A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF GRAHAMSTOWN, 1812 TO c1845

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

of

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

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December 2008

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the development of Grahamstown from its inception in 1812 to the mid-1840s, paying particular attention to the social and cultural life of the town. It traces the economic development of the town from a military outpost to a thriving commercial settlement, noting the essential factor of the town‟s proximity to the Cape frontier in this process. The economic interaction between diverse groups in the town mirrors the social and cultural interaction which occurred between British settlers, Khoekhoe and Africans. The result of these interactions was the creation of a new, distinctively South African urban society and culture, despite the desire of the white settlers to reproduce a "typical" English environment in their new home. The conflict between attempts to anglicise the urban environment and the realities of Grahamstown‟s situation on a colonial frontier was reflected in the architecture and layout of the town. Attempts to recreate an English social environment also failed. New classes arose in the town in response to the economic opportunities available on the frontier. Although some settlers prospered, many did not, and the presence of an impoverished white working class undermines settler historians‟ picture of settler success and affluence. The poorest people in the town, though, were the increasing numbers of Khoekhoe and Africans who migrated from the surrounding countryside, and who were unequally incorporated into the urban community as a colonial labouring class. In response to these unique circumstances, white settlers in Grahamstown developed a powerful political and propaganda machine, which helped lay the foundations of a distinct settler identity in the eastern Cape.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to my supervisor, Professor Paul Maylam, for his support, encouragement, guidance, and painstaking revision of drafts not always as carefully prepared as they might have been. Thank you to the staff of the History department for their advice, constructive criticism, and friendly support. Thanks to the staff of the Cory Library, especially Mr Zwele Vena and Ms Sally Schramm, for all their assistance and for tolerating the build-up of books and manuscripts on my desk with patience and forbearance. Thanks also to the staff of the National Archives in Cape Town. This thesis was written with financial assistance from Rhodes University and the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust for South African History, for which I am most grateful.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Cape Colony exercised only tenuous control over its hinterland. Despite increasing economic and cultural contact in the form of missionaries, pastoral farmers and traders, as well as a number of minor conflicts in the late 1700s, black African polities remained outside of European control and maintained their economic, cultural, territorial and political integrity. By mid-century a very different situation prevailed. The eastern Cape had become an area of extensive interaction and conflict. Grahamstown was founded in the wake of the new British administration‟s first major war of expansion – the fourth "Frontier" war of 1812. This conflict was different from the colonial-Xhosa wars that had preceded it. For the first time, rather than the sporadic and limited capacities of colonial commandos, significant resources were committed by what at the time was the world‟s most formidable military power: the British Empire. As a result, the Xhosa suffered their first significant defeat and loss of land. Colonel Graham, the British officer in command of the operation, drove 20 000 Xhosa from the Zuurveld across the Fish River, effectively depopulating what was to become the district of Albany[1].

Between 1812 and the mid 1840s Grahamstown became the largest settlement in the eastern Cape and the second city of the Cape Colony. By 1845 Grahamstown‟s population had reached nearly five thousand; Graaff-Reinet, which had been the major

[1] Maclennan, B, *A Proper Degree of Terror: John Graham and the Cape's Eastern Frontier* (Johannesburg, 1986) p 125.

eastern town before Grahamstown"s establishment, had only 2 500 inhabitants in 1848[2], and even the rising town of Port Elizabeth still only had a population of three thousand around the same time[3]. Grahamstown led the way in social and economic development – it is significant that the town was producing a newspaper from 1831, while Port Elizabeth and Graaff-Reinet had to wait until 1845[4] and 1852[5] respectively. Grahamstown"s population was increasingly diverse, and the interactions between people of different origins and cultures on its streets mirrored the complex relationships which were developing in the broader South Africa. Grahamstown was an important town, and a study of its development, landscape, culture and society can offer insight into the creation of colonial society in the eastern Cape.

Studies of small towns in South Africa, especially in the nineteenth century, are rare. The field of urban history in South Africa has tended to be dominated by the major cities, in particular the four main industrial areas of Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth[6]. Academic urban history has also tended to be markedly afrocentric, concentrating on "oppressive, discriminatory urban policy and on the black victims of that policy"[7]. White urban history has tended to be dominated by local historical societies – "anecdotal, eurocentric, celebrating the monuments of colonialism", as Maylam puts it[8]. There has been very little attempt to see cities and towns as an integrated whole. There has also been a marked focus on the twentieth century. A great deal of work has

[2] Henning, C, *Graaff-Reinet: A Cultural History 1786 – 1886* (Cape Town, 1974), p. 35.
[3] Redgrave, J, *Port Elizabeth in Bygone Days* (Cape Town, 1947), p. 33.
[4] *Ibid*.
[5] Henning, *Graaff-Reinet*, p. 36.
[6] Maylam, P, "Explaining the Apartheid City: 20 Years of South African Urban Historiography", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1 (1995), p. 21.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[8] *Ibid*., p. 20.

been done on twentieth-century Port Elizabeth, for example, while there is very little available on the city‟s early decades.

These limitations become even clearer if one concentrates on the urban history of the eastern Cape. Attention has been paid to twentieth century Port Elizabeth and, to a lesser extent, East London[9]. There is little academic work available on smaller towns. C. G. Henning produced a PhD thesis on Graaff-Reinet in 1971, subsequently published in book form. Calling itself a "Cultural History", this hefty tome has a number of serious limitations. Despite claiming to place the emphasis on the "people, their lives, their character and their reaction and adaptation to their environment"[10], Henning only has some people in mind – one would almost suppose that there were no Africans living in Graaff-Reinet between 1786 and 1886 from his work. Both the thesis and the book focus on the elite and downplay divisions within the Afrikaans-speaking community, preferring indeed to write of a unifying *volkswil* and a putative Afrikaner nationalism[11]. (On the other hand, the arrival of English settlers and British colonialism generally is noted as a cause of discord)[12]. Richard Bouch‟s PhD study of the colonisation of the Queenstown area and the role which the town itself played in that process is more valuable for comparative purposes, though concerned mostly with economics[13]. Grahamstown itself has probably attracted the most academic attention. A number of theses have been produced on various aspects of the town during the first half of the nineteenth century. H.

[9] Freund, W, "Urban History in South Africa", *South African Historical Journal*, 23 (2005).
[10] Henning, C, "A Cultural History of Graaff-Reinet 1786 – 1886" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, 1971), p .2.
[11] Henning, *Graaff-Reinet*, p. 11.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[13] Bouch, R, "The Colonisation of Queenstown (Eastern Cape) and its Hinterland 1852 – 1886" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1990).

L. Watts‟s 1957 PhD thesis, "Grahamstown: A Socio-Ecological Study of a Small South African Town"[14], examined the sociology of the town from its inception to the mid-1950s. Concerned more with explaining the reasons of the decline of the town from the prosperity and influence it enjoyed in the mid-nineteenth century, it devotes few pages to the early years of the nineteenth century. P. E. Scott‟s 1987 MA thesis on urban material culture covers a more relevant time frame and offers insight into the physical development of the town, but has more limited aims than this study. Despite having collected some valuable social data, it suffers from too rigid an attempt to force Grahamstown‟s class structure into models developed in relation to English towns and cities, whose societies were very different to that of Grahamstown[15]. Perhaps the most important thesis covering the period is K. Hunt‟s 1958 MA thesis on the development of municipal government[16]. Hunt does not cover the same period as this study, neglecting in particular the formative years of the early 1820s. It is also not a social study, concerned rather with the development of government structures in the town. His view of the Grahamstown merchant elite – "the thrifty, small businessman, [combining] a high sense of public duty with his commercial instincts"[17] – seems to take them very much at their own valuation. As this study will show, the society of Grahamstown was far from the picture of respectable, middle-class propriety that its elite attempted to portray. None of these works concentrates on the society and culture of the town. They also make little

[14] Watts, H. L, "Grahamstown: A Socio-Ecological Study of a South African Small Town", (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Rhodes University, 1957).
[15] Scott, P. E, "An Approach to the Urban History of Early Victorian Grahamstown 1832 – 1853 with Particular Reference to the Interiors and Material Culture of Domestic Dwellings" (Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1987).
[16] Hunt, K, "The Development of Municipal Government in the Eastern Province of the Cape of Good Hope with Special Reference to Grahamstown 1827 – 1862" (Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1958).
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

attempt to offer an integrated picture of a diverse community. Hardly any attention is paid to the divisions within the white settler community, while the town's African population is either ignored or treated as a prickly problem for white government and municipal officials.

If there is only limited academic material available on eastern Cape towns, a large and rather motley amateur literature has been produced. A great deal of this work is antiquarian and anecdotal: J. J. Redgrave's *Port Elizabeth in Bygone Days* offering a typical example. Much of this literature is out of date and carries attitudes and assumptions about South African history which have long been demolished. In the case of Grahamstown, T. Sheffield's *The Story of the Settlement*, published in 1912[18], and D. H. Thomson's *A Short History of Grahamstown*, produced in pamphlet form in 1952[19], are examples of this genre. As well as being brief and non-scholarly, these works are very much a part of the "settler" school of South African history and reflect attitudes and prejudices which are no longer tenable or accepted. D. H. Thomson, for example, wrote that "the mud and thatch frontier town had called a halt to the westward trek of the Natives. Grahamstown was a guarantee of the permanence of European civilization in the Zuurveld"[20]. Sheffield wrote how the Grahamstown merchants' "thirst for adventure, and their spirit of commercial enterprise" was not quenched by "hordes of treacherous savages"[21]. Neither view of the nature of frontier conflict is now considered valid.

[18] Sheffield, T, *The Story of the Settlement* (Grahamstown, 1912).
[19] Thomson, D. H, *A Short History of Grahamstown* (Grahamstown, 1952).
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[21] Sheffield, *The Story of the Settlement*, p. 3.

A study of Grahamstown in the nineteenth century raises questions about the nature and development of English colonial society in the eastern Cape. As the largest settlement in the region, Grahamstown came to be the cultural, political and economic centre of this community. The importance of the arrival of large numbers of British settlers in the region has been noted by many historians, though for different reasons. Nineteenth and early twentieth century historians such as Theal and, especially, George Cory, saw the British settlers as the primary driving force in subduing the barbarous "natives" of South Africa and laying the foundations of a new white nation in the British empire[22]. The title of Cory"s multi-volume and very much eastern Cape-focussed history, *The Rise of South Africa*, gives a clear indication of his understanding of the role of the settlers. These were histories of great men and government policies – little or no attention was paid to cultural or social issues. They were also written at a time when the power of Great Britain seemed to be supreme in South Africa, and are self-confidently imperial. Settler literature in the wake of the rise of Afrikaner nationalism in the twentieth century reveals shifting concerns. The settlers came to be seen not so much in an imperial light, but as the founders of a distinct English South African culture. This was especially noticeable in the late 1960s and 1970s, which saw both the 150th anniversary the arrival of the 1820 settlers as well as the final severance of ties between Britain and South Africa, and the high noon of Afrikaner nationalism. Tom Bowker, who initiated the 1820 Settler Monument project, did so for fear that "the English-speaker" would have no place in the "Broederbond-dominated regime"[23]. Winifred Maxwell, head of history at Rhodes University, did much to foster this new interest. The most significant historian of the

[22] Saunders, C, *The Making of the South African Past* (Cape Town, 1988), p. 24.
[23] Neville, T, *More Lasting than Bronze: A Story of the 1820 Settlers National Monument* (Grahamstown, 1993), p. 1.

settlers in the 1970s, though, was Guy Butler, a Rhodes English professor. His 1974 *The 1820 Settlers* underlined the new attitudes. The foundations of "English-Speaking South Africa" are stressed and the contribution of the British settlers to culture, religion and education is celebrated. The poet Thomas Pringle, loathed by many of his contemporaries, is re-invented as a cultural ambassador and representative of the best in the settlers[24]. After the 1970s, though, the cult of the settlers went into decline – the public celebrations, "pilgrimages" and commemorations of the 1950s-1970s no longer seemed appropriate in a "New South Africa". On the other hand, the construction of identity in colonial communities has become of renewed interest to academic historians. Drawing on recent theoretical insights, Clifton Crais[25] and Alan Lester[26] have published works on settler identity in the nineteenth century which avoid the pitfalls of writers such as Butler anxious to celebrate settler heritage. They attempt to understand eastern Cape society as an integrated whole, and stress not only political, economic and military interactions on the frontier, but also the cultural and ideological positions which arose out of particular eastern Cape circumstances. These are general studies, though – they do not examine the way these interactions played out in specific communities.

This study has two primary aims. It is a work of urban history, tracing the economic and physical development of a small but significant town on the Cape frontier. It will examine the nature of the diverse society which arose under those conditions, and try to understand the complex divisions which prevailed even in such a small community. To

[24] Butler, G, *The 1820 Settlers* (Cape Town 1974), p. 339.
[25] Crais, C, *The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape* (Johannesburg, 1992).
[26] Lester, A, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth Century South Africa and Britain* (London, 2001).

do so it is necessary to understand the essential integration of the town‟s population. Africans, though unequally incorporated in the colonial community, were not simply victims of colonial oppression and exploitation – they contested the role assigned to them in the settler-dominated order and tried to create their own spaces in the town. The economy of the town could not have functioned without them – the foundations of the "Settler City" rested on the region‟s indigenous inhabitants. At the same time, close attention is paid to the settlers themselves, who formed a large majority in the town, even in mid-century. Their class and religious divisions, their cultural and leisure activities, and their political and ideological beliefs all point to a community far more complex than the settler myths suggest. Focusing on a specific community is of value in relation to writers such as Lester and Crais. Grahamstown was a primary location for the creation of a distinct settler identity. The presence of a prolific press and influential settler propagandists meant that settler communities elsewhere often looked to Grahamstown for cultural and political leadership. But the town had its own specific agendas which sometimes showed up the cracks in the settler consensus. Its economic imperatives, for example, were often at variance with those of the surrounding countryside.

A variety of primary documents from the period were available for this study. Many settlers left behind diaries or memoirs, some of which have been published, others of which are available in the Cory Library. These offered a valuable resource for this study. Diaries in particular offer insight into the everyday life of the town. Memoirs, written at one remove, often contain less specific information, but reveal something of the beliefs, values and attitudes of the period. Many of the accounts of travellers and missionaries

give some description of Grahamstown, an important stop on most itineraries. Although casual visitors lacked the intimate knowledge of the community of a resident, they were also more immune to local prejudice, and offer perceptive if not always flattering insights into the life of the town. From 1831 Grahamstown possessed a prolific press, in particular the *Graham's Town Journal*. The *Journal* is a well-mined source, relied on heavily by many of the historians of the period. Some of the "settlerist" historians, such as George Cory, seem to have formed their ideas on the history of the eastern Cape almost entirely from the columns of Robert Godlonton. And as a virulently biased and, in the phraseology of the period, "interested", publication, the *Journal* needs to be treated with extreme caution. It remains for all that an extremely valuable source of social data. If the *Journal* was the mouthpiece of the mercantile elite, its correspondence columns occasionally provide alternative viewpoints. It seems to have been widely popular, and as such its prejudices give insight into the mind of the white community. It also reported the proceedings of the Circuit Court in the 1830s and 1840s, thereby providing some picture of the life of the deprived sections of the community. They have been used to find a glimpse of life in the town beyond the official discourses of propriety and respectability. Another important primary source were the records of the magistrate"s court, presided over by the Landdrost, from 1821 to 1828[27]. A period of considerable social flux in Grahamstown, they offer a picture of the development of a new colonial society on the South African frontier.

Secondary material, both published and unpublished, has been vital in locating Grahamstown in the history of the frontier. The works of Mostert, Crais, Keegan and

[27] Criminal Records, Cape Archives, 1/AY 3/1/1/1/1.

Peires[28], among others, have been drawn upon to explain the significance of broader issues affecting the town. There are also a number of theses concerning more specific aspects of Eastern Cape history, from agriculture[29] and trade[30], to art[31] and the environment[32]. A number of articles published in journals give similar insight into specific ideas or issues.

[28] Mostert, N, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (New York, 1992); Crais, C, *Making of the Colonial Order*; Keegan, T, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (Cape Town, 1996); Peires, J, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence* (Johannesburg, 1981).
[29] Webb, A.C.M, "The Agricultural Development of the 1820 Settlement down to 1846" (Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1975).
[30] R. Beck, **"**The Legalisation and Development of Trade on the Cape Frontier 1817 – 1830" (Unpublished PhD thesis, Indiana University, 1987).
[31] M. Crosser, "Images of a Changing Frontier: Worldview in Eastern Cape Art from Bushman Rock Art to 1875" (Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1992).
[32] J. Payne, "Re-Creating Home: British Colonialism, Culture and the Zuurveld Environment in the Nineteenth Century" (Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University 1998).

CHAPTER ONE

"THE PECULIAR GENIUS OF THE INHABITANTS": THE ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF A FRONTIER TOWN

> The District of Albany must unquestionably be regarded more as a trading station than as an agricultural or pastoral country. It is to commerce alone that it is indebted for its existence at the present day. It is to the peculiar genius of the inhabitants; their enterprise, their courage, their perseverance and their industry in the promotion of their intercourse with the native tribes, that the British settlement has risen to its peculiar eminence, and that it holds out on those promises of becoming at no very distant day, the regenerator of a considerable portion of the African continent – *The Graham's Town Journal*, 1834[1].

Although it was always intended by the colonial government that Grahamstown would develop into a civilian centre, there was initially little inducement for settlement in the town. The presence of a military base did provide certain economic opportunities and some contractors and merchants were able to accumulate significant wealth during the 1810s. These opportunities were necessarily limited. It was only after the rapid increase in population after 1820 that the town"s economy began to diversify. Initially, the scarcity of skilled workers provided opportunities for white artisans to escape the land on which they had been located and find employment in their original trades. Although these became an established section of Grahamstown society, it was the development of commerce, especially across the frontier, which provided the primary impetus for Grahamstown"s growth from the mid-1820s. By the 1840s Grahamstown was a predominantly commercial town, and had also invested in the growing wool industry, for

[1] *Graham's Town Journal*, 13 November 1834.

which it provided a commercial centre. This economic development, and the increasing social stratification which resulted, affected the physical development of the town, although residential segregation according to wealth was not as marked as it became later in the century. Race as well as class determined residential boundaries, with Africans and Khoekhoe being confined to impoverished townships from as early as the 1820s. The physical development of the town reflected various cultural and social conflicts as the attempt of the dominant class to give their values concrete expression in the landscape of the town competed with the reality of a cosmopolitan and chaotic settlement on the Cape frontier.

Before 1820 little development occurred in Grahamstown. In November 1812, a few months after the town‟s establishment, the Deputy Landdrost, Major Fraser, and the military commander, Colonel Lyster, were instructed to establish buildings suitable for civilian administration[2]. These included a prison, completed in 1814 and now the oldest surviving building in Grahamstown, a messenger‟s house, and accommodation for the deputy Landdrost and two African policemen. The shortage of skilled workers and evident incompetence on the part of contractors inhibited the development of government infrastructure in the town. A contractor from Uitenhage, Von Buchenroder, had failed to complete the jail and the messenger‟s house as late as 1817, while the construction of other buildings planned in 1812 had not even been commenced[3].

[2] Cory, G *The Rise of South Africa* (1910; Reprint Cape Town, 1965), ii, p. 267.
[3] *Ibid.*, i, p. 272.

In 1814 steps were taken to pave the way for civilian development. J. Knobel surveyed land to be made available to civilian settlers[4]. The prison, one of the few government buildings approaching completion, was used to determine the line of High Street, intended to be the central economic axis of the town. The shape of the irregular "triangular square", in which the cathedral now stands, was a result of the refusal of the military to relocate existing structures, even though they stood at an angle to the projected street. In May 1815 the lots thus surveyed were sold by auction, on the condition that a house would be constructed within 18 months of purchase[5]. At the same time, the chaotic assembly of huts in the middle of the new street which had accommodated the soldiers of the Cape Corps were cleared away, and the soldiers were relocated to the East Barracks. The town remained embryonic - only about 30 houses had been completed by 1820.

The economic opportunities of the town were limited, and almost entirely dependent on the military or the small civil establishment. These included above all construction and supplying the commissariat. Nevertheless there were evidently opportunities to accumulate wealth. By 1820 traders and contractors such as Piet Retief and A. B. Dietz had managed to acquire property in the town. The latter was the agent of Frederick Korsten, based at Algoa bay, who had attained considerable prosperity supplying the military on the frontier[6]. Some of these merchants, such as Retief, took advantage of a few residual monopolies auctioned by the government and dating from VOC times (these privileges were extended by the British administration to the new provinces on the

[4] *Ibid.*, i, p. 269.
[5] *Ibid.*, i, p. 271
[6] Chase, J. C, *Old Times and Odd Corners* (Port Elizabeth, 1868). P. 4.

frontier); the liquor monopoly, or "pacht", was worth nearly two thousand pounds a year for Albany before it was abolished in 1830[7]. Retief managed to corner the market on wheat in 1819, and used his advantage to sell it on to the newly arrived settlers at exorbitant cost[8]. A small number of merchants who were later to play a prominent role in Grahamstown"s economic and public life had established themselves. W. R. Thompson had commenced trading and John Rafferty had established a tannery[9].

