

https://dspace.org/

The making of Krugersdorp, 1887-1923

Dugmore, Charles Frederick

2008-08-19T10:00:49Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/5430

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

Chapter Two: 'The Church on the Rock': the Making of a Stable, Settled Krugersdorp, 1887 to 1905

Introduction

This Chapter traces and critically examines the factors that helped to transform the violent and ephemeral mining town of Krugersdorp into a stable, law-abiding 'settler town' over the period 1887 to 1905. During this transformation, the nature of Krugersdorp's population became dramatically altered from one dominated by single young males into a more balanced demographic mix of both genders. By the late 1890s, and especially after the South African War of 1899–1902, a steadily increasing percentage of white male miners started to marry and establish families.[1] At the same time, those who were already married began to bring their wives and children over to live with them in Krugersdorp. The Milner government also supported various immigration schemes that raised the percentage of marriageable women on the Rand.[2]

While the increasing numbers of women and children in the town had the effect of civilising the rough-neck miners, this changing demography should be seen more as a symptom or as proof of a change in the attitudes of the white working class towards their town, rather than as the cause of the transformation. Miners brought their wives over and got married because they wanted to settle in Krugersdorp. This Chapter will explore the factors that influenced the miners to change their minds about a place that they had clearly seen previously (throughout most of the 1890s) as a temporary stopover that was violent, dangerous and exceptionally unpleasant in which to live (see Chapter One). It will be argued here that the most important single factor was the role played by the local English-speaking white middle professionals and shopkeepers who acted in such a way that could have persuaded the miners to commit to the town and to strike down roots.

---

[1] See L. Lange, 'White Working Class Families in Johannesburg, 1890–1906', Occasional paper, Centre for Advanced Social Research, University of the Witwatersrand, 1997.
[2] See C. Headlam (ed.), *The Milner Papers, 1931–1933*, Castells and Co., London, 1933.

The middle class married, set up families and established permanent homes for themselves during the 1890s and especially after the South African War, and so served as an example to the transient miners. They built large, permanent, stone structures, notably churches and a Freemasons Hall, sanctified the ground and held elaborate public ceremonies around the 'laying of foundation' stones that were frequently witnessed by large numbers of these footloose workers. These permanent structures were located strategically at important crossroads on the daily paths of miners moving to and from the mines to work so that the ambulant miners would 'read' the 'message' of permanency that was so powerfully inscribed onto the built environment. In short, this Chapter will argue that the middle class, either intentionally or unintentionally constructed and conveyed a semiotic message of permanence that encouraged miners to settle down in the town.

Of course the miners had also to believe that it would be economically feasible for them to live with their families in this town. Improvements in the local mining industry, growing job security, increased wages and a lowering of the cost of living all played a crucial role in persuading the white miners that they *could* settle in the town, but the possibility of being able to live in a particular space does not explain probability that these miners *would* commit to this *particular* place. Krugersdorp had to be seen as a safe, secure and pleasant place in which to live.

It was the English-speaking white middle class (with some help from the local Dutch-speaking middle class and the 'respectable' elements of the white working class) that ensured that, particularly after the South African War, streets were paved, water supplies were laid on and an electric lighting system was provided for the town. This middle class replaced a working-class miners' culture of gambling and drinking with temperance, church-going and wholesome entertainments such as the theatre, a library and a swimming pool. Criminal violence appears to have been sharply reduced through the lobbying efforts of the middle class who secured a larger, more professional police

force for the town and a more efficient court system. Parks were laid out, trees planted and the town became more aesthetically appealing to its dwellers as attractive, sumptuous buildings were erected with ornate facades and visually pleasing architectural designs. Miners, in short, were seduced by the middle class to settle in *this* town, once it became clear that it was feasible to do so.

The middle class acted in its own interest when it tried to persuade the white working class to settle in Krugersdorp. They had invested considerable sums of money into their businesses and feared that the ephemeral town was at risk of collapse into a ghost town unless a more permanent and settled population could be created that looked to the future with confidence. With their capital locked up in physical assets like shops, the middle class did not have the liquidity to move around the Rand should the town's population decline. Furthermore the middle class also wanted to live a place that was safe, clean and pleasant.[3] This class ensured that considerable powers were granted to the town in the form of a municipality, and then used these powers to transform this town into a permanent, attractive and settled place.

While this Chapter will focus mainly on the white middle class's efforts to persuade white miners to settle in the town, many black miners left the mines and began to settle in the location and backyards of shops and found work in the town itself. A number also either married or brought wives to join them there. Mine married quarters developed in Krugersdorp mines in an effort on the part of the mines to retain experienced black miners who wanted a more normal and settled urban family life.[4] Black middle class elements also appeared in the town's location and fought a battle to establish stability,

[3] A plethora of studies have been conducted on the Victorian and Edwardian middle class and their values that stress their concern for sanitation, hygiene, attractive surroundings and personal safety. See, for example, G. Crossick, (ed.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain, 1870–1914*, Croom Helm, London, 1977. See also G. Crossick and H.-G Haupt (eds.), *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth Century Europe*, Methuen, London, 1984.

[4] See S. Moroney, 'Mine Married Quarters: the differential stabilisation of the Witwatersrand's workforce, 1900–1920' ('Mine Married Quarters'), in S. Marks and R. Rathbone (eds.), *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness, 1870–1930*, Longman, Essex, 1982.

law and order over this residential space. They were supported, at times, in their efforts by the white middle class and, other times, neglected for reasons that will be further explored in Chapter Six.

Indians and Coloureds also began to settle in the town with their families in small numbers by the turn of the century. Although the white middle class clashed frequently with the Indian shopkeepers during the first two decades of the twentieth century (see Chapters Five and Nine), they shared many of the same desires to settle in a pleasant, secure and safe place. This Chapter does not look at the attitudes of African, Coloured and Indian residents of Krugersdorp, as they are the subjects of later Chapters. Yet, clearly, they too were influenced by the transformation of the town from an ephemeral space to a permanent place, and consequently many decided to make their homes there.

This Chapter serves as a case study that explores the role played by local white shopkeepers and professionals in the stabilisation of Krugersdorp, as one of the several mining towns on the Rand that underwent these important changes. The role of the white, English-speaking urban middle class in transforming the Rand into a relatively settled, safe and pleasant urban space has been ignored by urban historians who have tended to focus on macro-level processes like the stabilisation of the gold-mining industry and Milner's social engineering experiments.[5]

These approaches take a 'top down' perspective and focus on the 'big picture' of macro-economic and national political developments while ignoring the role of the local economy, municipal politics and the psychological, ideological and cultural pressures that the local middle class applied to the working-class inhabitants of these towns. This Chapter is intended as a corrective to this genre of urban history and seeks rather to emphasise local agency in the transformation of a violent, transient town into a

[5] See, for example, C. van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand*, vol 1, *New Babylon* vol 2, *New Nineveh*, Ravan, Johannesburg, 1982.

peaceful, stable, urban entity.

This Chapter is organised into four sections. The first section draws on secondary literature to identify key attributes of the middle class and the roles it played in urban society in a general, comparative sense. The second section examines the phenomenon of the 'ghost town' and explores why the English-speaking middle class of Krugersdorp dreaded this fate for their town. This Chapter also introduces the neologism of the 'phantom town' to describe planned towns that remain blueprints in order to analyse how the middle class prevented the building of the 'Robinson Township' and held back Randfontein Village's development.

This section also looks in detail at how the middle class set about building churches and other structures. It explores why they were built, the significance of their location, and public ceremonies of sanctifying 'holy ground' and 'laying the foundation stone'. This section further develops the theoretical insights of cognitive mapping, environmental behavioural systems and urban semiotics to assess how the built environment may have been 'read' by passing white miners as a 'message' of permanence that influenced them to decide to settle in the town. The deliberate transformation of the townscape to a 'legible' text that conveyed the middle class's aspirations and values will form the heart of this Chapter's argument.

Finally, in the third section, this chapter looks at how the middle class campaigned for a Town Council and then deployed their new powers to make the town habitable by improving water and electricity supplies and by building new roads. The middle class's aim, it is argued, was to lay the 'foundation stone for a town', by trying to attract investors, industrialists and labour to Krugersdorp to ensure the future of the town.

Krugersdorp's White, English-speaking Middle Class

The middle class constituted a distinct group in Krugersdorp and a contemporary

observer would have no difficulty in pointing out members of this class. The middle class was more prosperous, better dressed, carried themselves with an affected decorum, attended more refined entertainments such as music recitals, were nearly always church-going, mostly abstained from alcohol, owned their own property, built solid, attractive homes, raised families and spent their disposable income on displays of conspicuous consumption.[6]

This class, furthermore, had its own professional and business societies like the Chamber of Commerce, for example. Its members were active in local politics, often standing as municipal candidates (see Appendix Two for a brief biography of the majority of Krugersdorp's Town Councillors) and many belonged to Ratepayers' Associations and similar bodies. Members of this class took the initiative in the formation of sporting societies, charities and social clubs in the town including temperance societies (see Chapter Seven), the Freemasons and the Krugersdorp Club. Needless to say, its members dominated these societies, holding all or most of the executive positions. The more refined and visible social and cultural life of the town, (outside the bars, music halls and gambling dens, that is), was in the hands of the middle class.

Krugersdorp's middle class was overwhelming English-speaking. The earliest trade directories reveal a preponderance of English-speaking surnames in the titles of commercial establishments. Many of these businesses were owned by individuals who re-appeared each year throughout the 1890s in the same directories, suggesting that they enjoyed prolonged professional and business success and were committed to Krugersdorp as their place of business and residence.

There were, however, also indications of occasional hardship. For example, many of the early entrepreneurs diversified across a number of different businesses to keep

[6] There are a number of useful studies that further explore middle-class behaviour and values. See, for example, E. Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*, Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1968.

themselves solvent. J. Varley owned a well-known Hotel[7] but he also appears as a 'cab proprietor' in one directory.[8] P. S. May appears in 1892 as a 'baker'[9] but he had his fingers in other pies as well, as he practised as a butcher, confectioner, fruiterer, grocer, provision merchant and 'produce buyer'.[10] While none of these men seems to have been the proverbial 'butcher, baker and candlestick maker', W. Andreka, a Greek entrepreneur, came the closest as a butcher, a baker and a blacksmith![11]

The biographical details of some of the members of the English-speaking middle class can shed some light on its composition. It appears, for example, that many of them were born and educated in Great Britain and spent time in South African coastal towns before making their way to Krugersdorp. William Ramsay MacNab, for example, was educated at Inverness High School and the renowned Bell's Academy.[12] He was a pioneer at Barberton in 1886, then moved to Krugersdorp in 1894 and made his living as an 'Auctioneer, Sworn Government Appraiser and Real Estate Agent'.[13]

Alphaeus Snell was born and educated in Devonshire, England.[14] He then travelled to South Africa where he obtained a B.A. at the University of the Cape of Good Hope before moving to Krugersdorp in the mid-1890s.[15] There he served, sequentially, as Editor of *Ons Volk*, *De Voortrekker* and, briefly, of *The Standard, Krugersdorp*.[16]

---

[7] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 20 June 1906, 'Mr. and Mrs. Varley'.
[8] *The Argus Annual and South African Directory*, The Argus Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., Cape Town, 1894, p. 854.
[9] *ibid*, 1892, p. 966.
[10] *ibid,* pp. 966–7.
[11] *ibid.*
[12] *The South African Who's Who, an Illustrated Biography and Sketch book of South Africa*, (*SA's Who's Who*), South African Who's Who Publishers Company, Durban, 1908, Second Issue, pp. 77–8.
[13] *Ons Volk*, 7 December 1897, untitled; *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 31 October 1908, untitled; and Krugersdorp Public Library (KPL) *Mayor's Minute*, (*Mayor's Minute*), Mayor's Report, 1916–17, p. 3.
[14] *SA's Who's Who*, 1908, p. 377.
[15] *ibid.*
[16] *ibid.*

