. Miners should also be held here until an adequate number had been collected to qualify for cheaper batch fares. Medical inspection by the railway medical officer of parties of blacks returning from the Transvaal locations was also called for to ascertain if they were free from contagious disease before they proceeded to the Transkei.[227] The Queenstown Council also asked the Cape Government Railways to insist on seeing a vaccination certificate from blacks before they were issued with a railway ticket, although Elliot of the Cape Government Railways was reluctant.[228] He maintained that "hitherto we have not separated the two classes here very definitely: it may come to that some day. In the Transvaal and Natal they separate them absolutely".[229] By the end of 1895, smallpox was prevalent throughout much of the colony.[230] A typhus depot was also retained at Sterkstroom until 1920 for examining

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[223] *The Queenstown Representative*, 1 May 1885; *The Queenstown Free Press*, 8 October 1887; 23 April 1889
[224] CAD, 3/QTN, 1/1/1/8, Queenstown Council Minutes, 30 May 1893
[225] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 8 August 1893
[226] *The Albert Times*, 8, 29 May, 19 June, 14 August 1894
[227] Ibid., 23 January, 19 June, 18 December 1894, 30 April 1895, 30 July, 20 August, 18 December 1895, 17 February, 12 May 1896; Section 35 of Act 39 of 1879; *Amaas* was proclaimed as an infectious disease in terms of Section 7 of the Public Health Act 1883, CAD, 3/QTN 1/1/1/8, Council Minutes, 20 January 1891, 1 October 1895, 23 June 1896
[228] CAD, CGR, 2/3/1, Minutes of Meeting, Grahamstown, Cape Government Railways and Chamber of Commerce, 20 November 1894
[229] Ibid., Minutes of Meetings of Railway Officials, South African Railways Officers Conference, 1896-1 February 1897
[230] Although leprosy was more prominent in parts of the Transkei, there are few references in the archival records for the Stormberg. However, in 1888, a public enquiry on Syphilis was to be held at various places, including the District of Sterkstroom, on 7 November to determine its prevalence in terms of the Contagious Diseases Act of 1885. Based on medical reports, the press advised caution in hiring servants. 78 out of 83 districts reported the disease was prevalent, infecting both whites and blacks and was gaining ground every year.

returning miners, many of whom only made it as far as the Sterkstroom station before succumbing to illnesses such as Pthisis, Silicosis, Typhus and TB.[231]

A graphic example of the disease experience by miners themselves is conveyed by an article entitled 'Dead on the Veldt' which appeared in the press in 1896. This was at a time when hundreds of blacks were passing through the district on their way home from the Rand mines as a result of the reduction of wages. [232] The paper reported:

> 'Sad occurrences often take place at our very door and we remain ignorant of them… "strong men working in the mines at Johannesburg feel the dread typhoid fever creeping on them and they immediately make for home. Arriving at the railway stations along the Border line which lie nearest to their various dwelling places in Kaffirland, they attempt the remainder of the journey on foot. Some arrive at their destination no doubt, other lie down and die along the road. A few months ago the authorities here were shocked at the number of typhoid patients arriving by train; the same thing is happening now. Saturday night's train brought the corpse of one victim and a comrade in the last stages of the disease. The latter expired soon after his arrival. Another sad case was discovered near Waterval, where a native, after dragging his fever worn limbs to that point, lay down to die. His brother remained with him until the end, eduring cold and hunger with the heroic patience so characteristic of the native. This is we believe the third man that has died along the Waterval road since Christmas. So far as we can see nothing can be done to prevent these distressing events. A sick native makes for home regardless of all risk and perhaps he is right. Nursing and medical comforts will not be found at the Rand mines.'[233]

In 1897, the Under Colonial Secretary wrote to the Burgersdorp Town Council confirming that the Orange Free State and the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek promised to do all in their power to stop blacks with Typhoid travelling by rail while the Cape Government Railways would also be on the lookout. However in terms of the existing Public Health Act the Cape government could not interfere with the movement of people suffering from Typhoid, such power only being given to Typhus Fever, Smallpox, Syphilis and Cholera. It would also be difficult to detect sick blacks as 'they do all they can to conceal it when under observation'.[234] As van der Horst points out, there was little knowledge concerning the medical history and causes of death of ex miners who returned home which may have served

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The press warned that it was spread to whites by black children, and nurses who vaccinate themselves after vaccinating the public, Interview Verne Cockin, Kei Mouth, 18 February 2009; *The Queenstown Free Press,* 20 July, 2 November 1888, 6 September 1889; non-sexual transmission accords with 'endemic' as opposed to 'venereal' syphilis as outlined by K. Jochelson, *The Colour of Disease: Syphilis and Racism in South Africa, 1880-1950*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001; however, this distinction was unknown to doctors in the 19th century

[231] CAD, PAH 35, 1/11, Sterkstroom Lock up, Accommodation for the Natives, Assistant District Surgeon, C Robertson to Assistant Resident Magistrate, P.G. Fischer, Sterkstroom, 28 October 1910;Typhus is a highly infectious disease common in crowded conditions where lice spread easily. Typhoid is a separate disease with Typhus-like symptoms, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typhus ; Silicosis (also known as Grinder's disease and Potter's rot) is a form of occupational lung disease caused by inhalation of crystalline silica dust, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silicosis

[232] *The Albert Times*, 18 November 1896

[233] Ibid., 10 June 1896

[234] Ibid., 13 January 1897

to conceal a wider prevalence of disease. While there was some evidence that the incidence of silicosis may have been lower among migrant blacks who worked intermittently than among Europeans with equal length of total service, the incidence of TB seems to have increased as blacks were especially susceptible to the disease during their first year of service on the mines.[235] The increase in migrancy thus increased the risk of illness and death from this cause.[236] Thus the declining health of miners ensured the railway was a health threat in Queenstown and Sterkstroom, the main access stations for migrants and led to increasing segregation.

While residential segregation was becoming a form of social and racial control, it was not yet institutionalised in the Cape, but the greater the industrialisation and the more health dangers presented themselves, the more it became a consideration. Ironically, given the health fears of whites, town locations were usually located near dumping sites of night soil or rubbish.[237] This was an ambiguous time in the housing of South African urban labour, where options ranged from compounds at Kimberley and the Rand, sprawling mining camps as in the Stormberg, permanent municipal locations to informal - sometimes racially mixed - areas within the towns. Capitalising on the ambiguity of segregation, John Elliot of Penshaw mines threatened to create an urban slum in the middle of town when he felt the Council was grossly overcharging him for site on a stone kopjie behind his mine for "his hewers of coal and drawers of water". Elliot said the council was doing good business at this figure which was equal to a yearly rental of about £300 per acre per annum while Vice said he only charged £10 a year for two acres. Elliot was 'glad land was booming but objected to doing the booming part.' If he could get no satisfaction, he would rent spare erven in town and erect buildings like Jardine's houses, right opposite the Good Templar's Lodge and house his "dusky crew" inside the town. He did not care if it did not suit others.[238] Finally, the council gave permission for Elliot to lease one acre of Municipal land on the hill in the vicinity of his coal mine, on condition that he paid for the proper medical and police supervision which would be subject to council's inspection.[239] At a time when spatial considerations along racial

[235] S. van der Horst, "TB in South African Natives with specific reference to the disease amongst the mine labourers on the Witwatersrand", *The South African Institute of Medical Research*, No. XXX, vol. V. March 1932, p. 174
[236] S. van der Horst, *Native Labour in South Africa*, London, Frank Cass, 1971, p. 191
[237] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 4 November 1907, 9 January 1909
[238] It was explained that Fairview paid £17 a year for the ground where their labourers lived, *The Albert Times*, 25 April 1894
[239] *The Albert Times*, 27 June 1894

lines were still relatively fluid, they were nevertheless becoming significant factors in the shaping of towns.

Thus colonists were conflicted by the need for labour and the concerns of contagion which helped to shape social and spatial divisions in the towns of the frontier. But segregation in the Stormberg towns was not only derived from health concerns, but also from ideological and cultural biases. Even when Viljoen, a Sterkstroom police constable who could only speak Afrikaans, was to be replaced by Walter Sondhlo, who was fluent isiXhosa, English and Dutch, a petition of five signatories, including representatives from the Dutch Reformed Church and the town council, appealed that Viljoen remain and Sondhlo be found another position.[240] Gordon Pirie has also demonstrated how mixed trains were done away with and blacks were eventually only allowed in 3rd class carriages.[241] Similarly, when the ladies' waiting room at the Stormberg junction one Saturday evening was filled with a number of black women, the paper complained that it was 'very irregular' as "they were in undisputed possession, for they made their presence very manifest and the officials did not take any steps to have them turned out."[242] Similarly, *The Queenstown Free Press* often referred to Chinese immigrants as 'celestials' and later complained about Queenstown being swamped by 'coolies' after they were expelled from East London.[243] In 1893 and again in 1895, the Queenstown Council revealed their aversion to the possibility of Asian immigrants coming to the Cape.[244] However, it seems Molteno stopped short of implementing a curfew as was the practice in Brugersdorp for which the Reverend EJ Mqoboli of the Native Wesleyan Church expressed his gratitude in the press.[245] Similar paternalism was shown by the residents of Cyphergat, who 'being almost exclusively British… the sports committee catered for the native population in a way which will not be forgotten by them'.[246]

Conclusion

While Meintjes presents an idyllic picture of Molteno at the end of the century, his perspective glosses over the duality of real hopes and aspirations, compromised by real social

[240] CAD, CO 4265, Memorial Received. Sterkstroom Inhabitants asking for the Appointment of Jan Hendrik Viljoen in the Village, 18 February 1888.
[241] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 24 August 1888; 1891
[242]*The Albert Times*, 23 March 1898
[243] *The Queenstown Free Press* 10 August 1888, 3 February 1891
[244] CAD, 3/ QTN, 1/1/1/8, Queenstown Council Minutes, 11 April 1893, 25 April 1895
[245] *The Albert Times,* 9 February 1898
[246]Ibid., 7 July1897

divisions, conflict and tensions.[247] Certainly, given the inception of coal mining in the region, the towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom became strategic links with areas of industry like Kimberley and between the agricultural hinterland and the coastal port of East London. Molteno, specifically, thus had wider importance than many other small towns as agents of regional change, economically, politically and culturally. As the assembly point of new communities, this centre also became a site of intense interaction between race, class and ethnicity. Inherited prejudices, ethnicity and race shifted within the messy milieu of new economic resources, new affiliations and reshaped power concerns. The towns of the coal mines became the sites of new emergent, identities, some of which were crystallised by the normative power of 'print capitalism'.[248]

The imagined futures of Molteno and Sterkstroom inhabitants were especially bright in 1892 after the opening of the Stormberg –Middleburg junction and when the railway reached Johannesburg. Businesses and stores mushroomed, the population grew and the clean air of the Stormberg elicited dreams of Molteno becoming a haven for asthmatics and TB sufferers. Also, given the availability of coal and the great prevalence of wheat growing, flour mills multiplied, with local entrepreneurs importing machinery from Britain. This alleviated the colony's reliance on imported wheat and countered the high prices of the King Williams Town mill. Attention was also paid to education, including the elevation of poor white children from their state of ignorance and isolation on farms, and from the possibility of their future integration with the black labouring class.

However, attempts to build social respectability, capitalism and a Christian ethos, the core values of Victorian culture, were constantly challenged by the anomalies of a border zone, such as the lack of infrastructure, an erratic water supply, social isolation, the loneliness of women, the boredom of young single men and the menace of predatory opportunists. The security of townspeople was also challenged by the growing numbers of immigrant black workers in the sprawling mining camps and their access to liquor. Finally, towns were rendered vulnerable by the health effects of black dispossession, the direct access of sick miners by rail into the towns, as well as the relegation of blacks to insanitary labour camps and locations. The need to manage public health matters was becoming a crucial factor in the formation of the north eastern Cape towns. Clearly, 'the coal rush' had precipitated the pace

[247] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 31
[248] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on The Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London, Verso, 1983, pp.152-4; the press emerged in Queenstown in the 1860s

of urbanization, creating a number of contradictions which had to be fitted into the town's vision of itself.

CHAPTER 4 - THE RESPONSE OF FARMING TO THE COAL FRONTIER, 1880-1899

Even though coal mining and the railway led to the founding of commerce and related activities and sheep farmers were already global exporters of wool, capitalisation of farming in the district was differentiated and often tardy. This was because of a severe economic recession and a drought, both of which lasted for much of the 1880s, the lack of supportive British capital for farming, and ecological afflictions such as the sheep disease, scab, and the Rinderpest which affected cattle. It was mainly better off farmers who benefited from the facilities of the railway and urban commerce, intensifying class stratification. At the same time, antagonisms emerged from many Afrikaner farmers towards the consequences of the new capital, such as the labour force of the mines and the railway, the Chambers of Commerce and the Standard Bank. Meanwhile, these antagonisms were exacerbated by class divisions over scab largely along ethnic lines between well-to-do, mainly English, farmers and merchants and usually lower income Afrikaner farmers. It is the purpose of this chapter to analyse agrarian responses to coal capital and their social consequences against a background of factors innate to farming in the late 19th century.

Pre-existing challenges and class differentiation

Farming in the early to mid 1880s in the district was in the doldrums. Not only was it dominated by an ongoing drought but also by a severe recession. The Cape, as a producer of primary goods, such as wool, agricultural produce and diamonds, was dependent on overseas prices. As the Standard Bank reported, "The quantity of wool exported from the Cape colony in 1881 exceeds that of the previous year by 301, 582 lbs whilst there is a decrease in value of £247 434."[1] South Africa was also increasingly a net importer of basic consumer goods.[2] Neither did British capital, which fuelled the Cape's economy during this time penetrate anywhere near the Stormberg, and then only in the form of the railway line and rolling stock in the mid 1880s.[3] Conversely, the low level of technology and productivity of farming failed to attract capital, perpetutating the control of credit and banking by mercantile interests.[4]

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[1] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*. *Standard Bank Reports on Economic conditions in Southern Africa, 1865 – 1902*, Johannesburg, Standard Bank Investment Corporation, 1987, p. 120
[2] Ibid., p 120; *The Queenstown Representative*, 26 February 1884.
[3] A. Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism, Intensification and Expansion in the Economic Geography of the Cape Colony, South Africa, 1854-1899', PhD thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1984, pp. 39-40
[4] C. Bundy, *The Rise and Decline of the South African Peasantry*, 2nd ed., Cape Town, David Philip, 1988, p. 112

Davenport assessed that such common agricultural problems provided the potential to create a colony-wide Anglo-Afrikaner farmers' party, until the divisive scab issue reached a climax in 1894.[5] Indeed, they were similarly all affected by wool exports dropping from over £3 000 000 in the early seventies, to £2 400 000 in 1880 and to £1 400 000 in 1885. Similarly, wheat imports, an indicator of the fallibility of the home crop, rose to 40 million lbs in the years 1882-4 and to a record high of 52 million lbs in 1885. Importation of agricultural implements had almost stopped by 1884 and a credit squeeze by the banks ensued where 'discounts were reduced in 1881-4 by nearly 50%, leading to a threefold increase in the Colonial insolvency rate.'[6] This was a huge shock after the system of easy credit had developed over the 1870s. Nearly 50% of the 250 insolvencies in the first quarter of 1883 were farmers, although between 1880 and 1882, the Albert district was less affected than many others (see Table.3). Also President Kruger of the Transvaal rejected a customs union with the Cape despite repeated requests by the Afrikaner Bond leader, Hofmeyr, which also drove a wedge between southern and northern Afrikaners providing the potential for colonial solidarity.[7]

Table 3. Insolvencies in select districts of the Cape, 1880-1882

Town/ District	1880	1881	1882
Albert	1	0	7
Aliwal North	0	3	9
Beaufort west	10	4	28
Cradock	6	4	38
Tarka	4	0	6
Queenstown	3	4	13
Graaff Reinet	11	11	45
Cape	49	45	76

Source: Cape of Good Hope, Government Blue Book, 1882, p. 806.

Similarly, ecological problems were common to all farmers. Although the Stormberg, a sheep producing region, could successfully carry stock summer and winter, obviating the need for regular trekking, the drought of most of the 1880s caused major stock mortality and the need

[5] T. R. H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1966, pp26-27; Rhodes had also done much to assist Cape farmers by getting the railway extending to Johannesburg in 1892
[6] Ibid., pp. 96-97
[7] A Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism,' p. 256; TRH Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, p 128

for transhumance.[8] While smaller farmers had to trek away, better off farmers could either hire or buy a farm in another district, such as Xhalanga, and move their stock there.[9] Like George Vice and the Halses, they also built dams for irrigation, bored for water using government hired drills and explored the use of water lifts and steam pumps since windmill pumps were often hampered due to the lack of wind.[10] Discussion also began about ensilage, the preservation of green cattle fodder in underground silos.[11]

The difficulties besetting sheep farming was also an issue of the greatest concern since wool was the single most important factor in the countryside before the advent of the railway and coal in the 1880s. Its export value was compromised by two major factors. One was its subjection to the vagaries of the global market which led to a steady drop in the price of wool until the First World War, despite an increase in production. The other was its poor quality. Up to 1870, two thirds of the wool leaving the Cape was washed or scoured producing the very popular bales of 'snow whites' and greatly enhancing its value. However, wool washing gradually collapsed as a colonial industry.[12] Nor were correct sorting and baling procedures used, so that most wool was packed as it came off the sheep, complete with 'locks, tags and dung', much to the chagrin of progressive merchants and brokers in the commercial hub of Queenstown.[13] Scab disease (discussed later in this chapter) was also a major factor.

The 'backwardness' of farming was thus a continuing theme of the time. As late as 1919, Macmillan wrote of the 'considerable paucity of skill and good judgement' in South Africa about stocking of feed and conservation of water which often led to an inability to withstand cyclical booms and slumps in wool and wheat exports.[14] The voices of notables, merchants and the press urged farmers to pay more attention to the management of agricultural

[8]Interview, Dudley Price, Uitkyk, Molteno, 29 November 2011

[9] *The Queenstown Representative* , 16 September, 18 March 1884, 21 January 1887; Nelson Mandela Metrropolitan University Archives, Cape of Good Hope Blue books , G1-'94, Report of the Scab Disease Commission, 1892-4, pp. 431, 432; Beinart also shows that there was a general belief among 19th century farmers that the more often sheep were moved to new pasture, the less they were prone to disease, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa . Settlers, Livestock and the Environment,* 1770-1950, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 41

[10] *The Queenstown Representative*, 13 January 1885, 15 March 1887

[11] Ibid., 8 January 1884; Ensilage was much used in America, but was only really implanted in the study area around 1886, *The Queenstown Representative* 15 June, 28 May 1886

[12] South African Wool Board , *An Illustrated World History of the Sheep and Wool Industry*, Pretoria, 1970, p. 13

[13] Ibid., p. 212, p. 215; locks come from other parts of the body like the legs, *The Queenstown Representative,* 25 April 1884

[14]WM. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem and its Historical Development*, Pretoria, The State Library, 1974, p. 44, p. 65

enterprise as agrarian problems were fundamental in affecting regional development.[15] In 1884, the Sterkstroom correspondent to *The Queenstown Representative* was not confident of real change:

> 'The veld is looking very poor due to drought and the absence of irrigation and the conservation of natural water supplies. But farmers here are not intelligent and into conservation. They are content with a hand to mouth existence and think they are wealthy because they have large tracts of land and the accumulation of unproductive stock. Sad to think there is so much land just for wild game. The inertness and supineness of large landed proprietors is startling here. The thinking here is the government ought to do something or strenuous labour can't work unless supported by large capital, or that when the government ceases to link overseas thinking with local enterprise then things will come right here.'[16]

In a more patronising tone, the English press commented on the nature of the Afrikaner farmer and his inclination to farm sheep rather than crops:

> 'Unfortunately large tracts of land – almost the entire district - are given up to cattle and sheep and the Afrikaner farmer is not addicted to calculating the prospective oak as a consequence of the diminutive acorn… Wool is the largest export item from the colony and this indicates that land is sacrificed to sheep running and food producing is non existent. Shortsightedness occurs easily in a country where land is cheap and plentiful, the population small and sheep and cattle seen as a basis in wealth and are easy to handle. So the farmer is in the end paying for food imports which he could produce.'[17]

However, some problems were certainly innate to Afrikaner farmers alone. The increasing division of farms by Afrikaners among their children had also given rise to the problem of overstocking.[18] Whereas a rule of thumb was one sheep per morgen per year, many, such as Paul Rorich, ran more. He had 2–3 000 sheep on Zeekoegat, a farm of 1200 morgen and in 1892 went into liquidation.[19] Daniel Raubenheimer reported to the Scab Commission that "the farms are becoming so overcrowded by the increased division that they are consequently more overstocked. This is as good a district for horses, cattle and sheep as there is in any part of the world, but it is getting overstocked."[20] John Stretton reflects:

> 'there were some farms that were divided up to 150 morgen ... people were then trying to make a living out of those smaller and smaller pieces of ground here. ... the composition of the veld would change. The karoo bush would sort of creep in from the West and the carrying capacity of the farm would carry fewer and fewer stock, as the veld was denuded … It slowly started happening you see from the time that the original farms were allocated and surveyed.'[21]

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[15] *The Queenstown Representative*, 29 July, 29 August 1884
[16] Ibid., 29 July 1884
[17] Ibid., 29 August 1884
[18] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope Blue Book, G1-'94, Report of the Scab Disease Commission, 1893-4, Vol 3, Testimony of Daniel Raubenheimer, p. 438
[19] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 11 March 1892
[20] NMMU, G1-'94, Report of the Scab Disease Commission, 1892-4, Daniel Raubenheimer p 438
[21] Interview, John Stretton, Strydfontein, 29 November 2011

Thus, growing soil erosion, created by the wide clearance of land for farms and overgrazing, led to an official concern for afforestation based also on the belief that tree plantations could attract greater rainfall.[22] According to Meintjes, Vice was one of the first farmers in South Africa to fight soil erosion on his farm by the planting of specific grasses and by laying out a tree plantation known as the Pines consisting of 500 morgen of pines and cypresses, on the previously treeless right bank of the Stormbergspruit.[23] The timber was sold for mining props and fuel while the seedlings were sent away to farmers in the Cape and the Orange Free State. A portion of the estate was also planted with fruit trees, generating fruit for sale.[24]

Indeed, such problems had already contributed to growing class stratification among farmers prior to the advent of coal and the railway, leading to a range of class positions from owner farmers, lessee farmers, down to sharecroppers and itinerant graziers (trekkers). It tended to be the latter group, along with immigrants unaccustomed to farming pursuits who, when drought or recession hit, lost their hold on the land and swelled the ranks of the 'poor whites' who had first been noted as early as the major recession of the 1860s.[25]

An analysis of farm sizes in Molteno may shed light on the viability and ethnicity of farmers. The size of the quitrent farms of 2 700 to 3 600 morgen, which had been apportioned to settlers in the Albert district in the 1840s and 1850s, were relatively modest compared to sheep farms in the Karoo described by Macmillan as being between 10 000 to 100 000 morgen.[26] By the 1880s, many Albert farms had been further reduced. Even the largest farm, Klipfontein, in Ward 6, of 13 461 morgen, was divided between six owners. Only one farmer, J.H. Steenkamp, individually owned as much as 7 322 morgen which consisted of Dwaalfontein, a 3222 morgen farm, and sizeable portions of three other farms.[27] Usually the extra land holdings were adjacent to the main farm, presumably to utilize more grazing veld as stock expanded.

Of a total of 127 rate paying farmers in the Lower Stormberg, (see Table 4), only 11% owned between 3-4000 morgen, while only 8% owned anything above that with a mere 5.5% holding between 4-5000 morgen such as M. J. Greyvenstein who owned 4489 morgen. It was

[22] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country,* p. 169
[23] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome : Die Geskiedenis van Molteno, 1874-1974*, Molteno, Munisipaliteit, 1974, p. 22
[24] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 18 September 1903; When he died in 1917, there were 160 000 trees left, many fruit trees and an avenue of trees which dominated the town , J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 22
[25] A Mabin, 'The Making of Colonial Capitalism', p. 107
[26] W.M. Macmillan, *The Agrarian Problem*, p. 64.
[27] Cape Archives Depot, 4/ALB, 7/6/1, Rates register, Divisional Council of Albert, 1885

mainly the farmers in the upper categories who owned more than piece of land. Only 21% owned two or more sections of other farms with the remaining 79% owning one piece of land. The majority of owners (33.9%) only owned between one to 2000 morgen, while over 28% owned under 1 000 morgen. Thus, farmers in this region tended to be weighted in the medium to small category of landholders. This is clear evidence of class stratification since the 1840s when larger farms were sold.

Also it would have been mainly the Afrikaner farmer who experienced this decline if only because they were by far the largest ethnic group among the farmers of the Molteno-Stormberg area. Although the ethnic profile derived from the Voters' rolls of the time has to be impressionistic, partly because ethnicity was not specified and partly because of inaccuracy and some repetition, it is clear that Afrikaner names were overwhelmingly predominant in 1885 in the three wards of Albert relevant to this study. These wards were Lower Stormberg, Bamboesberg and Klaas Smits. In 1885, the number of Afrikaner names in the farming sector of the Lower Stormberg Ward around Molteno comprised approximately 86% and a staggering 96% in the Bamboesberg Ward to the south of Molteno.[28] Meanwhile further south, the Klaas Smits River District, in which the town of Sterkstroom was situated, indicated a slightly lower figure of 77% Afrikaner names in its farming sector (see Table 5).[29] Afrikaner families consisted of large numbers either on the same farm or spread across farms. This prevalence was because they were largely the descendants of the early trekboers, and thus had been in the area longer than most English settlers by the 1880s.[30]

In contrast, mainly due to the practice of primogeniture, English families were far smaller with very few spread across farms.[31] A distinct prevalence of English speaking farmers existed in a curve from the North East of this district on farms such as Grootvly and Kloppersfontein, north-westwards through farms such as Droogefontein, Klipkraal and Buffelsfontein in the South western corner of the adjacent Wodehouse district, to farms such as Strydfontein and Vlakfontein at the headwaters of the Kraai and Holspruit Rivers, in the

[28] CAD, CCP 11/1/14, Voters Roll, Electoral Division of Albert,1885
[29]CAD, CCP 11/1/16, Voters Roll, Electoral division of Queenstown, 1884; The towns are a stark contrast to the rural areas, in that the figures for Sterkstroom indicate only 42 percent Afrikaner names, while the town of Molteno had zero percent.
[30] NMMU, G1-'94, p 438; The Greyvensteins were the most prevalent family in 1885 numbering 15 voting males in the two wards in the Molteno District, CAD, CCP 11/1/14, Voters' Roll, Ward, Bamboesberg, 1885.
[31] In 1885, Vlakfontein had a variety of English names on it such as David Annandale, J.M. Barry, C.W. Halse, C.S. Hockey, R.A. Murton and N.A. Smith, CAD, CCP 11/1/14, Voters Roll, 1885

east of the Lower Stormberg Ward.[32] Many of these had arrived in the Stormberg region around the 1850s, prior to the coming of coal and railway development, bringing wealth accumulated in earlier enterprises, either from overseas or from earlier settlement schemes such as that of the 1820 settlers. The Strettons who arrived in 1858 on Buffelsfontein and John Frost, an Anglo-South African cabinet minister and landowner, were examples of such immigrants.[33]

Table 4. Number of farmers according to size of land holdings in Ward 6, Albert District, 1885.

Number of farmers	%	Size of Farms in morgen
1	0.8%	7000 - 8000
2	1.6%	6000 – 7000
0	0%	5000 – 6000
7	5.5%	4000 – 5000
14	11%	3000 – 4000
24	18.9%	2000 – 3000
43	33.9%	1000 - 2000
21	16.5%	500 - 1000
15	11.8%	Under 500
127	100%	

Source: CAD, 4/ALB, 7/6/1, Rates Register, 1885.

Table 5. Profile of Afrikaner farmers in the Klaas Smits (Sterkstroom) District, 1884

KLAAS SMITS FIELD CORNETCY, 1884			
Rural/ urban area	**Nos. of Afrikaner Voters**	**Total No. of Voters**	**% of Afrikaner Voters**
Farming area	99	129	77%
Town of Sterkstroom	33	73	43%
Total	132	202	65%

Source: CAD, CCP 11/1/16, Voters Roll, Electoral division of Queenstown, 1884.

[32] The largest farms had shopkeepers and teachers, such as Frederick Muller (schoolmaster) on Morgenzon and J Squires on Wonderhoek, CAD, CCP 11/1/26, Voters' Roll, 1891

[33] He was associated with Sir Gordon Sprigg, Secretary for Native Affairs in 1893 in the ministry of Cecil John Rhodes and later Secretary for Agriculture. During the Anglo-Boer War he was an advisor of the ill-fated Sir Redvers Buller, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Frost_(politician)

Table 6. Profile of Afrikaner farmers in the Molteno District, 1885

BAMBOESBERG (Ward 7), 1885				LOWER STORMBERG (Ward 6), 1885		
Rural/ urban area	**Nos. of Afrikaner Voters**	**Total No. of Voters**	**% of Afrikaner Voters**	**Nos. of Afrikaner Voters**	**Total No. of Voters**	**% of Afrikaner Voters**
Farming area	170	181	96%	222	257	86%
Town of Molteno	0	56	0%	-----	----	----
Cyphergat	8	53	15%	-----	-----	-----
Total	178	290	61%	222	257	86%

Source: CAD, CCP 11/1/14, Voters Roll, Electoral Division of Albert,1885.

Such settlers, maintains Beinart, "retained close links with a more capitalist, commercial world in the older parts of the colonies or Europe and were not necessarily from an agrarian background".[34] Indeed, Henry Stretton, who had owned a butchery in Port Elizabeth, then moved into farming, expanding northwards and, in 1873, purchasing Buffelsfontein, a farm of 2 000 morgen. Here, he consolidated his holdings further and expanded into other entrepreneurial ventures, such as quarterly trading excursions into Basutoland. This utilisation of a range of resources enabled the family to buy additional land.[35]

Similarly, the Halses grew their capital endeavours. They had originally bought Buffelsfontein at the top of the Penhoek Pass in the north of the Klaas Smits Field Cornetcy but by 1865, they had established themselves on Grootvly in the wetter, eastern part of the Sterkstroom district, which they called Carnarvon.[36] This was a huge farm of 17 500 morgen, far larger than any others in the entire Stormberg region. The nucleus of the estate was started by Fred Halse who drained a massive swamp created by water that collects on the Andriesnek range and created a furrow through the centre. This, as well as three large dams, the largest of which was called 'Colossal', linked with pipes and hydraulic systems and all built on the great mountain basin to the south of the homestead, irrigated the whole of the valley. By the early 1880s, the Halses grew potatoes and wheat, despite hard frosts and a limited growing season, utilised 14 ploughs; ran sheep and cattle, had built a flour mill managed by a 'first class English miller' and established various tree plantations on the estate.[37] They also acquired another 2 000 morgen, which they called Balmoral, echoing their strong ties to

[34]W. Beinart, P. Delius and S. Trapido, (eds.), *Putting a Plough to the Ground, Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa. 1850-1930, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986*, pp. 28-29
[35]Information provided by Sandy Stretton, 25 January 2013
[36]Interview, George Moorecroft, Penhoek Pass, 30 November 2011; newspaper clipping by Lillias Fuller
[37] *The Queenstown Representative*, 22 April 1884

England.[38] In 1885, *The Queeenstown Representative* lauded Fred Halse as a true agriculturalist who understood that agriculture was in its infancy and knew the value of the scientific approach, reporting, "The influence of half a dozen such men in each district in the colony would obviate all hazy and unnecessary protective legislation."[39]

In the 1870s, certain 1820 settler descendants also purchased land in the region utilising capital accumulated by their forebears. These included the Moorcrofts who established the farms of Klipfontein and Droogefontein in the district of Wodehouse and the Brosters who settled on Vlakfontein, a farm of 4 643 morgen. These farmers, who often consolidated their status through marriage, typified the later wave of English settlers occurring in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, referred to by Beinart, who spread through South Africa and "brought with them the ideas for more intensive use of the land." This endorses Beinart's view of the influence of white farmers in the late 19th century that "It is not accurate to equate mining and commercial capital with English-speakers and agrarian with Afrikaners in the Cape."[40] Thus, despite the commonality of farmers' experiences, class divisions were beginning to emerge along ethnic lines and were to be widened over the coming decades.

Farmers' responses to coal and the railway

With the arrival of the railway, the largest element, by far, in Cape government expenditure throughout the period 1880-1910, Britain's major industrial export was transplanted onto the Stormberg's pastoral economy. The Stormberg coal mines supplied the very material that drove that revolution. The landscape was torn up as British capital laid miles of steel across farming land. Both rail and mining brought with them new capitalist relations, accelerated transformation of the mode of production and a greater wage-based, cash economy. Rural isolation was eroded as the railway linked Stormberg farming to the markets of the coastal ports and created new markets for farming in the form of expanding towns, mining and railway camps.[41] However, the coal/railway nexus also had a negative impact on the agrarian sector by introducing a competitive and threatening mercantile sector, greater stock theft and increasing class stratification.