The earliest illustration of Grahamstown dates from 1820[10], eight years after the establishment of the town. It shows only a handful of buildings, so few that the occupier of each building is noted on the drawing. At this time, the area around Church Square was still dominated by military buildings, including the private residences of officers and the military chaplain, and the hospital. Most civilian houses stood in High Street, or in the recently laid out (in 1820) New Street. The only really substantial building was the East Barracks, built in 1815. Otherwise the town consisted of a few straggling white cottages along muddy streets not clearly demarcated. In the next decade the town was to experience rapid growth as its population rose in the wake of the 1820 settlement scheme, and its economic base became considerably diversified.

The 1820 settlement was intended to be primarily agricultural, and most of the 4 000 settlers were to remain on the land. It was hoped that the settlers would practise

[7] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 217.
[8] *Ibid.*, ii, p. 75.
[9] Philip, P *British Residents at the Cape: Biographical Residents of 4 800 Pioneers* (Cape Town, 1981), pp. 335 and 421.
[10] This painting, now in the Albany Museum, is reproduced in Bryer, *The British Settlers of 1820* (Cape Town, 1986) p. 13.

agriculture rather than the pastoralism prevalent among the trekboers, so that a much greater density of population could be achieved. Only 100 acres were assigned to each head of household, much less than the three to six thousand acres the boers were often granted[11]. It was hoped that this would assist in the defence of the colony against the neighbouring amaXhosa, many of whom had been expelled from the area only eight years previously. Agriculture was intended to replicate that practised in the English countryside: a class of gentleman farmers served by white labourers, growing such traditional English crops as wheat. The environment of the Zuurveld, however, made such farming impossible. Although some crops could be grown successfully, the main staple of the British settlers, wheat, was attacked by disease, and seldom produced a significant yield[12]. The climate was erratic, with drought in the early 1820s being followed by torrential rains in 1823. Even if a crop could be produced, the lack of a significant market was a considerable disincentive[13]. This was aggravated by the fact that the military, who could potentially have consumed the settlers' produce, were supplied by the Somerset farm. This farm was run by the government and was able to employ both military and Khoekhoe labour at low cost, giving it a considerable advantage over labour-scarce Albany[14] in the 1820s. This was a continual source of grievance to farmers until the farm was converted to the village of Somerset East in 1825. By the mid-1820s it was clear that the hope of a dense agricultural settlement in the Zuurveld was to be dashed, and that the land would not be able to provide a living for most of the settlers.

[11] Webb, "Agricultural Development", p. 18.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[14] As the area of settlement was named in 1820.

The collapse of the 1820 settlement scheme resulted in a considerable spurt of growth and development in Grahamstown. The early 1820s provided a stark contrast between the increasing impoverishment of the countryside and the rising prosperity of the town. The failure of agriculture left many families on the land in dire poverty; two organisations in Cape Town were established for their relief[15]. A more permanent solution was to allow a drift into the towns of the colony, and Grahamstown was able to acquire a large population of skilled artisans and other labourers, some of whom, though by no means all, were quickly able to prosper. Much was made of the supposedly high wages which could be earned by skilled craftsmen in the towns. Thomas Philipps, a settler landowner, pointed out that "a great many tradesmen came out who could find no employment on their land…are flocking to the Towns…£6 a month is the common rate for carpenters and masons. Many of them earn enough for their families, and if saving, to buy a couple of cows every month". This was a source of complaint for many of the original settler gentry who feared that their economic position might be undermined by the departure of their labour force, especially in the early 1820s when Khoekhoe and African labour was scarce. Some, such as Philipps, argued that wages could be effectively reduced: "If wages were reduced by half or more, and perhaps ere long they will be, it will be sufficient for them in a country like this where beef and mutton is scarcely 2d a lb and of the finest quality". He was exaggerating: although artisans were able to earn a living, few became wealthy. Jeremiah Goldswain, for example, leaving his land in 1820, initially made only a tenuous living as a sawyer[16].

[15] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 163.
[16] Long, U (ed.),*The Chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain* (Cape Town, 1949), i, p. 36.

By the mid-1820s, builders, blacksmiths, shoemakers, wheelwrights, and even more esoteric trades such as jewellers and bell-hangers, were operating in the town. Although many resumed trades they had practised in Britain, evidently not all were competent, as the difficulty in finding sufficient skilled labourers to construct public buildings in the 1820s demonstrates. There was evidently a degree of social and occupational mobility. Many artisans tried their hands at trading or returned to farming. But many continued to work in their trades. By the 1840s Grahamstown had a well-established artisan and labouring class. Of the "householders" listed in the 1843 almanac 46.1% belonged to this class, including professions such as dressmakers, wood and metal workers, builders, leather workers and a variety of others. The almanac also included twenty-four people whose occupation was listed as "labourer". This is probably an underestimate of the number of casual labourers, a group which would have included many settlers as well as the majority of the African and Khoekhoe population of the town. The Grahamstown elite hoped that a more significant class of white labourers would develop, and the emigration of labourers from Britain was being encouraged by the leading merchants and farmers as late as the 1830s. But it is unclear what kind of opportunities existed. The *Journal* suggested in 1832 that employment for five hundred white labourers could be found, but this estimate was disputed by correspondents, who suggested that this would benefit the "storekeepers" rather than the community as a whole[17]. In the end, Africans and Khoekhoe could be employed for less and came to form the bulk of the labouring class.

If the artisan and working class were able to escape destitution on the land and achieve a measure of stability in Grahamstown, it was commerce which was the route to substantial

[17] *Graham's Town Journal*, 20 April 1832.

wealth. The artisans were vulnerable to poverty, especially during periods of depression. In the 1860s, for example, not only was the Khoekhoe and African township impoverished, but so too were some of the white working-class areas established in the 1820s[18]. The greater potential of trade as a path to prosperity was recognised from the early 1820s, and many artisans attempted to establish themselves as traders, especially after the creation of the Fort Willshire fair in 1824. Those who applied for licences to trade there included farmers, carpenters, shoemakers, painters, bricklayers, tailors, wheelwrights, and smiths, as well as a piano tuner, a jeweller and a china painter[19]. Some were able to prosper as merchants; but many, especially after the number of trading licences were reduced in 1826, were obliged to return to their original occupations. Donald Moodie described the varying fortunes of the traders:

> Anyone of the class of artisan or mechanic who possesses industry or steadiness may easily raise himself to a higher situation in society; for as soon as he has acquired a little capital he may readily obtain credit with the merchants of Cape Town, who will give him goods to sell for him on commission; and he soon acquires the means of carrying on business on his own account [however] their ambition generally leads them to live expensively and to speculate beyond their means, and after going on for a few years in apparent prosperity, they become bankrupt and are obliged to return to their original employments[20].

Jeremiah Goldswain, for example, was unable to make a success of trading, and had to return to his previous employment as a sawyer.

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[18] Gibbens, M, "Two Decades in the Life of a City: Grahamstown 1862 – 1882" (Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, 1982), p. 45.
[19] Beck, "The Legalisation and Development of Trade", p. 115.
[20] Quoted in Le Cordeur, B, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism* (Cape Town, 1981), p. 40.

Those who could make good as traders could become enormously wealthy. The saddler‟s apprentice, George Wood, became a wealthy store owner in Grahamstown by the 1830s[21]. William Southey claimed that profits from the frontier trade ranged from 20% to as much as 100%. Benjamin Norden, by the 1830s also a leading Grahamstown merchant, boasted that he had earned between £40 000 and £60 000 in two decades of trade. Trans-frontier trade became the foundation of Grahamstown‟s prosperity. The frontier traders formed the core of a wealthy mercantile elite in the town by the 1830s. They included, among others, Wood, the Norden brothers, P. Heugh, the Maynard brothers, W.R. Thompson, J. Howse and W. Ogilvie. They were joined by some who had made their fortunes trading with the military, such as the "army butchers", William Lee and William Cock[22], and a few, such as Robert Godlonton, who had earned wealth through professional avocations, such as journalism, medicine or the law (although the journalist Robert Godlonton, a conspicuous figure in the town‟s elite, also operated a retail store in Grahamstown)[23].

Grahamstown had long been the centre of trade on the eastern frontier, especially with the amaXhosa. The first attempts to establish legal trade between the colony and the amaXhosa were made there, though the twice yearly fairs established in 1817 were not successful, and were ended following the 1819 frontier war[24]. After the war, an attempt was made to establish fairs at the clay pits, where the Xhosa would exchange ivory and hides for the clay they were accustomed to collect free of charge, an arrangement which

[21] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 69.
[22] Cock, W, "Journal: Covering 1819 – 1849", Cory Library, MS 14 262, p. 2.
[23] Le Cordeur, B, "Robert Godlonton as Architect of Frontier Opinion, with Special Reference to the Politics of Separatism, 1850-1857" (Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1956), p. 6.
[24] Beck, "The Legalisation and Development of Trade", p. 62.

was unsuccessful[25]. Far more popular was illegal trading across the frontier, involving a number of settlers. Illegal trading in Albany, in common with other areas in the colony, favoured those settlers closest to the frontier, such as John Stubbs and Thomas Mahoney, and was decentralised. Soldiers at frontier outposts also became involved in illegal trading[26]. It was a dangerous business and a number of settlers, including John Stubbs, lost their lives[27]. But it was clearly profitable and there was considerable demand for the trade to be legalised. The creation of the first successful fair at Fort Willshire in 1824 resulted in Grahamstown"s re-establishment as the centre of the frontier trade. One reason for this was that settlement in the vicinity of Fort Willshire was forbidden, and as a result the majority of traders there preferred to be based in the town, although the distance they were required to travel, nearly one hundred kilometres, was sometimes a cause for complaint[28]. Another reason was that the traders generally sold on their goods in Grahamstown, where they were purchased by town-based merchants and mostly exported. Generally it was these merchants, who had often themselves earned their fortunes at the fair, or representatives of trading concerns in Cape Town, who had provided the traders with the necessary capital in the first place[29]. William Lee, for example, advertised in the *Journal* offering assistance to people "trading in the interior"[30]. This pattern continued after the opening of the frontier to traders and the decline of the Fort Willshire fair after 1830. After that date traders were allowed to range across the frontier at will, though they usually retained bases in Grahamstown. Fort

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 74.
[26] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 175.
[27] Maxwell, W and McGeogh, R (eds.), *The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs* (Cape Town, 1978), p. 11.
[28] Beck, "The Legalisation and Development of Trade", pp. 100 – 103.
[29] Le Cordeur, *Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 39
[30] *Graham's Town Journal*, 1 December 1831.

Willshire thus lost its importance, though the "robbing and cheating [of] the natives" that allegedly occurred there may also have been a factor[31]. (The fairs were also popular for "drinking and gambling", which no doubt further lessened their commercial viability)[32].

The goods purchased at the fair or across the frontier and resold in Grahamstown were bought by locally based merchants and exported through Algoa bay. These merchants in return purchased goods imported from Britain and sold them as retailers in the town. The distinction between "merchants", mostly Grahamstown-based and often wealthy, and "traders" moving back and forth across the frontier was becoming clearer by the 1830s. The 1843 almanac lists them as clearly separate occupations[33]. There is also a distinction made between "merchants", presumably involved in the export trade, and "storekeepers", who were exclusively retailers. But many of the exporters had their own stores too. The quantity and variety of goods sold by these retailers was immense. B. Norden and J. Jarvis, for example, placed the following advertisement in the *Journal* in 1833, a standard practice amongst retailers:

> Received per *Diana* and *Maria* a few investments, comprising ironmongery, consisting of Hatchets, Drawing knives, Saws, Scales and Dutch Weights, Weighing machines, Plastering trowels, Brass Kettles and Stands, Saucepans, Tea Kettles, Snuflers [sic] and Trays, Screws, Stew Pans, Files, Flat Brass Candle Sticks, Japaned [sic] Snuff Boxes, B.Y. Sickles, Table Knives and Forks, Pocket and Pen Knives, Camp Ovens, Frying Pans, Copper Tea Kettles and Stew Pans, Britannia Metal Teapots, Sugar Basins and Cream Jugs, Cups and Ewers and Basins, Fire Irons, Brass sieves, Powder Flasks, Knife Sharpeners, Dress and Side Combs etc.etc.

[31] Le Cordeur, B (ed.), *The Journal of Charles Lennox Stretch* (Cape Town, 1988), p. 9.
[32] Collett, J, *A Time to Plant: A Biography of James Lydford Collett* (Katkop, 1990), p. 22.
[33] Chase, J, *The Cape of Good Hope and Algoa Bay* (London, 1843), pp. 287 – 294.

> Also two very super Beams, Chains and Scale Board, calculated to weigh two tons.
>
> Hosiery – viz. worsted and cotton Stockings and Socks, worsted Cuff and Comforters, worsted and cotton Drawers, short and long Angola socks, and Berlin Gloves. Also Cloths, Prints, Shawls, Veils, Caps, Bobbin Nett, Habits, Mantles, Quilling, Lace, Footing, Tatting, Crimp, Collars, Velveteen and Patent Velvet and a few Superfine Cloth Coats and Trousers etc.etc.
>
> A Great Variety of China Goods, consisting of Trays and Waiters, Tea Caddies, Card Boxes, Silver Watch Guards, Work Boxes, Sewing Silk, Table Mats, Paper Cutters, Waste Ribands [sic], Decanter Stands, Crimson and White Kerchiefs, Black Silk Neckerchiefs, Nankeen, Sweetmeats, and a Variety of Silks"[34]

The flood of whites into the region after 1820 was accompanied by a flood of European manufactured goods. The consignments were often sold at auction, and some individuals, such as Benjamin Norden, were able to prosper as professional auctioneers. The auctions were popular events, although, as one correspondent to the *Journal* confessed, the urge to acquire a bargain could become almost bankrupting[35].

The romance as well as the profitability of the so-called trans-frontier captivated Grahamstonians. The *Journal* described the market in glowing terms:

> The Public Market at Graham"s Town, which is held on every day except Sundays, exhibits a very lively and amusing scene. There is to be met the farmer from the most distant extremities of the colony, with his wagon laden with curiosities, such as the skins of wild animals, ostrich feathers, ivory and the rude but deadly weapons of the Bushmen and Betchuanas. Here also is to be seen the enterprising setter just returned from a six months trading journey in the interior, with a cargo of hides or ivory, together with

[34] *Graham's Town Journal*, 15 August 1833.
[35] *Graham's Town Journal*, 17 January 1833.

> the rich fur dresses or cloaks of the natives of distant regions visited by him in the course of his peregrinations[36].

In another edition, it claimed that Grahamstown‟s "traffic with the tribes in the interior is boundless in extent, and promised to afford ample employment, to an increased population and an enlarged capital"[37]. Cowper Rose, an English army officer who travelled through the area in the 1820s, was also struck by the exotic produce and weapons the traders acquired[38]. He mentioned the wild animals that could be had at the market; as late as 1844 a lion was advertised for sale in the *Journal* (he cost £20)[39]. Cory, one of the foremost settler historians, also stressed the importance of the frontier trade, arguing that ivory "came to the rescue of the struggling community"[40]. The appeal of this trade is expressed in a painting of Grahamstown‟s market by Thomas Baines, done in 1850. The settlers themselves appear in familiar European attire, and the tower of the Anglican Church dominates the skyline. But the goods for sale emphasise the exotic African location: in addition to great piles of ivory, Baines noted on the reverse of the painting – "Zoolu dress. Crocodiles, Pangolin, Rhinocerous horns. Vlake verk [sic], flat pig‟s tusk, Lions and panther skin. Eland‟s horns. Elephant tail. Koodoo horns. Swartbok. Buffalo horns. Karosses"[41].

The trade across the frontier was vitally important to the town‟s merchants, whose mouthpiece the *Grahams Town Journal* was. The transfrontier goods, until the wool

[36] *Graham's Town Journal*, 17 January 1833.
[37] *Graham's Town Journal*, 1 December 1831.
[38] Butler, *1820 Settlers*, p. 210.
[39] *Graham's Town Journal*, 8 February 1844.
[40] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 174.
[41] Carruthers, J and Arnold, M, *The Life and Work of Thomas Baines* (Vlaeberg, 1995), p. 120.

industry took off in the 1830s, provided the bulk of the exports from Grahamstown and the eastern Cape in general. These exports grew rapidly during the 1820s, from a value of £1,500 in 1821 to £24,438 in 1830[42]. In 1833, the *Journal* published the main produce brought to the market:

Product	**Total Value**
Ivory	£1, 800 7s 6d
Green Hides	£18, 145 4s
Dry Hides	£11, 886
Sole Leather	£504
Horns	£3, 000
Buck and Sheep Skins	£2, 460
Buck and Sheep Skins (tanned)	£100
Tallow	£4, 820 12s
Butter	£3, 080 10s
Soap	£230 15s
Wool	£407 4s
Ostrich Feathers	£303
Salt Beef and Pork	£3, 700
Wheat	£95
Wheaten Meal	£78
Candles	£100
Aloes	£10
Barley	£30
Total	**£51, 290 12s**

Table 1: Total Value of Produce at Grahamstown market 1833[43]

Three of the most lucrative items were hides, horns and ivory, all bartered from the amaXhosa for European goods and mostly exported. Salted meat, butter and tallow are the only other colonial products that were exported in significant quantities before wool became significant.

[42] *Graham's Town Journal*, 21 September 1843.
[43] *Graham's Town Journal*, 17 January 1833.

The frontier trade was not the only avenue for commerce in the town. Grahamstown was also the centre of a number of other trading networks within the colony. The presence of the military continued to provide substantial trading opportunities. One correspondent to the *Journal* reckoned that trade with the military was worth about £20 000 a year, although he admitted this was a rough estimate[44]. Even during peacetime the commissariat advertisements in the *Journal* appealed for an astonishing diversity of goods. As well as the more obvious requirements such as food and forage, one tender called for "screws, stone, trowels, tin, tiles, turpentine, whiting, glass, iron, lead, locks, linseed oil, saltpetre, paint, steel, staves, brick, brushes, bags, canvas, cane, coal, charcoal, copper sheet [and] glue"[45]. A merchant could evidently sell almost anything to the army. The military contracts provide one example of the differing economic priorities between Grahamstown and its immediate agricultural vicinity. One prosperous farmer, Richard Daniell, accused Grahamstown merchants supplying the commissariat of deliberately undercutting farmers to increase their profits[46]. Even the *Journal* admitted that the merchant contractors were harmful to agriculture[47]. The army also issued contracts to civilians for transport, construction and other services. Jeremiah Goldswain was the army contractor for lime in the 1830s, and was also contracted for transport during the 1834 war[48]. Some of Grahamstown's leading merchants, such as W. Cock and W. Lee, the so-called "army butchers", made their fortunes supplying the army. Individual soldiers could make large purchases – one bought 842 rix dollars worth of

[44] *Graham's Town Journal*, 15 June 1832.
[45] *Graham's Town Journal*, 20 December 1832.
[46] *Graham's Town Journal*, 2 March 1832.
[47] *Graham's Town Journal*, 6 April 1832.
[48] Long (ed.), *Goldswain's Chronicle*, i, pp. 70, 85.

goods from the trader James Collett[49]. At the same time they could also acquire debts they could not repay. An officer had to publish an advertisement in the *Journal* making it clear that the army accepted no responsibility for this[50].

If the military offered a steady source of income during peace, it was during war that spectacular fortunes were to be made. During the war of 1834-35 in particular many observers noted the propensity of Grahamstown merchants to make huge profits at the expense of the army. George Wood, who emerged from the war as one of Grahamstown‟s richest inhabitants, was a conspicuous example, particularly since he was accused of corruption. George Lennox Stretch, an acerbic officer stationed on the frontier, noted that

> From the impositions of the Graham‟s Town people during the panic many enriched themselves at the public expense. The most notorious was the clothing of the Provisional Colonial Infantry by a person named „Wood‟, who reaped the sum of £7 000 for this job. The articles purchased were of the most common material, a jacket of „Caffre baize‟, imitation moleskin trousers, a common black hat, 2 cotton shirts and a tin jug. The person soon after purchased Mr Cock‟s house for £2,000, who also had not been indolent in filling his pockets. It is not therefore surprising that these Graham‟s Town worthies were desirous the *‘war should proceed’*. The Caffres were *‘not sufficiently punished’*[51].