Membership of the retail trade was often risky and the sources are replete with the sad evidence of local bankruptcies.[17] Nonetheless it was a veritable ticket to affluence compared to the life-prospects of miners. Some examples from deceased estate files of select miners indicate that they had precious little disposable income at the point of their usually untimely deaths as relatively young men. For example, Jackson Laidlow, mine captain at Champ d' Or, was able to leave his heirs 12 pounds[18] while only half that amount was left by John Owen, a miner at the York mine.[19] These figures contrast sharply with the merchants. W.D. Smith owned the popular Hardware Merchants store of 'W.D. Smith and Co.' and left 2 028 pounds to his heir in excess of liabilities.[20] E. Hompes of 'Hompes and Seehoff' general dealers left an estate worth 5 520 pounds.[21]

With wealth came the ability to marry or to bring families to the Rand. The middle class tended to marry one another rather than 'beneath their station'. For example, a certain Miss Henderson, a music teacher in Krugersdorp, married Andrew Eschel, the publisher of *The Press*, in Pretoria. Miss Gertrude Thomas, daughter of R. F. Thomas, Mine Manager at the Windsor Mine, married Rev. E. Bottril of the Wesleyan Church in Krugersdorp.[22] Edward Laurie of the local branch of the Standard Bank married Miss Page, a teacher at the local Government School.[23] Local middle-class bachelors formed a committee and held weekly assembly dances in the Old Masonic Hall on Fridays,[24]

---

[17] See, for example, Central Archives Depot (CAD), Government Gazette 679, General Notice 752, p. 439: well-known tobacconist Adolf Seehoff, who served for a time as a Town Councillor, had to liquidate his business. Professionals could also have their practices sequestered, for example see Government Gazette 682, General Notice 788, pp. 534–49: Gerrit van Blommenstein who ran a flourishing legal practice and served as a prominent mayor, had to close his practice in 1911. The middle class was vulnerable to bankruptcy across the Rand, see D. Humphriss, Benoni*, Son of My Sorrow*, (*Benoni*), Benoni Town Council, Benoni, 1968, p. 35: 'the commercial population was in general better-off financially than the miners, but had to fend for themselves to a much greater extent'.

[18] CAD, Deceased Estates (MHG) file no. 19066, Estate of Jackson Laidlow.

[19] MHG 21757, Estate of John Owen.

[20] MHG 12725, Estate of W.D. Smith.

[21] MHG 32804, Estate of E. Hompes.

[22] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 10 February 1898, 'Marriages Notices'.

[23] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 8 July 1899, 'Of General Interest'.

[24] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 8 July 1899, 'Of General Interest'.

while picnics at the Waterfalls soon produced engagements among the suitable young middle-class men and women.[25]

Figure 2.1: Photographs of Select Members of Krugersdorp's Middle Class.



Abner Cohen (Merchant)



Henry Tonkin (Merchant)



Walter Greenacre (Merchant)



Dr. Wouter v.d. Merwe (Medical Doctor)



Charles Saner (Mining Engineer)



Johannes Stegmann (Solicitor)

Source: *South African Who's Who: An illustrated Sketch Book of South Africa*, South African Who's Who Publishing Company, Durban, 1908, pp.77, 414, 448, 489.

The middle class also had the financial resources to raise families despite the high cost of living in Krugersdorp and the economic fluctuations during the tumultuous 1890s. R.

[25] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 7 January 1899, 'Of General Interest'.

F. Wallis, owner of the *Standard* Printing Press, could announce the birth of his 'bouncy baby boy' in his own newspaper,[26] while his editor, Harry, could similarly announce the birth of a 'wee lassie' to add to 'the clan of Stammers'.[27]

As prominent professionals and commercial men who constituted the social elite of a small town, the local middle class could not avoid frequent interaction with the English-speaking miners. By their example, they must have inspired at least some of these miners to settle down themselves and raise families. Some miners intermingled with the middle class at church services while others got to know their middle class 'betters' by visiting or joining the local clubs and societies that were administered by the middle class. For example, the Krugersdorp Club had over 400 members on its books up to 1910 and its visitor books had just as many names. This far exceeded the likely size of Krugersdorp's middle class so it is quite plausible that many of these were working-class miners.[28] It appears, for example, that the miners Hallowes and Thomas were visitors to the Club.[29] Presidents of the club and office bearers are recognisably members of the middle class, for example a number of Presidents appear to have been local doctors including Dr van der Merwe, Dr Stewart and Dr Caldwell,[30] but many of the 'guests' who visited this club were likely to have been members of the 'respectable' working class.

Various associations helped to bring together middle- and working-class residents in Krugersdorp and promoted inter-class fraternisation on ethnic grounds. The Caledonian Society, for example, brought together those residents who had a Scottish background including W. Ramsay MacNab, Auctioneer, and R. Breckenridge, Engine Driver. The

[26] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, undated, 'Of General Interest'.
[27] *The Standard Krugersdorp*, 25 March1899, 'Of General Interest'.
[28] It is very difficult to discern the occupations of such visitors as the baptism and marriage registers of Krugersdorp's churches do not record occupations as they did in Johannesburg.
[29] This was discerned by comparing the Krugersdorp Club Visitor's Book, 1902–1912, with the Register of European Burials in Krugersdorp Cemetery, 1904–1929, and finally deceased estate files, see MHG 16214, Estate of Hallowes and MHG 16786, Estate of Thomas.
[30] This is recorded on a wooden plaque affixed to the east wall of the Krugersdorp Club.

latter Scotsman, who served as the 'Chieftain' of the Krugersdorp Caledonian Society,[31] later became a member of the Town Council.[32]

Middle-class elements also dominated sports clubs and interacted with working-class white residents as executive officers of these bodies. For example, H. S. Kingdon, a local merchant,[33] served as the secretary of the Krugersdorp Wanderers Club, the Association Football Club, Rugby Club and Baseball Club.[34] He was also a member of the Krugersdorp Chamber of Commerce and became a Town Councillor after the South African War.[35] The West Rand Club, the Oddfellows League,[36] the Freemasons, the Krugersdorp Debating and Literary Society and many more similar societies brought the transient English-speaking white workers into contact with a settled middle class and their families.

It seems plausible that many of the 'respectable' members of the working class would mix with the middle class particularly if they had higher aspirations. It appears likely, furthermore, that they would have been influenced to consider marrying and setting up families themselves in Krugersdorp once economic conditions allowed for it. In this way, the local middle class may have convinced some members of the local working class to settle and establish homes in this mining town rather than elsewhere on the Rand.

Many of these workers would also have interacted with the middle class at church services. The Anglican Church was the central institution of the English-speaking middle class. A number of middle class social gatherings were centred on the Church.[37] It was this sense of purpose and the Christian metaphor of building a house on rock that

[31] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 24 February 1920, untitled.
[32] *The Standard*, Krugersdorp, 17 November 1917, untitled.
[33] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 October 1910, untitled.
[34] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 27 February 1909, untitled.
[35] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 22 October1910, untitled.
[36] The 'Odd Fellows' are referred to as a 'working man's club' in Worger's study of labour in Kimberley which, like the Foresters, constituted a 'friendly society' that aided workers in hard times and helped their families in the event of death. See Worger, *City of Diamonds*, pp. 156–7.
[37] See, for example, *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 17 December 1898, 'English Church Bazaar'.

inspired the middle class with hope. It gave them the determination that was necessary to build a solid town that could resist those forces that threatened to collapse Krugersdorp into a ghost town. This will be the focus of the following section.

Ghost Towns

During its early years, Krugersdorp's business elite was constantly afraid that Krugersdorp might collapse into a ghost town. As pointed out in the previous chapter, mine camps could be abandoned virtually overnight when the gold ran out. In the Western United States there are numerous ghost towns such as Bodie, California and Bullfrog, Nevada, where all that remains are a 'few wretched shacks'.[38] Some of these towns had been large, established urban concentrations such as White Oaks in New Mexico, which reached its peak in 1893 with a main street 100 feet wide and half a mile long and a population of 4 000.[39] In some cases towns have vanished without trace with even the sites forgotten by their former inhabitants. Silverberg, who conducted a detailed study of ghost towns, describes the process that transformed once vibrant, bustling towns into abandoned wrecks:

> When the gold gave out, the town died…miners drifted away…until only the diehards remained.…Windows broke and never were repaired. Wild creatures moved into the abandoned cabins. The gravestones of heroes toppled in the town cemetery.…In time, the hard core of settlers also moved away, leaving just the dead husk of the town.[40]

The names of many of the ghost towns are evocative of transience, hard drinking, chance and violence: 'Hangtown', 'You Bet', 'Cut Throat', 'Boomo Flat', 'Fleatown', 'Whisky Gulch', 'Poison Switch' and 'Shirttail Canyon'.[41] The Pacific Northwest had its share of such abandoned urban wastelands and one study found fifteen ghost towns in Oregon, ten in Washington twelve in Idaho, ten in Wyoming and no less than fourteen

[38] G. Malamud, *Boomtown Communities* (*Boomtown*), Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York, 1984, p. 44.
[39] *ibid*., p. 43.
[40] R. Silverberg, *Ghost Towns of American West*, Thomas Y. Cromwell Co., New York, 1968, p. 2.

in Montana.[42] All mining towns had the potential to become ghost towns. It is more illuminating, indeed, to ask why some of these towns survived rather than why so many died.

In trying to understand the making of Krugersdorp, it is these 'survivors' that have to be analysed. For example, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Denver all grew into mature, stable cities. Both San Francisco and Los Angeles were, however, port towns that boomed indirectly due to mineral discoveries in their hinterlands, as was the case with Melbourne in Australia and both Cape Town and Port Elizabeth on South Africa's coast. Denver, like Chicago, benefited as a market town and from its strategic, isolated position on the Rockies, just as Chicago dominated communication networks to the East coast. This suggests that a key factor that separates the mature, stable towns from the ephemeral ghost towns, is economic viability and this is illustrated in the example of Kocksoord, a neighbour of Krugersdorp that briefly promised to become a substantial town before collapsing into a ghost town.