The immediate impact of this industrial and mining capital was the potential increase of property values. Thus, as mentioned in Chapter 2, farmers with coal reefs running through

[38] *The Queenstown Representative,* 11 March 1884
[39] Ibid., 23 January 1885
[40] W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa* . p. 19
[41] A. Colas, *Empire: Key Concepts*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007, p. 100

their land either mined the land themselves or leased it to mining companies or individual coal contractors. Also, property owners could exploit land values by advertising their farms on the basis of their proximity to the railway line.[42] Others, whose land the railway traversed, presumably made money by selling or leasing sections of their land at higher prices directly to the railways.[43] However, in general, given the recession and the drought, renting of farms in the mid 1880s in the Stormberg was about 30% lower than normal, and between 1883 and 1889, the value of land seemed to merely fluctuate, with only the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company's land escalating in value.[44] However, in September 1889, the railway was reported as "advancing the price of property all along the line."

The railway also moved more wool in greater volumes and more quickly than the lumbering wagon trains piled high with bales of coal and wool that used to head out of the Stormberg to Queenstown and East London.[45] Beinart maintains that in the 1870s around 40 million lbs of wool was usually exported annually and probably involved 10 000 wagon journeys of greatly differing lengths some taking weeks, and requiring at least 16 oxen each.[46] However, despite an absence of statistical evidence denoting bales of wool exported specifically from the Stormberg, there was a notable increase in wool production from 1885 which is the time the railways had reached the Stormberg, Aliwal North, Burgersdorp and Kimberley. Although Beinart suggests that a correlation between falling wool prices and increased production may have been because farmers tried to produce more in order to pay interest on debts and to maintain their standard of living, increased production may also have had something to do with the speedier facility of rail.[47]

From the outset of railway transport, farmers moved cattle to the Republics to the north and to the coastal ports by train instead of relying on the arduous cattle drives and Queenstown enjoyed a large increase of cattle traffic from 1892.[48] As the veld around Sterkstroom was good for rearing all kinds of stock, a considerable business was done in this connection with

[42] *The Queenstown Representative,*12 March 1886
[43] As happened in Umzimkulu around 1914, NMMU, Report of the Native Land Commission, 1916, UG 22-1914
[44] *The Queenstown Representative*, 4 April 1884; CAD, 4/ALB 7/6/1, Rates Register, 1883-1889
[45] D.Pirie, "Slaughter by Steam : Railway Subjugation of Ox-wagon Transport in the Eastern Cape and Transkei, 1886-1910", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 26 (1993), p. 322; A.Mabin, *The Confidence of the whole Country*, August 1887, p 219
[46] W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation*, p. 149
[47] Ibid., p. 23
[48] CAD, 3/ QTN, 1/1/4/2, Indexes to Council Minutes, 6 October 1892; *The Queenstown Representative*, 13 January 1897

both the Cape Town and the Johannesburg butchers assisted by the railway.[49] The Bailie and the Wessels families were two key farming families involved in stock speculation and Henry Bailie was also a buyer of horses for government requirements.[50] Jurie Wessels and his brother John were also well to do farmer-speculators conducting a profitable business supplying livestock to Cape Town butchers.[51] Similarly, well established farmers, such as the Halse brothers of Carnarvon who ran a functioning flour mill for local farmers, were now able to exploit the facility of the railway line by advertising quick delivery of flour within the region via the Sterkstroom station.[52] The railway also tended to assist in the diversification of crops, easier importing of machinery and stock feed and thus diminished the need for trekking. It helped in the location of water sources. Government Notice no 819 of 1893 announced the free supply by rail of government water drills and a supervisory foreman for farmers to drill up to three water holes.[53]

The advent of coal and the development of towns had given a great impetus to transport riding and for most of the decade, despite the advent of the railway, wagonning continued to supply haulage. Beinart points out that as early as the mid nineteenth century, problems in sheep farming persuaded a number of farmers and especially their sons to turn to wagon transport.[54] For a time, *kurveyors* (wagon drivers) were placed in a competitive position because rates charged by the eastern railway were about double those of *kurveyors* and because there were also lengthy train delays.[55] The Stormberg mines sent trains of wagons filled with coal to all the neighbouring towns, travelling as far as Cradock and Kimberley, while the need for wagon riding led to an added demand for black and mixed race labour - as leaders, drivers and even independent contractors.[56] Wagons were also used to transport goods between farms and stations and to and from rail heads. By mid-1886, the wagon trade was doing well, partly because they were undercutting the railway rates, but also because "they have never had such a time of prosperity in the last 10 years as they are having now, the

[49] Standard Bank Archives, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 11 October 1898
[50] Ibid., 11 Oct, 1898;Ibid., Liabilities List, Sterkstroom, 26 August 1897
[51] Ibid., Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 11 October 1898
[52] *The Queenstown Representative,* 18 April 1884
[53] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 5 September 1893
[54] W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation*, p. 149.
[55] *The Queenstown Representative,* 8 December 1885
[56] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 19; In 1886,the increase of wagon traffic going from the Stormberg coal mines to Middleburg station was such that the Civil Commissioner believed that large outspans, such as the one in the Stormberg between Boskop and Klipdrift farms, should be retained for wagons when the StormbergSpruit became impassable, CAD, LND 1/238, Ref. L 232, Disposal of Abandoned Outspans, Letter, Civicl commissioner to Surveyor General's Office, 1886; S. van der Horst, *Native Labour in South Africa,* Frank Cass and Co., London, 1971, p.87; *The Queenstown Representative,* 4 September 1885

crops are doing well and the farmers probably think that as they have the wagon and the staff they might as well use them."[57] Wagons were also soon conveying horses and oxen, fodder and food stuffs to the markets of the wealthy Rand. Others responded to the new opportunities by mining coal, hiring out wagons, selling or training oxen or building shops for passing wagons on their farms.

Figure 19. Bales of wool on wagon in main street, Molteno



Klektoring en wa

Clock tower and wagon

Source. A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, Molteno, Bamboesberg-Uitgewers, 1964, p.6

[57] *The Queenstown Representative,* 2 April 1886

The railway, as Beinart has pointed out, also allowed progressive farmers to build relationships of power, authority and trade into their investment in farming activities.[58] One such farmer, Stefanus Fouche from Boshoffskraal, who was situated on top of the Stormberg escarpment, built the road down Stapelbergskloof to Halseton station so that he could load his produce on to the train.[59] Edward Halse, likewise, saw rail 'as a thing that would sort this country out' and followed this principle by building political relationships and lobbying in Cape Town for the rail to go through Sterkstroom.[60] He later also worked for the extension of the railway from Indwe to Natal.[61] However, his agenda was also personal in that a number of important farms, including his own, converged at a point that would profit greatly by a rail head rather than by wagon cartage. It was in this way that the Halseton and Hazelmere stations were established.[62] The Halse brothers, like Vice and the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, also saw the financial potential of a plantation, partly to service the railways and mines, but also for the general market and went in for it on a large scale aiming for 300 000 trees in 1894.[63]

Perhaps the industrial capital of the area played no small part in drawing the immigration of English farmers to the area from the south. The great suitability of the district for farming which maintained its vaue at 25s to 30s per morgen, in spite of bad seasons, was obviously a key reason.[64] However, in 1891, farms in the locality of Sterkstroom were described as valuable and productive, in that "of late several enterprising English farmers have come into settle – an element necessary to urge the old Afrikaner inhabitants forward".[65] These came from Alice, Adelaide and Bedford.[66] Some, such as coal proprietors like the Gregory family from Molteno and the Hillhouse family from Indwe bought land and changed to farming.

Spurred on by the progress of the region and possibly in anticipation of the proposed railway connections to Indwe and Middleburg, the Halse family launched the Tennyson Settlement scheme, consisting of 25 immigrant English families, on their farm, Carnarvon. This was partly to develop their large landholdings, especially given the proximity of rail and coal.

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[58] W. Beinart, P. Delius and S. Trapido, (eds.), *Putting a Plough to the Ground*, p. 28
[59] Interview, Paul Mortlock, Penhoek Pass, July 2008, 30 November 2011
[60] When Rhodes started building the Matopos dam he offered the contract to the Halses, *The Sterkstroom Budget*, 1 April 1899
[61] *The Albert Times*, 21 August 1898
[62] Interview, Sean Bryant, Carnarvon, 2 October 2009
[63] *The Albert Times*, 11 July, 26 September 1894; The Under Secretary for Agriculture instituted a government tree planting competition in July, 1895, Ibid., 1 April 1896
[64] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Molteno, 5 October 1893
[65] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 2 January 1891
[66] SBA, INSP, 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, Molteno, 5 October 1893, 16 August 1894

However, given the high altitude and extreme cold of the Andriesbergen region, it was also to address the desperate shortage of labour since they were dependent on seasonal, transhumant sheep shearers from Swartwater in the Transkei.[67] It was also partly to address the fact that agricultural development depended on attracting a greater agricultural population as few countries were as sparsely populated as 19th century South Africa.[68] Such a notion dovetailed with the spirit of late nineteenth century immigration schemes whereby the British government, often in collaboration with private philanthropists, organised bulk emigration in order to relieve population pressure in the growing slums of Britain. The Wolseley Settlement of 1886 was an earlier example whereby 20 Scottish families were settled on a piece of land near Berlin just north of East London. However, it had failed by mid 1889 as many of the settlers did not want to work, the majority succumbed to drink and others left for the gold fields.[69] Arnold White, the British representative for this scheme, then turned his attention to Carnarvon, keen to implement lessons learned from the Wolseley experiment. Significantly, both schemes were situated close to the main East London-Molteno railway, the further trajectory of which the progressive Halse brothers were very conscious.[70]

The settlement scheme was established by the English Country Colonisation Association and in July 1888, Arnold White arrived with a contingent of 25 agricultural labourers and their families from Hampshire, comprising 176 men, women and children in total.[71] Passage and transport, rations for six months and sufficient implements and stock to cultivate their allotments were to be ultimately repaid to White at 5% interest by the settlers. Each fairly large settler family rented a small, cramped cottage with a small piece of garden with no possibility of purchase and no storage for stock or grain. They were to work 3000 acres of pasture and 50 acres each of irrigated, arable allotments (38 acres of ordinary soil and 13 acres of rich black vlei), totalling 1300 acres and divided from Carnarvon by substantial stone walls.[72] This was to be free for two years after which they had to pay Halse just under £20 per year or 7s 6d an acre. If the Indwe-Sterkstroom line was built, bringing the railway closer to

[67]Here, it is above 4500 feet (the acacia Karoo is below) and very, very dry necessitating supplementary feed, and minus 16 degrees in winter, Interview, Sean Bryant, 2 October 2009
[68]*The Queenstown Representative,* 13 August, 28 May 1886
[69]*The Queenstown Free Press,* 23 April 1889.
[70] Interview, Sean Bryant, 2 October 2009
[71] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 5 April 1889; Bryant thought they were from Somerset, but Hampshire is frequently cited in web sites such as http://www.rootschat.com/forum/index.php/topic,528457.10.html, which refers to a more creditable source, The Sheffield & Rotherham Independent (Sheffield, England), Friday, June 22, 1888, p. 5, Issue 10549. 19th Century British Library Newspapers: Part II; *The Queenstown Representative*, 27 July 1888
[72] *The Queenstown Representative*, 11 October 1887

Carnarvon, they would have to pay 12s 6d per acre. Spiritual attention, schooling, children's clothing, management, and for the first year or two, medicine, nursing and midwifery were provided. Settlers would also be assisted to leave as long as they had paid back what they owed and would be replaced by others from England.[73] As early as August, White proclaimed himself to be so happy with the arrangements at the settlement that he planned to remove remaining settlers from the Wolseley settlement and bring them up to Carnarvon.[74]

But by December 1888, problems were already rife with the Halses themselves condemning the settlers as a 'worthless set of lazy blackguards'.[75] *The Queenstown Free Press* confirmed that there were many very bitter complaints appearing in *The Frontier Guardian* from settlers which, if true would give a death knell to future immigration schemes. Promises regarding certain farm stock, for example, had not materialized, their holdings were very small, they had no means of buying oxen and cows to begin farm life on their own and a number of settlers had left and more were preparing to leave: "sundry brushes have taken place, and matters are on the whole lively. The settlement is… very unsettled."[76] One settler, Charles Wyatt, although a destitute according to the Poor Law authorities in Hampshire, opportunely wrote to the paper: "I must throw myself on the country because rations have been stopped and inducements have been made to induce people to leave their comfortable homes and come out to this worthless land."[77] White, however, stated that it was on account of bad crops and the exciting prospects of gold on the Rand that had seduced some of the settlers 'to forsake the plough for the pen' and write to the press complaining of shortages.[78]

However, by February 1889, although the numbers had dropped to 13 families, a sufficient number, it was claimed, were on their way to fill up the other cottages, making 200 individuals altogether. By the end of 1889, and pre-empting Rhodes' plans in the early 1890s, White was instrumental in trying to raise funds in Britain for a syndicate to buy the Indwe coal mines and build the railway to Queenstown. However, despite the claims of success, the settlement was taken over by the Church Army Executive in 1893 with only about six or seven families remaining, of whom two had nearly always been employed on the farm and another whose income as bailiff supplemented his farming. A number of those who left,

[73] *The Queenstown Free Press*, Letter from White to Mr Bell, 5 April 1889
[74]Ibid.,10 August 1888
[75]Halse diary, 29 December 1888, cited in Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation*, p. 165
[76]*The Queenstown Free Press*, 11 January, 9 April 1889
[77] Ibid., 5 April 1889
[78] Ibid.

found work as artisans, mechanics or domestics in the towns.[79] Thus, although the Indwe line was to join up with Sterkstroom in the very near future, the visionary Tennyson scheme was undermined by the difficulties of farming in the Andriesbergen and the limitations imposed by Halse.

Increasing social stratification due to the railway

However, not all the benefits of the railway encouraged optimism. The railway, itself, suffered from innate deficiencies: trains were slow due to the close spacing of some stations; for example, within a 20 kilometre distance were situated the stations of Cyphergat, Molteno, Stormberg, the Contat, Fairview and Penshaw mines. Lengthy hauls were also caused by the single-line railway and hilly topography of Bushmanshoek.[80] Miserable rail service also hampered trade in the region. Frederick Schermbrucker wrote to the local press about the gross mismanagement and inefficiency of the eastern line claiming that goods going from King Williams Town to East London first went to Aliwal North and then back and trains even stopped in the veldt so that employees could shoot springbok. The 'criminal incompetency' of the Cape Government Railways meant that the revenue got by the railway was being paid out in damages and affecting the commerce of the region.[81]

More importantly, as early as 1885, capitalisation brought by the railway was rapidly changing the basis of trade in the region. Since South African farming could not "attract substantial capital from industrialized areas" as in America, it remained a net importer of foodstuffs. Now, the more rapid delivery of imports, such as cheaper and better overseas wheat to the Stormberg, further modified the fortunes of local farmers. Also, those that relied on imported wheat when the local crop failed found the rail rates too high.[82] Similarly, agriculture generally evinced a tardy response even to the stimulus of the discovery of gold on the Rand. [83]

The extension of credit to farmers was no longer as easily available from merchants. Terms of trade were established, which tended to undermine farmers' economic base and create hostility. While *The Queenstown Representative* opined that the railway had brought rural Boer and urban Brit closer together, many Afrikaner farmers were critical of it due to the

[79] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 26 January 1892; 17 January 1893
[80] D. Pirie, 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 19, No.4, December 1993, p. 720; in fact there had already been some adjustment to the gradient in the 1880s
[81] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 21, 28 March 1893
[82] *The Albert Times*, 7 March 1894
[83] C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, pp. 111-112

structural changes in the mode of exchange.[84] The paper reported that: "The railway is revolutionizing local commerce because the farmers used to get a lot of credit from merchants who used to take a big interest in the form of feathers and wool. Now the railway delivers things fast and in better condition than the wagons."[85] The Standard Bank also reported:

> 'By the extension of Railways, Telegraphs and Postal facilities, a material change has occurred in the system of transacting business. The long terms of credit previously in vogue have been materially reduced, and business now is more on a cash basis. In proof of this…. in December 1881, the amount of Bills under Discount by all the Banks in the Colony was £10 000 000, whereas at the close of last half-year, they were only £4 600 000.' [86]

As more small farmers were being affected by capitalisation and the changing terms of credit, many were unable to pay quitrent, a system which *The Queenstown Representative* criticised as nothing more than a tax on capital and really 'problematic for the native or the small farmer'.[87] Macmillan has also pointed out how the potential of land had made the raising of bonds too easy.[88] These developments were the tipping point for many smaller farmers causing increasing class differentiation. Now many bywoners, desperately hoping to retain their small share of land, drew closer to the *dorps*, either taking jobs on road parties, peddling, transport riding, cab-hiring in the villages, or working at a neighbouring railway station or siding.[89] Ironically, the railway was both a cause and a solution, in that it was a preferred wage paying option:

> 'Though unskilled work on the railways is evidently a poor affair it does offer some chance of a rise… they prefer the chance of the railways to such offers as there are of work on the farms where wages seem to range, with a house of some sort, and possibly also with food, or some food, from 1s 6d or 2s to 5s a day.'[90]

Indeed, from the beginning of railway construction, Pirie shows that the railway had employed whites (including navvies from overseas) who formed about a quarter to one third of the total labour force. The employment of whites addressed fluctuations in the black labour supply and kept black wages down. Also it helped whites who became unemployed and impoverished during drought and depression. White wages were double that of black gangers who also utilised seasonal work on the farms. With the increase of the 'poor white' problem, official enquiries were made about employing more whites but, from the 1890s, the Cape

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[84]*The Queenstown Representative,* 24 March 1885
[85]Ibid., 24 March 1885
[86]A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, 6 August 1890, p. 279
[87]*The Queenstown Representative*, 4 August 1885
[88] W. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem*, p. 63
[89]Ibid., p. 48
[90]Ibid.

Government Railways were reluctant to do so as whites objected to working alongside blacks. Also, very often these whites were socially undesireable characters. The General Manager also stated he was disinclined to provide relief work for people on the basis of colour. After the devastation of the Rinderpest, the railways was still reluctant to employ whites as experience on the Graaff Reinet lines as well as in the East London and Indwe districts continued to show that they were inept. Similarly in 1899, a government request that whites from Barkly West be employed on the Queenstown Tarka line was met with opposition, with the Railway Engineer at Queenstown complaining that they were undisciplined, lazy and unwilling to occupy the lowest jobs. He would prefer not to have anything to do with them.[91]

It was only after the advent of the Indigency Commission (1906-1908), when a distinction was made between indolent navvies and local whites, was there a switch in attitude to local whites. By the end of 1908, the Central South African Railways had made big strides in its white employment policy and by September 1909, it was employing some 500 white railway workers.[92] Also, as the railway undermined trasnsport riding, an increasing number of whites would come to the railway for employment.[93] Over the next eight decades, the railway was to ameliorate poverty, revolutionising work, bringing many into harsh forms of wage labour for the first time and sustaining small towns like Sterkstroom.

However, many small villages also appeared at sidings or stations along the tracks, at first no more than base camps for construction gangers whose cottages were situated about five miles apart. Transkeians working on the line also occupied such huts or temporary shacks. Concerned about the isolation of whites in the veld, Father Simeon, the diocesan Missioner attached to the Grahamstown Cathedral from 1884-1892, established a railway mission in an attempt to cater for the scattered Anglican families living in these remote rural areas. He ministered along some 1000 miles of rail, making quarterly journeys by railway trolley, and covering about 32 miles per day.[94]

Yet, the railway finally undermined the creative alternative of transport riding utilised by small-time farmers. The colonial government firstly attempted unsuccessfully to introduce a

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[91] D Pirie, "White Railway Labour in South Africa, 1873-1924" in R. Morrell, (ed.), *White but Poor. Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880-1940,* Pretoria, Unisa, 1992, pp. 102-103
[92] Ibid., p. 105, p. 107
[93] Ibid., p. 108
[94] Rhodes University, Cory Library, BRN 144209, MS 18 437, Folder 1 of 1, 'A Century of Witness', Steynsburg, 1983-1992

tax on *kurveyors* to reduce their competition with the railways, much to the outrage of the Queenstown Chamber of Commerce.[95] However, proponents of agrarian development offered the mantra that was to be heard regularly in the coming decades: "The railway is a good thing …everybody agrees that if the bone and sinew applied to transport riding was invested in farming, it would be better for the colony."[96] Not only this, but ox wagon transport was also identified as a major cause of stock disease. By the early 1890s, wagon riding was dying down and roads were emptying of traffic, partly due to the railways but probably also because of the prevailing drought which compromised weakened oxen. Also some mines had organised their own sidings.[97] Ultimately, wagoners were largely superseded by the railway after it penetrated to the Rand in 1892 and after the Cape Government Railways and Cape politicians successfully manipulated transport riders out of existence.[98] Whereas at one time, one wagon load to Kimberly paid the rent of a *kurveyor,* now the railways took away that opportunity and indebtedness followed.[99]

Thus, as early as 1893, a variety of struggling farmers are in evidence. Some, such as the three Aucamp brothers for example, owned very small portions of Klapkloof, consisting of 370 and 340 morgen. Some owned farms that were heavily bonded, while some were merely waiting to inherit. Many tenant farmers who hired whole farms while others hired and sub-let.[100] A number of *bywoners* merely occupied a space on a farm in exchange for labour or crops. Some of the latter may have been non-paying if they were relatives. Numerous farmers sowed on the halves in Sterkstroom. Some of these had property in the town, but also worked land on the halves.[101] Ernest de Bruin worked lands on the halves for Richard Bailie while owning stock worth £500.[102] Another group, who farmed on the halves, only had assets totalling between £100 and £150.

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[95]*The Queenstown Free Press,* 15 March 1887
[96]Ibid., 28 May 1886; A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 321; *The Queenstown Representative*, 11 April 1884
[97]Ibid., 3 March 1891
[98]Keegan shows that transport riding finally died in the OFS in the 1930s with the advent of the motor lorry, T. Keegan, *Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa: The Southern Highveld to 1914*, Johannesburg, 1986, p**.** 36
[99] *The Sterkstroom Budget*, 20 July 1899
[100] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 5 October 1893
[101] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, Sterkstroom, 1 October 1895
[102] Ibid., 11 October 1898

The struggles of smaller farmers are also revealed in court records, many of which include contestation by black or coloured sharecroppers.[103] These struggles not only consisted of the daily grind around access to water resources, diminishing returns and partial reliance on barter, but also of contestation and legitmation of predominantly informal agreements. As Beinart has pointed out, white owned farms became, like the towns, a microcosm of class interaction where, often, contested tenure led to resistance by labour about the terms of tenancy.[104]

Contention often arose, for example, over boundaries between farmers and sharecroppers, especially when surface water dried up. Cattle would encroach on nearby farms and be impounded or claims for cattle losses arose when lack of water supposedly caused from "dik keel". In the absence of written agreements, fair judgements were difficult to ascertain.[105] Struggling lessees were further undermined by poorer sub-tenants when they failed to pay rent.[106]

Perhaps indicative of the undercurrent of agrarian racial tensions, the Molteno Court house was crowded with white and black farmers in November 1897, to hear the civil case between Maart versus Dirk Coetzee.[107] Maart worked partly at the mines at Molteno, but also hired ground from Coetzee on his farm Groenvlei for the sowing of wheat and for the grazing of his stock. According to Maart.s children, who worked as shepherds for both parties, Coetzee had reputedly let his sheep graze on Maart's wheat fields destroying the crop. However, Coetzee countered that Maart had not cleaned the furrow which led water from a natural fountain onto all the lands causing the failure of his crop, while white neighbours also testified in support of Coetzee. Maart finally lost the case. [108]

However, coal capital, especially in terms of its stimulus in the growth of towns and trade, played an albeit indirect role in further undermining the class position of small white farmers, for many of whom, the availability of cash was only intermittent.[109] Historically earlier systems of exchange, such as barter, were still drawn upon even in an urban, commercial context. Gert Bouwer, who lived on his father's farm, Zeekoegat, traded hamel skins and

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[103] J Meintjes maintained that come sharecroppers became very wealthy with their flocks of animals and, without offering an explanation, claims that this became quite a problem for their masters, J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 15
[104] W. Beinart, P. Delius and S. Trapido, (eds.), *Putting a Plough to the Ground*, p. 45
[105] CAD, I/MTO 2/1/3, Civil Records, File 45, Petrus Jansen Greyling vs Stuurman, 16 March 1896
[106] Ibid., File 24, 10 February 1896; CAD, 1/MTO, 2/1/4, Civil Cases, File 26, March 1897
[107] *The Albert Times*, 10 November 1897
[108] CAD, 1/MTO 2/1/4, Civil Cases, File 73, Maart vs Dirk Coetzee, 8 November 1897
[109] CAD, AG 3487 Part 1, Preliminary Examinations, High Treason, 1900-1905

butter at Paul Rorich's *Algemeene Handelaar* over a six month period in 1893. This was for a range of basic necessities, medicines, bundles of forage as well as accommodation and meals in Anna Rorich's boarding establishment. However, farmers such as Bouwer were at an immediate disadvantage with merchant capital given the higher prices of manufactured goods, their easy access to credit, receiving lesser payments for their products if they bought on credit and, in Bouwer's case, some tendency to spending on unnecessary luxuries. Such farmers were further undermined by their disinclination to keep records, as did shopkeepers. By the time of litigation, Bouwer had accrued a debt of over £20.[110]

Barter was also used to pay for the services of a 'water pointer' to identify the presence of fountains, even by well-to-do, progressive farmers like Johannes Vermaak, who farmed on Zuurfontein. He hired Jacobus Nel, also a farmer on Zuurfontein and 'water pointer' of 40 years standing.[111] Payment was partly by a cash advance and partly in kind on completion of the job. The detailed conflict revealed by the court documents between Vermaak and Nel over Nel's lack of delivery reveals clues to the minimal transformation of farming, despite the advent of mining and railway development in the region: the search for water, the district's reliance on one overworked, ageing water pointer, the disappointment and waste of resources when water was not found and the retention of barter.[112]

Thus, manifestly visible in the mid 1890s, was the increasing pattern of class differentiation. It is impossible to prove to what extent it had to do with either the effects of coal mining and rail in the area, ecological issues, the subdivision of farms and overgrazing or the continued drought from 1893 to 1898. Nevertheless, during this period, a number of farmers became insolvent.[113] In 1896, the Bank reported: "Farming prospects are rather better than they have been for several years. But even now, the smaller class of farmers speaks somewhat despondently of the future".[114] Those with very little land left sold up, some to trek to marginal regions, such as Griqualand West, or areas across the Orange River.[115] By 1897, the

[110]CAD, 1/ MTO, 2/1/1, Civil Cases, File 117, 11 October 1894
[111] CAD, 4/ALB, 7/6/1, Divisional Council, Albert; Vermaak is identified as progressive because he supported the Scab Act, see Report of the Scab Commission, 1892-4, pp. 433; he also ran between 2000 to 3000 sheep on his farm and on 1240 morgen of an adjacent farm; CAD, 1/MTO 2/1/1, File 155, 22 November 1894
[112] CAD, 1/MTO 2/1/1, File 156, 11 October 1894, File 155, 22 November 1894
[113]CAD, I/MTO, 2/1/3 Civil Records, File 29, 1896
[114] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 31 August 1896
[115] *The Albert Times*, 8 May 1895,15 April 1896; W. Beinart and P. Coates, *Environment and History. The Taming of Nature in the USA and South Africa*, London, Routledge, 1995, p. 27

press reported that a number of Afrikaner farmers, even good farmers, in the district were planning to emigrate to Rhodesia.[116]

At the same time, questions about the root causes of poverty were being asked. As Macmillan pointed out, by the 1890s, evidence emerged that all was not well in the Cape and there was a serious consciousness that poverty "could be due to anything more than vice and laziness".[117] In England, in the early 1800s, a distinction had arisen between poverty derived from economic misfortune and indigence or pauperism, resulting from a sense of dependence or indolence. This developed into a moralistic separation between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. Yet Van Heyningen demonstrates that in the Cape these concepts were not yet embodied in colonial government legislation, which only made provision for the sick poor.[118] So too, the Queenstown English press deemed alcohol and laziness to be major causative factors of poverty worsened by the *Bovenland Togt gangers*, or roving wagon canteens. These *gangers* sold liquor all over the Eastern Province without a licence, but yet were protected by law.[119] But the paper recognised that drink was as much an effect as it was a cause and that the Afrikaner Reformed Church was to be blamed for doing nothing about it. In a flourish of imperial chauvinism, the paper offered 'the real reasons' for degeneration:

> 'the dispersal of these people, the resulting isolation from progressive forces, lack of education and 'adherence to the Taal'. The order of the universe is progress and those that fall back are asking for trouble and savagery. The maintenance of the life and thought of Europe is the only way. Ties with Holland are all but gone, but the ties with the Mother country of English must be looked to.'[120]

However, many joined the ranks of the poor in the towns where debt, crime and familial disintegration were becoming evident. An increase in household and petty shop thefts occurred. In Burgersdorp, two white women were involved in a sensational case about theft and two other whites were charged with stealing from the house of the prominent Dr Kannemeyer.[121] In May 1898, the problem of white poverty was severe enough to induce the government to send 150 bags of imported wheat seed for distribution by landowners to poor whites across the six wards of the Albert district. This was repayable by recipients, for which landowners had to stand surety.[122] In Sterkstroom, the Afrikaner Reformed Church

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[116] *The Albert Times*, 24 November 1897
[117] W.M. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem*, p.8
[118] E. Van Heyningen, "Poverty, Self-Help and Community: The Survival of the Poor in Cape Town, 1880-1910", *South African Historical Journal*, 24, 1991, p. 128
[119] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 7 February 1893
[120] Ibid., 3 March 1893
[121] *The Albert Times*, 15 June 1898, 25 March 1896
[122] Ibid., 4 May 1898

authorities, who acquired capital of £5 000 by selling their rights to the town land to the new Municipality in 1898, attempted to help by offering assistance to indebted whites on more favourable terms of 5%.[123]

Concomitant with poor whiteism was the disintegration of families. The Carnegie Commission showed that the railway, ironically, became the means by which severely impoverished *bywoners,* who had previously no way of leaving the district could now escape to the towns or the Rand mines and may thus have contributed to the steady stream of destitute children advertised in the local press.[124] The 'solution' for dealing with such children was indentureship. A proclamation in 1812, mainly targeting the children of conquered communities, had allowed farmers to apprentice children for 10 years from the age of eight. In 1819, apprenticeship was extended to orphans and deserted children. In 1841, the first Masters and Servants Act extended the period of indentureship until the age of 21 years. With the growth of poor whiteism and black proletarianisation, the numbers of children escalated.[125] However, Act 15 of 1856, an amendment to the 1841 Act, reduced the possibility of being fined for the illegal detention of a juvenile, making indentureship easier. The status of destitute children was the same as that of juvenile offenders who, in terms of Act 8 of 1889, were also put into service.[126] Thus legislation for destitute or juvenile offenders was geared to providing labour rather than the future of children.

Given that schooling was not compulsory - nor practical - for farmers in remote, rural areas where children were needed as labour, the origins of the Act's brutal logic are clear. Ten year old William Botha, the son of a Afrikaner farmer on Carnarvon, for example, was brought into the Resident Magistrate's office in 1886 'in a state of destitution' by Stephanus Schutte, a farmer from Donkerhoek near Sterkstroom. If he was not claimed by 'someone fit and proper' he would be indentured to Schutte in terms of the Act.[127] In 1887, four white children, Thomas, Roger, Charles and Robert Lamb aged 12, 10, eight and six respectively, were also left destitute with the Magistrate. Their father Roger Winx Lamb, on departing for the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek, perhaps to seek his fortune at the goldfields, left Roger and

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[123] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 26 August 1899

[124] J.F.W. Grosskopf, *The Poor White Problem in South Africa, Report of the Carnegie Commission, Part 1. Economic Report: Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus*, Stellenbosch; Pro-Ecclesia-Drukkery, 1932, p. 8

[125] L. Chisholm, "The Pedagogy of Porter: The Origins of the Reformatory in the Cape Colony, 1882-1910", University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute, African Studies Seminar Paper, April 1885, pp. 5-6

[126] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 3 May 1892; Chisholm shows that the many of the smaller villages in the Cape contributed inmates to the Porter Reformatory in Cape Town, p. 6

[127] *The Queenstown Representative*, 23 February 1886

Thomas with Susannah Dreyer of Klaas Smits River, and Charles and Robert with Johannes Botha of Easterstead. They were also to be indentured if no one claimed them.[128] Even unclaimed babies could be committed to years of indentureship. A six months old child born to Margaret Landy living at a railway cottage in Sterkstroom was neglected and eventually abandoned by her. It was taken over by a Mr Klemp. Despite the child's age, it was advertised as destitute and put up for apprenticeship to Klemp.[129]

Coal, farming, labour shortage and the perennial issue of stock theft

One of the most significant social effects of coal capital was experienced in the tensions between the tightly related sectors of farming, the railways and the mines, and manifested mainly in terms of relations between white employers and black labour. Whereas mining undeniably brought more investment and spending power to the region, farmers were often opposed to it because they believed that the large mining population and railway workers were the cause of their labour shortage as well as being the source of the twin evils of drinking and stock theft. More extremist Boer farmers were against capitalist development itself.

