

**From Plough to Entrepreneurship: A History of African Entrepreneurs in
Evaton 1905-1960s**

By

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Supervisor Prof. Noor Nieftagodien

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted as a dissertation or thesis at any other university.

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University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, July 2013

Abstract

Evaton was distinct from other African freehold settlements in the Reef. There were several aspects that made it unique; these were its economic history and expression that delayed local incorporation into wage labour, self-sufficiency, demography, and geographical location. Physically, the area had big yards which enabled residents to be relatively successful subsistence farmers for the first three decades of its development. Subsistence farming facilitated economic independence and allowed local residents to refrain from working for white industrialists.

This study is motivated largely by the fact that Africans were deprived of economic and political autonomy by white governments. This marginalisation lies in the complex and interconnected processes of displacement and dispossession by which Africans were first dispossessed of their own land; then deprived of independent productive opportunities. The increasing scarcity of land as scarce commodity and African land ownership in Evaton— best explains the history of African local economic independence. For the local residents, land possession in Evaton provided a space where moral economy that fostered racial pride and solidarity was forged. It is where Africans created educational, religious and economic institutions that served as the base of challenging white political humiliation. These institutions provided ways to assert African dignity in the face of racial segregation. This work develops the logic explanation that stick together all forces that constrained Africans to give up labour to industrial economy in Evaton.

It provide us with the understanding on how local Africans struggled for economic independence and how independence changed over time in Evaton. It demonstrates how local residents resisted the forces of proletarianisation by adapting into different economic transformation that threatened their economic autonomy. The nature of these changes is represented by the shift from agricultural economic production to entrepreneurship. This progression has revealed how local entrepreneurs, particularly former sharecroppers, the educated residents, and independent farmers prioritised economic independence.

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List of Abbreviations

AME Church	African Methodist Episcopal Church
ANC	African National Congress
NAFCOC	National African Federation Chamber of Commerce
PAC	Pan African Congress
TUATA	Transvaal United African Teachers Association

Photos/ Plates

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Fig. 2 Fanny Coppin Hall, Wilberforce Institute Practicing School built in 1909 in 1914 built by Albert Johnson

Fig.3 Dr Nhlapo House, Nhlapo was the principal of Wilberforce

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