Thomas Stubbs, son of the settler who had been killed during an illegal trading expedition in 1823, described the uniforms supplied by Wood as consisting of “a few yards of Caffre duffel and coarse jersey, and for boots, a pair of soles and piece of sheep skin”. He also alleged that Wood had bribed the commissariat officer, but having become

[49] Hunt, “The Development of Municipal Government”, p. 35.
[50] *Graham’s Town Journal*, 16 February 1832.
[51] Le Cordeur (ed.), *Stretch Journal*, p.

popular with Colonel Smith he was able to draw substantial amounts of money. This fortune was supplemented by selling horses to the cavalry at vast profit[52]. Godlonton, too, was suspected of having "his finger in the public chest"[53]. William Shrewsbury, a Methodist missionary, noted that "some are earthly minded, seeking more *how to make the most of their merchandise in a time of public distress* rather than aiming at the glory of the Lord"[54]. This could occasion bitterness among the farmers in the surrounding countryside. J. M. Bowker claimed that the merchants actually looked forward to wars which would ruin the farmers since "Grahamstown does not suffer with the country"[55].

Grahamstown merchants tended to supply both sides during frontier conflict. David Livingstone claimed that "the Graham"s Town merchants who are the principal getters up of the war sell their goods to the troops at enormous profits , and then when the war is concluded they supply the Caffres with guns and gunpowder and call for a war again, and that great idiot John Bull has to pay the piper. This system has gone on for years"[56]. The illegal sale of firearms and gunpowder to the amaXhosa was lucrative. Stretch claimed that "500 barrels of powder had been sent from Graham"s Town to the Caffre tribes" before the 1834 war[57]. He claimed that "when there I saw „settler traders" beginning to introduce guns among the Caffres, which became a very profitable trade between Grahamstown and Caffraria for many years until the war of 1835 and long after"[58]. In 1834 a trader named McLuckie was arrested carrying 300lb of gunpowder in his wagon.

[52] Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 211.
[53] Quoted in Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 76.
[54] Fast, H, (ed.), *The Journal and Selected Letters of Rev. William J. Shrewsbury 1826 – 1835* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 166.
[55] Bowker, J. M, *Speeches, Letters and Selections from Important Papers* (Grahamstown, 1864), p. 241.
[56] Quoted in Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 136.
[57] Le Cordeur (ed.), *Stretch Journal*, p. 28.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

He subsequently implicated a number of prominent merchants, including G. Wood, W. Ogilvie, W. Wright, and J. Howse[59]. Although in this instance a few merchants received fines, convictions for gunpowder trading were rare. In any case, the quality of armaments sold to the amaXhosa was too poor to be a significant military threat[60].

Boer farmers were soon recognised as another promising market, just as soon as they had been inculcated with "ideal wants" for British produce, as Philipps expressed it[61]. As early as 1822 he noted the plight of a fellow party head, Mr Greathead, who, having been "completely ruined" on his allotment, had taken to "travelling up the country buying and selling goods to the Boors [sic]"[62]. Jeremiah Goldswain's first trading venture in the early 1820s was also "up country" rather than across the frontier[63]. The *Journal of Harry Hastings* describes the trading activities of "Robert Trumpet" amongst the boers[64]. John Montgomery became another successful trader within the colony. The traders amongst the Dutch also tended to be based in Grahamstown. James Howse "by his numerous business transactions with the Dutch colonists directed their attention to Grahamstown as a place of trade"[65]. Grahamstown merchants often provided the capital for trading expeditions. W. E. Crout, an employee of the wealthy merchant John Norton, described a trading journey:

> In a few weeks I am going to trade among the Dutch farmers with all sorts of goods, about 3 months every year, for cattle and sheep

[59] *Graham's Town Journal*, 14 August 1834, 4 September 1834, 18 September 1834.
[60] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 136.
[61] Keppel-Jones, A, (ed.), *Thomas Philipps, 1820 Settler* (Pietermaritzburg, 1960), p. 101.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[63] Long (ed.), *Goldswain Chronicle*, i, p. 39.
[64] Ayliff, J, *The Journal of Harry Hastings* (Grahamstown, Reprint 1963), p. 77.
[65] Ayliff, J, "Memorials of J. Howse Esq.", Cory Library, MS 7228, n.p.

> and then sell the fat cattle and sheep to the butchers. If I have good luck I shall make about £80 in 3 months that I go up the country. I shall go about 400 miles from Grahamstown. I have been up one journey for Mr J. Norton, and have made a good profit, about a £100. I was only gone 3 months…Mr J. Norton is going to let me have about £300 worth of goods on a good long credit. I am going up with wagons[66].

Thomas Stubbs was also financed by a Grahamstown merchant, W. R. Thompson, although his venture to Cradock was unsuccessful, illustrating the risk involved to creditors[67].

Grahamstown came to supply imported goods to many of the older towns of the eastern Cape, such as Graaff-Reinet[68]. The expanding frontiers of European colonisation augmented trading opportunities for Grahamstown merchants. Many of the traders, such as John Montgomery, took advantage of the opportunities created by the Great Trek[69]. This movement expanded the commercial reach of Grahamstown traders far into the interior. When the merchant W. R. Thompson presented a bible to the departing Dirk Uys in 1837, he was protecting a commercial relationship as well as taking leave of a friend[70]. In turn, the boer now possessed a market considerably more accessible than Cape Town, and eagerly sold their produce in Grahamstown. The Methodist missionary John Ayliff claimed that in 1834 2049 wagons containing £22 635 worth of goods arrived at the Grahamstown market from the "Dutch districts" of the colony[71]. The new settlement at

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[66] Quoted in Neumark, J. D, *Economic Influences on the South African Frontier 1652 – 1836* (Stanford, 1957), p. 147.
[67] Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 100.
[68] Neumark, *Economic Influences*, p. 142.
[69] Butler, *1820 Settlers*, p. 196.
[70] Hunt, "The Development of Municipal Government", p. 35.
[71] Ayliff, "Memorials of James Howse", n.p.

Port Natal attracted the attention of Grahamstown traders, and some, such as James Collett, acquired ivory from this distant settlement[72].

Grahamstown served as a trading centre for its more immediate hinterland in Albany. In 1821 Philipps reported that Khoekhoe living at the mouth of the Kowie River collected sea shells which they sold in Grahamstown for lime[73]. Residents of the mission stations at Theopolis and Bethelsdorp supplied timber and transport to the town in the 1820s[74]. The town provided a market for firewood, which was provided by both African and white rural poor. J. M. Bowker mentioned a case of a widow, Healy, who relied on her few cows to transport firewood to the town[75]. Goldswain, in one of the periodic attempts to expel Xhosa living in the colony without passes, was obliged to evict a family who made their living supplying firewood to the town[76]. Farmers supplemented their often meagre incomes by selling home-made goods in Grahamstown. Thomas Shone made shoes while also farming[77]. John Ayliff's party sold shoes and straw hats in the town[78]. Local farmers "always found Grahamstown to be their most convenient resort for mercantile transactions"[79]. The rural population was dependent on Grahamstown for supplying a profusion of imported goods, of which Albany consumed £160, 588 worth by 1842[80]. As well as providing a market for small manufactures and trade goods, Grahamstown was the centre for agriculture in Albany. Despite the failure of the 1820 settlement, there were

[72] Collett, *A Time to Plant*, p. 33.
[73] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 96.
[74] Ross, A, *John Philip (1775 – 1851): Missions, Race and Politics in South Africa*, (Aberdeen, 1986), p. 100.
[75] Bowker, *Speeches*, p. 54.
[76] Long (ed.), *Goldswain's Chronicle*, ii, p. 17.
[77] Silva, P (ed.), *The Albany Journal of Thomas Shone* (Cape Town, 1992), p. 58.
[78] Ayliff, *Harry Hastings*, p. 81.
[79] Shaw, W, *The Story of My Mission in South Eastern Africa*, (London, 1860), p. 75.
[80] *Graham's Town Journal*, 21 September 1843.

still upwards of 300 subsistence or small–scale farmers in the 1830s[81]. The diversity of their agricultural produce is indicated by the market returns for 1830-31:

Product	Total Quantity	Cost per Unit
Brandy	89 legers	£12
Wine	4 legers	£5
Meal	4 042 muids	£1 1s
Wheat	320 muids	£1
Barley	1 757 muids	4s
Oats	1 115 muids	3s
Indian Corn	153 muids	6s
Salt	1 840 muids	8s
Dried Fruits	8 559 lbs	3,5d
Raisins	9 905 lbs	3,5d
Tobacco	14 944 lbs	3d
Bed Feathers	139 lbs	2s
Wool	3 243 lbs	6d
Tiger Skins	77	12s
Raw Hides	10 730	10s
Dry Hides	487	4s
Buck Skins	11 130	1s 3d
Horns	24 663	(per 100) £2 5s
Kid and Calf Skins	2 564	2s
Oat Hay	150 202 lbs	(per 100 lbs) 3s
Oxen	100	£1 5s
Cows	90	£1

Table 2: Quantity and Average Price of Selected commodities at Grahamstown Market, October 1831 – September 1832.

The table makes clear that although frontier trade goods were the most lucrative export, Grahamstown provided a large market for locally consumed produce. The flight from the land into Grahamstown had been the salvation of those farmers who remained – they now had a market where they could sell their produce[82]. Cereals, fruit, vegetables and livestock were supplied to the town. Exhibiting their prejudice in favour of British staples local farmers persisted with wheat despite its repeated failures, but were more successful

[81] *Graham's Town Journal*, 13 April 1832.
[82] Webb, "Agricultural Development", p. 57.

with barley, oats, maize and vegetables[83]. Their success was still subject to the vagaries of the environment, as drought, locusts and disease caused yields and prices to fluctuate widely. This severely affected the life of a small farmer. Many farmers produced only on a small scale. John Stubbs used to take small quantities of agricultural produce from his allotment to Grahamstown - on one occasion two sucking pigs fixed to the horns of a pack ox[84]! Despite the initial discouragement of stock farming[85], local farmers soon acquired livestock, and produced butter, tallow, hides and other animal products for sale.

If many of the farmers in the immediate vicinity of Grahamstown remained poor, there were nevertheless fortunes to be made. The acceleration of stratification in the agricultural areas of South Africa, as those farmers who could acquire capital were able to prosper while those who were not were marginalised and often forced off the land, has been described by a number of writers[86] and can be seen clearly in the districts immediately surrounding Grahamstown. It was hastened by the initial collapse of the 1820 agricultural scheme but took a number of decades to be completed. This process saw the emergence of two kinds of farmers in the Albany district. Some remained small-scale producers. Others were able to acquire large tracts of land and invest in expensive, export-oriented activities, above all sheep farming.

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[84] Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 83.
[85] Webb, "Agricultural Development", p. 29.
[86] Beinart, W, Delius P, and Trapido, S (eds.) *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa 1850 – 1930* (Johannesburg 1986); Bundy, C, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (London, 1988).

The first successful sheep farmers were those heads of parties who had invested heavily in the 1820 land scheme and found it much harder to cut their losses than had their indentured servants. Initially, being burdened with an apparently unproductive resource induced some despondency, even hardship. In the mid-1820s, Thomas Philipps lamented the fact that "mechanics are doing well and getting up in the world while we are sinking fast"[87], and complained that "gloom and despair appear in all ranks here, but chiefly with people like myself who derive income from our land". John Montgomery described reducing his former party leader, Captain Butler, to tears when he offered the indigent Butler financial assistance[88]. In the long run, however, the disappearance of the settlers from the land enabled the remaining party leaders to consolidate the large tracts required for wool farming. Experiments with woolled sheep, in particular merinos, had already begun in the western Cape, and the settler gentry quickly recognised the opportunities they presented. Some, such as Major Pigot, had acquired merinos as early as 1820[89]. By the 1830s, former leaders such as Philipps, Miles Bowker, T. C. White, W. Gilfillan and R. Daniell had already established prosperous wool farms, supporting about 10 000 woolled sheep[90].

The second wave of investment, however, came primarily from the profits generated from the frontier trade. The profits earned through trade were re-invested in land and sheep. James Cawood, for example, arrived as an indentured servant, made his fortune in

[87] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 106.
[88] Quoted in Bulter, *1820 Settlers*, p. 175.
[89] Webb, "Agricultural Development", p. 118.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

trade and invested his profits in farming[91]. James Collett was another rags-to-riches story. He left his allotment in the mid-1820s to become a trader in Grahamstown. He had evidently prospered by 1832 since he had been able to open another branch in the Kat River settlement. That same year he sold both concerns to buy land and became a prosperous sheep farmer[92]. The Southeys, Bowkers, George Gilbert, Richard Painter, J.C. Chase and others formed a wealthy agricultural elite which had close ties to the mercantile elite of Grahamstown[93]. Many Grahamstown merchants were themselves absentee landowners. George Wood became both a town-based wool-broker and a land-owner, possessing four farms by 1849[94]. James Howse, a former trader and Grahamstown butcher, owned 30 000 acres and 23 000 sheep by the end of the 1840s[95]. It was claimed that his land lay along the Grahamstown-Fort Beaufort road for a distance of twenty-five miles[96]. Godlonton, too, invested in land and owned two farms near Fort Beaufort[97]. Even those Grahamstown merchants who did not invest directly in land had a close interest in the success of the wool industry. Many, such as George Wood, became wool-brokers, buying the clip from the farmer and then selling it on to Port Elizabeth or London. Other prominent brokers were N. Birkenruth, the Maynards, C. Pote, J. Norden and J. C. Wright[98]. They were also influential in supplying capital to the wool farmers. As early as 1833 the Grahamstown Joint Stock Company was formed to raise capital for the importation of merino sheep. The members included not only the early sheep farmers such as Philipps, Carlisle, White and others, but also substantial Grahamstown

[91] Le Cordeur, "Robert Godlonton", p. 15.
[92] Hunt, "The Development of Municipal Government", p. 33.
[93] Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 134.
[94] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 69.
[95] Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 134.
[96] Webb, "Agricultural Development", p. 183.
[97] Le Cordeur, "Robert Godlonton", p. 15.
[98] Hunt, "The Development of Municipal Government", p. 34.

businessmen such as Charles Maynard and Benjamin Norden, as well as the ubiquitous Godlonton[99]. Among the fifty shareholders of the company at least thirty were Grahamstown businessmen. Once banks and other financial institutions were founded in the town they provided capital for the wool farmers.

Wool farming prospered. In 1833, Albany produced 4 500lbs of wool valued at £222. By 1842 the district was producing close to a million pounds and earning £46 453[100]. Despite the upheaval of the 1834-35 frontier war, the infusion of capital into the colony as a result of the emancipation of slaves and the freeing up of large areas of cheap land after the emigration of many boers from the eastern Cape[101] made the 1830s a decade of rapid investment in the industry. The market for wool in the factories of Great Britain appeared to be inexhaustible, which gave wool another distinct advantage over other products[102]. The success of wool excited the admiration of observers and became the boast of Albany. William Shaw wrote that "the entire success of this pursuit has brought forth an entirely new set of competitors, as well as given a largely increased value to land. Many men of capital, of education, and of intelligence, are now engaged in this pursuit, and buildings and other improvements are springing up, which indicate decisively the rapid advancement of the colony in substantial prosperity"[103]. Grahamstown, and in particular the *Grahamstown Journal*, led the celebration of the sheep farmers" success. The *Journal* published success stories, advice on husbandry, and maintained a running commentary on other colonies, especially in Australia, which were also developing wool industries. The

[99] Webb, "Agricultural Development", p. 133.
[100] *Graham's Town Journal*, 21 Septmeber 1843.
[101] Webb, "Agricultural Development", p. 182.
[102] *Ibid.*, p. 186.
[103] Shaw, *Story of My Mission*, p. 50.

attraction of setting up as a wool farmer induced one advertiser in the *Journal* to offer his house for sale – and to accept payment in woolled sheep[104]!

Grahamstown provided financial services to the frontier. As early as 1832 a savings bank had been established, which, aside from the "moral benefit" to the "lower orders", who would hopefully save rather than drink their surplus cash, could provide small amounts of capital to aspirant tradesmen[105]. In 1838 the Eastern Province Bank was formed. Its board consisted of some of the most successful merchants in the town – W. Cock, W. R. Thompson, J. Black, C. Maynard, W. Wright, and J. Norton[106]. In 1839 the Eastern Province Fire and Life Assurance Company was created, with many of the same merchants as its directors, such as Maynard, Black, Wright and Cock. They were joined by J. Norden and T. Nelson, as well as Major Selwyn. Business and finance were evidently very tightly linked in Grahamstown. This was manifested not only through institutions. Many merchants were willing to lend money on their own account. Thomas Shone was in debt to the storekeeper Joseph Weakly, whom he described as a "usurer" who would "skin the devil for a farthing"[107]. William Wright was also lent money privately[108].

The town provided opportunities for a small group of professional men. There were a number of lawyers in the town, some of whom, such as George Jarvis and Henry Nourse, evidently prospered and became influential members of the community. A handful of

[104] *Graham's Town Journal*, 13 August 1835.
[105] *Graham's Town Journal*, 27 December 1832.
[106] *Graham's Town Journal*, 8 November 1838.
[107] Silva (ed.), *Shone Journal*, p. 72.
[108] Gifford, A, (ed.), *The Reminiscences of John Montgomery* (Cape Town, 1981), p. 98.

doctors practised in the town, some of whom became respected citizens. The most prominent of these were the settler John Atherstone and, after 1839, his son, William Guybon. Both were enthusiastic amateur scientists and medical innovators – W. G. Atherstone won fame as an early experimenter with anaesthetics in 1847[109]. Medical practice was rudimentary in the nineteenth century, however, and many eccentric remedies were prescribed. Electricity was recommended for Mrs Shrewsbury's rheumatism[110], while "calomel and jallop" was prescribed for Ayliff's "flux"[111]. Mrs Ayliff's "bilious fever" required an even more unlikely remedy: a "strong dose of jalap and calomel and after that a purgative and after that three powders of pure calomel and then a dose of salts to carry off the medicine"[112]. These were possibly better than popular remedies. Thomas Stubbs refused to see a doctor for his fever and drank, on the recommendation of a neighbour, a penny's worth of "bitter aloes" dissolved in a bottle of gin[113]. The medical profession seems to have acquired some marked eccentrics who earned notoriety in the town. Dr Peter Campbell possessed a paranoid belief that his practice suffered from "the baneful effects of dark and secret calumny, industriously diffused by a few interested, designing and malevolent individuals", and felt the need to defend himself publicly in the *Journal*[114]. Most notorious of all was Dr A. G. Campbell, who was briefly the editor of the magazine, *The Echo*, and founded the *Cape Frontier Times*. He claimed a vague affinity to the more liberal, "philanthropic" attitudes towards the frontier which existed in some circles in the western Cape and in Britain, but seems

[109] Mathie, N, *Dr W. G. Atherstone, 1814 – 1898: Man of Many Facets – A Pseudo-autobiography* (Grahamstown, 1998), p. 239.
[110] Fast (ed.), *Shrewsbury Journal*, p. 164.
[111] Hinchliff, P (ed.), *The Journal of John Ayliff* (Cape Town, 1971), p. 41.
[112] Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 52.
[113] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[114] Metrovich, F. C, *Assegai over the Hills* (Cape Town, 1953), p. 20.

also to have enjoyed ruffling his fellow citizens for the sake of it. As a result he was frequently sued for libel. Despite his personal eccentricities, he seems to have been a capable doctor[115].

By the mid-1840s, Grahamstown had grown from a ragged military encampment to a thriving small town. Its rapid development was a source of considerable pride to its inhabitants. In 1833 the *Journal* enumerated its advantages – 600 "good and substantial houses, a spacious church, four chapels, two public libraries, a handsome commercial hall in progress, a newspaper…[and] several excellent inns"[116]. In 1842 J. C. Chase boasted that it had become "the emporium of the Eastern Frontier Districts and its main streets present a scene of incessant commercial activity whilst almost every article whether of utility or ornament may be readily obtained as in most of the provincial towns of the mother country. There are several good inns, where visitors may command and will receive every reasonable comfort and attention"[117]. The comparison with the "mother country" was made by other observers. William Shrewsbury was thoroughly charmed by his first view of the town in 1826:

> At 3 p.m. arrived at Graham"s Town, a beautiful and delightful English town in the interior of Africa, 600 miles or more from the Cape of Good Hope. The houses, the farm-yards, the cross-barred gates, the inhabitants in manners, dress and appearance are thoroughly English, and while looking at every object I met, and the fields of oats and barley, and the gardens with abundance of vegetables of the same kind as are met with in my native country, it almost seemed a reverie to conclude that I was in Africa. It is certainly pleasing than from my circuit in the heart of Caffraria I

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[116] *Graham's Town Journal*, 11 July 1833.
[117] Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope*, p. 43.