Farmers complained of loss of labour to the better paying mines, yet farm labourers were usually only paid in stock, food or grazing, the alternative being payment of 10s a month and some rations of maize flour. Blacks from the Transkei would therefore prefer the higher wages to be got on the diamond, gold mines, railways and public works or the Stormberg coal mines.[130] As Bundy has shown, gold mining also offered good market opportunities from black farmers enabling their avoidance of the labour market.[131] The erraticism of labour sometimes exposed the rabid racism of employers, such as Halse who outlined his political manifesto for his candidature for the House of Assembly against Stretton.[132] With political ties to Rhodes, Halse's vision for South Africa was similarly to secure a cheap and regular supply of labour by strong legislation. He thus advocated the adoption of the Glen Grey Act to every black area in South Africa and the doubling of the hut tax. He also wanted Field Cornets and Justices of the Peace to be allowed to try and punish servants for desertion or for refusal to work. This would prevent the inconvenience of farmers having to travel great distances to courts. This would not encourage unbridled cruelty on the part of farmers, he

[128] *The Queenstown Free Press,* 24 March 1891
[129] Ibid., 24 May 1892
[130] NMMU, G3-'94, Report of the Labour Commission, 1893-4, Vol 3, pp. 198-199
[131] C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South |African Peasantry,* p. 114
[132] *The Albert Times,* 16 June 1897

believed, because cruel farmers would be avoided. If his views were somewhat severe, he believed they were the views of all farmers in South Africa since:

> 'What has education and religion done for them [natives] up to the present time? It is said with some degree of truth that every coloured woman who wears stockings and goes to church is a prostitute and that every civilized native man is a rogue and a drunkard. I say that life is too short to educate and Christianize the native. We must leave this work to future generations and in the meantime try to teach the noble savage the dignity of labour. At present the mass of our natives work about one month out of the twelve. The rest of the time they put (sic) in some native location sleeping during the day and indulging in beer drinks at night. Naturally the native labour supply is a most fickle quantity. When they have a bad season in Kaffirland and food is scarce they are compelled to seek work and their services are then expensive, on account of the high prices of grain and mealies. In good seasons when servants are the most required, the noble native remains at home.'[133]

However, the biggest effect of the coal mines on farming was seen to be an increase of stock theft, which had always been a factor in inter-group relations in rural areas. The absence of legislative compulsion or compounds resulted in a large percentage of squatters whose relative independence allowed them to work the times they chose, namely from 10 pm until midnight or 1am. Thus, mine owners were forced to retain high numbers on their property in order to meet production orders. This, however, left a lot of time for recreation and drinking, which reduced the propensity for work. Approximately 2 000 'miners'also squatted on farms in between stints of work in the camps, disinclined to take lower wages on the farms and reputedly indulging in stock theft.[134] This was exacerbated by the congregation of crowds of unemployed people around the camps which included women who served as wives and cooks. The close proximity of the mines also provided a retreat for thieves.[135]

The autonomy of squatting, according to Crais, was a form of resistance which had increased since the 1840s as attempts at settler control intensified and could be seen as a rejection of primitive accumulation and colonisation.[136] Related to this, but without giving further elaboration or his source, Meintjes tantalisingly refers to labour camps on the farms taking on a 'dimension of restlessness'.[137] However, if squatting represented resistance to unequal agrarian relations, stock theft took a more militant form. According to Japie Coetzee, whose family farm was close to the Cape Collieries, stock had to be chased into the kraals every afternoon and the 'boys' had to guard the animals every night while sitting on the walls of the

[133] *The Albert Times*, 27 January 1897
[134]Ibid., 21 February 1894
[135] CAD, CO 4272, M67, Petition from Farmers Requesting a Larger Police Force, 19 November 1890
[136]C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865*, Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 1992 , pp. 147-149
[137]J Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 15

kraals armed with rifles to keep an eye on potential thieves emerging from the mines.[138] More radical resistance was indicated when some sheep were destroyed in 'an act of wanton mischief' when Klein Lombard found two of his sheep lying with their throats cut. "How is this aptitude for destruction, on the part of the ungrateful native, to be accounted for?" asked the perplexed Sterkstroom correspondent.[139]

At a political meeting in Barkly East, Sydney Moorecroft, a political candidate for Wodehouse to the House of Assembly, singled out the railway works as the major cause of stock theft. Rejecting the timid policy of the colonial government, he advocated direct master-on-servant punishment:

> 'I am not against railways, but against the reckless way they are being worked. A great deal of stock-stealing takes place in the vicinity of Railway extension works … but nothing was done to protect the farmer, who was undoubtedly the backbone of the colony. If a Kaffir breaks into my stable and steals my horse, Plunger, or cuts the shoulder off an imported ram, he gets one or two years imprisonment with hard labour which means good living and gentle exercise: he goes to gaol thin and poor, but comes out fat and sleek. I am not an advocate for long sentences. Stock-stealing must be suppressed, and the only way to put it down was [sic] with the lash: and I am convinced from long experience that if native servants are punished by their masters they are all the better for it in the end.'[140]

Moorecroft's blatant advocacy of political oppression elicited the following irate response from September Bekenzie at Emacubeni in Glen Grey:

> 'Mr Moorecroft seems to think that most, if not all, natives are thieves; that to prevent their thieving propensities more stringent pass laws should be passed, and that to flog a native is better than imprisoning him. The pass laws have become a failure, and it is now pretty well acknowledged by all unprejudiced minds that these laws, instead of debarring the stock stealers, have proved to be quite the reverse, and that they are a grievous and oppression [sic] to the more enlightened of the native community. He (Mr Moorecroft) would like the natives to be treated so as to feel that they are entirely a subdued race … 1. by making more stringent pass laws; 2. by advocating flogging in the place of imprisonment; 3. by imposing more taxes upon them; 4. by stopping railway works, to which he is opposed simply because they…have deprived farmers of their labour, and spoiled the Kaffirs by paying them three shillings a day... I am of the opinion that such a man would be a disgrace to the division.'[141]

However, much of the stock theft had nothing to do with mine or railway labour as Sterkstroom farmers also suffered considerable stock theft without any success in tracing the thieves. In July and August 1884 alone, Mr Miller of Blauwkrantz, Klaas Smits, had eleven cattle, 16 sheep and three goats stolen; one 'lad' stole 78 sheep from three farmers and, in the vicinity of Buffelsdoorns near Dordrecht, farmers lost no fewer than 700 sheep 'to

[138] J Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 123
[139] *The Queenstown Representative*, 19 August 1884
[140] *Frontier Guardian and Dordrecht Advocate*, 9 February 1884.
[141] *Frontier Guardian*, 'An Intelligent Native's Letter', 1 March 1884

natives'.[142] John Fotheringham of Dell Farm lost 100 sheep on one night and two young black farm labourers, Hendrik and Charles were charged with stealing six sheep from H.C. van Heerden of Platjesfontein.[143] Examples in the press and court documents of alleged thieves also refer to farm labourers or sharecroppers as being the culprits.[144]

Similarly, the papers in 1884 continually reported the plight of white farmers along the border of the Wodehouse – Tambookie Location and in Klaas Smits, far from the mines and the railway camps of Molteno. Over 20 farmers gathered at Dick's Hotel at Baileys Junction, to discuss the lack of police protection from thieving by the Zwaartwater and Buffalodoorns blacks. Between them, they had lost 1300 sheep and 40 cattle in a six month period. However, some farmers' accusations of black stock thieving on the Wodehouse border may have had more to do with their own ambitions of land acquisition. The Queenstown newspaper, ever alert to blatant racial injustices, inferred that one farmer, van Rensburg, merely wanted the removal of the black communities occupying the Zwaartwater basin, who he claimed, were idle layabouts. The latter, states the paper, were not clearly culpable and farmers merely wanted to push them back into the Transkei, despite the fact that blacks there were also complaining of enormous stock thefts.[145]

Further evidence of stock theft committed by non-miners came from the pen of Advocate Tamplin who maintained that organised trafficking was in almost all instances done by white men. They employed a couple of black men to tend their stolen stock or even sent them to steal, telling them that it was their own stock they were fetching. A potential buyer would be located and the blacks ordered to deliver the stock to his homestead. Only about half of these whites were generally caught.[146] George Vice had 74 head of cattle stolen from his farm adjacent to Molteno, also supposedly by whites who were rumoured to be taking the stock in the direction of Barkly East.[147] One particularly inventive farmer put himself into bankruptcy and complained every day at the police station of theft, despite the fact that his relatives' flocks were clearly increasing at the same rate as his loss![148] Indeed, in 1892, John Frost giving evidence to the Select Committee on Suppression of Stock Theft maintained that the chief thieves in his district were whites, although no stock losses were traced to them since

[142] *The Queenstown Representative*, 1 July, 12 August 1884
[143] Ibid., 12 September, 16 December 1884
[144] *The Albert Times*, 10 April 1895, 8 July 1896
[145] *The Queenstown Representative*, 16, 30 September, 28 October 1884
[146] Ibid., 29 September 1885
[147] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 8 October 1889
[148] *The Queenstown Representative*, 21 October 1884

locals covered for white stock thieves. The inadequate police force was also often in collusion with the thieves reporting the movements of the police. Thus, farmers seldom reported stock losses to police as there was little hope of recovery.[149]

The scale of the theft in the Eastern Cape part of a wider crisis and could not be confined to mining or the railway camps. An Eastern Districts Court judge assessed that there were about 40-50 cases of stock theft weekly, excluding cases heard at the Circuit courts. These probably accounted for another 2 000 thefts, which did not represent one fifth of the number, since many did not all come to court:"When I say that 10 000 stock thefts take place annually in the Eastern Province, I think I am within the mark."[150] The latter was of critical proportions, indicated by the fact that while punishment for rape and incest was two years with hard labour, stock theft got three years.

It was a complex question imbued with a variety of possible causes. While some suggested the root of the problem was economic distress due to land dispossession in the Transkei, Advocate Tamplin believed that blacks stole because of 'hunger, disinterest in working, want, destruction and 'gorging.'[151] It was also perceived that drink, continued to be a source of the high level of stock theft. Solutions were varied. A drastic parliamentary bill was also submitted in 1884 proposing that a suspected thief had to prove his innocence.[152] In 1886, a meeting of Queenstown parliamentary representatives and their constituents proposed hard labour with the lash, the treadmill, spare diet or even transportation.[153] The next year, the Farmers' Congress suggested desperate measures when it supported a motion that the murder of anyone found near a farmer's stock during certain hours is justifiable.[154]

Farmers Congresses in the early 1890s claimed that things had reached "ruinous proportions" and called on the government for greater limitation of access to liquor, larger numbers of detectives for the Cape Mounted Rifles and for the Cape Police; supervision of mining and other locations by Cape Police or Inspectors; recognition of stock stealing as burglary; supplying lists of stock thefts to Farmers' Associations and the police; cattle passes under the Cattle Removal Act of 1870 to be issued to blacks only by officials and the implementation

[149] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, House of Assembly, (A.13-'92), Report of the Select Committee on Suppression of Stock Thefts , pp. 34- 45
[150] *The Queenstown Representative,* 21 July 1885
[151] Ibid., 12 February, 21 May 1886
[152]Ibid., 5 August 1884
[153] Ibid. 6 April 1886
[154]Ibid., 19 April 1887

of the Branding Act of 1890 in Albert.[155] Sufficient rations were also recommended for labourers and railway workers. In this climate, a 13 year old convicted of stock theft was indentured until he was 21 years old.[156]

Nevertheless, in 1890, Molteno farmers remained focused on the culpability of mine labour and called for increased policing of mine labour, at a time when many of the police stations of the Albert region were only staffed with between four and eight men each.[157] This was inadequate to deal with the great amount of stock theft being committed as shown by the fact that at two consecutive courts held at Molteno, 85 prisoners were sent to Burgersdorp. The police were increased creating an improvement in stock theft, after 1894.[158]

However, farmers associations together with mine owners, tended to agree a solution lay in dealing with the problem at its perceived source. They wanted the appointment of Location Superintendents to control numbers, working hours and drinking at the mines, on private property and in the towns.[159] It also resolved that anyone, including whites, blacks and women, without visible means of labour be forced to get employment.[160] Such notions were endorsed by the political manifestos of politicians preparing for the coming elections in 1898. Daniel Petrus Van den Heever of the Afrikaner Bond railed that the prevalence of stock theft was related to the self-interest of British Imperial capital. Calling for harsher penalties for stock theft, he bemoaned the fact that 'a diamond thief at Kimberley gets five or six years for stealing a diamond worth 15s, while the thief of an ox gets a few months.' This was clearly protecting 'the European speculators' who were also a reason why South African manufacturing had not been properly developed.[161]

Ethnic polarisation: English – Afrikaner relations

The effects of mining and the railway fuelled an escalating Afrikaner nationalism. However, it is necessary to understand these developments in the period beforehand. The mouthpiece for the emerging Afrikaans identity had been Afrikaans newspapers like *Die Afrikaanse Patriot* in 1876, the first Afrikaans language movement in the Western Cape which attempted to spread the Afrikaans language across classes and, more recently, the defeat of the British at

[155] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 24 May 1892
[156] Ibid. , 11 March 1892
[157] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, A.13-'92, Select Committee on Suppression of Stock Thefts, pp. 34- 45
[158] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope , G3-'94, Report of the Labour Commission, 1893-4, p 200; *The Albert Times,* 10 January, 25 April 1894
[159] *The Albert Times*, 16 January 1894, 22 April 18 November 1896
[160] Ibid., 11 March 1896
[161] Ibid., 3 March 1897

the Battle of Majuba.[162] In the Albert district, it must have also been spurred on by a naked sense of superiority expressed in the English papers towards the Afrikaner.[163]

However, Afrikaner Nationalism in the Albert district occurred within a complex web of loyalties. Giliomee maintains that in the late 1870s, "colonial Afrikaners identified themselves with their kinsmen across the Orange River, but put the Cape's interests first, rarely hid their sense of superiority over the Northern Afrikaners and harboured a sense of the benign influence of the British in promoting progress".[164] Meintjes says that Transvaalers and Free Staters had difficulty in understanding the Cape Afrikaners who spoke English as fluently as Afrikaans and who accepted the distant Victoria as their queen.[165] However, Giliomee's views must be qualified by evidence of early political developments around Burgersdorp. Local Boer farmers, particularly to the north of Molteno around Burgersdorp, had been vocalising their political consciousness for some years prior and, as early as the 1850s, had taken a lead in efforts to secure the use of Afrikaans in parliament. While local English farmers found their expression through town councils, Chambers of Commerce and newspapers, until 1879, Afrikaner farmers only had a voice in the Divisional councils (established first in 1865) which mainly supervised roads and schools.[166]

Then in 1879, the *Albert Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging*, along with other branches in the Cape, was established in Burgersdorp in solidarity with Jan Hofmeyr's opposition of Sprigg's excise duty on Western Cape brandy producers.[167] The organisation was aware of S. J. du Toit's appeal in 1880 for the formation of an Afrikaner Bond to give expression to Afrikaner rights, both political and cultural. Thus, political appeals were made such as the right to speak Afrikaans in parliament, an Afrikaner Bond which would erode English dominance over the Afrikaner people and the raising of the franchise to reduce the number of voting blacks. In October 1879, the *Albert Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging* had chosen Jotham Joubert, a founding member, as its parliamentary candidate, in opposition to the candidate of the predominantly English Burgersdorp Chamber of Commerce, Francis Tennant. Tension in the town was rife and Tennant withdrew, allowing the *Albert Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging* to score its first political victory.

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[162] H. Gilomee, *The Afrikaners. Biography of a People*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2003, p. 216, pp. 218-219
[163] Ibid., pp. 213-220; J. Meintjes, *Stormberg, A Lost Opportunity*, 1st ed., Cape Town, Nasionale Boekhandel, 1969, p. 3
[164] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 225, p. 205
[165] J. Meintjes, *Stormberg. A Lost Opportunity*, p. 5
[166] Divisional council members sat for a three year term of office, *Queenstown Representative*, 27 July 1888; blacks could not vote for the divisional council unless they were erf holders, Ibid., 2 July 1889
[167] T. R. H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, p.13

In 1881, the *Albert Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging* under Daniel Petrus van den Heever, formed an alliance with the Afrikaner Bond.[168] Van den Heever (known as 'Oom Dantjie'), originally from Colesberg, later became a member of the Divisional Council in Albert for many years. A father of 14 and an impressive, six foot three bear of a man, his rhetorical gifts and charismatic personality were to establish him in the forefront of Afrikaner politicians of the late nineteenth century. He was looked upon as the father of the Bond in Albert, one of the principal movers in the establishment of the Taal monument in Burgersdorp and the strongest and most violent opponent of the Scab act. [169] In 1884, van den Heever was elected to the Legislative Assembly for the North Eastern region, remaining there through much of the 1890s. Thus, within the colony, a power base of Afrikaners was growing around Burgersdorp, which felt nothing but aversion for the British connection and nursed grievances which went back to the days of the first British occupation.[170] In fact, in Albert, sympathies were regional: more English to the South, and more Afrikaner to the north.

Branches of the *Albert Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging* were also established in 1881 in Aliwal North, Steynsburg and many other centres, although there were no branches in the predominantly English town of Molteno neither in Sterkstroom.[171] There were, however, branches of the Afrikaner Bond in these towns whose members also had an influence on the Divisional councils. Davenport assesses that 25% of Cape Divisional Councils in 1882 consisted of committee members of Afrikaner Bond branches.[172] In 1884, the Sterkstroom branch of the Bond announced its support for the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek when British forces opposed their westward expansion into Stellaland. The Sterkstroom Bond was reported to be seriously considering obstructing the path of the British if they passed through the Stormberg. Although not a real threat to the British, it indicated that post-Majuba nationalism had spread further south.[173] By 1891, the Bond had 51 district boards, 207 branches and 5572 members in the Cape.[174]

English sentiments in the region were rigidly opposed to the Bond, to Afrikaners as unprogressive and unenterprising, and to the introduction of the Afrikaans language as a

[168] T. R. H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, p. 23
[169]Ibid., pp. 20-21; *The Albert Times*, 17 June 1896
[170] J. Meintjes, *Stormberg. A Lost Opportunity*, p. 3
[171]T. R. H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond* , p. 25
[172] Ibid., p. 13
[173] *The Queenstown Representative*, 25 November 1884; 13 January 1885
[174] *The Albert Times*, 10 April 1891

medium in parliament in 1882.[175] In 1892, the Afrikaner Bond held its annual congress at Queenstown clearly designed to stimulate Afrikaans in areas where the English influence was stronger. Moaned the press, Queenstown was "essentially an English town in our costumes, language and sympathies … the majority of us don't know the difference between the taal and gibberish."[176] In early 1893, the press noted that at the recent Farmers Congress, farmers were getting more political, and endorsed such politicization in order to oppose the Bond in the political arena.[177]

After the opening of the coal mines and the railway, Afrikaner nationalist responses were further heightened over opposition to stock theft reputedly by the labour of these essentially English institutions. In a vote of no confidence for the mines in 1893, a Bond meeting at Aprilskraal near Molteno resolved to urge the forthcoming Bond Congress to prohibit anyone connected to coal or gold mining to be elected as a Member of Parliament.[178] Danie van den Heever castigated the railways in 1897, saying the whole system 'was rotten and a mass of corruption'. Parliamentary nepotism, for example, allowed Transvaal coal to travel over Cape lines.[179] The only line that should be built, he said, was to Venterstad as it was farmers who were the backbone of the country. Van den Heever, however, supported the use of colonial coal on the railways since, as he put it, the coal mines 'could save thousands not hundreds of South Africans'. Conversely, Jotham Joubert, also a Bond member, supported the railways as a great boon to the country but did not favour the coal mines.

So too, many Afrikaner farmers and Bond members were against essentially British creations like Farmer Associations, the Standard Bank, Chambers of Commerce and even urbanisation itself. These were seen as the destructive mercantile appendages of the coal/rail nexus. In 1894, the Burgersdorp Bond prohibited its members from joining the Chamber of Commerce, which they called *'Konkelkamer'*, meaning a chamber which connives at trickery and fraud. This idea has come about, smirked the paper, because the smooth 'winkelier' achieves profits with no physical labour and is obviously a schemer, while the farmer attains low prices after hard work.[180] However, in 1895, the Afrikaner Bond in Burgersdorp repealed its decision

[175] *The Albert Times*, 3 July, 3 August 1888
[176] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 17 January, 3 March 1893
[177] Ibid., 31 March 1893
[178] Ibid., 20 January 1893; However, when John Frost accepted service in the Bond ministry, the Queenstown branch of the Bond approached the Queenstown Farmers' Association promising the confidence of the Bond if they would support the Bond candidate, in the next election. The Association said they would let them know, Ibid., 8 September 1893
[179] Ibid., 10 August 1896, 3 March 1897
[180] Ibid., 12 June 1891; *The Albert Times*, 21 March 1894

prohibiting its members from connecting themselves with the Chamber of Commerce by a considerable majority.[181] Yet, in the same month as the Jameson Raid, the Bond prohibited its members from joining local Farmers Associations, although this, too, was rejected by a huge majority two months later.[182] Thus the emergence of two new farmers' associations, one of which was at Burgersdorp in 1896 and another at Sterkstroom in 1899, possibly established to serve the needs of English farmers, may also have been an attempt to face off the heightening tension with the Bond.[183] At the same time, the Afrikaner Bond opposed the high rates of the Standard Bank and attorneys in money lending to struggling farmers of the district. There was also a call on attorneys, who endorsed bank bills, to reduce their rate to 7% else the farmer could not be properly helped.[184]

Opposition to towns, themselves, indicates the depth of resentment towards capitalist imperatives among some Afrikaner farmers and perhaps their experience of economic transformations. 'Scrutator' from the Burgersdorp area wrote to the paper, objecting to a proposed new town in the vicinity of the Stormberg since all towns established in the district were only "fatal to the prosperity of the farmer." Many have sacrificed their properties in Burgersdorp and got into debt building new houses and churches and supporting an extended clergy. Nor did farmers get good prices in the smaller towns other than Burgersdorp which, nevertheless, would also be affected in time.[185] Such developments were clear signs of growing political and ethnic polarisation on the part of the Afrikaner.

The animosity had deeply permeated the social fabric of the Stormberg and caused disturbing rumblings when a prominent member of the Molteno Afrikaner community, 50 year old Matthys Greyvenstein, his married daughter, Allie Magdalena, and two of her three small children were killed by a train. This happened while driving their cart over the railway crossing just past the 'Albert junction' on 6 August 1896.[186] Fears were expressed that, given the animosity 'at all times on the part of Africander farmers towards railway employees' and which now had turned into bitterness after the accident, the exposure of the Scottish train driver to the jury system in court would be highly dangerous. Already an 'intelligent' Afrikaner farmer had suggested hanging the driver, and uneducated Afrikaner farmers in the jury, judging a railway employee who caused the death of four Afrikaners, would be clearly

[181] *The Albert Times*, 1 May 1895
[182] Ibid., 22 January, 11 March 1896
[183] *The Sterkstroom Budget*, 8 April 1899
[184] The interest offered by banks varied with the amount of security offered, *The Albert Times*, 14 April 1897
[185] *The Albert Times*, 23 May 1894
[186] It is not clear whether this was the Stormberg or the Sterkstroom junction

unwise. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the district were so intermarried that it would be difficult finding someone who was not related to the deceased family. The train driver was finally tried by a jury in Queenstown and found not guilty.[187]

However, parallel to these tensions, the sheep disease, scab, as with the tariff war in the Cape Brandy industry, was embroiling farmers in a fiercely contested debate along both class and ethnic lines**.**[188] Although this had little to do with the coal mines or the railway, it nevertheless played a part in escalating ethnic tensions. While most ecological pressures could have helped to consolidate a common farmer experience, if not unity, in the area, scab was different, in that the official management of it exacerbated existing divisions between Boer and Briton. Scab was one of a range of stock diseases, which had been endemic among sheep in the colony since the 17th century, and was caused by tiny mites or *acari* that bit into the sheep's skin, causing infected sores and loss of wool yield and quality, particularly when it passed through various stages of manufacture. The disease was also inextricably tied into issues of drought, transhumance and degradation of the veld.[189] Scab rendered sheep more vulnerable to the tough new brackish grasses which sprouted during times of drought so that 1000s of sheep died during such periods. But more commonly, the long drought of the 1880s forced farmers, especially those with small to average size farms, to move their flocks in search of better veld which exacerbated matters.[190] It not only spread the disease across neighbouring farms but also caused further degradation of the veld, completing a vicious cycle**.**[191]

Concern for the future of farming generated heated debates. Permissive legislation had been enacted in 1874 which had encouraged a big move to dipping, supported by the wool buyers and large sheep farmers. However, it was ineffective owing to the absence of compulsory country-wide legislation.[192] In 1885, the Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce clamoured for a new law reporting that the price and the quality of the wool had never been so low in its whole history, due to a very long drought, interbreeding, carelessness of farmers and shoddy wool and because 50 to 60% of the sheep in the country were suffering from scab.[193] New legislation was enacted in 1886, but like its predecessor it was also permissive requiring that

[187] *The Albert Times*,5 October, 14 September 1898
[188] While Keds attacked sheep as well, it didn't cause the same size lesions and was never eliminated. Redwater and Lungsickness attacked cattle, Interview, Verne Cockin, Kei River Mouth, 18 February 2009
[189] *The Albert Times*, 7 May 1886
[190] *The Queenstown Representative*, 9 March 1886
[191] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, G1-'94, Report of the Scab Disease Commission, 1892-4, pp. 428, 435
[192] *The Queenstown Representative*, 10 March 1886
[193] Ibid., 17 March 1885

farmers in each district had to agree to its proclamation. Only 26 districts in the Midlands and the Eastern Cape, excluding the district of Albert, were proclaimed.[194] As Frost admitted, though faulty, this act was a political compromise, since a direct Act would have alienated 'the government's supporters' (the Afrikaner Bond).[195] Between then and 1896, the colonial government consistently sought to enforce quarantine and dipping.

The cause of scab was widely accepted among English farmers and some progressive Afrikaners, as was the need for a countrywide compulsory scab act which called for enforced dipping.[196] **'**Scab had three bad effects,' *The Queenstown Representative* warned, 'It damages the wool; it damages good wool by dipping and it damages South Africa's reputation in the English market. South Africa's best wool is classed with Australia's worst!'[197] The Colonial Secretary pointed out the loss of wool price due to scab amounted to about half to three quarters of a million pounds.[198]

In the meantime, spurred on by the crushing drought and in the spirit of late 19th century self improvement, Beinart has shown how a period of extensive application to disease, environmental problems and diagnosis was launched by the state 'leading to a high degree of environmental regulation in the Cape.'[199] State veterinarians wrote prolifically on poor animal health and the degradation of the veld, and assisted in the establishment of a Department of Agriculture in 1887.[200] Duncan Hutcheon, the state veterinarian, travelled the colony both to elicit local knowledge and educate farmers in the science of the spread of the disease.[201] He advocated dipping, preserving the veld by ending transhumance and kraaling and the fencing of lands into paddocks, with a portion of the veld reserved for winter grazing as part of the move towards intensive agricultural practices.[202] By 1886, nearly all farmers in Klaas Smits River had put up fences.[203]

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[194] NMMU, G1-'94, Report of the Scab Disease Commission, p 433.
[195] *The Queenstown Representative*, 25 January 1887
[196] *The Queenstown Free Press*, 24 March 1891; A. Fischer was Secretary for Agriculture at this time. A Minister of Agriculture was being debated, *The Queenstown Free Press*, 29 May 1891
[197] *The Queenstown Representative*, 12 January 1886, 11 September 1888
[198] Ibid.,, 7 May 1886
[199] W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation*, p. xix
[200] Ibid., p. 20, p 21
[201] Ibid., p. 132, p 142
[202] Ibid., p. xvii; Kraaling was identified as perpetuating scab, since eggs would drop into kraal dung which acted as a perfect incubator, but also because kraaling sheep nightly to protect them from predators/jackals degraded the veld as sheep were run across it daily to reach better pastures; Ibid., p. 156
[203] *The Queenstown Representative*, 6 April 1886, 28 October 1887

But the majority of Afrikaner farmers in the Albert District showed strong resistance to the **'**Brandzickte Act' (Scab Act)**.**[204] Some argued that scab was a plague inflicted by God for the sins committed by his people, and had to be endured like locusts and droughts. Others were suspicious of the new scientifically established information and clung to their farming methods partly because of an inherent antipathy to officialdom. Giliomee shows how the attempt to eradicate scab escalated into both a civil disobedience and an ideological issue around the liberty of Afrikaners. He maintains that, apart from the Great Trek which was a peaceful revolt, colonial Afrikaners had made no serious attempt until now to resist British domination. Resistance was also partly because of the hardship and negative repercussions of legislation for smaller farmers. Dipping with harsh solutions like Cooper's Dip sometimes killed sheep for which there was seldom state compensation. Also, compulsory outlay on dipping tanks and dip would limit their prospects and discourage them from improving or increasing flocks which would be at the mercy of the scab inspector. "The majority of Afrikanermen I have spoken to look on the act with absolute dread", reported the paper sympathetically.[205] Indeed, throughout the mid 1880s, Bond Member of Parliament for Albert and the leader of the anti-scab movement, 'Danie' van den Heever, called for the protection of the poorer farmer. He vociferously opposed a compulsory scab act because of the necessity of transhumance, the existence of 'obnoxious herbs' as a cause of scab and - targeting two groups in one go - the mixing up of 'kaffirs' scabby wool by merchants with that of whites.[206] Growing tensions in the drive for a compulsory act broadly found institutional expression in the form of the closely linked Afrikaner Bond and Divisional Councils on the one hand and on the other, Farmers Associations and the English press who voiced overseas criticism of Eastern Cape wool.[207]

Yet, the ethnic dimension of the cleavage over scab was not clear cut. The Scab Disease Commission (1892-4), under the chairmanship of John Frost, which took systematic evidence across the colony to investigate the feasibility of implementing a compulsory scab law, provides a clarifying profile of the intersection of class and ethnic cleavages over scab.[208] In the unproclaimed district of Molteno, fifteen farmers – two English and 13 Afrikaner–were interviewed. Opponents consisted of nine Afrikaner farmers, Stephanus Cloete, Hendrik

[204]W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation*, pp. 152-3; *The Queenstown Representative*, 3 June 1884
[205]*The Queenstown Representative*, 29 July 1884
[206] Ibid., 31 August 1888
[207]Ibid., 1 June, 28 May 1886; *The Queenstown Free Press*, ; 26 March 1889, 14 March 1893
[208] NMMU, G1-'94, Report of the Scab Disease Commission, 1892-4; Frost, a progressive farmer, was for a compulsory Scab Act for the whole colony, *The Queenstown Free Press*, 15 April 1892

Buurman, Mathias Greyvenstein, William Steyn, Jan Willem, Jan Aucamp, Hendrik Greyvenstein, Daniel Raubenheimer and Carel Pretorius. One third of them were Afrikaner Bond representatives and two thirds of the opponents were small stock owners only owning between 500 and 1400 sheep (see Table 7). Their testimonies to the Commission reveal a clear link between class and prejudice or ignorance. Some, like Cloete, revealed their ignorance of the causes of scab saying he did not believe scab was caused by an insect. Presumably also unaware of official moves against transhumance, he said he did not believe that scab could be stamped out altogether because they needed to trek to Vlekpoort where undipped sheep were infectious to their own sheep.[209] Jan Aucamp believed it was caused by poverty not insects.[210] Similarly Greyvenstein did not know that the 1886 act allowed farmers to dip well before ewes were due to lamb which he said was "one of the principal reasons why this part of the country is opposed to the scab act"[211] So too, Carel Pretorius, an itinerant farmer, possibly a bywoner, was opposed to the act because of the limitations it would impose on moving his flock of 1200 sheep.[212] Daniel Raubenheimer, who had been farming in Molteno for 35 years, believed the new attempts at change were disrupting time-honoured methods:

> 'The six monthly shearing was the cause of scab because when we used to shear once a year, the wool was excellent. I don't dip my stock when they get scab … we old farmers don't thoroughly understand it… I am afraid of a stringent act. We have always lived very peaceably together here, and we are afraid of an act of this kind.'[213]

Supporters consisted of the only two Englishmen interviewed, Thomas Pierce and John King and four Afrikaner farmers. They were all better off farmers, owning between 1500 and 4 000 sheep and were clearly aware of the true benefits of the new act as well as the financial gain in abiding by it. Thomas Pierce was in favour of the scab act because, since he moved from his farm at Whittlesea in the Queenstown district to Molteno where there was a greater incidence of scab, he lost at least £40 per year. Similarly, John King of King's Glen, who came from Bedford, a proclaimed area, 18 months ago, was compelled to dip in the winter in Molteno as all his neighbours had scabby sheep. He therefore lost a lot of wool in weight as well as many lambs due to the sheep's weakened condition. Both King and Vermaak senior thought that opposition came from prejudice rather than awareness of financial loss.[214]

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[209] NMMU, G1-'94, Report of the Scab Disease Commission, p. 432, p 436
[210] Ibid., p. 436
[211] Ibid., p. 433
[212] Ibid., p. 439
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid., pp. 434 - 436

Johannes Vermaak, the only interviewee from the Molteno Bond to support the act, felt "the gain a man has in keeping his sheep clean for the year is worth all the trouble and expense of a scab act. There are very few of us who ever keep accounts of what we do, but the loss in one scabby clip of wool is more than any farmer would imagine."[215]

Table 7. Ethnicity and numbers of sheep holdings of Molteno interviewees, Scab Commission, 1894

ETHNICITY & ATTITUDE	NUMBERS OF SHEEP									
	500	800	1000	1200	1300	1400	1500	2000	2000-3000	3000-4000
English supporters								1		1
Afrikaner supporter							1		2	1
Afrikaner opponent	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	

Source: NMMU, G1-'94, pp. 429 - 439

A compulsory dipping act was implemented in November 1895, Act 20 of 1894, but the issue of official control was seen by many Afrikaner farmers to be as destructive as the coal mines and grew in force as an additional ideological factor in the armament of Afrikaner consciousness. The volatile and charismatic D.P. van den Heever still crusaded against the scab act and whipped up feeling among Afrikaner farmers, arguing against the injustice and partiality of the inspectors; the difficulties of dipping in bad seasons; the fines which would be imposed and the loss of freedom which the poor farmer must endure. His popularity increased with *Volksvergaderings* (gatherings of the community) being held all over the district where cries of 'Down with the Act!' were heard.[216] His political extremism was fodder for the English press as in April, when he addressed applauding farmers at Molteno, assuring them that scab was "as natural to sheep as sickness to children." In March 1897, he claimed that 'there had been scab since the time of Moses' and "wool was lower in price now than for many years in spite of the much vaunted Scab Act.[217] The English press poked fun at van den Heever, challenging the reliability of his story about a Cookhouse farmer he could not name, who had lost 4 500 sheep from continued dipping – sheep which had been

[215] NMMU, G1-'94, Report of the Scab Disease Commission, p. 430, p. 431
[216] *The Albert Times*, 6 February 1895
[217] Ibid., 5 February 1896, 3 March 1897

*doodgedipt (*dipped to death).[218] Such opposition began to threaten the very stability of the Rhodes ministry, but it was also rumoured that there was a split within the anti-scab party because of van den Heever's methods.[219]

Indeed, the extremely scornful attitude of *The Albert Times'* tended to polarise differences. As the self-appointed guardians of public ideology, the press closely monitored and arrogantly evaluated the ideological, cultural and political views of the Boers. In this sense they became another, albeit insensitive, role player in the scab debate. When the paper covered a meeting between the Molteno Farmers Association and A. Davison, the Chief Scab Inspector from Bedford, their normally patronising tone escalated to one that was scathing and insulting and could have done little for ethnic conciliation. Lauding Davison's tact with the Boers, the press described the Afrikaner mentality*: "*one must first put them in good humour, and this he did to perfection. The Boer is a nasty annual to drive; but get him in good company, talk to him nicely in his own beloved *taal*, and he is wonderfully teachable. The result of the Molteno meeting goes to prove this."[220]

By February 1897, Verran told the Farmers Association of Albert that the simultaneous dipping prescribed by the scab act 'had done wonders' and, according to him, farmers had been very cooperative. He had even gained the co-operation of those who had previously supported van den Heever.[221] His claim was supported by the Annual Report of the Burgersdorp Chamber of Commerce which reflected on "a marked improvement in the wool and sheep of this district and a splendid lambing season" due to the scab act.[222] This was important given the fact that by 1898 the Albert District was the second largest Merino sheep owning district after Barkly East, in the 74 divisions of the Cape.[223] What the disagreement over scab had also done for the social relations of this region was to create a period of intense ethnic and class tension between lower–income, usually Afrikaner, farmers and the larger, mainly English, accumulators, in the fraught years immediately preceding the war.