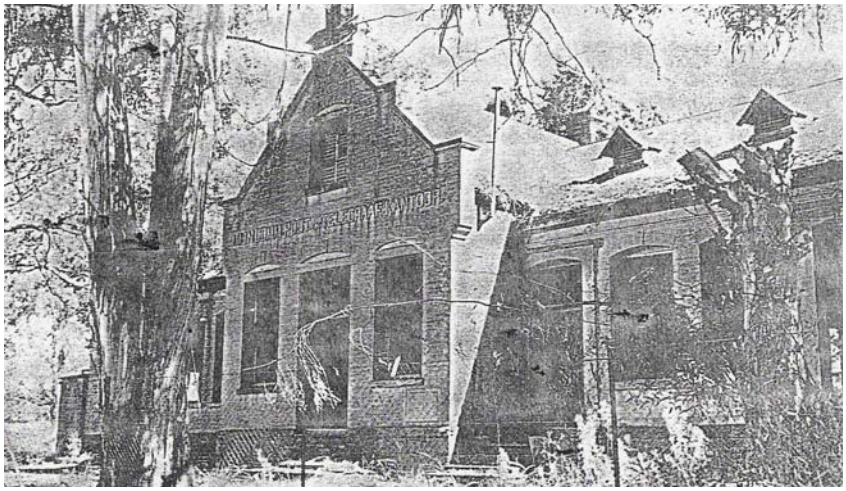
Kocksoord was the product of a petition for a town signed by local farmers and stage-managed by Mr Wolmarans, a member of the Volksraad in the late 1890s.[43] A site was purchased for 12 000 pounds, a township was laid out, and at its centre was built 'a most pretentious public building of solid masonry', which contained a Court House, a post and Telegraph Office and a Police Station, which cost 6000 pounds.[44] The walls were 20 feet high and 18 inches thick **(see Figure 2.2).** Stands were put up for sale and the projected 'sign' of permanence inscribed into the built environment by the building of substantial, heavy buildings, had the intended effect on the public which 'read' this

[41] Malamud, *Boomtown*, p. 44.
[42] N. Weis, *Ghost Towns of the Northwest*, Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho, 1971 cited in Malamud, *Boomtown*, p. 45. For Australian case studies see G. Farwell, *Ghost Towns of Australia*, Rigby, Adelaide, revised and enlarged edition, 1976. For South African examples, see E. Rosenthal, *Shovel and Sieve*, Howard Timmins for George Allen and Unwin, London, n.d., Chapter XVI, pp. 110–116.
[43] Randfontein Municipality, *Randfontein 50 Years*, 1929–79, 1979, p. 44 .
[44] *ibid.*

'message' and were duped into believing that the little town had a future. An article in a local newspaper described the gullibility of those who bought stands in Kocksoord:

> … the public presumably judging that the Government would not have gone to this expense were they not certain that considerable mining developments were immediately to be made in the district.[45]

Figure 2.2: The Derelict Kocksoord Court House, a Post and Telegraph Office and a Police Station



Source: Randfontein Public Library, Randfontein Municipal Library, *Randfontein – 50 Years, 1929–1979*, Randfontein Municipality, Randfontein, p. 28.

Formatted: Font: Italic

Deleted: -

The town, however, was never occupied and no mining developments took place in the area. It was far from the main Witwatersrand reef and it was unlikely that anything other than some alluvial gold would be found there. Stand holders were soon unable to pay their stand licences which then reverted to the Government. In 1905, the new Milner government tried to re-auction the stands to the public but were unable to attract a

[45] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 29 April 1905, 'Township goes a-begging'.

single bidder, even at the low price of seven pounds a stand.[46]

The site was too isolated and too far from centres of population for shopkeepers or industrialists to be interested. It was, after all, four miles from the Randfontein Village and 'an hour's gallop' from Krugersdorp. Thus the semiotic 'weight' of a substantial built environment was not in itself sufficient to 'anchor' this town into a settled, permanent urban space. Economic viability was a pre-requisite. Kocksoord nevertheless stood as a grim reminder to Krugersdorp what could happen if any of its economic props were removed.

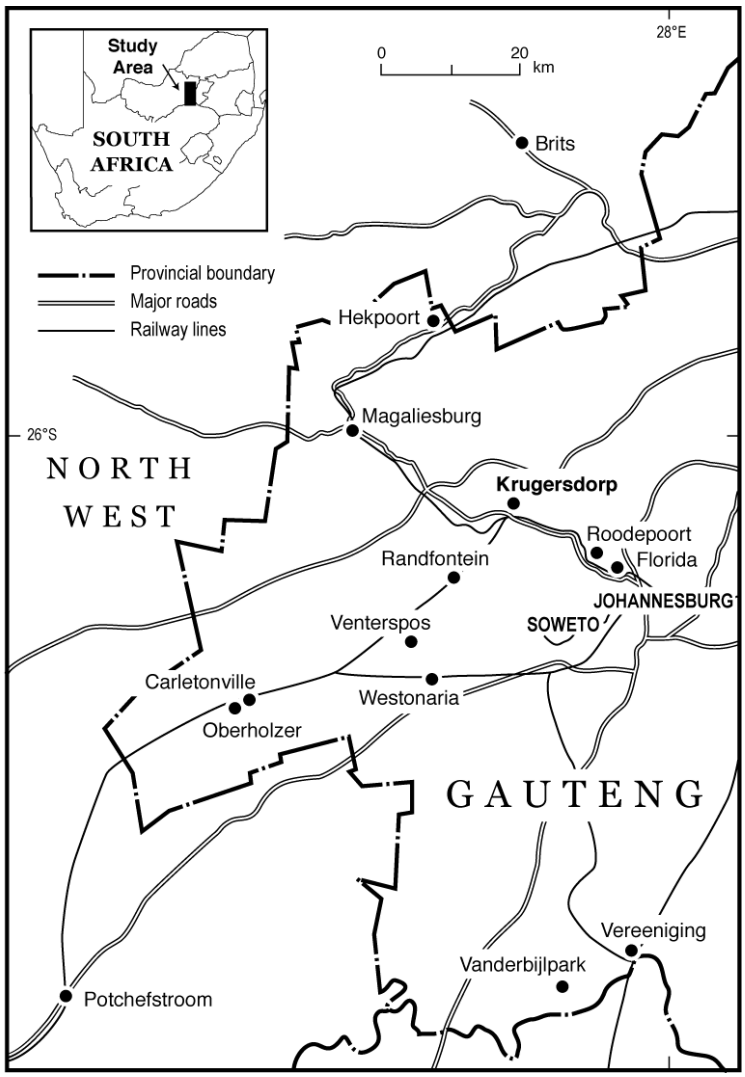
'Phantom Towns'

A second major threat to Krugersdorp's viability was the proposed township near the Randfontein mines that was to be called 'Randfontein'. This remained on the blueprints throughout the 1890s. The proposed Randfontein or 'Robinson' Township, its alternative proposed name, enjoyed all the basic economic pre-requisites for a successful town: it was close to existing mines grounds, the Randfontein railway station and the Randfontein Village. The railway line provided a communication link to the rest of the Rand and ample good land was available to be laid out in stands **(see Map One).** Shopkeepers and professionals would find it easy to establish their businesses and practices there and this is precisely why the local middle class in Krugersdorp could not allow Robinson to turn his plans into reality.

The proposed site for Randfontein on the far West Rand was known as *Rietpan* ('Reed water lands') by the boers or *Mhlangeni*' ('place of Reeds') by Africans who had long settled in the area.[47] It was flat and well provided with water, the two key requirements for a township site. It also had ample potential customers due to the proximity of the enormous Randfontein mines. For example, the South Randfontein mine had 1 798

[46] *ibid.*
[47] Randfontein Public Library (RPL) J.J. Snyman,'Kort Geskiedenis van Randfontein en Distrik', Randfontein Stadsraad, Randfontein, 1952, Randfontein Municipal Library, p. 28.

Map One: Krugersdorp and Randfontein in the Context of the Witwatersrand and Surrounding Farms as it Appears Today.



Source: CD 1344, AG 4653, Map of Krugersdorp and surrounding farms, *c.*1906, adapted to a modern view.

black miners.[48] The standard ratio of white to black mineworkers was at least 1:10 at this time, so there were probably about 300 to 400 white men working in the area, more than sufficient for the purposes of supporting a town. There were ample prospects for commercial and industrial development, for boarding houses, inns, taverns, general dealers, music houses to service the miners and for administrative buildings of all kinds. A town with its own bank, hospital and gaol could easily have been erected there in the late 1890s, particularly after the Randfontein railway station was built there in 1896.[49]

J. B. Robinson, a wealthy local mining magnate, wanted to diversify his investments and the establishment of a town near his mines offered many appealing prospects. To achieve this goal, J.B. Robinson entrusted J.W.S. Langerman, his right hand man and well connected politically (he was later to serve as an M.P. for the Randfontein constituency), to secure the necessary permission.

Langerman wrote to the State Secretary of the Transvaal Republic in February 1897 and put in an application for a 'stand township'.[50] Robinson added, in another letter, that the amount of work that was being carried out on Randfontein meant that the proposed township would be an ideal location for government offices.[51] He also approached a certain Mr van Boeschoten and asked him to place this application before the President and his executive.[52]

Robinson did his best to sell the idea of a township in the area. He proposed to use a portion of the farm Middelvlei, owned by his company, to erect a 'stand township' and declared himself willing to give the government stands on which they could erect Government buildings. He pointed out that the site at Randfontein was the 'centre of the mining industry on the West Rand' ('het middelpunt van de myn industrie op de West

48 *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 16 April 1904, untitled.
49 *Ons Volk*, 25 April 1896, 'Plaatselyk and Algemeen', 'De NAZM ontwaakt'.
50 CAD, SS 6183, R1707/97, letter: J.W. Langerman to the 'Staatspresident en leden van Uitvoerende Raad', 2 February 1897.
51 *ibid*., R3390/97, letter: Staatssekretaris to J.B. Robinson, undated.
52 *ibid.*, J.B. Robinson to Mr. van Boeschoten, 8 March 1897.

Randt') and that within eighteen months there would be twenty-one separate mining companies operating in the area with an output of over two hundred pounds sterling a month.[53]

He claimed that it was vital that government buildings be placed nearby to make it easy for these companies to obtain licences and passes for black mineworkers. Robinson's Randfontein company directors had come to an understanding with the Republican railway company, the NZASM, whereby land was provided at the Randfontein station for the railway company to build necessary structures and already two stations and a number of houses had been laid out. Plans were made to build a large railway works near the station.[54] When these overtures failed to yield the expected permission, Robinson appealed again in a telegram to Dr Leyds, the State Secretary in March.[55] By early April he had received no reply and expressed concern about this in a letter to van Boeschoten.[56]

It is not difficult to see why he failed since the very reasons that made town economically viable and administratively desirable, were precisely the reasons why Krugersdorp's middle class feared its establishment. The local English-speaking commercial and professional elite and their local Dutch-speaking counterparts as well as local Dutch officials were all threatened by the possibility of a new town being built close to Robinson's mines as it would divert customers and clients, causing Krugersdorp to shrink, perhaps, to a point of becoming a ghost town.

---

[53] *ibid*.

[54] *ibid*., letter: J.B. Robinson to State President and 'leden van de Uitvoerende Raad', 8 March 1897.

[55] *ibid*., telegram: J.B. Robinson to Dr. Leyds, SS, 23 March 1897. Robinson pointed out that van Boeschoten had been confined to bed due to an unfortunate accident and asked Leyds to place the letter before the Executive. Again, he emphasised that he was 'willing to give them all the necessary stands for government purposes on Randfontein'.

[56] *ibid*, J.B. Robinson to C. van Boeschoten, 5 April 1897. Boeschoten appears to have served a similar function as Alois H. Nellmapius who was close to members of the government and especially President Kruger and who was often approached by those who 'wish to obtain some privilege' who would ask Nellmapius 'to intercede for them', see H. Kaye, *The Tycoon and the President: the life and the times of Alois H. Nellmapius, 1847–1893*, MacMillan, Johannesburg, 1978, p. 60. The mining house of Eckstein made use of this back channel to the government and it is something of a mystery why Robinson failed to use Nellmapius to get his township approved.

