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**SEGREGATED HOUSING AND CONTESTED IDENTITIES: THE CASE OF
THE KING WILLIAM'S TOWN COLOURED COMMUNITY, 1895-1946**

THESIS

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a case study of the dynamics of coloured housing in King William's Town between 1895 and 1946. The impact of spatial segregation on pre-apartheid coloured settlements in the Eastern Cape has largely been ignored up to the present. This needs to be rectified as the lack of in-depth enquiry can lead to misinterpretations that may influence contemporary politics and identity formation.

Through research based on primary sources, it has become apparent that segregation in King William's Town was safeguarded and rationalized through the discourses of sanitation and civilization, and the practices of relocation and removal. The existing slum conditions were used as a convenient excuse to implement municipal control. Segregation compounded the problem of poverty, inequitable access to housing and the provision of basic services. As a result, local coloured housing was increasingly characterised by a shortage of decent accommodation and basic services, decreasing home ownership and increasing municipal tenancy. In addition, through the implementation of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act and the 1934 Slums Act, high sanitation standards were set, but the Council itself provided inferior services. Ironically, conditions in the relocated municipal settlements were also not on par with the provisions stipulated in the Slums Act that were used to effect removal in the first place. The implementation of racially exclusive housing was, therefore, not driven by a single role player. It was pioneered by the local authorities, legalised by national government and supported by the coloured elite, when needed, in an attempt to access decent housing.

This occurred mainly through the political manoeuvring of the coloured elite, and specifically the African Political (later People's) Organisation (APO), the Afrikaanse Nasionale Bond (ANB) and the locally constituted Coloured Welfare Association (CWA) in King William's Town. These organisations attempted to procure access to housing within the narrow boundaries of a prescribed identity. Segregated housing therefore fostered and sustained coloured identity. It consolidated feelings of separateness and division and

provided impetus for the construction of race and even racial tension. Coloured identity attempted to serve as a rallying point to overcome differences in religion, family and social networks and place of residence in order to procure access to housing. It was not, however, able to overcome the occasional division between settlements, caused by well-developed place-identities, which still inform the contemporary housing milieu.

The coloured elite initially did not question the legitimacy of coloured identity. Only in 1939, under threats of increased residential segregation, combined with the resulting opposition in coloured protest politics, was the legitimacy of coloured identity publicly contested. By 1943, with the creation of the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC), local coloured unity proved to be insufficient. A division within the ranks of the local coloured elite was evident. As a result, the expression of coloured identity still remains contested in contemporary King William's Town.

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Preface

It is a pleasure to thank the many people who made this thesis possible. I would firstly like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Prof Gary Baines. This work would not have been possible without his sound advice and conscientious encouragement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Terminology

Terminology applied to human groups in South Africa, with its well-known history of racial division and discrimination, raises some vexing issues. Who are the so-called coloured people? The term 'coloured' in the South African context refers to people of mixed descent, including a varying admixture of Khoisan, Malay, African and/or European people. South African and North American usage of the term coloured/colored, which refers to all people of colour, therefore differs.¹ The term coloured was defined in the 1904 population census,² and subsequently became part of the social construction of race in South Africa. All people labelled as coloured did not, however, accept the imposition of a racial identity. Indeed, while some so-called coloured people embraced their 'colouredness', others did not. In order to identify the people who are the subject of this thesis, rather than to reify any form of racial discrimination, the term coloured will be problematised.

Ethnic identity and terminology go hand in hand. Throughout the 20th century, writers on coloured identity have attempted to resolve the dilemma of coloured terminology.³ Some researchers have done so by using different terminology, such as, in Afrikaans 'bruin mense' ('brown people'). The association with Afrikaans as mother tongue has led to the popular term, 'Bruin Afrikaner' ('brown Afrikaner'). Another tendency has been to prefix 'so-called' in front of coloured. Some researchers spell 'coloured' with a lower case 'c' as opposed to a capital letter, in order to indicate that it is a contested term. Mohamed Adhikari, a noted researcher on coloured identity, recently published the first systematic study on coloured identity in South Africa. He advocates the use of the term 'Coloured' with a capital letter to refer to people who consider themselves as such.⁴

¹ The American term 'colored' was primarily used to refer to African Americans.

² Birgit Pickel, *Coloured Ethnicity and Identity: A Case Study in the Former Areas in the Western Cape*, South Africa, Hamburg LIT, 1997 Demokratie and Entwicklung

³ See, for example, G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall. A History of South African 'Coloured' politics*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1987, p. 1-4.

⁴ M Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*, Double Storey Books, Cape Town, 2005, p. xv.

During fieldwork conducted for this study, the researcher noted that some of her informants, even though classified as 'coloured' in terms of racial legislation, did not necessarily see themselves in such terms. Some resisted the imposition of such an identity while others feel comfortable with it.⁵ It is clear that ethnic terminology presents inevitable difficulties in historical research and remains a contested identity. The author is of the opinion that as long as an awareness of ethnic group identity exists, ethnic terminology will be used in order to define this group awareness. It is therefore important to state that this study on segregated housing is not undertaken in order to perpetuate any racial categories. For this reason, and as a sign of respect to those informants who object to the terminology, the researcher will use the term 'coloured'.

The terms African and black are used to refer to the Nguni-speaking people of South Africa. Where possible the author has used the term Xhosa in order to be as precise as possible.

Coloured Identity

Coloured history has been the subject of several publications throughout the 20th century.⁶ Adhikari divides coloured historiography in South Africa in three distinctive categories.⁷ The 'essentialist' school includes almost all popular sources and many of the older or more conservative academic writing. The essentialists do not attempt to question the validity of colouredness, but approach the subject as a natural product of miscegenation requiring little or no further analysis. The 'instrumentalists', writing within the 'liberal' mould and

⁵ DJ Matthews & CP Davids: personal interview, 23.03.2006, B Osteridge: personal interview: 23.10.2006.

⁶ Earlier publications on coloured history include: JS Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937*, Longmans Green, London, 1939; C Ziervogel, *Brown South Africa*, Maskew Miller Ltd, Cape Town, 1938; M Hommel, *Capricorn Blues: The Struggle for Human Rights in South Africa*, Culturama, Toronto, 1981; J Western, *Outcast Cape Town*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1981; AJ Venter, *Coloured: A Profile of Two Million South Africans*, Human & Rousseau, Cape Town, 1974; R van der Ross, *The Rise and Decline of Apartheid: A Study of Political Movements in South Africa, 1880-1985*, Tafelberg Publishers, Cape Town, 1986. Roy H Du Pre, *Separate but Unequal: the 'coloured' People of South Africa - a Political History*, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 1994. M Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*, Double Storey Books, Cape Town, 2005. Coloured identity is, of course, not merely of scholarly interest. It has evoked considerable interest in recent times. The website www.bruin-ou.com caters for 'The Brand, The People, The Lifestyle'.

⁷ M Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*, Double Storey Books, Cape Town, 2005, p. 34-36. It is not the intention of this thesis to reproduce in full Adhikari's historiography pertaining to coloured history and specifically identity. For a fuller discussion see the above reference.

influenced by a growing rejection of coloured identity dating from the late 1970s, place coloured identity firmly in the context of an artificially imposed category.⁸ Coloured identity is viewed as the result of historical processes of social engineering created as part of a divide-and-rule strategy. The instrumentalists therefore focus on social injustices and resistance politics, largely ignoring the accommodation of coloured people within the system. A third approach, which Adhikari refers to as 'social constructionism' dates from the latter part of the 1980s. It criticises the two former approaches for oversimplifying coloured identity and, in the process, denying coloured people the right to participate in the creation of their own identity.⁹

Subscribing to the third school, Mohamed Adhikari's central argument is that coloured identity is, in the first instance, a product of coloured people grounded in a specific historical milieu.¹⁰ He demonstrates that their intermediate status in the racial hierarchy resulted from 'assimilationist' aspirations into a dominant culture, negative racial stereotyping and marginality. According to Adhikari, the intermediate position of coloured people regulated the way in which colouredness functioned under white rule. In the process, severe limitations were placed on independent social and political action.¹¹

The fact that coloured people draw parentage from more than one racial group does not mean that they define themselves only in racial terms. Identity can also consist of other markers of identity such as language, family, social networks, place of residence and profession. This is well illustrated in King William's Town where many older coloured people are able to converse not only in Afrikaans, but also in English and Xhosa. Hence colouredness is the meeting place of different cultures, languages and identities. Rather than being a clear-cut category, colouredness is a self-imposed and official grouping, in which discrete

⁸ Examples include I Goldin, *Making Race: The Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa*, Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 1987; G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall. A History of South African 'Coloured' politics*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1987.

⁹ Z Erasmus (ed), *Coloured by History Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town*, Kwela Books and SA History Online, Social Identities South Africa Series, Cape Town, 2001; B Pickel, *Coloured Ethnicity and Identity*, Hamburg LIT, Demokratie and Entwicklung, 1997; M Adhikari, *Not White Enough....* Double Storey Books, Cape Town, 2005, p. 35.

¹⁰ M Adhikari, *Not White Enough....* Double Storey Books, Cape Town, 2005, p. xii-xiii, 11.

¹¹ M Adhikari, *Not White Enough....* Double Storey Books, Cape Town, 2005, p. xii-xiii, 11.

boundaries overlap and hard edges are blurred, reducing the whole notion of race as a clear-cut category to an absurdity.¹²

Identity is not a fixed non-negotiable construction, but involves choices made by the individual, who is nevertheless socially embedded. Group ties and associations are part of the construction of individual identities. It is questionable to what extent identities are holistic. This is equally true of Afrikaners, English, Xhosa and so on. There are, in fact, varieties of colouredness that differ from place to place, and although the varieties include certain characteristics in common, no single variety includes them all. Thus colouredness is polymorphous – it assumes a variety of forms.¹³

Similar trends are present among the King William's Town coloured community. Many local families trace their Khoi origins to the Kat River Settlement and Keiskammahoek areas,¹⁴ while some interviewees emphasised their British and Irish forbearers to explain the introduction of surnames, such as Alexander, Nelson and Flanagan. Some evidence of German descent was also traced. The younger generation generally focused on their Khoisan and slave heritage, while others proudly acknowledge their broader African identity. Colouredness is therefore a multi-faceted identity constituted and even contested from within. Individuals draw on their personal experience in order to create an identity for themselves.

It is clear that colouredness and discussions about coloured identity will not readily disappear from post-apartheid discourse as long as they remain relevant to people's lives. Colouredness and its accompanied intermediate and multi-faceted status will, however, continue to draw criticism both from within and

¹² Cf. Z Erasmus (ed), *Coloured by History Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town*, Kwela Books and SA History Online, Social Identities South Africa Series, Cape Town, 2001 for more on creolization theory.

¹³ E Leach, *Culture & Communication: The Logic by which Symbols Are Connected. An Introduction to the Use of Structuralist Analysis in Social Anthropology*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1976, p. 33-35; Dr MM Hirst: personal communication, 23.11.2006.

¹⁴ Cf. A van Wyk, *Die Ou Man in Kettings: Vier Swart Verhale*, Saayman and Weber, Cape Town, 1988. This includes a documented history of Andries Botha from the Katriver Settlement. He was the father of Klaas Botha, who resided at Brownlee Station post 1850. Other ex-Kat River descendants include the Groep and Boezak families.

outside the coloured community itself. As the title of this thesis suggests, coloured identity will remain a contested issue.

The Setting

Straddling the banks of the Buffalo River, some 60 km west of East London, lies the bustling Eastern Cape centre of King William's Town. It was established as the capital of the short-lived Province of Queen Adelaide in May 1835 and thereafter became the military and administrative headquarters of British Kaffraria in December 1847.¹⁵ The town developed from the garrison, which served as the springboard for military operations against the Xhosa. Like Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth and East London, the town's foundations were firmly established in missionary activity and settler outposts, as well as large-scale trading with the Xhosa. It is therefore not surprising that mission stations, trading stations and fortifications characterised the 19th century landscape of the town.¹⁶

Under the guidance of the missionary, the soldier, the trader and subsequently the administrator, the town was governed according to white economic, cultural and moral standards. The town was therefore white-dominated, but catered commercially for a numerically preponderant Xhosa-speaking population. In addition to the above groups, a small percentage of the local population comprised those that were subsequently termed coloured.

The People

The main focus of this study is the coloured population of King William's Town, which, in 1891, consisted of about 420 people, or 5.8% of the local population. Their numbers steadily increased and by 1946 there were reportedly 1 320 coloured people living in the district of King William's Town, comprising 11.6% of

¹⁵ According to a dispatch dated 26 December 1835 from Lord Charles Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, the Xhosa were reinstated in the annexed Province of Queen Adelaide. The province of British Kaffraria existed from 1847 to 1866 when it was incorporated into the Cape Colony. Both provinces encompassed the area between the Kei and Keiskamma Rivers.

¹⁶ MM Hirst, 'Introduction' in BM Randles, *A History of the Kaffrarian Museum*, Lovedale Press, Alice, 1984, p. ix, x.

the local population.¹⁷ Coloured people were mainly identified along language and cultural lines.¹⁸ They largely spoke Afrikaans as their mother tongue and were culturally closer to the white Afrikaners. They were largely Christian, absorbed the essence of white middle-class norms and values, and formed part of a labouring underclass in the local economy. They were largely lower-income or working-class people.¹⁹ Indeed, there was an almost complete absence of any professional or affluent businessmen among the coloured people of King William's Town between 1895 and 1946. Many people were employed as factory workers at King Tanning, Kaffrarian Boots, Border Footwear or King Clothing. Some of the men worked as drivers, assistants or builders at local businesses. Many females were employed as washerwomen or worked in the town's Military Reserve, known locally as 'The Barracks'.²⁰ Some families supplemented their income by selling wood and vegetables or letting rooms to boarders. Only a few coloured-owned businesses were identified and were mainly situated in town.²¹

A small elite, known as the 'leaders' in the community, represented the upper strata of the local coloured population.²² Adhikari's comments on the coloured elite nationally partly hold true in King William's Town. The coloured elite were occasionally distinguished by relative affluence, but mostly by the fact that they were literate. A general consciousness of their superior status within the coloured community set them apart from the rest of the working class. However, their elite status only existed within their own community and in reality, they formed part of a 'respectable' working-class, rather than an emerging petite bourgeoisie.²³

¹⁷ D Hobart Houghton, *Economic Development in a Plural Society: Studies in the Border Region of the Cape Province*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1960, p. 23; Census 1911, Part 1-5, Annexures to General Report, Government Printer, Pretoria, 1912 p. 88-89; Census 1921 (3rd census of the Population of the Union of South Africa, enumerated 03.05.1921. Population Census 07.05.1946, Government Printers, Pretoria, 1949 p. 56.

¹⁸ R Du Pre, 'One Nation, Many Afrikaners: The Identity Crisis of 'Brown' Afrikaners in the New South Africa'

in *Journal for Contemporary History*, vol. 22, no 1, June 1997, p. 84.

¹⁹ S Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People Within the Structure of the Union of South Africa*, Grove Press, New York, 1953, p. 118. As late as 1955, Hammond-Tooke noted that the wage pattern among local coloured residents showed very few individuals in the middle-income group. Cf. WD Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of King William's Town district*, Department of Native Affairs, Pretoria, 1958, p. 36.

²⁰ Sarah Arends and Annie Stompies, for example, were employed as washer-women. CP Davids: personal interview, 24.03.2006.

²¹ For example, Stoffel Botha was a saddler and harness maker in Market Street and John Taai worked as a dairyman.

²² WA Nelson: personal interview, 31.03.2006.

²³ M Adhikari, *Not Black Enough, Not White Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured community*, Ohio University Press, Athens, 2006, p. xiv. Adhikari states that the coloured elite consisted

In 1895, according to Franco Frescura, it was difficult to identify one specific area in King William's Town as being predominantly coloured in character.²⁴ Residents were largely living in mixed residential areas, sharing their home environment with the Xhosa and to a lesser degree, with the white residents of the town. An analysis of the King William's Town Burial Register²⁵ of 1895 to 1946, pinpointing the exact addresses of coloured residents, was utilised to determine where coloured people predominantly resided in King William's Town. In addition, the analysis also indicates how spatial segregation influenced housing patterns in the period under discussion. A detailed discussion will follow in the accompanying chapters.

Coloured Identity and Housing in King William's Town

We all come from a place. What is authentic about us - our very identity - is inextricably linked with the places we inhabit and call our own.²⁶ This concrete connection between person and place has moulded people's outlooks and still mediates their everyday experience. Identity is therefore place specific. Kinship, associational ties and social networks are resources individuals draw on in the process of constructing their identities. The habitus, or place or origin, according to Pierre Bourdieu, only exists inasmuch as it is 'inside the heads of actors'.²⁷ The habitus encapsulates the practices of individuals and informs their interaction with one another and their environment. 'The habitus (is) not just manifest in behaviour, it is an integral part of it.' It forms a concrete connection between individuals' subjective worlds and the cultural world they occupy and share with others. A place of residence therefore serves as a unifying location. Under specific conditions a common place of residence can, and does, forge solidarities on the basis of material and political interests. The habitus is the connection between individual identity and supra-

of a respectable working class and an emerging petite bourgeoisie. As stated above, this was not the case in King William's Town

²⁴ F Frescura, King William's Town Conservation Impact Study, Archetype Press & the Environmental Development Unit, Port Elizabeth, 1994, (Unpublished document, Amathole Museum Library), p. 169.

²⁵ A database copy of the Burial Register is available at the Amathole Museum. The original cemetery records are housed in Buffalo City Municipality's cemetery division.

²⁶ J Western, *Outcast Cape Town*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1981, p. 3.

²⁷ Pierre Bourdieu as quoted in R Jenkins, 'Practice, Habitus and Field' in *Pierre Bourdieu*, Routledge, London and New York, 1992, p. 74 and 75.

individual/exogenous structures.²⁸ This was and is the case with segregated housing in King William's Town as it fosters and sustains coloured identity.

The creation of divided spaces had a lasting effect on people's perceptions of self. In time, a distinct in-group perception, largely formed by habitus, developed. Greg Philo and David Miller stated that 'History provides the real material circumstances in which identities are produced and project(ed) toward the future.'²⁹ In a racially divided country, where housing is segregated along racial lines, people have little option but to act within the identity that has been allotted them, in order to access scarce resources, of which housing is one. The position of colouredness within the racial hierarchy was therefore exploited, when needed, in order to obtain access to decent housing, preferably with home ownership rights attached.

Separate areas of residence played a defining role in the formation of coloured identity in King William's Town. Coloured families living in distinct settlements socialised, to a large degree, separately from one another. They also shopped at different sites, used different midwives and generally married suitors from the same place of residence.³⁰ The small coloured population of King William's Town thus revealed a multi-faceted identity based on separate place-identities.

This is not to say that local coloured housing could completely escape the stratified layering of society along the lines of race, language and class.³¹ Many of the local coloured settlements constituted multi-racial areas, but did not represent non-racial communities in the truest sense. White, coloured and Xhosa neighbours mostly lived in separate pockets within the settlements. Children played together across the colour bar, but attended separate schools and

²⁸ R Jenkins, 'Practice, Habitus and Field' in *Pierre Bourdieu*, Routledge, London and New York, 1992, p. 74 and 75; J Dixon & K Durrheim, 'Displacing Place-Identity: A Discursive Approach to Locating Self and Other' in *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 2000, volume 39 pp. 27, 29; JE Davis, *Contested Ground: Collective Action and the Urban Neighbourhood*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1991, p. 4. The original emphasis in Bourdieu's quotation, printed in italics, has been removed.

²⁹ G Philo & D Miller, *Cultural Compliance: Dead Ends of Media/Cultural Studies and Social Science*, Glasgow, Glasgow Media Group, December 1997 p. 39, as quoted in P Hammond, 'Cultural Identity and Ideology' <http://www.myweb.lsbu.ac.uk/philip-hammond/1999b.html>.

³⁰ K Trompeter, M Botha, W Arkell, E Groep: personal interviews: 06.06.2006.

³¹ Crain Soudien, 'Holding onto the Past: Working with the 'Myths' of District Six' in Rasool, Ciraj & Sandra Prosalendis (ed) *Recalling Community in Cape Town: Creating and Curating the District Six Museum*, District Six Museum Foundation, Cape Town, 2001, p. 98.

churches. Relationships on a social level were racially stratified. Relations were amicable and even neighbourly, but the families did not socialise. 'We got on well together, but we weren't friends.'³²

In the 1930s the town's housing became increasingly segregated. Physical boundaries led to social distance and were well illustrated in the use of racial terminology. Mrs Florrie Arends, recalling her experience of living in the town's location, where coloured and Xhosa housing were segregated referred to the Xhosa section as 'the location'. In return, the coloured section was described as 'emaLaweni' (place of the coloured people).³³ Residents were therefore aware of the division of space within their neighbourhood. Certain areas were increasingly proclaimed as coloured areas. Referring to the oldest suburb of King William's Town, where the implementation of the 1923 Native (Urban Areas) Act had caused the removal of Xhosa inhabitants, an ex-resident born in 1944, stated: 'Daai was onse gebied, waar die bruin mense gewoon het (That was our area, where the coloured people lived).'³⁴ What does this statement suggest about the perception of identity and ownership and to what extent was individual identity defined by place?

It is widely recognised that spatial segregation encouraged feelings of exclusion in communities that were separated from one another. The division of those that belong and those that do not became embodied in the physical division and organisation of space. Segregated housing encouraged the use of physical boundaries and buffer zones between groups. Physical distance therefore perpetuated social distance and, in the process, provided a new impetus for the construction of race in South Africa.³⁵

³² J Trerise: personal interview, 03.05.2006.

³³ F Arends, personal interview, 06.06.2006; Personal communication with Fezile Cindi, ex-Ginsberg resident, 21.09.2006.

³⁴ CP Alexander: personal interview, 08.05.2006.

³⁵ M Seitles, 'The Perpetuation of Residential Racial Segregation in America: Historical Discrimination, Modern Forms of Exclusion, and Inclusionary Remedies' in *Journal of Land Use & Environmental Law*, 1996; J Dixon & K Durrheim, 'Displacing Place-Identity: A Discursive Approach to Locating Self and Other' in *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 2000, Volume 39 pp. 34.

Methodology and Sources

Given the relative shortage of any secondary literature on King William's Town for the period 1895 to 1946, primary materials constitute the major source of this study.

The Amathole Museum has an extensive database containing entries from the King William's Town Burial Register, as well as local directories. Biographical files assisted with the compilation of short personal histories, where necessary. In its collection, the museum also houses some rare photographs and documents regarding the local settlements. Original copies of two local newspapers, the *Cape Mercury* (1895-1946) and the *Kaffrarian Watchman* (1895-1899) were perused at the museum. Monthly municipal minutes of the King William's Town Borough Council were published in the *Cape Mercury* from 1890 to 1945. In addition, matters of interest, arising from the minutes, were raised in individual articles and editorials.

Copies of the Borough Council minutes, including in-committee reports not published in the local media, as well as the minutes of Health and General Purposes committee meetings are available from the Cape Archives Depot. The municipal files contain a wealth of information on the various settlements discussed in the thesis. Extensive correspondence between the local coloured political associations and the Borough Council was traced to the Cape Archives. A survey of individual coloured homeownership was conducted in the King William's Town Deeds Office.

Additional municipal correspondence was located within the Archival division of Buffalo City Municipality. Improperly stored in boxes packed on top of each other, the municipal documents were found to be in complete disarray. To make matters worse, no filing system was utilised, making referencing highly problematic. Listing all these documents would have resulted in a long and arduous Bibliography. The researcher accordingly resolved to record only the documents pertinent to this study.

To supplement these documentary sources, the author conducted interviews with members of the local coloured community; both with the original inhabitants and their descendants. These interviews provided numerous insights into the characters of individuals, both of officials and prominent community figures. It is only through the willingness of people to share their experiences with the researcher that she was able to study segregated housing.

Secondary sources were used in order to supply background information and to supplement the primary sources. Mohamed Adhikari was particularly useful in this regard.³⁶ Gavin Lewis's study on coloured politics in South Africa provided important background information on national political organisations active in King William's Town.³⁷ Research on King William's Town itself has been limited to a few theses. Significant gaps therefore exist in the written record.³⁸ Denver Webb and Sharon Caldwell have contributed to the historiography by researching residential segregation round the turn of the 19th century.³⁹

Only one researcher, HM Zituta, has attempted to comprehensively focus the implementation of spatial segregation in King William's Town. In his study, Zituta found it impossible to differentiate between coloured and white surnames recorded prior to 1951. He therefore felt that it was impossible to document local coloured housing prior to this date.⁴⁰ Only by an extensive analysis of the respective families through a database copy of the local Burial Register of 1895 to 1946, local directories, title deeds, extant archival records and personal

³⁶ M Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*, Double Storey Books, Cape Town, 2005.

³⁷ G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall. A History of South African 'Coloured' politics*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1987.

³⁸ GS Hofmeyr, King William's Town and the Xhosa, 1854 - 1861. The role of a frontier capital during the High Commissionship of Sir George Grey. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1981; SE Caldwell, The course and results of the plague outbreaks in King William's Town, 1900-1907, Unpublished Honours Thesis, UNISA, 1987; DA Webb, King William's Town during the South African War, 1899-1902. An urban social, economic and cultural history, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1993; HM Zituta, The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town, 1826-1991, Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1997 and F Frescura, King William's Town Conservation Impact Study Archetype Press & the Environmental Development Unit, Port Elizabeth, 1994, (Unpublished document, Amathole Museum Library).

³⁹ Sharon Caldwell was the first researcher to discuss the origins of segregation in Ginsberg. Cf. SE Caldwell, The course and results of the plague outbreaks in King William's Town, 1900-1907, Unpublished Honours Thesis, UNISA, 1987.

⁴⁰ HM Zituta, The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town, 1826-1991, Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1997, pp. 13, 14, 16, 63, 118.

interviews could the author overcome this problem herself.⁴¹ This study therefore attempts to add and build onto the extant historiography of King William's Town, especially for the pre-1948 period. 1895 was chosen as a starting point for the study because in that year coloured residents requested that the Municipality establish a separate township. In the process many sub-themes, discussed in this study, are introduced. In 1946 the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC) conducted a survey on the state of coloured housing in King William's Town, providing a suitable summary for concluding this pre-apartheid study.

Excellent research has been conducted on segregation in the South African urban milieu. Noted authors in this regard are Saul Dubow, Paul Maylam, Gary Baines, AJ Christopher and Susan Parnell.⁴² Very little, however, has been written on residential segregation pertaining to the coloured population outside the Cape Town area. No extensive research has been conducted on coloured housing in the Eastern Cape. This is probably owing to the minority status of coloured people in the province's population, as well as the dearth of historians of coloured history in the Eastern Cape.

Coloured history did, however, receive attention during the period under discussion from two noted sources, namely Sheila Patterson and the 1937 Government-appointed Commission on coloured people.⁴³ Both these sources, which cover an extensive subject, only contribute to a general overview of coloured housing.

⁴¹ The assistance of Mr Brian Osteridge in the identification of specific role players is hereby acknowledged.

⁴² S Dubow & W Beinart (eds), *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, Routledge, London, 1995; S Dubow, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-1936*, MacMillan Press Limited, Hampshire, 1989; P Maylam, 'The Rise and Decline of Urban Apartheid in South Africa' in *African Affairs*, vol 89, no 354 (January 1990), P Maylam, 'Explaining the Apartheid City: 20 years of South African Urban Historiography' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, March 1995 vol. 21 issue 1; GF Baines, *New Brighton, Port Elizabeth c. 1903-1953: A History of an Urban African Community*, Unpublished Phd thesis, February 1994. AJ Christopher, *The Atlas of Changing South Africa* (2nd edition), Routledge, London, 2001 & SM Parnell, *Johannesburg Slums and Racial Segregation in South African cities, 1910-1937*. Unpublished PhD thesis, WITS University, Johannesburg, 1993. See Bibliography for further details.

⁴³ S Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People Within the Structure of the Union of South Africa*, Grove Press, New York, 1953; *Report of Commission of Inquiry regarding Cape Coloured Population of the Union*, Government Printer, Pretoria, 1937.

The lack of any in-depth research, combined with the focus on media representations and public discourse, has led 'to stereotyping of coloured people in the popular mind.'⁴⁴ The very process through which racial terminology and identity have been manipulated and rationalised remains largely unaddressed. There is a false assumption that black South Africans were the only people affected by discriminatory housing legislation in the pre-1948 period. In addition, the existing literature minimizes the role that coloured people played in South African history, especially in the pre-1948 period. The impact of spatial segregation on the everyday lives of coloured people has been largely ignored. In the absence of any serious historical re-assessment, a holistic history, including the part played by coloured people, remains to be written. This needs to be rectified as the lack of in-depth enquiry can lead to misinterpretations that may influence contemporary politics and identity formation. Of more immediate concern is the application for land restitution for the ex-residents and the descendants of Brownlee Station, Leightonville and Old Town. It is therefore pertinent that the historical record be properly recorded.

Scope of Study

This thesis examines the history of coloured housing in a specific historical milieu, namely King William's Town (1895-1946). It aims to analyse the link between housing, segregation and identity by focusing on the development of local coloured settlements. It identifies and describes individual coloured settlements and aims to understand both the rationale and terms of segregationist measures, as well as the responses to segregated and discriminatory housing, as applied to the coloured people of King William's Town. The period between 1895 and 1946 was characterised by white racial attitudes and the rationalisation thereof through sanitation, civilisation, segregation and ultimately relocation and municipal tenancy. In response to white social design, and specifically to procure decent housing, coloured people acted within the narrow boundaries of an identity allotted to them. The position of colouredness within the racial hierarchy was therefore exploited, when needed, in order to obtain access to housing.

⁴⁴ M Adhikari, *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*, Double Storey Books, Cape Town, 2005, p. 1.

The study includes an analysis of the local role players within the context of the national segregationist policies of the day. The Borough Council, the white ratepayers, the local media, the white liberals, the coloured elite and their various political organisations, all contributed to local coloured housing. The aforementioned political organisations included the African Political (later People's) Organisation (APO), the Afrikaanse Nasionale Bond (ANB) and the locally-formed Coloured Welfare Association (CWA).

Chapter 3 defines residential segregation before discussing the accompanying national health and housing legislation. It focuses on national trends present in coloured housing before discussing the role of the Borough Council, its white ratepayers and the various coloured political organisations active in the King William's Town housing sphere.

Chapter 4 portrays the various settlements in King William's Town, with the exception of Ginsberg location, that catered for coloured housing. Attempts to remove residents from Brownlee Station and Ridsdel are discussed in detail. Recurring themes in this chapter include removal, sanitation, the loss of home-ownership and a general shortage of housing.

Chapter 5 looks at the early history of Tsolo and Ginsberg before focusing on the re-housing of the coloured people of Brownlee Station and Ridsdel at Leightonville. Coloured housing conditions, as implemented under the Native and Asiatic Location Regulations and subsequently the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, are discussed. The quest for a separate coloured housing scheme, advocated by the coloured elite through the APO, the ANB and the CWA, is given attention in this chapter. Issues of political manoeuvring and racial tension, occasioned by limited access to housing opportunities, are highlighted.

The conclusions emerging from this study are detailed in Chapter Six. In this chapter, the role of the local role players is analysed. This chapter aims to contribute to an understanding of the influence of segregated housing on contemporary coloured identity and social relations, as well as on housing in present-day King William's Town.

Chapter 2: Patterns of Differentiation and Discrimination:¹ Coloured Housing in South Africa, 1895 – 1946

Segregation and Housing

The term segregation was coined at the beginning of the 20th century. To a large degree, the practice of segregation established the political and ideological framework out of which apartheid was constructed and refined. Segregation therefore refers to the social practices and the set of government policies that sought to control relationships along colour lines.² The adoption of segregation represented an attempt to systematise control and domination in a heterogeneous and newly unified state. Segregation was thus designed to maintain and safeguard white supremacy at every level of society.

Racial separation was sought at a time when the desire for economic protection and social division increased among whites. The early 20th century witnessed the growing desire to eliminate overcrowding and slum conditions as the fear of disease increased. Overcrowding, slums, as well as public health and safety, were often seen in the light of ethnic and class differences. The proximity of locations to white residential areas was, for example, viewed as a potential health hazard. Other early motives included a perceived 'unfamiliarity with white culture', attempts to uphold European moral standards and to maintain property values. The fear of crime and the desire to control and canalise labour also increased the desire for racial separateness.³

The increasing urbanisation of the working class convinced the authorities that the existing structure of South African society was at risk. The threat of racial mixing and its perceived consequences led to an increase in systematic strategies of racist urban control. Anxieties about miscegenation or concerns

¹ Heading originally used in S Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People Within the Structure of the Union of South Africa*, Grove Press, New York, 1953, p. 33.

² S Dubow, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa*, MacMillan Press Ltd, Hampshire, 1989 p. 1.

³ P Morris, *A History of Black Housing in South Africa*, Pauline Morris SA Foundation, Johannesburg, 1981 p. 12.

about the 'degeneration' of whites were shamelessly appropriated by politicians to mobilise support for segregation. As a result, social divisions in South African society increasingly took on a rigidly racial character.⁴

The practice of racial differentiation and discrimination in the first half of the 20th century impinged upon all aspects of South African society. It pervaded social, economic and political spheres and gradually became institutionalised in, for example, the educational system, the work place, transport and, of course, housing. According to Paul Maylam: 'Segregation was essentially a form of spatial control over residential space'.⁵ Residential segregation was perhaps the most obvious form of racial discrimination because it impacted on the subordinate group in an urban setting in a very visible fashion.

Coloured housing in the urban areas of South Africa evolved through four distinct periods between 1895 and 1946. Initially, the local authorities focused only on the reduction of overcrowding and slum conditions. After World War One (1914-1918), they aimed at reducing black and coloured urbanisation by focusing only on providing accommodation for the employed urban workforce. Few towns had provided any special accommodation for the increasing number of urban townsmen. In time slum clearance and the practice of using public housing as a device for white advancement, became the seedbed of urban segregation.⁶

In the inter-war period, residential restrictions were progressively tightened through the implementation of public health and housing legislation. Segregated housing increasingly became part of state policy. There was a general belief in municipal circles that it was virtually impossible to keep the urban areas free of disease or to clear slum areas until location housing for the displaced residents had been constructed. After World War Two (1939-1945), subsidised housing, based on the differentiation between racial groups, was widely implemented. This

⁴ W Beinart & S Dubow (eds), *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth-century South Africa*, Routledge, London, 1995 p. 1.

⁵ P Maylam, 'Explaining the Apartheid City: Twenty Years of South African Urban Historiography' in *Journal of South African Studies*, March 1995, vol. 21, no. 1, p. 7; see also S Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People Within the Structure of the Union of South Africa*, Grove Press, New York, 1953, p. 118.

⁶ SM Parnell, *Johannesburg Slums and Racial Segregation in South African Cities, 1910-1937*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, WITS University, Johannesburg, 1993, p. iii.

led to the growth of locations on the periphery of South African towns. The older inner city suburbs and the town centres largely remained at least partially racially integrated, paving the way for the implementation of the Group Areas Act in 1950.⁷

The gradual implementation of residential separation must be understood in the context that segregation was not morally contestable at the beginning of the 20th century. Segregation increasingly filtered through the intellectual discourse of the day and it was treated as normative. Liberal whites and many black intellectuals agreed on its desirability and inevitability.⁸

One of the earliest users of the concept of 'territorial segregation' was the prominent King William's Town liberal and attorney-at-law, Richard Rose-Innes. He linked residential segregation to the establishment of reserves for Africans as 'reservoirs of labour'. The model used was the 1894 Glen Grey Act. According to Paul Rich, Rose-Innes established some continuity in Cape liberal thinking by commencing a wider debate on segregation. This resulted in some of the provisions accepted as part of the 1902 Treaty of Vereeniging as well as the Union's 'native policy'.⁹

What was at stake was not whether, but through which mechanisms, racial residential control should be applied to urban areas. This was accompanied by a widely-held belief that the coloured and black working class was incapable of constituting its own housing environment. Some form of control, implemented by either local or central government, was therefore advocated.¹⁰

⁷ SM Parnell, 'Creating Racial Privilege: the Origins of South African Public Health and Town Planning Legislation' in *Journal of South African Studies*, September 1993, vol. 19, no. 3, p. 472; AJ Christopher, 'Port Elizabeth' in Lemon, Anthony (ed.) *Homes Apart: South Africa's Segregated Cities*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1991, p. 46; V Bickford-Smith 'Mapping Cape Town: From Slavery to Apartheid' in Sean Field (ed), *Lost Communities, Living Memories. Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town*, David Philip Publishers, Cape Town, 2001, p. 22.

⁸ SM Parnell, 'Race, Power and Urban Control: Johannesburg's Inner City Slum-yards, 1910-1923', in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, September 2003, vol. 29, no. 3, p. 631.

⁹ P Rich, *White Power and the Liberal Conscience: Racial Segregation and South African Liberalism, 1921-1960*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1984, p. 4.

¹⁰ P Maylam, *South Africa's Racial Past: The History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation and Apartheid*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2001, p. 143.

Housing was all about control. Housing policies were geared not only towards the provision of adequate shelter, but also towards the suppression of black and coloured inhabitants. Controlled housing became a favoured segregatory tool, forming one of the pillars of a racist society. It is no accident that political rights were bound up with property. In the period between 1895 and 1946, political rights were only conferred on those who were owners or potential owners of property.¹¹ The aforementioned group constituted a small minority of South African voters. According to Parnell, rehousing projects and forced removals strengthened and even created racial differences.¹² Racial categorisation of slum residents for the purposes of residential segregation ensconced the divisions on which the racial hierarchy was built.

Residential segregation in the pre-apartheid period often focused only on the effect of racist legislation on Africans. The impact of residential segregation and slum clearances on the coloured people in this time frame is often ignored. Alan Mabin,¹³ for example, argued that the Group Areas Act of 1950 extended general segregation to coloureds for the first time. In reality, thousands of coloured people were forcibly removed and re-housed during the pre-apartheid period.¹⁴ This occurred through the implementation of segregatory measures, both on a local and national level. In addition, coloured people were prevented from living in and owning property in certain urban areas. Between 1895 and 1946, specific legislation also provided for the establishment of coloured settlements within limited areas.¹⁵ As previously stated, municipal housing specifically designed for separate racial groups, was fairly widespread after World War Two (1939-1945). As with Africans, access to coloured housing was severely limited, entrenching

¹¹ From 1905 to 1945, the percentage of black and coloured voters on the Cape Province common roll fluctuated from 6.3% to 20.8%. Coloured voters consistently constituted the largest group, making up 6.3% to 13.5% of the electorate. R van der Ross, *The Rise and Decline of Apartheid: A Study of Political Movements among the Coloured People of South Africa, 1880-1985*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 1986, p. 1.

¹² SM Parnell, *Johannesburg Slums and Racial Segregation in South African Cities, 1910-1937*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, WITS University, Johannesburg, 1993, p. iii.

¹³ A Mabin, 'Comprehensive Segregation: The Origins of the Group Areas Act and its Planning Apparatuses' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Taylor and Francis Ltd., June 1992, vol. 18, no. 2, p. 406.

¹⁴ Thousands of coloured and Indian people and even poor whites were removed from city centres in the pre-apartheid period.

¹⁵ S Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People Within the Structure of the Union of South Africa*, Grove Press, New York, 1953, p. 118.

the idea of separateness and inferiority and excluding them from participating equally in an urban society.

Residential Segregatory Legislation

Many elements of spatial segregation were initially governed by custom rather than law, and subsequently by convention as well as legislation. In the absence of any national policy on segregation, spatial separation was often implemented in an inconsistent and piecemeal manner at local government level. A variety of urban segregation measures thus existed. None of the urban areas developed any comprehensive policies for housing the urban African or coloured populations. Municipalities and municipal associations frequently requested central government to provide co-ordinated and uniform legislation in order to enforce residential segregation on a national basis.¹⁶

Segregated housing in South Africa developed slowly and deliberately. As early as 1847 the Cape colonial government issued regulations for the establishment of separate locations on the periphery of the white urban centres. Both coloured and Africans were required to live in these locations if they were not independent property owners or were not living in housing provided by their employers.¹⁷ In 1894, the government enshrined segregation in statute when the Glen Grey Act created separate 'reserves' for Africans. The first official exposition of segregation was the South African Native Affairs Commission of 1903-1905. The Commission outlined a theory of residential separation whereby Africans were to be accorded land in specially demarcated reserves.¹⁸ In 1909, the British parliament approved the South Africa Act, combining the four colonies into a Union in which the Transvaal, Orange River Colony and Natal instituted a colour bar clause and retained whites-only franchise. Only the Cape Province extended the vote to blacks and coloureds who met specific qualifications.

¹⁶ FA Saunders Lt Col, *Municipal Control of Locations - A Paper read at the Thirteenth Session of the Association of Municipal Corporations of the Cape Province, held at Grahamstown, 10-12 May 1920*, Grocott & Sherry, Grahamstown, p. 4.

¹⁷ AJ Christopher, *The Atlas of Changing South Africa* (2nd edition), Routledge, London, 2001, p. 33.

¹⁸ M Festenstein & C Pickard-Cambridge, *Land and Race: South Africa's Group Areas and Land Acts. The Group Areas Act: Its Origins, Workings and Effects*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1987.

The pre-1910 period was, however, still characterised by some flexibility. The local authorities did not enforce regulations and controls strictly, and everyone had the opportunity to find their own accommodation. After 1910, in one province after another, municipal legislation enabled local authorities to establish locations. All these measures were still only partially implemented as they did not attempt to enforce segregation in a uniform manner. Their limited effect fuelled white demands for stricter controls and government legislators were prompted to meet these expectations. The pressure towards greater racial residential separation intensified under the prevailing concept of pragmatic segregation.¹⁹

Sporadic outbreaks of contagious diseases such as bubonic plague, tuberculosis and influenza gave significant impetus to municipally-enforced segregation. The overt purpose of such regulations was to improve living conditions in urban areas, but there was often a racial sub-text to such regulations. The discourse on public health legislation thus increasingly viewed disease in racial terms. In the process, segregation was promoted under the guise of public health care. It aimed to bring about the removal of slum communities to create space for white working-class housing schemes. State intervention to deal with these changing circumstances began in 1919 with the Public Health Act.²⁰

Through this Act, segregation officially became State policy. In an effort to create a national model, the major objective of this act was to standardise pre-Union Provincial laws. The town-planning clauses in the Public Health Act were the first town-planning legislation in the Cape Province. Implemented in the aftermath of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic, this act was instituted as a preventative measure to curb the threat of disease. The Act empowered local authorities to provide adequate housing, essential services and 'proper' management of locations. In addition, these services were to be partly financed from their own budgets.²¹

¹⁹ AJ Christopher, 'Port Elizabeth' in Lemon, Anthony (ed.) *Homes Apart: South Africa's Segregated Cities*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1991, p. 45.