In contrast, the arrival in 1896 of the Rinderpest, a highly contagious viral disease lethal to game and cattle, generated little division between groups. It had first appeared in Somaliland in North East Africa in 1889, thence making its way down the eastern part of Africa reaching

[218]*The Albert Times,*12 May 1897
[219] W. Beinart, *the Rise of Conservation*, p. 154; H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 226; *The Albert Times*, 12 June 1895
[220]*The Albert Times*, 18 September 1895
[221]Ibid., 10 February 1897
[222]Ibid., 3 March 1897
[223] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Statistical Register, 'Livestock on 31 December 1898', 1901

Southern Rhodesia by 1896. Given South Africa's well developed railway system by this time, it moved rapidly southwards, thereafter reaching Bechuanaland by the end of March 1896, and the Orange Free State (OFS) by June. Unlike scab, the Rinderpest was devastating in its scale and aggression, and perhaps for this reason, did not have the potential to divide members of the farming community as scab had. Although some asked the government to invoke divine assistance, with this disease, there was no time for dissent over causes and little dispute about treatment.[224] Regulations were rapidly promulgated about the destruction of infected cattle, correct procedures for reporting outbreaks, the issuing of certificates for moving stock and the erection of a cordon of guards along the Orange River.[225] However, in early May 1897 and accompanied by a severe drought, the Rinderpest broke through the cordon and appeared in Albert, 12 miles west of Burgersdorp. Albert was now proclaimed an infected area for the disease.[226]

In the first half of July the Rinderpest erupted on a number of farms in the Stormberg. By August, heavy losses were reported. Alfred Heyter, for example, lost nearly 40% of his cattle, his neighbour about 50% and van Aswegen hardly had a beast left on his property.[227] 'Altyre' was set up as a hospital farm and, towards the end of July, Dr Edington's system of inoculations using 'glycerinated bile' was being used in preference to Koch's gall inoculations which were now confirmed as dangerous.[228] Some animosity arose since, being in the border area, farmers had been used as an experiment for the whole colony.[229] New outbreaks were proclaimed on farms and in November 1897 the Rinderpest reached the town of Molteno, itself.[230] By this stage, Rinderpest was reputedly attacking sheep which the drought had spared. Locusts, too, had made a re-appearance.[231] Finally, by June 1898, the last quarantine was removed and seemingly the disease had run its course.[232]

Ultimately, whereas scab had been a divisive factor in Boer and Britons' relationship, the Rinderpest, if anything, unified them in their efforts to control and eradicate a disease whose

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[224]*The Albert Times*, 25 November 1896; It was also noted how the Colonial League, a loyalist British organization was established in response to Afrikaner-British tensions generated by the Jameson Raid, and the Afrikaner Bond, were cooperating at Kimberley in the face of the Rindpest
[225]Ibid., 10 June, 16 September 1896
[226]Ibid.,18 November 1896, 17 March , 5, 10 May 1897
[227]Ibid., 7, 14, 21 July, 11 August 1897
[228]Ibid., 30 June, 28 July 1897; During this period, the Altyre hospital was the greatest boon to the district and, on the whole, gall produced from it was successful, February 1898
[229]Ibid., 11 August 1897
[230]Ibid., 25 August, 27 October, 24 November 1897
[231] Ibid., 17 November 1897
[232]Ibid., 15 June 1898

causes and implications they all agreed on. Indeed, Albert's loss of 23% of its cattle, compared favourably with that for the whole Cape (35%).[233] The reactionary Jotham Joubert, for example, praised the government for the way they tackled the Rinderpest, something of an anomaly at a time when political tensions were rising rapidly in the country between Imperial Britain and the Boer Republics.[234]

During the Rinderpest crisis, the railway had been significant in bringing the disease to Molteno by the transporting of stock. However, it also assisted the exodus southwards of heavy traffic in produce and livestock from Albert ahead of the epidemic and to avoid congesting local stations.[235] The disease also had an immediate impact on the mines; in that, firstly, black miners stampeded without notice from all colonial mines to the Transkei to try and save their cattle or to consume them. Thus for three or four months during the winter when coal was most needed, production was seriously hampered. Towards the end of the year, absconding miners returned.[236]

Secondly, the Rinderpest caused the large scale proletarianisation of blacks. Bundy has assessed that the disease destroyed 80-90% of the cattle of the black farmer in the Transkei, liquidated much of his capital and reduced his credit worthiness and his ability to plough. The impoverishment of thousands of smaller farmers, then, resulted in their return to places of work, like the Molteno mines.[237] In September 1898, the labour market of the district was, in fact, glutted by a large number of blacks in search work and food. This gave rise to a public call for compounds to control black miners and potential stock thieves. In 1894, Lawrie of the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company had dismissed the idea on the basis that 'the class of natives here would [not] do it unless at higher wages. De Beers pay much higher wages than we do but hardly any of our class of natives look for work at the diamond mines.'[238] However, in 1898, at a 100 strong meeting at Molteno targeting the prevalence of mine labour as the cause of stock theft, compounds were again mooted. An impassioned Afrikaner claimed, 'It is he [the black miner] who compels the farmer to watch his flocks at night and it is he who is leagued with the capitalist to force the agriculturalist into ruin and the sale of his acres'. The use of compounds would be beneficial, it was argued, since inmates would be

[233] NMMU, Cape of good Hope Blue Books, G.72-'98, Rinderpest Statistics for the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope
[234] *The Albert Times*, 3 March, 15 September 1897
[235] Ibid., 20 May 1896
[236] Ibid., 15 September 1897, 23 February 1898
[237] C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, p. 120
[238] *The Albert Times*, 25 April 1894

contained at night and merchants could service their needs. Jotham Joubert also attached himself, heart and soul, to the compound system. True the mine owners at Kimberley had lost money by it, he said, but they were rich men. What coal owners lost, would be gained much more by farmers. Also when blacks emerged from the compounds they would have so much more to spend.[239]

The proposal for compounds was unanimously passed at the meeting, but the press pointed out that not all miners were congregated around the coal mines and, furthermore, stock thieving went on in all parts of the colony. Compounds for miners would effectively lock up working men, keeping them away from farmers, while the vagrant in the hills, the unemployed, armed with the necessary pass, could still wander from farm to farm, scouting out sheep to steal. It maintained:

> 'Granted… that at each mine are congregated a horde of unemployed natives … but ... no one would deny the value of the coal mines to the region… it would be unwise to place restrictions on the movements of natives in search of employment as a good supply of labourers is always desirable. Thus we cannot check the stream of men women and children from Kaffirland ... We must have the native and he must have his wife and child. Where there are mines, the natives in large numbers become necessary and so the farmers of Moleno must face the inevitable.'[240]

More to the point, the press advised farmers to reflect on their own role in the creation of stock theft:

> 'You have a large number of native squatters on your farms. They are a sort of reserve force for the ploughing, reaping and wool season and in the intervals, earn a precarious livelihood by tilling an acre or two of ground and doing odd jobs for the neighbours. These squatters do not receive regular rations and it is said they are taking a hand in the stock theft game. Farmers, look to yourselves.'[241]

Neither did mine owners support compounds. The Cyphergat Coal Mining Company strenuously opposed the findings as compounds would entail a heavy outlay on the part of the coal owners. While a commission appointed to look into stock theft was in favour of rationing or compounding miners, a new bill proposed to adopt only the suggestions of the Associated Mines, the chief item being the appointment of a Location Inspector to oversee labour on the mines.[242] Nevertheless, the segregationist idea of separating labour, whether for reasons of control, health, access to liquor or stock theft, had its own unstoppable momentum.

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[239] Also see *Cape Times*, 27 July 1899, 'Second Reading Debate, Native Labour Locations Bill', NA 625/1988, cited in M. Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900- 1909, " *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1977), p. 395

[240] *The Albert Times*, 28 September 1898

[241] Ibid., 28 September 1898

[242] CAD, PWD 1/2/97 B 83: Cyphergat Coal Mining (and Pottery) Co., Report on Manufacture of Earthenware Pipes, by Percy Aspenden, Chief Inspector, Public Works Department, 23 August 1899

Ultimately, it would culminate in the creation of segregated Municipal locations.[243] But for now, Molteno's industrial and residential spaces were still in a state of flux.

Conclusion

Clearly, given the rural context of the Stormberg, the operation of the coal mines and the railway were deeply entwined with the political economy of farming. However, their impact on farming was complex and varied. Coal mining entered an already ecologically and economically challenged agrarian environment. It was subject to droughts, frost, hail, locusts, stock disease, severe economic recessions, a quasi-barter economy, the debilitating practice of subdivision and was remote from the ports. While these factors had generated a common experience for all farmers, they had also created a certain amount of class differentiation prior to the advent of industrial capital in the region.

Industrial capital brought an urban market, merchant capital and railway transport from which many farmers were able to benefit. Similarly, coal's partner in trade, the railway, raised the potential of nearby property and provided for the quicker export of important goods, like wool and animal stock, as well as the inflow of imports. It delivered the means for progressive farming in the form of fencing wire and government drills for the locating of water. On a more visionary scale, Fred Halse was stimulated to establish the Tennyson Scheme where settlers would maximise the usage of his large landholdings and the railway. While better off farmers could respond to the new capitalisation, exert political muscle, withstand high rail rates, fence in their properties and afford dip and dipping tanks, smaller farmers could not do any of these things. Indeed, the imperatives of capitalisation furthered class stratification and the demise of smaller farmers. Their attempts to maintain a hold on the land by resorting to wagon riding were also ultimately eroded by the facility of rail. Poor whiteism, and the concomitant disintegration of families, which had emerged noticeably in the 1880s economic depression became more conspicuous in the 1890s.

Increasingly throughout the period of 1880–1899, white farmers of all classes came face to face with the congregation of economically and politically unequal, but numerically significant blacks around the railway and the mines. Questions of labour supply, alcohol control, rampant stock theft, perpetrated often by miners and railway workers, but also by

[243] M. Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome", p. 395

poorly paid farm workers, lack of policing, undermined agrarian relations and faith in government capacity.

Parallel to these difficulties, but little connected to coal and rail, the especially emotive issue of scab control played a divisive role between Afrikaner and English. On top of this, the coal/rail nexus became the symbol of problems to many Afrikaner farmers and together with other institutions like the Chambers of Commerce and the Standard Bank, were symbols of an advancing, destructive British capitalism. The advent of coal therefore introduced volatile factors in the plasticity of an emergent and vulnerable zone of capitalist development - this during an increasingly tense period between the forces of Imperialism and republican Afrikaner nationalism.

CHAPTER 5 - THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH, 1899-1906

In 1899, the inhabitants of the Stormberg region were thrown into political, economic, social and ideological turmoil when war broke out between Britain and the Boer Republics and spilled over into the Cape colony. War was the culmination of tensions that had been mounting ever since the discovery of gold in the ZAR in 1886 as the republics came under increasing pressure from Imperial interests to pursue economic policies that were favourable to the Cape and to Britain. The intervening period in the Stormberg had seen existing points of difference between Afrikaner and English groups enter a complex phase of steadily heightening tensions, especially in the second half of the 1890s.

The majority of histories on the Boer war have dealt with the topic as a clash between the Boer republics and Britain played out across the republics and to a certain extent in the Cape. Many have also necessarily dealt with the role of Cape rebels and *hensoppers* revealing important ideological contradictions.[1] Peter Warwick and Bill Nasson have also outlined in detail the war's impact on blacks and provided much clarity on the racial dynamics in the Stormberg.[2] However, the purpose of this chapter is to examine, within the relatively small geographical space of the Stormberg, lately now reconfigured by coal mines and the railway, how the opportunities and losses of social groups across the towns, mines and farming sectors consolidated or polarised economies and identities. Thereafter, the aftermath of the war will be analysed in terms of how the urban and agrarian sectors reorganized themselves, ideologically and economically, especially in terms of the ensuing depression and drought. (The mining sector and its decline will be dealt with in Chapter 6).

The war, 1899-1902

Previous chapters have already examined certain ideological and agrarian tensions in the Stormberg between mainly English speaking and lower income Afrikaans farmers but, in the last half of the 1890s, these tensions deepened. Perhaps they could have been contained, but the Jameson Raid, which took place in the Transvaal on 29 December 1895, dashed any hopes of conciliation between Britain and the Boer republics.[3] It also had immediate

[1] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners. Biography of a People*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2003, pp. 212-213, p. 227; H. Shearing, 'The Cape Rebel of the South African War, 1899-1902', Phd Thesis, Stellenbosch, 2004

[2] B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*, Cambridge University Press, 1991; P. Warwick, *Black people and the South African War, 1899-1902*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1983

[3] The failed Jameson Raid was the result of a conspiracy between Cecil John Rhodes, Leander Starr Jameson and Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to unseat the Kruger government

repercussions in the Stormberg. Indeed, the purchase by some Afrikaners of about hundred guns at the onset of the trouble created a deeply fearful atmosphere among the English in Molteno.[4] Yet, Afrikaner mobilisation was not universal in the district. Most of "*onzeboervrienden*" (our Boer friends) claimed the newspaper, were also rattled by being placed in an awkward fix by some of their 'over zealous boer neighbours'. They denied they wanted guns for offensive purposes, had no quarrel with the government and did not want to fight.[5]

Around the same time, increased military posturing occurred in the annual *wapenschouws* in Sterkstroom under 'General' Danie van den Heever. These were high visibility military displays involving tactical manoeuvres, probably relating to the defence of a growing Afrikaner nationalism. The militant Reverend Lion Cachet in Burgersdorp also established a rifle club.[6] The English raised a number of volunteer corps, while the Molteno Mounted Riflemen, established for the Bechuanaland 'front' in 1895, grew to 40 men under the command of Captain Pinnoy.[7] This was eagerly supported by those such as Charles Broster of Broughton, a wealthy horse breeder, who offered to lend horses if necessary.[8] Shortly thereafter, a few farmers attempted to get Sterkstroom and the Stormberg Junction to form an amalgamated Mounted Volunteer Corps.[9] As tensions rose, newspapers printed rumours and gossip which often had to be quickly dispelled in the very next issue of the paper.[10]

The most militant English organisation of the time was the Imperial South Africa Association financed partly by Cecil John Rhodes. Strongly imperialist, it emerged first on the Eastern frontier at Kei Road in 1896 as a reaction to the Afrikaner Bond and to the tensions generated by the Jameson Raid and spread rapidly northwards along the eastern border from East London.[11] By the end of May, a branch of the association had been formed in Molteno with 40 English town notables, including mine owners John Elliot and George Vice.[12] In a similar adversarial vein to the Bond's recent alternative, the association's headquarters at East London went as far as demanding that Members of Parliament for the region who refused to

[4]*The Albert Times,* 23 December 1896
[5] Ibid., 23 December 1896
[6]Ibid., 7April 1896
[7]Ibid., 8 April 1896
[8]Ibid., 29 May 1895; 8 July 1896; *The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 1 June 1906
[9] *The Albert Times,* 6 May 1896
[10]Ibid., 29 July 1896
[11]See G. Cuthbertson, A. Grundlingh, and M. Suttie (eds.) *Writing a Wider War*: *rethinking gender, race, and identity in the South African War, 1899-1902,* Athens : Ohio University Press, c2002, pp. 304-306, 308-316, 318-321
[12]*The Albert Times,* 20 May 1896

join the association should be made to give their reasons for doing so.[13] Ironically, this could not work in Molteno as both MPs for Albert, Andries Stephanus du Plessis and Jotham Joubert, were Bondsmen.[14]

As the decade drew towards a close, rumblings in the region continued to reflect the international build up to war. In 1898, the Worcester Conference of the Bond discussed the option of rebellion in case of war at a long morning's meeting, and indicated (possibly related) divisions between the Molteno Bondsmen.[15] In May 1898, Cachet made a derisive speech in Burgersdorp about the reliance of Rhodes and the Cape government on Britain.[16] In March 1899, nearly 1000 burgers from the region took part in the annual *Wapenschouwing* practice at Putters Kraal near to Sterkstroom.[17] Later that year, to the consternation of the English establishment, the General of the *wapenschouwing* received 3 000 rounds of ammunition way ahead of their annual meeting the following March and two Transvaal spies were reported to have been "'mousing' around the district for some weeks".[18] It was also stated "on excellent authority that a number of Transvaal guns have been smuggled into the district and are concealed in a friendly farmhouse."[19] On the other hand, Imperial supporters were collegially noted in the paper, such as Dr Ben Bertram, a previous Sterkstroom doctor, on his way north through the Stormberg to join the Imperial troops.[20]

As the gulf widened between Boer and Briton, the English stronghold of the town of Molteno was clearly the first line of defence for Britain in the North Eastern Cape. Areas to the north of the Albert District, particularly around Burgersdorp, were known to be Republican-aligned.[21] Thus sympathies were roughly regional: increasingly English to the south, and increasingly Afrikaans towards the north. Yet, being less than 100 kilometres from the OFS border, the districts of Molteno and Sterkstroom were divided to a degree, with the military displays of Boer opposition around Sterkstroom, and antagonism from sections of the Bond

[13] *The Albert Times*, 27 May 1896
[14] Ibid., 28 October 1896; But Elliott and Adcock were leaving Molteno and therefore the League.
[15] Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Archives, Cape Hansard, House of Assembly, 1902, p. 109; *The Albert Times*, 23 February 1902
[16] *The Albert Times*, 4 May 1898
[17] *The Sterkstroom Budget*, 11 March 1899
[18] Ibid., 14 September 1899
[19] Ibid., 28 September 1899
[20] Ibid., 14 September 1899
[21] J. Meintjes, *Stormberg: A Lost Opportunity: The Anglo-Boer War in the North-Eastern Cape Colony, 1899 1902*, Cape Town, Nasionale Boekhandel, 1969. p. 5; the forces in Molteno in 1899 were the Cape Mounted Police, the Cape Mounted Rifles and the Town Guard, J. Meintjes, *Stormberg*, p. 9

and younger, generally lower-income Afrikaner farmers. Thus this area was fertile terrain for ambiguous actions and split loyalties, right from the outbreak of hostilities.[22]

Finally war was declared on 11 October 1899, putting an end to a period of speculation and mounting tension. As British troops moved up into the area, many families, especially women and children, fled southwards. Farmers from as far north as Burgersdorp also hurried their sheep and cattle southwards through Sterkstroom. The Sterkstroom Budget reported a flurry of events: the Kaffrarian Rifles, which included Sterkstroom locals, were posted near the railway line. Business in town was severely disrupted, although some speculators such as Herbert Bailie, Robert Ewan and Jurie Wessels were doing good business by hurriedly buying up all available mules and horses in anticipation of an enlarged military market. Charles McCalgan was also given the order to supply the Kaffrarian Rifles for the duration of their stay.[23]

Molteno, meanwhile, braced itself as British and Republican forces focused on the occupation of the Stormberg railway junction, 11 miles outside of Molteno. Indeed, the crucial strategic value of the railway and the junction meant control of the region and made Molteno and Sterkstroom an important theatre of war. The railway transported British troops and supplies and generated camps at places all along the line, such as Queenstown, Putterskraal, Cyphergat, Molteno and Stormberg. Conversely, it tended to be the target of Boer attacks. Indeed, during the early phases of the war, the Stormberg junction was occupied by consecutive contingents of Boer and British forces as the military advantage was obvious to both sides. Indeed, control of the railway junction determined much of the course of the interactions in this region.[24]

Initially, the British held the junction, deciding that troops would not go further north since nearby Burgersdorp was a rebel stronghold. This provided the town with a certain amount of protection from a Boer attack. However, due to sympathy among some Cape Afrikaners for the Boer cause and as the Aliwal North area was in danger of an attack from an Orange Free State commando, martial law was imposed on 15 and 16 November on the District of

[22]Bywoners in the Transvaal, for example, tended to join the British after resisting going on commando to defend the property of landholders in the frontier wars against Africans without proper recompense, while their own families were destitute…".their treason was often a rebellion against exploitation", H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners. Biography of a People*. Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2003, p. 251
[23]*The Sterkstroom Budget,* 14 September, 4 November 1899
[24] J. Meintjes, *Stormberg: A Lost Opportunity,* pp. 10-141

Molteno and other areas in the Northern Cape.[25] This provided penalties for sedition, suspended the constitution, freedom of the press, freedom of movement and many other aspects of ordinary civil rights.[26] It also provided for large scale commandeering of horses and for permits for farmers to store forage and grain.[27]

However, in early November, the small British force evacuated the junction at the approach of the Boers who then annexed Colesberg, Aliwal North, Dordrecht and Barkly East, creating safe havens for rebels and reached the Stormberg station on 26 November.[28] They were quickly joined by local rebels who were reported to be "restless and disposed to join the invaders". Claims were made after the war that some rebelled because they were alienated by the lack of protection for the border areas and some alienated by the unfair pressures of martial law.[29] However, the rebels were mostly young Boers, often bywoners, who had little to lose.[30]

Meanwhile, the British planned an attack on the junction under General Sir William Forbes Gatacre, a strict disciplinarian who had earned an admirable reputation in the Sudan. He arrived at Putterskraal, just south of Sterkstroom, to lead the advance.[31] Broadly, his plans were to travel up the railway line to secure the Stormberg junction and ultimately to invade Bloemfontein. However, the famous Battle of Stormberg which ensued was a debacle due to a lack of communication by Gatacre, especially to his support force led by Captain 'Jim' De Montmorency, disregard for the exhaustion of his soldiers who had been on their feet since four 'o'clock that morning, a change of last minute plans regarding the direction of his attack and confusion on the part of his guides. Stumbling into view of a Boer encampment above the junction, the British soldiers were fired on and dispersed in various directions. Boer contingents that were spread around the area, joined the battle and Gatacre gave orders to retreat. Strangely the Boers failed to give chase. Only 28 British soldiers were killed, 61 men were wounded and 634 men were taken as prisoners of war to Pretoria. Six Boers were killed

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[25] Martial law was also imposed on Cathcart and Colesberg, H. Shearing, 'The Cape Rebel of the South African War', p. 146

[26] P. H. Kritzinger and R. D. McDonald, *In the Shadow of Death*, cited on website http://angloboerwar.com/books/133-kritzinger-in-the-shadow-of-death/2823-kritzinger-chapter-x-the-rising-in-the-cape-colony

[27] H. Shearing, 'The Cape Rebel of the South African War', p. 146

[28] P. Warwick, *Black people and the South African War*, p. 119

[29] T. and D. Shearing, *The Rebel Record*, *The South African War, 1899-1902*, Cape Commando Series A-H, p. vii

[30] J. Meintjes, *Stormberg. A Lost Opportunity*, pp. 4, 5; Interview, John Stretton , Strydfontein, Molteno, 29 November 2011

[31] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome: Die Geskiedenis van Molteno, 1874-1974*, Molteno, Munisipaliteit, 1974 , p. 90

and 27 were wounded.[32] This shameful skirmish with the Boers was to be one of the major debacles of the war for the British and, occurring within days of two other seminal defeats at Colenso and Magersfontein, became known as part of Black Week. Fraught with severe bungling, it caused an international outcry and entered into the folk lore of white generations in the area.[33]

The Boers continued to retain possession of the Stormberg junction, but did not attempt to occupy the British strongholds of Molteno and Sterkstroom. However, the Bamboesberg in the Stormberg range provided excellent cover for Boer raiding, recruitment drives, attacks on British convoys and patrols, plunderings of farms and intimidation of loyalists in the Stormberg, Rosmead and Colesberg areas. By March 1900, the Boers had captured several small towns along the northern edges of the Cape Colony and had annexed areas like Steynsburg by proclamation.[34] Then, with the surrender of General Piet Cronje at Paardeberg in the Orange Free State on 27 February 1900, Boer forces were recalled from all fronts. By 5 March, the Boer evacuation of the Stormberg was complete and that same day Gatacre reoccupied the station with 3000 men.

Rebels were now left high and dry and began surrendering in March 1900. By early April 1900, 696 local rebels from the Albert District had surrendered at the court house at Dordrecht.[35] To provide for the trial and punishment of Cape rebels, the Cape government passed the Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act No. 6 of 1900 promulgated to run from October 1900 to April 1901. The Act was also formulated to indemnify the government and military personnel in regard to acts during the existence of martial law and to make provision regarding compensation to those who had sustained direct loss and damage through military operations or through the acts of the enemy or rebels. Special courts were also established for High Treason cases while Commissioners were appointed to enquire into other cases.[36] The Special Tribunal Court opened in Burgersdorp on 14 June 1901 dealing mainly with rebels who had participated in the Stormberg battle.

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[32] J. Meintjes, *Stormberg. A Lost Opportunity,* pp. 81-103
[33] J Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 100; black interviewees knew little about the various battles
[34] Rhodes University, Cory Library, BRN 144209, MS 18 435, Folder 1 of 1, 'A Century of Witness', p. 13; P. Warwick, *Black people and the South African War,* p. 120
[35] *The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle*, 3 April 1900
[36] Cape Archives Depot, CCP 6/2/1/42 Act 6 of 1900, The Indemnity and Special Tribunals Act, 12 October 1900; no Circuit courts were held during the war, but only periodical courts and Tribunals to try Treason cases, *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 16 October 1902

Altogether in the Cape, 12 000 men had gone into rebellion with 32% emanating from the north eastern Cape, 10% from the Albert district and only 2% from the Molteno- Stormberg area.[37] This is deduced from statistics of various government records which, although they do not completely agree, give some idea of the degree of rebellion in the Stormberg. Cases under Chapter Three of the Indemnity and Special Tribunal Act indicates 208 men, voters and non-voters, listed as accused rebels for the Lower Stormberg Ward, but nothing is shown for Bamboesberg and the town of Molteno.[38] Another return of disfranchised rebels in Lower Stormberg, showed 205 men and 48 for the Bamboesberg Ward.[39] In Sterkstroom, only four people were charged, including Wynand Schrader apprehended in 1901.[40] A record of rebel statistics, based by the press on a Government Blue Book report, gave a different set of statistics for the various districts as at March 1902: Aliwal North district was the highest with 1211, Beaufort West with 903, Cradock, 313, Colesberg, 245, Graaff Reinet, 137, Molteno, 42, Sterkstroom, three and Queenstown, five.[41]

Court documents reveal a patchwork of rebel profiles who were randomly spread across numerous farms in the Stormberg. Many were in their twenties or thirties while one or two were even younger.[42] Not all were simply farmers. A few worked in town or on the mines.[43] Often, more than one family member rebelled, or even an entire family such as the group of eight Marais men on the farm, Zuurfontein.[44] However, there were older rebels who were perhaps more steeped in radical conviction, such as Hendrik Buurman, 36 years old, from Poortje, and Andries Liebenberg. Buurman, a member of the Divisional Council and the Afrikaner Bond, and "a well to do farmer and a man of great influence in the district", was reputedly seen in the company of known rebels.[45] Liebenberg escaped to America and, working from the Orange Free State Consulate in New York, was appointed to mount opposition to the war and raise money for 'The Boer Relief Fund and for the Distressed in

[37] H. Shearing, 'The Cape Rebel of the South African War', pp. 110, 147
[38] CAD, AG 3550, Registration of Cases under Chapter 3 of the Indemnity and Special Tribunal Act, No. 6 of 1900
[39] CAD, AG 2113, Returns of Disfranchised Rebels, 1899-1906
[40] CAD, AG 3550, Registration of Cases under Chapter 3 of the Indemnity and Special Tribunal Act, No. 6 of 1900
[41] *The Albert Times and Molteno News* 7 March1902
[42] CAD, AG 3487 Part 1, Preliminary Examinations, High Treason, 1900-1905
[43] CAD, AG 3531, High Treason Cases, Molteno, 1902-3
[44] CAD, AG 3487, Part 1, Rebels under class 11, 1900-1905
[45] Ibid., Part 11, Preliminary Examinations, High Treason, 1900-1905

South Africa'.[46] Ironically, even one of Albert's members of parliament, Jotham Joubert, eventually turned rebel and 'when matters looked uncomfortable, left the country'.[47]

Although martial law was lifted in the Molteno district in August 1900, in October, the desperate top command of the Republican forces launched massive Boer incursions into the Cape and Natal Colonies between December 1900 and the end of the war.[48] Smaller commandos often joined by local rebels, under Gideon Scheepers, Wynand Malan, W.D. Fouchè, P.H. Kritzinger and others, crisscrossed the district but avoided the British base of Molteno.[49] Thus, the Stormberg came under Martial Law at the end of January 1901 and again from 22 April 1901 after the Indemnity act had run its course.[50] In August 1901, a commando under Smuts slipped into the Cape to make a last ditch attempt to raise a significant Cape rebellion. An epic campaign was conducted through the Stormberg, down towards the Sundays River and across to the West coast, renewing fears of a revival of hostilities in the district.[51] However, at the same time, Lord Kitchener, pursuing a relentless offensive in the Boer republics tried to contain the major roads and rail lines between the Orange River and Stormberg. Blockhouses were built and linked by fences of barbed wire, parts of farms were commandeered for encampments and additional railway lines were laid where necessary.[52] Thus, the towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom were never occupied by the Boers.