The mining commissioner for Krugersdorp, Mr. J.A. Burger, wrote a strongly worded letter to his superior noting that there could 'not be two stand townships' ('niet twee standsdorpen kan hebben') in the same vicinity.[57] Burger also wrote to the State Secretary arguing that a Randfontein township would cause '…a flow of thousands of pounds' ('duizende ponden vloeien') to the 'owner' ('Eigenaar') of the town, J.B. Robinson at the expense of the state and 'hundreds of residents of Krugersdorp' ('honderde personen van Krugersdorp').[58] He insisted that Krugersdorp was 'the centre of the West Rand' ('centrale punt van die Weste Witwatersrandt Delwyren') and that to establish another township would cause the 'businesses in a large part of Krugersdorp to close' ('de besigheden in Krugersdorp het grooter gedeelte moeten sluiten'). Krugersdorp already had 744 stands that had been sold for 'enormous sums' ('enorme somme') to the public and recently a number of 'attractive and costly buildings' ('prachtige en kostbare gebouwen') had been erected and a new township would cause 'enormous harm for the public' ('enorme schade die door het publiek').[59]

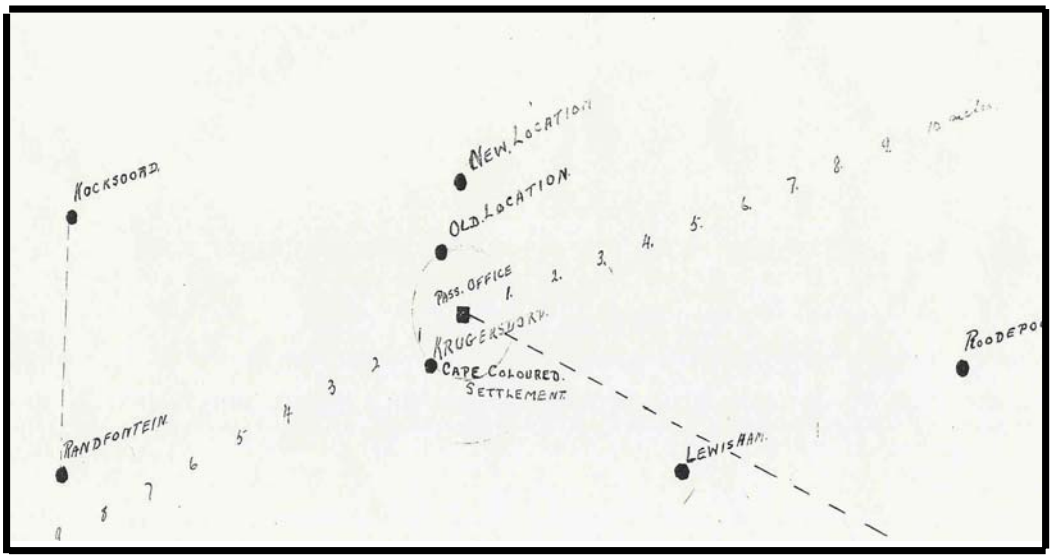
The Mining Commissioner was a leading figure in Krugersdorp. He was *ex-officio* chair of the Sanitary Committee and the equivalent of a mayor. Burger mixed freely with Krugersdorp's English- and Dutch-speaking middle classes and, like them, owned a number of stands in the town. Krugersdorp's shopkeepers and landlords would be ruined if a township was established at Randfontein. It would not be easy for them to simply move their businesses to the new township as they had considerable investments locked into the bricks and mortar of their shops and homes.

Burger's letter also points to another, perhaps even more important motive, behind the government's decision to reject Robinson's plans. The official pointed out that there was

[57] *ibid*., Burger, mynkommissaris, Krugersdorp na Hoofdmynwezen, 15 March 1899.
[58] CAD, Archives of the State Attorney, (SP) 83/88, R 1707/97, M.C. Krugerdorp to SS door Hoofd van Mynwezen, Pretoria, 22 February 1897.
[59] *ibid*.

sufficient land for at least 2 000 stands to be erected at Krugersdorp on government land. Given rising land prices in the fast-growing town, the government could anticipate a substantial profit by selling these stands to the public, an attractive prospect for the cash-strapped state. Thus, although Robinson spoke Dutch fluently, donated money to causes dear to President Kruger and took the Boer Government's side in its clashes with Britain and the Chamber of Mines, he could not get his treasured Randfontein Township approved.

Map Two: Distances, in Miles, between Krugersdorp, Randfontein and Kocksoord, c. 1924



Source: CAD, GNLB 169, 647/14/102, Map attached to letter from Native Sub Commissioner, Krugersdorp to Director of Native Labour, Johannesburg, 9 May 1924.

Robinson's ‘Company Town’ was prevented from ever being born and remained merely as a ‘phantom town’, despite the inconvenience of hundreds of white miners who had to travel six or seven miles a day from Krugersdorp because of lack of appropriate housing

near the mines.[60] The middle class had won a reprieve but the experience merely underlined the urgency with which they needed to find ways to 'anchor' the town. They began to look for ways to tame the 'Devil's Dorp' into a settled, stable town that could attract secondary industry so it could endure when the gold ran out. The Church held the key to their plans.

The Role Played by the Middle Class and the Church in 'Anchoring' Krugersdorp

Comment [JE1]: Not sure about logic of capitalisation of some nouns in headings

It will be argued, in this section, that Krugersdorp's middle class was determined to set down roots in their town and to convince the white working class to do the same. As deacons and other leading members of congregations, members of this class manoeuvred to erect large, well-built stone churches and a Freemasons Hall in prominent positions in the town where these buildings could be seen by the miners, artisans and travellers throughout the town. It will be argued here that these churches conveyed a message of permanency that may have persuaded the mobile miners to settle down and raise families. This would help to stabilise the town and end the lawlessness and violence that characterised the town's early years (see Chapter One). A stable, law-abiding town with a settled, docile labour force would, in turn, be attractive to investors who could establish industries in the town that would provide alternative sources of employment, once the gold was ultimately and inevitably exhausted.

Comment [JE2]: I added 'help to' here. Please delete if inappropriate

Drawing from theories concerning cognitive mapping, environment behavioural systems and urban semiotics, it can be argued that an emotional commitment to Krugersdorp was invoked by the construction of key structures such as churches that conveyed a message of permanency. Of course, there were other large, permanent structures in Krugersdorp, but these lacked the semiotic power of the churches and related buildings like the Freemasons Halls built on sacred, consecrated ground.

The government buildings, including the magistrate's court and the Police Station did

[60] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 13 November 1909, 'Randfontein'.

not have this effect. After all, large, sumptuous government buildings in Kocksoord failed to prevent this town from collapsing into a ghost town. In terms of urban semiotics, these structures were 'illegible' as signifiers of permanence. This can be partly explained by noting that these structures were erected by the Dutch-speaking Boer Republican government. This was the same government that denied English-speaking miners the vote. Moreover, these building were erected in the 'Transvaal Republic' architectural style which conveyed to the miners the 'message' that they were unwelcome aliens.

Similarly, the large, permanent residences of mine managers **(Figure 2.3)** also failed utterly to convey permanence. Most miners were influenced by trade unionism, socialism and syndicalism to the point that they would have recoiled from any representation of a system that exploited them on a daily basis. Such structures would simply not 'work' to convey a message of permanency.

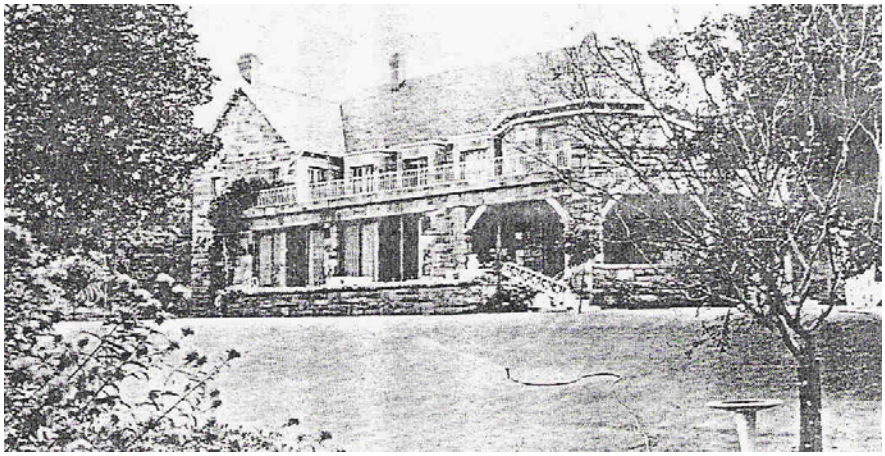
Comment [JE3]: This whole paragraph is a bit suspect. It sounds almost tongue in cheek.

Comment [JE4]: may be unclear what 'they' refers to?

Comment [JE5]: The way you phrase this is so definite - perhaps it would help if you expressed it more tentatively, e.g. and may have conveyed a sense...

Comment [JE6]: The figure here refers to Randfontein estates. This is confusing as I thought that this dealt with Krugersdorp.

Figure 2.3: The General Manager's Residence, Homestead Avenue, Randfontein Estates and G.M. Co. Ltd., *c.*1890s.



Source: Randfontein Public Library, *Randfontein – 50 Years*, Randfontein Municipality, Randfontein, 1979, p. 18.

The churches were the only substantial structures left in the town, and it was these

Comment [JE7]: Which town? Kocksoord? I am confused now.

buildings that constituted the best candidates as structures that could inspire a desire to settle down and raise families in the hearts and minds of the white working class. These buildings were built in the town itself, rather than on the margins like mine managers' houses. Churches were erected at the corners of major thoroughfares rather than in peripheral, minor streets. Their steeples were built so tall that they were visible at any point in the town. They were also located in the southern part of the town that was associated with working-class residences and which constituted a 'British' space given the concentration of English-speaking people who lived there (see Chapter Three).

Comment [JE8]: Steeples generally are tall.

The location of churches in the southern part of the town conveyed a strong sense of a future for 'Britishness' in the town and served as an antidote to the 'message' of alienation that was conveyed by government buildings in the centre and in the north of the town **(see Map Three)**. It seems plausible that churches were seen as relatively positive symbols by miners that powerfully conveyed a sense of permanence. Churches in Britain were frequently many centuries old. Miners who came from Britain or its dominions would have strongly associated these structures with permanence or, indeed, with eternity.

Comment [JE9]: This sentence again needs to be rephrased. Churches were associated with history and culture and tradition, particularly in the context of Europe and specifically Britain where several ancient churches are located.