²⁰ P Maylam, *South Africa's Racial Past: The History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation and Apartheid*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2001, p. 158.

²¹ P Morris, *A History of Black Housing in South Africa*, Pauline Morris SA Foundation, Johannesburg, 1981 p. 15; GF Baines New Brighton, Port Elizabeth c. 1903-1953: A History of an Urban African Community, Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Rhodes University, February 1994, p. 31.

The Public Health Act was confined to the implementation of preventative regulations. The Housing Act of 1920 included measures authorising municipal officials to remove occupants from slum buildings and to demolish such buildings. It made local authorities, in the first instance, responsible for housing displaced people, for which they could obtain Central Housing Board loans. The Central Housing Board fell under the Department of Health and its role was to advise and assist with the housing programmes of local authorities. For many years however, local authorities often did not use their legislative powers to segregate housing.

One of the administrative requirements of the Housing Act stated that municipal housing estates should be racially homogeneous. This was instituted to prevent poor whites from mixing with the rest of the working class, specifically coloured people. The implementation of the Housing Act thus effectively segregated people. As a result, new council housing areas were almost totally mono-racial.²²

The Public Health Act and the 1920 Housing Act formalised colonial standards of urban living. The 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act²³ took the matter one step further. It represented the first major intervention of the central state in an attempt to control the urban black population. The Act empowered, but did not compel, local authorities to set aside land for black occupation in segregated locations and to implement a rudimentary system of influx control. The Act legitimised separate housing facilities for Africans by providing an overall framework for urban segregation. It further underlined government's focus on the racial stratification of urban society. In the process, the Act also initiated segregated coloured housing by tightening the definition of 'native' and coloured. According to Parnell, it included, through a special amendment to accommodate the Free State Province, the provision that coloured people living in an African location had to be re-housed.²⁴ The Cape Municipal Association did not oppose the amendment, but sought special exemption from the obligation to re-house

²² AJ Christopher, 'Segregation Levels in South African Cities, 1911–1985' in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Boston University African Studies Center, 1992, vol. 25 no. 3, p. 569.

²³ For an extensive background to spatial segregatory legislation and specifically the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, see TRH Davenport and SM Parnell.

²⁴ SM Parnell, *Johannesburg Slums and Racial Segregation in South African Cities, 1910-1937*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, WITS University, Johannesburg, 1993, p. 45 – 47.

existing coloured occupants. 'Until adequate and suitable accommodation is advisable ... elsewhere' coloured people could reside in the location under the same regulations that applied to Africans.²⁵ The implementation of the 1923 Act also often meant that coloured people occupied the houses vacated by Africans. The Act, therefore, had a significant effect on coloured housing.

Significantly, this action drew support from Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, a leading figure in coloured politics from 1905 until his death in 1940 (see below). Abdurahman feared that coloured people would be grouped with Africans in the implementation of the bill. Dr CT Loram, a leading figure in the implementation of the Act, argued in this regard, that coloureds 'should be helped to improve the white blood they have' and that they should not 'at once be brought up to the level of Europeans'.²⁶

The government's attention now focused on the housing of poor whites, leading to the near neglect of the needs of coloured and Indian urban working-class communities. Until the 1930s coloured people were not legally prevented from living in most areas, except on land that had title-deed restrictions. But economic limitations,²⁷ enhanced by job reservation, often led to residential segregation.²⁸

In the Cape Province, white-dominated municipalities were especially concerned about integration between coloureds and whites. This led to increasing demands for residential segregation of coloured people. In 1931, the Cape Municipal Association resolved at its annual congress to request the Provincial Administrator to replicate the location provision of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act for coloured people in the existing municipal ordinance. Similar requests continued during the decade.

²⁵ Natives (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923 (as amended Act 36 of 1944)

²⁶ SM Parnell, *Johannesburg Slums and Racial Segregation in South African Cities, 1910-1937*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, WITS University, Johannesburg, 1993, p. 46.

²⁷ They were undermined by the civil labour policy, as well as legislation designed to favour whites in the competition for employment.

²⁸ M Festenstein & C Pickard-Cambridge, *Land and Race: South Africa's Group Areas and Land Acts. The Group Areas Act: Its Origins, Workings and Effects*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1987, p. 4.

Central government now realised that low-income housing needs could not be met on an economic basis and in 1934 the Housing Act was amended, giving the Central Housing Board the right to recommend the financing of location schemes out of sub-economic loans at low interest rates. This was especially used in cases where the local authority could show that the proposed schemes were aimed at slum clearance.²⁹

The Housing Act became a particularly effective instrument for enforcing segregation when combined with the 1934 Elimination of Slums Act. This Act provided for the demolition of overcrowded and insanitary buildings or even entire neighbourhoods. The displaced residents were subsequently moved, where funds were available, to racially segregated Council housing.³⁰

The Wilcocks Commission was appointed in 1934, mainly to pacify the coloured electorate. The Commission was instructed to report on the economic and social structure of the coloured population. Having starkly outlined the deteriorating and insanitary conditions under which most coloured people lived, the Commission's report recommended better sanitation in coloured housing schemes and more state-supported sub-economic housing. In its desire to propose pragmatic reform, the commission often reinforced segregatory policies. The government did not, however, implement any of the Commission's recommendations.³¹

The hope of the segregationists was that slum clearances and public housing provisions would impose racial separation indelibly on the urban landscape, but segregatory legislation was only partially successful in this regard. Coloured people, for example, consistently preferred renting congested private rooms to living under municipal control. This led to continued attempts to bring coloured segregation more comprehensively onto the statute book. After 1936, when African residential segregation was entrenched, a campaign developed to segregate coloureds from whites in residential areas.

²⁹ *Report of the Central Housing Board, constituted under Section 18 of the Housing Act no 35 of 1920, for the calendar year ended 31.12.1934.*

³⁰ AJ Christopher, 'Segregation Levels in South African Cities, 1911 – 1985' in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Boston University African Studies Center, 1992, vol. 25 no. 3, p. 569.

³¹ G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall. A History of South African 'Coloured' Politics*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1987, p. 160 – 169.

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, largely prevented these proposals from being fully implemented, but some regulations were immediately affected. The first measure came in the form of segregated housing. In 1939, the Cape Municipal Congress resolved in favour of segregated residential areas following opposition by whites in the Cape to the presence of coloured people in their suburbs. At the time, the Prime Minister, Gen. J.B.M. Hertzog, referred to the possibility of introducing legislation to enforce segregation between whites and coloured people. Partly due to sustained mass demonstrations in Cape Town in 1938 and 1939, these principles were not put into effect until 1950.³²

By the end of the war, local councils, as well as provincial and national government, provided segregated housing. A national policy of segregation was therefore reinforced at the local level by the various municipalities. These structures were in place when, in 1943, the first major attempt was made at the political separation of the coloured people with the formation of the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC).³³

The aim of the Council was to 'advise the government on all matters affecting the economic, political and social interests of the Cape Coloured and Cape Malay communities'.³⁴ The CAC created the deepest split in the history of the coloured people to date. A section of the African People's Organisation (APO) believed that, by fully co-operating with the government they could secure improved conditions for coloured people. Those opposing the CAC felt that it was a forerunner for further segregation. The subsequent establishment of the Coloured Affairs Department (CAD) not only heralded the beginning of the political separation of the coloured people, but also initiated the polarisation of coloured political life.

Spatial segregation continued to win ground. The constitution of the Broederbond, for example, stated in 1944 that 'all Broeders in their political action

³² G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall. A History of South African 'Coloured' Politics*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1987, p. 188, 189, 194.

³³ M Festenstein & C Pickard-Cambridge, *Land and Race: South Africa's Group Areas and Land Acts. The Group Areas Act: Its Origins, Workings and Effects*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1987, p. 4.

³⁴ As quoted in G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall...* p. 209.

will strive for ... segregation of all Coloured races domiciled in South Africa'.³⁵ In the same year, the Housing Amendment Act introduced certain adjustments to the Housing Act. The National Housing and Planning Commission replaced the Central Housing Board and a new financial framework for the granting of housing loans was introduced. The new body was empowered to intercede in local housing policies, thus further reducing local municipal autonomy.³⁶

However, residential segregatory legislation only served, as a canvas on which community experiences were painted. Local government, white ratepayers and the particular housing conditions of each community, also had a significant role to play in the formation and expansion of separate residential areas.

The Role of Local Government in the imposition of Residential Segregation

According to Parnell,³⁷ local government pioneered residential segregation in South Africa. In response to municipal demands for a uniform urban policy, residential segregation increasingly became accepted as the preferred national policy of urban control. Empowered by state legislation, the municipalities became a willing and essential agent through which urban segregation was reinforced.

Spatial segregatory legislation made local government largely responsible for public housing. In the process, sub-economic housing became one of the time-consuming activities of local government in the 1920s and 1930s.³⁸

Although undertaken at the behest of the central government, the municipal councillors and council officials were party to the removals and subsequently were responsible for controlled housing schemes.³⁹ Expenditure on social control

³⁵ As quoted in A Mabin, 'Comprehensive Segregation: The Origins of the Group Areas Act and its Planning Apparatuses' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, June 1992, vol. 18, no. 2, p. 410.

³⁶ P Maylam, 'The Rise and Decline of Urban Apartheid in South Africa' in *African Affairs*, January 1990, vol. 89, no. 354, p. 67.

³⁷ SM Parnell, *Johannesburg Slums and Racial Segregation in South African cities, 1910-1937*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, WITS University, Johannesburg, 1993, p. iii, 31.

³⁸ Parnell, Susan & Alan Mabin, 'Rethinking Urban South Africa' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, March 1995, vol. 21, no. 1.

³⁹ GF Baines, *New Brighton, Port Elizabeth c. 1903-1953: A History of an Urban African Community*, Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Rhodes University, February 1994, p. 31.

enjoyed a high priority at local level. The salaries of location staff, rather than, for example, sanitation, were viewed as a key component in the costing of urban segregation.

Ironically, increased state intervention led to tension between the local and national governments. Housing, according to Maylam,⁴⁰ became a contested terrain. Each party tried to shift the burden onto the other. Tension often centred round finances. Local municipalities and central government tossed the financial ball of obligation back and forth. Money for location development in municipal budgets was in short supply. Pressured by local white ratepayers, the local authorities were unwilling to spend locally generated funds on black housing. Government funding for housing schemes, if available, was only released if restrictions, imposed by the Central Housing Board, were adhered to.

In the process, the housing backlog grew and unauthorised shack settlements emerged. These settlements were seen as a challenge to the power of local municipalities as they involved considerable financial implications and generated resistance from local ratepayers.⁴¹

The Local Ratepayers

The role of local authorities in applying residential segregation must not be overstated. It must be remembered that municipal councillors represented the interests of local ratepayers when applying residential segregation at a local level.

The ratepayers, like their municipal councillors, seldom set foot in black living spaces. Their perceptions were based on the opinions of the Sanitary Inspector and the Location Superintendents' as reported in the local media. Most would have encountered coloured people as subordinates or employees.⁴²

⁴⁰ P Maylam, 'Explaining the Apartheid City: Twenty Years of South African Urban Historiography' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, March 1995, vol. 21, no. 1, p. 12.

⁴¹ P Morris, *A History of Black Housing in South Africa*, Pauline Morris SA Foundation, Johannesburg, 1981 p. 29.

⁴² GF Baines, *New Brighton, Port Elizabeth c. 1903-1953: A History of an Urban African Community*, Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Rhodes University, February 1994, p. 6.

According to Parnell, the white working-class was especially opposed to any municipal investment in urban infrastructure, probably because locally-subsidised housing was seen as enhancing the competitive position of black urbanites.⁴³ Local landlords also benefited from the entrenchment of residential segregation at municipal level. Concerned about the value of property, landowners and the mercantile classes wanted local government to exercise control in order to remake urban areas in ways that would enhance their business and personal interests.

The political strength of white voters underscored extensive urban housing assistance. Residential segregation resulted not only from a need to safeguard the most desirable urban land for whites, but also served to restrict black and coloured urban opportunities.

The call for location housing to be built 'anywhere but in my back yard' and from national and not local funds, therefore retarded any effective black and coloured housing programmes in urban areas. Ironically, white ratepayers' reluctance to finance location development encouraged the extension of slum conditions.⁴⁴

Coloured Housing Conditions

Poor and inadequate housing can certainly be regarded as one of the major problems facing the coloured population.⁴⁵ According to Christian Ziervogel,⁴⁶ the inferior housing situation was not caused by a sharp rise in the coloured population, but by poverty and by the absence of protective laws and institutions. In time, deteriorating control over coloured housing emerged as a nationwide problem. It was accordingly the source of acute dissatisfaction. A shortage of housing was and is widespread in South Africa's urban areas and naturally presses most harshly on under-privileged groups.

⁴³ SM Parnell, *Johannesburg Slums and Racial Segregation in South African Cities, 1910-1937*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, WITS University, Johannesburg, 1993, p. iv.

⁴⁴ S Parnell, 'Race, Power and Urban Control: Johannesburg's Inner City Slum-yards, 1910-1923' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, September 2003, vol. 29, no. 3, p. 619.

⁴⁵ Most of the Commissions of Inquiry, appointed during the period under discussion came to this conclusion. See for example SA Reports: RP 38-1976 Commission on Coloured Population Group p. 207-213.

⁴⁶ C Ziervogel, *Brown South Africa*, Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1938, p. 26. Protective legislation was, of course, increasingly instituted in order to safeguard the white population.

Formal urban residential segregation can be traced to the period following the abolition of slavery and the first substantial influx of coloured people to urban areas. The earliest urban locations were established by missionary societies, either on private or on crown land.⁴⁷ With the growth of white towns, settlements of coloured workers and their families began to emerge on the periphery of every town. This occurred either as a result of the gradual consolidation of squatter settlements or through the deliberate allocation of residential sites by the military authorities, colonial and republican governments.

During the immediate post-Anglo-Boer War period, the situation altered as colonial authorities began to transform the nature of local government. The village boards and the town councils were finding it difficult to ignore public health issues arising from the locations.⁴⁸ At the time of Union, most coloured townspeople therefore lived in specially allocated areas; creating a pattern of residential segregation entrenched by perceived economic and racial differences.

The housing pattern of coloured people in the major cities was that of lower income or working-class people. Rapid urbanisation ensured that the ever-growing urban coloured population quickly filled the older working-class pockets of settlement until they were bursting at the seams. The problem was aggravated by the fact that coloured people were deprived of political power, and consequently were not able to demand alleviation of the systemic housing conditions.⁴⁹

In response to the critical housing shortages and extreme overcrowding in existing houses, many coloured urbanites built their own accommodation in unauthorised settlements. Coloured residents in these settlements increasingly resented the authorities and their attempts to forcibly remove them. In turn,

⁴⁷ This occurred mostly in the Eastern Cape. AJ Christopher, *The Atlas of Changing South Africa* (2nd edition), Routledge, London, 2001, p. 33; Lemon, Anthony (ed.), *Homes Apart: South Africa's Segregated Cities*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1991, p. 3.

⁴⁸ TRH Davenport, *The Beginnings of Urban Segregation in South Africa - The Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 and its background*. Occasional Paper, nr 15 Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1971, p. 1.

⁴⁹ S Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People Within the Structure of the Union of South Africa*, Grove Press, New York, 1953, p. 118.

residents at these informal settlements were regarded by the authorities as troublemakers.⁵⁰

The 1937 report on the 'Cape Coloured Population'⁵¹ indicated that the coloured housing situation in the major urban areas was almost uniformly unsatisfactory. Describing coloured housing as deplorable, the report cited many examples of overcrowding. The majority lived in the location or coloured township whilst a smaller number resided in white residential sections of the town or village. Only a small minority, including the skilled and semi-skilled artisans, earned a sufficient wage to acquire their own homes or were in a position to hire a house large enough to accommodate their families. The majority were living in overcrowded one- or two-roomed houses situated in locations or coloured townships. In most urban areas, residents could build their houses upon a payment of two to four shillings for site rental. Their dwelling houses were erected from any available building material. Baked clay, raw brick, wattle and daub huts, beaten-out petrol cans and sacking, poles and sacking, galvanised iron shanties and cow dung floors were reported as common.

Water for domestic use had to be carried from a well, windmill or fountain, often situated over long distances. Inadequate communal privies, without proper supervision, were the norm. Very few residents could boast proper washing facilities in the form of public wash-houses or home facilities. Baths were rare, but showers did exist.⁵²

The 1937 Commission found that it was legally possible for coloured people to purchase property in town, but most did not possess the financial means to do so. In practice most coloured people tended to concentrate in certain areas, due to economic constraints on home-ownership, restrictive title deeds and racial proclamations, making it difficult to rent or purchase property in white-dominated areas. The large majority paid more than a quarter of their incomes on rent.

⁵⁰ P Morris, *A History of Black Housing in South Africa*, Pauline Morris SA Foundation, Johannesburg, 1981, p. 41.

⁵¹ *Report of Commission of Inquiry regarding Cape Coloured Population of the Union*, Pretoria Government Printer, 1937, p. 106.

⁵² *Report of Commission of Inquiry...* p. 106.

Taking into account their small income, it was clear that this was an excessive proportion of their wages.⁵³ The economic factor thus played a primary role in the prevalence of congestion. This, in turn, was the chief cause of many comparatively well-built houses becoming slum properties.⁵⁴

During the Second World War (1939-1945), the rapid flow of people into the urban areas and the shortage of labour and building materials meant that conditions deteriorated further. New coloured housing areas included voluntary expansion into segregated areas and housing estates for coloured people only. Municipal housing schemes thus clearly aimed at increasing residential segregation between white, coloured and black. According to Maylam,⁵⁵ large-scale segregation was unattainable because alternative accommodation was not always available. The choice of housing was very limited as the local authorities were unwilling to invest substantial capital in the creation of locations.⁵⁶ In the process, very few better-quality settlements were established. In the smaller urban areas, coloured people often lived interspersed with Africans in the locations where it was difficult to differentiate in respect of their treatment. All residents, irrespective of colour, were subject to ordinary location regulations that exerted rigid control over their private lives.

In the older, and predominantly poorer, town centres, white and coloured working-class families often lived side by side. Moderately affluent neighbourhoods were almost completely inhabited by white residents, but small pockets of coloured families were also present.⁵⁷

According to Patterson, property values were automatically reduced whenever coloured families moved into an area.⁵⁸ A significant drop in value would have

⁵³ According to the Native Affairs Department: 'It is impossible economically to build and hire good houses to [black people] because they are too poor to pay higher rents on the basis of present wages.' As quoted in C Ziervogel, *Brown South Africa*, Maskew Miller Ltd., Cape Town, 1938, p. 28.

⁵⁴ S Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People Within the Structure of the Union of South Africa*, Grove Press, New York, 1953, p. 119; *Report of Commission of Inquiry regarding Cape Coloured Population of the Union*, 1937, Pretoria Government Printer, 1937, p. 124.

⁵⁵ P Maylam, 'The Rise and Decline of Urban Apartheid in South Africa' in *African Affairs*, January 1990, vol. 89, no. 354, p. 63.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Cape Mercury*, 18.03.1931, p. 2 'Housing scheme'.

⁵⁷ J Western, *Outcast Cape Town*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1981.

⁵⁸ S Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa...* p. 119, 284.

prevented many landlords and home owners from spending on the maintenance and upkeep of their properties. This potentially created a downward spiral and in the long run, slum conditions were perpetuated. Ironically, the removal of any formal or informal colour bar would probably have prevented the creation of slum conditions.

The prevalence of sub-economic housing schemes reflects the low economic status of the majority of coloured people. The class structure was modified by the prevalent racial classification. In the process, a situation arose where comparatively well-to-do tenants were forced to occupy houses meant for lower-income tenants because they were unable to move elsewhere. Decent economic housing and home-ownership for coloured people would be increasingly difficult to obtain as long as the economic colour bar remained.

Contemporary commentators⁵⁹ were of the opinion that the remedy was to be found in home-ownership schemes. Although not common, cases where the local authorities assisted coloured persons to acquire their own homes were listed in Queenstown and Bloemfontein between 1895 and 1946. 'The Bloemfontein system' referred to municipally-assisted home-ownership where the local authority assisted prospective home owners in a self-build scheme. The building material and a number of approved building plans were made available at a low interest rate by the local authority. This resulted in large-scale home-ownership. The Bloemfontein houses belonged to the householder, but no transfer was effected. The owner was, however, able to sell the property with the approval of the local authority.⁶⁰

The 1937 Commission agreed that pride of home-ownership could be an important factor in the upliftment of people, but the small number of home owners and home-ownership schemes remained constant between 1895 and 1946. It

⁵⁹ *Report of Commission of Inquiry regarding Cape Coloured Population of the Union*, Pretoria Government Printer, 1937; S Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People Within the Structure of the Union of South Africa*, Grove Press, New York, 1953, p. 118.

⁶⁰ DS Krige, 'Bloemfontein' in Lemon, Anthony (ed.) *Homes Apart: South Africa's Segregated Cities*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1991, p. 107.

was clear that not all local authorities were fully aware of, or willing to implement, the wider re-housing choices.⁶¹

By 1944, the situation remained virtually unchanged. An investigation into the housing conditions of coloured households in Cape Town revealed gross overcrowding.⁶² Seven out of ten households had inadequate accommodation, and 30 to 40% were overcrowded. By 1946, the coloured housing situation was therefore almost uniformly unsatisfactory in the major urban areas.

Local Dynamics: The Role of the Borough Council

The King William's Town Borough Council was constituted in February 1861. With the consequent transfer from the military to civil authority, a municipal government was established under Ordinance No. 1 of the same year.⁶³ The ordinance divided the town into five municipal wards, each of which could return two burgesses as members of the Council. Of the ten councillors thereby elected one was chosen as Mayor. Eligible municipal voters were confined to male burgesses of 21 years and older, provided that they owned property valued at no less than £25, or had rented property valued at £5 per year for not less than six years.⁶⁴

The Borough Council was responsible for the provision of water, prevention and control of nuisances, maintenance and construction of roads, provision of street lighting, exercising fire-prevention and fire-extinguishing services, the establishment of pounds, markets and abattoirs, the regulation of traffic and the maintenance and care of the commonage. Funds were raised from the levying of rates, tolls and through the sale and lease of corporation land.⁶⁵

⁶¹ *Report of Commission of Inquiry...* p. 125.

⁶² 'The Housing of Coloured Households in Cape Town' in *Social Survey of Cape Town Report*, 1944.

⁶³ Amended by Ordinance No. 9 of 1864, General Municipal Act No. 45 of 1882. In 1905 KWT came under its own Act of Incorporation No. 27 of 1905. Re-constituted under Ordinance 10 of 1912. Repealed by the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923.

⁶⁴ JA Bateman, *A Century of Public Service*, Progress Printing Co. King William's Town 1961, p. 8. The King William's Town Act of 1905 stated that the Borough Council would consist of 12 Councillors representing four wards. *The King William's Town Borough Act*, No. 27 of 1905 p. 4862.

⁶⁵ JA Bateman, *A Century of Public Service...* p. 8.

The Borough Councillors mostly originated from the upper-class stratum of King William's Town society. In the early years, the local mercantile and manufacturing classes frequented the Council Chambers. By the 1920s the proportion of businessmen remained dominant, but members of the professional classes, as well as retired civil servants and military officials, were also represented. The councillors were keen to serve their fellow white burgesses and increasingly began to flex their political muscle.⁶⁶

The 'small tradition' of Cape liberalism,⁶⁷ although limited in its numerical support, was quite effective in moderating the workings of the Borough Council between 1870 and 1900. Individuals such as JJ Irvine, JW Weir and TN Dyer⁶⁸ successfully curbed the more conservative element present in the Borough Council.⁶⁹

In the 1890s, the town reached its financial peak and the prospering urban centre subsequently extended into new suburbs. With the establishment of new housing areas, the middle class moved out of the town centre. In the process, the older suburbs increasingly accommodated a mixed, largely working-class population. Race, however, always asserted itself. The middle-class Xhosa, for example, lived among the coloured and white working class in the older town centre.⁷⁰

The town's white ratepayers, however, were serious about the implementation of segregatory measures. Two petitions were addressed to the Borough Council in this regard. In September 1897, some 232 burgesses requested the Council to implement curfew regulations in King William's Town. The petition also called for

⁶⁶ F Frescura, King William's Town Conservation Impact Study, Archetype Press & the Environmental Development Unit, Port Elizabeth, 1994, (Unpublished document, Amathole Museum), p. 85; A list of councillors and their occupations was extracted from the King William's Town Burial Register, photographic collection and biographical records housed in the Amathole Museum.

⁶⁷ As coined by S Trapido, 'The Friends of the Natives: Merchants, Peasants and the Political and Ideological Structure of Liberalism in the Cape, 1854 – 1910 in Shula Marks & Anthony Atmore (eds) *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, Longman, London, 1980, p. 267.

⁶⁸ They served on the Borough Council as follows: JJ Irvine (Mayor 1879-1880), JW Weir (Mayor 1880-81) and TN Dyer (Mayor 1896-1903).

⁶⁹ Many Cape liberals had a strong connection with Eastern Cape missionaries. JW Weir was, for example, the son of James Weir, a Glasgow missionary who was stationed at Tyumie. Richard Rose-Innes was married to Hannah Brownlee, the granddaughter of the Rev John Brownlee.

⁷⁰ F Frescura, King William's Town Conservation Impact Study, Archetype Press & the Environmental Development Unit, Port Elizabeth, 1994, (Unpublished document, Amathole Museum), p. 99; DA Webb King William's Town during the South African War, 1899-1902, Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1993, p. 30.

the 'total exclusion of blacks from the town'.⁷¹ The residents of Ward Five signed a second petition, dated May 1898 which repeated many of the points raised in the 1897 petition, but focused on the maintenance of law and order and underlined health and sanitation concerns.⁷²

By the turn of the century, the town was losing ground to neighbouring East London, mainly due to the seaport's harbour facilities. A downward economic spiral resulted. With the increase in coloured and Xhosa inhabitants resident in the town proper, the Council deliberated over the removal of black townsmen to the outskirts of the town. The outbreak of bubonic plague in King William's Town in 1903, led to further attempts to establish and control separate municipal locations.⁷³ The Borough Councillors harboured definite ideas on ordering society along race and colour lines, and deepened the division present in King William's Town society. In time, the town's spatial map would be reshaped dramatically by the racist social control engineered by the Borough Council.

In an attempt to protect the business and residential interests of white ratepayers, the town developed as a segregated arena. Underpinning it all was the belief that property rights were sacrosanct and therefore had to be protected. The Council's segregationist tendencies were therefore more about control of valuable property resources than about separating residents. Vague concerns about sanitation and health stood in sharp contrast with the willingness of white slumlords to erect unhygienic hovels in the back yards of their own houses.⁷⁴

Protecting their interests and those of white ratepayers might explain the Council's inactivity in dealing with overcrowded and slum conditions. This was especially pertinent when Borough Councillors also acted as slum landlords. Mr

⁷¹ Curfew regulations were only implemented in King William's Town in 1912. In comparison, East London's curfew was framed in 1878. The city's Municipal Act of 1895 also included segregated bathing and segregated pavements. Cf. KPT Tankard, *The Development of East London Through Four Decades of Municipal Control, 1873-1914*, Rhodes University, December 1990, Unpublished Ph.D thesis, p. 389, 405.

⁷² CA 3/KWT Vol. 2/1/2/45 Petitions to the Borough Council, September 1897 & May 1898 as quoted in DA Webb *King William's Town during the South African War, 1899-1902*, Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1993, p. 38-39.

⁷³ S Caldwell, *The Course and Results of the Plague Outbreaks in King William's Town, 1900 – 1907* Unpublished Hons thesis, UNISA, 1987, p. 42.

⁷⁴ F Frescura, *King William's Town Conservation Impact Study*, Archetype Press & the Environmental Development Unit, Port Elizabeth, 1994, (Unpublished document, Amathole Museum), p. 170.

WJ Deady, manager of Dyer and Dyer, complained in 1902-1903 of the large group of black neighbours living adjacent to his Ayliff Street property. Deady added that his neighbours lived in overcrowded accommodation, with an apparent lack of adequate sanitary measures. The landlord was stated to be a Mr Newing. This was none other than Mr Joe Newing, a municipal councillor. Apart from serving the interests of local ratepayers, Mr Newing was also keen to earn extra income by letting shanties to the town's black residents.⁷⁵

The influence of segregationist discourse was especially felt under the mayoral leadership of Senator Franz Ginsberg, a leading manufacturer in town. During his mayoralty in 1906, independently-owned huts situated on the periphery of the town, albeit on municipal property, were expropriated in order to make space for a new housing scheme. Municipal houses were let on a monthly basis and location regulations were instituted. The Borough Council increasingly controlled all access to local housing.⁷⁶

By 1912, the implementation of segregatory measures was openly discussed in the Council Chambers. Councillor 'Bob' Symons suggested that coloured people should receive the same treatment as Xhosa and Asian townsmen. Cr Ginsberg pointed out that the Council had the power to compel all coloured persons, except property owners and registered municipal voters, to live outside the town. Symons' motion was unanimously carried.⁷⁷

The local media propagated the racial discourse of the day. The provision of location housing 'for those natives and coloured people who, at the present time, rent rooms and houses within the town proper, as well as the establishment of an Asiatic location' was reported in the local press. A self-supporting housing scheme, bearing 'no burden whatsoever on the general revenue of the town' and where residents 'may live under more desirable conditions' was advocated.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ DA Webb, *King William's Town during the South African War, 1899-1902*, Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1993, p. 40-41. Newing served on the Borough Council for the 1895-96 and 1898-99 period.

⁷⁶ *Cape Mercury*, 12.07.1905 p. 3 'Council Minutes'. Franz Ginsberg was Mayor of King William's Town from 1904-1907. See 4.1.3 for further details on the 1906 expropriation attempt.

⁷⁷ *Cape Mercury*, 01.05.1912 p. 3 'Town Council Minutes'. Cr R Symons was the owner of a local wagon-making concern.

⁷⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 02.05.1912 p. 2 'Editorial'; *Cape Mercury*, 03.04.1912 p. 3 'Town Council Minutes'.

With the implementation of curfew regulations in 1912, it was clear that the liberal tradition in King William's Town was on the wane. The Editor of *Imvo Zabantsundu*, Mr JT Jabavu, stated at the time that since the Dyer, Weir, Dick and Irvine families had left King William's Town conservative factions were dominating the Borough Council.⁷⁹

High sanitation standards were set for the municipal locations, but the Council supplied inferior health services. Social control enjoyed a much higher priority than the provision of water, acceptable latrines and refuse removal. Expenditure on social control included the salaries of the Borough Ranger, Borough Police, Health and Location officials.

The Borough Council advocated segregation to be implemented in all areas of society, not just housing. In June 1930, for example, Cr AR Burton⁸⁰ stated that coloured people often used the swings, situated on the Victoria Square public playground. He suggested that the Borough Ranger should occasionally visit the playground in order to monitor the situation. He suggested that there ought to be some indication that 'the swings were for Europeans only'.⁸¹

By 1930 most of the Xhosa, who had previously resided in the town proper, were living in the municipal location. This was mainly due to the implementation of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act. Accommodation vacated by the Xhosa in the town proper was often taken over by coloured families. The Borough Council now turned its attention to the housing of the white working-class. With the outbreak of the nationwide depression, the plight of poor whites enjoyed national attention. King William's Town was no exception.

⁷⁹ *Cape Mercury*, 09.05.1912 p. 2 'Editorial'. JT Jabavu (1859-1921) was editor of the first black-owned newspaper in South Africa, *Imvo Zabantsundu*. He was a member of the unsuccessful multi-racial delegation sent to London to fight the colour bar clauses in the SA Act in 1909, a leading Methodist and played a persuasive role in the establishment of the University of Fort Hare in 1916.

⁸⁰ AR Burton (1857-1939) served as Mayor of the town in 1914-1915. He was the father of Dr AW Burton, an amateur Border historian.

⁸¹ *Cape Mercury*, 18.06.1930 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

The Council's Sanitary Inspector repeatedly reported on the acute housing shortage experienced by 'people who can only afford to pay a small rent'. The *Cape Mercury* stated that white and coloured families often lived in close proximity to one other. The newspaper suggested that houses inhabited by coloured residents should be restored in order to accommodate the white working class. The Council's solution to the housing problem was to advocate the removal of coloured residents to the municipal location.⁸²

Urbanisation, according to the Council, was causing congested accommodation in the town centre. The soup kitchens were crowded and the Government was trying to shift what was regarded as their responsibility onto the local authorities. Cr AR Burton suggested that the government should provide housing for their employees and industrialists should build railway cottages for their coloured employees. It was clear that the Council was also keen to shift its responsibility.⁸³

According to Webb,⁸⁴ the Borough Council's handling of location matters smacked of high-handed paternalism, neglect and double standards. Coloured townspeople preferred to reside in the town centre rather than the municipal location, even if this meant living in congested and often insanitary conditions. In the locations, social control, implemented through location regulations and carefully adhered to by the location staff, was the order of the day. In addition, no trading rights or fixed land tenure were available in the location.

The APO, the ANB and the CWA

A small elite, distinguished by their standing within the coloured community and to a lesser degree by their 'respectable' working-class status, education and literacy was present in King William's Town from 1895 to 1946. Members of the elite served on the local executive of three political organisations; the African Political (later People's) Organisation (APO), the Afrikaanse Nasionale Bond (ANB) and the Coloured Welfare Association (CWA). The executive members

⁸² *Cape Mercury*, 25.11.1931 p. 1 'Municipal Health Department'; *Cape Mercury*, 23.07.1931 p. 2 'Editorial'; *Cape Mercury*, 29.03.1922 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

⁸³ *Cape Mercury*, 22.07.1931 p. 3 'The Housing Scheme'.

⁸⁴ DA Webb, *King William's Town during the South African War, 1899-1902*, Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1993, p. 207.

were all Brownlee Station residents and were also leaders in the sporting arena, specifically the local Shamrocks Rugby and Cricket Club.⁸⁵ The coloured elite used these organisations as a medium to convey their opinions and satisfy their aspirations. An acute shortage of housing and a limited choice of home-ownership resulted in the emphasis being placed on housing. It is therefore worthwhile to sketch a background of the APO, ANB and CWA respectively.

The existence of an APO branch proved that the King William's Town community did not function in isolation, but used a national organisation as a local mouthpiece. The first written evidence of the existence of a local branch coincided with the establishment of Leightonville in 1924.⁸⁶ It is not clear why the elite was so slow to establish a branch, but they probably did so only when the opportunity for improved housing arose.

The APO was established in Cape Town in 1902 and represented the first extensive coloured political organisation. Its leader, Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, who headed the APO from 1905 to 1940, largely personified the organisation. Supporting the principles of nineteenth century liberalism, the APO advocated equal political rights and economic prospects for all civilised men, but did not demand social intermixture with whites. Claiming to speak on behalf of the entire coloured population, the APO chiefly represented the interests of the emergent coloured petty bourgeoisie. Its membership therefore consisted mainly of small retailers, artisans, teachers, clerks and a handful of professionals. In King William's Town, however, the local APO consisted of members of the working class.⁸⁷

It is unclear why or when the elite changed allegiance to the Afrikaanse Nasionale Bond (ANB). We do know, however, that in August 1930, a local branch of the ANB met with the Council concerning building sites at Ginsberg. The Bond, also known as the African National League, was founded in 1925 and

⁸⁵ Shamrocks was established by George Shaw in 1913 who chose the name in order to reflect his Irish heritage. B Osteridge: personal communication, 24.11.2006.

⁸⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/147 ref. J4/31 Minutes of Health and General Purposes Committee, 17.09.1923.

⁸⁷ M Adhikari, 'The product of civilization in its most repellent manifestation: Ambiguities in the racial perceptions of the APO (African Political Organization), 1909-23'. *The Journal of African History*, July 1997 vol. 38 nr. 2, p. 285; G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall. A History of South African 'Coloured' politics*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1987, p. 24, 253-254.

emerged nationally as a serious rival to the APO. The ANB was established partly due to Cape Nationalists attempting to influence coloured voters. Dr DF Malan, leader of the Cape National Party and editor of *Die Burger*, drew up the constitution himself. Receiving all its funding and literature directly from the National Party, it was described by one of its leading members, Mr W le Grange, as 'the powerful Coloured wing of the Nationalist Party.' The Bond supported an independent South Africa within the British Empire, Afrikaans language rights and the promotion of coloured and Malay people as a distinct 'race'. Unlike the APO, the Bond rejected concepts of non-racialism. Dr Malan committed the ANB to protecting white and coloured people with a 'civilised' standard of living against competition from black South Africans. It was, however, not comfortable with the term Afrikaner and suggested the use of 'Eurafrican' in its endeavour to build 'a race that the Europeans can be proud of'. Surprisingly, the ANB attracted a high membership of several thousand. Hertzog's National Party abandoned the New Deal after the 1929 election results, indicating that the Nats no longer needed to rely on their coloured allies. This marked the end of the road for the ANB who had been able to flourish only so long as the Nats held the promise of material benefit for its collaboration.⁸⁸

The King William's Town Coloured Welfare Association (CWA) was established in April 1934 in the schoolroom at Brownlee Station. The local branch of the ANB agreed to cast in its lot with the new association. The most notable difference between the two local branches was the inclusion of NP Arends as chair.⁸⁹ The CWA, like the ANB in its later years, would increasingly focus on socio-economic and self-help programmes rather than political assertion. It was subsequently agreed that this body, in terms of the constitution of principles, would strive to

⁸⁸ M Adhikari, *Not Black Enough, Not White Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured community*, Ohio University Press, Athens, 2006, p. 5; G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of South African 'Coloured' Politics*, David Philip, Cape Town, p. 147; H Giliomee, 'The Non-Racial Franchise and Afrikaner and Coloured Identities, 1910-1994 in *African Affairs*, vol. 94, no. 375, April 1995, p. 212.

⁸⁹ Nicholas Petrus Arends aka 'Uncle Barney' worked as a collector-skinner-taxidermist at the Amathole Museum from 1923 to 1960 spending much of this time on safari with the museum director, Captain Guy Shortridge. A first hand account 'Trapping Safaris' was published in 1966. He was a leading member of numerous sporting, cultural and political organizations, serving as the chair of the CWA, Hon. Secretary of the Coloured Primary School and the Border Coloured Rugby Union as well as the Coloured Burial Society. In 1960 he was appointed as a technical assistant in the Department of Zoology at UWC where he spent nine fruitful years. From 1959 to 1967 he served on the Council for Coloured Affairs and was national secretary to the Republican Coloured People's Party.

improve the social, economic, industrial and educational conditions of the coloured people of the town and district. Like the ANB, the CWA's sights were firmly set on the procurement of decent housing. The CWA further sought the co-operation of all local white residents in their efforts. The question of forming a joint European-Coloured Council was discussed but never came to fruition.⁹⁰

The first executive committee of the CWA was unanimously elected as follows: Messrs NP Arends (Chair), B Plaatjes (Honorary Secretary), S Fourie (Treasurer), as well as S Botha, H Jasson, JE Pieterse and G Janneker. The subsequent secretary, Mr Willie Swartz, usually undertook the Association's correspondence with the Borough Council. Occasionally other members of the association, namely Messrs NP Arends, B Plaatjes and Henry Jasson, also wrote to the Council regarding coloured housing. Its correspondence was normally well-written, especially those penned by Mr NP Arends, and provides a clear picture of the local housing needs as experienced by the coloured elite. In the subsequent years, the CWA would serve largely as an advisory committee, for the residents of Brownlee Station now resident at Leightonville. Although Leightonville tenants served on the Location Advisory Board, it was the CWA that predominantly forwarded individual concerns to the Council.

Like the APO and the ANB, ambiguities were clearly evident in the CWA who seemingly supported non-racial and 'assimilationist' ideals, but in practice promoted coloured separatism. All three organisations were thus in effect racially exclusive organisations, catering for the advancement of coloured people. The organisations stated that coloured people wanted to win social acceptance within white society and set themselves apart from Africans. However, all the above organisations did, on occasion, support the political programmes of black organisations and condemned instances of racial prejudice against them.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Coloured-European Councils were set up nationally in the 1930s on similar lines to Joint Councils for Africans and whites. The intention was to achieve the alleviation of social and economic distress in the coloured community. *Cape Mercury*, 03.05.1934, p. 3 'Coloured Welfare Association'.

⁹¹ M Adhikari, 'The product of civilization in its most repellent manifestation in *The Journal of African History*, July 1997, vol. 38 nr. 2, p. 192-193.

Apart from serving as a local mouthpiece, these organisations were also able to mobilise support within the local coloured community for national concerns. This was increasingly needed after 1939 when the network of segregatory measures concerning coloured people was extended nationally.

'Each group should develop along its own lines'⁹²

The 1930s were characterised by demands for racial separation of restaurants, public amenities as well as increased job reservation. The call from white ratepayers for spatial segregation, seeing it as a means to combat miscegenation, lowered property values and crime, intensified. The Cape Municipal Congress was quick to respond to these demands. In April 1938, it proposed a draft resolution compelling municipalities to segregate residential areas along the same lines as Africans. Coloured leaders in the Cape Province reacted with unprecedented public demonstrations and meetings of angry dissent. The resulting political action indicated that the normally moderate elite could be persuaded to react to specific issues constituting an immediate and direct threat to their aspirations.⁹³

At the height of coloured protest in March 1939, the CWA took action by organising a public meeting to voice its opposition to the proposed segregatory measures. The 'large and representative gathering' met in the Arthur Street Mission building, King William's Town on 16 March 1939.⁹⁴ The meeting resolved to condemn the segregation of 'non-Europeans' on the grounds that it would inhibit them from cultural progress and remove their remaining civil and political rights. It was stated that residential segregation would condemn 'non-Europeans' to a state of servitude.⁹⁵ The meeting resolved to forward the above resolution to the Cape Municipal Congress, then in session. Copies were also sent to Messrs ACV Barnes, local MP for King William's Town, HF Malcomess, MPC, the Minister of the Interior, and the Mayor of King William's Town. A Committee of

⁹² *Cape Mercury*, 16.09.1943 p. 4 'Government's Policy to Coloured People.' Letter to the Editor from NP Arends.