Opportunities, losses and loyalties

Although there was disruption to the economy in Molteno in the early part of the war, conditions returned to normal when the Boers left the Stormberg junction. There was an immediate response to the commercial possibilities of the large military market in town by those most positioned to benefit such as general dealers and retailers. The business of the Standard Bank's Molteno branch accelerated greatly with the influx of troops and the sale of

[46] CAD, AG 2092, Ref. 5, 7 October 1901, Pamphlet, 'Boer Lecturer'; he returned at the end of the war; CAD, AG 2092, Secretary, Law Department, Lonsdale to Resident Magistrate, Molteno, 1 March 1904; Ibid., 29 August, 11 September 1901
[47] *The Sterkstroom Budget*, 2 December1899; *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 26 September 1902
[48] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p. 257; P. Warwick, *Black people and the South African War,* p.120
[49] P. Warwick, *Black people and the South African War,* p.120.; AG 3531 High Treason Cases, Molteno, 1902
[50] Rhodes University, Cory Library, BRN 144209, 'A Century of Witness', p.14; Many British soldiers lie buried in the local cemeteries.
[51] D. Reitz, *Commando: A Boer Journal of the Boer War,* London, Faber and Faber, 1932, pp. 202-213; Sandy Stretton, 'Smuts in the Stormberg', Dordrecht, The Anderson Museum, 2001
[52] P. Warwick, *Black people and the South African War*, p.120

horses by farmers.[53] Stock auctioneers prospered by supplying the military and selling captured rebel stock so that, in the middle of 1900, Elliott brothers had the largest stock sale ever.[54] As late as 1901, a period when "ordinary trade has collapsed", capitalist impulses in the form of exhorbitant prices had to be restricted by martial law to protect the poorer classes.[55]

Figure 20. Stock fair, Molteno



Source. A. Lomax, Portrait of a South African Village, p.7

On one level, the effect of the war on farming was also positive due to the large demand for agricultural products and stock by the Imperial forces. Given that the republics' lands were

[53] Standard Bank Archives, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 18 October 1900; SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', ARCH 1/1/MTN, p. 12
[54] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 20 May, January 4 1901; *The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle*, 18, 26 May 1900
[55] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 15 February, 6 September 1901

almost laid waste by Kitchener's scorched earth policy, agricultural production was said to be increasing daily.[56] In March 1901, Francis Tenannt reported that:

> 'The farming community have realized very high prices for their stock and farm produce (except for wool) which has made farming more lucrative than in any other year and may account for the rise in farm property which now rates at 25s to 30s per morgen and in several cases even higher. And the wholesale requisition of horses at full value by the Imperial government has to an unprecedented degree raised the buying power of stock breeders.'[57]

Wagon cartage, although generally under long term threat from the emergence of the railway, was another lucrative outlet which assisted a 'notoriously slow and unreliable' railway. This was because its single track system was unable to sustain the huge amount of freight traffic leading to 'crippling rolling stock shortages, especially relating to armoured locomotives leading all too often to an erratic and skeleton train service.' There were also frequent blockages from enemy sabotage and a shortage of the necessary line extensions to critical areas.[58] The railway was also constantly disrupted in that, owing to the great demands of the military, it seemed 'quite unable to send forward any ordinary goods. The greatest inconvenience is naturally being felt by local businesses in consequence of this stoppage of traffic.'[59] Thus the period saw a resurgence in wagoning which in turn led to a great demand for wood cutting and the carrying of wood in districts such as Queenstown, Sterkstroom and Molteno.[60]

However, disruption to the towns' economies was widespread and occurred in numerous ways. At the onset of the war, widespread panic was felt about safety in Molteno. Rumours spread and a mass exodus of English speakers occurred in November 1899 until the end of the war. Businesses and institutions, such as the Standard Bank sent their assets away to safer centres and closed their branches.[61] In January 1900, the King Williams Town Steam Mill almost ground to a halt when Gatacre, hearing that the Boers bought provisions in Molteno, immediately spoiled the flour and deactivated the machinery.[62] The military also obtained

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[56] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Molteno, 16 November 1901, 18 October 1900.
[57] Tennant's report for the Burgersdorp Chamber of Commerce for 1900 in *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 29 March 1901
[58] B. Nasson, *Abraham Essau's War*, p. 73
[59] *The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle*, 6 April 1900
[60] B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War,* p. 73.
[61] SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno'**,** p. 11; J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 89; A. Mabin, and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 477; SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 9 September 1899
[62] *The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle*, 10 January 1900; J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 90

sole control over the water that was usually supplied for irrigation by holders of water erfs.[63] Continuing hostilities elsewhere in the country affected business for the rest of 1900.

Martial law further hampered the economy and aggravated already conflicted loyalties. Restrictions were placed on travelling, residential areas, admission to railway premises, traders, hawkers and commercial travellers, signalling, boarding houses, the flow of civil supplies and the availability of horses, mules and bicycles. Much irritation, inconvenience and dissatisfaction ensued among the inhabitants of Molteno and the surrounding districts.[64] Afrikaners in eminent civilian positions were demoted. P. Hattingh, for example, who had been installed as mayor early in 1899, was obliged to accept the ignominious rank of batman. Business also tended to be ideologically aligned as in Sterkstroom, where the Elliott Brothers risked losing much Afrikaner business since their partner Mr Whittal had for some time been associated with the Colonial Defence Force. At the same time, the rival Price Brothers cut further into the Elliots' business by using the popular Afrikaner attorney, Daniel de Wet.[65]

Similarly, while the formation of the Molteno Town Guard in January 1901 was ostensibly organised to defend the British cause, it generated much dissension among British supporters by interrupting business.[66] With the seond Boer invasion, the new British commandant, Captain Baker, insisted in May 1901 that all able bodied men, including the whole of the Standard Bank's staff, do compulsory Town Guard duty and report twice daily whether the town was in imminent danger or not, else he would proceed against them under martial law. Yet, the bank was working overtime in an effort to cope with the increase in the volume of work passing through the branch. The bank's inspector believed that the unreasonable attitude of the commandant was goading loyal subjects "to rebel or do some wrong".[67]

The mines, too, were disrupted by the war; firstly by the actions of the Boers who, when in control of the Stormberg junction, cut off coal supplies. The Standard Bank reported:

> 'In no direction has the war now in progress so acutely affected South African enterprise as in its mining industries... their prostration is, for the time being, absolute... boer inroads to the North Eastern Cape… cut off coal supplies... [which] had to be brought in from India and the UK to prevent stoppage of the railways and a large number of the transports were laid up for a

[63] *The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle*, 26 May 1900
[64] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 29 March 1901
[65] Rhodes University, Cory Library, BRN 144209, 'A Century of Witness', p. 11; INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 9 November 1901
[66] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 4 January 1901
[67] SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno**,** p. 13

> time in Table Bay owing to the scarcity of coal. The Cape railway system which is almost exclusively based on South African coal is now dependent on foreign coal.'[68]

However, the mines, usually employing about 2000 black miners in the district, as well as most other sectors like the railways and public works were also affected at various times by a severe depletion of labour.[69] Black miners, fearful of falling into the hands of the Boers who were constantly passing over mining property, were so unsettled that many spontaneously disappeared from work sites.[70] The Cyphergat Coal Mining Company only got into full swing again during June 1900.[71] Thus the Standard Bank reported in August 1900 that, whereas the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company produced 3 000 tons per month prior to the war, after the war began, production fell to 1 000 tons. In August 1901, the company's production only amounted to 19 460 for the year and 16 896 tons for 1902. Overall, the production of the mines in the Molteno area fell from 40 000 tons between February and August 1901 to 25 000 tons between August 1901 and February 1902.[72]

The British military made matters worse in a number of very distinct ways by, for example, creating a severe shortage of rolling stock and explosives for the mines by requisitioning mining stock.[73] They also added to the labour shortage of the mines and other employers by recruiting hundreds of blacks across the country into the military which provided good pay and rations, excitement and the possibility of loot. This was confirmed by the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company. Sir Percy Girouard, railway engineer for the Imperial forces, established labour bureaus to raise levies and recruited 10 000 men throughout the war. They were first recruited in the environs of the military camps and through magistrates in those areas of the Cape that had become associated with the supply of labour for the mines and transport work.[74] Moreover, under martial law, orders were issued that black labour was not to be

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[68] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 480; At times the Vereeniging collieries were also only able to work one day a week, dropping production from close to 2 million tons in 1898 to a ¼ of that amount in 1900, R. Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks : The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal*, Cape Town, David Philip in association with Jewish Publications, South Africa, 1991, p. 162

[69] SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 9 September 1899

[70] The Cyphergat Coal Mining Company Report, printed in *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 1 August 1902; SBA, B. Conradie, "The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', pp. D8-D9

[71] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 488

[72] Ibid., p. 517

[73] CAD, CGR 2/1/445, 500/ 21/ 29412, Letter, General Manager, Cape Government Railways to Resident Magistrate, Molteno, 9 January 1900; SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 9 November 1901

[74] B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*, p. 26; Girouard had also served in the Sudan, B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*, p. 200; P. Warwick, *Black people and the South African War*, p. 116.; CAD, CGR, 2/1/199, A48/32056, Native Labourers, 1901-2, Vol. 2, W.E. Cummings to General Manager, Cape Government Railways, 20 March 1902; The magistrate at Ngqeleni in the Transkei in 1902, they had fears of being "eaten up by the white man", most likely a reference to underpayment and harsh conditions, Ibid., Morris, Magistrate at Ngqeleni, to General Manager of Railways, 17 March 1902

employed until military requirements were satisfied, nor should wages exceed those paid by the military. Thus, the labour force was becoming exceedingly independent of the mines, would not work for local employers more than four days a week and pressure or threats only resulted in their departure. Similarly, the Indwe colliery faced crippling shortages which the management blamed squarely on the military.[75]

Table 8. Coal output and number of employees: Albert and Queenstown Districts, 1899 - 1903

DATE	TONS	NO OF EMPLOYEES
1899	76 052	1651 (72 whites)
1900	69442	1860 (85 whites)
1901	75 991	1314 (64 whites
1902	69 270	1236 (64 whites)
1903	73 909	1261 (62 whites)

Source: NMMU, Statistical Registers, Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1901- 1909; UG 37 – '23; UG 40- '17, Annual Report of the Department of Mines and Industries.

The success of the British thrust into the Orange Free State also impacted negatively on the coal mines in that after the capture of Bloemfontein in March 1900, the Imperial Military Railways took over the Free State line to the disadvantage of the Cape Government Railways. The haulage of Vereeniging coal, which had long been used to beat down Stormberg prices, threatened to become too expensive. Thus, in February 1901, the Cape government entered into a contract with Natal for the supply of 14 000 tons of coal per month to be landed at Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.[76] However, in late 1901, the Colonial government took a more direct approach to the problem by driving a wedge in between the Cape mines to break their monopoly and force down their prices as well as those of the Imperial Military Railways. They chose the Stormberg mines to do it, purchasing the railway line that had been built to the recently liquidated Cape Collieries, thereby obtaining cheaper coal in that area. The line was then extended to Woolf's mine on Romansfontein farm to further consolidate their position and end once and for all the bellicose attitude of mine owners who had once attempted to keep the price of coal as high as 20s per ton. In no time at all, Vereeniging coal was being supplied for only 10s per ton and Stormberg coal prices were now driven

[75] By 1901, Indwe's workforce had been roughly halved from its pre-war level, and coal production had slumped from 18 000 tons in October 1900 to 11 000 tons in June 1901, B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*, p. 28
[76] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 499

downwards.[77] By the end of the war, the coal industry in the Cape colony had suffered severely from the war.[78] De Beers was also directly affected by the shortage of coal and had to look elsewhere for fuel.

As the war ranged over the countryside, the farming sector was possibly the most severely disadvantaged. The war had caused a shortage of black workers on all fronts not only at the mines, but on farms and even in households.[79] Farmers now experienced a shift in power relations with an increasingly independent labour force, which led to less labour, less leverage over stock theft and ultimately over their own security. When the Transkei levies were disbanded in March 1900, severe famine in a number of districts in the Transkei and Ciskei led to stock thieving of epidemic proportions in the Stormberg with Afrikaner farmers, especially those who had left to join the rebels, frequently the victims.[80] In February 1900 alone, 29 horses, 56 cattle and 30 sheep were stolen in the district of Molteno.[81]

British troops also damaged farms as, for example, when Vice's winter feed was taken for the military's horses in June 1901.[82] Some of Colonel Price's men, who were stationed at Cyphergat, burnt a couple of miles of fence poles for warmth although coal at the mine could have been utilised. Thus, with active military operations in the district, the uncertainty of reaping what had been sown led many farmers to leave their lands idle rather than take the chance of losing crops, noted the magistrate.[83]

One of the greatest difficulties for farmers was the effect of martial law. Under the latter, restrictions on movement meant that particularly Afrikaner farmers, who were potentially more suspect than English residents, needed permits to enter town, to gain access to the station and even to leave one's own property. Many farmers were forced to reside in town to the extent that several new dwelling houses had to be erected. Afrikaners could not obtain

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[77] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 17 June 1901; CAD, CGR 2/1/321, 167/15/32409 A, Letter, General Manager, Cape Government Railways to H. Woolf, 10 October 1901; The Cyphergat Coal Mining Company produced 2 000 tons monthly, Silkstone Collieries 1500 tons, the Cape Collieries 1200 tons, Penshaw and Vice's Molteno mines 1000 tons, SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 18 October 1900

[78] A. Mabin and B. Conradie, *The Confidence of the Whole Country*, p. 527

[79] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 24 May, 5 July 1901

[80] P. Warwick, *Black people and the South African War*, p. 122; CAD, CGR 2/1/445, 500/ 21/ 29412, Telegram, Resident Magistrate to Cape Government Railways, 31 December 1899

[81] CAD, AG 2070, Ref. 13, Numbers of stock stolen in the month of February 1900 in District of Molteno; Ibid., Ref. 12, Complaint, CZF Pretorius to Resident Magistrate, Theft of cattle out of his kraal, 24 February 1900.

[82] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 14 June 1901

[83] CAD, AG 1003, 'Report on the State of District', Resident Magistrate to Secretary, Law Department, 20 December 1902

passes easily, were thus prevented from trading or speculating and lost business. In a strange twist of logic, since poor whites were usually Afrikaners, the conclusion was drawn that "the poor white problem is going to be worse after the war. We as Englishmen have a lot to be fed up about regarding the Boers for allowing this war."[84]

However, by far the biggest problem for farmers was commandeering, whereby the military could appropriate any stock, horses, wagons or produce they deemed necessary, severely compromising the capacity of farming in the district. Louis van Zyl, from Klipfontein, found that the wagon and 10 oxen that he sent into Molteno to collect stores and foodstuff for his family and servants were appropriated by the Cape Police who suspected him of assisting Boer commandos.[85] A proclamation in February 1901 stipulated that farmers had to bring all their horses to town for sale or safe keeping.[86]A huge amount of food stuffs, slaughter animals, wagons, and services were also taken (and recorded) by the colonial and imperial forces from English and Boer alike.[87] A battery of proclamations was emitted throughout the war restricting the storage and selling of forage.[88] In March 1902, all horses, cattle, goats, sheep and pigs had to be officially registered.[89] As late as June 1902, after the war had ended, a martial law notice informed farmers in the Aliwal North district to bring potatoes and onions into town to sell to the troops not yet demobbed.[90] Further losses were experienced when certain military personnel like opportunist, John Leach, Chief Colonial Transport Office who, together with his commanding officer, appropriated and sold large numbers of cattle seized from Boer farmers.[91]

Meintjes asserts that while the Boers commandeered supplies from farmers, they usually only approached farms they knew were sympathetic to their cause and issued them with letters for reimbursement from the Orange Free State government.[92] However, the Boer forces clearly plundered farms. On one occasion, 300 Boer soldiers even brought a threshing machine to reap crops within two miles of the colonial camp on Bird River which was too weak to

[84] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 1 July 1901
[85] CAD, AG 2074, 'The Anglo-Boer War, Stormberg Lists', File 71, Letter, L.J. van Zyl to Premier, 9 December 1899
[86]*The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 15 February 1901
[87]CAD, 1/MTO , 15/2, Register of War Claims, 1901-02
[88]Tennant's report for the Burgersdorp Chamber of Commerce for 1900 in *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 29 March 1901, 17 January 1902
[89]*The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 7, 14 March 1902
[90]Ibid.,7 June 1902
[91] Ibid., 9 January 1903
[92] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 103

react.[93] Also, Woolf's farm and coal mine was visited twice by Boers, with merchandise from his shop and two cart horses seized.[94] It was only when the chain of blockhouses were built that local farmers became less afraid of losses by Boer raids.[95]

The compulsory circulation of cattle and large quantities of looted stock sent by speculators all over the colony, also allowed the rapid spread of stock disease, especially lungsickness which reached P. J. Hattingh's farm, Zeekoegat, in the Molteno area in 1902.[96] Rinderpest also made a re-appearance with the Albert district being declared a Rinderpest area on 18 September 1901 and remained so until 25 May 1902.[97] Its emergence was of great concern to the authorities as it was impossible to stop the circulation of cattle owing to the war. However, it was a less virulent type than before and responsive to inoculation which suppressed the disease, if only temporarily, thus allowing oxen to carry on working.[98]

The magnitude of a harsh civil war tended to crystallise existing British loyalties in the town. Certainly, the British loyalty of Molteno, and to a large extent Sterkstroom, was already well established before the war.[99] However, with the first occupation of roughly 3 000 men at the Stormberg station in 1899, the visual landscape of the town was reinforced English identity by sights of uniformed British soldiers, a large contingent of sailors from Simonstown, congested hotels and shops, union jacks everywhere and generally heightened activity. Reciprocal social entertainment and sports games, probably public relations exercises, emphasised solidarity between the towns and the military.[100] When news of the relief of Mafekeng came, Sterkstroom shop owners, the hospital and the municipal offices hoisted Union Jacks and a public holiday was proclaimed.[101] Thus, the face of the towns became distinctly more 'imperial', a comforting reality to English residents who were keenly aware that they had been catapulted right into the frontline of war.[102]

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[93] *The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle*, 15 January 1900; The river lies about 30 kilometres to the east of Sterkstroom
[94] *The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 28 June 1901
[95] SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 9 November 1901
[96] *The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 3 January 1902
[97] Ibid., 25 May1902, 3, 31 October 1902
[98] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, G.57 -1902, Reports of the Colonial Veterinary Surgeon for 1901
[99] The English section of the entire district could only have amounted to between 5 – 10%, given that out of a total population of 4 000 only 7/800 were registered voters. This calculation has been arrived at on the basis that the Afrikaner section of the voting population must have formed at least 10% to be able to continually vote in Afrikaner Bond members of parliament during this period, SBA, INSP 1/1/111, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 16 November 1901
[100] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 14 February 1902; *The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle*, 25 April, 7, 26 May 1900
[101] *The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle*, 26 May 1900
[102] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome,* p. 108

Military control of the press encouraged British propaganda directly by publishing government appeals for support against the Boers or by implication; for example, pointing out the aversion of prominent Afrikaner inhabitants to the actions of their more militant brothers.[103] Long lists of names of those who contributed food to the hospital in Queenstown were published as were the attempts of Mr and Mrs Howe to establish a 'home' for soldiers at Sterktroom.[104]

The loss of popular fallen leaders elicited emotions of loyalty and solidarity at the funerals of popular leaders in both towns.[105] On the other hand, English inhabitants of the region were antagonised by the activity of the rebels. An inhabitant of Molteno wrote about the activity of local rebels in the Stormberg battle: "We are grieved to find many famers around here seriously mixed up in rebellion. Really, it makes one feel savage to see the way many of the supposed loyal farmers rushed out on that memorable Sunday, and took their places in and around Stormberg and helped in the destruction of our poor fellows, and then returned to their farms again."[106]

British allegiances also blinded loyalists to British atrocities. After Kitchener accelerated the burning of homesteads, townsmen were confronted by railway trucks full of women and children on Molteno's train station, who were on their way to concentration camps at the coast. Children begged for bread and women brought baskets full of food to the station. While many were moved by the scenes at the station, the morality of others simply failed. A smug report on the death rate in the camps as being reasonable, appeared in the paper, based on a consideration of "the weather, an outbreak of measles and also that inmates arrived in a bad state often due to the robbing of their homesteads by their own kind."[107] Francis Tennant also wrote an indignant letter to the editor defending the treatment of women in the concentration camps by English troops. "There may have been some incidents" but he talked to women at the station on their way from Heilbron to the East London concentration camp and they said "they had had plenty of food and good treatment."[108] Even Matthys Greyvenstein, a prominent Boer in Molteno civic life, made a popular public proposal that the town record its disgust with the slander by the English and continental press about the

[103]*The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 15 July 1901
[104]*The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle,* 11 January 1900
[105] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome,* p. 107
[106] *The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle,* 4 May 1900
[107]*The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 8 July 1901
[108]Ibid., 28 March 1902; Edwin Tennant, son of Francis Tennant was Chief of Intelligence at Graaff Reinet before returning to the Rand, Ibid., 21 March1902

conduct of English troops in 'the present campaign' of the war.[109] Greyvenstein, an elder in the Afrikaner Reformed Church, epitomises the duality of loyalties to Afrikanerdom and Queen Victoria, while providing a contrast with relatives and neighbours who were rebels.

While some women were moved by scenes at the station, the Loyal Women's Guild of Molteno, established in 1900, focused on catering for the troops in Molteno and its vicinity 'in truly hospitable fashion', especially over Christmas in 1901. They worked in the Town hall packing boxes containing foodstuffs, cards, periodicals and cigarettes, which they delivered on Christmas morning in two wagons to the 22 blockhouses in the 'neighbourhood' and were 'heartily received' at each stop. Nor did they forget the dead, marching to the graveyard where the national anthem was sung and graves adorned with flowers "to try to uphold the honour and welfare of the British Empire."[110] All this was dutifully reported in a public display of Victorian loyalist ardour by Guild officials to the Governor of the Cape, Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson, when he visited Molteno in February 1902.[111]

However, some found themselves in ambiguous situations. In the days following the Stormberg Battle especially, there were many arrests of Afrikaner farmers to the great unease of the Resident Magistrate, John Christopher du Toit. Appointed in 1898, he had become Civil Commissioner and Deputy Administrator of Martial Law during the war. The authorities, for their part, believed that while Afrikaners may not have been actively helping insurgent commandos, they were not necessarily resisting them. On the other hand, the Magistrate's tendency was to protect them.[112] In an urgent telegram, he appealed to the Attorney General:

> 'The position in which I am is somewhat peculiar. Some of the farmers, through no fault of theirs, live right amongst the enemy and are afraid to come into town for fear of being arrested… We must be very careful not to cause unecessary friction. You will agree with me that my position is of a most trying nature.'[113]

And again the same day:

> 'I don't know if you understand the position. The enemy you are aware is in part of my district. They patrol on the farms and I cannot see that there is anything to prevent it. Mr Pienaar a well known farmer close to the town complained to me that ... the Cape Police turned up and abused him most violently for allowing the enemy to come on his farm. I think at all times commonsense should prevail and allowances made for the existing state of affairs … I can do

[109] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 7 March 1902; this could have referred to the scorched earth policy and consequent concentration camps of the British
[110] Ibid., 3 January 1902
[111] Ibid., 7 February 1902
[112] SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd. In Molteno', pp. D9-D10
[113] CAD, AG 2039, Telegram, Resident Magistrate to Secretary, Law Department, 12 December 1899

> no more than tell you that in my opinion it is most dangerous and unsafe to arrest the local farmer upon the statement of natives who you will agree with me cannot always be depended upon.'[114]

Indeed, he was particularly opposed to the commandeering of stock based on the testimony of local blacks. In 1900, du Toit again appealed to Graham for assistance, revealingly indicating that "of all magistrates [he] was placed in the worst position'. Referring to Louis van Zyl's case, he again deplored the arrest on the 'say-so of natives.' Du Toit's personal sympathy with the Boer cause and the split loyalties he endured embodied the ideological and emotional confusion of many in the region. By 1900, a tormented du Toit who, having presided over the arrest and sentencing of many of his countrymen, applied for leave to go to London for an operation since he was suffering from "an obstruction of the abdominal veins and nervous breakdown".[115]

The war's impact on blacks

The effect on blacks during the war was also varied. As Bundy has shown, in areas of British control, black producers responded industriously to the large military markets.[116] Also, as has already been indicated, enormous amounts of labour were needed by the British military which had 'agents all over the country' recruiting for it. The British military also used black scouts and guides who, given the hazards facing them in border areas such as Molteno and Aliwal North and being mounted men, were paid higher wages than the usual rate of £4 to £5 per month.[117] At Stormberg, 150 armed 'magnificent and muscular Basuto watchers' also assisted in the patrolling of the area and in preventing the pilfering of railway goods.[118] Black Town Guards were also established by July 1901 all over the Cape, including Molteno.

However, as has been shown by the scrutiny of the work of Peter Warwick and Bill Nasson, blacks experienced harsher losses and experienced greater brutality than did whites in the Stormberg, due to their subordinate social and racial position.[119] They experienced confiscation of property, looting and destruction of stock and crops, harrasment, dispersal, loss of mine wages, intimidation, victimisation, starvation and murder. Indeed, with the Boer

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[114]CAD, AG 2039, Telegram, Resident Magistrate to Secretary, Law Department, 12 December 1899
[115]CAD, AG 3487, Part 2, Preliminary Examinations, High Treason, 1900-1905, 16 April 1900; also, du Toit was seen to have conducted 'splendid work during the war at Molteno", CAD, AG 3487 Part 1, Preliminary Examinations, Rebels under class 11, High Treason, 1900-1905
[116] C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, 2nd ed., Cape Town, David Philip, 1988, p. 122
[117] B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*, pp. 24-26
[118] Ibid., p. 48
[119] P. Warwick, *Black people and the South African War*, pp. 119-124, 145-162; B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*

annexation of areas, new administrative structures were set up and a much more oppressive order followed with local rebels playing key roles as Field Cornets, Llandrosts and other officials. They rigorously enforced passes, summarily resolved labour disputes and conscripted labourers to perform duties for the occupying forces. In order to ensure regular food resources, blacks were pressed into labour gangs to work rebel farms or conduct wagon driving. Many fled into the surrounding bush or hilly terrain to escape such raids. Resistant headmen were dealt with violently with floggings noted in Molteno, Burgersdorp, and many other areas in the Cape.[120] In some areas, even the disenfranchisement of blacks went ahead.[121] After the withdrawal of the Boer forces in March 1900, blacks conducted counter raids on Cape rebels in retaliation for their loss of cattle, or as an indication of general resentment. Such raids and counter raids recreated the turbulence of the region's earlier history in what now became a 'no-man's land'.[122]

Nasson has detailed how the war revealed deep-seated, pre-existing social antagonisms in the countryside between Boers and blacks. If stock theft is accepted as a form of rural resistance by blacks, the volatile conditions of war allowed far more radical forms to emerge. In the 'irregular civilian warfare' being played out in the countryside over 'alternative sets of rights and assumptions' and 'clouded by smouldering enmities and ideological divisions', Nasson describes the Treason Law as the 'resonant medium' within which a range of social and political conflicts were fought out.[123] Certainly, in the Molteno district, a range of black spies reported rebel moves to the English and testified in the ensuing Treason trials. Here, black rural dwellers formed between 75% - 90% of all prosecution witnesses.[124] This raised an outcry and murderous instances of retaliation. The Boer backlash was so ruthless that it became difficult to keep witnesses alive until trials took place especially in Molteno, Stormberg, Queenstown and other areas.[125]

The verbal assault on Soona Nadasen, an Indian shopkeeper in Sterkstroom by Wynand Schrader, a small time farmer and *kurveyor*, therefore had sinister force for Indians when contextualised by this reign of violence. Belligerently, he jeered: "You Indians have all made money in the Boers' country and when the war comes you won't [be allowed to] join the Boers [in the Transvaal]… You had better leave Sterkstroom and join some Boer force and if

[120] B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*, pp. 103, 105; AG 3487, Part 1, 1900-1905
[121] P. Warwick, *Black people and the South African War*, p. 119
[122] Ibid., 120.
[123] B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*, p. 142
[124]Ibid., p. 150
[125] Ibid., p. 147, p. 153; NMMU, Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 1900

you don't you will soon find out what is going to happen to the English." He continued to harass her for a number of days and threatening her with dire consequences when the Boers reached Sterkstroom.[126] Clearly, besides exhibiting a defensive nationalism, Schrader's harassment was also symptomatic of the growing economic failure of whites like himself.[127]

Similarly, the war also generated sexual activity between soldiers and women, mainly from the poorer parts of town who could utilise the circumstances to increase their income. However, the town council was quick to utilise martial law by requesting the Deputy Administrator to remove occupiers of two 'disorderly houses' in town.[128] Meintjes maintains that among the coloured community, there are people who are descended from British soldiers from this period.[129]

The antagonism and violence in the Stormberg was mostly brought to a close when the war ended in defeat for the Boers in May 1902. Martial law was repealed, civil liberties restored and the military sold off its blockhouses, fencing and any other material left on farms.[130] Afrikaner rebels in the Cape colony had been subdued and the finalisation of their disenfranchisement by military courts was in process. The political lines had been drawn with British hegemony established once and for all over the whole of South Africa.

Aftermath: restitution, rural struggles and urban development, 1902 - 1906

The peace was not even signed when celebrations in the region erupted for all sorts of excuses, including a Tennis Club Ball in Molteno attended by a hundred people, the usual picnics and a series of Coronation balls for Edward VII, the future king of England.[131] Although the coronation festivities were coincidental with the ending of the war, they provided a much needed release of stress.[132] Similar celebrations also took place in Sterkstroom and Stormberg.[133]

Social relations in the region were fairly settled despite the war, according to the Resident Magistrate, du Toit. In September 1902, he reported that there was "no occurrence indicating the existence of general feeling of any pronounced character affecting the public situation",

[126] CAD, AG 3487 Part 1, Preliminary Examinations, High Treason, 1900-1905
[127] *The Queenstown Representative and Border Chronicle*, 26 May 1900; Schrader, who underwent a preliminary examination for High Treason was released for lack of evidence against him
[128] *The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 2 May 1902
[129] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 54
[130] *The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 25 May 1902
[131] He was crowned after the death of Queen Victoria on 22 January 1901
[132] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 18 April, 30 May 1902
[133] Ibid., 15 August 1902

and testified to the "general loyalty of the inhabitants."[134] However, Molteno society was more fractured than this view suggested and was to be exacerbated by the inadequacies of restitution in the immediate years to come. The Indemnity Act continued its work until November 1903, sentencing class one rebels (leaders) to jail and class two rebels to disfranchisement for life.[135] There were also reports of restiveness and belligerence among blacks in the Cape, the snubbing or attacking of known Boer supporters and examples of 'scattered incendiarism'.[136] Many blacks were out of work now that the military had dispensed with them and mine work at this stage was limited. Thus, large numbers of black men and women were reported to be loitering around the town, 'refusing to work' and causing concern. Others were still employed by the military. Indeed, a labour shortage continued to affect the post war period until 1904.[137] These conditions encouraged extensive depredations of stock as reported in December 1902, by the Alberts Farmers' Association. 402 sheep had been stolen from August to November 1902 with only 193 retrieved.[138]

Moreover, the health of some individuals had been damaged, like that of the Resident Magistrate. The burden of being an Afrikaans speaking Magistrate in a northern border region during the war had taken its toll on him. Although he left for England for a six month holiday at the end of April 1903, his trials were not over as in September his wife died of consumption.[139] In 1908, he was transferred to 'more suitable climes'.[140] The health of others, such as that of Jotham Joubert, was irrevocably broken, possibly also because of the severe emotional stress of the war. Joubert, who returned to Burgersdorp in August 1903 from Holland where he had fled during the war, was 'greatly changed by sickness', and was 'scarcely recognizeable'.[141] A month later, the dreadfully dramatic deaths of the colourful 'Oom Danie' van den Heever, now aged 65 and his 33 year old son, Daniel Petrus ('Naart'), occurred within four hours of each other. Naart was dying of typhoid, necessitating the recall of his father from the Cape Town parliament. Reaching his son's bedside, 'Oom Danie' prayed with him, but pehaps because of the stress of recent years and a treason trial, died on his knees at the bedside. The stunned town of Burgersdorp was plunged into mourning.[142]

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[134] CAD, AG 1003, Resident Magistrate to Secretary, Law Department, 2 September 1902
[135] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 20 June 1902; However, in 1905 a general pardon ended all prosecutions and in 1906 all the disfranchised were reinstated on the voters roll
[136] B. Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War*, p. 171
[137] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 23 May 1902
[138] Ibid., 19 December 1902
[139] Ibid., 17 April, 18 September 1903
[140] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 4 November 1907, 4 July 1908
[141] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 10 July, 7 August 1903
[142] Ibid., 11 September 1903

Others dealt with the repercussions of the war by 'trekking' to a new continent.The Reverend L. P. Vorster of Burgersdorp and Willem Venter from Chiappiai's Klip led an exodus of nearly 100 Afrikaner farmers including women and children from Albert to settle in Argentina as 'there is much unhappiness with the British government'.[143] In 1906, they were reported to be in a 'deplorable condition'.[144]

However, Lord Milner aimed to reconstruct the country he had plundered so badly and provide a sound base for British capitalism and culture in South Africa. The Central South African Railways was established in 1903 to solve the tariff war between the different provincial rail companies and a common customs union was also launched.[145] Also, the Lagden Commission of 1903-1905 introduced a national framework for racial segregation which would draw independent blacks increasingly into the labour force. Parallel to this, the economy of Molteno took a determined upswing during the immediate post-war period. The war had spurred a number of British soldiers to stay and farm in South Africa and Molteno's population tripled after the war.[146] Whereas the population was about 700 in 1897, by early 1903, it had grown to 2350 of whom 1000 were whites and 1350 were black or coloured (see Table 9).