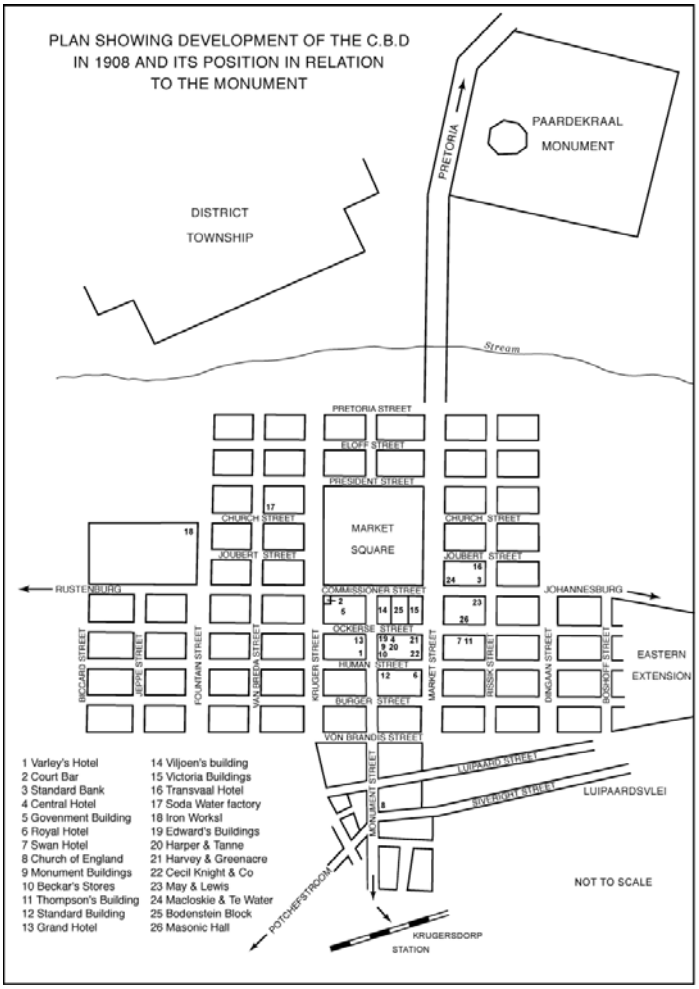
Some recent research into working-class families suggests that churches were the sites of key working-class social events such as marriages, baptisms and funerals.[61] While workers did not regularly attend church services, many must have been influenced by the constant proselytising efforts of a variety of evangelical 'missionaries' on the Rand. Many workers admired and respected the 'rescue work' of the Wesleyan Salvation Army, and some joined the various temperance campaigns of organisations such as the famous Independent Order of Good Templars or more specifically, the Transvaal Temperance Alliance that that operated among the workers of the Rand in 1892.[62]

[61] See M.L. Lange, 'The Making of the White Working Class: Class Experience and Class Identity in Johannesburg, 1890–1922', ('White Working Class'), PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, especially Chapter 2.

[62] C. van Onselen, *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886–1914*, vol. 1, *New Babylon*, (*New Babylon*) Ravan, Johannesburg, 1982, p. 59.

The erection of a new church was a spectacular public event. Various stages of its building were accompanied by elaborate public spectacles that could not fail to have an impact upon those who witnessed these. The process of building a church, for example, began with the consecration of the ground. This involved a series of public rituals and prayers, sometimes accompanied by the sprinkling of holy water and, depending on the denomination, the burning of incense.

Map Three: Map of Krugersdorp Depicting the Position of Major Business Establishments and Krugersdorp's Churches *c.*1908



Source: J. Henning, 'The Evolution, Land Use and Land Use Patterns of Krugersdorp', BA Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1963, p. 27.

This deeply religious ceremony was accompanied by its secular counterpart, the 'laying the foundation stone'. This was a spectacle that often required the use of a crane or stout pulleys and chains that manoeuvred a large, heavy block of stone into position. A prominent member of the clergy or a local notable would be invited to spread a layer of cement over the top with a trowel made of solid silver. Speeches would be made and the inevitable crowd that gathered would frequently cheer and applaud when the foundation stone was declared to be firmly in place. Later, a plaque would be fixed in a prominent part of the structure to commemorate the event.

Churches, of course, symbolised God's presence in a particular place and conveyed the sense that this spot was blessed. The consecration of land meant that it was rendered sacred. Legally it meant little, but symbolically it powerfully conveyed that this land was God's chosen space for eternity. On this holy land, high church walls would rise up steadily, witnessed by passing miners. Eventually the imposing structure would be completed, capped with a tall steeple that tilted the observer's gaze skywards, up towards God. In Boer *dorps*, this principle was well-known and churches were among the first buildings built and they were always placed in the most prominent part of the town and were, by far, the tallest building.[63]

Comment [JE10]: I assume this should be Haswell, not Hawell in fn ref.

Krugersdorp's churches were erected close to the mines and railways so that miners who lived in the town would pass these impressive, heavy structures every day. Miners who lived in boarding houses further south or in workers' residences on the mines would pass these churches when they came to buy provisions from the general dealers situated around Market Square or when they had some need to visit the government offices in the centre of the town.

[63] The early 'dorps' in the Cape – like Swellendam, Paarl and Tulbagh – all had 'central churches', as did the 'Voortrekker dorps'. See R. Haswell, 'Pieter Mauritz Burg, the genesis of a Voortrekker Hoofdplaats', in J. Laband and R. Haswell (eds.), *Pietermartitzburg, 1838–1988*, (*Pietermaritzburg*), University of Natal Press and Shuter & Shooter, Pietermaritzburg, 1988, pp. 26 and 28.

On Sundays, the small size of the town meant that most of its residents were in earshot of the hymns sung by the congregations or, at least, could hear the pealing of the church bells. This 'soundscape' would have been emotionally-charged for many working-class miners who would associate these sounds with profound social milestones like marriage, baptisms and funerals. It seems plausible that constant exposure to the sights and sound of the local churches could act as a mnemonic device, in the way that Rappaport described it, triggering responses of deep reflection and contemplation on one's future. These churches could also have reminded the white expatriate miners of their childhood homes, their families and may have created a yearning for a more stable, settled life.

The presence of the church among the daily sights and sounds of the town would also have had a stabilising effect on black migrant workers. Wesleyan Methodists deliberately targeted 'Africans who moved into towns in search for work', following the 'missionary method of William Shaw' that advocated that 'the first steps be taken in the towns'.[64] Those Africans living in the Location would similarly be influenced by the church's impressive structures and many 'native' churches were built in the town's location.[65] It was the white working class that constituted the majority of Krugersdorp's residents, however, and this study is concerned with the processes that led to their growing commitment to the town.

Comment [JE11]: I assume you omitted the 's' here as a typo.

From the white middle class' point of view, the church was the centre of their social life, and many attended church regularly and held positions such as deacons. The early mining towns were seen as 'Babylon' where prostitution, drunkenness and gambling was rife, so the church was considered as a sanctuary from surrounding evil for the

64 J.P. Brain, *The Catholic Church in the Transvaal*, (*Catholic Church*) Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Johannesburg, 1991, p. 26.

65 CAD, Archives of the Colonial Secretary (C.S.) 217, 81/03, Stands for Native Congregation Church, 1902–3, letter, Mr. Richardson to Colonial Secretary, 8 November 1902. See also *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 29 October 1904, 'Closing up the year' and *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 3 December 1904, Municipal Mixture'.

middle class. It was also the launch pad for proselytising that could transform the City of Mammon to the City of God. [66]

The church ministers and their lay middle-class adherents wanted to spread God's word and remove the stain of Satan from the souls of the miners. The elite also wanted their children to grow up in a safe, stable and attractive town. Certain 'respectable' elements of the white working class were also church-goers and supported these goals. This seems to be the case particularly among the more experienced, mature miners that had moved from mining town to mining town and who were now tired of their nomadic way of life:

> Among the rough and ready diggers…there were men who had had experience on the diamond mines and in the Eastern goldfields. These men used their knowledge and energies for the improvement of the mining village [in reference to early Johannesburg]….a significant number of men did have their families with them and it has been suggested that these were the families that had moved in from the Kimberley or Eastern Transvaal mining districts rather than those who had recently arrived from Europe. This is confirmed in church records….Support for the various Christian churches on the Witwatersrand…would have come from these family groups.[67]

Middle class congregants and ministers would frequently launch 'crusades' to save the souls of the white miners. For example, the Church of England in Johannesburg ran a series of special services at St. Mary's during September 1894, hammering away at their audiences for ten days straight, focusing especially on the importance of marriage, parental responsibility and generally promoting 'family values' as opposed to the depredations of mining town life.[68] These crusades would have won over a percentage of white working-class residents in mining towns like Johannesburg and Krugersdorp,

---

66 Brain, *Catholic Church*, p. 54; Van Onselen said that the early miners 'produced, reproduced and accentuated several elements of late-nineteenth century working class culture', see van Onselen, *New Babylon*, p. 5. See also Lange, 'White Working Class', p. 37, who blames this culture on the large numbers of bachelors living in the early mining towns.

67 Brain, *Catholic Church*, p. 54.

68 Lange, 'White Working Class', p. 38.

who would then join the middle class in their efforts to stabilise these violent, transient places.

Humphriss points out that many miners were, in any case, already 'chapel-goers from Cornwall and Wales' so church-going was a well-entrenched habit for a large proportion of the white working class.[69] These men presumably would also support the middle-class aims of stabilising the mining towns of the Rand. Humphriss notes that such workers 'received less attention' from historians and newspaper reports than their 'wilder counterparts'.[70] Similarly, Lange proposes that our understanding of the white working class has become coloured by this image of hard-drinking single miners, whereas there were many working-class families in Johannesburg in the 1890s. Lange argues for a more complex understanding of white working class life on the Rand that takes into account its more stable and settled elements:

> Working class life involved men, women and children, single and married people, employed and unemployed in a social continuum that included the work-place, the street where they lived, the bars, the churches…'[71]

The commitment of Christians to the building of strong, secure church buildings can be likened to the knocking of pegs to secure the unruly flaps of the 'tent town' to one spot. It is instructive to consider, in detail, how this process was carried out by considering some examples. Many English-speaking middle and working class white residents in Krugersdorp probably identified themselves with the Anglican Church if recent research on Johannesburg's white working class can be extrapolated to Krugersdorp.[72] Shortly after Krugersdorp was laid out, a temporary church was erected behind the Standard Bank at the corner of Rissik and Joubert streets. It had a wooden frame and a calico

Comment [JE12]: 35.94% seems an odd figure in the fn.

[69] Humphriss, *Benoni,* p. 50.
[70] *ibid*., p. 41.
[71] Lange, 'White Working Class', p. 17.
[72] *ibid*., p. 7. Lange notes that 36% of 2290 white families in Johannesburg had their children baptised in the Anglican Church.

covering and cost one hundred pounds.[73] By February 1888, the 'Calico Church' had a congregation of thirty adherents and also doubled as a school for about twenty-five children.

When the temporary tent church was blown down by a gale in August 1888, it prompted the local middle class to demand a more permanent structure. The Reverend Organ immediately set about planning a church bazaar to raise funds to build a 'substantial building'.[74] Just as Krugersdorp's merchants faced competition from its much wealthier counterparts in Johannesburg, so, too, the Christians of Krugersdorp had to contend with their fellow congregants in Johannesburg who seemed to have a monopoly on funds from donors in Britain. When the Secretary for the Propagation of the Gospel donated one hundred pounds per annum for the support of the English church clergy on the Rand, the Krugersdorp correspondent of the *Star* newspaper commented bitterly, that:

> It might be reasonably supposed that at least half of that sum will go to support the church in Krugersdorp, which is at this present moment struggling for its very existence; but as a matter of fact, every farthing...has been annexed by the wealthy church in Johannesburg, while the clergymen in Krugersdorp are understood to have been left utterly unprovided for by the church.[75]

The leading figures in the local mining industry also had an interest in a settled, sober and god-fearing workforce and soon proved to be powerful allies for the fledgling middle class in their endeavours to use church buildings and missionary work to settle the unruly 'Devil's Dorp'. In early 1888 the Luipaard's Vlei G.M. Co. Ltd donated the stands that it owned in Monument Street for the erection of a new church. Cecil Rhodes donated one hundred pounds to the church's building fund while President Kruger

Comment [JE13]: Make sure consistent with previous spellings

[73] St. Peter's Church, '*Onward', A History of the Anglican Church in the Parish of Krugersdorp,* ('*Onward*'), The Model Printing Company, West Roodepoort, 1965, p. 4.
[74] *The Star*, 14 September 1888, 'Krugersdorp'.
[75] *The Star*, 21 May 1888, 'Notes and Comments'.
[76] St. Peter's Church, '*Onward*', p. 7.

contributed five pounds.[76] The total cost was 420 pounds, so presumably the balance was raised by the local Anglican congregation, a remarkable sum of money for such a small group.