⁹³ G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall. A History of South African 'Coloured' Politics*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1987, p. 188-189.

⁹⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 15.03.1939 p. 2 'Segregation. A Public Meeting'.

⁹⁵ *Cape Mercury*, 17.03.1939 p. 2 'The Segregation Movement. Protest by local Coloured Community'.

action was subsequently elected to take any necessary steps 'in the fight against segregation'.⁹⁶ The use of the term 'non-European' as opposed to coloured in the resolution should be noted. It is not stated why it was used, but it is noteworthy that the meeting, called in the middle of sustained opposition to coloured segregation, chose a term referring to both coloured and black people.⁹⁷ Despite local and national opposition, the Congress adopted the proposed ordinance, but its decision had no practical effect.⁹⁸

With the implementation of the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC) in 1943, the Union Government took segregation one step further. The Minister of the Interior, Mr HG Lawrence, declared in this regard that the aim of the CAC was to assist with the implementation of urgently needed social welfare reforms. The Minister especially noted the need for 'proper nutrition, proper housing and better economic conditions'.⁹⁹ According to the CAC's Annual Reports, the Council attempted to address the problem of adequate housing by investigating various parts of the country where coloured people resided.¹⁰⁰

In 1943, the CAC conducted an investigation on coloured housing in King William's Town.¹⁰¹ Mr HCA Cloete, a primary school teacher and CAC member from Bedford, compiled the report. He based his findings, published in 1946, on interviews with leaders of the local coloured elite and various municipal and government officials as well as site visits. He interviewed coloured leaders such as Mr W Swartz and held a meeting convened by Mr NP Arends and the CWA in the municipal location. Cloete described existing housing conditions and made several recommendations regarding local housing.¹⁰² He suggested the implementation of a coloured home ownership scheme, supported a separate

⁹⁶ *Cape Mercury*, 17.03.1939 p. 2 'The Segregation Movement. Protest by local Coloured Community'.

⁹⁷ And defined them negatively, referring to what they are not.

⁹⁸ G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall. A History of South African 'Coloured' Politics*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1987, p. 194.

⁹⁹ Union of South Africa, Hansard, 1943, vol. 46, cols 4297-8; Hancock and Van der Poel, Smuts Papers, p. 424, Document 603 as quoted in G Lewis, *Between the Wire and the Wall. A History of South African 'Coloured' Politics*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1987, p. 209.

¹⁰⁰ *Third Annual Report on the work of the CAC for the period 01.04.1945-31.03.1946; 4th Annual Report...01.04.1946-31.03.1947.*

¹⁰¹ HCA Cloete 'Report on Conditions under which the Coloured People live in King William's Town, Gillam's Drift, Breidbach and East London' in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946.*

¹⁰² HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions...' in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946.* The formation of the CAC in 1943 represented the first major attempt at the political separation of the coloured people with the formation of the Coloured Advisory Council.

coloured municipal township and commented on the general lack of municipal services in exchange for the payment of rates. Apart from housing, Cloete also made suggestions regarding local job opportunities and recommended that a crèche, a nursery school and a play centre be built. The Borough Council did not implement any of his recommendations, but Cloete's report does provide a clear picture of coloured housing in pre-apartheid King William's Town. It also provides an opportunity to consider the views of a CAC representative and non-resident of King William's Town who, at the same time, was able to compare local housing conditions with national trends.

The above investigation does not mean, however, that the King William's Town coloured community supported the CAC and its activities. Locally, as well as nationally, the CAC created a deep rift among the coloured people. Coloured anger and internal division followed. Those opposing the CAC felt that it was the forerunner to further segregation. Some coloured leaders, especially APO supporters, believed that by fully co-operating with the government they would secure improved conditions for coloured people.

At least one noted local exception, NP Arends, in the influential position of chairman of the CWA, professed to see the benefit of 'separate development'. On 13 September 1943, the *Daily Dispatch* printed a statement issued by the Prime Minister's office in regard to government policy towards coloured people.¹⁰³ NP Arends, speaking on behalf of the CWA, stated that his organisation welcomed the statement in the local press. He felt that it would diminish 'irresponsible' statements from 'so-called Coloured leaders ... who term themselves intellectuals, educationalists and anti-Coloured Advisory Councilists.' According to Arends, these leaders were doing the coloured community a great disservice. Supporting the policy of segregation, his opinion was that there should be no social intermixture between white and coloured and 'that each group should develop along its own lines.' Arends stated that the people in the Cape Peninsula had accepted the policy of residential segregation and he suggested that the people in King William's Town should do the same.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ *Daily Dispatch*, 13.09.1943 p. 4 'Government's Policy to Coloured People'

¹⁰⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 16.09.1943 p. 4 'Government's policy to Coloured people.' Letter from NP Arends.

The local press printed two letters in response to Mr Arends' correspondence. 'The Knight' stated that the majority of coloured people were opposed to spatial segregation. He concluded by asking Arends:

Why must we have residential separation to develop along our own lines? Are we so weak as not to progress unless we are all together now? ... I will leave our esteemed friend with a little thought. A man who is not prepared to defend his rights does not deserve them.¹⁰⁵

Mr CF Accom, Chairman of the East London Coloured Teacher's Association, also responded to Arends' letter in the *Cape Mercury*. Accom was of the opinion that Arends' letter should not pass unchallenged for it revealed dangerous opinions. He stated that numerous leading coloured people had turned down offers to serve in the CAC because they did not believe in segregation. According to Accom coloured people had 'a moral right to absolute equality of unhindered opportunity.'¹⁰⁶

Mr Arends' letter did, however, also receive support from local coloured residents according to the local media. He was now bold enough to state that he knew the identity of 'the Knight' and challenged him to 'confer on a public platform.' This was, however, not to be and the *Mercury's* Editor closed the correspondence without the identity of 'the Knight' being revealed.¹⁰⁷

Reflecting national trends, it was clear that the local coloured community was divided about the benefits of a separate, government-sanctioned organisation for the advancement of coloured people. The division was so strongly felt that people felt free to criticise even the chairman of the local coloured mouthpiece. Unfortunately, we do not know if the CWA executive indeed sanctioned Arends' letter. Arends, however, wrote to the local media under the auspices of the CWA.

The coloured elite initially did not question the legitimacy of coloured identity. Only in 1939, under threats of increased segregation, combined with the resulting opposition in coloured protest politics, was the legitimacy of coloured identity publicly contested. With the creation of the CAC in 1943, local coloured unity

¹⁰⁵ *Cape Mercury*, 23.09.1943 p. 1 'A reply to Mr Arends from 'The Knight' Letter to the Editor.

¹⁰⁶ *Cape Mercury*, 28.09.1943 p. 4 'A Reply to Mr. Arends' Letter to the Editor.

¹⁰⁷ *Cape Mercury*, 23.09.1943 p. 4 'A Reply to Mr. Arends' Letter to the Editor.

proved to be insufficient to overcome division within the ranks of the coloured elite.

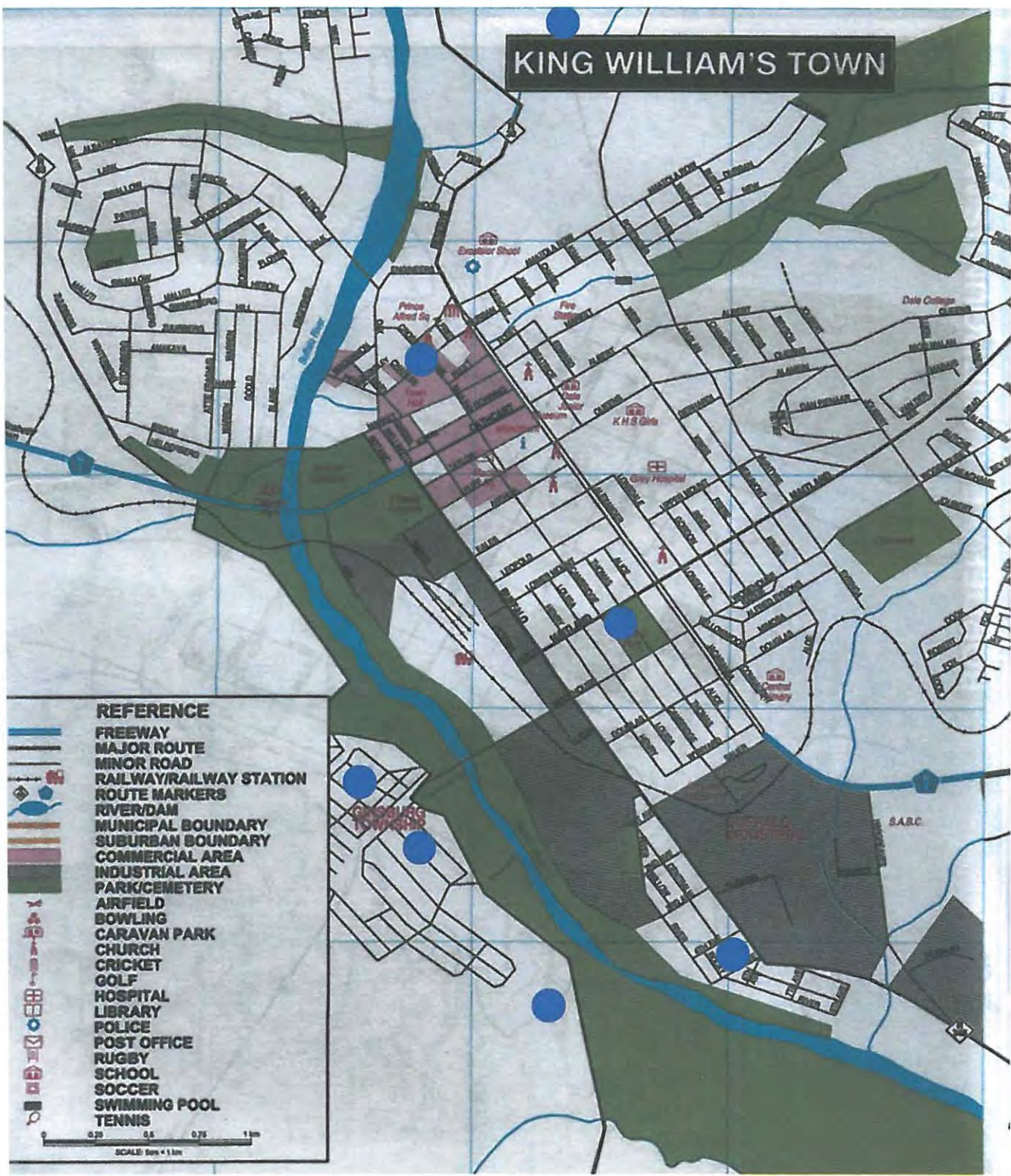
Conclusion

As we have seen, segregation refers to the social practices and set of government policies sought to systemise control and domination along colour lines. Custom, supported by the colonial/military authorities, and missionary societies, rather than law initially characterised coloured housing. From 1920 a policy of racial separateness was increasingly placed on the statute books. In the process, residential segregation affecting coloured people was entrenched in the urban milieu.

The implementation of health and housing legislation led to thousands of black South Africans, as well as a large proportion of coloured people, being removed and re-housed. Segregatory legislation was pioneered by the local authorities, legalised by national government, implemented by the local authorities and supported by white ratepayers. In King William's Town, the Borough Council increasingly portrayed definite ideas on the racial ordering of society and, in the process, dramatically affected the town's spatial map.

Coloured identity represented a rallying point for the APO, ANB and the CWA. It was used as a means to overcome differences in religion, background and place of residence in order to advance their interests as a group. With the creation of the CAC, coloured identity proved to be insufficient to overcome the division present among the coloured elite. A deep rift within the coloured community, both locally and nationally, was the result.

Map indicating the approximate location of coloured settlements in King William's Town, 1895-1946.¹



¹ Border/Kei Directory, East London Chamber of Commerce, East London, 2005.

Chapter 3: Implementing Segregation in King William's Town

In 1895, the coloured people of King William's Town were living largely in small pockets in the town centre, as well as in settlements scattered on the periphery of the town. Their accommodation included privately-owned dwellings, rented accommodation and subsequently, municipal housing schemes. All the settlements discussed in this chapter displayed a distinct history informed by the local role players, financial constraints and national segregatory and sanitary measures. Subsequent to a description of each settlement, recurring themes present in the various settlements are identified and discussed.

Brownlee Station

'Reserved for village purposes:' Brownlee Station: a background¹

Brownlee Station formed part of the original black location of King William's Town and its existence pre-dates the establishment of the town. The history of the station can be traced back to 1826, when the Rev John Brownlee of the London Missionary Society established a mission among the amaNtinde of the late Chief Dyani Tshatshu. In due course, the mission became known as Brownlee Station.

Sir Benjamin D'Urban established King William's Town on the site of the mission in May 1835. These arrangements, however, did not meet with the approval of Lord Glenelg, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and King William's Town, to all intents and purposes, ceased to exist.² At the conclusion of the War of the Axe (1846-47), the British decided to utilise the mission grounds for the re-establishment of King William's Town. In order to compensate Brownlee, the government granted a freehold of some 14 acres of land on the eastern side of the Buffalo River, north of the town. Title was granted to Brownlee for the erection of a private residence, the remainder – about 11 acres – being granted to the mission society.³ This new situation did,

¹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/2: Brownlee Location Commission, 1910, p. 2.

² D Webb From Garrison Town to Dormitory Town: Aspects of the History of King William's Town, Unpublished document, Amathole Museum, 1989.

³ This removal was to be recalled by two Brownlee residents, Booy Bovana and Benjamin Plaatjes, when they gave evidence to the 1910 Commission. CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/2: Brownlee Location

however, afford some advantages, and Brownlee was able to extend his missionary work to include the coloured Cape Mounted Riflemen (CMR) troops housed within the new Military Reserve and to families originating from the Kat River Settlement.⁴ The mission station authorities cut a furrow from the Buffalo River through the mission grounds to supply water to the inhabitants. This water supply was also used by the military, and at a later date supplied the entire town.

With the growth of the town, labour was required, and the labourers were located with the mission inhabitants on the outskirts of the mission. On 21 May 1861, the Lieutenant Governor directed that an additional area of eight acres be set aside and 'reserved for village purposes for the use of the Station natives.'⁵ The Lieutenant Governor was, however, not prepared to authorise issue of title thereto. It was to be these eight acres of land that would be hotly contested in the ensuing years. In time, a fairly large location sprang up, a small portion of which was situated on the mission grounds and the remainder just outside. In 1861, the town was constituted a municipality and it accordingly also allotted sites for huts in the same area. The admixture of mission converts and townsmen did not prove a success for soon 'it was found that drink began to find its way to the station, with the result that rowdy scenes ensued.'⁶ The missionary complained to the Council and the Municipality complained to the missionary, each holding the other responsible for the conditions which had arisen, but neither apparently taking steps to address them.

In 1871, Rev Brownlee died, and matters appear to have become worse after his death. During this period, it was recognised, after some controversy, that

Commission, 1910, p. 1; 10; D Webb From Garrison Town to Dormitory Town: Aspects of the History of King William's Town, Unpublished document, Amathole Museum, 1989.

⁴ Basil Holt, *Greatheart of the Border: A Life of John Brownlee Pioneer Missionary in South Africa*, South African Missionary Museum, King William's Town, 1976, p. 124. The Imperial CMR was originally raised as the Cape Regiment in 1806, with the officers being British and the other ranks Khoi or coloured. In 1827 the corps, was reformed as the CMR (Imperial) and served until 1870 when it was disbanded in England. The Colonial CMR was raised in 1855 as the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police and deliberately changed its name to that of the older, Imperial CMR in 1878. In 1913 the name changed again to the First Regiment, South African Mounted Rifles which was disbanded in 1926. King William's Town was the headquarters of the Colonial CMR for most of its existence and many coloured troops were stationed in the town.

⁵ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/2: Brownlee Location Commission, 1910, p. 2.

⁶ CA PAS vol. 2/733 ref. L48/C/12: Report on Brownlee Station, Additional Medical Officer to MOH for the Colony, 14.10.1907 p. 5.

the municipal regulations were in force in the location. Although bye-laws were to some extent enforced, the supposed 'rowdy scenes' enacted at the station continued. The income received from the station did not defray the costs of municipal supervision, and the Council would not increase the staff complement in order to improve municipal control. The Council charged rates, but was unable to claim hut tax, as it was not the owner of the land. The rateable income was probably not very high in any event – the majority of inhabitants working as nursemaids, cooks, washerwomen, domestic servants, chauffeurs, factory hands, delivery men, milkers, etc.⁷

Following a request of the Resident Missionary, John Harper, a government survey was conducted on the said eight acres of land. On 1 December 1883, the Surveyor-General of the Cape Colony, Mr A de Smidt, issued a Certificate of Reservation in favour of three trustees: the Civil Commissioner, the Mayor and the Resident Missionary, as well as their successors in office. The trustees, however, did not exercise any of their functions, beyond drawing up certain rules of residence. The entire responsibility rested upon the shoulders of the Resident Missionary.⁸

After the certificate was granted, the Council located no more sites in the reserved area, but allotted them on a hill site above the station. This would subsequently become known as Ridsdel or Nqhayi.⁹ The missionary continued to allot sites in the reserved area to any person who agreed to abide by the rules mentioned above. He administered the location, with the assistance of a resident committee, consisting of members of the congregation.¹⁰ But the committee was powerless to eject 'undesirables'. Generally speaking, any person removed from the municipal location, found refuge at the mission. The

⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16: Report from MOH to Health and General Purposes Committee, 04.01.1938.

⁸ CA PAS vol. 2/733 ref. L48/C/12: Certificate of Reservation, 1883.

⁹ DJ Matthews & CP Davids: personal interview, 24.03.2006. Spelt as such by informants. Matthews and Davids added that this refers to a bald-headed person. This could possibly be a description of the location of Ridsdel which was situated on a protruding hill. 'Inqhayi', according to Albert Kropf (*A Kaffir-English Dictionary*, Lovedale Mission Press, Alice, 1915) refers to a bald-headed person. I have used the term 'Nqhayi' to refer to Ridsdel because ex-residents refer to it in this way. In contemporary Xhosa it should read 'inqayi'.

¹⁰ In 1899 the Station Committee included Klaas Botha, originally from the Kat River Settlement. DA Webb, *King William's Town during the South African War, 1899-1902. An urban social, economic and cultural history*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1993, p. 213.

land was therefore held under certificate of reservation, but the dwellings belonged to the residents of Brownlee Station. Residents could, by right, inherit, sell or lease their homes.¹¹ In order to supplement their income, a large number of lodgers were received into the huts, in spite of the rules of residence. The limit to the sites originally approved by the missionary was thus exceeded, causing the houses to be situated in close proximity to one another.

With the lack of control, several medical and/or sanitary reports detailed 'the drunkenness, immorality and vice present at Brownlee Station.'¹² The Council was especially concerned about reports of the 'immoral' relationships across the colour bar, which was reputedly originating from Brownlee Station. Another concern was the thriving sex trade on the outskirts of the town that resulted in a high incidence of venereal disease among the military troops stationed in town.

From an early date, a large number of coloured families lived at Brownlee Station; mostly in what ex-residents referred to as 'Upper Brownlee', situated near the square in front of the church. Their homes were described as large brick houses under iron roofs, but some families lived in thatched wattle and daub structures.¹³ The relationship between residents was stated as very amicable. An ex-resident, referring to Brownlee Station of the 1930s, stated that 'We didn't know about apartheid. We were only taught about apartheid in town.'¹⁴

'That Hottentot location'¹⁵

In March 1895, the Borough Council received a petition from 60 coloured inhabitants of Brownlee Station. The residents requested a piece of land in order to be separated from their Xhosa neighbours with whom, it was stated,

¹¹ CA PAS vol. 2/733 ref. L/48/c/12: Memorandum on Brownlee Mission Station by Additional Medical Officer, 05.02.1908.

¹² SE Victor, 'Museum Assists with Brownlee Location Land Claim' in *Imvubu*, April 2004, p. 3.

¹³ Well-known residents included the Matthews, Plaatjes, Osteridge, Jasson, Botha, Hamman, Herbert, Taai, Cochrine, Rayner, Harris, Krait and Gysman families. Only four coloured families lived in 'Under Brownlee', namely those of Williams, Talmakies, Davids and Conybeare. WA Nelson, DJ Matthews and CP Davids: personal interviews, 24.03.2006 and 31.03.2006.

¹⁴ WA Nelson: personal interview, 31.03.2006. The narrator uses the term 'apartheid' but is referring to the pre-1948 period.

¹⁵ Quotation in heading: *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 20.03.1895 p. 3 'Borough Council'; *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 06.03.1895 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

they were not on friendly terms. Mr JJ Yates,¹⁶ a local lawyer, appeared on behalf of the residents. He suggested that the coloured inhabitants be moved to the other side of the Blue Quarry, situated near the 'Nquabba' (sic) stream about three kilometres from town. Upon investigation, the Commonage and Location Committee strongly recommended that the site, described as 'in every way suitable', be granted to the petitioners.¹⁷ Yates assured the Council that the claim was a just one. He asked only that they might be treated with the same fairness as they were in other places in the Colony.

A separate coloured settlement did not, however, have the support of the whole Council. Cr Gilbert Fox¹⁸ failed to see the necessity of a new location; the coloured people not having increased sufficiently to justify the same. In his opinion it was only the 'riff-raff' who wished to leave Brownlee Station, whilst the respectable coloured residents were satisfied with their present places. Cr William West also opposed the scheme, stating that he 'didn't want his name to be handed down in connection with so serious a matter'. It seemed to Yates that those who were opposing the scheme felt that coloured people had no rights whatsoever and that granting them a site was a gratuity.¹⁹

In May 1895, the Council received a petition from the white residents of West Bank, emphatically protesting against the establishment of the location. The protest was lodged, even though the proposed site was more than two kilometres away from the nearest West Bank residents. Cr Charles Gilbank responded that the respectable element of Brownlee Station wanted 'to live more decently and cleanly among themselves ... instead of herding together in the filth and stink of Brownlee Station.' He stated that many of the inhabitants of Brownlee Station were probably responsible for a good many of the illnesses for which the burgesses had to pay heavy doctor's bills. He therefore

¹⁶ This was possibly Joseph John Yates, a registered King William's Town voter in 1889. He became a prominent local solicitor and was subsequently the Native Commissioner for Tamacha in the Ciskeian General Council.

¹⁷ *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 15.03.1895 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

¹⁸ Gilbert Fox (1834-1899) and Son conducted business as produce buyer on the Market Square near the Town Hall. Fox was Mayor of King William's Town from 1889-1890.

¹⁹ *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 20.03.1895 p. 3 'Borough Council'; *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 27.03.1895 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

considered the proposed new location to be a safety valve to the town. Gilbank's motion was carried.²⁰

By the end of May 1895, the Council received another petition requesting a public meeting to consider the question of a coloured location on the West Bank. The petition bore the signatures of several prominent white residents, including Messrs TB King, JW Varder and GJK Rawlings.²¹ The meeting was subsequently held on 7 June 1895 in the Council Chambers, with about 50 burgesses present. The Council was requested not to establish the proposed settlement. A local wagon maker, Mr William Ririe, stated that he:

did not question the [coloured people's] respectability nor their civilization, but he thought that once they removed these men from one location to another they would find that neither their respectability nor their civilization was very far advanced (Hear). The Hottentots desired to leave Brownlee Station because they could not agree with the Kafirs there – but for his part he questioned very much whether they would agree among themselves.²²

Accompanied by loud applause, it was stated that the Borough Council should first consult with the burgesses before matters of this kind were settled. Most of the gentlemen present regretted that the public meeting had not been held several months before. They were of the opinion that it would have saved the Council a lot of trouble as surely they had no wish to run counter to the wishes of the burgesses. Whether Gilbank and Yates were present is not indicated in the local press. If they had been, however, they had not publicly voiced their support in the matter. The feelings of the majority of burgesses present at the meeting were, however, crystal clear.

Gilbank, having been rebuffed by the public meeting, was not willing to ignore the matter altogether. In December 1895, under a newspaper heading entitled 'Monkey Location', the granting of a piece of land to the coloured residents of Brownlee Station, was again listed. Cr AJ Beet was responsible for the derogatory nickname.²³ The suggested site was situated in the locality known as Nqhayi. Similar conditions to those previously discussed by the Council were again tabled. This time however, the Council was careful not to offend the local

²⁰ *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 15.05.1895 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

²¹ *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 29.05.1895 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

²² *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 07.06.1895 p. 3 'Public Meeting The Hottentot Location'.

²³ *Cape Mercury*, 21.12.1895 p. 3 'Borough Council. Monkey Location'.



burgesses and decided to provide the town with an opportunity to 'ventilate the question.'²⁴ The matter was, however, not brought up in subsequent Council meetings.

The petition, requesting land for coloured occupation is significant, as coloured people would formally appeal for a similar scheme only 30 years later. In the period under discussion, this would also be the only time a public meeting was requested with regard to coloured housing. Although the opinion of subsequent Councils would often be surmised in the following years, we are not presented with such a clear picture of the opinions of the general white ratepayer as was expressed during the 1895 public meeting. The expression of overt racism is especially noted in this regard by both the ratepayers and some of the Councillors. Although racial slurs, such as 'Monkey Location', would by no means be the only example of racism evident in the period under discussion, subsequent comments would generally be more guarded.

The proposed housing scheme established several patterns to be found in the period under discussion, including the role of white liberals and appeals to the discourse of sanitation²⁵ and 'civilization' to justify segregation efforts. The Council's unwillingness to act against the wishes of white ratepayers and occasional friction between coloured and Xhosa residents regarding access to housing would also surface in the period under discussion. The 1895 petition, advocating a separate coloured settlement set apart from their Xhosa neighbours, represented an early attempt at segregation. Interestingly, this was a desire for segregation instigated from within the coloured community themselves. The Borough Council was, however, quite willing to discuss these social divisions present in the local community. The Council not only safeguarded white interests, but also restricted coloured urban opportunities.

²⁴ *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 18.12.1895 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

²⁵ MW Swanson, 'The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909' in *Journal of African History*, vol. 18, nr. 3, 1977, p. 387. Maynard Swanson first coined the phrase 'sanitation syndrome'. He indicated that local authorities often utilized public fears of improper sanitation to justify residential racial segregation.

Spreading dismay and alarm: Chief Umhala's 1906 petition

The removal of mission residents to the municipal location received the Council's attention as early as August 1880.²⁶ Not being the legal owners of the property, the Council was powerless to act on their original intentions - at any rate not without extended powers. The matter of ownership was so complicated that, according to an observer, it was impossible to settle without a prolonged enquiry and negotiations, the payment of compensation and possibly the introduction of special legislation.²⁷ This, it will be argued, would set the trend for the next 60 years.

In April 1906, the residents of Tsolo, Bidhli and Brownlee Station received eviction notices from the Borough Council. They were given three months' notice to vacate their tenements after which all buildings would become the property of the Council. A petition, including a covering letter from Chief Umhala,²⁸ was subsequently published in the local newspaper, the *Cape Mercury*. It respectfully requested the Council to withdraw its resolution and pointed out that many families had been living in their respective settlements for nearly 50 years. To the petitioners it seemed illogical that the buildings erected by the people themselves should now be taken over by the Council to whom they would be obliged to pay rent.²⁹

The intended evictions caused widespread dismay and alarm and were headlined in the columns of the *Cape Mercury*. Correspondence between the editors of the *Mercury* and Mr JT Jabavu's *Imvo Zabantsundu* ensued. Jabavu was more direct than the 'cap-in-hand' tone of the petitioners implied. He referred to the notices as 'harassment' and suggested that the Colonial

²⁶ *Cape Mercury*, 25.08.1880 'Borough Council Meeting'; *Cape Mercury*, 13.10.1880 'Borough Council Meeting'; *Cape Mercury*, 27.03.1882. Acknowledgement is due to Mr Anathi Wotshela who located these references at the Amathole Museum.

²⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 41/1/143 ref. J/3: Mission Reserve: Conditions of Tenure, etc. Brownlee Station, Secretary to NAD Minute of 16.07.1907. WG Blenkins, Civil Commissioner, to NAD.

²⁸ The letter signed by 'N. Umhala', probably refers to Nathaniel Cyril Kondile Umhala, the son of Chief Mhala (d. 1875). Although Umhala was a descendant of Chief Mhala he was never a chief. The Minutes of the Borough Council, published in the *Mercury* state, however, that the petition included a covering letter from 'Chief Mhala'. Cf. Report of Commission on Native Laws and Customs. Evidence delivered by Nathaniel Umhala, 06.10.1881, p. 256.

²⁹ CA 3/KWT vol. 41/1/145 ref. J3/16: Petition; *Cape Mercury*, 12.04.1906 p. 3 'Borough Council Meeting'

Government implement measures to safeguard the interests of the residents. Generally supportive of the Town Council, the *Mercury* pointed out that the local authorities were working for the good of the whole community.³⁰

The Mayor, Franz Ginsberg, responded that apart from hut tax, amounting to approximately £121 per annum (1901 figures), no rates or taxes were paid by the location inhabitants. The white population, on the other hand, paid a revenue of about £21 000 per annum. The fact that Xhosa and coloured people were made to pay tax on annexed land completely escaped Ginsberg's reasoning and is central to the paradox of Brownlee Station.

The idea was to improve the condition of the location by enabling the Council to manage it in a better way, especially in the event of an epidemic. Ginsberg stated that there was no intention to make any great revenue from the scheme and hut owners were promised fair compensation for their homes.³¹ A subsequent report by the local Sanitary Inspector, focused on conditions present at Brownlee Station:

The huts are badly constructed, without ventilation or fireplaces, and are plastered with mud taken from ground contaminated with disease germs... The ground immediately outside the huts is used as a dumping place for all manner of refuse ... there [are no sanitary] conveniences. Among the children whooping cough, measles and croup have been rife, and it is reported that a great number of the older residents are suffering from TB.³²

The report recommended that Brownlee Station be closed down and all residents be removed to Ginsberg location, adjacent to Tsolo. The petitioners subsequently sought legal representation from Mr Richard Rose-Innes,³³ a prominent 'liberal' lawyer. He was of the opinion that Mayor Ginsberg masterminded the proposed evictions. Described by Rose-Innes as 'a paper invasion', the time and expense that had been consumed in formulating such abortive measures was lamented. In reference to the Sanitary Inspector's report, he pointed out that the Rev John Harper, the resident missionary, had

³⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 04.04.1906 'Council Meeting'.

³¹ *Cape Mercury*, 12.04.1906 'Council Meeting'.

³² *Cape Mercury*, 26.10.1907 'Council Meeting'. This does not quite relate to the statistics. Only 16 children under the age of 2 years died of the above diseases in the period between 1895 and 1946.

³³ Richard Rose-Innes (1857-1944) was a philanthropically-minded advocate who established a reputation for defending black interests within parliamentary and governmental circles. He became a leading attorney for challenging what he saw as racial transgressions in KWT as well as East London. He married Hannah Brownlee, a granddaughter of Rev John Brownlee.

publicly stated that no case of typhoid or plague had ever originated at Brownlee Station. According to Rose-Innes, in his "humble judgement, that fact knocks the stuffing out of all the 'medical reports'."³⁴

Owing to financial constraints, the situation was to stall for a few months, but reference to 'the prevailing sanitary threat at Brownlee' would soon be included in subsequent municipal annals.³⁵ The eviction notice, the petition and the subsequent correspondence printed in the local media would, however, establish subsequent trends. The presence of a vocal, missionary-educated Xhosa elite, assisted by white sympathisers, is evident from the 1906 petition.³⁶ In contrast to the coloured petitioners of 1895, the Xhosa were well aware of their prescriptive rights to the land and the bargaining power of their labour. The loss of home-ownership and the financial implications of becoming municipal tenants were especially lamented. Jabavu insinuated that there was friction between the Cape government and the local authorities with regard to housing and the control of location residents. The relationship between these parties would be characterised by increasing tension in later years.

Apart from the 1895 petition, the coloured people were a silent presence in the early years. The petition appears to be the only tangible evidence of coloured consensus to relocate from Brownlee Station. The paternalistic Council, under the guise of concerns over sanitation, overcrowding and the potential outbreak of diseases, was developing strong segregationist tendencies. Segregation was increasingly implemented because it was seen as safeguarding the business and personal interests of white King William's Town. This was fuelled by the fact that Brownlee Station was in close proximity to the town proper, and definitely contributed to the dilemma. As one of the residents was to point out many years later 'The town was only a street away.'³⁷ This was especially evident under the mayoralty of Franz Ginsberg, a true segregationist at heart. The above-mentioned 'paper invasion' would be one of many subsequent attempts of the Council to extend its control over the town's locations.

³⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 01.12.1908 Letter to Editor, 'The 'crux' of the matter' by RW Rose-Innes.

³⁵ CA 3/KWT vol. 41/1/143 ref. J3: Letter from Town Clerk to Resident Magistrate, 01.07.1908.

³⁶ *Cape Mercury*, 01.12.1908 Letter to Editor, 'The 'crux' of the matter' by RW Rose-Innes.

³⁷ CP Davids: personal interview, 24.03.2006.

'To play ducks and drakes with people': the 1910 Commission³⁸

In July 1909, the Council resolved to request the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry consisting of representatives of Government, Council and residents. The Council was willing to consider the whole question of removal and resettlement elsewhere, on condition that it would not be bound by the decisions of the Commission.³⁹ *Imvo* responded that the appointment of a Commission created a dangerous precedent in giving municipalities unlimited powers 'to play ducks and drakes with people holding land under title.'⁴⁰ The *Mercury* acknowledged that the closing of Brownlee Station would cause inevitable hardship, but reasoned that this outweighed the benefits to every section of the community.⁴¹

The Government Commission consisted of Councillor F Ginsberg (Chairman, representing the Council), WT Brownlee (Assistant Chief Magistrate, Transkeian Territories, acting for the residents) and Dr EN Thornton (Additional Medical Officer of Health for the Colony; representing Government). The object of the Commission was to report on the conditions under which the removal and resettlement upon a new municipal site may be carried out.⁴² WT Brownlee was the grandson of the Rev John Brownlee, founder of the mission station. From the outset, the Council took exception to his appointment due to his family's connections with the mission.⁴³

Brownlee stated that he was not satisfied that the location was in any way more insanitary than any of the other municipal locations. Many of the houses inspected were, in his opinion, excellent in structure and in accommodation and were scrupulously clean in both interior and surroundings. Brownlee was of the opinion that attempts could be made to improve the sanitary conditions without

³⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 18.08.09 p. 2 Editorial 'Brownlee Station'.

³⁹ *Cape Mercury*, 29.10.1924 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

⁴⁰ The residents did not, of course, hold title to the contested eight acres of land.

⁴¹ *Cape Mercury*, 18.08.1909 p. 2 Editorial 'Brownlee Station'.

⁴² CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/2: Brownlee Location Commission, 1910 p. 1.

⁴³ *Cape Mercury*, 21.10.1909 p. 2 Editorial 'Brownlee Station'.

necessitating removals. The views of the two other commissioners were however, in support of removal, and were adopted in the final report.⁴⁴

The Commission sought evidence from the Resident Missionary, several municipal officials, the town's district surgeon, the military authorities and a handful of Brownlee Station residents. Rose-Innes acted as legal representative for the inhabitants. Benjamin Plaatjies⁴⁵ represented the coloured residents of Brownlee Station. The Commission concluded that the conditions at Brownlee were beyond remedy and that the inhabitants should be removed. The Brownlee residents were unwilling to abandon the area. The Commission therefore pointed out that the Council might need additional statutory powers to effect a removal, in which case the legal rights of the residents needed to be considered. They approved of the suggested site for removal, provisionally selected by the Council at Tsolo location. It was also recommended that compensation be decided by arbitration.⁴⁶

In December 1910, the Municipality considered the Commission's report. Hindered by financial constraints, it was agreed that no further steps be taken. The Council was not in favour of cash compensation, fearing that many of the residents would find their way into the poorer quarters of the town where the Council's control of shanties and back rooms were problematic. For these reasons the Council resolved to enquire into the feasibility of an Act of Parliament being passed in order to expedite the removal of Brownlee.⁴⁷

'They do not wish to move':⁴⁸ New legislation and the 1924 report

The issue of removal was probably diverted by the First World War (1914-1918) and was only again discussed during a visit by the Native Affairs Commission

⁴⁴ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 66.

⁴⁵ According to SM Matthews: personal interview, 24.03.2006, Plaatjies was a 'learned man. He studied in Aliwal (North).'

⁴⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/2: Brownlee Location Commission, 1910, introduction.

⁴⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 41/1/143 ref. J3: Special Meeting of Council, 14.12.1910; HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation*, p. 66; CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Letter from Assistant Health Officer to Secretary for Public Health, Pretoria, 08.10.1924.

⁴⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 29.10.1924 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

on 12-13 May 1922.⁴⁹ After interviewing the interested parties, Dr CT Loram and Dr AW Roberts gave their views on Brownlee Station in a letter to the Council. Supporting the recommendations of the 1910 Commission, they recommended that a sufficient loan be granted to the Council so that removal could be effected. The Council, however, decided to await the promulgation of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. Those hoping that the new legislation would provide for the removal of Brownlee Mission were to be disappointed. The eight acres of land at Brownlee Station was crown land and the new legislation did not apply to crown land. The right to remove people from crown land could only be obtained by agreement or expropriation.⁵⁰ The Act could therefore not be used.

At a special Council meeting in October 1924, the removal of Brownlee Station was again discussed. It was proposed that a sum of £10 000, earmarked by the Council for the erection of location housing, be utilised to accommodate the Brownlee people. The Council agreed to pay compensation to the individual owners of Brownlee Station, by mutual agreement or by arbitration. It was suggested that such compensation would not be paid in cash, but set off against rental for Council housing. The Council felt that the difficulties faced in regard to the attempted removal of Brownlee Station were insurmountable. It was of the opinion that 'whatever concession Council cares to make, these people will ask for further concessions, for in reality they do not wish to move.'⁵¹

In November 1924, WT Brownlee, came out in support of the mission residents.⁵² In a letter to the Secretary of Native Affairs, he quite correctly stated that no statutory powers had been obtained by the Council to enable the removal of the residents. Brownlee added that the Council's newest proposal

⁴⁹ This commission was set up under the Native Affairs Act of 1920 and was instrumental in the passing of the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. Loram was previously Chief Inspector of Native Education in Natal and Roberts was the Principal Teacher of the Lovedale Training School from 1883-1920. Loram, a prominent white liberal was, according to Paul B Rich (*White Power and the Liberal Conscience: Racial Segregation and South African Liberalism, 1921-1960*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1984, p. 18) crucial in accommodating inter-war liberalism with government's segregation policy.

⁵⁰ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/13: Report of Special Committee on Brownlee Station, 27.10.1924; *Cape Mercury*, 10.02.1931 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'. Agreement could only be arranged with the concurrence of parliament under the Crown Lands Disposal Act, and powers of expropriation could not be exercised against Crown property.

⁵¹ *Cape Mercury*, 29.10.1924 p. 4 'Borough Council'. Stated by Cr RHJ Schulze.

⁵² CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N/9/15/3: Letter to Secretary Native Affairs from WT Brownlee, November 1924.

was remarkably inconsistent with the 1910 resolutions where, for example, liberal compensation *in cash* (his emphasis) was recommended. Fixity of tenure, freedom to erect houses and free water, were also demanded in Brownlee's letter. The Prime Minister, General JBM Hertzog, wrote to Brownlee on 22 February 1925, stating that the Government desired to compensate the residents in terms of the 1910 Commission. The Council's resolution to utilise the sum of £10 000 was therefore shelved.⁵³

The 1925 Native Affairs Commission

On 2 September 1925, Hertzog paid a visit to King William's Town. During the ensuing meeting, the Mayor, Mr BO Schonegevel, blamed the Government for the insanitary conditions at Brownlee Station. He called upon Government, as owner of the location, to control the public 'nuisance' at their expense. The Prime Minister objected to the claims, but promised to take the matter further.⁵⁴ Three advisors to the Minister of Native Affairs, Dr Roberts, Dr Loram and General LA Lemmer subsequently visited the town in October. Constituting the 1925 Native Affairs Commission, they interviewed the Brownlee Station residents and the Borough Council.⁵⁵

The Commission concluded that the Brownlee residents be removed and compensated. The commission's recommendations differed from the 1910 proposals as to the suggested removal site and conditions of tenure. It was agreed that the people of Brownlee should be relocated to a municipal location under the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923.⁵⁶ According to the Commission, residents were willing to move, provided that they were satisfied with the site and the attached conditions. The residents suggested several suitable sites, but the Borough Council was not willing to depart from its fixed policy of housing the entire population at Tsolo location, situated on the west bank of the Buffalo River. The residents objected to the suggested site, describing it as 'too

⁵³ CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3 Brownlee Mission: Visit of Native Affairs Commission, 07.10.1925.

⁵⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 07.09.1925 p. 2 Editorial 'Brownlee Location'; HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 95.

⁵⁵ CA 1/KWT vol. 6/1/4 ref. 3/21/5: Memo, 22.03.1930; *Cape Mercury*, 08.10.1925 p. 2 Editorial 'Brownlee Location'; *Cape Mercury*, 23.09.1926 p. 2 Editorial 'Brownlee Station'; CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Brownlee Mission: Visit of Native Affairs Commission, 07.10.1925.

⁵⁶ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation...*, p. 96; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/145 ref. J3/16: Minutes of Meeting of KWT Council with Native Affairs Commission, 09.10.1925.

rocky'.⁵⁷ The Council was determined to possess full municipal control of the new location, but the residents were decidedly opposed to municipal control.