The increasing population gave rise to a revival in building activities during 1903 and 1904 and plans to extend the Cape Police Barracks with accommodation for 30 men and 60 horses.[147] To the north of the town, a new flour mill and some 'villas' were being built.[148] In 1904, a start was made with the erection of a new Dutch Reformed church which was to cost £7-8000.[149] New stock pens were erected which, it was hoped, would draw additional buyers and sellers to Molteno.[150] Between 1902 and 1904, the official valuation of Molteno's town property nearly doubled from £57 405 to £109 850, clear evidence of the rapid growth of the town (see Table 10). Molteno bore all the aspects of a thriving, growing place and the dream of its potential as a health spa was once again resuscitated in the press:

> 'If the virtues of its climate, especially in summer, were more widely known, it would rapidly develop into a health resort. While the residents of King Williams Town, Burgersdorp, Aliwal

[143] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 10 July1903, 13 October 1905
[144] Ibid., 22 June 1906
[145] H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners,* p. 265
[146] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 21 February 1902
[147]Ibid., 3 July, 18 September 1903, 31 March 1904
[148]Ibid., 18 July 1902
[149] SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', p. D 12
[150] *The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 24 July 1903

> North and adjacent places are sweltering and panting about the Christmas season, Molteno is gratefully cool in comparison.'[151]

Meanwhile, of the 1350 black or coloured inhabitants of Molteno, 337 lived in the town, 371 in the location and 642 at the various mines.[152] Given that 73% lived outside the boundaries of the Location, the town council now called for application of the recently enacted Native Reserve Locations Act (1902) which provided that all blacks, excepting registered voters or property owners or domestic employees residing on employers properties, were to be moved to locations. "This cannot be done too soon", pronounced the press.[153] In 1903, Mr King was the Inspector of Native Locations for Molteno assisted by one clerk and a Chief Constable, and a Headman in charge of the Municipal Location.[154] Clearly, a change in mood was taking shape. The Molteno Farmers and Fruit Growers' Association even called for a wheel tax on blacks and others who were carrying coal from the mines and thereby doing the greatest damage to the roads.[155]

Table 9. Population, Molteno, 1889-1906

		1889	1897	1902	1903	1905	1906
Whites	**Males**					580	580
	Females					492	492
	Total whites			1000	1000	1072	1072
Blacks	**Males**					833	833
	Females					820	820
	Total blacks			1350	1350	1653	1653
Total		**264**	**700**	**2350**	**2350**	**2725**	**2725**

Source: *The Molteno Advertiser*, 21 December 1907; NMMU, Statistical Register, Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, 1907

Table 10. Municipal Council Valuation, Molteno, 1902-1906

	1902	1903	1904	1906
Valuation in £s	57 405	91 370	109 850	153 680

Source: SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Molteno, 1903-1912

[151] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 15 July 1904
[152] Ibid., 27 February 1903
[153] Ibid., 3 January 1903
[154] Ibid., 18 September July 1903, 24 March 1905
[155] Ibid., 20 July 1906

However, stability could not really take off for much of the Dutch population in the Stormberg until the resolution of specific issues such as the status of rebels and the payment of compensation for war losses, especially of horses, produce and arms. Also, a future policy was needed regarding the position of the Dutch language and culture in education. These issues were the focus of Afrikaner Bond politicians in Albert who were gearing up for the crucial forthcoming elections in 1904. A promising Bond candidate was the young Advocate Henry Burton, elected as Member of the Legislative Assembly for Albert in 1902 who, during the war, had distinguished himself by his zealous and capable defence of many significant Cape rebels in the Treason Trials. He had also delivered very vocal criticism about martial law and the lack of proper compensation to farmers for war losses.[156]

The military now invited applications for compensation for commandeered stock, produce and possessions or damage caused by the British troops.[157] However, the reclamation process for the vast numbers of horses expropriated - now many on Protection Farms or Remount Depots - was to be the most contentious issue.[158] About 1500 claims from Burgersdorp alone were put to the War Claims Compensation Commission but full restitution of items taken in the heat and confusion of war was difficult to achieve.[159] Burton and Andries du Plessis clamoured in parliament for a detailed list of all the animals taken from civilians, of amounts that had been paid out and for final resitution.[160]

In the meantime, while politicians positioned themselves, farmers attempted to address the grievances themselves. An Afrikaner delegation and the Albert Farmers Association simultaneously met Joseph Chamberlain, himself, in February 1903. Each delegation was seated at opposite ends of a train at the Rosmead Junction. It was a striking metaphor, graphically representing the deep divisions inflicted by an external force which had inserted itself on a domestic terrain. With Veerasamy from the largely marginalised Indian group providing the catering, the metaphor was thus completed. The Afrikaners asserted their interest in building relations with the English, and that they had been loyal under severe and continuous trials. However, the experience of some had been such a bitter one, "that in sheer desperation men rebelled, more with the idea of escaping harsh and unjust treatment than

[156] W. J. De Kock, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol. 1, Cape Town, published for the National Council for Research, Department of Higher Education, Nasionale Boekhandel, 1968, p. 138; Burton continued to represent Albert until 1915; *South African Law Journal*, 1908, pp. 393 -395; *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 24 October 1902
[157] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 16 May1902
[158] Ibid., 20 June 1902
[159] Ibid., 3 October 1902
[160] NMMU, Cape Hansard, House of Assembly, 1902, p. 561

disloyalty." They also raised the issues of lack of compensation for rebels from the first rebellion and the return of arms as promised to those who had been in the Town Guard. Chamberlain reassured them that arms would be returned in due course. The delegation then also addressed their most pressing issue: that of the vast loss of horses and the chaos that now surrounded the Horse Protection Farms, as often no receipts had been issued for horses commandeered. Sometimes, absurd prices had been paid or horses and foals had been put into inadequate camps where many had died. Also, why, asked the Afrikaners, when compensation for horses was paid, were loyalists and rebels equally compensated? Chamberlain dismissed these issues as belonging to the past and as Martial law had indemnified the British, almost impossible to rectify. He also refused their request for a Commission on the horse question.

While the Dutch delegation attempted to make up losses, the Farmers Association, cognizant of the Bond's political dominance in Albert, attempted to consolidate British gains and the power of the English speaking community in the region. They wanted nothing less than a change in the Constitution for the inland country districts, with one Member of the Legislature elected from the rural areas in Albert and one from the towns. Francis Tennant urged that redistribution would create more of a place for the English voice. Punting the notion that race feeling had only emerged after the advent of the Afrikaner Bond and after a dual language policy was legislated, E. Hughes appealed for a short suspension of the Constitution to give Milner a chance to weld South Africa into a Federation and thus kill off Afrikaner influence. Race feeling came entirely from the side of the Boers, the delegation claimed. However, Chamberlain rejected removing or tampering with the constitution in a free governing colony. Conciliation, he said, was the answer.[161] Clearly, his visit had been a 'window-dressing' exercise for both delegations.

Adding to the prevailing hardship, farming in the Stormberg took a downturn. Firstly, the volume and prices of stock sales suddenly dropped, due to the cessation of hostilities.[162] Secondly, wool production for the 1902-3 season showed a shortfall of 50% on the usual output because farmers around both Molteno and Sterkstroom had sold so many of their sheep seduced by the good prices available during the war years.[163] Thirdly, in 1903, a severe drought began in the Stormberg region and was to plague the district until 1906.[164]

[161] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 20 Feb 1903
[162] Ibid., 24 July 1904; SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', p. D15
[163] SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', p.D12
[164] CAD, CGR 3/108, 17552, Halseton-Railway Water Supply, 27 April 1904

The associated problems were then compounded by a country-wide depression which also started in 1903 and was to last until 1908.[165] Owing to the war and the drought, Scab made tremendous strides between 1900 and 1903.[166]

The situation in Sterkstroom was so bleak that the numbers who trekked away for pasture and water rendered the district practically deserted.[167] Sheep were reported to be poor and the wool inferior. Yet, many farmers were also thought to be indolent. The manager of the Sterkstroom Standard Bank disdainfully reported, "There are several fairly well to do Dutch farmers in the district, though there are many who spend more time in the local bar than is good for their farms. The community is speculatively inclined and require to be kept in hand so far as banks are concerned at any rate."[168] The bank's opinion was unchanged in 1906: "The farmers here appear to be of a very undesireable stamp of character, unreliable and untrustworthy and require great care in business transactions. The present manager is totally unable to deal with the 'slim' (clever) Dutch around here."[169]

However, the drought forced some creative entrepreneurial solutions. G. J. Botha was a medium-sized farmer who managed his mother's farm, Naudesfontein which he would inherit on her death. He positioned himself as a middleman, bartering grain across the Kei, which he had bought off Wessels Brothers for £900, and charging customers two sheep for a bag of grain.[170] Some, as in the late 1890s, redirected their capital northwards. William Griffiths bought a 1300 morgen farm in Ficksburg, the crops being sold in Johannesburg and elsewhere. Whittal, local partner of Elliot Brothers in Sterkstroom, purchased a farm in the Thaba Nchu district of the Orange River Colony where he was reported to be doing well.[171] Some, as already noted, looked further afield, with several families leaving the Albert district to settle in Argentina.[172]Additionally, between 1904 and 1906, a sudden demand for trek oxen sprang up from the Imperial Cold Storage Company which made fairly heavy purchases in

[165] SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', p. 15; T. R. H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 227
[166] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 9 January, 2 October 1903
[167] Ibid., Sterkstroom, 30 January 1905
[168] SBA, INSP 1/1/274, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 12 July 1904
[169]Ibid., 10 February 1906
[170] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 6 November 1903; SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, 12 July 1904, 30 January 1905
[171] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, Sterkstroom, 12 July 1904
[172]*The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 12 May 1905

the Sterkstroom district on behalf of the German government. This was 'presumably for his [the Kaiser's] model colony in the West'.[173]

Having recently been through the ravages of the Rinderpest, the Molteno Farmers Association, re-established in 1902, was keenly aware of the need for government support in the matters of veterinary assistance, lectures by experts, scab, irrigation and the eradication of predators.[174] An increased level of government assistance, as Beinart has shown, occurred in the first couple of decades of the 20th century. The government encouraged local farmers in farming techniques, such as more intensive farming methods gradually replacing the older process of trekking, more introduction of pedigree animals; dairying, experimental irrigation works and the growing of more fodder.[175] Education on scab had resulted in a complete turn about from previous decades, with the Bond voting strongly in favour of a new scab act at a meeting at Burgersdorp in 1905.[176] Thereafter, whereas at the end of 1906, Molteno had been on the government blacklist for having an incidence of 5% scab in the district, this had dropped to 2.24% in 1907, 1.5% by 1909 and 0.5% by the end of 1910.[177] This was a greater improvement than the average for the surrounding regions. In 1905, the Department of Agriculture also punted the formation of co-operatives which were introduced in an effort to assist farming and avoid exploitative merchants. These could prevent farmers having to borrow on unfavourable terms; regulate distribution in order to get the best prices; provide good implements, access to good breeding stock and the results of scientific research, and offer grading and packaging of products to achieve uniformity of standards as well as physical distribution.[178]

However, the hardship of recent years and the post war labour shortage also saw the retention, in many cases, of black tenancy.[179] Thus, in 1906, a variety of independent black pastoral tenants remained on at least eight farms in the Molteno District as well as on the

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[173] SBA, INSP 1/1/274, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 12 July 1904; *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 2 February 1906

[174] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 6 February, 28 October, 18 September 1903; predators included leopards, jackals and red cats.

[175] W. Beinart, P. Delius and S. Trapido, (eds.), *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850-1930*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986, p. 29; *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 14 March 1902, 20 October 1905

[176] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 1 December 1905

[177] CAD, CIS 47, Chief Inspector of Sheep, Area under Assistant Fincham, 1910; CAD, CIS 37, S 216, Reports for year ending 1910, 1911; by the end of 1907, the percentage of sheep infected in the Colony was only 2.5%, the lowest it had ever been, *The Molteno Advertiser*, 13 March 1909

[178] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 10 November 1905

[179] *The Queenstown Daily Representative*, 1903

Halses' lands east of Sterkstroom.[180] The relative independence of the Molteno tenants is indicated by their possession of substantial numbers of oxen, cows and heifers in Table 11 and suggests an ongoing need in the district by certain farmers to retain tenants.

Table 11. Hut tax register showing numbers of children, agricultural possessions and Stock, 1906

Tennant	Farm	Owner	Children	Oxen	Cows	Calves	Sheep	Goats	Wagons	Ploughs
John Oliphant	Tolkop	Coulthart	6	2	2	2				
William Pendu	Banghoek	K Hayward	4	15	11	5	200	75	1	1
Joseph Matshoba	Chasant	GW King	8	14	6		10	3	1	1
Klaas David	Chasant	GW King	9	19	17	2	18	30	1	1
Isaac Jacobs	Kennilworth	M Miles	6		1	1		60		
September + Jonas Mbutama	Zeekoegat	T van Wyk	3	14	11 + 1 bull	8			2	1
April	Zeegoekat	T van Wyk	2	4	5	6				1
Captain + Diamond	Klipfontein	H van Rooyen	9		8 + 1 bull	4	51	39		
Anasi Crocodile	Roodepoort	JR Gregory	2							
Booi Grootboom	Fairfield	RA Murton	3							

Source: CAD, 1/MTO 15/4, 1906-1908[181]

Meanwhile, in 1905, perhaps due to the war, the recession and the drought and in order to safeguard key aspects of Molteno's economy, men of capital and standing in Molteno had formed syndicates. They were formed mainly along ethnic lines, many of their members retaining their pre-war positions on the town council.[182] The Stormberg Steam Mills was run by a syndicate of six people who acted as guarantors for credit provided by the Standard Bank.[183] Another syndicate was formed by Noah Deary, George Vice and Edwin Hall, to manage the public funds of the new Victoria Hall.[184] Deary, who had first been elected to the town council in 1900, became the new mayor at the end of 1903 and was to remain so for three years.[185] Having long maintained a high profile in the affairs of the town, he was now a wealthy man, (worth about £10 000) and as director of the Penshaw collieries, he was 'fully

[180]CAD, AG 1458, 6203, Resident Magistrate, Wodehouse to Secretary, Law Department, Cape Town, 3 July 1906; Interview, Sean Bryant, 2 October 2009

[181] Hut tax was only payable when the annual rental was less than £50

[182]*The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 3 January, 27 February, 4 December 1903, 5 February, 25 March 1904; CAD, 3/ MTO 1/1/1/4, Municipality of Molteno, Minutes of General Meeting, 30 May 1905

[183]*The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 20 March 1903; SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, Molteno, 8 April 1905

[184] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, Molteno, 8 April1905

[185]*The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 11 September 1903 19 August 1904, 18 September 1905, 3August 1906

alive to the importance of the coal industry to Molteno'.[186] George Vice, whose total worth was estimated to be £50 000, continued to be the wealthiest man in the Molteno district.[187]

Matthys Johannes Greyvenstein, a 'highly respectable and wealthy man', was a financial backer with four others of the new Dutch Reformed Church and, in 1904, the Standard Bank reported approvingly that he was 'one of the best marks (most credit worthy) in the district and one to be studied'.[188] He also invested in the district through the establishment of his farms worth £9 650, town property worth £1800, a large number of cattle and by providing collateral for his sons' store, Greyvenstein Brothers, a good 'Dutch business'. Being a member of the town council and a committed member of his church, he continued to maintain a balance between the Afrikaans and English communities.

Another strategy to concentrate Molteno's wealth in the area, given Molteno's discontent with the Albert council's administration at Burgersdorp, was to lobby for its proclaimation as a separate fiscal division in 1903 and to have its own Divisional council. Hendrik Buurmann, Bond member for Molteno and a member of the Albert Divisional Council, was very energetic in pressing for this separation.[189] Finally, in 1905, a Molteno district of 205 152 morgen was carved out of Albert and divided into a district of six wards with Justices of the Peace also being the field cornets of the wards.[190]

However, unlike in Molteno, the population was going into decline in Sterkstroom.[191] At the beginning of 1903, there were 1500 white and 500 black inhabitants of whom a large proportion consisted of children and infants. By July 1904, the population had dropped by 13% to a total of 1726 with the white population falling to 946, a staggering drop of 37%.[192] (see Table 12). The storekeepers and building trade were very quiet. With a steam flour mill, two small wagon makers and several stores, post-war Sterkstroom was drily described as a 'typical small Dutch dorp' by the Standard Bank Inspector.[193] Indeed, the commercial strength of a small dorp like Sterkstroom had always been precarious and, without the backing of coal mines, remained essentially a farming town, based mainly on the trade of

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[186] *The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 15 July 1904; SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, Molteno, 8 April 1905; Ibid., 24 February 1906
[187] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, Molteno, 8 April 1905
[188] Ibid.
[189] *The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 14 October 1904, 20 January, 10 November 1905
[190] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 110; it seems that the borders of the district of Molteno were next determined in 1932.
[191] SBA, INSP 1/1/274, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Sterkstroom, 28 February 1903
[192] Ibid., 30 January 1905
[193] Ibid., 28 February 1903, 12 July 1904

wool, wheat and potatoes.[194] In 1902, the unsanitary state of the village meant that the likelihood of well pollution was almost unavoidable and when Dr Robertson won the Sterkstroom Municipal election, there were hopes of having the water question tackled.[195] Difficulties were also created by neglectful officials, such as the water bailiff who failed to clean the water furrows, and weak water pressure in the dam which relied on natural fountains.[196] Thus, the town struggled in the early years of the century, being plagued by problems that seemed to permeate not only the demography and economy, but the municipality itself. Very poor attendance at council meetings hindered civic progress and at one stage even prosecution of councillors was recommended. The Town Clerk, appointed in February 1904, was fired three months later because of ineptitude and embezzlement of about £40.[197]

Table 12. Population, Sterkstroom, 1903-1906

	1903	**1904**	**1906**
White females		487	
White males		459	
Total whites	1500	946	946
Black females		382	
Black males		398	
Total blacks	500	780	779
Total	2000	1726	1725

Source: SBA, INSP 1/1/274, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Sterkstroom, 10 January, 5 October 1907, 15 January 1909

Table 13. Municipal Council Valuation, Sterkstroom, 1898-1904

	1898	**1899**	**1900**	**1901**	**1903**	**1904**
Valuation in £s	53 360	57 625	62 305	67 600	51 170	96 190

Source: SBA, INSP 1/1/274, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Sterkstroom, 10 January, 5 October 1907, 15 January 1909

[194] SBA, INSP 1/1/274, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Sterkstroom, 10 February 1906
[195] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 8 August 1902
[196] CAD, 3/SSM 1/1/1/1, Sterkstroom Council Minutes, 6 March 1903, 1904
[197] Ibid., 29 March, 6 May 1904

An ‘embryonic water supply’ and poor sanitation had made the prevention of disease in all three economic sectors of the Stormberg almost hopeless, especially in the poorest areas. It was especially the ‘labour spaces’ of the mining camps and the locations that spawned disease. When disease broke out in the Stormberg, it was always in the congested shack areas of black living spaces. Smallpox outbreaks occurred in the Cyphergat mining camp during the war in December 1902, again at Percy Vice’s mill in July 1903 and in the Location in October 1903.[198] It returned two years later to Molteno and to the Sterkstroom location in 1906.[199] The particularly unsanitary nature of the locations not only permitted disease to be more rampant, but also reinforced the justification of racial division.

The railway also continued to be a threat in its potential conveyance of disease. Early in 1902, at a time when Bubonic Plague was entering the Cape ports, the Molteno Town Council requested the Magistrate to order the surveillance of passengers who came into town on the railway from areas infected by plague.[200] Plague reached Burgersdorp and the Queenstown Location in mid 1903, where several deaths occurred, and a pass and innoculation office in Queenstown was opened for blacks taking their stock through.[201] In 1904, when an outbreak of Plague occurred in Johannesburg, visitors were only permitted to stay at the Sterkstroom location for one night if they had a protection pass while the magistrate placed all roads in the vicinity under police surveillance to watch out for ‘travelling natives’.[202]

Such segregationist policies often also resulted in a lack of civilized, humanitarian attitudes in terms of the treatment of black migrants returning from the Rand. From 1908, due to the launch of aggressive labour recruiting tactics for the Rand mines, there was a vast increase in the traffic of migrant labourers entraining at Molteno, Sterkstroom and Queenstown. Many returning miners only made it as far as the station at Sterkstroom before succumbing to illnesses such as Pthisis and TB. In 1910, the Assistant District Surgeon in Sterkstroom, C. Robertson, wrote to the Assistant Resident Magistrate, P.G. Fischer calling for another room to be added to the ‘lock up’:

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[198] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, G 4-1902, Public Health Report, Dr Archer Isaac, District Surgeon*; The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 10 July, 2 October 1903
[199]CAD, 3/ MTO 1/1/1/4, Municipality of Molteno, Minutes of Sanitary Committee Meeting, 4 September, 3 November 1905; *The Albert Times and Molteno News*,13 October 1905, 5, 13 February 1906
[200]*The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 7 March 1902
[201]*The Queenstown Daily Representative*, 3 October 1903
[202] CAD, 3/SSM 1/1/1/1, Sterkstroom Council Minutes, 29 March, 12 April 1904

> 'Numbers of natives proceeding in search of work, and returning home, are constantly passing through the junction. Several cases of natives being found in a sick or dying condition at the station have occurred lately. These have been removed to the gaol and the only accommodation for this class of case is an iron hut used as a storeroom for wood, disinfectants, etc. Further the need of a dissecting table for the purpose of post mortem examinations is very apparent. At present all examinations are conducted on the floor of the gaol yard. This is both unsatisfactory and insanitary.'[203]

Finally, if the lack of water exacerbated disease, in 1905, the railway brought relief to Sterkstroom regarding the water supply when a conclusive agreement was made with the Cape Government Railways by the enterprising Halse brothers, Henry and Walter. The Halses offered to pump 100 000 gallons every 24 hours to the railway at Hazelmere Halt or the Penhoek siding through pipes which they would lay, at their own expense, from their farm about six miles to the west of the Halseton station. From this point, the water would be conveyed by rail to Sterkstroom.[204] The water supply to Sterkstroom was concluded with the Halses on 18 May 1904 whereby they would supply a minimum of 100 000 gallons per day from their spring for which the government undertook to pay £1000 a year.[205] Water boring also continued with fair success.[206]

Poor whites and the growth of Afrikaner Nationalist Education

However, the war had highlighted two social strands which dovetailed in the towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom. One was the the steady dispossession of smaller Afrikaner farmers and bywoners into the labour markets of the towns, already begun decades back with the process of capitalisation. The other was the move by Afrikaner nationalists towards the establishment of Christian National Education around the Afrikaans language and the elevation of poor whites.[207]

The war and war requisitioning had speeded up the process of the drift to the towns by such 'poor whites' who now became more visible, especially in Sterkstroom, while the economic recession together with the drought had been the last straw in the fortunes of many who were barely clinging to the land. Towards the end of 1904, it was noted in Sterkstroom that there were "a large number of poor people in town."[208] Macmillan has also referred to their

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[203] CAD, PAH 35 H1/11 Sterkstroom Lock Up for Sick Natives, Letter from Additional District Surgeon, C. Robertson, to Assistant Resident Magistrate, 28 October 1910
[204] CAD, CGR, 3/108, 17552, Halseton – Railway Water Supply, Assistant Engineer to Engineer-in-Chief, 27 September 1904
[205] Ibid., Halseton – Railway Water Supply, November 1904
[206] SBA, INSP 1/1/274, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 10 February 1906
[207] T. R. H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, p. 234; by 1925 Afrikaans was to become an official language
[208] CAD, 3/SSM, 1/1/1/1 Sterkstroom Council Minutes, 1 July, 22 November 1904

exploitation by better off farmers and the high prices charged to them by traders.[209] In Sterkstroom, some absentee landlords left bywoners, who had become indebted to them, to run their farms while they followed professions in the towns.[210] In Molteno, in 1908, the Standard Bank predicted that, as many of the farmers were of a backward type, bywoners were likely to increase in number as a considerable number of the farmers' sons were indebted to storekeepers. The latter obtained credit facilities on the basis of inheriting money or property from their parents in the future, but when they came into the inheritance they had to part with it in order to pay their debts.[211] Indeed, by 1912, reported the Standard Bank, the custom of storekeepers providing farmers with a year's credit, and often at the end of that period granting a further extension of that credit, resulted in the outstanding debts in the town reaching levels out of all proportion to the capital.[212]

Macmillan observed that the process of proletarianization involved two stages, whereby bywoners would drift from the farms to the dorps for work rather than to the major urban centres, in an effort to cling to the land. They would also continually put their savings in flocks, always hoping to return to owning a farm. They would either take jobs on road works, hawk goods, do transport riding or cab hiring in the villages, or work at railway stations or sidings, usually while still having access to a small share of land.[213] In the first decade of the 20th century, there was a notable shift from English to Afrikaners in the smaller shops and service occupations in Molteno. In 1907, tenderers for gravelling of the commonage roads and cartage thereof were Afrikaners.[214] J. Jubber was a blacksmith and farrier, and J.M. Jacobs also a blacksmith, farrier and wagon and cart builder.[215] W. P. Venter was an undertaker, joiner, carpenter and J.A. Greyling, a builder.[216] Mey Brothers was a building contractor also offering joinery, carpentry and repairs, while A.P. Pienaar owned a Saddle and Harness business.[217]

Concerns about the elevation of the white poor were being voiced in the region.[218] In July, ground had already been set aside for a poor school on the west side of Sterkstroom.[219]

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[209] W. M. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem*, pp. 73- 74
[210] Ibid., p. 71
[211] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 4 April 1908
[212] SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd. In Molteno', p. D15
[213] W. M. Macmillan, *The South African Agrarian Problem*, p. 48
[214] The *Molteno Advertiser*, 11, 18 November 1907
[215] Ibid., 20 March 1909
[216] Ibid., 13 June; 22 February, 4 January 1908
[217] Ibid., 9 January 1909
[218] Much was done in the Cape in general from 1904 by the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging (ACVV), a prominent women's organization, which strove to implement "racially circumscribed philanthropic ventures"

Concern was also expressed in the council that Mr Kloppers, a street labourer, had wages far below that of a white man's and should be raised to five shillings a day. Relief work was created for two white men who replaced prisoners working on the gravel pits.[220] In 1907, the Standard Bank had reported a large number of 'obligants' on their books who only possessed loose assets, and were representative of the large number of tenant farmers in the district.[221]

Indeed, in the Molteno area, concern for the upliftment of poor whites was indicated by the prevalence of rural schools. In 1902, there were 10 'farm schools' and five poor schools, one of which was in Molteno, one at the Cape Collieries and three on the farms Noordhoek, Poortje and Groenvlei.[222] Often, however, there was a fine dividing line between the two types of school since bywoners were scattered across farms. Concern was also expressed by Hymen Woolff who reported that there were numbers of white families living about on the farms, he said, without any means of subsistence – 'not as much as a fowl to their name'. They did not starve so what did they live on? While mine labourers received wages, farm labourers did not get enough to eat and this was an inducement to theft. Perhaps this is why there was a Salvation Army Rescue Branch stationed at the poor railway community at Stormberg.[223] The incidence of burglaries in town had also increased to an extent that suggests the increasing plight of bywoners may have played a role. "Several robberies of homes are going on at the moment", reported the press, and only a few months later, "hardly a day goes by without theft going on in the town… night and day… the target [being] larders and fowl houses".[224]

Parrallel to the growth of poor whites and a development that was ultimately to be linked in the coming decades, was a move in Molteno towards an Afrikaner Nationalist Education based on the use of Dutch. This was engendered locally by solidarity with the fortification of Afrikaner Nationalism in the Crown colonies across the Orange River. This worked against Milner's Anglicization policy aimed at drawing the Boers into a sophisticated and global English world. In a context where, in 1904, the children of a third of the white population in the Cape were getting no schooling at all, language and education were to be the potential

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with support for the *volk* and the Afrikaans language, M. Du Toit, "The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: Volksmoeders and the ACVV, 1904-1929", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 29, Number 1, March 2003, p. 155

[219] CAD, 3/SSM, 1/1/1/1 Sterkstroom Council Minutes, 1 July, 22 November 1904

[220] Ibid., 6 December 1904, 17 January 1905

[221] The *Molteno Advertiser*, 10 January 1907

[222] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, G11-1903**,** Report of the Superintendent– General of Education, 1902, Statistics of Enrolment and Attendance

[223] The *Molteno Advertiser*, 9 October 1909

[224]Ibid., 21 March, 27 June, 25 July 1908, 4 December 1909

channel for converting a backward nation of Boers to the civilizing standards of the British Empire.[225]

However, in 1903, the schooling system in the Cape was hardly co-ordinated. As in the late 1890s, it was still a sprawling system of different types of schools without compulsory attendance. In 1902, there were 22 schools in the Molteno district, with only 50% of the teachers being certificated.[226] These schools consisted of the 'Grade 2' Public School in Molteno and English and Wesleyan mission schools in the Municipal location; four 'Grade 3' public schools at Cyphergat, the Stormberg junction and the farms Cornetskop and Zuurfontein and the 10 'farm schools' and five poor schools, mentioned above. These schools supported about 500 children in total although this may have gone up when post war conditions fully returned to normal.[227] New developments in education policy aimed to restructure public schools under Municipal control, and put them under Special School Boards

The Boers' intense resentment of Milner's Anglicisation scheme found local expression in the person of the Reverend Abraham Pepler, the Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, who was the first to tackle the politically biased educational system in the town.[228] The Public school in Molteno was run by a committee under the auspices of the Town Council consisting of Pepler, four Englishmen and another two Afrikaners.[229] Alive to the dominance of the English in Molteno, Pepler urged the council to expedite the matter and hand over the Public school to a general school board elected free of any political interference and entirely separate from council control.[230]

In May, angered by a lack of response, he wrote again to the council listing his complaints about the existing school. These included bad results and appointments of headmasters by those who were prejudicial against a 'certain party' so that good candidates were ignored. During this period, two principals from Scotland, R. Moffat in 1902 and C. Thompson from

[225] T.R.H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, p. 224
[226] NMMU, G. 11-1903, Report of the Superintendent– General of Education, 1902; The gender profile of teachers was 56% female and 44% male in and around Molteno which was similar to that of the rest of the Cape, *The Albert Times and Molteno News,*13 October 1905
[227] NMMU, G. 11-1903**,** Report of the Superintendent– General of Education, 1902, Statistics of Enrolment and Attendance
[228] T.R.H. Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond*, p. 228.
[229]*The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 7 February1902, 10 July1903
[230] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, A. 9-1903, Papers and Correspondence Relating to the Appointment of School Committees at Adelaide, Rhodes and Molteno, February 1903

1903 to 1906 were appointed at the Molteno Public School.[231] Furthermore, in his last meeting with the council, one member insulted him while the rest gave him no protection during this encounter – behaviour which 'sorely affected the spiritual and social life of the town'.[232] Pepler then wrote to the Superintendent–General of Education, informing him of his resignation and the lamentable condition of the school. In 1903, he opened the Afrikaner-oriented 'Molteno Gymnasium' at his own expense, with a boarding house for about 40 pupils and advertised for staff able to speak Dutch.[233] It was opened with a fund raising tea meeting and, in a clear message of Afrikaner solidarity, a bazaar was held in the Gymnasium on behalf of the poor and needy in the Transvaal.