This underlines how important the church was to the members of the local middle class and respectable working class, with the former contributing the lion's share. A church, a parsonage and a school chapel were built out of stone, just in time to hold a service on Christmas Day, 1888.[77] The timing of the service and the symbolism would have had a profound impact upon the town's transient miners. Bishop Bousfield travelled again to the far West Rand to dedicate the church to St. Mark on 1 February 1888,[78] and while no descriptions survive, this too must have been an event of note. The dedication and consecration of a church so early in Krugersdorp's formative period, must have impacted deeply upon the transient miners causing them to contemplate commitment to the town.

Comment [JE14]: Doesn't sound like they were that transient at this point in any case!

The site of St. Mark's Church was located in the heart of Luipaardsvlei, an area later to become a heavily working-class suburb, near to the Krugersdorp railway station. This meant that miners could not help seeing the Church at least twice a day as they went to work at the start of their shifts and when they returned. The church was a formidable, solid building **(see Figure 2.4)** that stood out among the mostly transient structures of the town described in Chapter One.

The middle class was strongly represented among the Churchwardens including W.M. Edwards (local farmer and later Town Councillor) and Mr Hallimand (the manager of the West Rand Consolidated G.M. Co. Ltd.).[79] A number of well-known commercial and businessmen baptised their children at this church during the 1890s including F.W. Lewis (bookkeeper and later owner of 'May and Lewis' general dealers and Town

---

[77] *ibid.*
[78] *ibid.*
[79] *ibid.*

Councillor), Harry Stammers (printer and later proprietor of *The Standard, Krugersdorp* newspaper), Frederick Cooper (contractor and later Town Clerk) and Humphrey Hayes (manager of the Luipaard's Vlei Estate and G.M. Co. Ltd. and, later, Town Councillor).[80]

Comment [JE15]: Again variation i spelling here

Figure 2.4: St. Mark's Church, Krugersdorp in Monument Street, 1888.



Source: St. Peter's Church, *'Onward', A History of the Anglican Church in the Parish of Krugersdorp*, The Model Printing Company, West Roodepoort, 1965, located in the Church of the Province of South Africa Archives, University of the Witwatersrand, p. 7.

The miners in the area were exposed to the middle class's example as, dressed up in their 'Sunday finest', these middle-class families walked to the Sunday service. Constant exposure to such scenes up to fifty-two times a year, must have had an impact upon these rough and ready miners through what Rappaport terms 'redundancy':

> . ...When space organisation, building form, sign systems and visible activities coincide, meaning is much clearer and urban form much more legible and memorable...eikonic and verbal systems work best when they are clearly related to the space organisation, that is, when redundancy is increased.[81]

A month later, in March, 1888 when Krugersdorp was described as 'rapidly growing', tenders were called for the 'erection of a handsome stone school house large enough to

[80] *ibid.*, pp. 6–7.
[81] Rappaport, *Meaning*, p. 84.
[82] *Star*, 21 March 1888, 'Krugersdorp'.

accommodate 300 pupils' under the auspices of the Anglican Church.[82] Given that Krugersdorp's adult population did not reach even half this number at the time, this was a remarkable vote of confidence in the future prospects of the town. The symbolism of providing for an, as yet, unborn youth was powerful indeed and is unlikely to have been lost on the white miners in the town.

The relationship and mutual resonances of stability, solidity and the church is expressed in a well-known passage from the New Testament. In the words of Matthew 7: 24-27:

> Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.[83]

The building of St. Mark's church was designed to establish just such a 'house on the rock', an inspiration to those who saw it, radiating permanence and stability. The new Anglican church also seems to have provoked a friendly rivalry with other denominations who followed their example in building large, permanent structures of their own. The Roman Catholics were the first out of the blocks in 1891 when a plot of land was secured on the corner of Human and Rissik streets.[84] On it was built an imposing and attractive structure on 9 June 1891, built of 'brick & stone'. This solid, bulky and tall building also powerfully conveyed a sense of permanence of the 'church on the rock' in a very prominent part of the early town **(see Figure 2.5).**

---

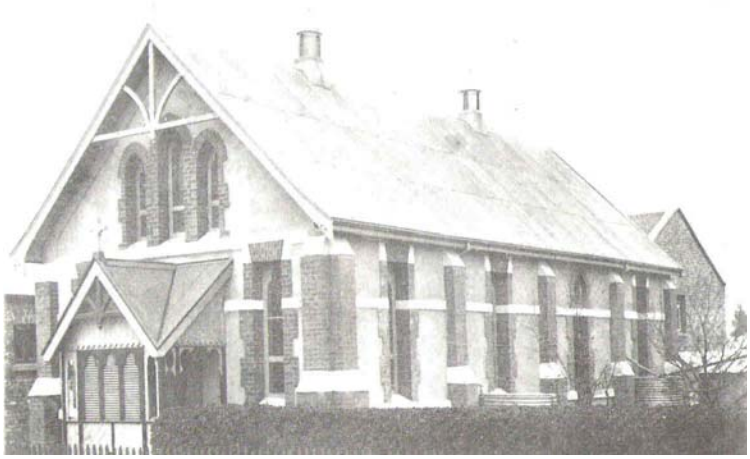
[83] *The New International Version of the Bible*, New Testament, Bible Society of South Africa, 1978, pp. 8-9.

[84] Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Krugersdorp, *Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Krugersdorp: Centenary Brochure, 1891–1991*, (*Our Lady*), Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Krugersdorp, p.11. Available from the Krugersdorp Catholic Church. See also Brain, *Catholic Church*, p. 63.

The Rev. Fr. Monginoux dedicated the church to Saints Peter and Paul at a special mass. After the benediction, a 'sacred concert' was held which was described as 'crowded'[85] and a church bell was set into place.[86] Thereafter, the pealing of a church bell would form part of the town's soundscape and the spectacle of Sunday services witnessed by those who passed by the church on this busy main street.

Comment [JE16]: I would make mass and benediction lowercase, but not sure?

Figure 2.5: Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Corner of Human and Rissik Streets, Krugersdorp, 1891.



Source: Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, *Krugersdorp, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Krugersdorp*, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Krugersdorp, 1992, p. 12.

Formatted: Font: Not Bold, Italic

The building of a Roman Catholic Church may, in some senses, have been an even more powerful symbol of commitment to place than its Anglican counterpart. This is because Roman Catholicism was treated with considerable suspicion by the government of the Transvaal Republic whose Dutch reformed roots led them

[85] *ibid.*
[86] *ibid.*, p. 13.
[87] *ibid.*, p. 25.

instinctively to mistrust 'papism' ('Roomse Gevaar').[87] Generally Catholics had greater difficulty than Anglicans in building churches in the Transvaal because of this hostility and their relatively smaller numbers.[88]

A Catholic living in Krugersdorp later observed that there were 'not many Catholics in Krugersdorp and [there was] a fair amount of anti-Catholic prejudice'.[89] Thus, by succeeding in building a permanent church in the face of considerable hostility, the Roman Catholic Church demonstrated a degree of faith and optimism in the little mining town of Krugersdorp that may have positively influenced non-Catholic miners to also commit themselves to this part of the world.

The next major church to be built was that of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Gemeente. The congregation met as early as 18 November 1889 in the home of M.P.W Pretorius, the owner of the farm Paardekraal, on which Krugersdorp had been established. At that time, Pretorius lived on the corner of President and Kruger streets.[90] The church ran a school where the congregation met, and a 'manse' ('pastorie') was built in Ockerse street in 1891.[91]

Eventually enough money was raised and the 'cornerstone' ('hoeksteen') was laid by *dominee* H.C. J. Becker on 7 April 1894 in the block bounded by Rissik, Ockerse, Church and Joubert streets.[92] During January 1895 the church was 'consecrated' ('ingewy') and among its Deacons ('Diakens') was a certain T.J. Bedford, who was later to serve as Market Master.[93] The opening of this church was 'a great affair', 250

---

[88] Brain, *The Catholic Church*, p. 68.
[89] *ibid*., p. 105.
[90] Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, Krugersdorp*, Fotoalbum ter herdenking van die honderdjarige bestaan van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Gemeente Krugersdorp, 1890–1990*, n.d., *c.*1990, located in the Krugersdorp Dutch Reformed Church Archives, p. 14.
[91] *ibid*.
[92] *ibid*.
[93] *ibid*., pp. 4–5.
[94] *The Star*, 6 February 1895, 'Out and About', 'Krugersdorp'.

wagons were counted along with troops of horsemen and cart proprietors. The building was in the 'Norman-Gothic' style and cost 6 000 pounds.[94]

Although the English-speaking miners would be impressed by such an imposing and solid structure **(Figure 2.6)**, the 'message' may have been ambiguous as it would have been difficult for them to identify with people of a different language and culture. But the sight of hundreds of Dutch-speaking white families converging on the looming, bulky Dutch Reformed Church may have reinforced the 'message' conveyed by the stone structures of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, creating what Rappaport called 'redundancy'. As Rappaport explained, the repetition of similar 'messages' from the spatial environment was a pre-requisite for their successful communication to those who 'read' these 'messages'.[95]

Figure 2.6: The Dutch Reformed Church Building in Ockerse Street, Krugersdorp, 1891.



Source: Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, Krugersdorp, *Fotoalbum ter herdenking van die honderdjarige bestaan van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Gemeente Krugersdorp*, 1890–1990, n.d., *c.*1990, p. 4.

[95] Rappaport, *Meaning*, p. 84.

In much the same way, the building of the temple for the Dutch Chapter of the Freemasons society, the ‘Libertas Lodge’, could have indirectly promoted a sense of permanence for onlookers. Local middle-class Dutch-speaking notable Mr M. Seehoff, was appointed its ‘Worshipful Grand Master’ in June 1892, the earliest reference to the Lodge.[96] As a quasi-religious society, the Freemasons' ideology centred on the stability of stone which played a key role in their rituals and ceremonies. The stonemason’s tools, notably the callipers used to measure cut blocks of stone, became an important symbol of Freemasons.

For this quintessential middle-class society, the ‘text’ of permanence inscribed into the built environment through the use of heavy stone in building substantial structures was highly ‘legible’. Although meant for Dutch-speaking adherents, the Libertas Lodge's temple served as an example to the English-speaking Freemasons who followed by erecting their own buildings by the late 1890s, as will be discussed later. English-speaking miners knew of the Freemasons and may, at least, have been moved by the impressive lodge when passing it by.

The NGK's ‘sister’ church, the Nederduitse Hervormde Gemeente, received stands 113–7, 161 and 165 in 1893. Its foundation stone was laid in 1897 by President Kruger himself, and the presence of this popular and imposing figure would have turned this already notable ceremony into a powerful public spectacle. In that same year, a suburb for ‘poor burghers’ was established in west Krugersdorp and the church was meant to serve their spiritual needs. Again, English-speaking miners, while they were not likely to be directly influenced by this church nor by the arrival of a number of Dutch-speaking families in their midst, must have registered these developments in a way that spurred them to think about setting up their own family homes and settling down.

Much more influential was the building, also in 1897, of the Wesleyan Methodist church

[96] *The Star*, 18 June 1892, ‘Krugersdorp Notes’, ‘Freemasonry’.

in Krugersdorp on the Northwest corner of Rissik and Burger streets.[97] Methodism was the church of the working class[98] and there is some evidence that some miners in Krugersdorp saw the Methodists as 'their' church. An early handwritten history of the Krugersdorp Methodist Church referred to the appointment of a Methodist lay leader who seems to have been a worker at the Champ d'Or mine during the 1890s. There was
also a reference to a service that was held at the Lancaster mine during this period [99] so there seems to be some justification, in the case of Krugersdorp, for the argument that Methodism emphasised evangelicalism among workers.