In November 1925, the local Magistrate, Mr H Britten, instructed by the Secretary for Native Affairs, met with the Brownlee Station residents. He would attempt to secure their acceptance of the said recommendations. Britten accordingly convened a meeting with 160 Brownlee residents and a committee was elected, including Messrs AM Jabavu,⁵⁸ Edward Qalinge⁵⁹ and Carl Matthews.⁶⁰ Matthews's name was added when Britten pointed out that the coloured inhabitants needed representation. In questioning the residents if the elected committee was representative of their views, Matthews replied:

All that has been done, all that is being done and all that is to be done is by the Committee. If the Committee says 'yes' or 'no' it will be right and they will abide by their decision.⁶¹

The Brownlee Station committee objected to being placed under the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, but Matthews informed the Magistrate that the coloured inhabitants were prepared to move to Tsolo location. The coloured residents were therefore willing to negotiate their removal, but would abide by the decision of the local committee. In subsequent meetings between the committee and the Magistrate, alternative sites for removal were suggested. The Council however, was not prepared to depart from its stated terms. According to Qalinge: 'Everything is for the Council and we make the sacrifice.'⁶²

In the opinion of the Magistrate, the residents decided to stand on their prescriptive rights as owners or occupiers. 'Further negotiations are therefore, likely to be futile.'⁶³ It is clear that coloured representatives were only included on the insistence of the various Commissioners, or in this case, the local

⁵⁷ CA 1/KWT vol. 6/1/4 ref. 3/21/5: Letter from RS Medford to Minister of Native Affairs, 21.10.1925.

⁵⁸ AM Jabavu became editor of *Imvo Zabantsundu* after his father, JT Jabavu's death in 1921. He also served as vice-president of the ICU and was a general councillor for the Ciskeian General Council.

⁵⁹ Edward Qalinge served as the committee's secretary.

⁶⁰ Matthews (1877-1966) was a respected member of the Brownlee Station community. He initially worked for Dreyfus & Co. and later as the Native Commissioner's chauffeur. He was known as an excellent translator and local sport personality.

⁶¹ CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Meeting at Brownlee Station, 16.11.1925.

⁶² CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Meeting at Brownlee Station with Magistrate, Missionary and Brownlee committee, 26.11.1926.

⁶³ CCK vol. 119 N9/15/3: Meeting with Magistrate, Missionary and Brownlee committee, 23.02.1926.

Magistrate. They were of the opinion that coloured residents needed separate representation. In the process, racial division among the inhabitants was strengthened. The truth is that even when represented, the coloured residents adhered to the decision of the majority of the residents. And without the residents' approval, the Council did not possess the necessary statutory means to remove the residents.

'Has it again been shelved?'⁶⁴ **The 1929 removal attempt and the Public Health Department's Role**

In February 1929, a meeting, instigated by a Brownlee Station deputation and including Carl Matthews, took place with the Town Clerk, HM Gray.⁶⁵ The deputation stated that they were willing to move, but a site, satisfying both the residents and the Council would have to be found. Alternative sites and conditions, including the remodelling of the present site, were accordingly discussed and both parties were able to state their terms.⁶⁶ In a subsequent letter to the Town Clerk, Edward Qalinge purported that Grey had left out important details of the deliberations in his report. Qalinge stated, for example, that the report did not take into account compensation to be paid for the 14 acres of mission land at Brownlee Station. The residents were well aware of their existing rights and were decidedly against municipal control at a new location. Qalinge therefore deliberately steamrolled the Borough Council's relocation attempt.⁶⁷ The Borough Council, on the other hand, was not willing to negotiate house ownership. It was increasingly interested in controlling access to all black and coloured housing.

A 1929 Public Health Department report pointed out that between 60-70% of the Brownlee Station houses were fit for human habitation. The report stated that about 50% of the balance could be repaired. The remainder were described as badly constructed tin shanties and their demolition were

⁶⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 23.04.1927 p. 2 'Brownlee Mission Station'.

⁶⁵ Harold M. Gray was Town Clerk in King William's Town from 1928 to 1945 when he retired. He died in England in 1959.

⁶⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16: Letter to Mayor from HM Gray (Town Clerk), 27.02.1929; *Cape Mercury*, 13.03.1929 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

⁶⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16: Letter to Town Clerk from Edward Qalinge, 20.03.1929; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16: Letter to Mayor from Town Clerk, 15.05.1929.

encouraged.⁶⁸ The Secretary for Native Affairs accordingly suggested that the Council utilise the 1919 Public Health Act. This would enable the local authorities to remove certain individual dwellings in Brownlee Station, considered to be insanitary.⁶⁹ In terms of the aforementioned act, Council resolved to serve notice on the Trustees of Brownlee Station on 3 March 1930. Calling for remedial measures, the trustees were directed to demolish all insanitary dwellings and erect additional sanitary conveniences for the residents. The resident missionary, MH Wilson, recognising a breach of their prescriptive rights, objected. Wilson pointed out that according to Ordinance No. 9 of 1864 this was the duty of the Council in return for the payment of municipal rates.

'There is one title deed':⁷⁰ Tension between coloured and Xhosa residents

The Council was now obliged to find alternative methods in its quest to demolish Brownlee Station. The solution seemed to lie in the passing of a special Act of Parliament. This could provide for the cancellation of the Certificate of Reservation and would vest the aforesaid land in the Borough Council. In the process, the whole area would be defined as a location in terms of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act. A Council delegation was consequently sent to Cape Town so that further representations could be made to the Government. In January 1932, the Brownlee Station residents, having learned about the Council's intentions, sent a deputation as well as a petition to the local Chief Native Commissioner and the Minister of Native Affairs. The Native Commissioner, quite correctly felt that it was unlikely that the Government would establish a location on land completely surrounded by municipal property. This clearly indicates the political manoeuvring that led to a breakdown in communication between the two sides and the divergence of interests.⁷¹

⁶⁸ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16: Letter from Public Health committee to Public Health Dept, 12.12.1929; *Cape Mercury*, 20.02.1930 p. 2 Editorial 'Insanitary Areas'.

⁶⁹ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, pp. 97-98; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16: Letter from Public Health Committee to Public Health Dept, 12.12.1929.

⁷⁰ CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Deputation on Brownlee, 29.01.1932.

⁷¹ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 100; CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Deputation on Brownlee, 29.01.1932.

During the aforementioned discussions the Native Commissioner enquired about the origin of the coloured people of Brownlee. Qalinge answering on behalf of the deputation stated that a handful of coloured people from the Military Reserve had enquired from Rev Harper if they could obtain land in order to attend the mission church. Qalinge stated that:

They have no claim at all. The Town Council once called them squatters. What they have is not their own. Even now they are asking Council for places in which to live... We do not regard the coloureds as part of ourselves. They have acquired rights by buying houses, but they have no rights to the land... We have no individual title deeds, but in the transfer of Church property the deed was made out only to the Natives... There is one title deed for the whole community.⁷²

The mission was indeed established among the amaNtinde people in 1826, but from 1847, the Rev Brownlee's missionary sphere also included coloured troops housed in the Military Reserve. By 1883 many coloured people were residing at Brownlee Station.⁷³ Qalinge's statement includes several additional inaccuracies. No title deeds existed for the eight acres occupied by the residents. The land in question was crown land held under a Certificate of Reservation by three trustees on behalf of the residents. The coloured homeowners of Brownlee Station therefore had as much claim to the land as the Xhosa residents did. Qalinge was denying coloured residents their right to the land. His statement that: 'Even now they are asking Council for places in which to live' was brought on by several requests from the coloured elite for the establishment of a separate coloured township.⁷⁴ Qalinge probably felt betrayed by his coloured neighbours' individually negotiating with the Council for their removal. This is borne out in his statement: 'We do not regard the coloureds as part of ourselves.'⁷⁵ Qalinge's comment is an important example of the tension that existed between coloured and Xhosa residents in their quest to retain home ownership rights. Tension within the community, brought upon them through the Council's attempt to order society along colour lines, deepened divisions within the settlement. The coloured residents of Brownlee Station would only voluntarily remove from the location if they were convinced

⁷² CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Deputation on Brownlee, 29.01.1932.

⁷³ By 1938, 44% of coloured homeowners stated that their homes were inherited. This indicates a long period of ownership at Brownlee Station. Cf. 3/KWT; vol. nr. 4/1/146; ref. J3/16 Brownlee Mission, owners' particulars, 1938.

⁷⁴ See Chapter 5

⁷⁵ CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Deputation on Brownlee, 29.01.1932.

that it would improve their present circumstances. Already possessing their own homes, they would only leave Brownlee Station if the Council would agree to a homeownership scheme for coloured people elsewhere.

The control of Brownlee Station's eight acres of reservation was disputed, but the Council was definitely acting as if it was the owner of the land. The fact that the residents and the Borough Council seemed unable to reach an amicable agreement regarding the future of the location left the two parties with no definite solution. This dilemma, however, would soon be resolved. The impasse over the disputed control of the eight acres of Brownlee Mission and the future of its coloured and black residents remained so only until January 1937 when the Slums Act of 1934 was used to force the issue.

'An epoch making event': The 1934 Slums Act⁷⁶

In January 1937, the implementation of the Elimination of Slums Act (53 of 1934) was suggested as a possible solution. Through the application of the Act, the Council possessed the necessary legislation to remove the residents from the contentious eight acres of land at Brownlee Station.⁷⁷ On 4 January 1938, Dr RE Meaker, Medical Officer of Health (MOH) for the Public Health Department, declared that, according to the provisions of the Slums Act, a nuisance existed upon the eight acres of land. In his report, he stated that overcrowding, insufficient accommodation for members of the opposite sex, inadequate sanitary accommodation and congestion of land were present at Brownlee Station. According to Meaker: 'Rights are of no consideration when the health and lives of over 1 200 people are daily in danger.'⁷⁸

A meeting with the three Trustees of the eight acres, namely Mr W T Robertson (Magistrate), Rev D Tolmie Fraser (Missionary), and Mr AS Weir (Mayor), was subsequently called. The meeting being satisfied that a nuisance did exist at Brownlee Station, in accordance with the Slums Act and the report of the MOH,

⁷⁶ *Cape Mercury*, 11.05.1938. p. 2 'Citation Court: Brownlee Station declared a slum' Quotation by the Mayor, AS Weir.

⁷⁷ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p.100; *Cape Mercury*, 12.05.1938 p. 2 Editorial 'Brownlee Station'.

⁷⁸ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16: MOH Report, 04.01.1938.

Brownlee Station was declared a slum. The Trustees of Brownlee Station had the right to lodge an appeal against the establishment of a Citation Court within ten days. No appeal was lodged and the owners were subsequently notified of the Council's intention to resettle the residents of Brownlee Station.⁷⁹ The Slums Act effectively empowered three people, to declare Brownlee Mission a slum. It set in motion events that led to the relocation against the will of the residents. It swept aside years of resistance by an abbreviated administrative process.

The missionary, as representative of the Congregational Union of South Africa (CUSA),⁸⁰ made no attempt at this point to prevent removal. The CUSA instructed Rev Fraser, against the wishes of the residents, to co-operate with the local authorities in the removal of Brownlee Station. This was done on the understanding that the Council would pay reasonable compensation for the buildings and land to the residents. Many years later a Brownlee Station descendant was to voice his anger against the church's unwillingness to intercede on behalf of the people of Brownlee Station during this crucial stage. No evidence could be traced of any local CUSA member who objected to the church's decision in regard to the removal of Brownlee Station at the time.⁸¹ The church was unwilling or unable to challenge the provisions of the Slums Act and in so doing collaborated with the Council against the Brownlee residents.

Through the provisions of the Slums Act, the Council decided to pursue expropriation. Compensation for the residents' houses would accordingly be negotiated through arbitration. With the Government's consent, notices were to be served upon the trustees as owners of the land. The Municipality further resolved to resettle the Brownlee Station people on the West Bank of the Buffalo River in the neighbourhood of the existing locations. The Slums Act

⁷⁹ *Cape Mercury*, 11.05.1938 p. 2 'Citation Court: Brownlee Station declared a slum'; *Cape Mercury*, 23.05.1938 'Special Council Meeting'.

⁸⁰ The property and affairs of the London Missionary Society were transferred to the Congregational Union of South Africa in 1925.

⁸¹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16: Letter from Secretary, CUSA to Town Clerk, 15.10.1937; B Osteridge: personal interview, 12.04.2006.

made provision for the Council to raise a loan under the Housing Act of 1920 with the specific purpose of acquiring land for slum elimination.⁸²

The residents of Brownlee Station would make a last attempt to prevent their removal. In June 1938, they appealed against the Council's decision to declare the eight acres of land a slum. Represented by Messrs Dower and Turpin, solicitors from Adelaide, their appeal centred on the fact that notice had not been served upon each owner or occupier of the Brownlee Station houses. The solicitors questioned the fact that the residents had not been afforded the opportunity of being represented or consulted in the proceedings. According to the appeal, resettlement in the municipal location would deprive them of their existing privileges and rights as owners, to which they were legally entitled.⁸³ Why legal representation was not sought from King William's Town is not explained.⁸⁴

The residents' appeal however, was lodged after the ten days, stipulated in the Slums Act, had elapsed. The Council was therefore not prepared to accept the stated reasons as sufficient justification for appeal. The letter, as well as a petition from the residents, was subsequently forwarded to the Minister of Native Affairs as well as the Central Housing Board. Their representations would prove unsuccessful and subsequently on 7 September 1938, the Minister approved the expropriation of Brownlee Station. The Council therefore used the Slums Act as a 'sanitising' instrument that protected it from the consequences of legal action. It always had the option of not using the Slums Act and assisting the people of Brownlee Station in improving their living conditions. The word 'slum' is also emotive. One man's slum can be perceived as another's proper housing. The Slums Act provided the Borough Council with the opportunity to relocate the people of Brownlee Station to municipal housing in an area of its choice while obtaining ownership of the eight acres of contested land.

⁸² *Cape Mercury*, 15.02.1938 p. 2 Editorial & Municipal Affairs 'Brownlee Location'.

⁸³ *Cape Mercury*, 21.06.1938 p. 3 'Brownlee Station'.

⁸⁴ By 1939, Richard Rose-Innes was an elderly gentleman who was probably not practising as a lawyer anymore.

The residents were not alone in their opinion that the local authorities were treating them unfairly. Writing from the Cape African Congress Headquarters at 'Ntabethembha' in Cradock, the President of the Cape African Congress, James A Calata, urged the local Magistrate, as one of the trustees of Brownlee Station, to act in the interests of the residents. Calata rightly summarised the new site at Ginsberg location as not 'on the same lines as those of the present reserve.'⁸⁵

It is very difficult to determine how the coloured residents of Brownlee felt about their imminent removal. The loss of homeownership and the limited choice in alternative accommodation must have been particularly emotional. At least one home owner, Peter Fourie, signed a form, containing owners' particulars, with the words 'Under protest' written below his signature.⁸⁶

There is some evidence that at least a few of the coloured residents were aware of the area's unhygienic condition. A non-resident, Mr NP Arends, described Brownlee Station as an unhygienic and insanitary place where 'people died of TB every week.'⁸⁷ Mr Arends possessed his own political agenda in that he supported segregation of the races. Mr Victor Wilson, who often discussed the history of Brownlee Station with ex-residents, did, however, confirm Arends's opinion.⁸⁸

But for others, the removal still conjures up emotional memories, even after more than 60 years. An ex-resident, Mr Charlie Davids, feels that the sanitation issue could have been dealt with through the installation of proper sanitary accommodation. He alleges that the Council wanted to move the residents further away from the town because of interracial relationships as well as alleged drug use in 'Mamo's Alley' by young white males. According to Davids:

⁸⁵ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/145 ref. J3/16: Letter from James A Calata to Magistrate, 15.10.1938.

⁸⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/146 ref J3/16 Owners' particulars, Brownlee Mission, 1938, erf M5.

⁸⁷ NP Arends, Retrospect (Unpublished autobiography, Amathole Museum), p. 50.

⁸⁸ According to his son, Brain Osteridge: personal interview, 12.04.2006. According to the data analysis, extracted from the town's Burial Register, 49% of the deaths recorded for Brownlee Station, was of children under the age of 2 years. The rate of Tuberculosis-related deaths was, however, not significant. The disproportionately high mortality and infection figures confirm the insanitary conditions which people experienced.

It was bad. Some women had four or five children with white men. The women would work in their shops and every now and again they would become pregnant. When they found out about that, it was the beginning of the end for Brownlee Station.⁸⁹

According to Davids, the Council was, apart from the obvious sanitation issues present at Brownlee, also careful not to expose the soft underbelly of white King William's Town, perceived as tainted with miscegenation and drug abuse. Davids alludes to the fact that Brownlee Station has a darker history which, sixty years later, has largely been lost to the historical record. No further evidence was found in the extant documents to substantiate Davids' claims.

'A place of hygienic beauty': The Evacuation of Brownlee Station⁹⁰

On 11 October 1938, the Town Clerk reported that the residents of Brownlee had handed over about 50 compensation claims. The majority of the claims were much in excess of the municipal valuations. According to Zituta, compensation was not as liberal as the municipality liked to state it was.⁹¹ In reality, however, the Council was legally bound by the provisions of the Slums Act to compensate the residents only to the limit of the municipal valuation. The Council's compensation was generally higher than the required municipal estimates and was more 'liberal' than could be expected.

Compensation was authorised by the Native Affairs Department, under the authority of the Slums Act, as a charge against the Native Revenue account and the General Account of the Municipality, in equal proportions. By September 1940, the Council claimed that £5 200 had been paid in compensation to the people of Brownlee Station. This money apparently originated from a £30,700 sub-economic housing loan received through the Central Housing Board.⁹²

On 20 October 1938, the Certificate of Reservation for the eight acres of land at Brownlee Station was cancelled. The Council was finally in legal possession of

⁸⁹ CP Davids: personal interview, 24.03.2006.

⁹⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 15.05.1940 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

⁹¹ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p.105.

⁹² CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Letter from Chief Native Commissioner to Native Commissioner, 15.06.1940; *Cape Mercury*, 10.09.1940 p. 1 'Municipal Affairs'.

the contentious site. The demolition of the Brownlee Station residences could commence.⁹³ Most of the surviving residents of Brownlee could not remember the removal very well, probably because they were all mere children at the time of evacuation. Mr Charlie Davids remembered making a play wagon during the time of removal. He attached the wheels of an old pram onto his makeshift wagon. He recalled walking through the hot ash of his neighbours' burnt-down dwelling and moved out of Brownlee with blisters on his feet.⁹⁴ After all the sellable parts of their homes were sold, the buildings were razed to the ground. The municipality provided contractors, namely De Lange's Transport and Mr Piet Botha, to assist residents with their removal. Mr DJ Matthews' father was employed as a driver and had access to a car. He remembered his family transporting their personal belongings on the car's roof rack.⁹⁵

Some of the surviving residents were too young to understand the repercussions of their removal from Brownlee Station. Mrs Stella Smith (née Matthews) remembered her parents being upset about the removal, but the children were delighted with their new houses. Most residents and their descendants have no re-collection of their parents' receiving compensation money or for what purpose it was applied. This is probably because financial matters were generally not discussed with minors.⁹⁶

In May 1940, the Town Clerk was able to report that all the residents of Brownlee Station had been removed. The only difficulty that remained was the question of the Brownlee Mission School. With the removal of the residents, it made sense that a new school should be erected in the municipal location at Ginsberg. The Congregational Church of South Africa (CUSA), as owners of

⁹³ KWT Deeds Office Crown Grant G7/1939; *Cape Mercury*, 07.09.1939 'Mayoral minute, 1938-1939'; *Cape Mercury*, 20.03.1940 'Report by HM Tait'.

⁹⁴ CP Davids: personal interview, 24.03.2006.

⁹⁵ DJ Matthews: personal interview, 24.03.2006.

⁹⁶ Mr Stoffel Botha, bought land in Keiskamma Hoek with his share of the compensation. Mrs Flora Osteridge's grandson stated that his grandmother utilized her share to erect a tombstone on the grave of her husband and Mrs Eva Welcome's father, Mr Stephen Fourie, bought a plot in Blikkiesdorp/Gillam's Drift with his compensation money. AJ Butler: personal interview; 24.03.2006; B Osteridge: personal interview, 12.04.2006; E Welcome: personal interview, 03.05.2006. Stephen Fourie received £65 in compensation for his property at Brownlee Station.

the church, was accordingly compensated the sum of £500, for the establishment of a new school at Tsolo.⁹⁷

The CUSA received no compensation for the loss of their mission station. The historical Brownlee Memorial Church was the only building that was not condemned and is still standing on the site today. The loss of the historic mission was an emotional issue. The paradox of having a church building and manse, but no mission station dealt a deadening blow to the mission.⁹⁸

The Council subsequently discussed the question of the vacated land. A portion of the land was set aside for a new National Road to Stutterheim. Earlier suggestions included a garden village for coloured people.⁹⁹ Envisioned as 'a fitting example of a conversion from a slum into a place of hygienic beauty', a suitable rockery garden was also suggested as an attractive entrance to the town. Neither the rockery nor the coloured garden village was ever to materialise.

By June 1940, a total of 129 families, of which 39 was coloured, had been evicted from their erstwhile homes.¹⁰⁰ Through the implementation of the Slums Act, the Council finally succeeded in its efforts to remove Brownlee Station. Under the guise of 'the sanitation syndrome', segregation won the day with residents being removed to the location across the river. Through the Natives (Urban Areas) Act municipal control was extended to the residents of Brownlee Station. With the removal of Brownlee Station the Council increasingly controlled access to coloured housing. This would become a recurrent theme in subsequent evictions.

Deprived of their privileges and rights as owners, the residents severely felt the financial and social implications of becoming municipal tenants: 'Waar hulle my arm gemaak het, was die dag wat hulle my pa se huis weggevat het. (They

⁹⁷ CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Letter from Chief Native Commissioner, KWT to Secretary for Native Affairs, 29.06.1940.

⁹⁸ Quotation from *Cape Mercury*, 04.06.1938; *Cape Mercury* 30.08.1947 p. 3 'Bantu News and Views'.

⁹⁹ *Fort Beaufort Advocate* as quoted in *Cape Mercury*, 28.05.1938 p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997. Appendix 5.

made me poor the day they took my father's house).¹⁰¹ The residents were forced to demolish their houses and were encouraged to become municipal tenants. Some of the coloured residents however, refused to move to Leightonville. The Shaws moved to Mthatha, the Izally family obtained housing in Old Town, the Weimers family and William Rayner moved to Cape Town.¹⁰²

Ridsdel or Nqhayi

Nqhayi and the Salvation Army's Commissioner Ridsdel

The area known as Ridsdel location, formed the upper portion of Brownlee Station. The Government survey of 1883 left a number of residences, situated on a protruding hill, outside the reservation and the mission's 14 acres. Residents named the settlement Nqhayi or Kerrie town.¹⁰³ The Council would subsequently refer to these dwellings as Ridsdel. The residents and the missionary regarded the location as a legitimate extension of Brownlee Station. According to the Council, Ridsdel was a casual settlement situated on the commonage and falling under its direct control. In practice, the dividing line between Ridsdel and Brownlee was imaginary, as the boundaries actually merged. In fact, the casual observer might consider the two areas as forming one location.¹⁰⁴

The people of Ridsdel paid the Council a quarterly site rent according to the Native Locations Act, promulgated in 1873. This arrangement was maintained until Ridsdel was removed in 1938.¹⁰⁵ Two cesspits had been built for the residents in exchange for their rates, but no running water, sewerage or electricity were provided.

The location was named after Commissioner Ridsdel of the Salvation Army. In about 1876,¹⁰⁶ the organisation approached the Council for permission to establish a building, serving both as school and church at Nqhayi. The

¹⁰¹ CP Davids: personal interview, 24.03.2006.

¹⁰² WA Nelson: personal interview, 31.03.2006.

¹⁰³ *Cape Mercury*, 21.12.1895 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

¹⁰⁴ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16: Letter to Town Clerk from Edward Qalinge (Secretary, Brownlee Station Removal committee), 20/03/1929; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Investigation of a dispute between the Town Council of KWT and the inhabitants of Ridsdel location.

¹⁰⁵ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Letter from Town Clerk to Magistrate, 27.01.1926.

¹⁰⁶ This date was recalled by Councillor AS Weir who grew up in King William's Town. CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Memo by AS Weir.

Salvation Army also maintained buildings at Tsolo and Ginsberg. By 1897, Ensign Eccles of the Salvation Army induced the Ridsdel residents to build two-roomed houses. The Council heartily agreed with this decision and felt that it was a step in the right direction. Councillor Yates stated that: 'There could not be the slightest doubt that the building of square houses was a distinct step toward civilisation.'¹⁰⁷ The Council encouraged residents to build a settlement consisting of 'a better class of house.'

The Rev John Harper, resident missionary at Brownlee Station, protested against the involvement of the Salvation Army at Ridsdel. He accused the Council of partiality and saw its action as an intrusion into his sphere of work. He was of the opinion that the Council was obliged 'to treat all religious bodies with fairness and justice.'¹⁰⁸ Ignoring the sentiments expressed by Harper, the Council continued granting sites at Ridsdel, on the advice of the London Missionary Society, as well as that of the Salvation Army. By October 1897, the Borough Ranger even referred to the settlement as 'Ridsdel Salvation Location.' In subsequent years, the influence of the Salvation Army in Ridsdel waned. By the 1920s, the organisation's buildings were still present, but no representative resided on site. In spite of the involvement of the Salvation Army and the Borough Council, the residents and the local missionary never ceased to view Nqhayi as part of the Brownlee Mission sphere.¹⁰⁹

In 1912, the Borough Ranger and Forester reported that a 'mixed class of inhabitants' were residing at Ridsdel. The location consisted of about 60 dwellings, mostly wattle and daub structures, but some substantial wood and iron stands were also present. In the same year, 282 men, women and children were reported to be living in the location. The number of dwellings remained constant. Twelve years later, it consisted of 62 dwellings.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ The Burial Register of King William's Town recorded the death of John Plaatjes in 1899; *Cape Mercury*, 30.01.1897 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

¹⁰⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 29.05.1897 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

¹⁰⁹ *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 28.09.1898 p. 3 'Borough Council', CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Letter from Town Clerk to Magistrate, 27.01.1926; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Letter to Mark Wilson from John Harper, 17.05.1926.

¹¹⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 23.09.1912 p. 3 'Borough Ranger & Forester Annual Report'; *Cape Mercury*, 11.12.1912 p. 2 Editorial.

According to the interviewees, Ridsdel was regarded as a black location, most of the coloured residents preferring to live at Brownlee. A small number of coloured families did, however, live at Nqhayi. The following names were identified: Jimmy Lennard, Molly and Frank Brown, Annie Klaas, Mary Balt, Trompetter, Henry Elson, Morrison, Jasson, Hendricks, Hamann, Danster and Plaatjes.¹¹¹ Most of these families had relatives living at Brownlee Station. With the shortage of space becoming more acute at Brownlee after 1920, coloured families moved to Ridsdel.

The Council began to campaign for the removal of the location as early as 1906. According to the local authorities, their endeavours to remove Ridsdel were an attempt to improve sanitary conditions and to secure better control of Ridsdel's residents. By the 1930s, the Borough Council stated that Ridsdel was a menace to the public health of the residents, as well as the people of King William's Town. They felt validated by the rumours of illicit beer brewing and trading. The Council made it clear that, in its opinion, the occupation of Ridsdel sites had been granted subject to the pleasure of the local authorities. In 1933 the Acting Town Clerk reported that the Council received £30 in revenue from the residents annually. According to the Council, the revenue hardly warranted expenditure on additional sanitary conveniences.¹¹²

The residents considered themselves as the legitimate owners of the dwellings.¹¹³ It was felt that the abolishment of Ridsdel would result in the loss of vested privileges, such as home ownership, church and school. In a new location, residents would fall under municipal control, as well as under the stringent regulations of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act.

'A desirable place for respectable natives':¹¹⁴ early removal attempts

The Council wished to abolish Ridsdel and remove residents to the municipal location on the west bank of the Buffalo River. In 1906 and again in 1912 a

¹¹¹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Ridsdel. Application for Compensation of Removal of Dwellings; CP Davids and DJ Matthews: personal interview, 24.03.2006; M Botha: personal interview, 06.06.2006; Burial Register of King William's Town, 1895-1946.

¹¹² *Cape Mercury*, 23.01.1934 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

¹¹³ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Letter from Town Clerk to Robertson, Wiley and King, 04.02.1926.

¹¹⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 07.09.1911 p. 2 Editorial.

notice was served on each occupier to quit. These notices however, were not complied with and the Council took no further action. On 10 November 1925, the people of Nqhayi were again notified of the abolition of Ridsdel at 'an early date.' As in the case of Brownlee Station, the Council entertained false hopes that the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 would provide it with the legal authority to remove the residents of Ridsdel. The Council requested residents to inform the local authority if they desired to rent one of the new location tenements at Ginsberg, but no applications were received.¹¹⁵

The Chief Native Commissioner, on behalf of the Ridsdel residents, subsequently appointed the local Magistrate to serve as mediator between the residents and the Council. The Magistrate questioned the jurisdiction of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act over Nqhayi. According to him, Ridsdel, as an extension of Brownlee Station, had been in existence prior to the establishment of the Borough Council. A letter from Rev John Harper supported these views. Harper stated that Nqhayi had always been part of Brownlee Station and could therefore not be considered as a municipal location, separate from the missionary sphere. The local Magistrate accordingly advised the Council to extend considerate treatment to the residents of Ridsdel.¹¹⁶

The Council nonetheless prompted its solicitors, Messrs Robertson, Wiley and King, to expedite the issue. In August 1926, the Borough Solicitors advised that the Council should have a single hut in Ridsdel medically inspected. They suggested that the subsequent report of the Medical Officer of Health could then be used to apply for an eviction order from the Magistrate's Court. At best, this action could only lead to Council obtaining an eviction order for one dwelling. The Council wished to remove the entire location.¹¹⁷

On 14 December 1933, the Council served the residents of Ridsdel with another eviction notice effective from 31 March 1934. It was the intention of the

¹¹⁵ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Letter from Location Superintendent to Office of the Superintendent of Locations, 10.11.1925; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Minutes of Council in Committee, 01.02.1926.

¹¹⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Minutes of Council in Committee, 07.03.1927; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Letter to Wilson from John Harper, 17.05.1926.

¹¹⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Minutes of Council in Committee, 01.02.1926 & 16.08.1926; *Cape Mercury*, 08.04.1930 'Health and General Purposes Committee'.

local authorities to remove the residents without payment of compensation.¹¹⁸

According to the *Cape Mercury*:

The Borough Council has decided to close down Ridsdel Location... the people concerned are thus given ample opportunity of finding fresh quarters in more healthy and wholesome surroundings. The Council has absolute control of Ridsdel. Here there are none of the complications associated with the greater question of Brownlee Station, and the Council's right to take the action decided upon cannot be disputed.¹¹⁹

The Editor was of the opinion that the situation was created by the residents themselves: 'who apparently cannot, or will not, realise that vacating the area is for their own good.' That there were complications was appreciated, but it was pointed out that every proposition made by the Council had been strenuously opposed. Talk of ulterior motives on the part of the local authorities was also regretted, according to the newspaper. The *Mercury* stated that the Council's sole desire was 'to improve living conditions and to abolish this menace to public health.'¹²⁰

On 25 January 1934, Mr Herbert B Hutton, a local lawyer, wrote to the *Mercury's* editor. He stated that the eviction notices, first published on 24 January 1934 and due to expire on 31 March, were impossible to adhere to. He argued that the Council's claim, that a menace to public health existed at Ridsdel, indicated that municipal authorities were guilty of dereliction of duty. The Council had claimed that it had absolute control of Ridsdel and should therefore keep it clean. In return for inferior sanitation services the Council demanded absolute social control. Supporting the sentiments addressed by Hutton, Mr Rose-Innes also voiced his concerns in the *Cape Mercury*. He described the proposed removal without compensation as unjust. The Council subsequently extended notice of eviction to June 1934 and resolved that special rental concessions would be offered to residents at Ginsberg location.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16: Letter from Public Health committee to local Public Health Dept, 12.12.1929; CA 3/KWT vol. 1/1/1/23 Council Meeting 14.04.1930 Ridsdel location; *Cape Mercury*, 08.04.1930 Minutes of Meeting of Health and General Purposes committee; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Minutes of Meeting of Health and General Purposes committee, 14.12.1933.

¹¹⁹ *Cape Mercury*, 24.01.1934 p. 2 Editorial; *Cape Mercury*, 23.01.1934 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

¹²⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 24.01.1934 p. 2 Editorial.

¹²¹ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 79; *Cape Mercury*, 14.02.1934 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

On 13 February 1934, the residents of Ridsdel petitioned the Council. They objected to eviction without compensation and pointed out that the Council had not offered a site for removal. The Chief Native Commissioner was subsequently requested to influence the Council to adopt a more tolerant attitude towards the residents.

On 19 February, a deputation of Nqhayi representatives was interviewed at a special Council meeting. The residents wanted to relocate to a site where they could build their own houses. They also requested compensation for their Ridsdel homes, the school and church. Attempting to mediate between the residents and the local authorities, the King William's Town European-Bantu Joint Council was eager to find an amicable solution to the problem at hand. As spokesman, the Rev Cannon Hanley of the local Anglican Church stated that the Council's choice of removal to the West Bank location was problematic. The residents of Ridsdel objected to the proximity of the sewage farm. The Council was not, however, planning to divert from the West Bank scheme. It would, according to the Council, be too expensive to sewer Ridsdel, so the best alternative would be the establishment of a new location.

In March 1934, Council officials inspected the proposed removal site at Ginsberg. The Borough Engineer commended the locale for its good sloping ground and the close proximity of existing services for water, electricity and sewerage. The Engineer subsequently drew up a new housing scheme, consisting of 40 dwellings valued at £13 500. The local authorities resolved to apply to the Housing Board for the necessary sub-economic loan.¹²²

Discussions on the new housing scheme found its way into the pages of the *Mercury*. 'Zanozo', referring to the location as 'the second black hole of Calcutta', questioned the missionary society for not implementing operational measures that would have ensured a clean bill of health and the maintenance of law and order at Ridsdel.¹²³

¹²² *Cape Mercury*, 19.02.1934 p. 4 'Special Council Meeting'; *Cape Mercury*, 06.03.1934 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'; CA 3/KWT vol. 1/1/1/24: Minutes of Special Meeting of Council, 22.03.1934.

¹²³ *Cape Mercury*, 10.03.1934 p. 1 'King' Native Affairs by 'Zanozo'.

Rose-Innes pointed out in his letter to the local newspaper, that the breaking up of a home was no light matter. 'However humble the home might be – it is the home of the occupier... they will cling to their holdings with a passionate devotion.' As always, Rose-Innes was sympathetic to the plight of the people of Ridsdel, and believed that it was possible to devise a scheme that would commend itself to the residents and was also within their means.¹²⁴

'The second black hole of Calcutta' and The Native Affairs Commission

By direction of the Minister for Native Affairs, a Commission was appointed in June 1934, to investigate the dispute between the Town Council and the inhabitants of Ridsdel location. The Native Affairs Commission consisted of two members, Dr AW Roberts and Senator P le Roux van Niekerk. On 20 and 21 June 1934 the commissioners held a meeting in King William's Town with members of the Borough Council and representatives of Ridsdel.¹²⁵ The purpose of the meeting was two-fold: to investigate and issue a report on certain complaints originating from the residents concerning the eviction notice served by Council; and to decide on the approval of a loan requested by the Council for the resettlement at Ginsberg location. The representatives of the Commission heard detailed evidence of both the parties concerned and thereafter inspected *in loco* the proposed extensions of Ginsberg and also the existing sites at Ridsdel.

The inhabitants of Ridsdel regarded themselves not as tenants of the Council, but as landowners, in view of the fact that they had been living at Ridsdel for many years. The residents maintained that the Council was able to improve the existing location by providing additional sanitary conveniences. It was stated that the residents would sooner seek a site outside the boundaries of the town than remove to Ginsberg. As an alternative, the desire to build their own houses, under the supervision of the Council, was expressed. Residents felt that they could not afford the suggested municipal rentals. If they built their own dwellings, the rental payable to the Council, would be reduced. For this

¹²⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 21.05.1934 p. 3 'Correspondence'.

¹²⁵ Quotation in heading: *Cape Mercury*, 10.03.1934 p. 1 'King' Native Affairs by 'Zanozo'; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Investigation of a dispute between Council and the inhabitants of Ridsdel location.

purpose, the residents suggested that the Council could, for example, provide ground higher up from Ridsdel on the Balassi side.¹²⁶

The Council found the residents' desire to build their own houses impracticable and undesirable. It was stated that residents could not build cheaper than the Council. If residents were complaining about rentals, they could ill afford building their own homes. The real reason for their objections to removal was the restriction of their freedom, which, according to the Council, produced the menace in the first place. The Council did not foresee the payment of compensation.¹²⁷

The Commission stated that the Council was acting correctly in wanting to remove Ridsdel. They agreed with the Council's plans to settle all residents under its control at the municipal location. Of the 60 houses at Ridsdel, possibly one quarter was properly built; the remainder could possibly be improved. With more supervision and the institution of a pail system, the location might compare favourably with other locations in the Union.¹²⁸

The Commission was perplexed by the fact that the Council never consulted residents and that compensation had never been discussed. Commissioner Van Niekerk felt that the Council needed to convince the Native Affairs Department (NAD) that it had done everything possible to meet the needs of the people concerned.¹²⁹ The 1934 Native Affairs Commission recommended that the Council allow inhabitants a period of one year, wherein applications would be received for new sites in the proposed extension of Ginsberg. After the period had expired, the Council could order the remainder of the residents to leave Nqhayi without further notice or remuneration. Compensation, according to the Commission, was to be awarded by a specially appointed committee, consisting of representatives from the Council, NAD and residents.

¹²⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Investigation of a dispute between Council and the inhabitants of Ridsdel location.

¹²⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Minutes of a Special Council Meeting, 29.06.1934.

¹²⁸ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 80; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Investigation of a dispute between Council and the inhabitants of Ridsdel location.

¹²⁹ *Cape Mercury*, 21.06.1934 p. 4 'Ridsdel Location Inquiry'.

The residents were also to be given a choice between cash or a reduction in future rentals. The Commission provisionally recommended that the £13 500 loan be approved by the NAD, on condition that compensation be paid. The amount necessary for compensation could be included in the Council's loan.¹³⁰

On 25 June 1934, a Round Table Conference was held, consisting of the Council, the residents, as well as representatives of the European-Bantu Joint Council. Residents, in the form of a memorandum, stated that as freemen, members of the church and landowners, they did not want to associate with the tenants of Ginsberg. They suggested two alternative sites and demanded compensation for their houses, as well as the school and church buildings. They desired to build their own homes at a new site or have a pail sewerage system provided at Ridsdel by the municipality.¹³¹

The Council would not yield to the residents' proposals and felt that all forms of negotiation had been exhausted. It resolved that no compensation would be paid to residents unless they were to remove to the site selected by the Council at Ginsberg. The local authority decided that the only course open to them was to proceed with removal in terms of the 1919 Public Health Act or, alternatively, the 1934 Slums Act.¹³²

Home Ownership vs. Tenancy: Preparations made for eviction

The Department of Public Health was supportive of the Council's attempts to remove Ridsdel. It was, however, set against the bucket system and was only prepared to support relocation to the new site served by water-borne sewerage. In a memorandum to the Native Affairs Department, the Secretary of Public Health urged NAD to co-operate with the Council by approving their loan.

At a Council meeting held on 30 July 1934, it was resolved to extend the eviction notice to 30 June 1935. One of the remaining obstacles was the source

¹³⁰ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Investigation of a dispute between Council and the inhabitants of Ridsdel location.

¹³¹ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 81; *Cape Mercury*, 26.06.1934 p. 2 Location Problem & p. 4 Ridsdel Location Problem.

¹³² HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation...*, p. 82.

of funding to be utilised in the payment of compensation. Using loan funds under the Housing Act (no. 35 of 1920) for the payment of compensation required legal sanction.¹³³ By November 1934, with their housing loan approved by Government, the Council accepted a tender for the erection of 130 houses at Ginsberg, in order to accommodate the Ridsdel residents.¹³⁴

In a letter dated 3 June 1935, Messrs Tate, Chubb & Dickson, Ridsdel residents' legal representatives, approached the Council on the matter of compensation. They requested that the Council extend the eviction notice to 31 December 1935. The lawyers also recommended that 75% of compensation be paid immediately and the balance after demolition of the buildings. The Council agreed to extend the deadline and, after some negotiation, accepted the new suggestion for payment of compensation.¹³⁵

By September 1935, the Town Clerk was able to report that out of a total of 60 dwellings at Ridsdel, 55 householders had submitted their valuations for the purpose of compensation. The Town Clerk and Borough Engineer were then instructed to evaluate each individual claim. As in the case of Brownlee Station, the majority of the claims were much in excess of the municipal valuations. The Borough Engineer stated that the intrinsic value of most of the houses, built of wattle and daub or scrap iron was miniscule. Each rondavel was valued at £10 with each additional room valued in comparison to the basic rondavel. The Council stated that it was prepared to offer the valuations arrived at by the Borough Engineer, as compensation and the offer would only be available until 31 December 1935.¹³⁶

Opposition to removal

On 18 December 1935, four residents questioned the amount of compensation offered by the Council, stating that, in their opinion, it was inadequate. They

¹³³ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Minutes of Special Council Meeting, 30.07.1934.

¹³⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 13.11.1934 p. 2 Editorial 'Coloured Housing Scheme'.

¹³⁵ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Letter from Town Clerk to Tate, Chubb & Dickson, 12.06.1935; *Cape Mercury*, 15.06.1935 p. 4 'Ridsdel location'.

¹³⁶ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 85; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Minutes of Finance and Law committee, 07.11.1935.

pointed to the disparity between the valuations of the Borough Engineer and those of the residents. The said residents requested arbitration, as well as an extension of two months, in order to allow for negotiations. The Council felt that its valuation was most liberal and that arbitration might result in less compensation paid to the residents.¹³⁷

The Nqhayi residents were not satisfied with this course of action. A local resident, Mr Jerry Tema, stated that the Council had violated the recommendations of the 1934 Native Affairs Commission. Tema and a deputation from Ridsdel subsequently had an interview with the Chief Native Commissioner and the Under Secretary of Native Affairs in Pretoria respectively. The residents stated that the Council was unwilling to provide them with an opportunity to build and own their houses. They requested land situated outside the municipal boundaries, but their request was not acceded to. The Under Secretary stated that, in his opinion, Council had acted fairly towards the aggrieved residents.¹³⁸

By January 1936, most of the residents had demolished their homes, but 22 Xhosa owners refused to demolish and requested arbitration. The residents were notified that unless they demolished their buildings at Ridsdel, the offer of compensation would be withdrawn and they would be sued for eviction and damages. The residents refused to vacate Ridsdel and in January 1936, the Council applied for the removal of one of the defaulters, Jerry Tema.

