

https://dspace.org/

Coal capital: The shaping of social relations in the Stormberg, 1880-1910

Gibbs, Pat

2014-10-22
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/15790

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

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.