It was mainly middle-class elements that took up leadership positions in the Methodist Church. They were primarily responsible for raising the funds to build the church. Two core middle-class members of this church who would have been involved in this fund-raising were R.F. Thomas who was the manager of the local Windsor mine[100] and J.T. Halse, a contractor and builder,[101] who was also closely connected to the mining industry.[102] Both men were leading figures of Krugersdorp's middle class and both became Town Councillors.

With the help of such middle-class elements, the Methodist church was able to raise considerable sums of money. For example, in 1899 the Reverend Bottril announced that it was intended to raise 10 000 pounds in the Transvaal to clear the church of its

---

[97] Krugersdorp Public Library (KPL), B. Burger, 'Die Geskiedenis van Krugersdorp tot 1952', unpublished manuscript, Krugersdorp, 1953, p. 51; and personal inspection of site.

[98] Humphriss argues that in Benoni, Methodist was the 'strongest congregation' among the miners, see Humphriss*, Benoni*, p. *32.*

[99] 'History of the Methodist Church, Krugersdorp', manuscript lodged with the Krugersdorp Methodist Church, undated, no pagination.

[100] *ibid.*

[101] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 30 October 1920, untitled.

[102] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 2 September 1922, untitled.

[103] *ibid.*

debts in the region.[103] The Krugersdorp Methodist church was a handsome building made of brick and stone and was situated in a prominent position in the town on the walking routes used by workers who lived as lodgers in the neighbourhood.

Finally, on 21 April 1897, the Royal George Lodge was 'consecrated' for the use of the 'Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of England' (the Freemasons of the English Constitution).[104] In 1899 the Freemasons built a Masonic Hall, which was situated at 18 Ockerse Street.[105] Brother Harry Stammers (co-owner and editor of the *Standard, Krugersdorp*) was a prominent member while R. F. Wallis, another proprietor of this newspaper and a Town Councillor some years later, served as the Grand Master. The local newspaper, not surprisingly, described the Masonic Hall in glowing terms. It was described as 'certainly, the most imposing structure in the town'.[106]

Comment [JE17]: Name changed?

The hall was used in many capacities, from a ballroom to a theatre[107] and, in this way, promoted middle-class 'refined' entertainments such as dancing and theatre. This contributed to the stabilisation of the town by drawing the working class away from gambling dens and music halls. As the largest building in the town, it also contributed in conveying the semiotic message of permanence, particularly given its central position in one of the main streets. In 1899 the Hall was described as 'rich in point of craftsmanship and beautiful to the eye', full of the 'decorations, fixtures, emblems and all that go to make up a lodge and expound the mysticisms to the younger members of the craft'.[108] White workers used the building for a wide variety of social functions and this combined with its mystique, may have made them receptive to its 'message' of

---

[104] J.W. Crisswell, 'Royal George Lodge, Abridged Historical Review, 1887–1997', unpublished manuscript, private correspondence, pp. 1–2.
[105] Interview with J.W. Crisswelll, Florida, April 1997.
[106] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 January 1899, 'New Masonic Hall'.
[107] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 27 May 1899, 'Freemasonry'.
[108] *ibid.*

permanence.

Taken cumulatively, the building of Christian churches of various denominations and even the erection of sumptuous Freemason Lodges and a Masonic Hall is likely to have had some effect on the residents of the town. Building took place throughout the 1890s regardless of the economic conditions. Irrespective of whether Krugersdorp experienced a boom or a depression, large sums of money were invested in the construction of large, impressive edifices that were often richly decorated. Such confidence in the future must have at least laid down some seeds in the minds of white workers that would later blossom into a decision to commit to Krugersdorp.

African residents also began to settle in the town in larger numbers by the late 1890s and they, too, may have been influenced in the same way to commit to Krugersdorp. Churches were built in the 'Old Location' in Krugersdorp at the turn of the century and these structures may have helped to 'anchor' those Africans living there. The Muslim Indian community, was granted a stand for a mosque by President Kruger himself, probably in 1897 when Burghershoop and the Indian Location were laid out. Interviews with elderly Indians born in the area reveal that a 'tin shanty' and later a wooden Mosque were built on the land, the latter costing 8 000 pounds.[109] In the Muslim faith, consecrated land remains sacred forever so this Mosque would have had a profound effect on Krugersdorp's Indian Muslims, convincing them, too, that they had a future in the town.

These informants point out that Krugersdorp's Indian community was initially too small to support the cost of a stone mosque (which eventually was built in 1948) but that this should not be seen as lack of commitment to the area. The plot of land on which it was built, situated on the corner of Rosenberg and Commissioner streets in Burghershoop,

[109] Interview with Ebrahim Mohamed Dadoo, Krugersdorp, July 1998; interview with Moosa Bada, Krugersdorp, July 1998.
[110] See the *South African Law Review*, 1909, *Doobie and Others* v *Sallie and Others*, pp. 552–5.

was considered sacred land by the Muslim community.[110] The concept of 'sacred ground' was apparently based on a revelation that the Prophet communicated to a Muslim priest, which is cited in the Muslim 'Toofa', where Mohamed declared that church land should never be sold.[111]

The Jewish middle class in Krugersdorp likewise used the consecration and establishment of a Synagogue as a means of 'anchoring' their community to the town. The West Rand Hebrew Congregation, which was formed in 1903, built a Synagogue on the north-west corner of Burger and van Breda streets shortly after the South African War. Like the Muslims, this involved prayers of deep significance in the process of preparing the land and the structure for its spiritual purpose. [112] Synagogues and the land on which they were built, were sacrosanct and could not be easily or lightly re-sold or demolished. The Krugersdorp Synagogue's foundation stone was laid by Abner Cohen in an elaborate ceremony.[113]

Cohen, was a successful local Jewish business and a founder of the Krugersdorp Hebrew Congregation. The building of the synagogue represented his own commitment to the town. The Anglophile itinerant businessman (he built the first structure in Krugersdorp, the 'Court Bar') had been 'exiled' from the town after the Jameson Raid (see Chapter Three).[114] He returned to Krugersdorp after the South African War and, in an act pregnant with semiotic power, bought several stands in the District Township, in the northern 'Boer' area of the town, and called it 'Homelands'.[115]

Comment [JE18]: Insert date

[111] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 3 January 1903, untitled.

[112] This can be surmised from the Programme for the consecration of the new Krugersdorp Synagogue, Cilliers Street, Monument, Krugersdorp in 1968. see the United Hebrew Institute of Krugersdorp, *Order of Service: Consecration and Opening of New Synagogue*, 1968, in possession of the. United Hebrew Institute, Krugersdorp.

[113] Archives of the United Hebrew Institute of Krugersdorp, unsorted, loose photo.

[114] *South African Who's Who: an illustrated biographical sketch book of South Africa*, 1908, pp. 77–8.

[115] Town Planning Office, Krugersdorp, Blueprint entitled 'District Township *c.*1903 '.

The African, Coloured, Indian and Jewish middle classes all shared the aspirations of the English-speaking middle class for a stable, settled and prosperous town. Their mosques and synagogues 'spoke' of permanence and may have reinforced the message of permanence for white working-class miners through the process of redundancy. For the English-speaking miners the cumulative effect of so many large, solid buildings of deep spiritual significance reinforced the message of permanence, confidence in the future and commitment to the town. This message was underlined by the efforts of the English-speaking middle class that began to transform Krugersdorp into a habitable space after the South African War.

Laying the Foundation Stone of a Town: Krugersdorp's Middle Class Elite and Municipal Reforms

After the South African War, the English-speaking middle class worked hard to make Krugersdorp liveable, a place that they – and possibly also white workers - could call 'home'. They campaigned to secure a hospital, piped water, electrical street lights and decent roads for the town. They hoped to attract investors and secondary industry to the town to ensure the town's future, and to make the town a pleasant place in which to live, and to encourage white working-class residents to lay down their roots. This section briefly traces and analyses the campaigns taken up by Krugersdorp's middle class, which built on and complemented the effects of the building of churches in strategic locations to help stabilise the white working class and anchor the town.

As early as 1888, demands were made for a hospital when recent arrivals to the town were discovered to have contracted malaria. Plans were made to petition the government to use a portion of the native registration fees 'to aid in the erection of a small, temporary building to meet urgent cases'.[116] While the mines employed their own doctors and the Champ d'Or mine had its own 'lazerreto' (sic) for infectious patients[117] Krugersdorp was less well-off, as was pointed out in Chapter One. At first,

[116] *The Star*, 14 March 1888, 'Krugersdorp: from a correspondent'.
[117] *The Star*, 9 February 1894.

only one private doctor, Dr van der Merwe practised in Krugersdorp, but he was later joined by a number of others until, by 1896, a Dr Adam was described as the sixth doctor for Krugersdorp.[118] A District Surgeon was appointed under the Sanitary Regulations for the town in 1889.[119]

Under pressure from the middle class, the Boer Republic granted a form of local government to the town in the form of the 'Gezondheidz-Comite' or 'Health Committee'. The town was divided into four sections which elected four representatives from among the male adults of each ward. A Sanitary Inspector was also to be appointed to improve the sanitary conditions in the town.[120]

The English-speaking middle class continued to campaign for a hospital in 1895,[121] and a local Dutch newspaper pointed out that the town required a hospital to treat those wounded during the battle between the Republican forces and Jameson's forces near the town.[122] After the South African War, local doctors and the District Surgeon[123] continued to press for a hospital and in 1903, the local newspaper weighed in to support the campaign for a 'Cottage Hospital'.[124] A ball was even held to raise funds to build a hospital in 1904.[125] Although the hospital was only built in 1911, the campaign may have persuaded white workers to commit to Krugersdorp as they believed that the

[118] *Ons Volk*, 25 April 1896, 'Meer nog meer'.
[119] *Staatscourant* (SC), 21 November 1889, 'Gezondheids Regulatien voor Krugersdorp', p. 967.

[120] M.A. Schutte, 'Die Geskiedenis van Krugersdorp 1887–1890', MA dissertation, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1976, p. 37.
[121] *The Star*, 12 February 1895, 'Out and About', 'Krugersdorp'.
[122] *Ons Volk*, 25 January 1896, 'Plaatselyk en Algemeen'.
[123] CAD, Archives of the Colonial Secretary (CS), 92, File 4991/02, letter Assistant Resident Magistrate, Krugersdorp to Resident Magistrate Krugersdorp, 21 May 1902. The letter refers to the District Surgeon's complaint that the absence of a hospital in Krugersdorp endangered the lives of patients who had to embark on lengthy journeys to hospitals elsewhere on the Rand.
[124] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 19 September 1903, 'The Cottage Hospital'. See also *The Standard, Krugersdorp,* 17 October 1903, 'The Hospital Concept' and *Krugersdorp Standard*, 28 November 1903, 'Wanted – A Hospital!'.
[125] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 5 March 1904, 'In aid of the Hospital', see also *Krugersdorp Standard*, 1 October 1904, 'The Hospital Question' where it was made quite clear that a hospital was one of the 'first wants of this district'.

erection of a hospital was imminent.[126]

It was really only after the South African War that the middle class had the political resources to establish a permanent, settled town. The middle class campaigned for three key municipal reforms: a piped water supply, proper macadamised roads and electric street lights. Having laid the foundation stones of large well-built churches to 'anchor' the town spiritually; the English-speaking middle class then set about to 'anchor' the town through municipal reform making it sufficiently attractive to persuade the white working class to settle permanently in Krugersdorp.