During the court proceedings, the Council pointed out that through Tema's refusal to remove from Ridsdel, the offer of compensation had lapsed. It was stated that Nqhayi was the property of the Borough Council and Tema had acknowledged the Council's ownership of Ridsdel through the payment of rent. Judgment was subsequently given in favour of the plaintiff with costs. The Messenger of the Court was ordered to demolish the buildings at Ridsdel.

¹³⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9: Minutes of Meeting of Finance and Law Committee 18.12.1935; *Cape Mercury*, 14.01.1936 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

¹³⁸ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 86, 87; *Cape Mercury*, 10.02.1936 p. 2 'Ridsdel Deputation to Pretoria'.

Through their actions, the dissenting occupiers sacrificed their compensation and had to bear the costs of legal representation. Tema personally lost £44 in compensation.¹³⁹ On 10 March 1938, it was reported that all buildings at Ridsdel had been demolished. Two ex-residents of Brownlee Station dispute this fact. According to them, the last houses at Ridsdel were not demolished, but were burnt down by the Municipality.¹⁴⁰

In affecting the removal of Ridsdel location, one new obstacle confronted the Borough Council. By the end of 1939, the Secretary for Native Affairs informed the Council that as Ridsdel was regarded as commonage, the 1934 Slums Act could not be applied. The Department directed the Council to repay the loan from their General Account, as the local white ratepayers benefited from the removal of Ridsdel. The Council was of the opinion that it proceeded as owners of the land and could rightfully serve notices to quit upon the occupiers of the dwellings. The Department of Native Affairs' direction was reluctantly acceded to. The total cost, including legal expenditure, amounted to £1 080.¹⁴¹

In all the Council's attempts to remove the residents of Ridsdel, the voices of the coloured minority had been silent. Only two coloured residents were listed as owners of Ridsdel in 1938 when compensation was received, namely Annie Klaas and Henry Ellson. Both families were removed to Ginsberg where they were obliged to rent municipal tenements. Exchanging private home ownership for subsequent municipal housing became a recurring event within the municipal boundaries of King William's Town in the pre-apartheid era. The Council increasingly rationalised segregation through so-called sanitation, civilisation and ultimately, relocation. In the process, its control of the built environment, and the coloured residents housed within these concrete constraints, was entrenched.

¹³⁹ *Cape Mercury*, 13.01.1937 p. 2; *Cape Mercury*, 10.02.1937 p. 4; *Cape Mercury*, 16.06.1937 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

¹⁴⁰ SM Matthews & CP Davids: personal interview, 23.04.2006

¹⁴¹ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 89; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/148 ref. J4/39: Letter from Town Clerk to Town Clerk EL, 01.04.39.

Bidhli: 'a small place, tenanted chiefly by old people'

King William's Town's first Resident Magistrate, Richard Taylor,¹⁴² stated that by 1860 the town's first locations were situated at Tsolo and Bidhli. According to Taylor the latter fell under the headman, James Bidhli, who supervised a group of 135 men, women and children. It was also recorded that the settlement included 19 firearms, 37 huts, 43 goats, five horses, three wagons and five ploughs. The residents worked in the emerging town.¹⁴³

The settlement of Bidhli (also known as Beasley or kwaBidhli) had been established under the military government, but the dwellings were taken over by the Borough Council in 1861. According to Webb,¹⁴⁴ by 1898 Bidhli consisted of municipal land and the Council granted sites for the building of huts. Prospective residents applied for a site from the local authorities and for permission to build a hut. In 1908, the residents paid the Council 2/6d per quarter for a site, the huts being erected by the residents at their own expense. Most of their houses were constructed of wattle and daub under thatched roofs. The population of Bidhli consisted of both Xhosa and coloured residents.¹⁴⁵

In the early part of 1906, the Council gave notice to the occupiers of hut sites at Ridsdel, Tsolo, Bidhli and Brownlee Station (see 1906 petition). It was the Council's desire to relocate the residents to the municipal location at Ginsberg. The Bidhli residents did not heed the 1906 notice, but the Council was determined that they vacate the premises. The Council's objective was to ensure greater control over the residents and to improve sanitary conveniences. The Borough Council subsequently curtailed the transfer of dwellings at Bidhli in the case of death or removal from the town. In addition, no new sites were let at Bidhli. The dwellings thus vacated became Council

¹⁴² He was Resident Magistrate from 1852 to 1869. WD Hammond-Tooke, *The Tribes of the King William's Town District*, Department of Native Affairs, Pretoria, 1958, p. 27

¹⁴³ Burton, *AW King William's Town in the British Kaffraria*, vol. 1, (Unpublished note book, Cory Library), 1967, p. 55. Webb incorrectly dates the origins of Bidhli to 1895. The early history of Bidhli does, however, require further research.

¹⁴⁴ DA Webb, *King William's Town during the South African War, 1899-1902. An urban social, economic and cultural history*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1993.

¹⁴⁵ CA 3/KWT vol. 41/1/143 ref. J3: Letter from Town Clerk to Resident Magistrate, 01.07.1908; HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 59.

property. In this way, the local authorities gradually acquired dwellings at Bidhli and the residents were removed to Ginsberg. By 1908, the Borough Ranger reported that Bidhli consisted of 94 residents living in 36 occupied huts.¹⁴⁶

By 1910, the Council was able to report that: 'Bidhli is a small place, tenanted chiefly by old people who are generally dying out.'¹⁴⁷ It was stated that there were no more than 29 or 30 residents at Bidhli and that no supervision was required. In July 1912, it was resolved that the residents of Bidhli be given six months to quit the location.¹⁴⁸

The Council received a petition, on behalf of the residents of Bidhli, on 10 October 1914. The author, Mr JT Jabavu, pointed out that residents were anxious about the Council's desire to abolish Bidhli location. According to Jabavu, tenements at Bidhli consisted of two or three acres utilised for garden purposes. It was stated that Bidhli was a well-behaved, respectable community and had given the Council no trouble. Most of the residents were third generation tenants who had worshipped in the small Wesleyan Church since the 1840s. The residents were now 'hurried and harassed to leave town.' Jabavu stated that he would like to discuss the matter with the Council with a view of arriving at some amicable solution. According to Jabavu the small allotments should be retained at Bidhli. He suggested that, rather than abolish the settlement, the Council might consider extending and developing Bidhli in what might become 'a model for the municipal corporations.'¹⁴⁹ The Council decided that the matter stand in terms of its previous resolution. It felt that 'full justice was being done' and that the residents who had certain vested rights at Bidhli were permitted to retain possession of their huts.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 41/1/143 ref. J3: Letter from Town Clerk to Resident Magistrate, 01.07.1908; *Cape Mercury*, 18.08.1908, p. 3 'Borough Council'.

¹⁴⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/2: Brownlee Location Commission, 1910, p. 93. Also quoted in heading.

¹⁴⁸ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/149 ref. J5/2: Letter from Town Clerk to Borough Ranger, 24.07.1912; *Cape Mercury*, 09.07.1912 p. 4 'Borough Council'; *Cape Mercury*, 17.09.1912 p. 4 'Borough Council'; *Cape Mercury*, 23.09.1912 p. 3 'Borough Ranger and Forester Annual Report'.

¹⁴⁹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/149 ref. J5/6: Petition on behalf of residents of Bidhli by JT Jabavu, 09.10.1914.

¹⁵⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 15.10.1914 'Borough Council', *Cape Mercury*, 26.10.1914 'Borough Council'.

By December 1914, only nine sites were still occupied at Bidhli. Zituta stated that Bidhli was finally closed in 1916.¹⁵¹ The remaining residents were removed to the town's municipal locations. Under the guise of calls for greater supervision and improved sanitation, the Council had insisted that home ownership was undesirable.

While occupants were dwindling, the Council transformed the land into the Bidhli Experimental Farm. In the Council minutes of September 1912, the Borough Engineer authorised the planting of grains on the municipal farm for the utilisation of the Council stock. The remaining dwellings were utilised as living quarters for council workers employed on the farm as well as at the sewage dams. The sewage works were situated just opposite the farm across the Buffalo River, adjacent to present-day Schornville.¹⁵²

Successive generations of coloured families lived on the farm including the Russels, Smiles', Roois, Bramwells, Fouries, Swanepoels, Flanagans and Fritz's.¹⁵³ Both the Fourie and Swanepoel families were removed from Brownlee Station before settling at Bidhli.

Two white Council officials, a manager and an overseer, also lived on the farm.¹⁵⁴ Strict supervision included daily house inspections, both interior and exterior. Even the pit latrines were checked for cleanliness! The farm produced lucerne, corn and vegetables such as pumpkins, tomatoes and cabbages. Specially established plantations supplied the Council with wood. Produce was presumably sold in order to supplement the farm's income. The adjacent land was let to dairy farmers for cattle grazing. No running water, sewage or electricity was provided for Council employees, but in subsequent years bore hole water was supplied.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 60.

¹⁵² CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/161 ref. L3/5: Council Minutes, 18.09.1912.

¹⁵³ C Rooi, J Smiles: personal interviews, 24.04.2006.

¹⁵⁴ These officials were identified as a Mr Scott and Mr Lieberum, one of whom was subsequently replaced by a Mr Boucher.

¹⁵⁵ C Rooi: personal interview, 24.04.2006. The ground, according to Mrs Rooi, was contaminated probably through water pollution originating from King Tanning.

In contrast to Brownlee and Ridsdel locations, the vacated land at Bidhli was subsequently utilised for Council purposes. This was probably due to the close proximity of the sewerage farm, as well as available water from the Buffalo River for irrigation purposes. The loss of home ownership in exchange for municipal control was, however, again evident.

Old Town: 'That was our territory'

Old Town, aptly named because it formed the historic core of the town, dates back to 1847 when the first streets were laid out in King William's Town. In December of that year, the Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Harry Smith, formally created the new colony of British Kaffraria with King William's Town as capital. Smith ordered the establishment of a cantonment, known as the Military Reserve, as well as the laying out of a civilian section. The area subsequently became known as Old Town and stretched from the boundary of the Military Reserve to Fleet Ditch.¹⁵⁶

The lifeblood of Old Town, Smith Street, was also the town's first main road. The road to Grahamstown entered King William's Town via a drift leading to Smith Street, southwest of town. According to an ex-resident, Mrs Joyce Trerise (nee Flanagan): 'Smith Street was Old Town proper.'¹⁵⁷ If you lived in Smith, Berkeley, McKinnon, Mary, Cross, Charles, Bank or Alfred Streets you were an Old Town resident.¹⁵⁸

The newly-established village grew rapidly and within a few years building sites within Old Town, outstripped the supply. As the town developed, most of the area's original white residents moved to the more affluent suburbs developing elsewhere. The additional accommodation would, by the beginning of the twentieth century, be identified by some landowners as an area for potential low-income residential use. It was obvious that, even then, the coloured and Xhosa residents of King William's Town suffered from a shortage of formal

¹⁵⁶ Fleet Ditch was then referred to as the Gezana Stream. DA Webb From Garrison Town to Dormitory Town – Aspects of the History of King William's Town, (Unpublished document, Amathole Museum, 1989) p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ J Trerise: personal interview, 03.05.2006.

¹⁵⁸ EE Matroos & K Flanagan: personal interview, 08.05.2006.

housing, and a number of buildings were let out as short-term living quarters. Unfortunately, the situation was inherently exploitative, and in a relatively short time, some structures had become notorious slums. Most of the properties in Old Town belonged to white Kingites of German, English and Jewish descent. Two major property owners of German descent were traced in the title deeds, namely Ms Wilhelmine Schroeder and the Born family. Many of the Jewish-owned properties were business premises in Smith Street, but they also owned houses in Berkeley Street.¹⁵⁹

A few Xhosa, Indian and coloured property owners were also present in Old Town. Messrs W.D. Soga,¹⁶⁰ D. Sipeta, A.M. Jabavu,¹⁶¹ Paul Xiniwe¹⁶² and family, as well as Mr Mesach Pellem¹⁶³ owned properties in Old Town. Messrs Suleiman Cassim Peer and family, Narsai Dayal, B. Pharboo and Gordham Morar ran their businesses and owned several properties in Old Town. The Peers let rooms to coloured families in Smith Street. Some Chinese property owners were also traced in the 1920s and 1940s namely, Messrs Yang Mason, Ashtok Fong, Eddie Kingston and Charlie Chan.¹⁶⁴

Five coloured homeowners were identified in Old Town in the period under discussion, namely Messrs Solomon Jackson, William Richard Trerise and the Nicholls family, David Jagers, Ibraim Mohammed and Herbert Wilson. Old Town, constituted a truly multi-racial character but most of its residents were coloured tenants.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ KWT Deeds Office: Erven numbers 524, 528-530, 562, 564 and 573; 538-541 and 565 & 566-69, 600, 601, 608, 775, 776, 790, 904 and 924.

¹⁶⁰ William Dilizintaba, son of Zaze Soga, lived in Smith Street from 1898 to 1909. He owned 41 Smith Street from 1898 to 1902. The Rev Tiyo Soga was his paternal uncle. As an inhabitant of Brownlee Station he was a member of the Native Vigilance Association in 1922.

¹⁶¹ AM Jabavu, son of JT Jabavu, was listed as a registered voter living at 15 MacKinnon Street, Old Town in 1927. He succeeded his father as editor of *Imvo Zabantsundu*.

¹⁶² Xiniwe (1857 – 1902) was a pioneer businessman as well as one of small group of black modernisers located in King William's Town. He was the proprietor of the Temperance Hotel on Market Square.

¹⁶³ Mesach Xala Pelem (1859-1936) worked on the Kimberley Diamond Mines for 10 years as a clerk and then as a registered diamond digger before returning to the Eastern Cape where he became a labour agent and established a successful business in KWT, making him one of the wealthiest Xhosa in the province. He was involved in local politics, serving as secretary of the Native Vigilance Association and led a new organization the Bantu Union trying to fill a void in regional politics. In Old Town he established the well-known Pellem's Boarding House in 1919.

¹⁶⁴ KWT Deeds Office: Erven numbers 578-589, 591, 596, 597, 599, 600, 776, 782, 784, 788, 789, 923 and 924; M. Durant: personal interview, 17.05.2006.

¹⁶⁵ KWT Deeds Office: Solomon Jackson (576, 577), William Richard Trerise and the Nicholls family (579), David Jagers (578), Ibraim Mohammed (592, 603, 925, 927) and Herbert Wilson (595).

Old Town combined residential and commercial functions with a measure of success. It offered small merchants the opportunity of living in apartments located above their business premises. Most of the businesses belonged, or were run by Jewish and Indian families, such as King Clothing Company (Shapiro) and the Welcome Café (Cassim) serving as examples. Coloured businessman trading in Old Town included Stoffel Botha, who was a saddlemaker in Bank Street. Andrew Weimers and Mr Ludick were Old Town's tailors. The Mohammed family were the only coloured residents who also traded from their own property.¹⁶⁶

A feature of Old Town around the turn of the century was the presence of a large number of boarding houses. These premises were generally white-owned and were let to both coloured and Xhosa tenants.¹⁶⁷ A well-known boarding house and one of Old Town's landmarks, was Pellem's Boarding House, situated at 8 and 10 Smith Street. Upon Mrs Lena Pellem's death in 1944, it was bought by Gordham Morar and managed by Mrs Rayner in the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1940s, Pellem's was the only existing boarding house in Old Town. Mrs Rayner's son, Mr William Nelson, recalls that:

Even in those days they were discussing ANC issues. My mother was very strict. She would say: 'You people want something to eat?' And then she would tip them off that the CID was outside. They wanted to close the place down so many times. Over Apartheid, that's all. If someone was beaten in the lane [behind Pellem's] they would want to close it down.¹⁶⁸

Almost none of the houses in Old Town were provided with electricity. Most of the residents remember using wood stoves and oil lamps. Ms CP Alexander recalls that in the 1940s their stove was equipped with a small tap providing hot water for bathing. They used a high-level cistern with a chain, situated in an out-house in the yard. Initially, no part of Old Town was supplied with water-borne sewerage. An ex-resident growing up in McKinnon Street recalls that

¹⁶⁶ F Frescura King William's Town Conservation Impact Study, Archetype Press & the Environmental Development Unit, Port Elizabeth, 1994, (Unpublished document, Amathole Museum), p. 143; R Malgas: personal interview, 24.03.2006.

¹⁶⁷ Zituta refers to boarding houses run by Mrs Magill (27 & 28 Berkeley Street), Mrs Fraser (24 Berkeley Street), Mrs Sandow (6 MacKinnon Street) and Mr H. Roberts (21 Smith Street). In addition, the Ladies' Benevolent Society offered rented accommodation at 27 Smith Street. HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 64.

¹⁶⁸ WA Nelson: personal interview, 31.03.2006. The narrator uses the term 'apartheid' but is referring to the pre-1948 period.

they still utilised the bucket system situated in an outhouse in the garden. This was collected by donkey cart once a week. When the family moved to Berkeley Street in the 1940s they enjoyed the privilege of water-borne sewerage for the first time.¹⁶⁹

The first half of the 20th century witnessed increasing complaints about overcrowding and housing perceived as 'unfit for human habitation' in Old Town. The shortage of accommodation did not assist matters. More than one family often shared accommodation. A property would often include several outbuildings where additional rooms were let. Some of the white residents began to complain about insanitary conditions prevalent in Old Town.

In April 1922, the Council received a letter from a Mr Davies in Bank Street, Old Town. Referring to his Xhosa neighbours, he complained that the owner of the property and employer of the residents was keeping insanitary premises. Council reprimanded the owner who was prepared to rectify the situation. At the same meeting, insanitary premises in Smith Street, where dwellings were used for the purposes of 'rack-renting', were discussed.¹⁷⁰ As with Old Town's Xhosa residents, coloured inhabitants were equated with inferior housing conditions, overcrowding and sanitation.

The Council's Health report for 1925-1926 discussed the housing issues faced by the local authorities. The report described Smith Street and its environs as 'slum areas that were still the happy hunting ground of Natives and Coloured people.' It was hoped that the Municipality, with the further powers vested in it under the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, would take action, but practically nothing was done to eliminate the vexing problem. The Sanitary Inspector stated that overcrowding and 'unauthorized Natives residing in town still exist as in former years.' The report further stated that many of the slum buildings had lately been improved, but there were many which had to be condemned. It was stated that

¹⁶⁹ CP Alexander and M Durant: personal interviews, 08.05.2006 and 17.05.2006.

¹⁷⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 12.04.1922 p. 1 'Town Council'.

the scarcity of housing made it imperative that such dwellings be utilised under the existing conditions.¹⁷¹

The problem of housing was aggravated by properties that were not well maintained by the slumlords. Although most ex-residents recalled that the houses were well built and neat in appearance, they generally acknowledged that some of the houses were overcrowded and neglected. Housing conditions in Old Town therefore varied enormously. It is interesting to note that, generally speaking, those ex-residents who are currently more affluent, are more willing today to discuss overcrowded conditions present in Old Town. Overcrowded conditions did exist in certain areas of Old Town, like Maloney's Yard in Smith Street or Kabelsky's Yard in Berkeley Street,¹⁷² but interspersed were well-maintained dwelling houses. The Town Council seemed to be fixated on the few insanitary residences.¹⁷³

The problem was that so many of the houses were rented properties. With a large percentage of tenants present in a small area, it was only natural that some of the houses would not be well maintained by their owners. The so-called slumlords were only interested in the income they could obtain from their premises and were unwilling to spend money on the upkeep of the houses. Many residents conducted some of the maintenance work on their homes themselves. Two sisters, Mrs EE Matroos and Ms K Flanagan recalled that the Flanagan family rented rooms from Mrs Maloney in Smith Street. Their father, John Flanagan, cleaned the property and serving as a 'Jack of all trades,' assisted Mrs Maloney with carpentry and plumbing on her premises. The sisters were expected to clean Mrs Maloney's house. Five families lived in what was called 'Maloney's Yard'. Tenants would often complain about the

¹⁷¹ Buffalo City Municipality Archives. Health Report, 1925-1926 King William's Town Urban Area by RN Pringle (MOH).

¹⁷² According to Susan Parnell, 'Race, Power and Urban Control: Johannesburg's Inner City Slum-yards, 1910-1923,' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol 29, nr 3, September 2003, p. 626, large slum yards in Johannesburg, known for its overcrowded and insanitary conditions, were often named after its proprietor.

¹⁷³ M Durandt: personal interview, 17.05.2006.

appearance of their homes, but rentals charged were generally low, due to the small incomes generated by the residents.¹⁷⁴

By February 1930, the Municipality's Health Department was serving notices on owners of Old Town properties and slight improvements were recorded. According to the *Mercury*, despite these improvements, conditions in some of the buildings in Old Town were appalling: 'Some are filthy, overcrowded, a menace to public health and inhabited by mixed races.' Urging the Council to utilise its powers in this regard, the *Mercury* was of the opinion that the only remedy in most cases was to demolish the slum dwellings. In response, Council notified the owners of insanitary properties in Smith and Berkeley Street to rectify the situation.¹⁷⁵

In sharp contrast to the report of the health officials was the experience of a white ex-resident, Mrs M Durant.¹⁷⁶ When discussing the supposed unhygienic conditions of Old Town, she recalled that while she was growing up in Old Town in 1941, her mother would send her to sell goods to their coloured neighbours on a Friday night. She remembered the house interiors as being immaculately clean.

Berkeley Street was recalled by more than one resident as consisting of larger houses. Ms CP Alexander described their home, 12 Berkeley Street, as a three-bedroom house with a lounge, kitchen, indoor bathroom and a large garden. As with most of the houses in Old Town, the toilet was situated in the yard.¹⁷⁷ This hardly constituted an overcrowded environment.

By the 1930s the effects of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act was being felt and most of Old Town's Xhosa residents were removed. In September 1932 for example, the Sanitary Inspector reported that fifteen notices had been served

¹⁷⁴ Mrs Trerise recalled that her father earned 3 pounds 7/6 per month in the 1940s. Mr Frederick Flanagan worked as a driver for Baker, King & Co. Their house in MacKinnon Street consisted of two-bedrooms which they shared with Mr Thys and Netta Swartz. J Trerise, EE Matroos, K Flanagan, B Osteridge: personal interviews, 03.05.2006, 08.05.2006 and 12.04.2006.

¹⁷⁵ *Cape Mercury*, 14.02.1930 p. 2 'Editorial'; *Cape Mercury*, 05.03.1930 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

¹⁷⁶ M Durant (nee Campbell): personal interview, 17.05.2006.

¹⁷⁷ CP Alexander: personal interview, 08.05.2006.

under the Natives (Urban Areas) Act requiring the Xhosa living in Old Town to take up residence in the location. The majority removed to Brownlee Station.¹⁷⁸

Old Town can therefore be defined by two different stages. In the pre-1930s the area was multi-racial in character, consisting of white and coloured working-class tenants, with a sprinkling of middle-class Xhosa homeowners. With the implementation of the Native (Urban Areas) Act the Xhosa were removed from Old Town. Post-1930 the area was increasingly perceived by the interviewees, all born after 1920, as a 'coloured' area. One ex-resident, Mrs CP Alexander, who was too young to experience the older multi-racial character of Old Town recalls: 'Daai was onse gebied, waar die bruin mense gewoon het. (That was our area, where the coloured people lived).'¹⁷⁹

Pressurised by Old Town's white slumlords, the Town Council was unwilling to apply sufficient pressure on the owners in order to improve sanitary conditions and to limit the number of occupants in each dwelling. The slumlords were only interested in maximum profit without adhering to sanitary regulations. The situation was aggravated by a lack of available housing, coupled with the meagre income generated by coloured families in general. Under direction from the Town Council, the local authorities could have utilised the large percentage of coloured artisans living in the area to improve housing conditions in Old Town.¹⁸⁰ The choice of accommodation was of course very limited. If a family desired more spacious accommodation where would they remove to? Alternative accommodation was simply not available.

New Town

According to the King William's Town Burial Register,¹⁸¹ several families resided in New Town. The following addresses are listed: Thomas, Henry, Louisa, Wodehouse, Alice and Grey Streets as well as Cambridge Road.

¹⁷⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 06.09.1932 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

¹⁷⁹ CP Alexander: personal interview, 08.05.2006. Also quoted in heading.

¹⁸⁰ WA Nelson: personal interview, 31.03.2006.

¹⁸¹ The biographical database containing the entries of the King William's Town Burial Register from 1895 to 1946 were utilized. The database is housed in the History Section of the Amathole Museum, King William's Town.

As in the case of Old Town, New Town's history is characterised by increasing complaints about coloured residents living in town. In March 1912, for example, an unnamed property owner wrote to the Town Council complaining about families residing at Louisa Street. In May of the same year, a *Mercury* editorial reported that 'certain parts of the town are simply honeycombed with coloured residents, living in conditions dangerous to themselves and a menace to the health of the white community'. The *Mercury* felt that it should be Council's main aim 'to place natives, coloured people and Asiatics in their own locations, where they may live under more desirable conditions.'¹⁸² Housing for coloured people was in short supply. Financial means or good relations with the whites were paramount in obtaining housing in the town centre. Many of the houses were not in a pristine condition, leading to further complaints about coloured housing. Segregated housing was demanded by the white ratepayers and the local press under the guise of sanitation, overcrowding and immoral living conditions. These conditions were, ironically, created by the white slumlords unwilling to rectify the situation. In the process, the lack of decent housing strengthened racial stereotyping and led to demands for segregated housing.

Three coloured property owners were to be found in New Town during the period under discussion. Mr Benjamin Plaatjies bought property in Alice Street with his Brownlee Station compensation money in February 1940. Isdan Izally bought two properties in August 1898 in New Town. Mr Izally's properties were bequeathed to his children upon his death in September 1904. One of the properties was subsequently sold to Mr Khan Mohamed in April 1917.¹⁸³ Apart from the few property owners listed above, the coloured residents of New Town largely consisted of tenants. It is difficult to determine whether the remaining residents were renting houses or rooms in New Town. It is, however, clear that New Town constituted a mixed residential environment between 1895 and 1946.

¹⁸² *Cape Mercury*, 03.04.1912 p. 3 'Town Council Minutes'; *Cape Mercury*, 09.05.1912 p. 2 Editorial.

¹⁸³ KWT Deeds Office: Erf 1919, 1960, 1964. The Izally family reputedly utilized funding obtained from horse racing to purchase property in town.

To some extent New Town served as a half-way stop for people from Brownlee Station to Gillam's Drift, East London and elsewhere, or alternatively as an extension of Old Town. Sharing schooling, church and shopping space with the residents of Old Town did not encourage a feeling of separate place-boundedness among the people of New Town.¹⁸⁴

Gillam's Drift/Blikkiesdorp: 'Turn a palace into a pigsty'

Gillam's Drift was named after Mr John Louis Gillam. According to his obituary, Gillam, an Englishman from Kent, came to the Cape Colony as a Sergeant in the 7th Dragoon Guards. When the regiment was ordered home after the War of the Axe (1846-47), he took his discharge and elected to stay on in King William's Town. In 1850, during the War of Mlanjeni, he, together with some others returning from East London, was attacked and seriously injured at a drift situated on the outskirts of the town. The area was subsequently known as Gillam's Drift.¹⁸⁵

Situated just outside King William's Town, the settlement (known presently as Schornville) consisted of a few plots of agricultural land adjacent to the sewerage farm. As early as 1896, for example, Mr JP Kilduff owned land at Gillam's Drift. The King William's Town Deeds Office listed five properties at the settlement between 1895 and 1946. The Borough Council also rented out land at Gillam's Drift, but this is not reflected in the said title deeds.¹⁸⁶ In 1946 the settlement consisted of 14 coloured and one white family, comprising a population of about 80 people.¹⁸⁷

In July 1912, it was rumoured that the Borough Council planned to build an Indian location at Gillam's Drift. A Mr Holly, who stated that he rented properties at the settlement, wrote to the Council objecting to the rumoured scheme. According to the Council, they had no definite ideas on the subject, but assured

¹⁸⁴ M Arends, B. Osteridge: personal interview, 29.11.2006.

¹⁸⁵ Quotation in heading: Buffalo City Municipality Archives. Letter to Public Health Department from Borough Sanitary Inspector, 12.08.1924 Re: Insanitary Conditions, Gillam's Drift; *Kaffrarian Watchman*, 08.11.1875, n.d.

¹⁸⁶ King William's Town Deeds Office. Erven numbers 19, 184, 221, 222, 223 and 224; *Cape Mercury*, 09.05.1932 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

¹⁸⁷ HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions under which the coloured people live in King William's Town, Gillam's Drift, Breidbach and East London' in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946*.

Holly that the rights of property owners would be considered if the scheme was commenced. The Indian location never materialised.¹⁸⁸

Several coloured families resided at Gillam's Drift during the period under discussion. The following names were found: Messrs Allick and Wilhelm Cox, Louis Fritz, Stephen Fourie, Mr Williams, E Flanagan, the Kleinhans family, Willie Stewart, Arthur Conybeare, the Van Staden family, Henry Mentoor and the Welcome family. Mrs Eva Welcome, an ex-resident of Gillam's Drift, stated that the residents referred to the settlement as Blikkiesdorp. White residents were more partial to the name of Gillam's Drift.¹⁸⁹

In August 1924, the Borough Sanitary Inspector, George W Jackson, reported on the prevailing conditions at Gillam's Drift. He stated that the insanitary circumstances at the settlement had been present for many years past, except that more coloured people were residing there than had formerly been the case. Jackson therefore equated the increased insanitary conditions at Gillam's Drift with the higher percentage of coloured residents present at the settlement.

The Sanitary Inspector reported that the main buildings were considered as fair and with careful tenants would be habitable for years. He added that the 'majority of residents are of a class that would turn a palace into a pigsty. Only constant and surprise visits from the Health Department would keep them in anything like clean and sanitary conditions.'¹⁹⁰

Each building was provided with a water closet and pail, but these were reportedly not regularly emptied. Jackson observed several rain tanks, but they were normally empty outside of the rainy season. The residents were then forced to find water elsewhere.¹⁹¹ In exchange for the payment of rates, the provision of sanitary conveniences and water was the duty of the Borough Council, but this apparently escaped the notice of the Council official. Instead,

¹⁸⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 09.07.1912 p. 4 'Town Council'.

¹⁸⁹ J. Smiles, EE Welcome: personal interviews, 24.04.2006 and 03.05.2006.

¹⁹⁰ Buffalo City Municipality Archives. Letter to Public Health Department from Borough Sanitary Inspector, 12.08.1924 Re: Insanitary conditions, Gillam's Drift.

¹⁹¹ Buffalo City Municipality Archives. Letter to Public Health Department, 12.08.1924 Re: Insanitary conditions, Gillam's Drift.

Jackson preferred to blame the insanitary conditions prevalent at Gillam's Drift on 'people of this class.' He stated that the shanties did not comply with municipal building regulations, but were no worse than those in use by the Railway Department and local butchers for their employees. The shanties were built of scrap sheet iron and were well ventilated, as the occupiers were able to make fires within.

In spite of regular visits by the Sanitary Inspector, the residents were not provided with improved municipal amenities. It is, in any event, difficult to see how the interests of sanitation were served at Gillam's Drift. It was situated adjacent to the municipal sewerage farm. The settlement also had no running water. Mrs Eva Welcome recalls fetching water at the abattoir or the Congregational Church near King William's Town. Water from the adjacent Buffalo River was not seen as fit for domestic use, but was utilised for garden and washing purposes. Mrs Welcome stated that the water was unclean, and occasionally muddy, especially during the rainy season. The residents were then obliged to fetch additional water for the washing of clothing and linen.¹⁹²

Despite the 'insanitary conditions' listed by the Sanitary Inspector, very little illness was present at Gillam's Drift. Coloured housing was nevertheless equated with the threat of disease. Jackson stated that in the event of an epidemic it would be very simple to quarantine Gillam's Drift, in order to ensure that the residents were not 'allowed to drift into (the white) town'.¹⁹³ The Council subsequently discussed the situation at Gillam's Drift. Cr Schulze stated that the settlement was in a deplorable condition. He cited medical opinion to the effect that certain prevalent diseases were a serious menace to the town. Schulze's comment went unchallenged, even though Jackson stated that Gillam's Drift was practically free of disease. The Sanitary Inspector regularly visited Gillam's Drift in the ensuing years. By 1931 he was able to report that 'improvement is evident in this part'.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² EE Welcome: personal interview, 03.05.2006.

¹⁹³ Buffalo City Municipality Archives. Letter to Public Health Department from Borough Sanitary Inspector, 12.08.1924 Re: Insanitary conditions, Gillam's Drift.

¹⁹⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 20.08.1924 p. 4 'Borough Council'; *Cape Mercury*, 29.09.1931 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

In September 1934, the Council proposed to erect a coloured home ownership scheme at Gillam's Drift. Local residents at the south end of town, and especially the dairy situated in the vicinity of Gillam's Drift, subsequently petitioned Council against the establishment of a coloured location near the settlement. Under pressure from white burgesses, the proposal, like the suggested Indian location, was subsequently dropped.¹⁹⁵

Mrs Eva Welcome stated that her father, Mr Stephen Fourie, subsequent to his removal from Brownlee Station in 1939, bought a plot of land in Blikkiesdorp in 1942. She described their property as a large piece of land consisting of two houses, several outbuildings and a large garden with many fruit trees. Mr Louis Fritz and the Cox family were their neighbours. The Fritz and Cox properties were situated adjacent to the Buffalo River. By 1940, the Deetlefs family were the only white residents living at Gillam's Drift.¹⁹⁶

Stephen Fourie supplemented his income by renting out the outbuildings on his property. Most of the tenants stayed with the Fourie family for many years, such as Willie Stewart and his family, Arthur Conybeare, the Van Staden family and Henry Mentoor. The Cox and Fritz families, owning two properties each, also let rooms on their properties. Mrs Welcome has pleasant memories of Blikkiesdorp. Relations between the residents were very amicable and friendly. They also socialised with inhabitants of Bidhli Farm, situated across the river from Gillam's Drift.

In September 1944, the Coloured Welfare Association, the local mouthpiece of the coloured people, stated in a letter to the Council that in return for the payment of rates, the people of Gillam's Drift were receiving no municipal services. The Chief Health Inspector reported upon the advisability of a water main being extended to this area.¹⁹⁷ The lack of municipal services was reiterated in Mr HCA Cloete's 1946 Coloured Advisory Council (CAC) report.

¹⁹⁵ *Cape Mercury*, 11.09.1934 p. 2 'Borough Council'; *Cape Mercury*, 13.11.1934 p. 2 Editorial 'Coloured Housing Scheme'. The scheme is discussed in Chapter 5.

¹⁹⁶ EE Welcome: personal interview, 03.05.2006; King William's Town Deeds Office: Erven numbers 19, 184, 221, 222, 223 and 224. Mrs Welcome's recollections were corroborated by the title deeds for Gillam's Drift.

¹⁹⁷ *Cape Mercury*, 12.09.1944 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

Cloete described the existing housing conditions at Gillam's Drift and made several recommendations.¹⁹⁸

According to Cloete the residents of Blikkiesdorp paid annual rates to the Borough Council. Despite continual representations to the Municipality, as well as the payment of water rates, Cloete pointed out that no water connection had been laid to the settlement. He therefore suggested that representations again be made to the Municipality for the laying of pipes up to the fence of private properties at Gillam's Drift. From their boundary fence the owners would then be responsible for leading the water on to their lands and providing taps for domestic use. The fact that the settlement only consisted of a few residents probably made the proposal uneconomical in the opinion of the Council. Only with the establishment of Schornville in 1958, on the site of Gillam's Drift, was running water provided to residents of the new township.

Cloete also stated that sanitary pails were not regularly removed by the Municipality. At the time of his investigation the pails had been emptied two weeks previously. The Sanitary Inspector, George Jackson, referred to the same issue in his 1924 report, indicating that Gillam's Drift suffered from inadequate municipal services over a sustained period. In the rest of the town sanitary pails were removed weekly.¹⁹⁹ In return for a lack of running water and the infrequent removal of sanitary pails, the local authorities were bent on imposing strict municipal control on the residents. Cloete made several recommendations, but the Borough Council did not institute any of his suggestions.²⁰⁰

Despite inferior health services and increasing municipal control, the small settlement of Gillam's Drift was fortunate in that the residents were able to own large properties in a community where home ownership was a particularly scarce commodity.

¹⁹⁸ HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions under which the coloured people live in King William's Town, Gillam's Drift, Breidbach and East London' in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946*.

¹⁹⁹ HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions...' in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946*.

²⁰⁰ HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions...' in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946*.

Breidbach and Bellstone

The village of Breidbach, situated about seven kilometres from King William's Town, was originally established as a settlement for members of the British German Legion in 1857. The legion was recruited to assist the British and French during the Crimean War (1854-1856) and fell under the command of Baron Richard von Stutterheim. The war ended while the regiment was still in training in England and some of the men were persuaded to volunteer as military settlers for British Kaffraria and the Cape Colony.

Divided into three regiments, the second regiment under Lieut-Col Adolph von Hake, headquartered in Berlin, placed a detachment of men at Breidbach. In May 1858, the detachment consisted of two officers and about 80 men. The legionaries received a small building lot, as well as four-acre garden lots, while the two officers obtained large agricultural lots. Most of the original dwellings were built of sods with thatched roofs, some of which were subsequently replaced by iron buildings.²⁰¹ Struggling to eke out a living in agriculture and small business, most of the legionaries enlisted for service with the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny in 1858. Only 43 returned to their original stations.

Most of the dwellings of the legionaries were utilised by the German peasant agriculturalists emigrating to British Kaffraria in 1858 and 1859. 26 German families settled in Breidbach.²⁰² In contrast to the sponsored legionaries, the German civilians were obliged to pay for their transport to the Cape Colony and were charged £1 per acre for land. The smallholdings around Breidbach were utilised for the production of vegetables, sold at the local market in King William's Town. The old stone houses on the banks of the Yellowwoods River still remain as a testimony to the German settlers and their descendants.

By the turn of the century, Breidbach was largely multi-racial in character. Many of the original plots were still farmed by German agriculturalists, but large tracts of land were also owned by a few Xhosa families. The Ncapo family, Messrs

²⁰¹ BE Pape & ELG Schnell, *Germans in Kaffraria 1858 – 1958*, King Printing Co., King William's Town, 1958, p. 15.

²⁰² BE Pape & ELG Schnell, *Germans in Kaffraria 1858 – 1958*, King Printing Co., King William's Town, 1958, p. 63.

Jacob Siyo, Patosi Gxonono and especially the Ntoni family owned many agricultural plots in the period under discussion.²⁰³ Several coloured landowners were also listed as plot owners. Messrs John Joseph and Lawrence J Thompson and family and the Abdol Bossr family owned several plots. Coloured landowners also included the Plaatjes, Cumming, Fritz, Cramfort, Jurie, Matroos, Adams, Baatjies, Leppan, Esbin, Windvogel, Weimers, Albert, Free, Meyers, Cochrane, Swaine, Sharpe, Matroos and Harris families.²⁰⁴

Most of the surviving residents of 'old' Breidbach recalled only a few German agriculturalists living in the Breidbach area in the late 1930s and 1940s. A Mr Andreka ran the local shop and was the owner of the hotel, Breidbach being situated adjacent to the old main road between King William's Town and East London. Mr Victor Bossr also recalled the names of Putzier, Bottcher, Tessendorf and Kieck as well as the Van Ecks and the Lotterings living on agricultural plots in the vicinity of the settlement.²⁰⁵ By the 1940s the white residents of Breidbach were predominantly located on agricultural lots on the opposite side of the Yellowwoods River to the coloured and Xhosa inhabitants.

The coloured residents were largely situated on the original building lots laid out for the legionaries across the present-day bridge leading to Breidbach. The original four-acre lots, referred to as 'die lande / the fields' by the local coloured people, were occasionally utilised for the planting of samp and mealies. Most of the residents kept cattle for domestic purposes. The lots were situated near the present-day Breidbach High School. Mrs SE Esbin stated that most of the

²⁰³ KWT Deeds Office. Erven numbers are listed as follows: Ncapo family (75 – 89; 92, 93) Jacob Siyo (90-91, 95 – 97, 245-248, 250, 253), Patosi Gxonono (77 – 89) and the Ntoni family (90 – 102, 104-107, 109-112). Coloured residents of Breidbach specifically recall the Gxonono and Ntoni families.

²⁰⁴ KWT Deeds Office. Erven numbers are listed as follows: John Joseph and Lawrence J. Thompson (51, 52, 58, 121-123, 130, 145, 193, 195, 196, 200, 220), Abdol Bossr and family (53, 55, 62, 115-117, 141, 185, 201, 203, 210, 212, 213, 275), John Plaatjes (53, 155, 209), Sydenham Victor Cumming (55), Louis Fritz (58), Niklaas and W. Cramfort (62, 131, 155), Matthew Jurie (68), Frederick Matroos (125-127), William Adams and family (133), Vincent George Baatjies (134), Willie Leppan (134), Ben and Richard Esbin (138, 184), Peter and Willie Windvogel (141, 201), Joseph Weimers (148-9), Richard Albert, Nicholas, Hans and Henry Free (159-60, 179, 181, 208), John Meyers (180-81, 194, 214), Edward Cochrane (186), Louis Fritz (196), William Swain (200), Matthias Jurie (206), Albert Sharpe (211), Willie Abraham Matroos (219) and Frank Harris (151).

²⁰⁵ V Bossr: personal interview, 18.05.2006.

Xhosa inhabitants were living adjacent to the four-acre lots, between Breidbach and King William's Town.²⁰⁶

Although Breidbach was multi-racial in character, the Xhosa, coloured and white inhabitants were largely living in separate pockets within the settlement. Racial boundaries within the settlement itself were entrenched in the local terminology. Xhosa-owned properties were referred to as the 'laere' (laagers).²⁰⁷ Mr Bossr had Xhosa playmates as a child, but their schooling and religious activities were conducted separately. The coloured children attended the Congregational Union's coloured school, utilising the same building on Sunday for religious services, while his Xhosa peers attended the local Methodist Church.²⁰⁸ The white residents of Breidbach sent their children to King William's Town for their education.²⁰⁹ Many of the residents had their own holdings and were regarded as permanent residents. In contrast to Old Town and Gillam's Drift, only a few tenants resided at Breidbach. Most of the families had lived at the settlement for more than one generation and were often related through marriage.