> can at any time ride on horseback in the short space of 5 days to Graham"s Town and behold England in miniature[118]

The civil, military and religious buildings in particular were self-consciously seen as physical expressions of English values and institutions. Cityscapes, it was hoped by settler communities, would reflect the "elevations of spirituality…the heights of social justice [and] the visible accomplishments of civil society"[119]. It is clear, though, that Grahamstown was not simply a miniature version of an English country town. Rather, the physical landscape of the town reflected its position on the frontier of an expanding colony, fraught with tension and conflict. This conflict existed not only between the different racial groups in the town, but also between conflicting values and priorities within the settler community. Despite the best efforts of the settler community, Grahamstown reflected the "creation of a new English frontier form, rather than the re-creation of English forms the settlers had known in their motherland"[120].

Buildings for administration and justice were an important priority. Government was never a weak presence in Grahamstown as it had been in earlier frontier settlements such as Graaff-Reinet, and this was expressed in the imposing nature of official buildings. One of the first buildings to be constructed in the town in 1814 had been a jail, but rapid population growth after 1820 necessitated a more accommodating establishment. The original jail had by 1822 as many as 20 prisoners in a single room, in which "no distinction can be made between the nature of the crime, of the description of persons, or

[118] Fast (ed.), *Shrewsbury Journal*, p. 27.
[119] Comaroff, John L, and Jean, *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago, 1997), ii, p. 280.
[120] Winer, M and Deetz, J**,** "The Transformation of British Culture in the Eastern Cape, 1820 – 1860", *Social Dynamics,* 16, 1 (1990), p. 60.

between the tried and untried"[121]. By 1824 a new prison had been constructed, able to accommodate 200 prisoners and one of the largest buildings in the town[122]. The attempt to construct a Drosdty was less successful. Commenced in 1822, it was only completed in 1830, and was never actually occupied by the landdrost. The building was transferred to the army in 1835. The town did acquire an impressive court house in High Street. This building was constructed in 1836 as a Commercial Hall, and as such was intended to express the commercial dynamism of the community. It was such a source of pride that the *Journal* used the building as its letterhead for a number of years. It was only of limited usefulness as a hall, however, so in 1843 it became the court house. Fronted by four columns and a portico the judges sat in an ambitious if somewhat pretentious building among the white storefronts of High Street. But such distinction was fitting for the dispensers of justice.

Religion played a vital role in the settler community and the construction of religious buildings was soon undertaken. All except the Anglican Church were paid for by donations, which seem to have been forthcoming even in difficult times. The first of these was the Wesleyan chapel, commenced in 1822. This was an ambitious project in an as yet underdeveloped, poor town, William Shaw, the Methodist minister, often had to use his personal funds to cover building costs[123]. Various other non-conformist denominations erected small chapels in the 1820s. The Methodists were the largest religious group and soon possessed a number of buildings at the lower end of High Street. By 1832 the

[121] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 182.
[122] Lewcock, R, *Early Nineteenth Century Architecture in South Africa: A Study of the Interaction of Two Cultures* (Cape Town, 1963), p. 247.
[123] Shaw, *Story of my Mission*, p. 107.

original chapel was felt to be too small, and a more impressive building was constructed, named the Shaw Hall in honour of the enterprising minister[124]. The increased prosperity of the 1840s saw a number of even more substantial churches built – the neo-classical Trinity Presbyterian Church in 1842, and the Gothic St Patrick‟s Catholic Church and Methodist Commemoration Church, completed in 1844 and 1850 respectively[125]. Despite the impressive nature of these buildings, and the fact that between them they accommodated most of Grahamstown‟s worshippers, pride of place was reserved for the Anglican Church. Less than a fifth of Grahamstown‟s population was Anglican in the 1840s, but the physical dominance of their church was a reflection of Anglicanism‟s official status in the colony. St George‟s Church was commenced in 1824 at the personal instigation of the governor, Lord Somerset, and paid for by the colonial government[126]. The site selected was the peculiar "triangular square" in the centre of High Street, and as such one of the most prominent locations in the town. Despite being described as a "heavy, clumsy-looking building"[127] it was the tallest in the town and the most distinctive feature on its skyline.

Despite its rapid growth into a commercial and administrative centre, the military continued to be an important presence in the town. During the 1810s some of the earliest houses were constructed by officers, while the men of the Cape Corps were housed in uncomfortable and dilapidated grass huts. By 1815 this arrangement was clearly untenable, and a new barracks was constructed a few miles from the embryonic

[124] Lewcock, *Early Nineteenth Century Architecture*, p. 271.
[125] *Ibid.*, pp. 338-339.
[126] *Ibid.*, p. 281.
[127] Van der Sandt‟s almanac quoted in *Graham's Town Journal*, 3 January 1842.

village[128]. The establishment of the "East Barracks", later renamed Fort England, marked the beginning of the military establishment as an integral, and yet also separate, section of the Grahamstown community. The military headquarters were always on the periphery of the town. One attempt was made to move the troops into the centre of the town with the construction of Scott"s barracks on High Street in 1823. These were so badly built, however, that they had to be abandoned almost immediately, and the troops returned to Fort England[129]. Eventually the military came to occupy the space at the top end of High Street where it developed an extensive infrastructure. During the 1834-35 war the semi-dilapidated and never occupied Drosdty building was given to the army, which it continued to occupy until 1870. A number of subsequent buildings were erected, including a military prison, the provost, constructed in 1838, which would have conveyed a sense of awe to the garrison of the town similar to that which the new gaol on Somerset Street conveyed to civilians[130]. A fort was erected on a hill above the Drosdty, named after Major Selwyn; it was a conspicuous landmark. Fort England remained in use, so the army occupied spaces at both ends of the town.

The wealthier officers also moved from the centre of the town to its outskirts. Some built impressive houses for themselves, in contrast to the more restrained civilian accommodation of the 1830s. Major Selwyn constructed "Selwyn Castle", a castellated villa and "a rare example of an English country house…at the Cape"[131]. It was considered sufficiently genteel to become the residence of the Lieutenant-Governor, Andries

[128] Lewcock, *Early Nineteenth Century Architecture*, p. 75.
[129] *Ibid*., p. 75.
[130] Scott, "Early Victorian Grahamstown", i, p. 148.
[131] Lewcock, *Early Nineteenth Century Architecture*, p. 288.

Stockenström, after Selwyn‟s departure in 1836[132]. The most extensive estate developed by an officer was that of the Commandant of the Frontier, Colonel Henry Somerset. Named Oatlands after an aristocratic mansion in England, the estate consisted of an extensive tract of ground chosen for its "picturesque" qualities rather than for serious agricultural pursuits. Somerset‟s house was for a time the largest building in the eastern Cape[133].

Despite occupying the fringes of the town, the military had a strong visual and aural impact. Troops frequently marched through the streets, and the army bands provided entertainment. Parades commemorated special occasions, such as the arrival of the Governor (a fairly common occurrence) or the sovereign‟s birthday. A cannon marked the time from Fort Selwyn, while the sound of bugles was also familiar. Above all, the presence of numerous red coats in the street must have been, to the settlers at any rate, a reassuring reminder of Grahamstown‟s membership of a broader empire. William Shaw described the impact of the military, drawing attention to specific local circumstances:

> The frequent appearance in the streets of the officers and soldiers of the garrison when off duty, and the numerous occasions on which their parades or field days bring them through the town accompanied by their bands of music, and the crowds of astonished or excited natives of every class who are frequently brought together in the streets, occasion much variety of scene, and produce a great deal more vivacity than is usually witnessed in the smaller provincial towns of Great Britain[134].

[132] *Ibid*., p. 289.
[133] Radford, D and Martinson, W, "Oatlands Grahamstown: A Short History of the Estate" Cory Library, MS 19 593.
[134] Shaw, *Story of My Mission*, p. 79.

Grahamstown grew rapidly from a handful of houses along High Street to a relatively substantial town of five thousand inhabitants in the 1840s. In 1820 it was estimated that there were only about 22 houses in the town; by 1848 there were 750[135]. Most of the housing development in this period occurred down the lengths of High Street and New Street, along Hill and Bathurst Streets towards the Market Square, and on the ground above the Market which came to be known as Settlers" Hill. The architecture of the domestic dwellings in the town reflected both a desire to reproduce English forms and the constraints of building in an underdeveloped region. Until the 1850s, the flat, white frontages of Georgian houses were preferred, whether for a humble two-roomed cottage or the more substantial double-storey house of the prosperous merchant. The settlers preferred the contiguous streetscapes of Britain and house fronts were built abutting one another, quickly giving the townscape a more filled-in appearance[136]. Traditional British designs competed with established Cape practice. One example of this was the construction of roofs. The British settlers tended to prefer steeped roofs, but the only material available for constructing these was thatch, which was actively discouraged as a fire hazard. In older Cape towns flat roofs had become the common alternative. Nevertheless, large numbers of Grahamstown houses acquired steeped thatched roofs[137]. Some South African innovations, such as the "stoep", were more eagerly adopted[138].

[135] Scott, "Early Victorian Grahamstown", i, p. 114.
[136] *Ibid.*, i, p. 141.
[137] Lewcock, *Early Nineteenth Century Architecture*, p. 201.
[138] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

Although many of the houses in Grahamstown presented similar whitewashed frontages, there was a considerable variety of dwellings, ranging from small, single-storey cottages to large free-standing town houses[139]. This reflected the disparities of wealth in the settler population. To a limited extent, white residential areas were segregated by class. One the most conspicuous examples of this was the development of "Settlers‟ Hill", centred on the crossroads known as "Artificers‟ Square". This area had been divided up into smaller plots than was the case in the rest of the town, thus making land available to less prosperous residents. Goldswain described the plots as "Mechanic Hearfs"[140] [sic – erven], and the area became associated with artisans, although not everyone who lived there could be classed as such. William Lee, the wealthy "army butcher", had a house in Artificers‟ Square[141]. There were a number of double storey townhouses among the smaller cottages, suggesting wealthier residents lived there. New Street was also largely an artisanal area[142]. Market Square was a wealthier area, soon surrounded by double storey townhouses belonging to successful merchants such as J. Temlett and W. Cock[143]. The elite of Grahamstown had not yet segregated themselves into the suburbs by the 1840s – it is significant that many of the wealthier houses overlooked the market, the source of their prosperity. The majority of merchants lived in High, Beaufort and Bathurst Streets, either directly over their business or in very close proximity[144]. Stubbs regretted his move from Church Square to the more prestigious upper end of High Street because it damaged his business as a tanner – his customers did not follow him. In the

[139] Scott, P and Deetz, J, "Building, Furnishings and Social Change in Early Victorian Grahamstown", *Social Dynamics*, 16, 1 (1990), p. 81.
[140] Long, *Goldswain's Chronicle*, i, p. 50.
[141] Gledhill, E, *Grahamstown from Cottage to Villa* (Claremont, 1974), p. 40.
[142] Scott, "Early Victorian Grahamstown", i, p. 160.
[143] *Ibid.*, ii, p. 25.
[144] *Ibid.*, i, p. 143.

early decades of the nineteenth century, therefore, the wealthy elite of Grahamstown lived very much in the midst of the town‟s bustling commercial activity. They also lived in close proximity to the poorer areas of the town. It was only as the merchant class became more established that they were able to move to the outskirts of the town, particularly West Hill, which is first mentioned as a suburb in 1850, when W. Cock is listed with that address[145]. The extensive villas of Worcester Street, and George Wood‟s Beaufort Street mansion "Woodville" were only commenced in the 1850s and 1860s[146].

By the 1840s, therefore, the settler population had managed to create many familiar English forms. The tower of the Anglican Church rose above a town of clustered white houses, interspersed with trees and surrounded by rolling grasslands. Closer examination, however, revealed the distinctively colonial and South African nature of the town. The settlers themselves were a very heterogeneous group, and the diversity of British accents and habits would have seemed remarkable to settlers accustomed to more homogeneous communities at home. Indeed, it had been initially suggested that settlers from England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland be settled widely apart so that they should not be "mixed up with any others as speak a different language"[147]. Philipps also thought that to "get a population, collected from all parts of England, differing in customs and manners to sit down quietly in the hive industry" would be no small achievement[148]. Many of the settlers commented on the variety of accents. "Harry Hastings" (in fact John Ayliff) found that the language of Ford‟s party was to his "London ears so broad that [he] could

[145] *Ibid*., i, p. 159.
[146] Gledhill, *Cottage to Villa*, p. 98.
[147] Edwards, *1820 Settlers*, p. 61.
[148] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 85.

with difficulty understand it"[149]. Thomas Stubbs commented on the London accents of his father"s party, which he attempted to render in writing. He recounts a man from Covent Garden trying to get oxen to pull a wagon: "Well! I"m blowed if they"nt off with a vengeance, that"s sartain"[150]; and another cockney servant, Mainman, on brick making: "Dos"t ya think I can hug watter – and mak steins and hug „em too? Tam wain"t work"[151]. He derived particular amusement from the Irish, and relates a story told to him by an Irish customer to whom he had sold gunpowder:

> I will jist tell ye how it was. It was this way, Ye know. The Wife and I went to bed, and we had not been asleep long before I hears a groan, and thin another, then ses I „Judy" ses I, „what"s the matter?" ses I, with that she ses, „Och Lawler be getting up, will ye, and be getting me some hot wather for I shall be ded entirely!" With that I gets up, and on going to the fire place I only saw a few coals, I had no matches and I thought of the powder. So I gets the powder in the one hand, and the candle in the other, and jest holds the candle about two foot from the coals, and then sprinkled some powder onto the coals intinden to catch the fire with the candle as it wint up the chimney; but by the God of War, the whole of the powder caught light, and went off like a great big gun, throwing me backwords into the other end of the room. The Wife screamed out, „Och Lawler what have you done?" „Och ses I, I"m kilt intirely. Be gitten up and get a light." The which she did and found me lying against the wall, but the whole of front of me shirt, burnt off and all my hair. Och, it was a fright I got. I"ll take care to have nothing to do with powder again, the treacherous baster…[152]

The idiosyncratic spelling of Goldswain"s Chronicle gives a strong indication of his Buckinghamshire accent: "Wen we rived in Port Elizabeth thear was not more then 12 or

[149] Ayliff, *Hastings Journal*, p. 93.
[150] Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 78.
[151] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[152] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

15 houses and at this time that I ham riting it is alarge sea port Town…"[153]. Thomas Pringle recounted exchanging pleasantries with Scottish soldiers in his "brogue"[154]. The Welsh Philipps enjoying practising his Gaelic with a wrecked Breton sea captain[155].

Grahamstown was evidently a filthy town in the early nineteenth century[156]. Discussions around the state of the streets reflect the divergence between the genteel, rural image of Grahamstown that the settler community tried to cultivate, and the realities of a poor, underdeveloped town on a colonial frontier. The streets were described as being in "a most perilous and degraded state, some of which are entirely too hazardous to be crossed in a dark night" – especially since the town was unlit[157]. The presence of large numbers of oxen, horses, and other livestock in the town meant that the streets were continuously chocked with manure. There were even more obnoxious sources of refuse. In particular, the abattoirs were a source of constant grievance and complaint. One correspondent to the *Journal* alleged the slaughter houses produced "deleterious and pestilential vapours and exhalations"[158]. Another claimed to have seen "the stinking carcass of a calf lying in the pathway, which about twenty dogs were devouring. I also saw some blood holes, which were full of blood"[159]. William Lee seems to have been one of the worst offenders, and was accused of shooting his cattle in High Street[160]. Some butchers asserted, rather unhelpfully, that the stench was the result of drowned cats and dogs in the stream rather

[153] Long, *Goldswain's Chronicle*, i, p. 18.
[154] Pringle, T, *African Sketches* (London, 1834), p. 128.
[155] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 359.
[156] Not that this would have been significantly different to towns in Britain, and indeed, Grahamstown was probably healthier than large industrial cities. Newsome,D, *The Victorian World Picture* (London, 1997), p. 85.
[157] *Graham's Town Journal*, 10 April 1834.
[158] *Graham's Town Journal*, 1 June 1832.
[159] *Graham's Town Journal*, 6 March 1834.
[160] *Graham's Town Journal*, 15 October 1835.

than the abattoirs[161]. Whether this was true or not, stray dogs were a menace, and occasionally people were bitten[162]. The solution, however, was less than satisfactory: "Suffering a gang of convicts to perambulate the streets a midday [sic], and then to shock the feelings of the inhabitants by their noisy vociferations and by compelling them to witness the merciless slaughter of every unfortunate cur which may fall in their way at the moment"[163]. The horror of the spectacle would have been accentuated by the fact that the convicts were not, of course, issued firearms to carry out their work. The filth in the town seems to have had negative implications for the health of the town's residents. The *Journal* reported that the medical officers were of the "opinion that the sickness which prevails so generally among the inhabitants is in part to be ascribed to the quantities of filth which are allowed to accumulate in the back streets and the unoccupied erven in the town"[164]. It was only in the later part of the nineteenth century that many of these problems were solved.

The attempt to create an Anglicised environment in the town was further inhibited by the development of a large and impoverished township at the eastern end of the town from the 1820s. As early as 1829 land was set aside for a Khoekhoe "location" near the burial ground[165]. In theory, the segregation of Khoekhoe from the rest of the town was supposed to be to the former's advantage. An LMS missionary, the Reverend Munro, suggested that "in the new village where the Hottentots reside they enjoy many privileges such as being under their own laws and regulations, and being so near to town, can be daily

[161] *Graham's Town Journal*, 27 April 1832
[162] *Graham's Town Journal*, 3 February 1832.
[163] *Graham's Town Journal*, 17 April 1835.
[164] *Graham's Town Journal*, 9 July 1835.
[165] Hunt, "The Development of Municipal Government", p. 37.

employed by the inhabitants"[166]. Apart from the symbolic separation from the town‟s white community, the disadvantages of the township tended to outweigh any advantages it may have offered. Most Khoekhoe were very poor, and unable to invest in permanent housing. Even Munro had to admit that the dwellings erected "in Africa may be called comfortable…but which if not constantly looked after, and if not inhabited, soon fall to ruin"[167]. The township soon developed slum conditions, and attracted the hostility of some of the town‟s white inhabitants. One correspondent to the *Journal* wrote:

> I have heard…a great deal said respecting the Hottentot village which, about two years ago, was marked out by our civil commissioner; and I once heard Doctor Philip remark in a sermon – „That it would reflect more credit on this town than all its trade and fine buildings put together". I have since looked carefully for the fulfilment of the Doctor‟s prediction, but all I can see is a parcel of wretched rush or straw hovels, which harbour abundance of filth, and a congregation of lazy, squalid, dissolute creatures, most of whom are induced to work by no other motive than that they may procure the means of rioting in drunkenness at the canteen[168].

Others were similarly critical: "It appears that several wretched hovels have been constructed near the Cape Corps barracks, which are occupied by a number of Hottentots – and that here without restraint they live in filth and wretchedness, and indulge themselves in the most infamous vices"[169].

The conditions in the township were exacerbated after 1835 by the arrival of large numbers of Mfengu, or "Fingoes", in the town. Although they were actively discouraged

[166] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[167] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[168] *Graham's Town Journal*, 20 June 1833.
[169] *Graham's Town Journal*, 25 July 1833.

from settling in the town by the Civil Commissioner, Duncan Campbell, they were nevertheless sought after in a town perennially short of labour. They came to occupy the common lands on the periphery of the town, a development which the Municipal administration watched with concern. Little attempt at managing the township was made until the 1840s. Before that decade, the primary thrust of segregation in the Eastern Cape was to maintain the separation of the colony from the African chiefdoms beyond its borders. Even though many Africans had long been living in the colony and were integral to its economy, the fiction was maintained that they were temporary residents, "Native foreigners" in official parlance, who would some day return. By the 1840s it was clear that Africans were to be a permanent presence in the colony, and segregation came to signify "a much more complex pattern of interlocking spatial and labour relations"[170]. The desire to regulate the position of Africans in the colony resulted in efforts to exercise greater control over Grahamstown"s townships. As with the Khoekhoe, the stated motive for the segregation of the Mfengu and other Africans was that it was for their own good. It was argued that the establishment of an Mfengu township was "to improve their condition and also other native foreigners within the municipality"[171]. The move was greeted approvingly by the local press. Even the relatively liberal *Cape Frontier Times* wrote:

> It is satisfactory to find that a beginning has at last been made to reduce the rude and scattered fragments of uncivilised life by which we are surrounded, into shape and order; and we trust that the preliminary steps will soon be followed by arrangements, the result of which will be to give to the numerous and useful classes of natives, who have now only a temporary location in the town

[170] Lester, A, "The Margins of Order: Strategies of Segregation on the Eastern Cape Frontier, 1806 – c. 1850", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 23, 4, (1997), p. 650.
[171] Hunt, "The Development of Municipal Government", p. 140.

> lands, a permanent interest in the prosperity of the town, and to raise them in the scale of social happiness[172].