The Town Council

The Sanitary or Health Committee that formed in Krugersdorp in 1889 had very limited powers and, as pointed out earlier, the town was effectively run by the Mining Commissioner and other key local officials such as the District Surgeon and the *landdros*t. These were state-appointed functionaries that were paid a salary by Pretoria and their commitment to the town was not likely to be particularly deeply-rooted unless they owned stands like J.A. Burger. They could, after all, be transferred to other districts at any moment. Burger, the Mining Commissioner, did intercede to prevent the laying out of Randfontein Township but such interventions were rare and the town was run down by the turn of the century partly as a result of what appears to be official neglect.

In 1898 the environs around the Government buildings in the centre of the town were described as 'filthy' ('zeer vuil') giving visitors 'no desire to return a second time to Krugersdorp' ('geven bezoekers geen lust om tweede maal naar Krugersdorp to komen'.) [127] The Government Buildings themselves were in a poor state of disrepair as white ants ravaged the doors and other wooden structures.[128]

---

[126] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 14 January 1911, 'Local and General'.
[127] *De Voortrekker*, 2 July 1898, untitled.
[128] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 15 April 1899.

Local inhabitants were disillusioned about the weakness of the local authority and took little interest in Sanitary Board elections – in one public meeting in 1898 only one member of the public turned up![129] The local English language newspaper, run by the middle-class Stammers, Wallis and Law, urged 'ratepayers' to free themselves of the 'lethargy' of the last few years and 'awake to their own interests' in voting for 'reliable men' to the Board. It recommended well-known 'men of business', May, Tonkin, Spiller, Du Preez and Andreka, all local merchants.[130]

The same article stressed that the two most urgent tasks are 'an efficient water supply, and street repairs'.[131] This local authority was not able to achieve its aims and after the South Africa war a report noted that the most urgent public works projects needed in Krugersdorp were those that dealt with, 'Roads... Water... Lighting...'[132] Each of these will be dealt with in turn to illustrate how the middle class planned to lay down the 'foundation stone of a town' by making the town a liveable space, sufficiently attractive to persuade miners to settle in this town rather than somewhere else on the Rand.

An Efficient Water Supply

Krugersdorp's water supply was 'totally inadequate'[133] in 1899. Residents had dug deep wells around the town which, although boarded, were dangerous 'death traps' as the

129 *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 31 December 1898, 'Enthusiastic Krugersdorp'.
130 *ibid.*

131 *ibid.*
132 Archives of the Colonial Secretary (CS) 111, file 7761,'Administrative Reports for year ending 30 June 1902, from Krugersdorp, Johannesburg, Germiston and Boksburg', letter to the Chairman of the Krugersdorp Health Board, ('Administrative Reports, Krugersdorp') 8 July 1902, p. 9.
133 *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 February 1899, untitled.
134 *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 3 May 1899, untitled.
135 *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 6 September 1902, 'Report of C. Alexander, Sanitary Inspector'.

coverings were described as ‘absolutely useless...simply worse than tissue paper owing to dry rot...honeycombed in appearance’.[134] The Health Board began to take action in late 1902 and considered fining residents for failing to properly cover their wells. Refuse would also fall into these wells and contaminate the water.[135] In January 1903, the Health Boards of Krugersdorp, Roodepoort and Maraisburg met to elect a representative for the west Rand on the newly form Witwatersrand Water Board'. The local merchant F.W Lewis (of ‘May and Lewis’ general dealers) was elected.

A report written after the South African War established that 21 000 litres of water flowed into the ‘spruit’ that passed through the town which could be piped into homes and businesses. Another potential source of tap water was the Witpootje waterfall, a few miles north of the monument hill. Given its elevation, a reservoir based there could distribute water to the town by gravitation.[136] Piped water was soon provided for Krugersdorp's stand township and in April 1903, it was proposed to extend this to Luipaardsvlei but money was short.[137] Some Krugersdorp residents were also still without water and the Board had to wait until it was constituted as a Municipality so that it could raise a loan to cover the costs of these extensions.[138]

Electric Street Lighting System

As far back as 1895, when the Sanitary Committee was given extended powers, demands had been made for ‘electric light’ (‘Electrisch Licht’) for the town of Krugersdorp and the ‘City Fathers’ (‘Staadsvaders*)* were urged to expedite the

---

[136] CS, 7761C, ‘Administrative Reports’, Krugersdorp, 8 July 1902, pp. 8–9.
[137] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 11 April 1903, untitled. See also *The Standard, Krugersdorp* 1 August 1903, ‘Luipaardsvlei water’ which makes it clear that Krugersdorp could not afford this extension. Plans were made for a government loan to cover the costs.
[138] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 25 October 1903, ‘Water’.
[139] *Ons Volk*, 7 November 1895, ‘*Electrisch Licht*’
[140] *De Voortrekker*, 9 July 1898, untitled.
[141] CAD, CS 111, 7761C, ‘Administrative Reports’, Krugersdorp, 8 July 1902, p. 7.

matter.[139] The call was made again in 1898 for the 'streets to be lit in the evenings' ('de straten avonds zullen verlicht').[140]

Apparently plans had been made to use a private contractor to erect street lights before the outbreak of the South African War but in 1902 a report recommended that it would be 'infinitely more desirable if a scheme could be devised to work Municipally'.[141] A heated debate took place across the Rand over whether electricity should be supplied by private companies or by municipalities (see Chapter Eight). The local middle class, as represented by the local newspaper were worried when the Lancaster Mining company said that it could provide the necessary electricity but only at the 'prohibitive' rate of nine pence per unit and could not guarantee continuity of supply so that the town 'might at any time be plunged into darkness'.[142]

Municipal Socialism was thereupon embraced by F.W. Lewis, a member of the board and local middle-class notable, who proposed that the local authorities approach the government for an 8 000 pound loan for this purpose. Another local merchant, G. Harper (of 'Harper and Tanner', 'men's outfitters') seconded the motion.[143] The proposal envisioned a generating plant, a hundred small street lamps of sixteen candlepower at each street corner and eight arc lights of 200 candlepower each at the main business thoroughfares and one large 400 candlepower light for the Market Square. It was anticipated that street lighting would also raise the 'status' of the town.[144]
The highly publicised commitment to a street-lighting campaign by the middle class could have convinced some miners that Krugersdorp had a promising future.

'Proper' Streets

---

[142] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 3 January 1903, 'Occasional Notes'.
[143] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 February 1903, untitled.

In 1898, the mouthpiece of the local Dutch-speaking middle class complained about the town's streets in which 'loose stones' ('losse klippen') were strewn.[145] The street near the station and the Varley and Edgson Hotel was in an 'infamous state of disrepair' ('in eene famelyke mater van reparatie').[146] The article acknowledged the limitations of the existing Town Council by pointing out that the 'City fathers, pardon, town fathers' ('Stadvaders - pardon, Dorpsvaders') had insufficient funds to make the necessary repairs.[147]

In 1899, the English-speaking middle class began to weigh in, through their local newspaper, in support of a campaign to repair the streets. An article commented that the absence of proper water drainage in Commissioner street was 'nothing short of disgraceful' and had led to serious damage of the Market Square during recent heavy rains that would cost hundreds of pounds to repair.[148] The Dutch-speaking middle class added that the sidewalks in Ockerse street were in a 'dangerous condition' ('gevaarlyken toestand').[149]

Comment [JE19]: I have made this lower case for consistency

After the South African War, the Sanitary Inspector noted that most of the roads were in a 'deplorable' state and would cost a lot of money to repair and macadamise.[150] No work had 'ever been done to them' it was claimed.[151]There was no drainage in the town – only a furrow between the Krugersdorp and Luipaardsvlei townships – so that the town was often 'flooded after a severe storm'.[152] The trunk roads were in a very bad state of disrepair mostly due to lack of maintenance during the war. In one road along the Luipaardsvlei a 'very bad washaway [sic]' had occurred while another road to

[144] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 6 December 1903, 'Lighten Our Darkness' (Editorial).
[145] *De Voortrekker*, 9 July 1898, untitled.
[146] *ibid*.
[147] *ibid.*

[148] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 4 February 1899, untitled.
[149] *De Voortrekker*, 25 March 1899, untitled.
[150] CAD, CS 111, 7761C, 'Administrative Reports', Krugersdorp, 8 July 1902, letter, Sanitary Inspector, Krugersdorp, to Captain H. L. Phillips, Resident Magistrate, Krugersdorp, 8 July 1902.
[151] *ibid.*

Randfontein was ‘in very bad repair’.[153]

By September1902, the Krugersdorp Health Board had agreed to lay a culvert on the road opposite the station to draw off rainwater that was damaging the town's roads.[154] The Sanitary Inspector recommended that more staff be hired to fill in holes and remove tree roots from pavements to prevent ‘accidents’.[155] The Board proposed a novel solution to cut the costs of labour: they agreed to allow the Inspector the use of twenty convicts from the local gaol to ‘clear and patch the sidewalks’. [156] The Town Engineer, Mr Perfect, estimated that it could cost the town nearly 15 000 pounds to repair the chief roads.[157] The Health Board decided to send this estimate to the Colonial Secretary's office. A loan was obtained from the government and work soon began to ‘renovate the thoroughfares in the town’.[158]

Conclusion

The making of a town is a complex phenomenon requiring the interaction of many forces, personalities, developments and attitudes. If only some of the elements are present, a town will not easily materialize or survive as the cases of Kocksoord and Randfontein illustrate. Large concrete buildings, such as those in Kocksoord could not tip the balance in favour of the development of a permanently settled and stable town. Economic viability was lacking in Kocksoord despite political approval. Political approval was lacking in Randfontein despite economic viability. Krugersdorp had both political approval and economic viability, so it had a fair shot of evolving into a permanent, stable town where families would live in homes. Nonetheless its future was balanced on a knife's edge and it had to attract people, money, investment,

---

[152] *ibid.*
[153] *ibid.*
[154] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 6 September 1902, ‘Krugersdorp Health Board’.
[155] CAD, CS 111, 7761C, ‘Administrative Reports’, Krugersdorp, 8 July 1902, ‘Report of C. Alexander, Sanitary Inspector’.
[156] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 28 February 1903, ‘Road Repair’.
[157] *ibid.*
[158] *The Standard, Krugersdorp*, 9 May 1905, ‘Renovation of the Roads’.

industrial investment and persuade its existing inhabitants to settle down at a time when many were transients.

The English-speaking middle class demonstrated their commitment to Krugersdorp by supporting, planning and often paying for the erection of meaningful, permanent structures associated with their religion and culture. The spectacle of these large, imposing structures, resting so still and assuredly on consecrated ground, seen on a daily basis as people went about the town and more intimately during the Sabbath or Holy Days, may have influenced at least a section of the ‘respectable’ white working class to consider settling in Krugersdorp as well.

Many white middle class shopkeepers and professionals publicly demonstrated their allegiance to Krugersdorp by building substantial business premises, homes and churches. It was the spectacle of large stone buildings, associated with a Supreme Being, that was particularly influential. It is contended that these buildings may have convinced many working class men to consider the possibility of permanent settlement in the town. The middle class who built these churches during the 1890s, used their new municipal powers after the South African War to make the town more habitable, and this too helped to persuade many of the town's transient residents to commit to the town. Krugersdorp became, as a result, slowly and steadily over the years, a place where young miners began to see as a familiar friendly place that somehow, strangely, felt like ‘home’.