The coloured area of Breidbach consisted mainly of the original stone dwellings under corrugated iron roofing, erected by the Germans. Some red brick buildings and a few mud houses were also present. A few shanties were situated on the fields. Mrs Esbin (nee Cramfort) recalled that her family lived in a four-roomed stone house with a typical dung floor.²¹⁰

Breidbach had no running water, electricity or sanitary conveniences. Water was obtained from the nearby Yellowwoods River. The Cramfort family was fortunate to have a donkey cart, which was utilised to convey large water containers between the river and their house. The cart was rented to their neighbours for the same purpose. Clothes and linen were washed on the banks of the river. The people of Breidbach bathed in the river or heated water on

²⁰⁶ SE Esbin: personal interview, 18.05.2006.

²⁰⁷ CP Davids: personal interview, 24.03.2006.

²⁰⁸ The coloured school was conducted in the old German Baptist Church.

²⁰⁹ V Bossr: personal interview, 18.05.2006.

²¹⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 10.09.1942 p. 4, 'Belstone (Congregational) Coloured School Educational Affairs', SE Esbin: personal interview, 18.05.2006.

their wood and primus stoves for use in large zinc baths. They were largely dependent on the river for consumption and domestic use. When the river ran dry, an unhealthy state of affairs was created as man and beast alike was obliged to drink from stagnant pools.²¹¹ Without electricity the residents used candles, oil lamps and wood or primus stoves. The Breidbach houses were not equipped with water-borne sewerage and pit latrines, situated in out-houses, were utilised.

Most of the inhabitants worked in nearby King William's Town. The town was reached on foot, by bicycle or by train. The settlement made use of the nearby Bellstone railway siding. The latter name originates from a chiming rock situated on a nearby farm. Balancing at a certain angle on another stone, the dolerite vibrates at a particular frequency, resembling the ringing sound of a church bell when struck with a stone. Situated on the old road between King William's Town and East London, the six-foot structure was a popular stopover. For the coloured residents of Breidbach the spot has a sacred meaning. Community church congregations would gather around the stone for prayer and gospel readings during times of drought.²¹²

In contrast to the other coloured settlements of King William's Town, Breidbach did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Borough Council. The Village Management Board consisted of three local farmers who administered the settlement. The Borough Council's influence was felt through the presence of the Borough Ranger and Forester. In charge of the Breidbach commonage, the Ranger also conducted the pound and kept the keys to the cemetery. Mr Bossr recalled that 'the Bush Ranger was a Mr Boy' in the early 1940s. Mr Boy also collected dog tax and granted licenses for the collection of wood.²¹³

In 1942 the Provincial Administration suggested that, on the grounds of Public Health, the boundaries of King William's Town be extended to include Breidbach. It was stated that the settlement included insanitary dwellings and

²¹¹ SE Esbin: personal interview, 18.05.2006; HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions under which the coloured people live in King William's Town, Gillams Drift, Breidbach and East London' in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946*.

²¹² *Daily Dispatch*, 30.01.1986 p. 3 'Bell Rock will Ring Forever'.

²¹³ V Bossr: personal interview: 18.05.2006.

overcrowded conditions. The Provincial Administration felt that under the Council's control, the perceived insanitary conditions would be improved by the provision of water, power and sewerage. The Borough Council was therefore requested to take control of the area, but they felt it was inopportune at the time. In August 1945, the subject was re-opened for discussion. The Borough Council was prepared to consider extending its boundaries in order to include Breidbach, but wanted to be clear about the exact obligations this would entail. The cost of providing the village with municipal amenities such as water and sewerage was the main stumbling block towards incorporation into the Municipality of King William's Town.²¹⁴ The Council already had its hands full with costly and time-consuming locations without taking on additional responsibilities with their added financial implications. Breidbach was also situated outside the town's physical boundaries, making incorporation less than paramount.

Mr HCA Cloete's 1946 CAC report also made reference to the village of Breidbach. He stated that the Board members, as well as the Borough Ranger, lived about five kilometres from the village. The distance to the pound, as well as to the cemetery key caused the residents a lot of inconvenience. Cloete therefore recommended that the pound be situated within or in close proximity to the village and that a coloured pound master should be appointed. He also suggested that the Village Management Board be requested to have the key of the public cemetery available to the inhabitants of the village, at some place within Breidbach. Cloete also suggested that the Management Board should take the necessary steps to have pipes laid from King William's Town, so as to enable the residents to have water for drinking purposes. None of his recommendations, mostly requiring capital outlay, were implemented.²¹⁵

Although located outside the boundaries of the town, creating some difficulties for the residents, Breidbach represented the largest conglomeration of homeowners in the coloured community of King William's Town. Controlled by

²¹⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 14.08.1945 p. 4 'Borough Council'; *Cape Mercury*, 10.06.1947 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

²¹⁵ HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions under which the coloured people live in King William's Town, Gillam's Drift, Breidbach and East London' in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946*.

a distant Village Management Board, municipal supervision was limited to the Borough Ranger's control of the Breidbach commonage and cemetery. Brownlee Station and Breidbach both represented the highest proportion of pre-1939 home-ownership. The largest concentration of coloured homeowners in King William's Town was therefore found in areas where municipal control was limited. It is clear that the Borough Council intentionally discouraged coloured home ownership in King William's Town.

Conclusion

Under the guise of concerns about sanitation and pressurised by its white ratepayers, the Borough Council wanted to extend its control over coloured people by attempting to regulate access to housing. Inferior housing and sanitation were regularly decried in all the coloured settlements, but the paternalistic Council was unwilling to spend ratepayers' money on improved facilities.

Through the utilisation of the 1934 Slums Act, the Council succeeded in the removal of both Brownlee Station and Ridsdel location. The 1919 Public Health Act only provided for the removal of unfit dwellings. Under the Slums Act, the Council possessed the necessary legislation to condemn both locations in their entirety. Central Government, specifically the Public Health Department and the more 'sympathetic' Department of Native Affairs, both collaborated with the Borough Council in its removal attempts. During the interwar years, the Department of Native Affairs was politically and administratively weak and therefore only sought to soften the harsh conditions and attempted to discourage extreme forms of exploitation.²¹⁶ With its blessing, the local municipality was able to effect the removal of Brownlee and Ridsdel.²¹⁷

The expropriation of Ridsdel, Brownlee Station and Bidhli represented the loss of housing devoid of strict municipal supervision. Only small pockets of

²¹⁶ S Dubow, *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa 1919-1939*, MacMillan Press Limited, Hampshire, 1989, p. 11.

²¹⁷ HM Zituta, *The Spatial Planning of Racial Residential Segregation in King William's Town*, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1997, p. 90.

coloured home owners and tenants remained in the settlements of Old and New Town, Gillam's Drift and Breidbach. Why was the Slums Act not used in the case of the above settlements? The strict regulations provided in the Slums Act could easily have been applied to any of them. The Slums Act empowered local authorities to declare and remove a section of or an entire slum area *if they so chose*. The Council was pressurised by white slumlords in the case of Old and New Town and deterred by the financial implications of providing municipal amenities in the case Gillam's Drift and Breidbach. Insanitary conditions were decried, but the Council did not act to remedy the situation.

All the settlements, with the exception of New Town which largely served as an extension of Old Town, displayed a distinct history and therefore a separate place-identity. The local authorities, national legislation and the occupants themselves influenced the individual dynamics and divisions present in each settlement. In 1895 and again from the 1930s the coloured elite professed their desire for coloured home ownership apart from their Xhosa neighbours at Brownlee Station. This led to race-based tension and division between the residents. Edward Qalinge's statement during the 1932 Brownlee Deputation is powerful and all encompassing. 'We do not regard the coloureds as part of ourselves.'²¹⁸ When they were faced with another removal attempt, the thin veneer of racial tension between the inhabitants of Brownlee Station, perpetuated by the local authorities, became clearly apparent. In the period between 1930 and 1946, racial divisions would be entrenched by separate housing conditions for coloured and Xhosa people.

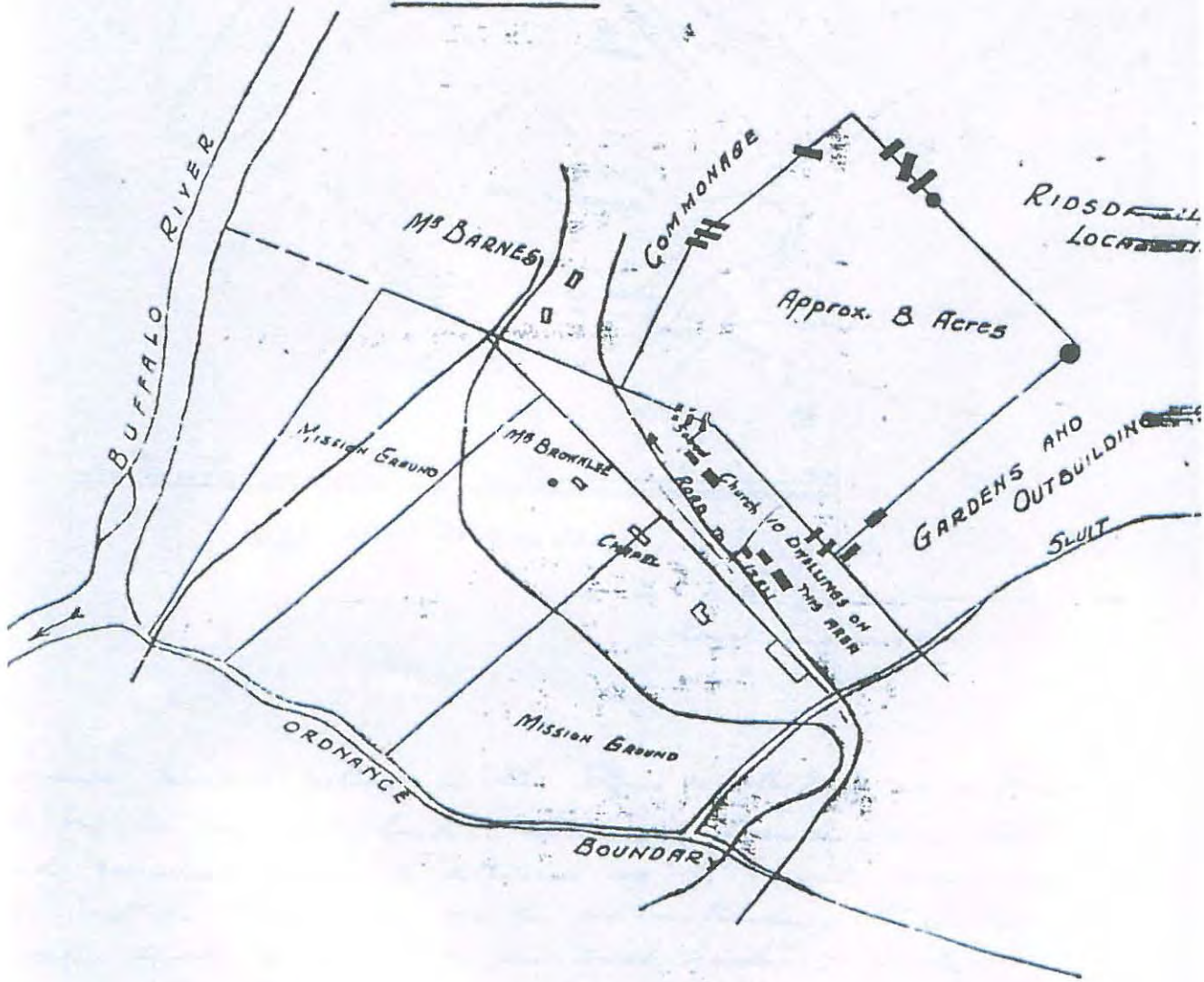
²¹⁸ CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3: Deputation on Brownlee, 29.01.1932.

Figure 1: Diagram of Brownlee Station dated 1938 indicating the position of mission and municipal property.¹

ANNEX

DIAGRAM OF BROWNLEE STATION.

K. W. TOWN.



SCALE 100 YARDS TO AN INCH.

DWELLINGS SHOWN THUS ■ ●

¹ Amathole Museum, Map collection, W6811A.

Figure 2: View of Brownlee Station, 1890s. Indicating wattle and daub houses and the mission church.¹



¹No. 283 Barnett Collection, *The Star Archives* (Independent Newspapers), Johannesburg

Figure 3: Brownlee Station Houses, 1938.¹

Home of Maggie Plaatjes, Erven F4, Brownlee Station

Home of Charles Herbert, G9, Brownlee Station.

1. CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/145 ref. J3/2 Owners' Particulars, Brownlee Station, 1938.



Figure 4: Particulars of Peter Fourie, Brownlee Station, 1938.¹

99
BOROUGH OF KING WILLIAM'S TOWN.

BROWNLEE MISSION STATION

PARTICULARS IN TERMS OF SECTION 19
OF ACT 53 OF 1934.

Number of Dwelling 175
Name of Owner Peter Fourie
Number of Rooms 5
How was Dwelling Acquired by Purchase
Is Dwelling Occupied by Owner Yes
Amount of Compensation Required £300 Three Hundred
Pounds 5/19
Signed P. Fourie
Under Protest
Witness J. A. S. Rume
Date 25/10/38

K.P. CO., K.W.T.



1. CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/146 ref. J3/16 Owners' Particulars, Brownlee Station, 1938.

Figure 5: Particulars for compensation of dwellings at Ridsdel, 1935.¹

RIDSDEL LOCATION.

APPLICATIONS FOR COMPENSATION FOR REMOVAL OF DWELLINGS.

Name	No.	Claim	B. Engr's Val.			Remarks
			£.	s.	d.	
Jessie Mboni	2	108	42	-	-	
Esher Maki	3	50	8	-	-	
Mrs. John Gzula	4	160	17	-	-	
Mrs. Ben Mkencele	9	150	60	-	-	
Jack Mkunge	12	40	8	-	-	
MofantiJobela	13	57	29	-	-	
Montaba Mlindazwe	14	106	36	-	-	
Maggie Dowe	17	75	19	-	-	
Mercy Bashman	27	50	8	10	-	
Banati Teketi	28A	75	10	5	-	
James Kaana	28B		2	-	-	
Notana	29	40	7	-	-	
Mrs. Ben Mkencele	33	35	15	10	-	
Popi Nenani	34A	25	8	-	-	
Mpaipeli Jongile	34B	97	30	-	-	
Tom Gwelana	38	40	14	10	-	
Stemela Jeku	39	12	4	5	-	
Charlie Magqaza	42	45	12	10	-	
Tom Mahe	43	80	14	10	-	
Booy Montongwana	44		6	-	-	
Fred Sidayiya	48	28	15	-	-	
Nonfolozi Mahe	49	25	5	-	-	
Mrs. Peter Mbatsha	50	25	6	-	-	
Joseph Sogidashe	51	87	12	-	-	
Jane Kele	54	45	7	-	-	
Albert Nkwentsha	55	90	18	-	-	
Samuel Magele	56	35	2	-	-	
Annie Klaas	57	30	10	-	-	
Qanawe Qopo	60	45	6	-	-	
Skrishi Momfu	61	65	8	-	-	
Mini Mtuma	65	45	22	-	-	
Mowatsha Kewana	67	50	9	10	-	
Louisa Nose	68	70	31	-	-	
Noma Fuba	70		9	-	-	
Fred Sidayiya	71	10	5	-	-	
Willie Mavakala	73	20	11	-	-	
Henry Elson	75	30	13	-	-	
Margie Mkosana	76	65	25	-	-	
Jane Mama	77	70	40	-	-	
Jeffrey Gqoloda	78	350	105	-	-	
Nosimse Gwelana	79	83	40	-	-	
Agnes Tone	80		3	-	-	
Nosayini Kondlo	81	35	12	-	-	
Mabe	82		16	-	-	
Ida Maneli	83	45	20	-	-	
Nonine Ndzima	84	105	26	-	-	
Ben Gqoloda	85	100	22	-	-	
Ernest Mtampo	86	78	24	-	-	
Lizzie Tonisi	88	10	9	-	-	
Noneyi Ngxibimba	89	25	10	-	-	
Eunice Simon Banzi	91	200	38	-	-	
Walter Jonas	92		22	10	-	
Jerry Tema	93	110	30	-	-	
Petross Jantjes	94	36	10	-	-	
Schriner Mkencele	96	40	15	-	-	

¹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/150 ref. J6/9 Applications for Compensation for Removal of Dwellings.



Figure 6: Bidhli Experimental Farm, 2006. Includes the houses of the erstwhile Manager and Overseer (below), and one of two extant rondavels similar to the ones demolished at Ginsberg in 1999. Photos: Stephanie Victor.



Figure 7: MacKinnon Street Houses, Old Town 1960s. Photos: Amathole Museum.

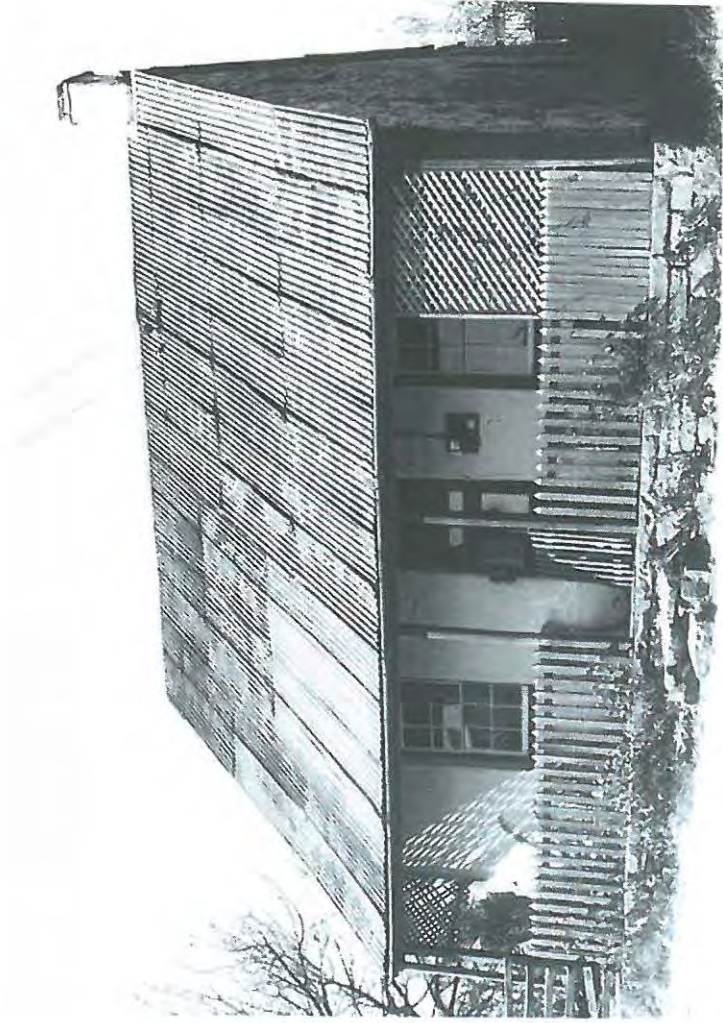
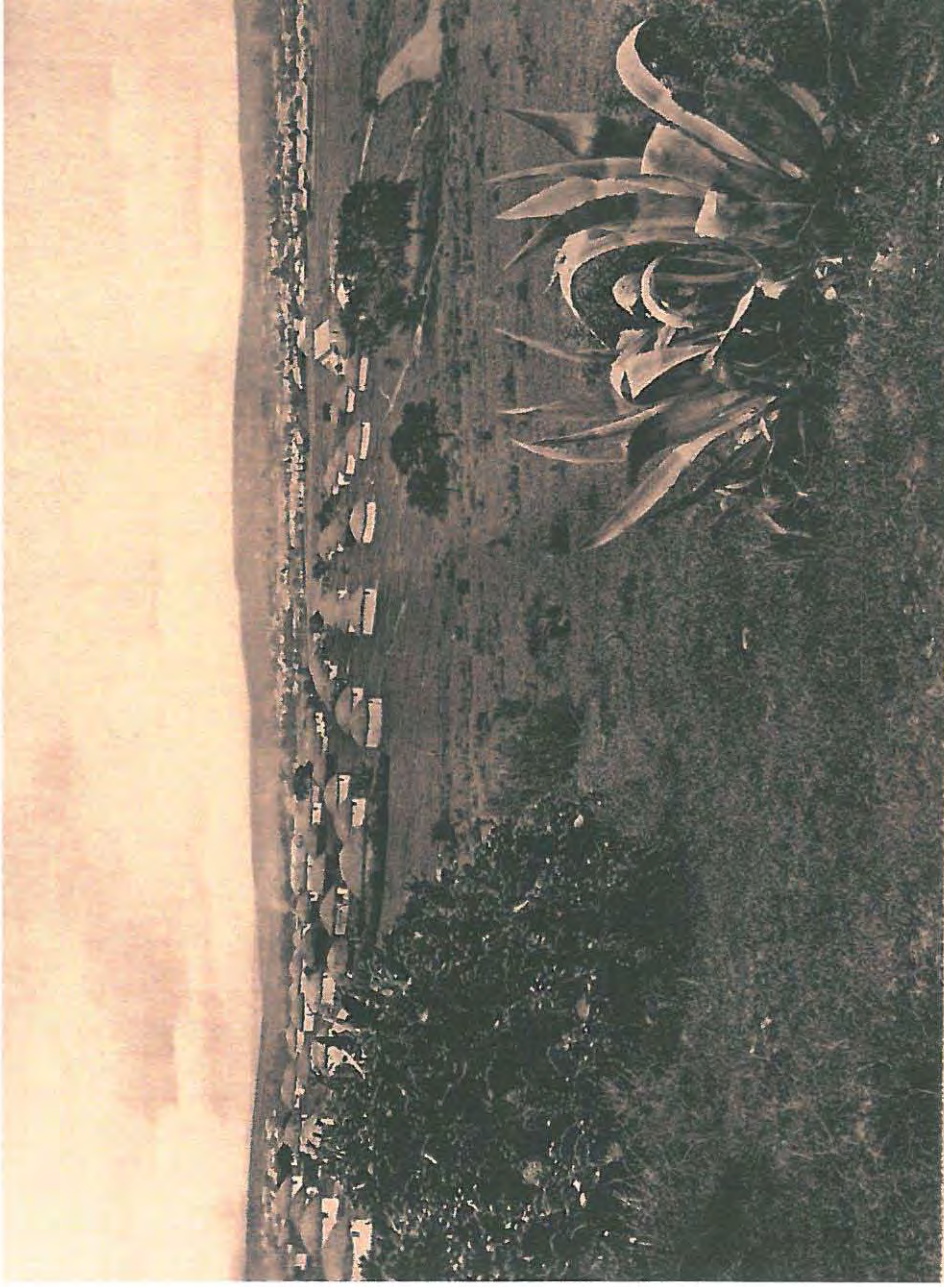
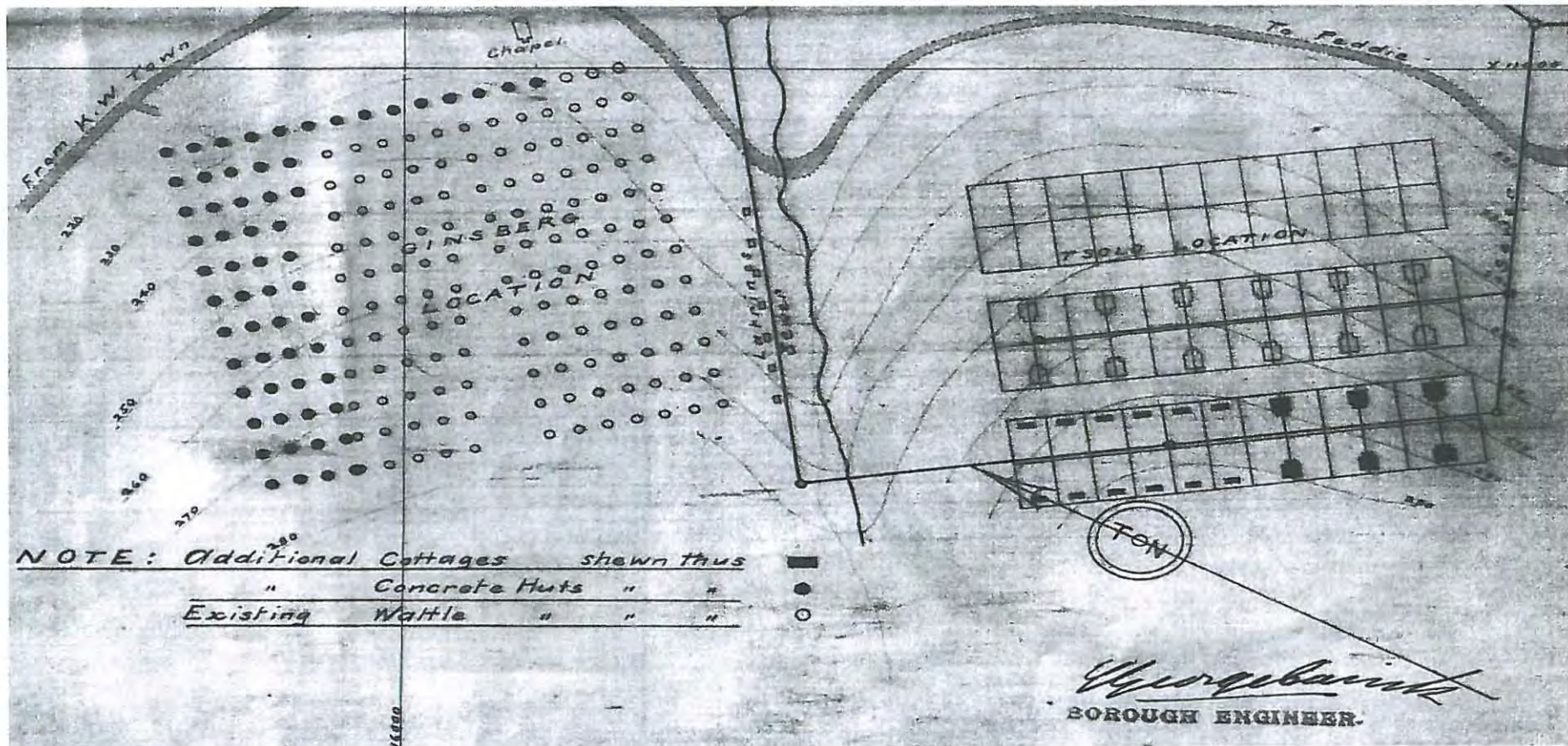


Figure 8: Wattle and daub rondavels, Ginsberg, circa 1901.¹



¹ *Views of King William's Town*, J. Wulff, King William's Town, n.d.

Figure 9: Diagram of Ginsberg and Leightonville (formerly known as Tsolo), about 1921.¹



¹ Buffalo City Municipality Archives. King William's Town Municipality. Housing Scheme. Proposed Additional Accommodation.

Figure 10: Extension of water connection to Ginsberg, ca. 1921. Photo: Amathole Museum



Figure 11: Mr NP Arends, skinner at the Amathole Museum (formerly known as the Kaffrarian Museum) with the treated hide of Huberta, the famous wandering hippo. Photo: Amathole Museum, April 1931.



Figure 12: Extract of letter from NP Arends to Town Clerk, December 1935.¹

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
No. 29478
Received 15 FEB 1935
KING WILSON TOWN.

The Museum,
King Louis Town.
12th Feb 1935.

The Town Clerk
King Louis Town.

Dear Sir,
Coloured Township

With reference to the above I think it will be advisable to grant a few of our members an interview Monday at 5 p.m. It will be in the nature of a discussion & not serve as a deputation, as working hours make it impossible to attend earlier. I trust the time mentioned will not put you to inconvenience?

The members have expressed the opinion that the Engineer (Mr. Fair) should also be present.

I am sure that our discussion will be in the interest of both the Council and the people. We do not intend to put any obstruction in Mr. Fair's way but simply

¹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21.



Reading from left to right:

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| P. Shaw, | B. Playter, | L. Shaw, | C. Matthews, | E. Jacobs, | G. Fayner, | W. Swarrit, | H. Forster, |
| B. Playter, | L. Shaw, | H. Wilson (V. Capt.), | D. Swartz (President), | A. Playter (Capt.), | S. Bolha, | J. Bussack, | J. Winter, |
| D. C. Williams, | H. Forster, | E. Jacobs, | G. Fayner, | W. Swarrit, | H. Forster, | J. Bussack, | J. Winter, |

Chapter 4: Re-housing and the Quest for a coloured Settlement

In 1939, the residents of Brownlee Station were removed to two new housing extensions in the settlement of Ginsberg. The erstwhile neighbours were now separated according to race. The Xhosa were re-housed at Brownlee extension and the coloured people were moved to a section of Ginsberg known as Leightonville. Prior to 1930 however, there had been coloured people living in Ginsberg and Leightonville. The names of the Arkell, Read, Fritz, Jack, Kleinbooi, Trompetter, S Lootz, A Mains, WD Rayner, S Booysen, H Palmer, P Grady, I Mintoor, Kate Jonas, Minnie Booi and Smith families were recorded. By 1930, at least 45 coloured families were living in Ginsberg.¹

'Not even a glass of pure water:' Tsolo and Ginsberg locations

The Resident Magistrate of King William's Town, Richard Taylor, stated that by 1860 Tsolo, the forerunner of Ginsberg location, consisted of 117 residents under the headmanship of Piet Cungwa.² Tsolo was therefore one of the original settlements established near the town.³ The population of the settlement increased notably and by 1897, the Council was able to report that Tsolo consisted of 559 residents. A small number of coloured inhabitants probably resided in Tsolo, but no examples, dating to the turn of the century, were located.

The residents received no sanitation services or water from the Borough Council, in spite of being liable for site rent. Supervision and control appeared to be high on the Council's agenda, hence the presence at Ginsberg of a headman and a Location Superintendent. As in the case of Brownlee, Ridsdel and Gillam's Drift, the Council was criticised for collecting site rent but not spending money on

¹ 3/KWT vol 4/1/251 ref ZH 9/21 Memorandum re Housing for coloured classes, dated 19.12.1930; F Arends, W Arkell, E Groep: personal interview, 06.06.2006.

² AW Burton, King William's Town in the British Kaffraria, vol. 1, 1967, p. 55, Unpublished manuscript, Cory Library for Historical Research, Grahamstown. Burton unfortunately only states that the information was supplied by Richard Taylor. The early history of Tsolo still requires further research as it falls outside the scope of this thesis.

³ Ka Msumza and Webb's statement that Tsolo was erected in about 1891 or 1895 is therefore incorrect. These dates probably refer to additional huts erected by the owners, but under the Council's supervision. L ka Msumza, From Half-way Station to Permanent Settlement: A Study in the Evolution of Ginsberg Township, 1939 to 1964, Unpublished Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993, p. 1; DA Webb, King William's Town during the South African War, 1899-1902. An Urban, Social, Economic and Cultural history, Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1993, p. 206.

improvements in the locations. In a letter to the Editor, published in the local newspaper, 'Skim' wanted to know what the people in the location received in return for the payment of rental. According to him "Nothing"; not even a glass of pure water."⁴

In 1901, Ginsberg was developed adjacent to Tsolo location 'at a spot chosen for the salubrity and convenience of its situation.'⁵ The location was situated opposite the town and was skirted by the main road from Peddie to King William's Town.⁶ It was named after the prominent local town councillor and Member of Parliament, Senator Franz Ginsberg. The Senator was an avid segregationist and played an active role in the establishment of the location. According to Sharon Caldwell,⁷ the 'model location' was founded as a direct response to the outbreak of bubonic plague in 1901. The Borough Council was of the opinion that the advent of the plague made better housing conditions and sanitary requirements necessary, but it also conveniently gave impetus to segregation attempts along the lines of colour.

Fifty wattle and daub huts, five metres in diameter with walls six feet high,⁸ thatched roofs and two glazed windows, were subsequently erected. They were built in five rows of ten, whitewashed inside and out with flooring made in the traditional Xhosa manner from the soil of ant heaps.⁹

The local authorities initially charged a monthly rate of 10 shillings per hut. A limit of six inhabitants per tenement was prescribed, in order to prevent overcrowding. It was felt that the rental fee was nominal, but the truth of the matter was that many prospective inhabitants struggled to pay in advance. The location gradually expanded, and by 1908, the Council was able to report that 503 people occupied 116 houses in Ginsberg. The new location gradually absorbed the settlement of

⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 14.01.1902 'Letter to the Editor'. Also quoted in heading.

⁵ SE Victor, 'The Early History of Ginsberg' in *Imvubu*, December 2003, p. 3.

⁶ This road was referred to as 'die wapad' (wagon-road) by the coloured residents of Ginsberg. J Smiles: personal interview, 24.04.2006.

⁷ SE Caldwell, The course and results of the plague outbreaks in King William's Town, 1900 – 1907, Unpublished Honours Thesis, UNISA, 1987, p. 40.

⁸ Six feet equals about 1.82 metres.

⁹ SE Victor, 'The Early History of Ginsberg' in *Imvubu*, December 2003, p. 3.

Tsolo and the entire area was subsequently referred to as Ginsberg. Tsolo now only comprised a section of the larger settlement of Ginsberg.¹⁰

As residents in a black location, coloured inhabitants were compelled to live under the Native and Asiatic Location Regulations, implemented by the local authorities in January 1912. According to these regulations, the Council was obliged to provide sites for dwellings. The regulations also compelled the Council to lay out streets, provide water, sanitary conveniences and a rubbish deposit area. No garden plots or grazing rights were allotted in the location and all strangers had to obtain a visiting permit. No able-bodied persons were allowed to stay in the location unless they had employment.¹¹

Under the regulations, the appointment of a Location Superintendent was included. This Council official was charged with keeping a register of all dwellings, including the names and occupations of their tenants. Headmen were appointed to assist the Superintendent in the execution of his duties. The aforementioned officials implemented all municipal regulations, especially in relation to the preservation of public health and the prevention of overcrowding and public nuisances. A penalty not exceeding £5 was authorised for a contravention of the said regulations. A curfew, framed under the Local Authorities Act of 1895, was enforced from nine in the evening to four in the morning, effectively imprisoning residents in their homes during the hours of darkness.¹² The Borough Council, through the implementation of its location and curfew regulations, made no distinction between Ginsberg's Xhosa and coloured inhabitants.

The residents of Ginsberg were not only compelled to live under strict regulations, but conditions in the township were far from ideal. In October 1917, Dr McMurtie, the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) for the Union, visited King William's Town. In his subsequent report, McMurtie warned that the absence of

¹⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 30.10.1901 'Borough Council'; SE Victor, 'The Early History of Ginsberg' in *Imvubu*, December 2003 p. 3.

¹¹ FA Saunders Lt Col, 'Municipal Control of Locations' in *The Thirteenth Session of the Association of Municipal Corporations of the Cape Province, 10-12 May 1920*, Grocott & Sherry, Grahamstown, 1920, p. 16.

¹² *Cape Mercury*, 05.05.1911 p. 2 'Editorial'; CA 3/KWT vol. 1/1/1/22 Council Meeting 01.12.1924.

adequate facilities could lead to poor hygiene and even the possible outbreak of typhus. The MOH's focus on the lack of public health care is typical of the 1920s discourse. The Council took note of his suggestions, but it would be four years before an attempt was made to improve conditions at Ginsberg.¹³

'A better class tenement': the building of Leightonville

In June 1921, the Borough Council applied for a £10 000 loan from the Central Housing Board in terms of the new Housing Act. The Council's application provided for the erection of 84 tenements in Ginsberg.

According to the Borough Council, housing was urgently needed in order to remove inhabitants from inferior tenements in the town proper. In its application, the Council suggested that the vacated houses could be made suitable for white working-class occupation. Under the guise of improved housing facilities, the Borough Council thus aimed to clear the town of black and coloured inhabitants and deal with the lack of housing for poor whites in the town proper. The Council therefore suggested a site that was 'easily accessible ... being right opposite the town with the River Buffalo between'. A footbridge and a paved drift for vehicle traffic provided easy access to the location.¹⁴ Two tanks would supply the inhabitants with water and the new housing scheme was to include a connection to the town's sewerage system.

It was the Council's intention to completely rebuild the location 'on the most hygienic and modern principles.' Ginsberg was to consist of two locations, situated on the site of the old Tsolo location and on a new site, adjacent to the original settlement. One location was to consist of 'a better class tenement' for the coloured and 'educated' Xhosa.¹⁵ It would consist of 24 two-roomed and three-roomed semi-detached cottages, with an added kitchen and a sanitary convenience for every four houses. The two-roomed cottages were to be built of

¹³ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/146 ref. J4/16 Letter from A Mitchell, Assistant MOH for the Union to the Town Clerk, 01.11.1917.

¹⁴ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/255 ref. ZH 9/10 Application of an Advance for the carrying out of Schemes and the construction of Dwellings by Local Authority. Statement with regard to land.

¹⁵ *Cape Mercury*, 24.09.1926, p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

hollow concrete blocks under wood and iron roofs. Ordinary brickwork on a concrete foundation was to be used for the three-roomed semi-detached houses. The other location for the 'ordinary Natives', on the site of Tsolo location, was to consist of 60 rondavels, built with hollow concrete blocks and a re-inforced concrete roof.¹⁶ With the creation of 'better class' housing the Borough Council not only provided for a division in class, but also race. The new extension only catered for the 'educated' Xhosa, but all coloured people regardless of schooling were to be accommodated. By September 1922, the Central Housing Board approved the Council's application and building was commenced.¹⁷

In March 1924, the name of 'Leightonville' was bestowed on the new location. It was named after Cr James Leighton, a long-standing member of the Borough Council and chairman of the Health and General Purposes Committee.¹⁸ With new developments in the pipeline, the Borough Council decided to purchase the balance of the privately-owned dwellings still in existence at Tsolo.

The new tenants were reportedly moved to the newly-erected tenements in Ginsberg and Leightonville by September 1924. In order to ensure that tenants originated from the town proper, the Borough Ranger advised the Sanitary Inspector when accommodation was available. He subsequently issued notices to prospective residents living in town.¹⁹ The MOH for King William's Town, Dr RN Pringle, welcomed the aforementioned arrangement. In his opinion, tuberculosis was spread mainly by the low standard of living of the Xhosa and coloured people, which included insanitary living conditions and overcrowding in the town.²⁰

¹⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/255 ref. ZH 9/10 Application of an Advance for the carrying out of Schemes and the construction of Dwellings by Local Authority and Appendix: Statement with regard to land. The last of these rondavels were demolished in Ginsberg in 1999. Two examples are, however, still in existence at Bidhli. Cf. Daily Dispatch, 08.07.1999 'Ginsberg, I weep for you' by Xolela Mangcu.

¹⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/255 ref. ZH 9/10 Letter from the Secretary, Central Housing Board to the Town Clerk, 22.09.1922; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/255 ref. ZH 9/10 Letter from RS Gordon, Provincial Secretary, Office of the Administrator to the Town Clerk, 12.10.1922. If race was really not the issue, then the white working class would also logically have been expected to move to the new extension.

¹⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 03.03.1924 p. 3 'Borough Council'.

¹⁹ *Cape Mercury*, 10.09.1924, p. 4 'Borough Council'; KWT Municipal Records Health Report, 1925-26 KWT Urban Area by RN Pringle, MOH.

²⁰ Buffalo City Municipality Archives. King William's Town Health Report, 1925-26 by Dr RN Pringle (MOH).

The Borough Council was under the impression that it would be virtually impossible to manage disease until all coloured and Xhosa residents had been removed from the town proper. It was therefore their desire to 'empty the town of native and coloured people'. According to the *Mercury*, it was hard to justify a distinction between coloured and Xhosa residents, 'because the standard of living of the one is not always higher than the other.' In comparison to Leightonville, no division was made between coloured and Xhosa residents, regardless of education or living conditions. The difference had everything to do with location. Leightonville was situated in the township while Old Town was a suburb of white King William's Town. Although not all coloured people lived in very poor conditions, Dr Pringle and the Borough Council suggested that they all be treated in a similar manner. This apparently benign statement meant that all coloureds were to be treated as if they were a health risk to whites. Dr Pringle could quite easily have conceded that some coloureds lived up to the standards set by whites and should not be treated like the Xhosa or other coloureds. It is clear that for Pringle disease was a convenient pretext for removal based on race, not sanitation.

However, the creation of Leightonville did not remove overcrowded conditions in the town itself. The Sanitary Inspector stated that as soon as residents were removed from overcrowded conditions in the town proper, others took their place.

²¹ Where exactly the new residents originated from is not stated. The dynamic was that shacks and back rooms were a kind of halfway house for people who were newly arrived from rural areas. The white slumlords were reluctant to destroy their shacks because it represented a source of rental income. These dynamics hampered the Borough Council's efforts to eradicate overcrowding in the town proper. In other words, the creation of new suburbs was destined to do exactly the opposite of what was intended. More slums were created instead of the intended purpose of eradicating slums.

The new tenants were subject to Location Regulations, framed under the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. Despite these new regulations, conditions in the

²¹ *Cape Mercury*, 10.09.1924 p. 4 'Borough Council'; *Cape Mercury*, 08.06.1926, p. 2 'Editorial'.

municipal location were not ideal. In October 1925, the Council's Health and General Purposes committee paid a visit to the municipal location. In their subsequent report, the committee stated that the location was in a 'somewhat filthy condition'. Many window panes were absent in the new huts or had been replaced with pieces of tin. It was therefore recommended that a more suitable rubbish deposit site be provided for the location, and that the streets be cleaned as far as possible with the available municipal labour. It was also resolved to replace the broken window panes, but the committee added that tenants should be informed that in future they would be liable for any breakages.²² Housing was provided, but there did not appear to be an available budget for minor repairs. In many cases, residents were too poor to repair broken window panes themselves.

The APO, the ANB and housing for 'respectable Coloured persons'

In September 1923, a deputation of the local branch of the African People's Organisation (APO) met with the Borough Council regarding the new municipal houses at Ginsberg. The APO delegation requested that coloured people occupy the new village exclusively or could be allowed to purchase houses in the new extension.²³ Although unsuccessful, this meeting is significant as it represented the first organised attempt to procure a separate coloured housing scheme since 1895. For the first time in 28 years, the creation of Leightonville provided a real opportunity for the procurement of decent coloured housing. The APO delegation saw the new township as a solution to their proposed removal from Brownlee Station and Ridsdel. Under the auspices of an organised mouthpiece, the meeting signalled the entry of a coloured political organisation into the housing sphere. In the process, the local APO branch strove to use its position of relative privilege in the racial hierarchy in order to obtain access to adequate housing. The period between 1923 and 1946 would be characterised by many more attempts to obtain sufficient housing, preferably with home ownership rights included.

²² CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/142 ref. J1/21. Minutes of Adjourned Meeting of Health and General Purposes committee, 13.10.1925.

²³ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/147 ref. J4/31 Minutes of Health and General Purposes Committee, 17.09.1923. The APO was formerly known as the African Political Organisation.

In October 1925, the APO requested another meeting with the Borough Council. The APO deputation, led by Mr Willie Swartz, appealed to the Council for a tract of land, preferably situated near Leightonville, for the building of an township for 'respectable Coloured persons'.²⁴ By acknowledging a class difference within the coloured community, the coloured elite were accentuating their association with white culture and norms. As seen in the 1895 attempt, the coloured elite were under the impression that their 'respectability' would count in their favour in their quest for a separate housing scheme. The APO supported a scheme built and managed by the residents themselves. Swartz therefore recommended the utilisation of skilled coloured labour, white or coloured supervision and a Board of Management consisting of coloured men.²⁵ The Town Clerk, Mr EJC Woodrow, responded that the matter was under consideration, but no further correspondence was forthcoming.

Ignoring the APO's home ownership quest, the Borough Council continued to enlarge the town's municipal locations. In August 1926, a second £10 000 housing scheme was completed at Leightonville and Ginsberg. A house for the Location Superintendent was erected with the remaining funds. A portion of the new housing scheme, again designed for both coloured and Xhosa families, occupied the site of the old Tsolo location. The huts at Tsolo, which had previously been purchased by the Council, were demolished to make space for 'a better class tenement.'

Leightonville now provided 77 families with semi-detached dwellings, each with three rooms, as well as single dwellings of two rooms. Each house had its own stand, which was fenced in, providing space for a vegetable garden and fowl run. The houses each contained a built-in fireplace and a wooden stove for cooking. No bathing facilities were supplied and ex-residents used their own containers in the outhouses or washed in front of the wooden stoves.²⁶

²⁴ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Resolutions written by W. Swartz, Secretary of the APO, KWT branch, 08.10.1925 to Town Clerk.

²⁵ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21. Resolutions written by W. Swartz, Secretary of the APO, KWT branch, 08.10.1925 to Town Clerk.

²⁶ K Trompetter, F Arends, E Groep: personal interviews, 06.06.2006.

With the new extension of Leightonville completed, the Council opted for an increase in rentals. The tenants responded by voting with their feet, leaving Leightonville 'en masse'. Ironically, this would not have occurred if residents owned their homes. In February 1927, it was reported that three-quarters of the cottages at Leightonville were standing empty. The situation continued and by April 1927, the Borough Ranger submitted a list of the former residents of Leightonville indicating where they presently resided. The residents had mostly removed to Breidbach, the town proper, or Brownlee Station, where cheaper accommodation was available.²⁷ Without home ownership rights the new residents of Leightonville had no ties with the township. The significance of this event is that it demonstrates a strong familial link between the Xhosa and coloured people that enabled families to simply abandon one place and move to another. It demonstrates how unsettled three quarters of the residents were at Leightonville. They had clearly not experienced any sense of settlement, community and contentedness.

The Council accordingly resolved to reduce rentals. The reduction in rent did not improve the situation and by June 1929, it was reported that there were still 35 vacant tenements at Leightonville.²⁸ That any organisation was behind the rental boycott is unclear. No evidence was found of any involvement by the APO.

The new extension of Leightonville had not proved satisfactory. The roofs of the new rondavels in Ginsberg were all leaking, and were therefore not very popular with the inhabitants. According to the Borough Engineer, the considerable number of vacant tenements meant that Leightonville was 'run at an annual loss of several hundred [pounds] a year.'²⁹ Ironically, location housing was costing the Council money that it had not anticipated spending.

In August 1930, the coloured elite once again forwarded a request to the Council to consider an exclusive housing scheme. This time, however, the application fell

²⁷ *Cape Mercury*, 08.02.1927 'Borough Council'; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/147 ref. J4/47 Minutes of Finance and Law Committee, 22.04.1927.

²⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 19.06.1929 p. 1 'Borough Council'; *Cape Mercury*, 18.02.1930 p. 4 'Municipal Parliament', CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Minutes of Meeting of Health and General Purposes committee, 11.03.1930.

²⁹ Buffalo City Municipality Archives. Letter from KWT Town Clerk to Town Clerk of Idutywa, 11.02.1929.

under the auspices of the Afrikaanse Nasionale Bond (ANB). A deputation of the ANB was subsequently invited to discuss the matter with the Council. On 17 December 1930, the ANB deputation presented a list containing the names of 125 coloured people who, it stated, were prepared to take up houses if the Council was prepared to erect them.³⁰

Mr Henry Jasson, as secretary of the local branch of the ANB, stated that the prospective homeowners were interested in purchasing one to three-roomed houses, which included indoor plumbing, and 'a bit of a yard at the back and the front.' Stating that they were 'not people of money means', the ANB enquired what the cost of land and supply of material would amount to if residents erected the cottages themselves. According to Jasson, the ideal location was situated near the blue quarry between the railway line and the main road, adjacent to the Fort Beaufort road, or alternatively, between the abattoir and the brickfields.³¹

Self-help building schemes were only to become fashionable in the 1950s and the Town Clerk, Mr HM Gray, had other plans regarding coloured housing.³² He was concerned about the Leightonville houses that would be vacated through the requested scheme and the accompanying loss of income to the Council. The erection of such a large number of houses was therefore out of the question. Not in any mood to gamble, Gray felt that there was no guarantee that the prospective houses would be taken up.³³ The only alternative, according to him, was if Leightonville and Ginsberg locations could be allocated separately as a coloured township for the former and a 'native location' for the latter.³⁴ It was therefore the Council and not the ANB that suggested segregated housing within in the municipal location.

³⁰ See Appendix 2 for a list of names of people desiring to occupy houses in the proposed scheme.

³¹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Request regarding a suitable building site for the coloured community of KWT by H. Jasson, undated. This is near the present-day Ginsberg Garden of Remembrance, adjacent to the national road to Grahamstown.

³² There were, however, some noted exceptions. The 'Bloemfontein system', for example, aimed at enabling prospective home owners to build houses. Building material and a number of approved building plans were made available at a low interest rate by the local Council. This resulted in large scale homeownership. Cf. Chapter 3. DS Krige 'Segregated City, 1911-1950' in Lemon, Anthony (ed.), *Homes Apart: South Africa's Segregated Cities*, David Philip, Cape Town, 1991, p. 107.

³³ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Memorandum re Housing for coloured classes, 19.12.1930.

³⁴ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Memorandum re Housing for coloured classes, 19.12.1930; *Cape Mercury*, 13.01.1931 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

The Town Council was prepared to consider favourably any applications for the purchase of houses at Leightonville, but it included a few obstacles. Gray advocated the idea of a fixed purchase price inclusive of survey charges whereby tenants would be allowed to pay off the purchase price including interest over a number of years.³⁵

In response to the ANB's application for a separate coloured housing scheme, Mr AM Jabavu wrote to the *Cape Mercury*:

The progressive (sic) Coloured element in King William's Town and its environs is to be congratulated for the wise step taken of consulting the Borough Council on the question of a Coloured village. This is an indication that quite a number of their families have begun to outlive the conditions of squalor that have been the bane of non-European communal settlement. The scheme propounded by the Town Clerk to meet the wishes of these people goes a long way to meet these happy aspirations.³⁶

Jabavu continued, stating that his only criticism was that the Town Council had omitted to consider the fact that Leightonville's Xhosa tenants would have to be removed to Ginsberg. For the tenants with large families the one-room houses at Ginsberg would never be adequate. Jabavu added that the Council's proposal would hardly assist Xhosa tenants in improving their social and economic conditions. He therefore suggested that a township on similar segregatory lines be erected for Xhosa townsmen.

Congratulating the Council upon its proposed housing scheme, the *Mercury* was, like Jabavu, concerned about the present tenants who would be removed from their homes. The local media therefore also advocated the creation of a separate Xhosa township.³⁷ Jabavu was, however, not a Ginsberg resident. In contrast with the local coloured elite, the Xhosa tenants did not voice their opinion on the matter.

³⁵ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Memorandum re Housing for coloured classes, 19.12.1930; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Minutes of Meeting of Health and General Purposes committee, 23.12.1930.

³⁶ *Cape Mercury*, 14.01.1931 p. 3 Letter to the Editor 'Local Coloureds and Natives' by AM Jabavu.

³⁷ *Cape Mercury*, 17.01.1931 p. 2 Editorial 'Housing schemes'.

'Each man should have his own house': Repeated requests for a home ownership scheme

Pleased with the idea of converting Leightonville into a coloured township, Henry Jasson, on behalf of the ANB, had several suggestions to make. He recommended that the Council employ skilled coloured builders and refrain from building semi-detached tenements as 'each man should have his own house.' The Town Clerk replied by offering 14 vacant tenements at Leightonville to the coloured people, pending the adoption of a more definite scheme. Using the rhetoric published in the local media as a convenient excuse, the Borough Council stated that it could not expect tenants to vacate their homes without ensuring that suitable housing was available elsewhere.³⁸ Jasson was quick to point out that it was the Council and not the ANB that had suggested the conversion of Leightonville into a coloured township in the first place. The ANB stated that the Brownlee Station homeowners were not prepared to remove to Leightonville unless the dwellings were available for purchase. They were unwilling to sacrifice their rights to home ownership in exchange for municipal tenancy. If the Council was unable to secure this requirement, the only alternative, according to the ANB, would be to allocate another site for the coloured people.³⁹

At the Council meeting of March 1931, Cr BO Schonegevel came out in support of a coloured housing scheme. He felt that the Council had not fully dealt with the desire of coloured people to become owners of their own property. He was of the opinion that the Council should adopt a policy of selling the Leightonville tenements as suggested by the ANB. He added that through the establishment of a coloured township quite a number of Brownlee Station residents would be accommodated in improved housing.

Clearly dragging its feet, the Council reported in June 1931 that the purchasing scheme was still under consideration. The ANB was, however, not prepared to

³⁸ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from H. Jasson, to Town Clerk, 06.02.1931; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Minutes of Meeting of Health and General Purposes Committee, 17.02.1931.

³⁹ *Cape Mercury*, 16.03.1931 p. 3 'Proposed Coloured township'; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter to Town Clerk from H Jasson, 02.04.1931; *Cape Mercury*, 28.04.1931 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

abandon the issue. Six months later, the Council was finally prepared to discuss the allocation of sites. At the meeting, the Chairman Mr W Swartz, and two ANB committee members, namely Messrs S Botha and B Plaatjes, met with the Mayor, JW Bryson, the local Member of Parliament, Mr ACV Barnes and the Town Clerk. The ANB supplied the Council with the names of 48 people desiring to acquire plots in a coloured township.⁴⁰

At the meeting, the Town Clerk reported that municipal officials, having made personal enquiries at Brownlee Station, determined that only four persons had signified their desire to remove from Brownlee to the proposed township. In reply, an embarrassed ANB argued that the said officials probably had not clearly stated the position to the people of Brownlee, or that the information was gained from irresponsible sources. Faced with a significant number of untenanted dwellings at Leightonville, as well as the financial stringency brought about by the national depression, the Council was, once again, not prepared to embark upon any further housing schemes.⁴¹

A year later, the ANB attempted to employ alternative channels. In May and December 1932, an ANB deputation met with the Chief Native Commissioner and the local Member of Parliament, Mr ACV Barnes, respectively. The deputation expressed its earnest desire to settle as a community apart from the Xhosa. For this reason the ANB was averse to settling in Leightonville. Both gentlemen subsequently corresponded with the Town Council on the matter, but the local authority was determined not to concede.⁴² Paradoxically, the coloured elite had first wanted to remove all Xhosa inhabitants from Leightonville in order to create a coloured suburb. When this was not feasible, they had attempted to establish an exclusive coloured suburb elsewhere. When it subsequently became apparent that they would not have their own suburb, they turned their attention back to Leightonville and the expulsion of the Xhosa. While the Council

⁴⁰ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from Town Clerk to H Jasson, 16.06.1931; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from H. Jasson to Town Clerk, 09.12.1931. See Appendix 3 for a list of prospective plot holders.

⁴¹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Minutes of meeting of Health & General Purposes committee, 15.12.1931; *Cape Mercury*, 22.12.1931 p. 4 'Borough Affairs'.

⁴² *Cape Mercury*, 03.05.1932 p. 1 'Borough Council'.

attempted to remove Xhosa and coloured residents from the town proper, the coloured elite advocated for the displacement of the Xhosa from Leightonville.

In July 1932, Jasson again requested details regarding the selling price and conditions of sale of the houses at Leightonville. He stated that the people of Brownlee Station were unwilling to remove to Leightonville until the matter of a coloured township was finally settled. The Town Clerk now stated that if the applicants were desirous of occupying Leightonville as homeowners, the sale of dwellings might be arranged.⁴³ The Council was willing to sell the two-roomed houses for £150 and the three-roomed dwellings for £180 each, inclusive of all developmental, surveying and transfer fees. The Town Clerk estimated that the total half-yearly payments, including all municipal costs and payable over 15 years, would amount to £9 and £10/10 for the two- and three-roomed houses respectively.⁴⁴

Jasson and the ANB were, however, hesitant to entertain the Council's offer. Many of the buildings were dilapidated, but even if the cottages had been in a first-class condition, the prices would, according to the ANB, still have been excessive. They were able to build new houses at the prices offered. The ANB therefore offered a counter price of £60 for the two-roomed and £120 for the three-roomed cottages.⁴⁵ He invited the Town Clerk to accompany his committee on a site visit in order to discuss its offer. Ignoring the suggestion, the Council instructed the Borough Engineer and the Municipal Ranger to submit a joint report on the condition of the Leightonville dwellings.⁴⁶ It is dubious if the Council was really serious about selling the properties. They probably wanted to illustrate to the coloured elite that the latter did not possess the financial means to buy the properties.

⁴³ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Report by Town Clerk, 21.07.1932 to Health & General Purposes committee.

⁴⁴ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Report by Town Clerk, 21.07.1932 to Health & General Purposes committee.

⁴⁵ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from H Jasson to Town Clerk, 29.08.1932.

⁴⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Minutes of the Health and General Purposes committee, 13.09.1932.

A local King William's Town resident, Mr SM Bennett Ncwana,⁴⁷ responded in the local press by describing the housing scheme as a 'very satisfactory solution to a long contest of rights between white and black in the urban areas.' According to Ncwana coloured people, as law-abiding citizens, were entitled to some measure of consideration, but not at the expense of the Xhosa, who had primary claim to these rights in their own territory. Ncwana noted that Leightonville had been established in the first instance as a place of residential occupation for civilised Xhosa townsmen, under the provisions of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act. This was, of course, not correct. Coloured people had been living in Ginsberg for many years and the new extension of Leightonville was designed for both coloured and Xhosa families. The suggestion that the Xhosa should be precluded from the projected scheme was, according to Ncwana:

monstrously unjust to the Natives as well as to the good name of the town. Security of tenure is what the Natives are clamouring for and to give this inherent right to the small colony of coloureds over the heads of a large population of the Natives, who are helplessly and hopelessly inarticulate, would be tantamount to callous indifference.⁴⁸

Ncwana therefore suggested that Leightonville should be transferred into a freehold property for both Xhosa and coloured residents. Apart from Ncwana and AM Jabavu's recommendations, no request for home ownership in the municipal location was documented originating from the Xhosa residents themselves. Ncwana's explanation for this was that the Xhosa residents of Leightonville and Ginsberg was 'helpless and hopelessly inarticulate.' In a white-dominated town bent on safeguarding white interests, segregated housing was advocated. Access to the limited resource of housing inevitably led to racial tension between self-appointed Xhosa and coloured spokesmen.

In September 1932, the joint report from the Borough Engineer and the Ranger was submitted to the Council. The report stated that, generally speaking, the houses were still in a satisfactory state of repair. Only minor renovations, which could be carried out by the location staff were necessary. The report added that it

⁴⁷ Described by Gary Baines as a political maverick, Ncwana, acted as editor of the ICU's newspaper *The Black Man* in the early 1920s and resided in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, for many years. Cf GF Baines *New Brighton, Port Elizabeth c. 1903-1953: A History of an Urban African Community*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Rhodes University, 1994, p. 165. From 1932 to 1934 Ncwana was living in 21 Smith Street, King William's Town serving in different capacities – as ex-Sergeant of the 12th SANLC, as member of the Joint European-Bantu Council and as Secretary of the Location Advisory Board.

⁴⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 29.08.1932 p. 2 'The Location Problem' by SM Bennett Ncwana.

had to be remembered that the cottages had been built using inferior semi-skilled labour and consequently the buildings were of a very poor class. The Council therefore regretted that it could not depart from the original terms of purchase.⁴⁹ A clearly frustrated Jasson replied that no request had been made for the houses to be renovated. The ANB's Secretary, Mr Benjamin Plaatjies, made several subsequent appeals for a home ownership scheme. The Council was however, not prepared to embark upon any further negotiations.⁵⁰ It would appear that it sometimes suited the Council to portray the Leightonville houses as neglected and at other times as in a satisfactory state of repair – depending on the purpose of the enquiry. The Council would not relinquish ownership. Ownership equated with control of the location and its inhabitants.

During the period under discussion, various individuals and organisations attempted to convince the Council to improve coloured housing conditions. In September 1932, the residents appealed to the Council for a reduction in rentals. Mr J Arkell,⁵¹ a coloured resident of Leightonville, made the appeal on behalf of the tenants of both Ginsberg and Leightonville. Concerned about the loss of revenue, the Council stated that it was unable to comply with the request. The Brownlee Station-dominated ANB concentrated its efforts on obtaining a separate housing scheme. No evidence was found, in the period under discussion, of any ANB mobilisation towards obtaining lower municipal rates for the Leightonville tenants. The above-mentioned attempt, although unsuccessful, also proves that a coloured resident, independent of the ANB committee, was willing to approach the Council on behalf of both coloured and Xhosa inhabitants.

In May 1934, the Leightonville Tenants' League, through the Location Advisory Board, subsequently made representations to the Council for the purchasing of their holdings. Mr William Read, a member of the Location Board, stated that the conversion of Leightonville into a freehold property for both coloured and Xhosa inhabitants would relieve the Council of incurring any further liability in respect of

⁴⁹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Joint report by Ranger & Forester and Borough Engineer, 24.09.1932.

⁵⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 01.11.1932 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'; *Cape Mercury*, 13.12.1932 p. 4 'Municipal Parliament'; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter to B Plaatjies (ANB Assistant Secretary) from Town Clerk, 02.11.1932.

⁵¹ Identified as Mr Jack Arkell by Winnie Arkell (nee Read): personal interview, 06.06.2006; *Cape Mercury*, 20.04.1932 p. 4 'Borough Council'; *Cape Mercury*, 03.08.1932 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

Leightonville. This attempt is of interest as it represents the only documented example of a joint Xhosa-coloured attempt to procure home ownership rights in Leightonville. It is significant because it indicates that the residents of Leightonville, as opposed to the inhabitants of Brownlee Station, the ANB and self-appointed spokesmen like Ncwana, did not necessarily desire racially exclusive housing schemes. The main objective for the people of Leightonville was the procurement of homeownership.

'Nothing in the world will make them go to Leightonville': the 1934 proposed scheme

It is unclear if the Location Advisory Board made any further representations to the Borough Council, but the newly established Coloured Welfare Association (CWA) was quick to make use of the opportunity.

In July 1934, a CWA deputation, introduced by the Rev CJ Steyn of the local Dutch Reformed Church, discussed the matter of a coloured housing scheme with the Town Council. The deputation consisted of Messrs NP Arends (Chair), B Plaatjes (Hon Secretary) as well as W Swartz and JE Pieterse. According to Rev Steyn, the coloured people were scattered all over town and in different locations. It was their wish to have a separate township.⁵² As the Council was considering the reorganisation of the locations, he thought that the time was opportune to bring the matter forward. Arends subsequently read a specially drawn up memorandum requesting that the township be situated on the West Bank of the Buffalo River, between the railway line and the road to Grahamstown. It advocated a Council-built housing scheme according to Council-approved building plans. Provision was, however, also to be made for owner-built houses. The memorandum suggested a monthly repayment system extending over a period of 30 years. It advocated two- to four-roomed houses with indoor plumbing built by coloured labour. The petitioners also supported a properly constituted managing body. Focusing on their closer cultural links with whites, it was stated that the idea of a headman was resented. The Mayor informed the deputation that the Council would 'do its best for the coloured

⁵² CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21/06 Memo submitted by CWA.

people' and that they would be advised in due course what action had been taken.⁵³

In a letter to the local media, signed by 'H', the writer stated that it would be to the benefit of all races to be separated by law and this scheme would anticipate this fact. Foreseeing financial problems, 'H' was, however, unsure how a single house could be built without the surety of capital.⁵⁴ The Editor of the *Cape Mercury* was also of the opinion that this ambitious scheme entailed some financial difficulties, but he did see the proposed scheme as a possible solution to the problem of Brownlee Station. Commending the coloured people for their enterprise, the pro-segregationist *Mercury* felt that the coloured people of King William's Town were 'anxious to be separated from Natives so that they can develop along their own lines.'⁵⁵

In July 1934, Arends reported that subsequent to their interview with the Town Council, the CWA had met with about 80 residents of Brownlee Station and other signatories of the petition. Arends was of the opinion that the issue of Brownlee Station and the proposed township was so closely linked that they needed to be considered in conjunction with each other. He stressed that the people of Brownlee were prepared to sacrifice their houses if the Council was prepared to meet their request for a coloured settlement.⁵⁶ As in the case of Brownlee and Ridsdel, the Council wanted to place the settlement on the west bank of the Buffalo, on a narrow strip of land, abutting Leightonville. The Location Superintendent was seemingly turning a deaf ear to any alternative site. Favouring the West Bank site, described in the CWA petition, Arends stated that the petitioners regretfully rejected the Leightonville site. The main objection against a proposed housing scheme at Leightonville was that the proposed site was simply inadequate. There was insufficient space for 50 houses laid out with gardens. Arends stated that the fact that the Council's suggestion to 'place people on top of your main sewerage – which constantly overflows' would not

⁵³ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Memo submitted by CWA. The 73 signatures included 49 families from Brownlee, 3 from Ridsdel, 9 from Old Town, 5 from the rest of the town proper and 3 from Bellstone. See Appendix 4 for signatories.

⁵⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 12.07.1934 p. 3 Letter to the Editor 'Coloured Township' by 'H'.

⁵⁵ *Cape Mercury*, 16.07.1934 p. 2 Editorial 'A Coloured Township'.

⁵⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from NP Arends to Town Clerk, 14.07.1934.

ensure a healthy population. The petitioners also objected to the class of people who resided at the present location due to the unmistakable signs of drunkenness prevailing there. Arends added that 'having had dealings with my people for a lifetime I feel convinced that nothing in the world will make them go to the Leightonville site or anywhere near the present locations.'⁵⁷

Arends, through the Brownlee Station-dominated CWA, thus exhibited a noted class distinction between Brownlee Station and the municipal tenants of Leightonville. Group consciousness, based on place of residence and the quest for home ownership rights, thus overrode coloured solidarity. It is clear that the CWA would only mobilise round coloured identity when it suited its desire to procure decent housing.

The Borough Engineer again stated his preference for the site adjacent to Leightonville. He was of the opinion that the applicants had raised no solid objection to the site.⁵⁸ He found it difficult to understand why the applicants were set against a housing scheme in the proximity of the existing locations, when most of the applicants were living alongside Xhosa people at Brownlee Location. The applicants were, however, determined not to accept the site. The Borough Engineer stated that if the applicants were prepared to pay the additional costs for the preferred site, the Council was willing to favourably consider the matter.⁵⁹ He accordingly drew up a preliminary estimate for two to four-roomed cottages including a bathroom, electric light and ceilings. The annual repayment if calculated over 40 years was as follows: two-roomed cottage (£19), three-roomed dwelling (£22) and four-roomed house (£24) respectively.⁶⁰

The costs of these houses should be viewed in contrast to the average salary of a coloured worker. In April 1934, coloured males working at the Kaffrarian Boot Factory earned an annual income of £43 3s 5d. Henry Jasson had not

⁵⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref ZH 9/21 Letter from NP Arends to Town Clerk, 14.07.1934.

⁵⁸ H Giliomee, 'Non-Racial Franchise and Afrikaner and Coloured Identities, 1910-1994' in *African Affairs*, vol. 94, no 375, April 1995, p. 201.

⁵⁹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21. Report by Borough Engineer to Works Committee, 20.07.1934.

⁶⁰ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21. Report by Borough Engineer to Works Committee, 20.07.1934.

exaggerated when he stated in December 1931 that they were 'not people of money means.'⁶¹

By August 1934, Arends provided the Council with a list of 12 to 15 signatories who were willing to deposit amounts ranging from £5 to £50 as down payments on the houses. According to Arends, he had every hope of obtaining additional names. Trusting that the scheme would come to fruition at the earliest date, the CWA expressed its appreciation for the Council's willingness to meet the wishes of the applicants. Arends's gratitude was, however, rather premature.⁶² It soon became clear that the town's white ratepayers strongly objected to the suggested West Bank scheme.

A letter from 'West Banker' in the *Mercury* emphasised the extent of local objection to the erection of a coloured housing scheme on the West Bank. Concerned about the effect the proposed scheme would have on property valuations, the unidentified writer stated that the residents of West Bank were set against the development.⁶³ In this connection, the Borough Council received a petition, signed by 82 local burgesses, who also strongly objected to the proposed housing scheme on the West Bank. The petitioners stated that they were concerned about the value of their properties, the safety of their women and children and the fact that liquor restrictions were not imposed on coloured people. The CWA viewed the petition 'with a feeling of deep astonishment' and submitted a counter-petition, signed by 90 white ratepayers, stating that it welcomed the proposed housing scheme. The petitioners considered the proposal to be a genuine solution to the Brownlee Station question and hoped that the scheme would improve the appalling conditions under which the coloured population was living. Arends hoped that the Council would intervene in the matter. He trusted the Council to 'take courage in both hands' and to proceed with the scheme under review.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Cape Mercury*, 20.04.1934 p. 4 'Boot Factory Fire. Relief Committee Meets'; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Request regarding a suitable building site for the coloured community of KWT by H Jasson, undated; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees, Kaffrarian Museum, 08.07.1931.

⁶² CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from NP Arends to Town Clerk, 02.08.1934.

⁶³ *Cape Mercury*, 22.08.1934 p. 3 'Coloured Township' Letter from 'West Banker'.

⁶⁴ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from NP Arends to Town Clerk, 20.08.1934.

Arends was again too optimistic. The former petition, including the names of a few influential businessmen, was sufficient to convince the Council not to continue with the proposed scheme. Buckling under the pressure exerted by the white ratepayers, the Council stated that it was now of the opinion that the site did not meet its approval and it could therefore not proceed with the housing scheme on the suggested site. A disappointed Arends insinuated that it was a great pity that members of the Council allowed themselves to be dictated to by 'outside interference' on matters of policy. Property prices were, of course a determining factor. The coloured people simply did not possess the financial means to realise the proposed scheme. The petition blatantly professed that a coloured settlement was viewed as a kind of blight on the landscape and that property values would automatically be reduced when coloured families moved into an area. According to Sheila Patterson, this was indeed the case.⁶⁵ A white-dominated property market would have reacted negatively to the erection of a coloured housing scheme. The CWA, on the other hand, felt that it would be a waste of time to investigate any area immediately surrounding the municipal location for the establishment of a housing scheme. It was, however, prepared to inspect alternative sites with the Council.⁶⁶

The local authorities now suggested a site east of Leightonville, in the vicinity of Gillam's Drift, as ideal for the establishment of a coloured housing scheme. The present tenants would, however, have to be removed from the proposed site. Eager to establish a housing scheme, the CWA indicated its acceptance of the site.⁶⁷

Gillam's Drift was in due course also deemed unsuitable, especially after the local dairy strongly objected to the proposed scheme, adjacent to its premises. A petition, signed by 104 residents at the south end of the town now also indicated their objection. The petitioners were, again concerned about property depreciation and the spoiling of the immediate area due to the presence of a

⁶⁵ S Patterson, *Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People Within the Structure of the Union of South Africa*, Grove Press, New York, 1953, p. 119, 284.

⁶⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from NP Arends to Town Clerk, 24.08.1934.

⁶⁷ *Cape Mercury*, 11.09.1934 p. 2 Editorial 'Coloured and Native Housing'.

coloured location.⁶⁸ The white ratepayers made their influence felt and the Borough Engineer acted accordingly. He was now unsure if the scheme was affordable and therefore needed to scrutinise the financial position of the 70 applicants. The estimated capital cost for the scheme was accordingly substantially reduced from £35 500 to an estimated £27 250. The Borough Engineer was of the opinion that even this scheme was beyond the reach of the applicants. According to him, it would be impossible to establish a township on a new site unless the scheme was heavily subsidised. Upon enquiry, the Engineer ascertained that the Central Housing Board did not subsidise any home ownership or self-build schemes. Without such a subsidy, the Borough Engineer felt that it was useless to consider further schemes of this nature.⁶⁹ It was only after the receipt of the petitions from the local burgesses that the Borough Engineer concluded that financing the scheme was not within the scope of the applicants.

Arends acknowledged that the proposed monthly repayment was totally beyond the reach of the 'most sanguine Coloured person in the town.' He therefore proposed that the scheme be repaid over 30 years. He also stated that it had to be remembered that there were fully-qualified artisans who were willing to erect the cottages at a much lower cost.⁷⁰ The petition and the high monthly repayments were apparently enough reasons for the Council to reject the proposed site at Gilliam's Drift.⁷¹

The Town Clerk subsequently suggested that his original idea of converting Leightonville into a coloured township be adopted. The suggested scheme would provide for the improvement of existing tenements, as well as the erection of additional housing, totalling 93 cottages. Assuming that a sub-economic loan was available from the Central Housing Board, the estimated cost of the work was £9 000. To accommodate Xhosa families removed from Leightonville, it was

⁶⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 13.11.1934 p. 2 Editorial 'Coloured Housing Scheme'; *Cape Mercury*, 13.11.1934 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

⁶⁹ *Cape Mercury*, 12.02.1935 Editorial p. 2 'Coloured Housing Scheme'.

⁷⁰ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from NP Arends to Town Clerk, 15.11.1934.

⁷¹ Ironically, this would, in 1959, become the site of Schornville, a coloured township catering for self-built accommodation and Council let housing.

deemed necessary to extend Ginsberg. The Council agreed to this proposal and the *Mercury* reported that:

We trust that in due course the coloured population will find it possible to accept the Leightonville scheme. There is no lack of sympathy with their aspirations for decent living conditions, but the problem is essentially one of finance, and Leightonville seems to be the limit to which the town as such can be expected to go.⁷²

Matters were, however, far from satisfactory in Leightonville. In September 1934, the European and Bantu Joint Council forwarded a report made subsequent to an inspection of Leightonville. The report listed, for example, the use of inferior workmanship and materials, missing gutters and leaking chimneys. The Joint Council suggested that Borough Councillors should undertake regular visits to the municipal location in order to ensure the proper upkeep of municipal holdings. In reply, the Borough Engineer acknowledged the use of cheap and inefficient labour. As a result, 'a European standard of building could hardly be expected in a native location.'⁷³

With all other options eliminated, the conversion of Leightonville into a coloured township conveniently suited the Council's location arrangements. It was now free to concentrate its efforts on rehousing the residents of Ridsdel location on the west bank of the Buffalo River. Desperate for access to decent housing, the CWA accordingly consented.

"A valuable health insurance cover": The Ridsdel scheme

By February 1934, the Borough Council was considering two housing alternatives for the proposed removal of Ridsdel location. Residents could occupy the vacant tenements at Leightonville and Ginsberg or a new housing scheme could be adopted. The vacant tenements were, however, insufficient to house all the people of Ridsdel. The latter scheme was to consist of an extension of the existing West Bank location. It was to include running water and communal

⁷² *Cape Mercury*, 12.02.1935 Editorial p. 2 'Coloured Housing Scheme'.

⁷³ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/25 Letter from the Town Clerk to the Rev D Martyn, Hon Secretary European and Bantu Joint Council, 13.11.1934; Report on Inspection of Leightonville Location, 08.09.1934.

latrines and was to be financed through a government loan and repaid at a low-interest rate.⁷⁴

The residents of Ridsdel were very reluctant to remove to Ginsberg location. Alternative sites, situated outside the municipal boundaries, were suggested, but the Borough Council was set on the idea of removal to the West Bank. The people of Ridsdel were unwilling to adhere to increased municipal and police supervision. They objected to the restriction on their freedom which, according to the Council, produced the menace in the first place. The loss of home ownership was especially lamented. The Council was of the opinion that it was 'neither desirable nor practicable' for the residents to build their own houses. It was, according to the local authorities, impossible for the residents to build houses cheaper than the Council was able to do under the proposed sub-economic scheme.⁷⁵ Ignoring the objections, a determined Council accordingly tasked the Borough Engineer with a draft municipal housing scheme.

The proposed scheme provided for the accommodation of 60 families in one to three-roomed brick cottages with wood and iron roofs. No separate provision was made for the coloured inhabitants of Ridsdel, probably because they constituted such a small minority. In fact, only two homeowners applied for compensation for their Ridsdel homes, namely Annie Klaas and Henry Elson. The number of coloured tenants originating from Ridsdel is unknown. The proposed monthly rentals for the tenements were as follows: Brick rooms (10s), two-roomed cottages (15s) and three-roomed houses (£1). The new housing scheme was enthusiastically recommended and accordingly approved by the Central Housing Board.⁷⁶

Ironically, the new tenements for the residents of Ridsdel, built due to the removal enabled by the 1934 Slums Act, did not comply with many of the sanitary requirements detailed in the Act. The Slums Act declared, for example, that slum conditions existed if one sanitary convenience was provided for more

⁷⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 20.02.1934 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

⁷⁵ *Cape Mercury*, 30.06.1934 p. 3.

⁷⁶ *Cape Mercury*, 24.03.1934 p. 2 Editorial New Location Scheme.

than twelve people. The new extension provided Ginsberg with six sanitary conveniences for 60 relocated families - clearly constituting a slum, according to the regulations of the Act.⁷⁷ It is doubtful if either the local authorities or the Central Housing Board took note of this fact. In both the case of Brownlee and Ridsdel, the Council spent more time in removing residents than in the actual matter of rehousing. Empowered by the Slums Act, the local authorities only applied the provisions of the Act when they chose to do so. The Act was therefore open to interpretation and even abuse.

In September 1936, the Ridsdel housing scheme was completed and the residents were able to remove to their new homes in Ginsberg. In a letter to the *Mercury* a local resident, Mr J McKee Sinclair, observed that conditions in the municipal locations had improved remarkably. Voicing the sentiments of the average white ratepayer, he added that:

These locations are models among propositions of a similar nature anywhere in South Africa ... The moderate expenditure incurred is fully justified if only as a valuable health insurance 'cover' of our borough, which is in close proximity.⁷⁸

It is true that the general quality of housing for the people of Ridsdel improved due to their removal. Overcrowding was regulated and additional sanitary conveniences were supplied. It is clear, however, that it was still not on par with sanitary requirements as described in the Slums Act. Ironically, the Council, bent on safeguarding white King William's Town, provided a location that was not the 'model' it was professed to be.

'Permanent tenancy ... is a one-sided affair'

In September 1936, a petition, signed by a number of coloured municipal tenants, was submitted for the attention of the Council. The tenants wanted to purchase their respective dwellings through a system of hire purchase stretching over a period of 15 years. Without the inclusion of surveying or title deed costs

⁷⁷ Section 1.2 and the Second Schedule of the Slums Act. Act No 53, 1934; *Cape Mercury*, 23.03.1934 p.

¹ 'Location Improvements. Borough Engineer's scheme approved by Borough Council'.

⁷⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 03.10.1936 p. 4 Correspondence from J. McKee Sinclair.

for every plot, the scheme was considered to be impractical and was accordingly rejected by the Borough Council.⁷⁹

The petitioners responded with another suggestion. They now offered to buy the cottages, but pay rent on the site.⁸⁰ The Council resolved to adhere to its previous decision. The petition was, however, sufficient to raise the concern of one councillor. Cr C Alperstein felt that the proposal should receive their sympathetic consideration. He was of the opinion that the solution to the removal of Brownlee Station might lie in a home-ownership scheme at Leightonville. The offered amount was, however, far below interest and redemption of the original cost of the tenements. The Council would lose control of the cottages and if they became dilapidated it would be powerless to intervene. According to the Council, the matter of sub-letting and the division of properties also complicated matters.⁸¹

In a subsequent letter to the *Mercury*, 'H' made several suggestions in order to simplify home ownership at Leightonville. The writer stated that he did not believe 'in permanent tenancy' for the simple reason that it was 'a one-sided affair.'⁸² The very concept of private property was that there should be as little control as possible and the proposed home ownership scheme would therefore be unacceptable to the Council. The Council wanted to control coloured people by housing them in such a way as to make them dependent on whites. The Council was, after all, moving away from private ownership in the locations. Having had to deal with the complicated matter of Brownlee and Ridsdel probably only reinforced this opinion. Renting the site while purchasing the building was, of course, also impractical. Even when the payments were completed, the tenants would still not secure possession of the land.

It is clear that the Council was not prepared to invest any municipal funding into a coloured home-ownership scheme. In the absence of any national government

⁷⁹ *Cape Mercury*, 15.09.1936 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

⁸⁰ This was known as the 'Bloemfontein system'. The house belonged to the householder, but no transfer was effected. It involved an assisted building scheme aimed at enabling prospective home owners to build houses. The building material and a choice of approved building plans were made available at a low interest rate by the City Council.

⁸¹ *Cape Mercury*, 13.10.1936 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

⁸² *Cape Mercury*, 19.10.1936 p. 3 'The Locations and Ownership' by 'H'.

funding for home-ownership schemes, the cash-strapped tenants had no choice but to abide by the decision of the Council. In the process, the matter of homeownership was once again shelved.⁸³

The Brownlee Station removal scheme and the CWA

In February 1938, when removal was imminent through the implementation of the 1934 Slums Act, the Council made preparations for the re-housing of the Brownlee Station residents. The Borough Engineer was accordingly instructed to submit a report detailing a draft re-housing scheme. With the support of the CWA, the Borough Engineer was further instructed to reserve Leightonville entirely for coloured people. The Xhosa residents of Leightonville were to be transferred to Ginsberg.⁸⁴ Through the political involvement of the CWA, the coloured people of Leightonville would in future be assured of exclusive access to better housing than the Xhosa occupants.

In June 1938, a CWA deputation waited upon the Council in order to discuss the suggested housing scheme. Mr Swartz, as the spokesperson for the deputation, stressed its desire to purchase dwellings if financed from housing funds. The Council reiterated that the amount involved in the purchase of dwellings, even under the housing scheme, was, as far as could be ascertained, beyond the means of the majority of the people concerned. The Council would, however, be willing to build houses suited to their requirements.⁸⁵ The meeting agreed that the CWA be given 14 days in which to consider the matter and that it be allowed to make further representations to the Council. The deputation was assured that it would be consulted in connection with any further developments.

The CWA subsequently forwarded a list of recommendations concerning the new municipal houses at Leightonville. Copies of the CWA's recommendations were circulated, but it was resolved that any consideration would be deferred pending

⁸³ *Cape Mercury*, 10.11.1936 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

⁸⁴ *Cape Mercury*, 15.02.1938 p. 2 Editorial 'Brownlee Location'; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/144 ref. J3/16 Letter from Town Clerk to Borough Engineer, 29.03.1938 Re Brownlee Station; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH 9/27 Letter from NP Arends to the Town Clerk, 22.03.1938.

⁸⁵ *Cape Mercury*, 14.06.1938 p. 1 'Municipal Affairs'.

the receipt of a list of prospective tenants and the wages earned by such persons. The CWA accordingly provided a list of 62 prospective tenants, 41 of whom originated from Brownlee Station. The remaining families lived in town or in Gillam's Drift. The Borough Engineer was, however, willing to make provision only for the Brownlee Station families.⁸⁶ None of the CWA's written recommendations were adopted and it would be several months before its suggestions would again be discussed.⁸⁷

In November 1938, the Central Housing Board interviewed the Borough Engineer in Pretoria in connection with the new housing scheme. Apart from some minor changes, it approved the two to four-roomed types in the semi-detached style. Specified rentals were set in the range of £18 to £21. It was felt that as the scheme would be financed from sub-economic loans, the rentals would be within the means of the occupants.⁸⁸

In February 1939, Mr Swartz, on behalf of the CWA, again enquired about the Council's position on the purchasing of property by coloured people. According to Swartz, members of the CWA would be in a position to purchase property when compensation for the Brownlee Station dwellings had been paid.⁸⁹ This was, indeed the case. Eleven Brownlee Station homeowners were compensated between £50 and £155 for their homes and were therefore in a position to buy property. Many others would have been able to pay a decent deposit on a house.⁹⁰ The Borough Engineer reported that the purchase of properties was not possible under the sub-economic loan as such a scheme could only be utilised for the erection of houses to be let by the local authority. The Council was therefore unable to sell these properties. The Borough Engineer was, however, of the opinion that it might be possible to provide land for building purposes

⁸⁶ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH/9/25 Report from Borough Engineer to Works Committee, Borough Council. 03.11.1938; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from Chief Native Commissioner, Dept of Native Affairs to Chief Native Commissioner, KWT, 31.07.1939.

⁸⁷ *Cape Mercury*, 14.09.1938 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'; *Cape Mercury*, 16.11.1938, p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

⁸⁸ CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3 Letter from Town Clerk and Town Engineer to Mayor and Council, 25.11.1938; CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3 Letter from Acting Provincial Secretary, office of the Administrator, to the Town Clerk, 19.01.1939.

⁸⁹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH/9/25 Letter from W. Swartz to Town Clerk, 20.02.1939. Nine Brownlee Station homeowners were compensated between £65 to £155 for their homes and were therefore in a position to buy property. Many others would have been able to pay a hefty deposit on a house.