The "Fingo Village", as the new township came to be called, was finally given official legal status in 1847, and marked the beginning of efforts to maintain closer control over the town‟s black residents. Theoretically the locations were to be treated equally with other parts of the municipality, and the building of square houses on right-angled streets was intended to conform to the appearance of the rest of the town[173]. The construction of African housing in such a way as to conform to European standards was frequently seen in the colonial context as an important step in "civilising" Africans and rendering their difference less threatening to settlers[174]. But the residents of the township seldom had either the means or the inclination to construct their homes according to European sensibilities, and the Municipal Commissioners were not inclined to make any serious investment in the infrastructure of the township. The slum conditions which had begun to develop in the 1830s continued and worsened. The physical separation of Grahamstown‟s black inhabitants demonstrated starkly their unequal incorporation into the settler-dominated community.

The presence of Grahamstown‟s diverse people in the streets also undermined the settlers‟ vision of an English community. Although laden with crude colonial prejudice, the complaints of white inhabitants of the town about the differing cultural practices of its black residents reveal the continuing struggle over the town‟s identity, and how this was expressed in material forms. It was asserted in the *Journal* that "nothing can be more

[172] *Cape Frontier Times*, 11 September 1845.
[173] Hunt, "The Development of Municipal Government", p. 141.
[174] Comaroffs, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, ii, p. 227.

unsatisfactory than the present state of Grahamstown. It teems with coloured persons, numbers of whom spend the day in idleness, riot and drunkenness"[175]. Another correspondent wrote that "it is impossible for any decent female to walk along the High Street without her ears being offended by the infamous and indecent language of drunken Hottentots and her eyes by naked Fingos"[176]. Complaints about Africans walking through the town naked were frequent, and they were eventually required to wear European clothes in 1845[177]. The "disgusting" rite of circumcision amongst Africans was also objected to[178]. One clerk even asked for re-assignment to avoid further dealings with "malodorous Fingos" - the refusal of his request was accompanied by the sardonic suggestion from Cape Town that he purchase a "smelling bottle"[179]. Even so potent a symbol of British identity as red-coated soldiers parading through the streets became a point of cultural conflict: the spectacle was marred by "crowds of black persons, both male and female [who are] attracted by the sound, and follow the march of the troops through the streets, sometimes dancing and using the most extravagant and disgusting gestures"[180].

What these settler complaints reveal, of course, is that Africans also attempted to bring their own cultural practices to the landscape of the town. Attachment to familiar dress and traditions such as circumcision were attempts by Africans to perpetuate in an unfamiliar colonial context the lifestyles they had left behind. Even the huts of the

[175] *Graham's Town Journal*, 12 November 1835.
[176] *Graham's Town Journal*, 19 November 1835.
[177] Hunt, "The Development of Municipal Government", p. 140.
[178] *Graham's Town Journal*, 4 March 1841.
[179] *Graham's Town Journal*, 14 October 1841.
[180] *Graham's Town Journal*, 14 July 1836.

township, which attracted so much ire as detracting from the ordered "Englishness" of the landscape, must have reflected architectural preference as well as the difficulty of actually erecting the kind of buildings encouraged by the municipal administration. Even every-day practices in such a diverse town could become contests over culture and identity.

The conflicted settler view of Grahamstown as being both "England in miniature" and a town "teeming" with "coloured persons" is reflected in contemporary artistic depictions. There are no photographs of Grahamstown until the 1860s and so it is necessary to rely on artworks to gain an idea of the appearance of the town[181]. Although these can be informative, they also need to be treated with caution, since they reflect the values and priorities of the artist as much as the actual appearance of the town. A recent study of Thomas Baines has cautioned that work of an artist "reveals the interactions of many influences and in it the presentation of „truth" becomes a complex issue encoded in re-presentation"[182]. In general, there are two kinds of artworks of Grahamstown available: cityscapes, which often tend to try to emphasise the "English" nature of the town, and street scenes, which depict Grahamstown"s diverse people in a colourful, but also sometimes prejudiced, light. The lithograph published in the memoirs of a missionary, Thornley Smith[183], is a good example of the former:

[181] Van der Riet, F, *Grahamstown in Early Photographs* (Cape Town, 1974), p. 11.
[182] Carruthers and Arnold, *Thomas Baines*, p. 14.
[183] Reproduced in Scott, "Early Victorian Grahamstown", p. 140.

Drawn in 1842, the lithograph presents Grahamstown as an orderly and neat settlement, dominated by its religious and civil buildings. A striking omission, however, is the township, which was already established near the (clearly visible) burial ground. Evidently it simply did not fit in with Thornley Smith‟s mental vision of the town[184]. Thomas Baines, one of the best-known artists of nineteenth century South Africa and one who championed "the taming and ordering of the [African] landscape and its people, while revelling in its beauty and uniqueness"[185], also omits the location in his cityscapes of Grahamstown. Such "emptying" of the landscape of its original inhabitants was, as Crais has pointed out, a common feature of colonial artwork in South Africa. As well as

[184] See Scott, "Early Victorian Grahamstown"; Crosser, M**,** "Images of a Changing Frontier: Worldview in Eastern Cape Art from Bushman Rock Art to 1875" (Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1992) .
[185] Carruthers and Arnold, *Thomas Baines*, p. 12.

reflecting the desired self-image of settlers, the removal of Africans is a way of justifying and validating the colonial project of conquest, settlement and domination[186].

Street scenes, on the other hand, tend to emphasise "uncivilised" Grahamstown. One of the most prolific Grahamstown artists was Frederick I"Ons, who moved there in 1834. He quickly came to identify with the settler viewpoint in the town, joining the volunteer forces in the Sixth Frontier War and drawing a series of cartoons attacking Andries Stockenström, a long-standing political opponent of the settlers, in 1836. His paintings, such as the scene at Shepperson"s Well in High Street[187], tend to reflect settler racial prejudices, among them the assumption that the Khoekhoe were given to drunkenness and licentiousness:

[186] Crais, C, "The Vacant Land: The Mythology of British Expansion in the Eastern Cape, South Africa", *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 25, no. 2, (1991), p. 257.
[187] Reproduced in Crosser, "Images of a Changing Frontier", p. 95.

He also painted a number of "canteen scenes", where the point was more explicitly made. Although I"Ons may have had a jaundiced view of Grahamstown"s African and Khoekhoe inhabitants, his paintings do at least acknowledge their integral place in the Grahamstown community, and demolish the idea that the town was an English "Settler City".

As the competing agendas for the development of the town indicate, Grahamstown had acquired a population of considerable diversity by the mid-1840s. In many ways the town was a microcosm of the whole frontier, with its disparate peoples at once engaged in continual conflict and struggle, but also increasingly incorporated, if unequally, into a single economy and society. The following chapter examines in more detail the divisions within the community, divisions not only of race, but also of class and gender. The differing agendas and priorities of these different groups found expression not only in architecture and the townscape, but over a wide range of cultural practices and activities.

CHAPTER TWO

"THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE HUMAN RACE": DIVISION AND DEPENDENCE IN A COMPLEX SOCIETY

> In the aggregate the power of the British government has been exerted to promote the best interests of the human race – to discountenance cruelty and oppression – to spread the knowledge of useful arts and sciences – and to establish just and liberal institutions – *The Graham's Town Journal*, 1835[1].

In the 1810s, the population of Grahamstown was small. Most were connected with the military, either as soldiers or their dependants. There were a handful of white settlers taking advantage of the commercial opportunities offered by the presence of a military base. After 1820, however, the population of the town grew rapidly, from about one hundred white settlers and a few hundred Khoekhoe (mostly families of soldiers in the Cape Corps) in 1819 to over 5000 in the 1840s. This population increase was largely a result of the immigration of large numbers of British settlers in the 1820s. These formed the majority of Grahamstown"s inhabitants. It was nevertheless far from being a homogeneous community: it possessed many social divisions, not only of race, but also of class within the white community. Attitudes towards race and class were frequently interlinked. The town therefore experienced frequent social tensions, as different groups attempted to establish and contest their roles in a small but divided community.

[1] *Graham's Town Journal*, 13 February 1835.

Grahamstown was established as a civilian as well as a military settlement. Land was made available to civilian settlers as early as 1814, but the non-military population of the town remained very small until the 1820s. Most early white settlers were attracted by the economic opportunities presented by the presence of the military. However, they remained few in number. Typically for the period[2], they tended for the most part to be either discharged soldiers, such as the saddler W. Ogilvie and the merchant W. R. Thompson, or drifters and adventurers, such as Arnoldus Bernadus Dietz. The latter was a marked eccentric, an enthusiastic violinist who considered Paganini to be a "mountebank" and an inferior musician to himself. Any customer visiting his store while he was practising was unlikely to be able to make a purchase. He was also exceptionally argumentative and litigious. He ran a store on behalf of Frederick Korsten, who operated from Algoa bay and possessed the most profitable business empire in the region[3]. Piet Retief, an erstwhile farmer who found that exploiting commercial opportunities arising from the presence of the British army and administration was a surer career, was another figure who attracted controversy. He was extensively involved in construction, trading and land speculation. Despite the prominence of these individuals, and the enduring place they retained in settler memory, it is difficult to gain a sense of Grahamstown as a community. The military was a transient population, although the acquisition of land gave many of the officers a certain interest in the town, and the merchants were too few to possess any real feeling of civic identity. It was only in the 1820s that a substantial community grew in Grahamstown with definite notions of its unique place in a broader South Africa.

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[2] Freund, W, "The Cape under Transitional Governments, 1795-1814", in Elphick and Giliomee, *The Shaping of South African Society*, p. 333.
[3] Ross, R, "The Cape of Good Hope and the World Economy", in *ibid*., p. 268.

The government-sponsored white settlement scheme of 1820 had intended to locate a large number of British settlers ostensibly to „defend" the frontier with Xhosaland along the Fish River. Since such a boundary existed more in the imagination of colonial administrators than in reality, the aim can be more accurately stated as an attempt to stabilise the security situation within the Zuurveld and resolve the question of land ownership and control. The second aspect of "closing" the frontier in the Zuurveld was to establish firmer colonial control of land[4]. The settlement was thus intended to be primarily agricultural in nature, and the hope was that a dense body of sturdy British farmers would provide a buffer against any efforts by the Xhosa to re-occupy the Zuurveld.

The proponents of the settlement had a clear vision of the nature of the society they hoped to create. Both the imperial and colonial government envisaged a social structure which would be closely modelled on the English countryside, in which a wealthy landed gentry would be served by a body of white labourers and tenants[5]. For this reason, potential emigrants were formed into parties, and title to land in the Cape was to be granted to the leaders of these parties, who in turn would distribute land to their followers. Some of the wealthier settlers, such as Thomas Philipps, George Pigot, Miles Bowker, Duncan Campbell, Charles Dalgairns and others, were able to pay deposits required for all members of their parties, in return for which they expected an agreed period of labour. They were considered to be the natural leaders of the settlement, by

[4] Giliomee, "The Eastern Frontier, 1770 - 1812" in *ibid.*, p. 459.
[5] Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 90.

virtue of their gentility and education. George Thompson, a traveller in the 1820s, considered that "this class, (with a very few exceptions) consisted of men of education, intelligence, and good character. There were besides a considerable number of highly respectable families, some of whom in England moved in circles superior even to middle life"[6]. The party leaders themselves shared this vision of a leading role in the community. For all their respectability these leaders were often escaping from economic pressures at home, which, in the words of Miles Bowker, made it "difficult to provide for a family…without reducing them to the lowest ranks of society, which ill accords with the previous knowledge of being ascended from *the first*"[7]. He and others hoped to secure or improve their social rank in South Africa. Such hopes were evidently contagious. The leaders of the so-called "independent" parties, where members had paid their own way and joined together for mutual benefit, also often began to assume that they too were entitled to certain privileges, despite their generally nominal positions as party leaders. Thomas Wilson, for example, claimed rights as "Lord of the Manor" - hunting, fishing and wood-cutting privileges as well as two years service from his fellow party members[8]. The pretensions of some of the party leaders could occasion disparagement: Somerset remarked that they should not be encouraged to consider themselves "Dukes of Bedford"[9]. But he still intended they would become landed gentry, and they harboured the same hope. Even after the arrival of the settlers, Thomas Philipps imagined the

[6] Thompson, G, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, (Cape Town, Reprint 1968), ii, p111
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 89.
[8] Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 90.
[9] Lester, A, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth Century South Africa and Britain* (London, 2001), p. 52.

Zuurveld as English parkland, finding it impossible to "prevent the eye from imagining a Mansion at the turn of every road"[10].

This vision of an idyllic replica of rural England proved impossible to realise. The Zuurveld was not suited to dense agricultural settlement[11]. A series of environmental disasters befell the settlers, ranging from a disease known as "rust", which destroyed the wheat crops for three years, to floods in 1823 which ruined fields and homes alike (both often built too close to river banks). However, there were clearly other reasons for the failure of the settlement. Almost half of those who emigrated had urban, working or lower middle-class backgrounds: "pale-visaged artisans and operative manufacturers", in Pringle"s somewhat dismissive phrase[12], people clearly unsuited to agricultural pursuits. Perhaps most important was the degree of social conflict that quickly came to prevail amongst the settlers. The settler gentry failed to understand that they were not the only ones hoping to improve their social status and economic position: that was the intention of the majority of the settlers. It became evident that remaining on the land would leave them just as insecure as they had been in the industrial towns they had left in Britain, while the rapid expansion of towns such as Grahamstown could provide generous wages for skilled artisans. Few parties survived as distinct communities on their assigned locations. The disintegration of the original parties was often a litigious process, and one discouraged by the authorities, but to little avail. Jeremiah Goldswain, for example, was involved in a particularly acrimonious dispute with the leader of his party which obliged him to travel back and forth between Uitenhage and Grahamstown and spend several

[10] Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 89.
[11] See chapter one above.
[12] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 130.

nights in prison before he was finally released from his indentures. Somerset even obliged settlers to acquire passes if they wished to leave their locations: they were probably the only white South Africans ever required to do so. But the drift away from the land continued. By 1823, only about 600 out of the original 4 000 settlers remained on the land[13].

The 1820 settlement scheme and its subsequent collapse had enormous implications for Grahamstown. It quickly led to a rapid increase in population. In 1820 it was estimated that the population of the town, including the garrison, did not amount to more than 400. Cory assumes that the 32 armed civilians who assisted in the defence of the town in 1819 probably constituted the entire male civilian population. By 1826, however, George Thompson estimated the total population to be about 2 500, while another traveller, Cowper Rose, gave a figure of 3 000 in 1828. By 1842, the population had reached about 5 000, of whom 4 000 were estimated to be white[14]. This increase significantly altered the social structure of the town. On the one hand, the settler gentry quickly established a close relationship with the military and civil elite, and reproduced as far as they could the social life they had left behind, including balls, outdoor excursions and horse racing. At the same time the town acquired a large population of artisans who quickly took up their old trades. The social structure of the town remained fluid. Since the 1820s were a period of rapid economic change the society of Grahamstown was in many ways in a state of flux, as the settlers adapted themselves to the conditions of their new environment.

[13] Peires, J, "The British and the Cape 1814-1834", in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society*, p. 475.
[14] Chase, *Cape of Good Hope*, p. 39.

The elite settlers quickly sought to set themselves apart from the mass of those of lower status: they were aware of their prospective role as leaders in the community. The arrangements on the beach at Algoa Bay in 1820 expressed their sense of difference and superiority. Pringle describes the tents of some of the party leaders as set apart from the rest of the tent city, and evincing "the taste of the occupants by the pleasant situations in which they were placed, and by the neatness and order of everything about them"[15]. Pringle felt that he "could not view this class of emigrants, with their elegant arrangements and appliances, without some melancholy misgivings as to their future fate; for they appeared utterly unfitted by former habits, especially the females, for *roughing it*…through the first trying period of the settlement".[16] Despite the initial necessity of "roughing it" on the allotments the settler elite were soon able to reproduce a social environment similar to that they had enjoyed in Britain. Thomas Philipps, one of the leading lights of this society, was described as "a gentleman whose intelligence, urbanity and kindly spirit" added the "charm of English sociability and refinement" to the settlement[17]. The young army officers of the Grahamstown garrison came from similar social backgrounds, and provided welcome company. Sophia Pigot, daughter of another leading settlers, describes "meeting a number of officers going through the street"[18] as one of the highlights of a visit to Grahamstown. The Somersets in particular, with their aristocratic connections (Henry Somerset named his Grahamstown estate, Oatlands, after one of the residences of Henry VIII), provided a focus for fashionable entertainment in the town. Philipps" daughter described an evening at Oatlands:

[15] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 12.
[16] *Ibid*., p. 12.
[17] Thompson, *Travels and Adventures*, i, p. 103.
[18] Rainier, M, *The Journals of Sophia Pigot* (Cape Town, 1974), p. 64.

> Captain and Mrs Somerset invited Mama and Papa to come and pass a few days, and had a party to meet them on New Year‟s Day, and were exceedingly attentive to them. They do not see much company as there are not many genteel families in Grahamstown. The band played on the lawn during dinner, and the evening concluded with Music, singing etc…Mrs Somerset plays extremely well on the Piano and Harp, we generally had music every evening, and a great deal of singing when her brother, Mr Heathcote, joined our party.[19]

Mrs Somerset‟s musical ability was widely admired in a society where such "accomplishments" were particularly expected of young women. Sophia Pigot spent much of her time playing the piano in her father‟s wattle-and-daub house, as well as sketching, needlework, copying poetry and playing whist: the approved pursuits of a Georgian young lady in the South African veld.

The presence of the military and government establishments helped to ensure that Grahamstown itself was the social centre for the elite, despite the fact that they mostly continued to reside on the land. (Since they generally held the legal title to the land, they had far more to lose by leaving it than indentured artisans). There were considerable opportunities for advancement for the higher ranks of the military establishment. Extensive grants of land were often granted to military officers in the colony. G. S. Fraser, who temporarily held command of the Grahamstown garrison before 1820 had large grants in the town[20]. Not all officers were so fortunate – one Lieutenant Wade was court-martialled after marrying the daughter of Major Armstrong on the basis of

[19] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 86.
[20] Thompson, *Travels and Adventures*, i, p. 16.

"expectancies" which were actually fictitious[21]. But by and large officers seem to have led a comfortable life in Grahamstown. The most conspicuous example of enrichment was that of Colonel Henry Somerset, son of a governor in the 1820s and later commandant of the frontier. He was able to carve out an extensive estate called "Oatlands". The Somersets and other senior military officers such as Colonel Scott held balls and organised other forms of entertainment in the early 1820s. Mrs Philipps described a ball hosted by the officers of the Cape Corps in 1826:

> It went off extremely well, the rooms were large and handsome, the building was illuminated with lamps and transparencies on the outside, and a guard on horseback placed before it. It had an extremely pretty effect on approaching it. The ball room was very well lighted up with chandeliers (not of cut glass) but formed of wood and tin entirely concealed by beautiful shrubs and flowers, which with the numerous candles placed amongst them looked uncommonly pretty…It was really a most splendid affair for this part of the world and the Assemblage of really well dressed Females, many of them elegantly so, greater than ever had been seen here[22].

There is a sense in which such obligations were expected of the military and civil elite. One of the objections to Captain Trappes, the magistrate at Bathurst, was that he was a "sensualist, a Scoffer of Religion, and a [great] misanthrope"[23]. Similar objections were raised against Harry Rivers (alias "pumpkin guts" and "humbug" in the words of Thomas Stubbs[24]), the notoriously unpopular landdrost at Grahamstown between 1822 and 1825; the affability of his successor, Major Dundas, helped to ensure his popularity[25]. Dundas

[21] *Graham's Town Journal*, 23 July 1840.
[22] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p.303.
[23] *Ibid*., p. 88.
[24] Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 83.
[25] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 88.

"rendered Graham"s Town quite a different place. Instead of form and ceremony they meet now frequently together in the most sociable way, the young people stand up to dance, the old ones play cards and converse, and all seem happy and pleased"[26]. Friction in such a small community could have significant social implications. When Colonel Somerset led a commando over the frontier in 1825 without informing Dundas, the civilian authority, much effort had to be made to heal the breach. Significantly a ball provided the occasion for reconciliation[27].

Another congenial activity for the elite in the 1820s was the establishment of horse racing, which took place from the early 1820s at a track established just outside the town. This was a particular passion of Lord Somerset, whose importation and sale of horses into the colony were considered scandalous by the Western Cape elite[28], and his son, who donated a cup bearing the family name. The races reached their social apotheosis in 1825 when the governor himself attended, bedecked in a "blue coat, sash, *Veil* and *parasol*" and reminding Philipps of "an old Lady of 70 riding in Hyde Park"[29]. The settler gentry and Somerset patched over their differences on this occasion, and the dinners, excursions and "transparencies" arranged were considered to be a great success.