Such moves elicited great resistance from the English sector of Molteno who insisted that it would be better to have one good school than two. This was especially so, since enrollment at the existing school had increased by 30 since 1902 after accommodation had been provided, repairs were made to the school and a 75% pass rate achieved. Why then the dissension from one man, they argued? This was a strangely blinkered question given the divisions of the war. It could not be due to ethnic divisions, they thought, as Afrikaans students had carried off most of the prizes. Could it be due to clerical intermeddling and a personality who wanted to impose himself at all costs?[234]

However, in July, Advocate Burton pressed parliament for an investigation into the educational crisis in Molteno. In response, Dr Thomas Smartt maintained Britain's only policy had been to try to educate the population within the British culture, and referred to the 'secretive struggle' of the Afrikaner Party against the English educational system, especially in up country towns. Furthermore, Afrikaans Superintendents were sought at schools if the population was mainly Afrikaans. Clearly, many school committees throughout the country were 'steeped in treason', he said.[235] Such inflammatory rhetoric, coming as it must have from both camps, percolated down to schoolchildren, encouraging polarity between the two schools in Burgersdorp where children called each other '*kahkis*', '*rooineks*' and '*doppers*'.[236]

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[231]*The Albert Times and Molteno News,* 4 April 1902; Thompson, who passed away at the age of only 34 years old when he caught a chill, had an MA from Edinburgh, and moved from the 'SA College School', to Queenstown High School, to Dordrecht and then to Molteno, Ibid., 14 September 1906
[232]Ibid., 10 July1903
[233]Ibid., *7*, 15 May 1903
[234]Ibid., 25 September , 9 April 1903
[235] Ibid., 17, 24 July 1903
[236] Ibid., 4, 18 December 1903

Two years later, the School Board Act No. 35 of 1905 was passed introducing school boards with greater financial self-reliance, nominations by a wider base than municipal councils, including the government, the council and the public and prepared the ground for compulsory education.[237] School Boards would also take over the management of Poor Schools while the management of state aided farm schools was vested in the all-Afrikaans Divisional School Board.[238] The Act did not apply to coloureds or natives at mission schools but they could apply for higher education and would then fall under an existing district school board.[239] A substantial number of nominees were submitted by both Afrikaner and English sectors but resulted in the election of a predominantly English speaking board.[240] However, the independence of the Gymnasium was to be challenged by English members of the Public School committee during the next few years.

Conclusion

The railway, the 'progeny' of Molteno coal mining, helped bring the South African war to the heart of the Molteno District. It assisted the British war effort but made the Stormberg junction the target of military action. Reverberations were felt across the region and impacted on communities economically, socially and ideologically. The mines were disrupted by military action and loss of labour, causing a drop in production and a financial loss to the local economy while farming was also severely targeted by the British military. Given these hardships, and the proximity of the region to the Orange Free State, loyalties were tested. Although blacks could avail themselves of opportunities offered by the British military, they experienced particular hardship at the hands of Republican Boers and Cape rebels.

When the war was over, reconstruction was restricted by a severe drought from 1903-1906 and an economic recession lasting from 1903-1908. Unity was also impeded by a simmering resentment on the part of many local Afrikaners. The growing presence of poor whites in the 1890s was also significantly increased by economic disruption and war commandeering. The rationalization of poor schools and farm schools was partly an attempt to deal with the problem. Parallel to this was the launch by prominent Afrikaners in Molteno of Afrikaner Nationalist education based on the use of Dutch. In future years, this school along with the existing English Public School, was to absorb children of poor whites. Meanwhile, the mines

[237] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 9 June, 20 October 1905
[238] The farmer did not have to pay fees, just provide board and lodging for the teacher , Ibid., 10 November 1905
[239] Ibid., 20 January 1905
[240] Ibid., 25 May, 1 June 1906

were drawn into a specific set of problems, some old and some new, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6 - THE DEMISE OF THE COAL INDUSTRY, 1902-1911

From after the war until 1911, the mines went into a steady decline which ultimately led to their demise as a national source of coal. This was partly due to the old problems of low orders, but also because of some distinctly new and serious issues. It is the purpose of this chapter to explore the trajectory of this failure and briefly to analyse its impact on farming and the towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom.

The coal mines reopened after the war and, according to *The Albert Times*, were back at work resulting in 'a large and increasing kaffir trade' going on in Molteno among the larger and the smaller store keepers.[1] However, the Burgersdorp Chamber of Commerce, perhaps more accurately, reported that since the war, black labour had not resumed appreciably because the military were still offering higher wages. The 12 to 13 mines in operation had thus not been able to make any proper progress, 'one of the leading Stormberg mines' only producing one third of its capacity while all the others faced similarly depleted outputs.[2]

The slow resumation of mining activity was also due to a range of more fundamental factors; namely the economic recession; the cessation of orders from Kimberley due to new low rates for Natal coal through the Orange River Colony and the improved mining and transport conditions at the coal mines of Klerksdorp in the Transvaal and Kroonstad in the Orange Free State. These centres were closer to Kimberley and could deliver coal more quickly and more cheaply to the diamond mines.[3] The Cape Government Railways were also importing great quantities of English coal while Lewis and Marks had been given large contracts by the railways to supply between 15 000 to 25 000 tons per month until the end of September 1904. The cost of their large coal was only 19s delivered to the Molteno station while the cost of Stormberg large coal at the same station was not much less at 17s 8d per ton, complained Arthur Douglass, Minister of Railways, and this was 'without talking about quality'.[4] However, the decline of orders may have also had something to do with political

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[1] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 24 October 1902

[2] Ibid., 27 February 1903; J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome: Die Geskiedenis van Molteno, 1874-1974*, Molteno, Munisipaliteit, 1974, p.68; The Wallsend Colliery Syndicate was near Cyphergat on property they purchased freehold from Cyphergat subsequent to the opening of the railway; Cape Archives Depot, CGR 2/1/321, 167/1/33794, Correspondence, 'The Wallsend Colliery Syndicate' and the Commissioner of Railways, 26 April, 3 July 1902; *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 4 November 1904

[3] Standard Bank Archives, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 14 March 1903; R. Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks : The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal*, Cape Town, David Philip in association with Jewish Publications, South Africa, 1991

[4] Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Archives, Cape Hansard, House of Assembly, 1902

underhandedness as the notorious Sivewright was back in government.[5] Nevertheless, by the end of 1903, despite the depression, labour had resumed and the yearly wages paid out to black miners at the Cyphergat, Molteno, Silkstone, Speedwell and Cape Collieries were reckoned to be £50 000 which was good for storekeepers in the area. "The conditions under which they are employed in our mines is such to attract them even though higher rates are paid at Kimberley and Johannesburg", the press smugly reported.[6]

In 1904, the variation in rail rates for the transport of coal was again adding to the concerns of the Stormberg mining companies. At a meeting of the Burgersdorp Chamber of commerce, Tennant irately pointed out that while the railways gave Vereeniging coal preferential rates for transport to East London, the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company was charged nearly double for only one third of the distance.[7] However, the Cape Government Railways maintained that they charged Vereeniging 14s 1d per ton and only 5s 8d to Cyphergat.[8] Indeed, the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company at 18s per ton was still able to pay dividends to shareholders of 7.5% in 1903 and, at the beginning of April 1904, it was able to inaugurate a new brick making plant capable of making 10 000 bricks a day.[9]

Much hope was now based on the fire-clay works at Cyphergat which produced award winning (and lucrative) fire bricks, drainage pipes, garden and flooring tiles and chimney pots, and also ornamental vases. 'This could be the future of South African ceramics if only they can get the same rate for carriage to the sea as for coal, viz 1/4d per ton per mile,' opined the press.[10] However, soon there was realization that the high railway rates would also destroy the Cyphergat Brick industry.[11] Francis Tennant complained that it showed the government was not sincere about supporting colonial industry and that Jameson's and Smartt's promises had come to nothing. Indeed, in early 1905, the government imported bricks to build the East London power station at a cost of £5 10s 1d for 1000 bricks, whereas Cyphergat bricks, purported to be superior to the imported article, would have been much

[5] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 25 September 1903
[6] Ibid., 27 November 1903
[7] Ibid., 10 June 1904
[8] Ibid., 24 June 1904
[9] Ibid., 24 July, 11 December1903
[10] Ibid., 6 May 1904
[11] Ibid., 18 September 1905

cheaper.[12] The brick and pipe industry at Cyphergat could not compete with East London, leading to its closure in 1905.[13]

The decline of the coal mines

By now a serious situation was developing in the Stormberg mining sector. Penshaw, one of the most significant mines, gave notice it would close in September 1904. Its shareholders in Kimberley cited the previous years' losses of £200 due to the continuance of differential railway rates favouring Orangia and the Transvaal collieries and cutting Penshaw out of the Kimberley market. For similar reasons it was unable to compete at the coast. The failure of the company to induce the government to construct a short branch railway to the main line, left them with serious transport expenses and added to the difficulties.[14] Perhaps the decision also had something to do with a charge laid in mid 1903 by the Inspector of Mines based in Kimberley, Thomas Quentrall, against David Knox Lawrie, manager of Penshaw Collieries, for contravening coal mining regulations. Quentrall was concerned that the only white supervisor for three drives was contractor, John Gemmell. Quentrall stated:

> 'I also found a gang of natives working at each drive. One white man could not supervise all these natives in accordance with the rules. I had to investigate last April, the case of a native who was killed by an accident in this mine. The accused was not at that time manager. Two of the shafts are about half a mile apart and the other being two miles away.'[15]

Lawrie was found guilty and paid a fine of £5 instead of opting for seven days imprisonment with hard labour.[16] The closure of the Penshaw mine in September would mean that between 100 and 200 men were to be thrown out of work. 'At least 95% of the men are the ordinary type of mining native. So, as unfortunate as the mine closing is', ruminated the paper, 'it does not imply anything like the wholesale throwing out of work of white men.'[17] This white work force would have included what the paper referred to as "the lusty British miners of Molteno."[18] However, Penshaw continued to produce under Deary, the local liquidator, and a new decision was taken to auction the mine as a going concern on 5 December. Due to a lack of interest the mine limped on.[19] In September 1905, Lawrie and Gemmell left Penshaw to

[12] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 1 December 1905
[13] Ibid., 3 August 1906
[14] Ibid., 2 September 1904
[15] Ibid., 31 July 1903
[16] Ibid., 31 July 1903
[17] Ibid., 2 September 1904
[18] Ibid., 16 October 1903
[19] Ibid., 9 December 1904

take over the Silkstone Collieries reputedly generating a very satisfactory yield during their time of working it.[20]

The year, 1905, was to be a critical year when coal interests seemed to be witnessing the beginning of a possible and permanent decline. The Report of the General Manager of the Railway was very disappointing both for the Stormberg collier and the Indwe mines as it pointed out that Welsh and Viljoensdrift coal used together only cost the Western system two thirds of that of the eastern system. Mr Beatty, the Chief Locomotive Superintendent said, despite this, the railway was now using more colonial coal and less Welsh coal than the previous six months and that "these railways are paying 50% more for the inferior Cape Colony coal than the Natal railways pay for their good coal… and it could not continue." Indeed, government had accepted tenders from the Stormberg mines of 60 000 tons for 1905, an increase of 9% on orders in 1898 and 1899. However, possibly because of the recession, cheaper prices offered by Lewis and Marks and the Natal mines also did much to push Stormberg prices down (see Table 14) to 16s 8d per ton which threatened to cause the demise of the Cape mines.[21]

Aside from Penshaw, other mine owners and contractors began to shift their focus away from coal. Dr William Calder, associated with the Monarch Collieries, reverted to a medical practice in Molteno while Hyman Woolf, perhaps anticipating the decline, had already moved to Molteno in about 1903.[22] Indeed, while state assistance for farming had accelerated, there was no parallel for the coal industry which was 'not going ahead'. Local sentiment was appalled at the general outlook for mining. How could the government destroy industry within its borders in favour of industries outside the colony? The community began to question whether Cyphergat was 'done' unless it could be turned into a township.[23] 'The government should stop outside contracts and focus on the home market,' complained the press, '[as] the Sivewright incident is not forgotten'.[24] Moreover, since colonial coal goes downhill it is more economical as opposed to Welsh coal being hauled upwards from the ports which also displaced paying traffic coming inland. On top of this, it was carried at a lower rate. Preference for the transport of local goods would foster colonial towns and bring

[20] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 8 April 1905
[21] Ibid.; see Mendelsohn for a concise analysis of the economy of Natal coal, Richard Mendelsohn, *Sammy Marks*, p. 165
[22] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 20 April, 12 May 1905
[23] Ibid., 20 May 1904
[24] Ibid., 18 November 1904

more business to the railways.[25] The Stormberg colliers again railed that the Progressives had done nothing for them; it was general knowledge that the coal topic was called the 'hardy annual' in parliament, where members even left the house when a speaker addressed the topic. Now they hoped Mr Sauer would, as in times past, explode some of the fallacious beliefs of the Railway Department such as Stormberg coal costing the colony too much. Perhaps the Bond would fight, if not for the sake of the coal industry, at least for the sake of the magistracy, which would suffer from the 'out of work native'.[26]

Table 14. Output, orders, rates for coal from the Stormberg, and output from Indwe, 1899 - 1922

Date	Indwe output in tons	Stormberg Ouput in Tons	Cape Railway Orders: Stormberg	Rates for Stormberg	Number of Employees, Stormberg	Accidents and fatalities, Stormberg
1899	132 603	76 052	49 000		1 651 (72 whites)	
1900	129 009	69 442 #		18s-20s	1 860 (85 whites)	
1901	129 819	75 991			1 314 (64 whites	
1902	116 154	69 270			1 236 (64 whites)	2 (1 fatality)
1903	133 584	73 909			1 261 (62 whites)	1 (1 fatality)
1904	106 929	65 856		17s 9d	1 613(61 whites)	2
1905	91 086	73 026	60 000	16s 8d	1 504 (62 whites)	7 (1 fatality)
1906	54 000	74 397	70 900	16s 6d	1 394 (53 white)	2 (1 fatality)
1907	70 000		59 250	16s 6d		2
1908				14s 11d		8 (5 fatality)
1909			38 600	12s 6d		2
1910				12s 6d		
1911			28 700	12s 0d	555 (30 whites)	
1916	41 752 together					
1917		8 300			3/400 (10 whites)	
1922		5 778 (only Molteno)				

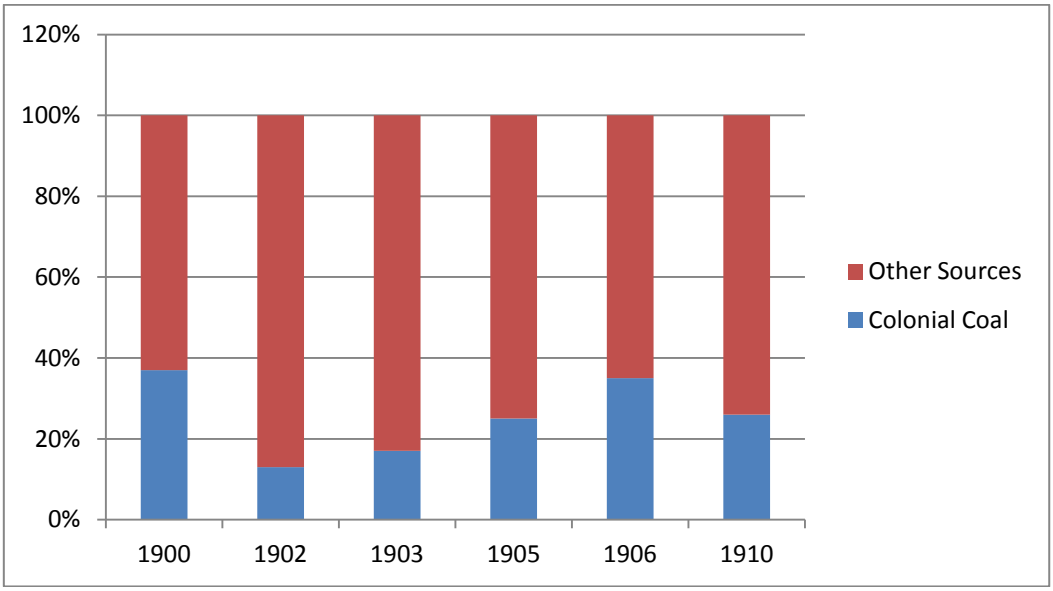
Source: CAD, LND 1/852 L15472, Output of coal from mines of Cape Colony, 1902; SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Molteno, 1905-1911[27]; NMMU, Cape of Good Hope Blue Books, Statistical Registers, 1901- 1909; UG 37 – '23 and UG 40-'17, Annual Reports of the Department of Mines and Industries.[28]

Thereafter, in 1905, although the Stormberg collieries tendered for 117 000 tons for 1906, the government only accepted 70 900 at a price of 16s 6d per ton. Colliery owners conveyed to Smartt, the Commissioner of Public Works, their disappointment at their wasted expenditure in preparing for the expected output. However, he pointed out that the total quantity of coal

[25] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 14 April 1905
[26] Ibid., 5 May 1905
[27] Wallsend was contracting under Jesse Hind and Wood at the old Looperberg mine on Cyphergat ;The Cape Collieries were active until 1905; J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 19
[28] There was no more government buying from Indwe after 1916, A. Mabin, 'Land, Class and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities; Indwe 1880-1920', University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, February, 1987, p. 14

the railways had contracted for in 1906 was 100 000 tons less than before, yet still the colonial order for 1906 was as high as 35% as against 25% in 1905. He assured them that every effort was being made to meet 'colonial coal makers' and that no outside coal was being used except for what came in at the Cape Town port (which the Stormberg mines had never competed with) and what came down in empty trucks from the North. The whole of the eastern line used colonial coal and to help the colonial mines, 30 000 tons more than is necessary was ordered which, at considerable expense to the government, had to be deflected to other systems. Should traffic improve, they should naturally be keen to assist the colonial mines as far as possible and this was the reason they had not taken any coal from the north except in return empties. 'This should prove conclusively the desire of the government to do all it can for colonial coal'.[29] Indeed, despite the relatively poor quality of Stormberg coal, the colonial government genuinely attempted to foster the coal industry during the early post-war period. The government now also reduced the cartage rate for colonial coal going coastwards.[30] However, the cost of producing inferior coal in the face of falling prices was beginning to tell. Thus, the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company's dividend dropped to 5%, the lowest rate in a number of years, while other smaller mines simply could not run without the support of the government.[31]

Figure 21. Percentage of colonial coal used by the Cape Government, 1900-1910



Source: *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 15 December 1905; *The Molteno Advertiser*, 27 August 1910

[29] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 15 December 1905; there was a Coal Owners Association.
[30] Ibid., 12 January 1906
[31] Ibid., 27 July 1906

By 1907, the mines decreased from 12 in 1903 to eight.[32] Meanwhile, the small settlement of 'the not too beautiful' Cyphergat which had developed a lively social, sporting and spiritual life, showed signs of decline in 1906 with activities winding down and life becoming monotonous.[33] If unsubstantial Cape Government Railways orders had long been a source of tension for Stormberg coal mine owners, 1907 saw a drop of 12% from 70 900 tons ordered in 1906 to 59 520 tons. This was a decrease of 11 380 for the Cape colonial industries while the Transvaal and Natal together received an increase of 63 000. At the same time, Ithe railways increased orders to Indwe by 16 000 tons.[34] Also, the Cape Government Railways offered the Stormberg mines a new low rate of 16s 6d per ton. By the end of the next year, the government required 20% less coal for 1909 and further lowered the price to a crushing 12s 6d a ton. "This is a very serious matter for the district and we expect it is the death knell for various mines" complained the local newspaper.[35] Creative solutions were pursued with Deary of the Coal Owners Association writing to the Cape Railways:

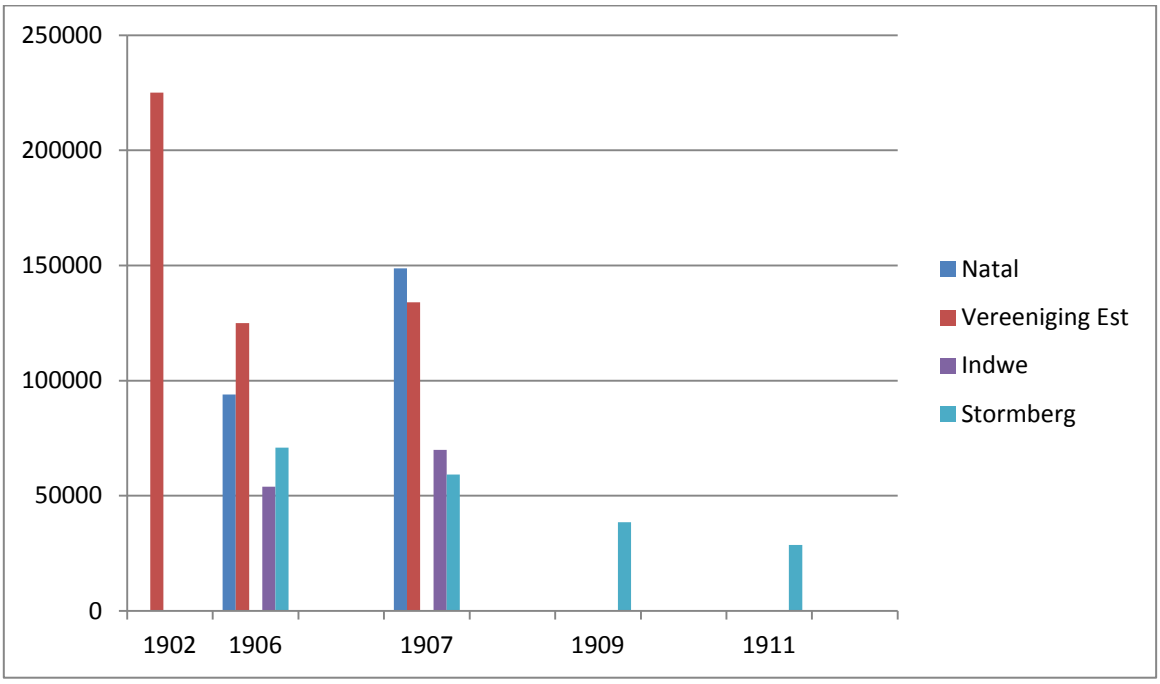
> 'We see you have conceded a special rate to the Transvaal Collieries to supply you coal. This has dealt the Cape collieries a harsh blow and so we ask for a reduction for our coastwards coal traffic so we might be able to compete for the private order trade and therefore make up some of the shortfall in orders placed by your company for the coming year.'[36]

In 1908, Advocate Henry Burton and Bond member, in canvassing for election to the Legislature under the South African Party, drove the point home to Molteno:

> 'The Progressive Party has done nothing for colonial industries. Your coal industry is dying. The price for the coal tenders for the railway has diminished to such an extent as to ruin the industry. The government say they don't need so much, but why do they take 50 000 tons from Rhodesia and give you just enough "to starve on". Your tile and brick industries have had to be closed simply because of bad treatment from the railway department.'[37]

[32] *The Molteno Advertiser,* 9 February, 28 March, 11 April 1908
[33] *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 4 December 1903; 13 May, 22 June, 3 August 1906
[34] Ibid., 14 December 1906
[35] *The Molteno Advertiser,* 14 November 1908
[36] Letter from Noah Deary, Colonial Coal Owners' Association, to the Railway, *The Molteno Advertiser,* 19 December 1908.
[37] *The Molteno Advertiser,* 11 January 1908

Figure 22. Coal contracts in tons given to key coal producing areas by the Cape Government Railways, 1906-1911



Source: *The Albert Times and Molteno News*, 14 December 1906; *The Molteno Advertiser*, 14 November 1908, 24 October 1908, 23 January 1909; SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 1 September 1911

Labour problems

Meanwhile, the post-war labour shortage at the mines was briefly rectified in 1904 by the return of labour, probably due to the drought, the recession, the drop in wages on the gold mines and a distaste for work on the mines of the Rand and the Cape Town harbour. However, in 1906, threats to the viability of the mines were compounded by a new reduction of labour.[38] The drop in numbers may have been due to recruiting drives by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association which had been established in 1900 for the purpose of channelling labour to the Rand. Certainly, the establishment of a branch in Indwe in 1905 pushed 10 000 black workers through the town on their way to Johannesburg.[39] Although the Association broke down by 1907, private recruiters filled the gap until 1912 adopting very successful, 'aggressive' recruiting methods utilising touts, runners and bribes and were further assisted by the failing economy of the reserves.[40] Jeeves shows that, after

[38] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 6 March 1906
[39] A. Mabin, 'Land, Class, and Power in Peripheral Mining Communities; Indwe 1880-1920', paper presented to The University of Witwatersrand History Workshop, 'The Making of Class', 9-14 February, 1987, p. 13
[40] Witwatersrand University, Cullen Library, AD 843, B36.1.1, Mining Industrial Board, Memorandum by Joint Council of Europeans and Natives, Henry Taberer, 1922; the NRC was formed in 1912

Chinese labourers, who had been working on the Rand mines, were repatriated in 1904, competition in the Eastern Cape created 'near anarchical' conditions in many areas. Although labour agents and their runners were required to hold licences and provide security deposits, local magistrates already overburdened with work, found it near impossible to keep a check on illegal recruiting. As the different mining companies rushed to establish their own agencies and freelance recruiters hurried to exploit the trade, competition soared and 'con men' and abuses multiplied.[41]

The lack of uniformity among agents and runners and the fallacious promises that were generated by so much competition, created great dissatisfaction among potential black miners. As a result, in 1908, Henry Taberer, Director of the Transvaal Government Native Labour Bureau, toured parts of the Cape colony to channel more labour northwards and to reassure headmen, such as those of Kamastone and Oxkraal outside Queenstown, who had raised concerns about ill treatment on the mines.[42] So too, Edward Dower, Secretary for the Native Affairs Department, toured centres, publicizing at a meeting at Lovedale the need for the Department to establish a centralized system and restore 'the natives' confidence'.[43]

By 1908, the impact of these recruiters and concerted control by the Chamber of Mines over the flow of labour to the Rand was making itself felt at the Molteno mines. Since outgoing labour caught trains to the north, the labour shortage was facilitated by the very railway which had once brought so much promise to the coal region. In November, the '*funa join*' ('do you want to join') business was still thriving and Queenstown and Indwe were 'literally swarming with agents and runners'.[44] Prospective agents needed to comply with Act 6 of 1899 and obtain a permit which reputedly was obtained by a £100 deposit.[45] Offices were set up in Molteno or Sterkstroom with some recruiters negotiating with local storekeepers to supply the hired labour with food and clothing.[46] Runners were sent into the Transkei to approach headmen or chiefs although Frank Fuller, who became a recruiter after his business failed in Sterkstroom in 1904, initially conducted the whole process himself.[47]

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[41] A. Jeeves, *Migrant Labour in South Africa's Mining Economy. The Struggle for the Gold Mines' Supply, 1890-1920*, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1985, p. 87
[42] *The Molteno Advertiser*,14 March 1908; private recruiters were finally replaced in 1912 by the Native Labour Recruiting Corporation, otherwise known by migrants as 'Teba'.
[43] Ibid., 26 December 1908
[44] Ibid., 7 November 1908
[45] Ibid., 26 December 1908
[46] Ibid., 9 January 1909
[47] Interview, Derric Fuller, Sterkstroom, 16 April 2009

The lucrative appeal of the business saw many attempts to work without permits. G. Fourie was summonsed to court for acting as a labour agent without the necessary permit and fined £5. As this was a case of great interest to labour agents, it suggests that the practice was widespread.[48] In April 1909, J. Shaw, a labour recruiter, was also charged for operating without having a licence as was M. Joint of Queenstown, who was fined £10 or 2 months hard labour for procuring 'boys' without a licence.[49] However, not all agents and runners were unprincipled. J. Jordaan of Sterkstroom secured compensation of £700 for relatives of miners that he had enlisted and who were killed or injured in the Glencoe Colliery disaster. This was the first time compensation had been paid for injuries to contract men and, praised the paper, 'reflects great credit on Mr Jordaan who worked so strenuously for five months to secure indemnity'.[50]

Indeed, a range of entrepreneurs attempted to benefit from the migrancy system, including storeowners at Cyphergat, J. Muir and Company and Thomas Gardiner. They aggressively competed with each other to secure concessions from the General Manager of the railway's Refreshment Department to sell bread to migrants on the passing trains. Hence, Gardener was particularly concerned to know whether returning migrants from the mines would be rationed or would be expected to spend the money earned.[51]

Nevertheless, the aggressive '*funa-join'* business was having a debilitating effect on the coal mines.[52] Jeeves maintains that, particularly because of the ongoing depression in the Cape, politicians, merchants and traders were loathe to interfere with the system which brought much needed money into the region.[53] However, the coal industry had much to loose. In December 1908, Deary, Chairman of the local Colonial Coal Owners Association, wrote to Henry Burton, now Attorney General of the Cape who, together with the Prime Minister, Merriman, was committed to reforming the recruiting system, asking him to use his influence in preventing the renewal of any native labour recruiting in the district during 1909. During the last few months of 1908, 332 men had been sent out of the district and 'we feel if our labour supply is further depleted in this way, we will have difficulty in keeping up our coal supply to the railway department under contract, to which a penalty is attached'. This figure,

[48] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 19 September 1908
[49] Ibid., 15 May 1909
[50] Ibid., 26 December 1908
[51] CAD, CGR, 2/1/322, 43432, 167/17, Cyphergat Sale of Refreshments to Natives, 19 February, 15 June 1910
[52] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 10 April 1909
[53] A. Jeeves, *Migrant Labour in South Africa's Mining Economy,* p. 91

if true, represented 25% of Stormberg's total mining workforce in 1908 (see Table x). The Government Gazette of 30 March 1909 showed that 140 blacks left the district to be employed elsewhere. Of these, 102 were engaged by labour agents.[54] In January 1910, in a meeting with de Waal, the Colonial Secretary, Deary again expressed his alarm at the number of blacks leaving 'the district' for the gold mines which, according to him, were 16 955 in 1907, 24 469 in 1908 and 45 765 in 1909. Deary maintained that in January and February 1910, 74 and 84 men respectively, had left Molteno to go to the Rand mines. Some farmers had ripe wheat dying in the fields while they waited for harvesters.[55] In December 1910, the Gazette showed a total of 107 leaving Molteno of which 78 were bound for the Rand mines.[56] Agents were also recruiting men from their place of service before their term of contract had expired, as reported by the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company manager.[57]

Nor did the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company have the alternatives that the Indwe Railway, Colleries and Land Company had. When labour at Indwe declined from 1906, pressure was brought to bear on tenants and lessees on company land, by forcing them to work in the mines.[58] However, the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company's farm area of 2882 morgen was let at £250 per annum on a lease due to terminate in 1917. This suggests the presence of only one well-to-do lessee or coal contractor. There is thus no evidence to suggest that the company had tenants who could be pressured into mine labour.

G. Fourie, possibly the agent mentioned earlier as having been taken to court, challenged complaints of a labour shortage, maintaining:

> 'There seems to be very little demand for labour here as eight or 10 boys were arrested for vagrancy here last month; recently I had to reject boys for being medically unfit and suggested they get work in the local mines but they said they couldn't. Thirdly, my local percentage is about 10% … I would be happy to supply any farmer with labour so long as I get a small fee.'[59]

Thus, the loss of black labour from the Stormberg mines, which first began significantly in the war, increased by 101 men in 1906, by 116 in 1907, 269 between 1908 and 1909 and 256 for the two years 1909 to 1911. By 1911, there had been a total decrease of 917 men.