⁹⁰ CA vol. 3/KWT ref. 4/1/146 Brownlee Mission Station: Owners' Particulars, 1938 and Settled Claims, 1940.

through a leasehold agreement. The prospective homeowners could be situated on land adjacent to Leightonville where they would be allowed to build homes for themselves, without loan assistance. The Borough Engineer therefore recommended that interested parties should apply to the Council for building sites and the matter could then be investigated further.⁹¹

In March 1939, the CWA had several changes to suggest to the proposed plans for Leightonville. The prospective tenants unanimously rejected the conversion of semi-detached dwellings. Not a single applicant desired to live under such conditions. Swartz was of the opinion that these buildings were not advantageous to the public health of the people concerned, as they encouraged overcrowding.⁹² The CWA was also not in favour of the conversion of semi-detached cottages, as this would necessitate a reduction in the size of existing plots. An ex-resident, Mrs Florrie Arends, corroborated the unpopularity of the semi-detached houses, but added that a shortage of housing left tenants with little choice. Referring to the semi-detached cottages she said: 'We didn't want to live there, but we had no choice. We had to accept it.' In response, the Borough Engineer stated that he could not understand why the people objected to the semi-detached houses. The Port Elizabeth Municipality provided semi-detached houses for all race groups and this was often referred to as a model example to other municipalities.

Other suggestions listed by the CWA, such as the proposed sharing of sanitary conveniences between families, were also not acceded to. It was stated to be too costly.⁹³ Ironically, this measure again did not comply with the sanitary provisions provided for in the Slums Act. The conditions for removal were not the same as the conditions for resettlement. The Borough Engineer was not prepared to implement any further changes. The Central Housing Board had already approved the schedule of buildings and any alterations would necessitate a new application. He added that this would lead to a considerable delay in proceeding

⁹¹ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH/9/25 Report to the Health and General Purposes Committee by HM Tait, 25.02.1939; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH/9/27 Minutes of Health and General Purposes committee, 28.02.1939.

⁹² CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH/9/27 Letter from W Swartz to Town Clerk, 14.03.1939; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH/9/27 Letter from Town Clerk to W Swartz, 17.03.1939.

⁹³ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH/9/27 Letter from W Swartz to Town Clerk, 14.03.1939.

with the scheme.⁹⁴ Ironically, the Central Housing Board was under the impression that the proposed scheme was built in order to suit the requirements of the prospective tenants. At no time during the deliberations was any correspondence received from the Xhosa inhabitants of Brownlee Station regarding the proposed building plans. The Xhosa tenants residing at Leightonville also did not query their proposed removal to the smaller tenements at Ginsberg. The CWA was able to inspect the proposed plans and made several recommendations, but this occurred after the Housing Board had approved the scheme. Alterations could therefore not be effected.⁹⁵

The CWA was disappointed that the Council was prepared to proceed only with the housing of the inhabitants of Brownlee Station. Criticising the Council for dealing with coloured housing in such a piecemeal manner, Swartz stated that applicants residing in town were just as anxious as the people of Brownlee to remove to Leightonville. A short-sighted Council was only concerned with the re-housing of the Brownlee Station residents. In the process, an opportunity to deal with the lack of coloured housing in the town proper was lost.

By June 1939, the matter of coloured housing was again discussed in the Council Chambers. The Deputy Mayor, M Shapiro, stated that he could not understand why the coloured people rejected the notion of semi-detached houses. Surely there could be no objection to such houses, as long as they provided suitable accommodation. It was felt that they had to be guided by the capacity of prospective tenants to pay rent. Accommodation therefore needed to be within the means of the prospective tenants.⁹⁶ The prospective tenants' capacity to pay for the improvements through a home-ownership scheme, made possible by the Brownlee Station compensation payouts, was again ignored. Cr C Alperstein commented that the plans for the coloured housing scheme should have been shown to the CWA before being sent to the Central Housing Board. These were, after all, the people who would have to live in the tenements. He thought their grievances in this respect were quite reasonable.

⁹⁴ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH/9/27 Letter from Town Clerk to W Swartz, 17.03.1939.

⁹⁵ CA CCK vol. 119 ref. N9/15/3 Letter to HA Fagan, Minister of Native Affairs from the Rev James AS Rune, 14.12.1938.

⁹⁶ *Cape Mercury*, 13.06.1939 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

In reply, the Borough Engineer, HM Tait, argued that he had consulted with the CWA regarding Leightonville. The only plans, according to Tait, which had been forwarded to the Housing Board without prior consultation, were those for the conversion of semi-detached houses. Ironically, these were the houses that caused so much discontent. Previous to that he had not only consulted with the people, but two sample houses had been put up, and all the CWA had to say was that they were too dear. People seemed to think that the Council was building new semi-detached houses, but it was simply converting semi-detached cottages. The Town Clerk stated that he had invited the coloured community to discuss the matter with him at their convenience, but this had been ignored.⁹⁷ Conveniently forgetting all the previous requests for home ownership, the Mayor, AF Symons, now enquired if the Council would allow coloured people to build their own houses. The Deputy Mayor replied that the Council was not committed to the principle, but permission could be given, provided that the buildings conformed to the municipal building regulations.

Swartz stated that it was ironic that whenever the CWA seemed to be making headway in its negotiations concerning a home-ownership scheme, some obstacle was placed in its way. This was, according to him, the sole reason why such a scheme had never reached fruition in the past.⁹⁸ Ironically, many of the erstwhile Brownlee homeowners were now in a position to purchase or build their own homes with the compensation money received. The Council was, however, bent upon re-housing the people of Brownlee in municipal tenements. Not only did the Council not seriously consider home ownership, but the CWA's recommendations for municipal tenements were also ignored.

Under Curfew Signal

Mrs Molly Botha recalled her family's removal to Leightonville just after the outbreak of the First World War in 1939. As soon as a new tenement was completed on the West Bank, it was let to the people of Brownlee Station.⁹⁹ It soon became clear that the new housing scheme would not provide sufficient

⁹⁷ *Cape Mercury*, 13.06.1939 p. 4 'Borough Council'.

⁹⁸ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH/9/27 Letter from W Swartz to Town Clerk, 12.05.1939.

⁹⁹ M Botha: personal interview: 06.06.2006.

housing for the displaced residents. Cr AS Weir was of the opinion that if residents had supplied the Council with their housing requirements during the scheme's planning stages, the shortfall would not have taken place. The patronising Council was not willing to take the blame for the shortfall, even though the result of inadequate planning and untimely consultation with the prospective tenants was quite evident.

It was now crucial to erect additional cottages in the municipal location. Furthermore, if the Council was serious about the removal of Xhosa townsmen, in accordance with the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act, more municipal housing would be required. The Borough Council accordingly applied for a £23 000 loan in order to provide for 100 additional houses.¹⁰⁰ However, the Council was to be disappointed in this matter. In June 1940, the Central Housing Board turned down its application. The Council could effect no further building improvements until additional funding was obtained.¹⁰¹

The shortage of accommodation meant that not all coloured inhabitants from Brownlee Station were housed in Leightonville after 1939.¹⁰² The Davids family resided at Ginsberg for several years. Mr Charlie Davids recalled that the rondavels in Ginsberg were very uncomfortable. Having moved from Brownlee Station, where the family had had a large house, they now had to adapt to living in one room. The family subsequently moved to a two-roomed cottage in Leightonville. This probably occurred in January 1945 when additional houses were erected in the township. The Xhosa tenants of Ginsberg did not, of course, have this option. The larger tenements at Leightonville, with its enclosed yards and better facilities were only available to coloured tenants.

The resettlement of Brownlee Station residents in Ginsberg and Leightonville respectively encouraged feelings of division based on race. The concrete divide between the two settlements reinforced racial boundaries and, in the process,

¹⁰⁰ *Cape Mercury*, 14.02.1940 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'; *Cape Mercury*, 12.03.1940 p. 3 'Municipal Affairs'.

¹⁰¹ *Cape Mercury*, 20.03.1940 'Municipal Affairs'; *Cape Mercury*, 13.08.1940 'Municipal Affairs'; *Cape Mercury*, 11.03.1941 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'; *Cape Mercury*, 11.06.1940 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

¹⁰² The following families were listed as living in Ginsberg: Davids, Cumming, Maggie Smith, Mathilda Groep and Tom Wall. CP Davids, F Arends, W Arkell, E Groep, M Botha: personal interviews 24.03.2006 and 06.06.2006.

gave impetus to increased race consciousness in King William's Town. The relationship between the residents was described as very amicable. The social networks established in the communal living space of Brownlee Station were continued in the municipal location, but they were now physically divided.

Some families adapted to Leightonville better than others. According to Mr William Nelson, it all depended on one's individual circumstances. If one moved from a large house, and one's family now had to adapt to a smaller space, it was difficult. There were only a few larger houses and so, even if one wanted to move to a larger tenement, it was not always available.¹⁰³ In general, however, most of the Leightonville houses were more spacious and better-built than their erstwhile Brownlee homes. The plastered houses, street lamps, running water and showers present at the relocated site were seen as an exciting novelty.¹⁰⁴ Many of the children were very pleased with their new homes, but the older people struggled to adapt to the new environment. An ex-resident described that his grandmother was very unhappy at Leightonville. She felt that her freedom was taken from her, that her movements were restricted. Now in her old age, she had to abide by regulations that hadn't existed at Brownlee Station.¹⁰⁵ It was, however, the irreplaceable loss of home ownership that was especially lamented by the coloured residents. Referring to Brownlee Station an ex-resident stated: 'Without land, a man remains poor.'¹⁰⁶

In July 1941, the Borough Engineer had an interview with the Central Housing Board in Pretoria in connection with additional location housing. It was clear that the Board had raised its standard of housing considerably since the last scheme had been approved. The Board stated, for example, that the number of communal water closets would have to be increased, but concrete floors as well as pre-cast concrete roofs were recommended instead of the more expensive wooden floors and iron roofs.¹⁰⁷ Under the new policy, new houses would cost

¹⁰³ CP Davids, WA Nelson, F Arends, W Arkell, E Groep, M Botha: personal interviews 24.03.2006, 31.03.2006 and 06.06.2006.

¹⁰⁴ S Smith: personal interview, 24.03.2006.

¹⁰⁵ WA Nelson: personal interview, 31.03.2006.

¹⁰⁶ WA Nelson: personal interview, 31.03.2006.

¹⁰⁷ Iron was almost unobtainable because of the prevailing war conditions and therefore more expensive than concrete.

substantially more, but it was not possible to increase the rentals to a figure beyond the means of the occupier. It therefore became clear that the local municipality would have to contribute financially towards the upkeep of the locations.

In August 1943, the Council applied for a £27 500 sub-economic loan in order to build 20 houses in Leightonville and 50 cottages in Ginsberg. The loan was approved in October of that year and the building of two to four-roomed houses in Leightonville was commenced. The new extension in Leightonville was completed in January 1945. The Council reported that the new houses absorbed a number of coloured tenants living in Ginsberg, but the housing shortage was still acute.¹⁰⁸

The CAC report on Leightonville

By 1946, Leightonville consisted of 108 cottages, inhabited by about 750 people in 48 two-roomed, 38 three-roomed, 14 four-roomed and 9 five-roomed tenements. Rentals were stated to be quite affordable and ranged from between 20s to 45s per month. Most of the families lived in the same house for many years. The Leightonville families living in the two and three-roomed houses shared an outside toilet and shower, as well as a tap and a washing gully amongst four families. The squat pans were stated to be very uncomfortable, especially for the older people. Mrs Winnie Arkell recalled that many people made use of a removable seat in the communal bathrooms.¹⁰⁹ The four and five-roomed houses included indoor plumbing. Some of these houses also had a store-room in their back garden. No electricity was supplied to Leightonville. Residents prepared food on their wooden stoves or used primus stoves.

The Location Superintendent, with the assistance of a headman and a team of municipal workers, was responsible for municipal supervision and maintenance. In September 1940, the CWA convinced the Council to appoint a Leightonville

¹⁰⁸ *Cape Mercury*, 13.02.1945 p. 4 'Municipal Affairs'.

¹⁰⁹ HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions under which the coloured people live in King William's Town, Gillam's Drift, Breidbach and East London' in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946* (See Appendix); W Arkell: personal interview 06.06.2006.

tenant and member of the CWA executive as headman at Leightonville. Henry Jasson was subsequently appointed. The headman was referred to as the 'sponda'¹¹⁰ and was described as follows:

Hy was maar bietjie uitsoekerig. As hy nie van jou gehou het nie, het hy rede gesoek om jou uit te skop. (He had his favourites. If he didn't like you, he would find a reason to kick you out).¹¹¹

The 'sponda' had to ensure that tenants were in good health, kept their yards in an orderly manner and paid their rent. If tenants were unable to pay rent, they could negotiate payment with the Location Superintendent. Non-payment of rent would result in their furniture being removed until the rent was paid. As prescribed by the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, written permission had to be obtained if out of town friends wanted to sleep over.

As in the case of Old Town, tenants assisted with the maintenance of their houses. They were responsible for rubbish removal and whitewashing their cottages. Lime was available free of charge from the Weir Hall.¹¹² A colouring agent, bought at the local hardware store, was often added to the lime wash. Vegetable seeds were available, gratis, from the Weir Hall. The maintenance of the local football field, situated on the south side of Wodehouse Street, was also the responsibility of the people of Leightonville.¹¹³

Through Mr HCA Cloete's report to the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC), we are afforded an opportunity to compare Leightonville's housing conditions with those of similar housing schemes in the Union. Cloete congratulated the Municipality on the type of houses erected at Leightonville. He was of the opinion that the rentals were reasonable and added that he had found tenants to be 'thoroughly satisfied with the houses.' According to Cloete, the residents were, however, greatly perturbed as they had no desire to live in a location under the Natives (Urban Areas) Act. Leightonville and Ginsberg were situated opposite each other and were separated by a street. Cloete continued:

¹¹⁰ From the Xhosa term 'isiBonda' meaning 'a headman of a locality or district, who upholds the Government's authority' Cf. A Kropf, *A Kaffir-English Dictionary*, Lovedale Mission Press, Alice, 1915.

¹¹¹ CP Davids: personal interview 24.03.2006.

¹¹² Situated on the boundary line between Leightonville and Ginsberg, Weir Hall was built in 1939 by the Borough Council for the use of the location residents.

¹¹³ K Trompeter: personal interview 06.06.2006.

It is deplorable that the Municipality should have thought (it) fit to place the coloured sub-economic housing scheme under the Natives (Urban Areas) Act, making what would otherwise have been the ideal coloured township, a Native location.¹¹⁴

The CAC report also favoured the appointment of a coloured superintendent when a vacancy occurred. Cloete suggested that the coloured headman be re-classified and the designation of Assistant Superintendent be accepted.¹¹⁵ Cloete was in favour of a home ownership scheme and therefore suggested that 50 building plots be made available for sale to coloured persons at a nominal fee. He also suggested the addition of 100 sub-economic houses to alleviate the acute shortage of housing as well as the provision of additional communal sanitary conveniences.¹¹⁶

Cloete therefore recommended that Leightonville be de-proclaimed and declared a coloured township, but his suggestion was ignored. The CWA never requested the de-proclamation of Leightonville as a 'native location' in the period under discussion. The residents were therefore obliged to live under location and curfew regulations as implemented under the Native and Asiatic Location Regulations of 1912 and the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923.¹¹⁷ By 1946, Leightonville was still administered in terms of the above-mentioned act.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

The period under discussion is characterised by the gradual implementation of segregatory measures under the pretext of improved sanitation and housing. These measures had a profound influence on local coloured housing, resulting in the loss of home ownership, municipal tenancy and the formation of a local coloured mouthpiece.

Initially the Borough Council made no distinction between Xhosa and coloured residents regarding access to housing. With the creation of Leightonville in 1924,

¹¹⁴ HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions under which the coloured people live in King William's Town, Gillam's Drift, Breidbach and East London' in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946*.

¹¹⁵ HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions...', in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946*.

¹¹⁶ HCA Cloete 'Report on conditions...', in *Fourth Annual Report of the CAC, 1946*.

¹¹⁷ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH9/25 Letter from Native Commissioner to Town Clerk, 20.10.1939.

¹¹⁸ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/254 ref. ZH9/25 Letter from Native Commissioner to Town Clerk, 20.10.1939.

the Borough Council made a class distinction between 'educated' and 'ordinary' tenants and housed them accordingly. The more spacious tenements were designated for the coloured people and the School Xhosa, while the Ginsberg rondavels were made available to the rest of the tenants. The Borough Council thus divided municipal tenants according to class, within the boundaries of the location. However, this provision also had racial implications. With the removal of Brownlee Station in 1939, Leightonville, under pressure exerted by the APO, ANB and CWA, was converted into a coloured settlement. Under the influence of the pro-separatist ANB and APO, the coloured elite fought for access to decent housing. This was, however, to the detriment of Leightonville's Xhosa tenants who had to remove to the smaller tenements of Ginsberg. In the process, constructed boundaries based on the division of race were reinforced.

It is clear that privately-owned coloured housing was unacceptable to the local municipality. Lack of funds was often used as a convenient excuse to prevent coloured home ownership. This is borne out by the example of the Brownlee Station homeowners, who had sufficient funds available to secure homeownership, but the Council would not oblige. The Council was primarily concerned with implementing the wishes of the white ratepayers who, in turn, were concerned about securing property values. Through several petitions to the Borough Council, the white burgesses made it clear that they were adamant in denying all attempts to create a coloured residential area in the vicinity of white King William's Town.

This is not to say, however, that the coloured people of King William's Town represented a unified group. Class divisions were, for example, present between the coloured residents of Leightonville and the Brownlee Station-dominated CWA. In the process, place-bound identities would often override the common dilemma of a shortage in housing. In the quest for access to decent housing, an attempt was made to exploit residential segregation to their own advantage, but their options, and therefore their successes, were severely limited. Reams of correspondence and negotiations with the local authorities did lead to a separate coloured township. The creation of Leightonville effectively put an end to homeownership discussions for many years.

The location's tenants were all forced to reside under strict location regulations. Initially these regulations were implemented through the Native and Asiatic Location Regulations of 1912 and subsequently by the provisions stipulated in the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act. The latter was specifically aimed at urban African families, but had implications for coloured people too. The Act provided for the continued accommodation of coloured people in the location until suitable accommodation was available elsewhere. In the process, legislation not applicable to coloured people living in the town itself was applied to all municipal tenants. After 1939, Leightonville continued to be administered under the Natives (Urban Areas) Act. Like their Xhosa neighbours, coloured residents adhered to, for example, a Location Superintendent and headmen, an Advisory Board and curfew regulations. The people of Leightonville were not, however, forced to carry passes and did have the option to settle elsewhere. The majority of the residents, however, would have been prevented to do so because of limited finances and a severe shortage of housing in the town itself.

Significantly, it was the CAC representative, HCA Cloete, and not the CWA, who pointed out that it was unfortunate that the local Council had decided to place a coloured township in a black location. In the period under discussion the CWA never petitioned the Borough Council to consider the proclamation of Leightonville as a coloured township. Cloete supported the proclamation of Leightonville as a separate township, but this was not to be.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In 1895 the coloured people lived in various settlements, such as Brownlee Station, Ridsdel, Tsolo (later Ginsberg) and Bidhli, in and around King William's Town, where they had Xhosa neighbours. Such colonial settlements, established by the London Missionary Society and the military authorities, consisted of crown and municipal land respectively. Although the land did not belong to the residents, they were free to erect their own homes and municipal control was limited. At Bidhli, for example, the residents cultivated agricultural allotments, some of which consisted of two or three acres of land. The settlements of Gillam's Drift and Breidbach were multiracial and consisted of a high percentage of white, coloured and Xhosa home owners. Racially divided accommodation and the control thereof were fluid.

In 1895 coloured residents of Brownlee Station petitioned the Council to establish a housing scheme, set apart from their Xhosa neighbours. A faction within the Borough Council was sympathetic towards the quest for home ownership, but it was unwilling to act against the wishes of white ratepayers, who denounced the idea at a public meeting.

Round the turn of the century, the more affluent white families moved to new suburbs developing adjacent to the town centre. In the process vacated homes in Old and New Town were let to Xhosa and coloured families. Unfortunately, owing to the lack of formal housing, the situation was inherently exploited by white slumlords and in a relatively short time, some structures had become notorious slums.

With the growth of the town, the lack of sanitation and overcrowding became pronounced and the Borough Council recognised the dire need for the improvement of facilities. However, the hypocritical way it went about 'solving' the existence of insanitary conditions needs to be noted. In an effort to safeguard white civilisation and entrench segregation, the Council supported a consistent policy of removal to the municipal locations, which were separated from the town itself. As a result, the municipal location of Tsolo was extended in 1901.

Ginsberg, which in time incorporated Tsolo, was founded as a direct response to the outbreak of bubonic plague in King William's Town. The Borough Council was of the opinion that the advent of the plague made better housing conditions and sanitary requirements necessary, but it also conveniently gave impetus to segregation along the lines of colour.¹

From 1906, the local authorities gradually repossessed the agricultural allotments at Bidhli and Tsolo. As a result, the residents took up tenancy at Ginsberg. The Borough Council also attempted to remove the residents of Brownlee Station and Ridsdel, but it simply did not possess the necessary statutory powers to effect a removal. The residents were made aware of their rights through the intervention of white liberals, such as RW Rose-Innes and WT Brownlee. Rose-Innes successfully represented the residents of Brownlee Station over a period of 30 years. WT Brownlee, a member of the 1910 Commission and grandson to the Rev John Brownlee, ensured that, as a prerequisite for removal, compensation was introduced. Their influence did not, however, translate into any concrete improvements to the housing conditions prevalent in the settlements of King William's Town.

The residents of Brownlee Station and Ridsdel were decidedly against their proposed removal to Ginsberg, where location regulations were strictly observed. By 1912, the Native and Asiatic Regulations applied to Ginsberg's municipal tenants and from 1923, the Natives (Urban Areas) Act. Although the latter was aimed at the administration of urban black settlements, it also had implications for coloured people, especially those residing in municipal locations. Compared to the families living in the town itself, the coloured residents of Ginsberg had to adhere to strict regulations, such as a curfew, implemented by a Location Superintendent. The regulations made no distinction between Xhosa and coloured municipal tenants.

The 1920s witnessed increasing complaints about overcrowding and housing 'unfit for human habitation' in Old and New Town. Coloured housing was equated

¹ SE Caldwell, The course and results of the plague outbreaks in King William's Town, 1900 – 1907, Unpublished Honours Thesis, UNISA, 1987, p. 40.

with inferior dwellings and overcrowded and insanitary conditions. Lack of housing and a high tenancy rate, in turn, aggravated conditions. The scarcity of housing made it imperative for such dwellings to be utilised under existing conditions. However, the Council was reluctant to apply sufficient pressure on the owners to improve sanitary conditions and to limit the number of occupants in each dwelling. Insanitary conditions at Gillam's Drift were also lamented, but little was done to improve sanitary services in exchange for the payment of rates. The Borough Council focused on social control, rather than the provision of services. As a result, successive Councils were unable to provide long-term solutions to the universal problems of urbanisation - adequate water, efficient removal of slops and decent housing. Increasingly, the lack of sanitation, civilisation and control was used as convenient excuses to rationalise a segregated housing policy embodied in inferior conditions, removal and relocation.

The Council's solution to the shortage of housing in the town itself was to extend the municipal location. The creation of Leightonville in 1924, did not only provide 'better class' housing for coloured and 'educated' Xhosa tenants, but also led to the rise of coloured political organisations. From 1924, the African Peoples Organisation (APO), the Afrikaanse Nasionale Bond (ANB) and the Coloured Welfare Association (CWA) made repeated requests to the Borough Council for a coloured housing scheme, preferably with home ownership rights included. Housing and specifically the lack thereof, dominated the perceptions of the coloured elite, who now sought to act within the limitations imposed by racial prejudice for the benefit of decent housing. In the process racial boundaries were not only supported on a bureaucratic level, but were also evident at grass roots level.

By 1930, the Xhosa residents of Old Town had mostly been removed under the provisions of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act. The remaining residents increasingly perceived post-1930 Old Town as a coloured area.² The creation of divided spaces therefore had a lasting effect on the perceptions of Old Town residents in that it fostered and sustained coloured identity. Despite the endeavours of the

² Ex-residents interviewed for this study, were all born after 1920 and therefore experienced an Old Town devoid of Xhosa residents.

coloured elite to obtain access to housing, the Borough Council repeatedly handicapped their efforts. The consistent cry from local white ratepayers that coloured housing be built 'anywhere but in my back yard' retarded access to decent housing.³ The Council therefore secured property values through attempting to keep coloured urban residences at a distance from those of whites.

The quest for coloured home ownership led to occasional tension between coloured and Xhosa residents. Racial division became part of the political manoeuvring of all interest groups in an attempt to gain access to housing. The desire for decent accommodation also led to friction between the settlements. The coloured elite's use of class differences between the people of Brownlee Station and Leightonville to prevent their removal to the latter is a noted example. Segregated housing therefore consolidated feelings of separateness and division across lines of colour and class in an attempt to access housing.

Ironically, the fate of coloured housing would not only be determined by mobilisation round race or place-boundedness, but by the bureaucratic combination of local, provincial and national residential segregation. The origins of residential segregation were, therefore, not singular. National health and housing legislation, as well as officials from the Departments of Public Health and Native Affairs, assisted the Council in their attempts to relocate the residents of Brownlee Station. The Native and Asiatic Locations Regulations of 1912 and subsequently the Natives (Urban Areas) Act came to determine the conditions under which people lived. However, it was the 1934 Elimination of Slums Act that empowered the Council to remove the residents of Brownlee Station and Ridsdel, in 1936 and 1939 respectively. By means of an abbreviated administrative process, the Slums Act swept aside years of resistance to relocation. Although the residents were compensated for the loss of home ownership and the new dwellings constituted a less congested environment, the same rights and privileges were not offered at the Ginsberg municipal location. This is borne out by the double standards inherent in the Slums Act and implemented in terms of the removal and resettlement of the residents. Ironically, the new dwellings were

³ S Parnell 'Race, Power and Urban Control: Johannesburg's Inner City Slum-Yards, 1910-1923' in *Journal of South African Studies*, vol. 29, nr. 3, September 2003, p. 619.

also not on par with many of the sanitary regulations detailed in the Act. High sanitary standards were set, but the Council itself supplied inferior services.

No colour distinction was present in the removal of the Xhosa and coloured residents of Brownlee Station and Ridsdel. Relocation, increased municipal control and limited access to housing characterised the milieu in which coloured and Xhosa residents lived. However, equal housing opportunities were not sustained in the municipal location. With the relocation of Brownlee Station residents in 1939, political manoeuvring ensured that better-class municipal houses became the exclusive domain of coloured residents, to the detriment of Xhosa tenants.

Ironically, the CWA, who laboured for a separate coloured housing scheme over many years, was quick to voice its dismay at renewed national attempts to legislate segregated housing. In 1939, at a local meeting opposing residential segregation, the CWA chose to use the term 'non-European' as a rallying point. With the noted exception of NP Arends, the majority of King William's Town coloureds opposed the implementation of segregation on a national level. It is clear that the APO, ANB and CWA supported an exclusive coloured housing scheme because they were under the impression that it would lead to better housing conditions. Coloured identity represented a rallying point for the APO, ANB and the CWA. Initially, the legitimacy of coloured identity was thus not contested. It was used as a means to overcome differences in religion, background and place of residence in order to advance their interests as a group, when needed. Only in the 1930s, with the emergence of national efforts to place residential segregation on the statute books, combined with the resulting opposition in coloured protest politics, was the legitimacy of coloured identity first challenged.⁴

With the creation of the CAC in 1943, local coloured unity proved to be insufficient. A division within the coloured community, both locally and nationally, was the result. In delimiting where people lived, segregation compounded the

⁴ Today, a substantial proportion of so-called coloured people reject the identity. Cf. M Adhikari, 'The Product of Civilization in its Most Repellent Manifestation: Ambiguities in the Racial Perceptions of the APO (African Political Organization), 1909-23'. *The Journal of African History*, July 1997 vol. 38 nr. 2, p. 283.

problem of inequitable access to housing. By 1946, despite the efforts of the local branches of the APO, ANB and CWA, coloured housing was characterised by loss of homeownership and increasing municipal tenancy. Privately-owned coloured housing was non-negotiable in the eyes of the Council because it implied that the local authorities would have limited control. A noted exception was Breidbach, which did not fall under municipal control and accordingly, by 1946, represented the highest percentage of coloured home ownership. Within a block from the town proper were the settlements of Old Town and Brownlee Station, where the divisions of race were more fluid. Constituting multiracial settlements, it was exactly in these terms that many of the housing areas discussed in this study represented an increasing threat to the local authorities. By 1946, the concept of segregated urban residential spaces was well established among municipal town-planners and state policy-makers.⁵

Involving the creation of divided living spaces, segregation has had a lasting effect on the South African urban landscape. Segregated housing entrenched the imposition of racial boundaries and continues to characterise the present-day lives of most coloured people. The majority of the coloured population still live in areas previously designated for local coloured housing, which can be attributed to a lack of affordable housing in the town and well-developed place-identities emerging from the historical context. In the process contemporary boundaries and well-developed place-identities have remained pronounced.

Ex-residents of Brownlee Station, Leightonville and Old Town are presently awaiting the results of a land restitution claim. Information contained in the thesis has been made available to claimants and the Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights. The impact of land restitution on the ex-residents and their descendants still needs to be addressed. In what way does land restitution assist the displaced community in dealing with the effects of segregated housing? Further research is also required on contemporary identity and its influence on present-day Eastern Cape society.⁶ The absence of any serious historical

⁵ P Maylam *South Africa's Racial Past: The History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation and Apartheid*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2001, p. 160.

⁶ This does not only apply to coloured identity. Politically-created divisions that exist between former residents of the Republics of Transkei and Ciskei are also a noted example.

assessment of the existence and utilisation of group identity can lead to misinterpretation, which impacts negatively on contemporary politics and above all, people.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Population Statistics for the King William's Town coloured people.¹

Year	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of local population
1891	177	243	420	5.8%
1904	246	316	562	5.9%
1911	412	419	831	9.2%
1921	383	395	778	8.06%
1936	538	614	1 152	10.7%
1946	630	690	1 320	11.6%

The reason for the decrease in percentage and total population figures from 1911 to 1921 is unclear. A discrepancy was found in the 1921 Census compared to the above figures, stating that 850 males and 854 females were present in King William's Town at the time. This is vastly different from the above-mentioned figures. It is therefore probably wise to use the above population statistics only as a rough guide.

¹ D Hobart Houghton, *Economic Development in a Plural Society: Studies in the Border Region of the Cape Province*, Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1960, p. 23; Census 1911 Part 1-5 Annexures to General Report, Government Printer, Pretoria, 1912 p. 88-89; Census 1921, 3rd census of the Population of the Union of South Africa, enumerated 03.05.1921. Population Census 07.05.1946, Government Printers, Pretoria, 1949 p. 56.

Appendix 2: List of Names and addresses of the coloured people who required building sites in a coloured housing scheme, December 1930:²

1. C. Conybear	Brownlee Station
2. H. Jasson	Brownlee Station
3. S. Fourie	Brownlee Station
4. P. Fourie	Brownlee Station
5. P. Gysman	Ginsberg Location
6. B. Ruiters	Ginsberg Location
7. T. Basson	Leightonville
8. J. Basson	Leightonville
9. M. Ruiters	Leightonville
10. G. Ruiters	Brownlee Station
11. H. Ruiters	Brownlee Station
12. W. Gysman	Smith Street
13. Joe Gysman	Brownlee Station
14. B. Plaatjes	Brownlee Station
15. A. Plaatjes	Brownlee Station
16. J. Plaatjes	Belstone
17. W. Reed	Leightonville
18. J. Fritz	Leightonville
19. L. Fritz	Belstone
20. P. Shaw	Brownlee Station
21. G. Shaw	Brownlee Station
22. S. Botha	Brownlee Station
23. H. Williams	Brownlee Station
24. R. Williams	Brownlee Station
25. J. Bezuidenhout (Senior)	Charles Street
26. J. Bezuidenhout (Junior)	Charles Street
27. J. Symons	Leightonville
28. H. Hall	Leightonville
29. A. Weimers	Leightonville
30. M. Pretorius	Leightonville
31. C. Jagers	Ginsberg Location
32. J. Belle	Ginsberg Location
33. J. Mintor	Ginsberg Location
34. H. Blanch	Ginsberg Location
35. M. Gysman	Ginsberg Location
36. C. Matthews	Brownlee Station
37. J. Price	Brownlee Station
38. J Estrice	Brownlee Station
39. H. Malgas	Brownlee Station
40. JA Arkell	Leightonville
41. H. April	C/o King Tanning Coy
42. J. Windvogel	Ginsberg Location

² 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 HM Gray, Town Clerk Memorandum re Housing for coloured classes, dated 19.12.1930.

43. H. Arends	Ginsberg Location
44. J. Arends	Ginsberg Location
45. P. Peters	Brownlee Station
46. A. Harris	Brownlee Station
47. WD Rayner	Brownlee Station
48. E. Davidson	Leightonville
49. J. Boswell	Leightonville
50. J. Booyesen	Brownlee Station
51. A. Paulaus	Brownlee Station
52. F. Potgieter	Leightonville
53. S. Potgieter	Leightonville
54. D. Smith	Leightonville
55. H. Marais	Belstone
56. H. Kleinhans	Brownlee Station
57. W. Copkey	Brownlee Station
58. B. Charles	Leightonville
59. F. Newton	Leightonville
60. W. Baker	Brownlee Station
61. J. Maart	Brownlee Station
62. F. Stuurman	Leightonville
63. M. Jurry?	Belstone
64. A. Kleinbooi (senior)	Belstone
65. A. Kleinbooi (junior)	Belstone
66. J. Alexander	8 Smith Street
67. C. Swanepoel	Brownlee Station
68. T. Walters	Brownlee Station
69. J. Coetzee	Brownlee Station
70. H. Jacobus	Pirie Mission
71. WJ Fourie	Brownlee Station
72. C. Herbert	Brownlee Station
73. H. Wiland	Cwengane KWT District
74. A. Malgas	Cwengane KWT District
75. A. Rooi	Cwengane KWT District
76. A. Rensburg	Cwengane KWT District
77. P. Scheepers	Brownlee Station
78. J. Bussack	Brownlee Station
79. W. Swartz	Brownlee Station
80. D. Weimers	Leightonville
81. W. Whittle	Brownlee Station
82. H. Free	Ginsberg Location
83. R. Free	Ginsberg Location
84. F. Griffin	Leightonville
85. W. Swartbooi	Leightonville
86. P. Grady	C/o Borough Council
87. C. Bramwell	Leightonville
88. H. Prince	Ginsberg Location
89. G. Solomon	Ginsberg Location
90. F. Solomon	Ginsberg Location

91. B. Lottering	Ginsberg Location
92. W. ?	Brick Fields
93. ?	Leightonville
94. ?	Ginsberg Location
95. ?	Ginsberg Location
96	C/o Sewerage Farm
97	Ginsberg Location
98	Ginsberg Location
99	C/O Everitts Wool Washery
100.	Brick Fields
101. D. Swanepoel	Belstone
102. H. Vincent	Belstone
103. J. Weimers	Belstone
104. D. Mintor	C/o King Tanning Coy
105. R. Swartbooi	No 8 Smith Street
106. J. Flanagan	Leightonville
107. P. Bussack	Brownlee Station
108. G. Peters	Mary Street
109. D. Swanepoel	Readsdale Location
110. P. Stanton	C/o King Tanning Coy
111. W. Smiles	C/o King Tanning Coy
112. A. Ward	No 40 Durban Street
113. C. Smith	No 120 Alexandra Road
114. J. Smith	Buffalo Road
115. A. Meyers	No 120 Alexandra Road
116. H. Wilson	Brownlee Station
117. A. Allison	Readsdale Location
118. W. Rayner	Brownlee Station
119. P. Botha	C/o King Tanning Coy
120. J. Lenard	Brownlee Station
121. D. Swanepoel	Brownlee Station
122. J. Krate	Brownlee Station
123. J. Gysman	Brownlee Station
124. HJ White	Readsdale Location
125. W. Smith	Ginsberg Location

Summary:

Brownlee	45
Leightonville	23
Ginsberg	22
Town	17
Outside	18
Total	125

**Appendix 3: ANB list of applicants for plots in a coloured township,
December 1931.³**

1. Willie Swartz	Brownlee Station
2. Henry Jasson	Brownlee Station
3. John Arkell	Leightonville
4. Peter Fourie	Brownlee Station
5. Stephen Fourie	Brownlee station
6. Carl Matthews	Brownlee Station
7. Theunis Basson	Leightonville
8. Bosman Ruiters	Ginsberg
9. John Fritz	Ginsberg
10. Benjamin Plaatjes	Brownlee Station
11. Allen Harris	Brownlee Station
12. William Daniel Rayner	Brownlee Station
13. Abraham Paulus	Brownlee Station
14. Stoffel Botha	Brownlee Station
15. George Shaw	Brownlee Station
16. William Copkey	Brownlee Station
17. Charlie Herbert	Brownlee Station
18. PW Shaw	Brownlee Station
19. JG Vinter	Brownlee Station
20. James Price	Brownlee Station
21. Jafta Estrice	Brownlee Station
22. Otto Holshausen	Brightons Drift
23. F. Newton	Leightonville
24. John Windvogel	Ginsberg
25. M. Ruiters	Leightonville
26. J. Ruiters	Leightonville
27. David Weimers	Leightonville
28. H. Vincent	Belstone
29. W. Sparks	Leightonville
30. Hans April	Brightons Drift
31. Willie Gysman	Smith Street
32. Isaac Mintoer	Ginsberg
33. Klaas Melatoe	Belstone
34. Elias Davidson	Leightonville
35. Christian Swanepoel	Brownlee Station
36. DA Swanepoel	Readsdale Location
37. ADJ Kleinbooi	Bellstone
38. AJ Kleinbooi	Bellstone
39. J. Morley	
40. John Edward Jack	Leightonville
41. Charlie Jagers	
42. Mark William Jagers	
43. P. Gysman	Ginsberg

³ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from Town Clerk to H Jasson, 16.06.1931; CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21 Letter from H. Jasson to Town Clerk, 09.12.1931.

44. T. White	
45. Joe Symons	Leightonville
46. P. Peters	Brownlee Station
47. B. Peters	
48. ? Pierce	Leightonville

Appendix 4: CWA list of names and place of residence of coloured residents requiring sites in a proposed coloured township, July 1934.⁴

Name	Residence	Adults	Children
1. B. Plaatjes	Brownlee Station	2	5
2. H. Jasson	Brownlee Station	2	5
3. P. Fourie	Brownlee Station	3	3
4. J. Bussack	Brownlee Station	2	4
5. WD Rayner	Brownlee Station	2	2
6. H. Fray	Brownlee Station	2	7
7. D. Haman	Brownlee Station	2	3
8. S. Botha	Brownlee Station	3	10
9. TR Walters	Brownlee Station	3	3
10. A. Pietersen	Brownlee Station	2	1
11. JG Vinter	Brownlee Station	2	1
12. H. Minnie	Brownlee Station	2	0
13. W. Gysman	Brownlee Station	2	2
14. PW Shaw	Brownlee Station	3	6
15. J. Lennard	Ridsdel	2	4
16. M. Kleinhans	Brownlee Station	2	0
17. A. Malgas	Brownlee Station	2	0
18. J. Estrice	Brownlee Station	1	1
19. P. Krate	Brownlee Station	2	6
20. CJ de Klerk	25 Cambridge Road	2	0
21. NP Arends	48 Market Street	1	0
22. D. Jagers	48 Market Street	2	4
23. M. Kiddo	Brownlee Station	2	1
24. J. Haman	Brownlee Station	2	3
25. J. Price	Brownlee Station	3	4
26. H. Malgas	Brownlee Station	2	2
27. T. Izally	15 MacKinnon Street	3	4
28. J. Gysman	Brownlee Station	2	3
29. G. Ruiters	Brownlee Station	2	1
30. G. Shaw	Brownlee Station	2	5
31. S. Fourie	Brownlee Station	3	4
32. J. Adonis	Brownlee Station	2	1
33. H. Adonis	Smith Street	2	0
34. C. Herbert	Brownlee Station	3	4
35. W. Swartz	Brownlee Station	2	2
36. H. Pretorius	Ridsdel	2	5
37. C. Swanepoel	Brownlee Station	2	5

⁴ CA 3/KWT vol. 4/1/251 ref. ZH 9/21/06 Memo submitted by CWA, July 1934.

38. A. Harris	Brownlee Station	2	3
39. K. Talmakies	Brownlee Station	1	2
40. A. September	Belstone	2	2
41. P. Peters	Brownlee Station	2	6
42. S. Ricketts	Brownlee Station	2	4
43. A. Paulus	Brownlee Station	2	3
44. D. Osteridge	Brownlee Station	2	7
45. J. Bezuidenhout	16 Charles Street	2	3
46. DA Swanepoel	Belstone	2	2
47. H. Vincent	Belstone	4	5
48. D. Rensburg	10 Smith Street	2	4
49. F. Faltein	5 Smith Street	2	2
50. A. Diedricks	10 Smith Street	2	2
51. C. Matthews	Brownlee Station	2	4
52. JE Pieterse	Grey Street	2	3
53. A. Plaatjes	Brownlee Station	2	4
54. H. Damon	Grey Street	2	3
55. G. Fritz	Brownlee Station	1	0
56. AM Arends	Brownlee Station	2	5
57. A. Ward	Reserve Road	2	4
58. J. van Rooyen	7 Charles Street	2	3
59. B. Mahomed	30 Smith Street	4	4
60. J. Plaatjes	Belstone	1	8
61. P. Bussack	Brownlee Station	2	0
62. W. Rayner	Brownlee Station	3	7
63. H. Williams	Brownlee Station	2	2
64. W. Lowe	Brownlee Station	2	2
65. K. Jagers	Brownlee Station	2	3
66. W. Capkey	Brownlee Station	2	5
67. G. Janneker	Brownlee Station	2	0
68. H. Brown	Ridsdel	3	6
69. W. Sparks	Market Square	2	2
70. D. Swartz	Brownlee Station	2	2
71. R. Winkworth	Brownlee Station	2	1
72. J. Flanagan	41 Smith Street	2	4
73. J. Coetzee	Brownlee Station	2	0

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