The settler gentry failed to prosper during the 1820s, and their perceived decline occasioned much bitterness. The failure to develop successful agriculture and the flight of labourers from the land into the towns reduced many, at least initially, to positions of

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 251.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 303.
[28] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 303.
[29] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 226.

severe financial difficulty. "Gloom and despair appear in all ranks here," claimed Philipps in the mid-1820s "but chiefly with people like myself who derive income from our land"[30]. However, particularly during the trying years of the 1820s, observers tended to exaggerate the difficulties faced by the elite. In very few cases were the original gentry reduced to levels of "absolute destitution", as Thompson feared would be the case[31]. Many were able to make their land productive as sheep farming took off in the district. It was this which ensured that, despite the flood of settlers into Grahamstown, the settler gentry generally failed to become an urban elite and remained largely a rural class. Those who did stay in the town generally sought advancement in government service. While not nearly as lucrative as the trading opportunities which were creating a new mercantile elite in the town, this was sufficient to maintain a reasonable level of gentility. The limited capacity of government in the town made competition for positions intense, and there was much jostling for interest and advantage. Initially a number of the leading settlers were made *heemraden*, a position which was unpaid and failed to satisfy the more ambitious. In 1821 Philipps was already coveting the position of Captain Trappes, the provisional magistrate of Bathurst. He hoped Trappes would be removed and leave "the fine government house he is now building at Bathurst for me to finish and inhabit"[32]. (He was to be disappointed in this hope). Donald Moodie, who came from an "antient [*sic*] and respectable family in the north of Scotland"[33], secured a series of minor positions in and around Grahamstown[34], as did Major Pigot, who became Protector of Slaves in 1828. More opportunity was created with the reorganisation of government in 1828, although

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 106.
[31] Thompson, *Travels and Adventures*, ii, p. 111.
[32] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 72.
[33] Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 89.
[34] Rainer (ed.), *Sophia Pigot Diary*, p. 104.

positions were still limited, and some, such as Philipps, were disappointed (and envious)[35]. The greatest prize was the office of Civil Commissioner, which went to Duncan Campbell.

While the settler gentry vied for government patronage, a new kind of society was developing in Grahamstown. Sir Rufane Donkin, the acting governor of the early 1820s, saw that "great and disagreeable changes must take place in regard to many of the particles now floating in the mass of Colonists, while it [i.e. settler society] is working and arranging itself into social strata"[36]. The more modest settlers arriving in the town soon turned their hands either to the artisan or labouring occupations they had pursued in England, or to trade. In the 1820s, the creation of a successful and prosperous artisan class was celebrated. Much was made of the wages that could be earned during the initial building boom of the 1820s. Philipps lamented that "mechanics are doing well and getting up in the world while we are sinking fast"[37]. Donald Moodie, another of the settler gentry, complained that the lower classes had become too "uppish" as result of their newfound prosperity[38]. The resilience of settlers escaping destitution on the land found much positive comment, however, and was admired by contemporary observers: Thompson claimed that "seven years of trials and privations have rendered them hardy and expert colonists"[39]. Rose celebrated the rising generation of settlers as "hardy, inured to climate, bold hunters, and unsaddened by old remembrances of another land"[40].

[35] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 341.
[36] Butler, *1820 Settlers*, p. 175.
[37] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 106.
[38] Macmillan, W. M, *The Cape Colour Question: An Historical Survey* (London, 1927), p. 117.
[39] Thompson, *Travels and Adventures*, ii, p. 115.
[40] Rose, C, *Four Years in Southern Africa* (London, 1829), p. 118.

Subsequently, sympathetic historians such as Hockly claimed that the flight to the towns was the "salvation" of "people skilled in all manner of trades and callings"[41].

While it is true that many settlers were able to prosper as artisans in Grahamstown, this was certainly not the case for all. Many could not find permanent occupation, and formed a class of casual labourers. They were frequently very poor. Thomas Stubbs described some of his fellow workers at a tannery as being some of "the lowest blackguards in the Colony", and implied he was the only one amongst them who was literate[42]. As well as labourers, soldiers were generally considered to be the lowest class of whites in the town. They lived much harder lives than the officers, and there was the endless conflict with the amaXhosa and the tedium of life in the barracks and the frontier forts. Many sought consolation in the canteens with the poorer settlers. There was a certain amount of friction between the military and civilians. One correspondent to the *Journal* claimed that "the insolence of the military on this frontier is proverbial" after an exasperated soldier locked a drunken settler in the guardhouse[43]. Many discharged soldiers chose to remain in the town as labourers, and were described by J. W. D. Moodie as "a drunken, dissolute and improvident set of men"[44]. The white poor also experienced severe social problems - not the picture of artisanal comfort and "respectability" depicted by historians such as Hockly. Drunkenness was endemic. The *Journal* claimed that "disgusting scenes of drunkenness … were …frequently presented in the public streets"[45]. Rose described the town as being populated by a "strange mixture of lounging officers, idle tradesmen,

[41] Hockly, H, *The Story of the British Settlers of 1820 in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1948), p. 78.
[42] Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 91.
[43] *Graham's Town Journal*, 15 May 1834.
[44] Moodie, J, *Ten Years in Southern Africa* (London, 1835), ii, p. 304.
[45] *Graham's Town Journal*, 1 December 1831.

(merchants, I beg their pardon,) drunken soldiers, and still more drunken settlers"[46]. Thomas Philipps also noted the evils of "vile" Cape brandy and claimed that "the quantity drunk by soldiers, Hottentots and Settlers is very great"[47]. Thomas Shone admitted to having "had many quarrels with that good woman [his wife] while in a state of intoxication"[48]. The journals of Thomas Shone reveal the temptations of the Grahamstown canteens for many of the settlers, especially as they became a convivial meeting place for townsfolk, soldiers, and local farmers in the town on business (though Mr Symond"s coffee shop perhaps provided an alternative)[49]. The *Graham's Town Journal* complained of "the lax discipline maintained in houses of public resort by the lower classes…Surely the inhabitants are not compelled to submit to the intolerable annoyance caused by a besotted fiddler, who is employed as a decoy in scraping upon a wretched instrument from morning to night, for the amusement of a squalid set of bacchanalians"[50]. The *Journal*"s use of terms such as "lower classes", as distinct from "inhabitants", is revealing.

Discussions around drunkenness in the town reveal the intersection of attitudes towards race, class and gender in the town. Although it was clear that alcoholism was widespread amongst the poorer white settlers, the elite often represented the problem in racial as well as class terms. At the founding of the Grahamstown Temperance Society in 1831, a typically elite organisation, whose committee was composed of administrators, clergy, and wealthy merchants, it was clear that alcoholism was considered to be very much a

[46] Rose, *Four Years in Southern Africa*, p.
[47] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 81.
[48] Silva (ed.), *Shone Journal*, p. 55.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[50] *Graham's Town Journal*, 31 March 1833.

"Hottentot" problem[51]. Khoekhoe were endlessly berated for "rioting in drunkenness" in the town"s newspapers[52], while one correspondent found the spectacle of "near thirty of the most disgusting females rioting near a certain canteen" especially distressing, demonstrating intersecting attitudes towards race and gender[53].

The selling of alcohol was a lucrative business and there were vested interests at stake. The merchants can only have had an ambiguous desire to abolish the source of substantial profit. Despite periodic railing against the canteens over the years, they remained open, and drinking remained a popular pastime not only for Khoehkoe and Africans but whites as well. As one canteen owner wrote to the journal: "I have been the humble means of dispensing more real and direct happiness in one hour, and that with plain Cape Brandy, than all your humbug schools and societies will do in a century"[54]. Another letter suggested a temperance society for those who drank wine as well as for those who drank brandy, suggesting that the presumptions of the elite were not always appreciated[55].

There were high levels of crime in the town. Thomas Philipps visited the prison in the 1820s and found it filled with "several Hottentots and some slaves", Xhosa from across the frontier, as well as a number of "Dutch and British" [56]. The original prison was soon found to be inadequate, and an imposing new prison was constructed in 1824. There was

[51] Although there also seems to have been class bias: One correspondent to the *Journal* suggested the necessity of a temperance society for the "higher classes, or those whose opulent position on the frontier enabled them to be classed as such", who could drink wine rather than the "ardent spirits" resorted to by the poor. *Graham's Town Journal*, 16 February 1832.
[52] *Graham's Town Journal*, 20 June 1833.
[53] *Graham's Town Journal*, 4 March 1841.
[54] *Graham's Town Journal*, 27 January 1832.
[55] *Graham's Town Journal*, 16 February 1832.
[56] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 156.

a minor wave of petty crime in 1820s as the settlers, failing to succeed as agriculturalists, turned to illegal avenues to make a living - smuggling, trading across the frontier, or selling alcohol. The break-up of parties also resulted in many cases of breach of contract or "insolence". By the 1830s and 1840s, the courts were largely concerned with theft, in particular stock-theft. There were rapes, murders and assaults. Examination of court records from the period indicates more than criminal activity. Attitudes towards crime, justice and punishment reveal much about the racial, gender and class attitudes prevalent in the community.

Government authority always maintained a significant presence in Grahamstown, as the importance of providing adequate prison space indicates. There was never any sense in which the administration was weak or despised, as in earlier frontier towns such as Graaff-Reinet. During the period there was much overlap of judicial and civil functions. The landdrosts served as magistrates as well as administrators. Despite the attempt to separate these duties after 1828, a shortage of funds meant that the roles of civil commissioner and resident magistrate were often filled by the same individual. Two different courts operated during the period. The landdrost, and later resident magistrate/civil commissioner, acted as a magistrate, trying cases below a certain level of seriousness. For more serious offences, including capital ones, a twice yearly circuit court was established, visiting Grahamstown around March and October each year.

Grahamstown seems to have been a thoroughly litigious community. Far from resenting the interference of judicial authority, as was the case in other frontier communities,

citizens frequently used the courts to resolve issues which could have been better dealt with privately. The magistrate‟s court records from the 1820s[57] contain many cases of "abuse" or "insolence", for which the magistrate often passed only derisory sentences, or recommended that the matter be resolved out of court. Even the highest personages in the town could become embroiled in acrimonious disputes. In the late 1830s a libel case between Duncan Campbell, the Civil Commissioner of Albany, and Andries Stockenström, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony, became a matter of scandal in the town. Respect for the courts went beyond the acknowledgement of their power or utility. They were seen as a key British institution and repository of British values, and were venerated by the English settlers. The arrival of the circuit court judges, was described by the *Journal*:

> Even at Graham‟s Town, which assumes to itself the airs of the metropolis of the Eastern Province, the event is of the most exciting description; all classes, whether civil, military, clerical or commercial, are upon the *qui vivre* – the market is dull – vendues are for the time discounted, and politics are forgotten – the grand point of attraction is the court house, and the most advanced phraseology, the quirks and quibbles, of the legal profession[58].

Upon the arrival of the judge, "in accordance with true English notions on such occasions, an excellent dinner was provided by the inhabitants, of which his honour was invited to partake". The dignitaries at the dinner proposed toasts to the king and the rest of the royal family, the army and navy, Governor D‟Urban, various colonial officials and the "ladies" of the Colony[59]. The courts were held in serious regard. In another issue the

[57] Criminal Records, Cape Archives, 1/AY 3/1/1/1/1
[58] *Graham's Town Journal*, 26 September 1833.
[59] *Graham's Town Journal*, 25 October 1834.

Journal opined that "the semi-annual circuits of our judges are events of great importance to the well being of our colony, exhibiting as they do to all, the operation of the law – that great safeguard of life, of liberty, and of property – they are eminently calculated to inspire confidence, and to command the respect of all who can appreciate the invaluable blessing of equitable government"[60]. The editorial also claimed that the courts were based on "true English notions" and were seen to provide equal justice for all, including African or Khoekhoe residents of the town. This was seldom the case.

Matters of crime and justice became a locus for colonial racial and class prejudice. Criminality came to be more and more explicitly linked with race. The *Journal* frequently emphasised the proportion of prisoners awaiting trial who were Khoekhoe or black. In October 1838, for example, the editor wrote: "There are 49 cases, nearly all the persons being persons of colour – a fact which is at once proof of the demoralisation which is caused amongst this class of persons by the present lax regulations respecting them, as well as an irresistible argument for the adoption of a more vigorous and, as a consequence, more humane policy"[61]. In practice, the courts were seldom lacking in vigour: the extent to which they were humane is more doubtful. The unequal workings of colonial justice were not necessarily that different from England, where the law had become from the beginning of the eighteenth century very much in the service of protecting propertied interests[62]. The difference was that, in the colonial context, race as

[60] *Graham's Town Journal*, 10 April 1843.
[61] *Graham's Town Journal*, 13 September 1838.
[62] Hay, D, "Crime and Justice in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England" *Crime and Justice*, 2, (1980), p. 51.

well as class became one of the factors influencing the nature of the "justice" that an individual would receive at the hands of the court.

Two sets of court records reveal the extent to which sentencing and punishment were influenced by race, as well as by class and gender - the magistrate"s court records between 1821 and 1828, and the circuit court records, extracted from the *Graham's Town Journal*, 1836 - 1845. Between 1821 and 1827, 688 defendants appeared before the magistrate"s court, of whom 552 (80.2%) were white. The remaining 136 (19.8%) defendants were Khoekhoe or "coloured"[63]. The high level of white crime was a consequence of the break-up of the 1820 settler parties and the rise of illegal trading, pass violations, and breaches of contract. There were also a number of cases of "insolence" or "abuse". The majority of cases involving Khoekhoe were for petty theft. The court was unable to try more serious crimes, such as murder or rape.

The magistrate"s court was able to sentence people to be flogged, and did so in 125 instances. Thomas Stubbs describes the scourging of a man in the 1820s:

> A pole was fastened across the gallows – the hands fastened in such a way as to bring the body against the pole and cause the back to slope forward. The executioner then commenced to scourge with a bunch of quince cuttings that had been drawn through the fire and mixed with a lot of split cane. A bunch in each hand, he stood behind the prisoner, and did not flog across the back as with the cats, but along the straight down the back, and cut the flesh off in strips. Then a quantity of coarse salt was rubbed in – that was what they called scourging under the gallows[64].

[63] The term "coloured" was coming into increasing use during the period.
[64] Maxwell and McGeogh (eds.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 70.

In this case, the offender was a discharged soldier named Jones. However, despite the fact that the vast majority of defendants were white, 76% of those sentenced to corporal punishment were Khoekhoe. To put it another way, only 5.4% of whites who appeared before the magistrate were sentenced to flogging, while 69.8% of Khoekhoe were. Sentencing also differed for the 48 women who appeared before the court, 31 of whom were Khoekhoe and 17 white. Only 5 women were flogged: it was already considered to be an inappropriate punishment for women and was made illegal in 1824[65] (although one judge in 1832 regretted that this was the case[66]). All five of the women flogged were either Khoekhoe or slaves. By 1828 the Khoekhoe population of the town had risen considerably, and by that year they formed a majority of defendants – 100 out of 123. In that year there were 38 floggings, all inflicted on Khoekhoe.

Between 1836 and 1845 452 defendants appeared before the circuit judges. 79 (17%) were African, 274 Khoekhoe or "coloured" (60%) and 99 white (23%). Only 25 of the defendants were women, of whom 24 were Khoekhoe and one white. The circuit court was also empowered to sentence people to corporal punishment, which it did in 107 cases. Of these, 28 were black (26%), 75 Khoekhoe (70%) and 4 white (4%). Women were not flogged. For more serious offences they were sent to the "house of correction" in Cape Town, or incarcerated in Grahamstown itself. If the magistrates were reluctant to flog women, however, they were less restrained with male minors. D. Mitchley, 14 years old, was sentenced to be "flogged by a chosen relative" for his involvement in an assault case, while G. Jantjies was given 14 lashes and a month in jail for stock theft. He was ten

[65] Theal, *History of South Africa since 1795*, i, p. 433.
[66] *Graham's Town Journal*, 3 February 1832.

years old. The Circuit judges were also able to pass death sentences, which they did in 21 cases (2 white, 1 black, 18 Khoekhoe), mostly for murder but also occasionally for rape. There is evidence that a 15-year-old youth, Robert Wicks, was hanged in Grahamstown in 1831. The case is mentioned in a letter to the *Journal*, but the correspondent did not feel it necessary to state Wicks"s crime[67]. Death sentences were public affairs, with leading clergy such as Shaw or Heavyside attending to the spiritual welfare of the unfortunate criminal, while the Grahamstown citizens watched the "melancholy spectacle" with feelings "less of loathing than of satisfaction"[68].

Even punishments short of the death sentence were draconian. This was in keeping with punishments in Britain, where flogging, hanging and transportation remained the most common sentences until the 1840s[69]. Here again, though, class, race and gender influenced the ferocity of the punishment. Stock theft was a matter of particular concern. As one judge argued, "from the prevalence of cattle and sheep stealing in this district, the same punishment awarded in other places for such offences would be altogether inadequate for the suppression of the crime"[70]. He went on to say that "the end of all punishment was not the gratification of vindictive feeling, but the prevention of crime and until this was done, or at least until crime here was reduced to a par with that usually met in the other division of the colony, the punishment inflicted would be proportionally severe". And so punishment was severe: seven years hard labour and 75 lashes was a usual punishment for stock theft. If theft had been particularly high, especially harsh

[67] *Graham's Town Journal*, 20 January 1832.
[68] Sheffield, *Story of the Settlement*, p. 177.
[69] Hay, "Crime and Justice", p. 55.
[70] *Graham's Town Journal*, October 1843.

sentences were given, explicitly as "deterrents". In 1845 Umpane and Male, two Xhosa men, were sentenced to life with hard labour for stealing 3 horses. Transportation to Robben Island was also considered to have deterrence value, one judge informing a Xhosa man who was unfamiliar with the place that the island was "a small place in the midst of the sea, and which would be the only object he would have to look at". It is difficult to tell whether such harsh sentences actually operated as deterrents. There is no evidence that they did. In any case, stock theft was unlikely to abate in the intense competition for land and resources on the frontier. One defendant, on receiving a sentence of eighteen months hard labour and sixty lashes, argued that "his children were starving and he had stolen the horse to exchange for cattle". Severe sentences could be readily imposed on blacks, Khoekhoe, and whites, such as soldiers or labourers, who occupied low positions in colonial society. The courts had to tread more carefully when more respected citizens were tried. One of the most scandalous cases was that of the Reverend George Aveline in 1845. Aveline, a Baptist minister and school-teacher, was one of the leading intellectual lights in Grahamstown society. At the library committee meeting in 1845 he discoursed for an hour and a half on "The Rise and Progress of Science and Literature in Great Britain", a talk which, the *Journal* assured its readers, was listened to with "unflagging attention" by those present[71]. Later that year Aveline was accused of committing "a crime which is not only too revolting to name, but the bare idea of which cannot enter the mind without pollution" – he abused one of the boys at his school[72]. Both rape and sodomy were capital offences in the Cape, but evidently, despite the disgust felt by the community, hanging a formerly respected citizen in front of the jail

[71] *Graham's Town Journal*, 25 May 1845.
[72] *Graham's Town Journal*, 15 June 1845.

would have been too traumatic. At the circuit court, the "wretched criminal was allowed to plead guilty to the minor charge [assault], and was addressed briefly but most impressively by the court". He was sentenced to two years on Robben Island and eternal banishment from the colony. At the same session two Xhosa were sentenced to ten years in Cape Town and 75 lashes for stealing a horse and foal.

The racial fears surrounding crime reflected more general anxiety amongst the settlers as the town acquired a large Khoekhoe and African underclass. By the 1840s, this class constituted a fifth of the town‟s inhabitants. The Khoekhoe and African population of the town experienced severe social problems. The numbers who were hauled before the courts for "lying drunk in the streets" and "exposing their persons" suggests that alcoholism was a chronic problem in the community. There were even occasions when alcoholism could lead to death, often through exposure[73]. What was not recognised by the editors or correspondents in Grahamstown newspapers was that these were not expressions of character, or a so-called "love of indolence" in the case of the Khoekhoe or in "the thieving tendencies" of the amaXhosa, but were symptoms both of attempted resistance and despair in a community being incorporated in a subordinate position in the town. As Crais has argued, "alongside the more obvious examples of resistance amongst the unfree were the less apparent ones: flight, theft, the destruction of private property, „go-slows‟"[74]. The court records for the period show a high incidence of theft, drunkenness, vandalism, desertion and "insolence", suggesting that Khoekhoe and

[73] *Graham's Town Journal*, 29 May 1845.
[74] Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 64.

Africans contested their incorporation into a subservient and impoverished underclass in the colonial community.