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[54] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 17 April 1909
[55] Ibid., 8 January 1910
[56] Ibid., 12 February 1910
[57] Ibid., 12 August 1911
[58] A. Mabin, 'Land, Class, and Power', p. 10
[59] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 24 September 1910

As if to underline the current affliction of the mining industry, mining accidents which had certainly occurred in previous years, now peaked in 1908. An unprecedented eight accidents and five fatalities occurred. A black 'contract boy', Jackson Silwana, went missing in the Penshaw Coal Mine on 5 March.[60] A full six weeks later, he was found drowned and lodged under a rock. Noah Deary, the joint owner of the Penshaw Mine, explained that it had taken a long time to find the body because for the first 14 days of the search, water had to be pumped out (at great expense to the mine).[61] Another death of a man, who was not even named in the press, occurred underground at the Speedwell mine which was worked by John Conway. Thomas Quentrall, the Inspector of Mines from Kimberley, testified that although the mine was generally carefully worked, Conway had tested the roof area before it collapsed and should have known it was weak. However, as noted by the new Resident Magistrate, Smellekamp, the case involved 'gross negligence' on the part of Conway, since between the time of the accident on Wednesday 10am and the time of death on Thursday night 11pm, no attempt had been made to procure medical treatment. The man had died from an injured spinal cord. Yet, despite the judgement, Smellekamp allocated no punishment to Conway.[62]

Further events challenged structural components of the mining industry. In 1908, an assault was made on the exploitative nature of the still extant 'truck' or 'ticket' system where labour had to buy their provisions at the company store (see Chapter 2). This system caused much dissatisfaction among both labour and competing merchants of the region. At a municipal congress in East London in 1908, it was stated that "the boys were forced to go to those particular shops with these tickets and, if they refused to take them, they were told they were no longer required". The Molteno council, consisting mainly of merchants and only one coal mine owner, mandated Mayor Pinnoy to oppose the 'ticket' system and to propose that all miners should be paid weekly in cash.[63] The Congress agreed that the practice was a contravention of the Truck Act, Number 23 of 1887, which stipulated that an employer could not pay anyone, other than a farm labourer, in goods rather than the monetary system of the colony.[64] However, the mine owners of Molteno did not all agree. At a meeting held to establish a new Chamber of Commerce, Noah Deary denounced Pinnoy for condemning the 'ticket' system. Deary could see no other way for the mines to conduct their business and was

[60] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 14 March 1908
[61] Ibid., 2 May 1908
[62] Ibid., 5 September 1908; Smellenkamp had now succeeded du Toit as Resident Magsitrate
[63] Ibid., 8 February 1908
[64] Ibid., 14 March 1908; the 'ticket' system was finally made illegal by the Coinage Act of 1922

endorsed by most of the participants who admitted they would probably do the same if they had a mine.[65]

The coal industry was also still on the defensive regarding accusations that mine labour was the main source of stock theft. Deary maintained that out of 19 recent convictions only three had been miners. Their association was anxious to do all they could to repress stock thefts. At a public meeting, some farmers again suggested the use of compounds as mooted 10 years prior during the labour influx after the Rinderpest. But in the present depressed state of things, the mines could not bear the expense. It would also drive their already minimal labour force away. Nor did the government approve of it for Molteno.[66] The general consensus was that all blacks should have a detailed pass, whether mine 'boys' or farm labourers, although it was admitted that the police were recently defied at Zandfontein regarding a demand for passes.

Closure

While coal companies still regularly advertised for coal leasing rights from local farmers and from those wishing to develop coal bearing properties on their farms, the hope of coal proprietors was waning fast.[67] In 1909 the Cape Government Railways orders had dropped to 38 600 tons which was only enough to keep the mines moving but without further development. Even the Natal coal industry's share of Cape orders dropped in 1909 in favour of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony coal mines which were in strong competition with each other and got an order for 160 000 tons.[68] When the Central South African Railway gave the Cape Government Railways special rates to bring Witbank coal down and the latter reciprocated, the press complained, 'This is what we have to compete with'.[69] Nostalgically, the paper recalled the benevolent attitude of Thomas Price, the General Manager of the Cape Government Railways, now employed by the Central South African Railway, who had 'looked out for' the colonial mines, engaged in discussions with owners and did not brush them aside autocratically, 'even though we were being paid 50% more than we are being paid now'.

[65] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 22 August 1908
[66] Ibid., 4 July 1908
[67] Ibid., 30 September, 1907, 12 December, 22 February 1908
[68] Ibid., 24 October 1908, 23 January 1909
[69] Ibid., 23 October 1909

Five collieries now had to relinquish their contracts and the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company showed a much smaller profit for the first six months of 1909. The mining industry was no longer the mainstay of the district and much unease was felt about its future after Union.[70] In 1910, it was forecast that should the railways' price fall again, there would only be two mines left which could make an output.[71] Whereas in 1900, the Colonial mines had supplied 40% of the Cape Government Railways's coal at a price of 18s to 20s, now they supplied 26% at prices ranging from 10s 9d to 13s. The same year, the government pulled up the 3½ mile railway line from Diepkloof to the Cape Colleries, which had once been 'floated with a flourish of trumpets, [and] was expected to revolutionise the prospects of this district'. Although they had come to grief over 'over-capitalisation and extravagant expenditure', the move was deeply symbolic for Molteno.[72]

In sum, by 1910, the coal industry had dramatically declined mainly owing to competition from cheaper and superior coal in the Transvaal, decreasing orders at lower rates from the Cape Government Railways and the labour demands of the gold mines. In 1911, the railways dropped its orders to 28 700 tons at 12s 6d, such prices being less than the cost of production so that contracts could not be fully carried out. This stalled the progress of the district, warned the Standard Bank, since prosperity from coal would not be realised.[73] In 1910, the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company only sold 5287 tons of coal for the whole year at 13s 3½ d.[74] The newspaper warned that the coal industry could not be indefinitely prolonged. Whereas, ten years ago there were five public companies on the Stormberg (Cyphergat, Wallsend, Monarch, Penshaw and Cape Colleries) the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company was the only one left now. At one time, they were paying dividends of 20%, but their last financial statement showed a loss of £103.[75] In 1911, when the contract offered by government was only for 3000 tons for the year, the Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, the kingpin of the Molteno coal mines, went into liquidation on 15 December.[76] Thereafter, there was no further mention of coal mining in the press that year. In 1913 the Central South African Railways also made it clear there would be no buying from Indwe after 1916.

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[70] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 20, 27 November 1909
[71] Ibid., 16 July 1910
[72] Ibid., 27 August 1910
[73] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 1 September 1911
[74] CAD, LC 12, Limited Companies: Act 23 of 1861. Cyphergat Coal Mining Company, 1882; *The Molteno Advertiser*, 12 August 1911
[75] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 3 September 1910
[76] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 1 September 1911; *The Molteno Advertiser*, 12 August 1911

From then on, what mines there were in the Stormberg merely supplied local buyers and householders. According to the Government Blue Books, two more coal mines were about to close down at the end of 1915.[77] In 1916, they reported that **c**oal mining was still going on in Molteno, Wodehouse and Engcobo, although 'the small mines around Molteno appear to be gradually shutting down and their owners going elsewhere'.[78] During 1917, the Bank reported 'the coal mining industry has practically become dormant during recent years and no revival is anticipated'; the combined output was 9 000 tons for the year and sold at a rate of 15s per ton. Only 10 whites and 3/400 blacks were employed.[79] Vice died during April of the same year, his life in Molteno having overseen the entire duration of the coal industry's life span.[80] In 1922, the only mines still working were those belonging to small lessees on Cyphergat, and Penshaw on Paardekraal and Westmeade colliery on Westmeade, both owned by Noah Deary. Coal production for the whole of the Cape was now down to 5 778 tons and merely supplying local demands. [81]

The viability of the towns and the steady upward trend in farming

Due mainly to the economic depression of 1903 to 1908 and possibly also because of the faltering mines, the towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom struggled in the post-war years.[82] In 1909 in Molteno, there was little or no demand for village properties, no new buildings erected, smaller businesses closed and teachers' salaries were reduced.[83] The King Williams Town Steam Mill employees were put on half time for the first time in the history of the company, while municipal retrenchments occurred.[84] The Divisional School Board was sued by about 10 different creditors for non payment, as were various individuals and many insolvencies occurred.[85] Although Molteno's population had increased from 2350 in 1903 to

[77] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, UG 28 –'15, Annual Report of the Department of Mines and Industries
[78] Ibid., UG 40-'17, Annual Report of the Department of Mines and Industries
[79] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Molteno, 1917
[80] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 50; CAD, HAEC, 1/2/18/6/2, Death Register Molteno, 1913 -1923; The only mines left in the area, according to the Blue Books, were Contat's Collieries at Zevenfontein at Molteno, owned by J. Contat and a mine at Cyphergat, owned by Jesse Hinds, NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, UG 37-'18, Annual Report of the Department of Mines and Industries
[81] NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, UG 37 – '23, Annual Report of the Department of Mines and Industries; small lessees on Cyhergat included Jesse Hinds, W. Rogers who ran the New Cyphergat mine and W. Hampson who ran the New Wallsend Colleries
[82] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 21 October, 9 December 1907
[83] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno , 31 December 1909; *The Molteno Advertiser*, 7 October 1907; 13 February 1909
[84] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 24 October 1908; 9 January 1909
[85] Ibid., 18 January, 10 October 1908; 27, March, 3, 10, 24 April, 8 May, 26 December 1909

2725 in 1905, thereafter it stayed static until 1910.[86] Moreover the black population declined between 1905 and 1911 by 495, which was clearly related to the demise of mining.[87] Many people were also leaving Molteno for the Rand.[88] The failure of the mines took their toll on Cyphergat. As at Indwe, Cyphergat was almost deserted by 1909.[89]

Meanwhile, prospects for the town of Sterkstroom in 1907 were thoroughly bleak. The town had hardly benefited from coal mining so that when the drought and the recession came, the town was already weak and marginalised. Also, it had always been geographically disadvantaged by being too close to the bigger towns of Molteno, Dordrecht, Tarkastad and Queenstown which allowed little scope for material expansion in trade.[90] Although its black population increased by 300 between 1903 and 1907, the white population had decreased by 600 (40%) (see Table 17). Between 1905 and 1907 there had reputedly been a staggering 27 insolvencies in the town and the growth of a 'poor white problem'. By 1909, there had been no improvement in Sterkstroom, stores closed down and even the train service to Indwe stopped running on Mondays and Fridays.[91] Prospects of a return to prosperity were remote.

Table 15. Population, Molteno, 1889-1911

		1889	**1897**	**1902**	**1903**	**1905**	**1906**	**1907**	**1910**	**1911**
Whites	**Males**					580	580	580		
	Females					492	492	492		
	Total			1000	1000	1072	1072	1072		1120
Blacks	**Males**					833*	833	833		
	Females					820*	820	820		
	Total			1350	1350	1653	1653	1653		1158
Total		**264**	**700**	**2350**	**2350**	**2725**	**2725**	**2725**	**2750**	**2278**

Source: *The Molteno Advertiser,* 21 December 1907; NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, Statistical Register,1907; SBA, B. Conadie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', p. D 14; J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 56

[86] *The Molteno Advertiser,* 28 April 1905; with one fifth (389 - 214 adults and 175 children) living in the Municipal Location
[87] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Molteno, 31 December 1909
[88] *The Molteno Advertiser,* 25 September , 16 October 1909; 15 January 1910
[89] Ibid., 10 April 1909; although a cold storage and a spinning and weaving factory were established in an attempt to make up for the losses, *The Molteno Advertiser,* 1 May 1909
[90] SBA, INSP 1/1/274, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 12 June 1911
[91] *The Molteno Advertiser,* 3, 31 July 1909

Table 16. Municipal Council Valuation, Molteno, 1902-1909

	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909
Valuation in £s	57405	91370	122180		153680		113475	115025

Source: NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Blue Book, Statistical Register, 1907

Table 17. Population, Sterkstroom, 1903-1910.

	1903	1904	1907	1910
White females		487		
White males		459		
Total whites	1500	946	900	400
Black females		382		
Black males		398		
Total blacks	500	780	800	500
Total	2000	1726	1700	900

Source: NMMU, Cape of Good Hope, Census, 1904; SBA, INSP 1/1/274, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Sterkstroom, 10 January 1907, 15 January 1909; CAD, AG 1458, 6203, Periodical Court, Sterkstroom, ", "Magistrates' Increased Powers Act, 1905": Area of Jurisdiction of the Assistant Resident Magistrate of Sterkstroom, Alberton, Queenstown, etc.", 1907.

Table 18. Municipal Council Valuation., Sterkstroom, 1898-1911

	1898	1899	1900	1901	1903	1904	1909	1911
Valuation in £s	53 360	57 625	62 305	67 600	51 170	96 190	97 875	98 050

Source: SBA, INSP 1/1/165, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Sterkstroom, 1895 – 1901; SBA, INSP 1/1/274, Standard Bank, Inspection Reports, Sterkstroom, 1903 – 1912

However, from 1909 the progress of the agrarian sector fortunately began to protect the well-being of Molteno and continued to do so for many years thereafter. Indeed, farming in the Molteno district, despite the demise of the coal industry, entered into a phase of steady upward development, never to revert to the stagnancy of the 19th century. The drought ended in 1906 and the Cape as a whole made enormous advances as a pastoral country: the flocks of sheep and goats in the colony increased from 18.5 million in 1906 to 21.75 million in 1907.[92] Wool exports grew from £4 million in 1904 to £20 million in 1919. In 1908, Molteno was

[92] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 14 March 1908

described as small but fairly good farming district and there was a substantial increase in number of sheep and cattle, all free from disease and a good demand for slaughter stock for Johannesburg and other markets.[93] Farmers improved the breed of their animals by importing valuable animals'.[94] Also, by 1909, the profile of the farmers was now described as being 'of a good class' with no insolvencies for many years.[95] Farm property was in increasing demand at enhanced prices ranging from £2 to £3 per morgen and between 1906 and 1913 the Divisional Council values had increased from £333 199 to £480 821.[96] Poorer white farmers, however, received state assistance by way of co-operatives particularly because of their difficulty in raising credit. The Stormberg Co-operative Cheese Factory was established on 15 January 1907 consisting of farmers to the north of the Molteno district and, in 1908, a Windmill Syndicate at Sterkstroom was to be established.[97]

It was reported that traders in town adapted to the changing conditions well. By 1910, the expansion of merchants into the farming business was so marked that the loss of the coal mining connection was hardly noticed. Increasing trade in stock was facilitated by the railway and mine owners or storekeepers were now increasingly diversifying into farming.[98] As an indication of the progressive trajectory of farming in the district, a 1916 report by the Standard Bank indicated that the district had been steadily progressing for the last 20 years.[99]

The social life of Molteno also thrived. The high level of pre-war social activity was maintained, which appears to reflect both the relatively sound base of the town and a strong confidence in its progress. While the predominantly English commercial life in Molteno and the mainly Afrikaans identity of the agrarian community met in an awkward mix of official bodies, the town continued to be dominated and thoroughly permeated by a vigorous British

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[93] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 15 August 1908; SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report, Molteno, 4 April 1908

[94] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report , Molteno, 15 December 1910

[95] Ibid., 31 December 1909

[96] Ibid., 12 June, 1 September 1911

[97] CAD, LC 265, 804, The Stormberg Co-operative Cheese Factory, 12 October 1907; CAD, AGR 630, T214, Formation of Windmill Syndicates, 11 April 1908

[98] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 14 January 1910; The railway for both Molteno and Sterkstroom was also a source of agricultural assistance in transporting large amounts of stock to markets, especially in times of drought, *The Molteno Advertiser*, 11 November 1907, 4 January, 21 March, 27 June, 7, 28 November, 12 December 1908; Beinart also points out that by 1910, the movement of livestock by rail was also supplementing that of trekking, with the South African railway agreeing to cut the railway tariff of stock by as much as 50% during droughts. Thus, he states, "Technology in the shape of the railways was being harnessed to prolong and extend old practices." , W. Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa. Settlers, Livestock and the Environment*, 1770-1950, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 262; *The Molteno Advertiser*, 22 February, 1 August 1908, 24 April,1 May 1909; SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Liabilities List, Molteno, 31 December 1909; Ibid, 4 April 1908

[99] SBA, INSP 1/1/247, Standard Bank, Inspection Report , Molteno, 17 April 1916

ethos. In 1907, a variety of clubs and societies continued to be offered, such as the Masonic Lodge, the Good Templars Lodge, the Association Club, the Homing Club, the Croquet and Dramatic clubs, the Christian Endeavour, the Molteno Farmers and Fruit Growers Association, debating societies, the Wesleyan Guild and the Loyal Womens Guild.[100] An art school also offered geometry, elocution, music and crystoleum, a fashionable development in painting technique.[101] All night dances took place, such as a dance at the Tennis Club at Cyphergat in September 1907 starting at 8.30 and finishing at 6am and attended by a large number of Sterkstroom and Molteno people.[102] The newspaper excitedly reported that in the first 12 days of October alone, a Good Templars meeting, a golf meeting, a concert of the Sacred Tantata, a farcical play, a farmers meeting, a sheep shearers' demonstration, a football dance, a doll show and a Debates Concert were planned. In 1909, a Geography evening was held to add to the coffers of St Cuthberts.[103] Dances were held in honour of the achievements of Molteno individuals such as Lennox Broster who had won a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford. 'Kriskringles', fancy dress dances, were held for children with the proceeds going towards St Cuthberts Church.[104] A mock council meeting was held for entertainment during which councillors proposed outlandish ideas permeated by racist humour.[105] By 1909 and 1910, Pagels and Fillis' circuses were visiting fairly regularly and a skating rink was established at the Victoria Hall.[106] 'Wolfram's No 2 bioscope' and Barras' bioscope toured country towns arriving in Molteno every five or six weeks, and offering 'cheap entertainment in the current depression'.[107]

Meintjes maintains that Molteno also became the most important sports centre in the Eastern Cape.[108] Indeed, a number of clubs and societies continued to flourish. Between 1908 and 1910, there were the Molteno Gymnastic Club, cricket and rugby clubs, a ladies hockey club, a basketball club and billiard matches which were played between Molteno and Sterkstroom. In 1908, a cricket match was played between the King Williams Town Steam Mill and the 'Phoenix Leather Hunters'.[109] Two specifically Afrikaner clubs were also established: a rifle club and a Molteno Recreation Tennis Club. A gymkhana was held with events such as a

[100] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 4 November 1907
[101] Ibid., 21 October 1907
[102] Ibid., 30 September 1907
[103] Ibid., 19 June 1909
[104] Ibid., 3 July 1909
[105] Ibid., 26 June 1909
[106] Ibid., 18 November 1907, 27 February 1909, 22, 29 January 1910
[107] Ibid., 26 September 1908, 23 January 1909
[108] J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 64
[109] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 4 January 1908

ladies' 'driving competition', 'lemon cutting', 'tilting the ring', an 'off- saddle race', a 'thread and needle race', 'tilting the water bucket' and tent pegging with a lance.[110]A tennis club was also re-established at Stormberg with 31 women and men enrolled. The committee, probably keen to relieve the isolation of the Stormberg Junction, announced that it would be pleased to welcome any passengers who were held up on the station owing to the lateness of trains.[111]

The railway facilitated the convivial inter-regionality of sports. In August, when the football team left Molteno to play against a team at Burgersdorp, the station presented one of the busiest scenes witnessed on a Wednesday. Nearly the whole town was there, ready to accompany the team. The train had been extended by a number of coaches attached to the train engine and 200 passengers were packed aboard like sardines. Singing, the playing of whist and dancing further enlivened the trip. A stop was made at Stormberg where people bought drinks and more passengers boarded the train; on its departure, children from the Railway School cheered 'heartily'. Another brief stop was made at Rayner's Post where a few more of the older residents of the District boarded. The train finally pulled up at Burgersdorp amidst tremendous cheering. After the match, the entire party caught the train home at 6pm getting into Molteno at 8.30. It was smugly noted that the train went smoothly up the steep gradients using Stormberg coal.[112]

Nor had the reproduction of British culture in Molteno diminished and was facilitated by family connections with the 'home country'.[113] *The Molteno Advertiser* itself pursued and maintained a discourse around British identity, making frequent references to England as 'home', 'the home country', 'the old country'.[114] Such feelings were spontaneously expressed in celebrations containing, for example, farewell songs like, 'I want to see the dear home again' which was sung to a Sister Anderson returning to Scotland for a holiday; Masonic Temple inaugurations were followed by toasts to the King of England and even Guy Fawkes was celebrated in the Market Square.[115] Icons of English heritage were similarly upheld. The Advertiser called for celebrations on the Kings birthday and on Empire Day, the 24 May.[116]

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[110] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 5 February1910
[111] Ibid., 19 June 3, 31 July 1909; Meintjes maintained that in 1924 there was still a 100 whites living in the small settlement of Stormberg, most being railway workers. However, by 1936, there were only 50 whites left, J. Meintjes, *Dorp van Drome*, p. 73
[112] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 7 August 1909
[113] Ibid., 24 October 1908
[114] Ibid., 8 February, 2, 27 June 1908
[115]Ibid., 29 February, 26 September, 7 November 1908
[116] Ibid., 14 October 1907, 22 May 1909

When local Afrikaners resisted raising their hats for the playing of 'God Save the King' at a 'promenade concert', Cuthbert Pope complained that such people were 'uncouth' and, whether Dutch or English, as civilised people they should show courtesy to the Empire.[117] Miltary units such as the bands of the Second Batalion Yorkshire Regiment, the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, and the 4th Royal Irish Dragoons played at local social events and when Mr Barrable left to join the British army in India, it was as 'Defender of the Empire'.[118]

In keeping with this nationalist-cultural ethos, the Loyal Womens Guild soldiered on.[119] Their work in 1908 entailed erecting a marble slab at the Stormberg battle field on van Zyl's farm, to commemorate British lives lost; to look after soldiers' graves three times a year; to commemorate Arbour Day; to circulate papers and periodicals to the Cape Mounted Police and the District Mounted Police at the out stations at Cyphergat, Zandfontein, the Cape Collieries and Halseton and to send old clothes to the East London Ladies' Benevolent Society to distribute among the poor.[120] In 1910, the Guild sent a wire to Government House expressing their sympathy at King Edward's death and was thanked directly.[121] Clearly, although the militant actions of the Women's Social and Political Union in Britain around this time may have had some effect in Cathcart where a women's only Suffragette meeting was held, little impact was to be felt in Molteno.[122] Here there was only a facetious reference to the 'suffragette' movement when Charlotte Vice publicly complimented the womens' sewing exhibitions at an Agricultural Society meeting. A journalist commented, "we are glad the good lady is not a suffragette enthusiast, but a champion on behalf of the true rights of womankind."[123]

In many ways the newspaper did not only reflect events, but was used as a tool to unite people, motivate social participation and modify behaviours, going as far as displaying an air of proprietorship over public morals.[124] Huffy letters were published about certain girls who stayed out too late at the fair surely without their mothers' approval, with one letter noting how some girls, who could not afford it, spent too much at the fair.[125]An editorial discussed respectable young men in town with nothing to do after work. They were never invited to

[117] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 13 March 1909
[118] Ibid., 20 February, 20, 28 March 1909
[119] Ibid., 30 September, 1907.
[120] Ibid., 14 November 1908
[121] Ibid., 28 May 1910
[122] Ibid., 20 March 1909
[123] Ibid., 19 June 1909
[124] Ibid., Municipal Officer of Health's Report, 21 December 1907
[125] Ibid., 2 May 1908

homes, yet needed to be 'taken in 'by the townspeople else they will go astray and prove what is always feared about them.[126] The newspaper reckoned that part of the solution was reading the NIPS, a naieve, society teaser column, that 'got people talking' and was really 'the nucleus of an evening's enjoyment.'[127] Nude swimming by men and boys disporting themselves on the banks of the mill dam was particularly frowned upon and Percival Vice's complaint that it was 'most disgusting' was dutifully published.[128] However, from time to time, the editor did attempt to rein in the bigotry of the town.[129]

Conclusion

While South Africa prepared for Union, a major transition had already occurred in the Molteno District. Since 1892, the mines had been losing their long battle with the Cape Government Railways in the competition with better coal from England and cheaper coal from the Transvaal. This was heightened after 1907 when railway orders dropped significantly and all was finally lost when the Rand mines invaded the labour force of Molteno. As the mines closed, the society that had been built on coal was reorientating itself towards a different future, one that was still very English but based on farming. By 1913 the towns were almost totally dependent on a thriving farming sector and were doing well.[130] Nevertheless, given the establishment of Reverend Pepler's Afrikaans-speaking Gymnasium, and with it signs of the coming of age of the Afrikaners in Molteno, further research into the next 30 year period, would undoubtedly trace the disappearance of English dominance in the town of Molteno.

[126] *The Molteno Advertiser*, 7 November 1908
[127] Ibid., 1 May 1909
[128] Ibid., 21 December 1907
[129] Ibid., 28 November 1908
[130] SBA, B. Conradie, 'The Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd in Molteno', p. D

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to address the lacuna of small towns in the development of capitalism in South Africa. In particular, it addresses the lack of writing on the coal mines of Molteno, its environs and the social relations they generated. It has utilised the analysis of the economic contexts of the Cape colony and Queenstown, provided by both Mabin and Bouch, respectively, but has extended their work in terms of scope and analysis.

This thesis tracked the establishment of coal mining in the middle of the Stormberg Mountains in the midst of a quasi subsistence, rural and pastoral domain, and explains how it became a catalyst for major economic and social change in the region. It builds on Mabin's understanding of the interaction of historical phases and economic sectors in the spread of Cape capitalism, triggered by both recessions and entrepreneurial expansion. A key example of this interaction is George Vice's mining initiative at Cyphergat beginning a decade after the establishment of the military buffer town of nearby Queenstown. Coal mining in this region was coterminous with the discovery of diamond mining, the latter becoming a major market for coal along with the Cape Government Railways, both connecting the eastern Cape coal mining region with important sites of commercial and industrial progress.

Mining occurred over a brief period of 30 years, the period of focus for this thesis which demonstrates and analyses its rise and fall. While coal mining induced mine owners to imagine that they had launched the South African 'Industrial Revolution' as had happened in Britain a century ago, the quality of Molteno coal proved to be disappointing as it consisted of narrow seams and was interspersed with shale. Consequently, the Molteno mines were not able to withstand competition from the cheaper coal produced by Lewis and Marks in the Transvaal or the higher quality imported English coal. From 1892, Molteno mining entreprenueurs repeatedly confronted the Cape Government Railways erratic interest and parliament's preference for doing business with the Transvaal collieries. Without powerful representatives in parliament, such as Rhodes who fought for Kimberley's interests or Schermbrucker for Indwe, the Stormberg mines fought a losing battle. Indeed, the colonial state's reliance on Vereeniging Cape coal, which was disrupted in 1895 by a recalcitrant Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek, may be seen as a step in the northwards expansion of British Imperialism leading to the outbreak of war in 1899.

Since coal mining struggled relative to the more highly capitalised diamond and gold mines , infrastructure and social relations took on different formations. There were no compounds at

Molteno and families were allowed to live in the camps which were sprawling, harsh, unsanitary areas epitomising what Beinart has called "the grinding edge of industrial and urban intrusion."[1] Importantly, these camps allowed for the autonomy of black labour in terms of mobility and resistance. Indeed, the mines' access to a regular labour force was continually hamstrung by the labourers' own intermittent inclination to leave due to their farming imperatives in the Transkei.

Nonetheless, the coal initiative served the expansion of the British sponsored railways, which together with the extension of the telegraph system, helped to grow what Mabin terms 'urban systems'. The establishment of the town of Molteno was an integral part of this enterprise and played a major role in drawing the direction of the railways through Sterkstroom, linking this town and Molteno more closely to Queenstown, the economic epi-centre of the region, and to northern towns such as Burgersdorp. The railway also linked town and country, the interior to the coast and the Transkei labour to the Cape ports and ultimately the Rand mines.

This thesis is a microhistory of economic, political and social relations of the small towns of Molteno and Sterkstroom. It has shown how mining, urban life and farming impacted on each other. Thus, when the mines drew an immigrant population into the area creating a 'merged space' where different races, classes and ethnicities interfaced, the white settler towns were significantly transformed. The town of Molteno created the anomalous situation of a Victorian enclave on the Stormberg veld, surrounded by Afrikaner farmers and in close proximity to black migrants who were not yet a substantial, permanent presence in these towns. English settler control of the town council, business and the press consolidated a hegemonic identity which regularly reinforced Victorian norms of 'respectability', Christianity, commerce and a capitalist work ethic. Victorian values were manifest in institutions, rituals and a densely packed society agenda.

With the building of the line from the Stormberg junction to Middleburg, Molteno and Sterkstroom were drawn more definitively into the burgeoning economy of Kimberley's diamond mines. This saw the further growth of Molteno, new mines and an acute sense of hope that Molteno was well on its way to economic success. Imaginings arose of a future predominance over other interior towns and extended to visions of Molteno's high altitude and healthy air serving as a health resort for TB sufferers.

[1] W. Beinart and P. Coates, *Environment and History, the Taming of Nature in the USA and South Africa*, Routledge, London, 1995, p. 59

An important aim of this thesis has been to try to balance the larger structural framework and trajectories of the period with a sense of local specificities. Local newspapers provided an invaluable resource but also generated difficulties. In line with Benedict Anderson's notion of communities forming nations or groups on the basis of their self perceptions, by imagining themselves, and expressing it through the vehicle of print capitalism, the newspapers in the Stormberg similarly become a powerful medium. Not only did they present the dominant view, there was always the overt suggestion that it was the right view. In this way, the press becomes one of the voices in this thesis. Nevertheless, its very dominance has presented a challenge to discover the position of role players other than the English. This has mainly been supplied by archival sources, and by identifying gaps in the papers themselves.

However, the Victorian ethos was continually undermined by black migrants, who are described by their employers as having an alien work ethic, preoccupied with beer brewing and drinking and their retreat to the Transkei when the agricultural season demanded it.

The emergence of 'poor whites', who lost their access to farming and drifted into the towns, became a particular social concern. The possibility of their merging with the black labouring class in the towns emerged as a threat to the Victorian classist system which increasingly paid attention to racial distinction. Poor whites appear in the region after the great recession of the 1860s, but became particularly visible in the 1890s, increasing significantly after the Boer War. Poor whites in the Stormberg were associated with occupations such as wagon riding, ganging on the railway works, or assisting artisans in the towns after the war. They were also identified with stock theft, burglaries and with selling spirits at the mines or buying drink from the *Bovenland Togt Gangers*. The paucity of schools, the need for more farm schools and for compulsory education were felt particularly where bywoner families hung onto a rural way or life. The eventual migration of many poor whites to towns where they swelled the ranks of the lumpenproletariat threatened to undermine the racial division of colonial society.

Diseases such as Smallpox, TB and Typhus brought by miners returning on the trains from the Rand also posed a threat to Victorian sensibilities in Molteno. If epidemiology and access to vaccines were limited across all areas, isolated small towns felt extremely vulnerable to disease. While, as Swanson maintains, Cape Town imposed racial segregation in the form of locations because of Plague, the small towns of the interior, remote from facilities and often without reliable doctors, would not readily be able to contain an epidemic of any kind.

Separate amenities for transient miners, lazarettos, special location passes and location guards were utilized as a form of health cordon. Ironically, the relative neglect by the local authorities of locations and mining camps encouraged the very diseases they so feared.

This thesis has also examined how the social changes engendered by mining and the railway were reciprocally linked with the farming sector. Yet, the railway, mining's progeny, had ambiguous effects in the region. On the one hand, it brought advantages for larger accumulators in terms of an increase in property value, more rapid export of wool, animal stock, farming aids and other products, and of necessary imports and government aids, such as drills for boring for water, seed and American wheat. Both the mines and the railway expanded both the number of workers and the institution of wage labour which, in turn, was a boon to local commerce. On the other hand, from the perspective of farmers, mining and railway workers were the greatest source of stock theft. The railway also created class stratification by reducing the amount of credit storekeepers were willing to give smaller farmers and ultimately eroded transport riding, the lifeline of many smaller farmers. Thus, the development of the towns led to an increase in the size of the 'poor white' group which consisted mainly of Afrikaners. As the government put increasing pressure on the Cape Government Railways to follow a white labour policy in the 1890s, the railway exhibited reluctance until 1908. Thereafter increasing white employment was to be a national pattern for the rest of the 20th century. Thus the railway provided employment for many of the whites who lost their access to land.

Because of post-war hardships and a shortage of labour on farms, black sharecroppers and their families, many owning considerable numbers of stock, who had lived on white owned farms before the war continued to be retained after the war, flying in the face of the Location Acts of the late 1890s.

On the farms, the response to scab acts exposed class cleavages, mainly along ethnic lines between Afrikaners and English. The divisions between the groups over the scab issue played into Afrikaner opposition to the intrusive aspects of industrial capital such as the increased stock theft as well as related institutions, such as the banks and the Chambers of Commerce, which they saw as serving the interests of merchants. These issues paved the way for the escalation of simmering tensions in the late 1890s, highlighting the ethnic ideologies of the time. When the Boer war broke out in October 1899, the railway played a crucial role. The Stormberg junction brought the Molteno district right into the the theatre of war. After the

war, farmers, miners and townsfolk in the region attempted to reconstruct their lives. Initially, severe drought and recession held farming back for most of the first decade of the new century, but this period was followed by distinct signs of prosperity. This change was partly due to government assistance such as advice on scientific advances in agriculture and the establishment of co-operatives, but also due to a growing demand in Johannesburg and the port cities for beef. The rising confidence of the town of Molteno was reflected in the intensity of their social agenda. In contrast, Sterkstroom remained a marginal town.

Ultimately, the mines began to falter. By 1907, the optimism of the period, 1888-1892 and the belief in a 'new' industrial-dominated north-eastern Cape had gone. In 1908, the Rand mines dealt the final death blow following reduced orders with an aggressive recruitment drive on the Stormberg labour force. Stripped of markets and labour, the uneconomical coal mines closed and Molteno's 'colonial moment' was quickly eclipsed. A modest farming town remained, sustained by an extraordinary growth in farming. From a pastoral economy to a colonial mining region and back to a farming community within 30 years, the Molteno district had gone full circle.

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