Grahamstown had a significant Khoekhoe population from its inception, although most initially were connected with the Cape Corps. A school for the children of these soldiers had as many as 200 pupils in 1819[75]. William Shaw estimated that, including soldiers, the Khoekhoe population of the town was about 800 in 1820[76]. The arrival of the settlers increased the demand for labour, on the farms and in the towns. This, despite the stated preference for European servants, was generally met by Khoekhoe. The complaints about shortages of labour were loud in the early 1820s. Philipps lamented that he could "hardly get a Hottentot if we wished it"[77], while Somerset claimed that labour was "a want that should be supplied as soon as possible" because otherwise no development "whether agricultural or of any other nature" could occur[78]. There was, though, a steady stream of Khoekhoe into the town, especially after Ordinance 50 in 1828 when many left service on the farms to seek better conditions in the towns[79]. Ordinance 50 released Khoekhoe from the necessity of having to carry passes, which had the effect of binding them indefinitely to colonial farmers. Many hoped to find greater opportunities on the mission stations or in towns. The movement of Khoekhoe, and other Africans, was not always simply a matter of compulsion by the colonial state to meet the settlers" voracious appetite for labour; many genuinely hoped to find opportunities for advancement in the town. By the late 1820s, Khoekhoe were employed as butchers, wheelwrights, storekeepers, canteen

[75] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, i, p. 388.
[76] Hammond-Tooke, W. D, (ed.), *The Journal of William Shaw* (Cape Town, 1972), p. 43.
[77] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 78.
[78] Edwards, *1820 Settlers*, p. 124.
[79] Crais, *Making of Colonial Order*, p. 73.

keepers, shoemakers, gunsmiths, blacksmiths, saddlers, jewellers, and in various other jobs. The town generally failed to fulfil their hopes. Few, if any, attained prosperity, and they were never considered to be social equals by the town"s white elite. The division of race and class could not be bridged.

Although slavery existed in Grahamstown, it was never as significant as in the western Cape. In 1828 there were 49 male and 47 female slaves in Albany[80], a figure which, according to the *Journal* remained roughly the same until 1834[81]. Technically, the new English arrivals were forbidden to own slaves. However, older Dutch settlers in the town, such as A. B. Dietz, Piet Retief and Johan Bertram[82], held slaves, and there are intimations that English settlers occasionally purchased them, despite the ban. J. Mandy, a successful trader, apparently owned a slave[83], as did John Norton[84], William Wright[85], and W. Ogilvie[86], all well-known figures in the community. Sometimes the plight of slaves excited the philanthropic instincts of the townsfolk. Kidwell was moved to purchase a slave on the Grahamstown market in order to give her her freedom. Being without many options however, she preferred to remain with her benefactor, no doubt to his embarrassment[87]. The Methodist missionary, John Ayliff, took an interest in the welfare of slaves, baptising the slave Abram, the property of yet another Englishman, Pool, in front of an "unusually large congregation" of "Hottentots and slaves"[88].

[80] Neumark, *Economic Influences*, p. 162.
[81] *Graham's Town Journal*, 20 February 1834.
[82] *Graham's Town Journal*, 10 February 1832.
[83] Sheffield, *Story of the Settlement*, p. 184.
[84] *Graham's Town Journal*, 13 January 1832.
[85] Criminal Records, Cape Archives, 1/AY 3/1/1/1/1
[86] *Graham's Town Journal*, 3 April 1834
[87] Sheffield, *The Story of the Settlement*, p. 183.
[88] Hinchliff, P, (ed.), *The Journal of John Ayliff* (Cape Town, 1971), p. 59.

Renamed Peter, his improved status was not accompanied by any improvement in his material position: "Brother" Peter was subsequently sold (for 2 950 rixdollars) to another inhabitant of the town.

Slavery was a dying institution by the 1820s, and the general consensus seems to have been that it was an evil. Not only was the system considered economically inefficient in an age of free trade, but opposition to slavery had come to be seen as a distinctively British virtue and a key element in Britain's imperial enterprise[89]. The *Journal* reflected these differing priorities: "We are no advocates for slavery – not only because we consider the system hateful in itself, but because we most decidedly believe the employment of slaves to be much less profitable than the labour of freemen"[90]. On the date of the actual abolition in 1834, and again when the period of apprenticeship expired in 1838, the inhabitants of Grahamstown trooped into their churches to give thanks and celebrate the benevolence of the British empire. "The time has now arrived", boasted the *Journal* "when each British subject may reflect with conscious pride that although the sun never sets on the British dominions, yet in all this vast portion of the globe not a slave is to be found; and the banner of Britain waves over freemen, and freemen only"[91]. There was, nevertheless, strong concern that the "labour of freemen" should not be withheld. Although eager that freedom should be conferred on slaves, they were expected to exercise that freedom in ways that conformed to the prescriptions of colonial society[92]. The *Journal* hoped that the "gratitude" that emancipated slaves ought to feel for the

[89] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, p. 25.
[90] *Graham's Town Journal*, 1 August 1833.
[91] *Graham's Town Journal*, 4 December 1834.
[92] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, p. 13.

"unspeakable gift" of their freedom would ensure continued loyalty to their masters[93]. Such gratitude and loyalty, though, was not guaranteed, and there was widespread employer support for a vagrancy law during the years 1834-35, which would have compelled Khoekhoe and other labourers in the colony to continue to work for whites[94]. Although unsuccessful at the time, the agitation for the law demonstrated that there was still the expectation that Khoekhoe, ex-slaves and blacks should retain their subordinate position in colonial society. In the words of Crais and Worden, "emancipation saw less the creation of free labour than the forging of new systems of coercion and exploitation"[95].

There was little inducement (or encouragement) for amaXhosa to cross the boundary of the colony to work as labourers in Grahamstown before the 1820s. As Andries Stockenström remarked in 1827, few amaXhosa would seek work in the colony "as long as the interior is in a state of peace and space aplenty"[96]. From the 1810s Xhosa chiefs occasionally visited Grahamstown, as did a few traders and labourers, but most only on a temporary basis[97]. The first chief to visit after 1819 was clearly alarmed by the rapid growth of the town – perhaps he recognised the dangers that the bustling colonial settlement represented[98]. In the 1840s a visit from a chief, "making his entry on the back of an ox or a horse…and accompanied by a retinue of half a dozen wives, and several

[93] *Graham's Town Journal*, 20 November 1834.
[94] Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 85.
[95] Worden, N and Crais, C (eds), *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and its Legacy in the Nineteenth Century Cape Colony* (Johannesburg, 1994), p. 5.
[96] Quoted in Newton-King, S "The Labour Market in the Cape Colony", in Marks and Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (London, 1980), p. 194.
[97] Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 43.
[98] Kay, S, *Travels in Kaffraria* (London, 1833), p. 56.

counsellors or *amapakati* [sic]" was still a notable occasion[99]. Makhanda, who led the amaXhosa attack on the town in 1819, is also supposed to have resided there a short time, apparently learning Christian ideas from the military chaplain, Van der Lingen[100]. The black population of the town grew gradually as various groups, often refugees, entering the colony were distributed as labourers on the farms and in the towns along the frontier. Slaves captured and released from Portuguese ships, often referred to as "Prize Negroes", were distributed as indentured servants in Grahamstown, where they formed "an interesting part" of one of William Shaw's "native congregations"[101]. Free blacks also appear in the Court Records of the 1820s, although their origins are unclear. Most black Africans entering the town in the 1820s were refugees from various wars beyond the colonial boundary. The first significant group were the so-called "Mantatees", a vague designation but mostly referring to Tlokwa from the Highveld[102]. "The distribution of some hundreds of the refugee Mantatees among the most respectable families, as servants and herdsmen, has also been of great advantage", claimed Thompson[103]. Philipps was also enthusiastic when some of these "Mantatees" were brought to Grahamstown and "all who wanted Servants and had not Slaves were allowed to have a family, taking care not to divide them from each other, for fear of making them discontented and unhappy"[104]. As late as 1833, a correspondent to the *Journal* wrote that "it is well known that on the Northern and Eastern boundary of this colony, the country is swarming with destitute natives from the interior – who would, if proper encouragement were afforded, gladly

[99] Smith, T, *South Africa Delineated* (London, 1850), p. 45.
[100] Kay, *Travels and Researches*, p. 69.
[101] Shaw, *The Story of My Mission*, p. 117.
[102] See Etherington, N, *The Great Treks: The Transformation of Southern Africa 1815 – 1854* (Harlow, 2001).
[103] Thompson, *Travels and Adventures*, ii, p. 115.
[104] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 252.

enter into the service of the colonists"[105]. And proper encouragement was forthcoming: the Landdrost of Graaff-Reinet regularly forwarded groups of refugees to Albany[106]. Further refugees were distributed after the Mbolompo campaign in 1828, and were referred to as "Fetcani", a similarly vague term. Ordinance 49 of 1828 attempted to regularise the position of these refugees, insisting on their carrying passes and giving them the dubious title of "Native Foreigner". Although intended for the refugees, many Xhosa also took advantage of Ordinance 49, though how many moved to Grahamstown itself is not clear[107].

The largest and best-known group of refugees to arrive were the so-called "Mfengu". Much controversy surrounds the origins of these people. The traditional view, first formulated by the missionary Ayliff and subsequently disseminated by "settler" historians, was that the "Mfengu" were refugees from the ferocity of Shaka, who, appealing to the hospitality of the Gcaleka Xhosa were reduced to conditions of "abject slavery". They were rescued from this plight by the colonial forces in the war of 1834-35, after which they swore loyalty to Britain in a ceremony contrived by Colonel Harry Smith. Both Ayliff and the colonial government were interested parties. Ayliff found the "Mfengu" more willing converts to Christianity than the Xhosa, and Governor D'Urban hoped that leading an anti-slavery crusade would make his expensive and unauthorised annexations on the frontier more palatable to the metropolitan government[108]. The most radical challenge to this version of events is presented by Julian Cobbing and Alan

[105] *Graham's Town Journal*, 16 May 1833.
[106] Newton-King, "The Labour Market", p. 192.
[107] Peires, *House of Phalo*, p. 61.
[108] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 147.

Webster, who argue that "Mfengu" identity and history were simply invented as a cover for captured Xhosa labourers[109]. Although this interpretation is right in dismissing the notion that the "Mfengu" were slaves of the Xhosa and in emphasising the diversity of the people who came to be known as "Fingos", it is probably inaccurate to claim that they became slaves of the British. As Lester points out, the mid-1830s were the high water mark of the philanthropist movement in the Cape, and it is unlikely that 17 000 people could be enslaved and held in "military camps" (a logistically formidable undertaking) without attracting the attention of Dr Philip and his allies[110]. The position of the "Mfengu" in Grahamstown tends to support the idea, put forward by Moyer and others, that those people who came to constitute the "Fingos" genuinely felt that transferring their allegiance from the Gcaleka to the colony would be in their best interests. After all, the devastating defeat of the amaXhosa in the war would have dramatically illustrated the price of resistance. As a group which had already experienced exile, they would have had less to lose than the amaXhosa by moving to the colony. They were not to know that servitude to the British would offer even less scope for advantage than clientship to the Gcaleka.

The experience of the Mfengu is illustrative of the limitations and restrictions placed on Africans in the colonial order in the town. Despite discouragement from the authorities in Grahamstown (Duncan Campbell stopped the issue of rations to compel as many as possible to leave), many Mfengu settled in the town. By the time of the first census of the

[109] Cobbing, "The Mfecane as Aftermath: Thoughts on Dithakong and Mbolompo", *Journal of African History*, 29, (1988); Webster, A, "Land Expropriation and Labour Extraction under Cape Colonial Rule: The War of 1835 and the „Emancipation" of the Fingo" (Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1991).
[110] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, p. 90.

"Fingo Village" in 1847 it was estimated that there were as many as 1 700, a significant number in a small town[111]. In common with some of the Khoekhoe after Ordinance 50, many Mfengu harboured hopes of finding opportunity in the Cape Colony. Many professed a willingness to adopt colonial values and institutions, sending their children to school, converting to Christianity, and acquiring the "individualistic and acquisitive tendencies" of the European colonists[112]. Furthermore, unlike Xhosa labourers who were also beginning to arrive in greater numbers during the 1830s, they had "no wish to leave, for they should not know where to go"[113]. Although white Grahamstown was happy to acquire a new labour source, it was were reluctant to accept the Mfengu as equals. Indeed, despite their economic enterprise the large number of the Mfengu mitigated against their success. For once there was a surplus of labour in Grahamstown which ensured that only low wages and menial work was available. A protest to the magistrate in 1840, asking that wages in the town be raised, was unsuccessful[114]. Meanwhile, ever more Xhosa crossed into the colony in search of work in the wake of Ordinance 49 in 1828 and the intensification of military conflict and land loss in the 1830s. Mfengu, Xhosa and Khoekhoe formed a large and economically vital section of Grahamstown"s population in the 1840s, but they remained marginalised, poor and subordinate.

While the black and Khoekhoe population of the town became increasingly impoverished a wealthy new white elite was developing in Grahamstown. The failure of Albany to become a prosperous agricultural district and the changing economic opportunities of the

[111] Moyer, R, "A History of the Mfengu of the Eastern Cape 1815 – 1865" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of London, 1976), p. 313.
[112] *Ibid.*, p. 264.
[113] *Ibid.*, p. 308.
[114] *Ibid.*, p. 307.

1820s resulted in the rise of a mercantile elite. Many of the new elite of the 1830s had had humble beginnings and had prospered only after arrival in the colony. William Lee, a successful butcher and wholesaler by the 1830s, had been a "broken tradesman" before 1820, afraid of imprisonment for debt[115]. Robert Godlonton, who became a vocal advocate of settler interests and a wealthy land speculator, emigrated as a printer[116] and occupied a number of minor clerical positions in the landdrost"s office in the 1820s. H. Halse, who became a wealthy auctioneer, began his career as a court messenger. James Howse was another who arrived in South Africa with nothing. He eventually made a fortune in trade, and combined considerable business acumen with strong religious feeling – he was reputed to sing hymns in his wagon after a day"s trading with the boers[117]. The career of George Wood, who rose to become one of the richest merchants in the town, indicates a degree of ruthlessness was required. Evidently unhappy in Britain, he had indentured himself to a carpenter in order to gain a passage to the Cape. As the carpenter decided to eschew the Cape and continue to India, the young Wood was obliged to abscond from the ship in Algoa Bay and turn his hand to saddling[118]. He was evidently not afraid of hard work: an anecdote depicts him working in the galley of the transport ship to acquire additional food for his ailing mistress[119], and he was seen leading wagons through the street barefoot. He soon realised that he preferred to be self-employed and took to trading across the frontier in the 1820s. He was, as were many

[115] Edwards, *1820 Settlers*, p. 57.
[116] Not the same profession as a journalist, despite the assumption in much settler literature that one occupation led naturally to the other.
[117] Ayliff, "Howse Memorial", n.p.
[118] The irreverent Thomas Stubbs, writing after Wood has risen to eminence, wrote that as an apprentice he "was so confoundedly stupid that it was thought he was not able to learn the trade". Stubbs also alleged that "he was so filthy in his habits that old Thackwray [his master] would not allow him into the house but made him get his food in the kitchen". Maxwell, *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 211.
[119] Bell, M, *They Came from a Far Land* (Cape Town, 1963), p. 21.

Grahamstown merchants, prone to sharp practice – his fortune was really made as a result of his dubious business dealings during the Sixth Frontier War. Godlonton, who was later nicknamed "Moral Bob" and came to be one of the most respected members of the Grahamstown community, had been considered, by Donald Moodie at any rate, as a "worthless blackguard" in the 1820s[120]. These merchants, together with the leading civilian officials and a much expanded and profoundly influential clergy, comprised the elite of the town in the 1830s and 1840s.

In an age of limited government responsibility, and a plethora of voluntary organisations, a few personalities came to appear dominant in the community, especially in a population of only 4 000 whites. In an Eastern Province almanac, published in 1843, Chase provides a list of various organisations, as well as the membership of their executive committees, This gives an indication of the tight-knit group who dominated the public life of the town. Some of these organisations were governmental or commercial, such as the Justices of the Peace, the Municipal Commissioners, and the directors of the Eastern Province Bank. Some were of more general cultural or economic benefit, such as the Albany Library Committee and the Cape of Good Hope Emigration Association. The majority were religious or educational: the School Commission, the Episcopalian Church, the Albany Colonial Church Association, the Sunday and Day Schools, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, the Baptist Church, the Union Chapel, the Wesleyan Chapel, the Wesleyan Auxiliary Missionary Society, the Wesleyan School of Industry for Girls, the Wesleyan Sunday School, the Grahamstown Auxiliary Bible Society and the LMS Auxiliary Missionary Society. The committees of these organisations, covering a wide

[120] Quoted in Le Cordeur, *Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 12.

spectrum of everyday life in the town, had a potential total membership of 195; in fact, the positions were filled by only 109 individuals. Charles Maynard, a wealthy merchant, held the record, being a member of seven of the committees of the listed bodies. The Anglican chaplain, George Heavyside, sat on six, as did the leading Methodist minister, William Shaw. Robert Godlonton, extending his already considerable influence in the town, sat on four committees, as did the merchant P. W. Lucas, while J. Black, W. Ogilvie, T. Nelson, J. Howse and J. Maskell, all successful businessmen, each held three positions. The dominance of these men was perhaps resented by some; a letter to the *Journal* described them as a "self-constituted aristocratic body"[121]. The *Cape Frontier Times*, established in 1840 and a somewhat more liberal alternative to the *Journal,* offered a more gentle parody of the self-importance and stuffiness of these organisations, describing the exploits of the Graham"s Town Fudge Society (G.T.F.S) in its columns. But the fact remained that wealth brought with it influence in the town.

The changing composition of the elite began to affect the social tone of the town. Although the pursuits described by Philipps continued, the Wesleyan church in particular exercised an increasingly powerful and conservative influence. Before 1820, religion had played a very small role in Grahamstown life; there was no chaplain of any sort in that year, and the town was described as "sunk very low in drunkenness, lewdness, and other deadly sins"[122], though some of the garrison held informal services in the barracks. The official establishment was, and tended to remain, nominally Anglican. So too were many of the original settler gentry, reflecting their class origins in England. They seem,

[121] *Graham's Town Journal*, 19 June 1834.
[122] Hammond-Tooke (ed.), *Shaw Journal*, p. 43.

however, to have taken a fairly relaxed view of religion. A prayer meeting described by Philipps seemed to possess more social than spiritual significance, with music, singing, and yarns about military life forming the main activities[123]. This was in marked contrast to the fervent expressions of spirituality which were a feature of non-conformist meetings. Despite their limited spiritual enthusiasm, the Anglican authorities often took a dim view of the various non-conformist denominations during the 1820s. John Ayliff was refused permission to visit the prison by Landdrost Dundas because he was Methodist, while Ayliff's attempt to get the Anglican chaplain, Thomas Ireland, to intervene on his behalf, was met with only grudging support[124]. Ayliff perhaps was not favoured by his somewhat tactless approach: on being refused permission to visit prisoners, he told the landdrost that should any of them die having been denied the teaching of the truth of Christ, the blood would be on Dundas' hands. Dundas threw him out of his office. Many officers of the garrison remained Anglicans, and there was a core group of Anglican merchants, such as W. R. Thompson, C. Maynard, J. Black and G. Jarvis, with whom they often intermarried[125].

Anglicanism generally failed to appeal to the majority of Grahamstown's settler inhabitants: non-conformism, and more particularly Methodism, came to be the most popular denomination during the period. The rise of the commercial gentry added to its respectability as many of the wealthiest and most influential members of the community were Methodists. The success of Methodism in Grahamstown was due to a number of factors. One was the origin of the settlers, many of whom came from the industrial towns

[123] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 140.
[124] Hinchliff, *Ayliff Journal*, p. 53.
[125] Scott and Deetz, "Building, Furnishings and Social Change", p. 79.

of Britain where Wesley's teachings had had such enormous success. A contributing factor, however, was the scarcity and poor quality of Anglican clergy in the town, which tended to leave the field open to the proselytising efforts of the other churches. Only two Anglican priests accompanied the settlers, neither of whom worked in Grahamstown[126]. The first Anglican chaplain, William Geary, was appointed by Lord Somerset himself on the basis of recommendations from his aristocratic connections. Somerset hoped that Geary would be able to "assist in stemming the torrent that is rushing in from all quarters to trample down the established church here"[127]. Geary was unable to raise the prestige of the established church, however, becoming embroiled in a number of controversies. His hostility to non-conformists alienated the predominantly Methodist population of the town[128]. He also succeeded in angering even the Anglican establishment, by coming into conflict with the landdrost and, most injudiciously, by reading to friends a letter from the mother of Lord Somerset in which she appealed to him to pray for the governor, since she had doubts about his godliness. The scandal descended to a level of pettiness which so often characterised the small, claustrophobic world of the 1820s establishment. Colonel Somerset snubbed Geary by marching the troops to Church and then immediately ordering them back to barracks. Geary's response was a sufficiently immoderate letter to justify his dismissal[129]. Geary's successor, Thomas Ireland, was equally unpopular, again largely because of his prejudices towards the non-conformist churches. He invoked the legal privileges of the Anglican Church in serious matters, such as the ability of

[126] F. McClelland became the long-standing chaplain of Port Elizabeth, while W. Boardman took up residence at Bathurst, where he served more as "a warning beacon rather than an ensample [sic] of the godly life". Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 97.
[127] Quoted in *ibid.*, ii, p. 193.
[128] In 1843 it was estimated that only 850 out of the 4000 whites in Grahamstown were Anglicans. *Graham's Town Journal*, 16 March 1843.
[129] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 200.

Methodist ministers to carry out marriages and baptisms, and raised some seemingly trivial issues, such as whether it was legal for any church other than the Anglicans to ring a bell on Sundays[130]. It was only after 1825 that the Anglicans possessed any clergyman able to command respect in the town.

The Methodists, in contrast, possessed both superior organisation and personnel. This enabled them to become the dominant religion in the region, and indeed, to form a distinct religious tradition in the Cape, centred in Grahamstown, and in marked contradistinction to the more liberal missionaries of the London Missionary society and their associates. At the centre of the Methodist mission was the figure of William Shaw, described by one biographer as being looked upon by the settlers with "a veneration that bordered almost on worship"[131]. Cory claims that "of all the honoured names of the 1820 settlers it is doubtful whether there is one which is worthy of being held in greater veneration than that of the Rev. William Shaw"[132]. Shaw was responsible for initiating the construction of the first church in the town, which for a number of years was used alternately by other denominations[133]. Shaw was also always willing to preach to any believers, claiming that Methodism was "anti-sectarian and of a Catholic spirit"[134]. In this way the Methodists were able to gain converts amongst those who had had no particular religious leanings in England, people such as Jeremiah Goldswain[135]. Even the alcoholic Thomas Shone could feel that his "heart" was "desperately wicked and self-righteous"

[130] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 202.
[131] Everleigh, W, *The Settlers and Methodism 1820 – 1920* (Cape Town, 1920), p. 28.
[132] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 98.
[133] Shaw, *The Story of my Mission*, p. 106.
[134] *Ibid*., p. 89.
[135] Although Shaw claims some periods were more fruitful than others, pointing to three "revivals" in Grahamstown and its vicinity in 1822, 1830-31, and 1837-38. *Ibid*., p. 186.

after hearing a sermon[136]. He was also critical of the Methodists‟ piety, claiming that they were

> full of very ignorant people, not given to drunkenness, for they were too selfish even to buy themselves the necessaries of life. These people were backbiters, slanderers, covetous, continually quarrelling among themselves, and picking holes in other people‟s coats, and so self-righteous that they did not allow any other sect to be entitled to go to heaven but themselves. All these defects Satan laid before me, to see people professing to serve God, and at the same time faithful servents [sic] to the devil[137].

The Methodists also had a system of lay-preachers. This lessened the pressure on ordained clergy and encouraged a number of settlers to enter the priesthood. These lay preachers were of variable stature and ability. Once again Shone offers a more irreverent perspective, describing one of Shaw‟s colleagues as looking "more like a thief than a preacher", while another was "according to his own statement…a common blackguard…with very little mercy for „the people of the world‟, as he is pleased to call all others of a different persuasion"[138]. Others, such as John Ayliff, H. H. Dugmore and John Shepstone, evidently possessed greater abilities and rose to enjoy a considerable respect in the colonial community.

The Methodists did not lack missionary zeal, and did concern themselves with the spiritual welfare of Grahamstown‟s black population. Shaw wrote to the Wesleyan Missionary society that they would "have been delighted to see the tears run down their [Shaw‟s Khoekhoe congregation] cheeks, and to hear them speak their experiences, and

[136] Silva (ed.), *Shone Journal*, p. 52.
[137] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[138] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

express their thankfulness for the good word of God". He always took care to emphasise that the Methodists" Sunday schools were not segregated. These missionaries" close links with the settlers, however, meant that their attitudes towards the frontier and race relations were very different to the "negrophilist" missionaries of the London Missionary Society. Shaw, at least initially, regarded the European settlers as his first priority, claiming that unless he "made great efforts to extend the benefits of the Wesleyan Mission to the white population – at that time the most neglected people in the colony – there was no hope that their case would receive speedy attention from any other quarter"[139]. Even after the development of missions in Xhosaland the Methodists tended to take the settlers" part. One of the more fanatical Methodist missionaries, who worked both in Grahamstown itself as well as across the frontier with the Gcaleka, was William Shrewsbury. He developed a thorough dislike of the amaXhosa. His threat to "most heartily" thrash a traditional healer if the latter were to lose a bet to heal Shrewsbury"s wife reflected the attitudes of frontier farmers (whom he considered to be "hearty friends of Africa") rather than a liberal missionary[140]. He also became imbued with the racial bitterness that followed the 1834-35 war, and was recalled as a result of proposing brutal methods for subduing the amaXhosa to the military commander, Colonel Harry Smith. This was too embarrassing even for the largely pro-colonial Wesleyan Missionary Society. Even the more moderate ministers, such as Shaw himself, closely identified with the settlers and sought to represent their interests. Shaw was one of the pro-settler witnesses to the Aborigines Committee, which sought to investigate the causes of the Sixth Frontier War and the state of the colony. Writing to Lord Aberdeen, he attributed

[139] Shaw, *Story of My Mission*, p. 96.
[140] Fast (ed.), *Shrewsbury Journal*, p. 138.

the war "not to any cruelties perpetrated by the British settlers upon the Kaffirs…but to the moral state and predatory habits of the Kaffirs"[141].

Although Anglicanism and Methodism were the most prominent, there were a number of other denominations in the town. Both the Baptists and Presbyterians had established congregations in the 1820s; they required new buildings in 1842 after the original chapels had become too small to accommodate their growing membership. The Catholics had a presence in the town, largely amongst the military, many of whom were Irish. Perhaps it was the necessity of providing private soldiers with spiritual guidance which mitigated Protestant hostility against Catholicism, which was considerable during the early 19th century. The opening of the new Catholic Church in 1844, constructed by soldiers of the 27th regiment, was attended by the Commander of the Frontier, at that time Colonel Hare, and the Civil Commissioner, Martin West. Despite approving the erection of the church, the *Journal* still felt the need to make "an avowal of uncompromising Protestantism"[142], illustrating the extent to which denominational rivalry was still alive in the community. A small number of Jews had been among the settlers. Although the Jewish congregation of Grahamstown was initially tiny, it included some of the town's most successful and prominent businessmen, such as John Norton, Benjamin and Joshua Norden, and later Nathan Birkenruth[143]. By 1846 the community was large enough to warrant the construction of a Synagogue[144].

[141] Shaw, *The Story of My Mission*, p. 153.
[142] *Graham's Town Journal*, 25 July 1844
[143] Hermann, L, *A History of the Jews of South Africa: From the Earliest Times to 1895* (Johannesburg, 1935), p. 205.
[144] *Ibid.*, p. 120.

The church was a powerful conservative force in Grahamstown society. By 1839 it was proudly asserted in the *Journal* that "there is no part of the United Kingdom where the outward observances of religion are more decorously attended to than in this colony. In Grahamstown business of every kind is suspended on this day [i.e. Sunday]"[145]. The Wesleyans in particular had austere ideas about recreation and morality, and dedicated less time to the pursuit of pleasure than the settler gentry. William Shrewsbury, who lived in Grahamstown in the 1830s, published a pamphlet in 1833 entitled *A Discourse Against Worldly Pleasure*. In this he claimed that

> The whole round of fashionable and worldly amusements, as cards, games of chance, dances, balls, masquerades, races and such like vanities, are so contrary to the nature of Christianity, as laid down in the New Testament, that men of all ranks in life, who delight in them, and attend them, give evidence thereby that they are not Christians[146].

Robert Godlonton evidently had a similarly low opinion of balls, observing at one held during the Circuit Court that "Sir John Wilde was among the dancers, quite as gay as the most juvenile person, and there were many other „grave and venerable seigniors" employed the same way, that I could not help thinking might have been much better employed"[147]. The *Journal* described races and balls as "the frivolities of life". James Howse, too, pitied the "poor souls in distress" who in their "noisy balls" danced the night away, rather than enjoy the benefit of church going[148]. Possibly the ball-goers did not feel their "distress" as keenly as Howse supposed. One correspondent objected to the

[145] *Graham's Town Journal*, 19 December 1839.
[146] Fast (ed.), *Shrewsbury Journal*,
[147] Le Cordeur, "Robert Godlonton", p. 16.
[148] Ayliff, "Howse Memorial", n.p.

increasing popularity of amateur theatricals during the 1830s, claiming that they were "most detrimental to public morality and in direct opposition to those precepts which are given in the Bible as a rule of life"[149]. Jeremiah Goldswain recorded feeling the pressures of social conservatism. Accompanying Reverend Stephen Kay, a relatively liberal Methodist, on a ride he suggested that the plain they were travelling would be a good place for racing; Kay expressed his disapproval by silence, and Goldswain was left feeling guilty[150]. Shortly afterwards he joined the church after feeling guilt over his "swareing"[151].

Despite the growing conservatism, drinking and other anti-social pursuits were continued, especially by the youth of the town. The *Grahamstown Journal*, very much an organ of the Methodist elite, reported on disturbances. One correspondent complained that

> certain „lewd fellows of the baser sort" (Acts 17:5) have for some time past sought amusement for themselves by INSULTING FEMALES when passing in and out of the Wesleyan chapel, in this town, and have also indulged in the habit of lounging on the steps of the portico, occasionally smoking segars [sic], and enjoying the boisterous mirth of fools, to the great annoyance of the congregation[152].

Other youths occasionally entertained themselves by pulling women's bonnets as they left church, and breaking windows[153]. The presence of a "maniac Fingo" in the town

[149] *Graham's Town Journal*, 5 September 1839.
[150] Long (ed.),*Goldswain's Chronicle*, p. 48.
[151] *Ibid.*, p. 52.
[152] *Graham's Town Journal*, 8 November 1833.
[153] *Graham's Town Journal*, 22 August 1844.

attracted a mob of "dirty urchins" who harassed the unfortunate man[154]. The various groups of "juvenile vagrants", whose immigration to the Cape had been sponsored by the British government at the instigation of the settlers, proved particularly intractable, and were continually before the courts on charges of absconding, vandalism, and assault. The iron water pipes, imported from Birmingham and one of the Grahamstown municipality"s proudest innovations, were also vandalised by a group of youngsters[155].

There was evidently not always a great deal for young people to do in the town. Many worked, being apprenticed in their early teens. Education, however, seems to have been variable in quality and duration, particularly in the 1820s. As late as 1832 the *Journal* claimed that there were as many as one hundred "uneducated" boys roaming the town[156]. Throughout the period there seems to have been a variety of schools, including many private institutions catering for only a handful of pupils. One of these schools in the early 1820s, headed by one Mr Grubb, apparently taught children to write in sand-boxes and liberally applied the cane[157]. C. Hyman, J. Hancock, and W. Howard also opened private schools early on[158]. Eventually the private schools seem to have improved in quality, catering for the mercantile elite and aiming to instil a degree of gentility probably lacking in the pupils" parents. Mrs Blackburn"s "Academy for Ladies", one of a number of such establishments, offered all "the usual branches of education; and also the Harp, Piano-forte and Guitar [as well as] English, Italian and French singing, Dancing, Drawing

[154] *Graham's Town Journal*, 14 December 1843. The incident is typical of the nineteenth-century toleration of cruelty in a supposedly devout Christian environment.
[155] *Graham's Town Journal*, 24 January 1846.
[156] *Graham's Town Journal*, 13 July 1832.
[157] Sheffield, *The Story of the Settlement*, p.176.
[158] Hockly, *The British Settlers of 1820*, p. 192.

etc"[159] – an indication of what was considered an appropriate education for middle-class women at the time. George Aveline"s school, catering for four boarders and four day scholars, boasted that each boarder would have his own bed, which raises questions about the facilities available at other schools[160]. A number of "Grammar Schools" were also opened, by the Anglican and Methodist churches among others. The Reverend Heavyside opened the Anglican St George"s School in 1843, which was to be a "superior school for young gentlemen which will afford all the advantages of an English Grammar School". It offered Latin, Greek, French and German in addition to "all the various branches of a sound ENGLISH education". A teacher from King"s College London was imported to undertake this task[161].

Public schooling was also available in the town: a government teacher was appointed from 1822. Until the late 1830s, however, these schoolmasters seem to have been of dubious quality. They were also generally poorly paid[162], and one at least supplemented his income by offering private tuition, which generated some resentment among those unable to afford this privilege[163]. The Grahamstown community did become involved in the government schools, forming committees and raising funds. Examinations at the government school were a public event, well attended and accompanied by a fair amount of self-congratulation. Despite the limitations of this school, the top class was examined in Euclid, Latin, geography, the history of Rome, Greece and England, and English

[159] *Graham's Town Journal*, 16 October 1834.
[160] *Graham's Town Journal*, 14 February 1839.
[161] *Graham's Town Journal*, 6 July 1843.
[162] The minimum salary for a school-teacher in the 1830s was £40, which could rise to, but not exceed, £80. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa 1652 – 1922*, (Cape Town, 1925), p. 66. Heavyside claimed in 1836 that the teacher"s salary was little better than a "mechanic". *Graham's Town Journal*, 27 October 1836.
[163] *Graham's Town Journal*, 19 December 1833.

Grammar[164], subjects which suggest that relocation to the Cape was not regarded as sufficient reason to deviate from English syllabi. Schools in the colony were reformed in 1839 with the establishment of an Education Department and the appointment of a Superintendent, who supervised the quality of teachers, syllabi, and raised salaries so as to attract a higher calibre of teachers[165]. Mr Tudhope, a teacher who arrived after the 1839 reforms, became a leading intellectual light in the town. A government infant school was founded in 1831, its affairs largely directed by a local committee. It held public examinations, and attempted not only to instil knowledge into the minds of its young pupils but also the value of "cleanliness, punctuality, order and subordination"[166]. Sunday schools, founded by the Methodists in the early 1820s and emulated by the other churches, played a similar role. Instilling values as well as knowledge was regarded as one of the most important benefits of education. The *Journal* argued that "what we are anxious the people be taught is – the difference between right and wrong – virtue and vice …Whilst knavery passes current for talent, cunning for capacity, impudence for address, ruffianism for courage, falsehood for truth and ribaldry for wit, it is not possible that people can be either comfortable or prosperous"[167].

Educational and cultural opportunities for adults in the town were also diversified, particularly towards the end of the 1830s and into the 1840s. The educational level of the settlers had been fairly varied. Although the wealthier settlers had a fairly high standard of education, a large number were also clearly either illiterate or semi-literate. Philipps

[164] *Graham's Town Journal*, 27 December 1832.
[165] Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, p. 71.
[166] *Graham's Town Journal*, 6 January 1832.
[167] *Graham's Town Journal*, 23 June 1836.

boasted in the 1820s that "I have never felt the benefits of education with such force as I have done since I have been in Africa, nor ever had so much deference paid to it". This was a result of the "market in S. Africa [sic]" not being "over stocked with this article"[168]. The new mercantile elite, with their humbler backgrounds, were often less well educated than the original settler gentry. Even as late as 1860 Shaw could claim that "the inhabitants are, perhaps, too much immersed in the pursuits of business to afford sufficient time for mental occupation, and they cannot be regarded as a very intellectual race"[169].

That is somewhat unfair; intellectual improvement was considered a moral imperative and conscious efforts were made to develop the intellectual life of the town. Indeed, the acquisition of education was seen as an important marker of "respectability", that key Victorian ideal, in a community of mixed social origins. A circulating library was opened in 1834, and was succeeded by a municipal library in 1842, an event celebrated with a fete and to the accompaniment of the band of the 91st regiment[170]. The bookseller Caffyn was a regular promoter of literary pursuits, for reasons which seem not to have been entirely mercenary. Books and magazines were regularly available for sale for those who could afford them[171]. Public lectures were also a popular pastime, for which early

[168] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 215.
[169] Shaw, *The Story of My Mission*, p. 80.
[170] *Graham's Town Journal*, 25 April 1842.
[171] A brief examination of the titles available reveals much about the tastes of the community. A great many of the books were of a religious nature. Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Cowper and Goldsmith were popular poets, not all of whose popularity has endured, while more contemporary writers such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley or Keats were seldom if ever advertised. Evidently the Romantics were not popular in Grahamstown. The exception was Sir Walter Scott, whose works were often advertised. But then the town seems to have been more up to date with novels: *The Pickwick Papers* and *Nicolas Nicklelby* were available almost as soon as they were published. Magazines such as the *Tattler, Spectator, Edinburgh Review, Guardian, and Westminster Review*, as well as the *Army and Navy Lists*,

Victorians, both in Britain and in the colonies, had an insatiable appetite[172]. One popular speaker on the lecture circuit was Dr McCartney, "the Cape‟s most racist phrenological propagandist"[173], who arrived in the town in 1835. Phrenology, which formed the subject of his first lecture, purported to assess the character of individuals on the basis of the shape of their skulls. Although controversial, and subsequently discredited, it was nevertheless reckoned to be within the ambit of respectable science at the time[174]. It was originally intended to be applied to differences between individuals, but also came to be regarded as explaining racial differences. As such, it found an enthusiastic audience in the racially embittered atmosphere of Grahamstown in the immediate aftermath of the Sixth Frontier War. McCartney illustrated his lectures by displaying "various casts of celebrated characters and models of the skulls of different nations"[175], as well as a number of Xhosa skulls made available in the recent war[176]. Objections to the lectures came not from liberals, but from the town‟s religious community, since some Grahamstown residents believed the subject (and a subsequent course of lectures on geology) undermined Christianity and encouraged "materialism" and "infidelity"[177]. McCartney, who became a frequent speaker, was more careful in a later lecture on astronomy, another potentially controversial topic, to emphasize that the spectacle of a comet filled "the mind with the most profound conceptions of the surpassing grandeur

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would have kept Grahamstonians in touch with the political and cultural landscape in Britain, while the *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the *Zuid Afrikaan* would have supplementated the *Journal* for local news.

[172] Newsome, *Victorian World Picture*, p. 144.

[173] Bank, "Of „Native Skulls‟ and „Noble Caucasians‟: Phrenology in Colonial South Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22, 3 (1996), p. 396.

[174] *Ibid.*, p. 389.

[175] *Graham's Town Journal*, 12 November 1835.

[176] Bank, "Native Skulls and Noble Caucasians", p. 398.

[177] *Graham's Town Journal*, 26 November 1835.

and glory, as well as the infinite power and perfection of THE GREAT CREATOR"[178]. McCartney also offered an ambitious series of lectures which covered "heat, air, sound, light and electricity"[179]. Tudhope offered lectures on amateur science, encompassing such novelties as electricity. He had a flair for the dramatic, illustrating one lecture with the aid of a magic lantern[180], while another on "The Effects and Communication of Heat" was illuminated by the new technology of gas lighting[181].

For lighter entertainment the "Graham"s Town Theatrical Amateur Company" was formed in 1837. Its tastes ranged from comedy, such as Sheridan"s *The Rival*, which seems to have been the company"s first performance[182], to the Gothic, such as "Monk" Lewis"s *The Castle Spectre, or, the Ghost of Evelina*[183]. These performances were often accompanied by comic songs and burlesques. Music concerts were performed, and music, drawing and dancing lessons were available. Occasionally a Mechanical Theatre made an appearance.[184] By and large though, the acquisition of culture was seen more as a moral imperative than merely a source of entertainment. This is well illustrated by the formation in 1845 of the Graham"s Town Mental Improvement Association, whose first lecture concerned "The advantages arising from the study of Science on Christian principles"[185].

By mid-century, the population of Grahamstown, although small, was diverse. Class, race and gender divided the small community, and created conflict and competition. At the

[178] *Graham's Town Journal*, 27 July 1843.
[179] *Graham's Town Journal*, 31 December 1840.
[180] *Graham's Town Journal*, 9 March 1843.
[181] *Graham's Town Journal*, 21 April 1842.
[182] *Graham's Town Journal*, 16 November 1837.
[183] *Graham's Town Journal*, 8 March 1838.
[184] *Graham's Town Journal*, 21 August 1845.
[185] *Graham's Town Journal*, 19 June 1845.

same time, the elite of the town were becoming a vocal and influential community in the Cape. As the primary urban settlement in the eastern districts, Grahamstown became something of an unofficial capital of the east. The town was the obvious location for mobilising political support for various eastern concerns. The next chapter discusses the creation of the Grahamstown political and propaganda machine, centred on newspapers such as the *Graham's Town Journal*. As the self-appointed settler spokespersons attempted to formulate a cohesive eastern interest and identity, they attempted to paper over the cracks in settler society. The conflict and diversity of colonial communities went increasingly unacknowledged.

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CHAPTER THREE

"AN IRRUPTION OF AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT KIND": POLITICS, PROPAGANDA AND HISTORY IN COLONIAL GRAHAMSTOWN.

> Theirs [the British settlers] has been an irruption of an entirely different kind. It has been the opposition of benevolence to savage cruelty, of light to darkness, of the blessings of Christianity to heathenish superstition and wretchedness – *The Graham's Town Journal*, 1845.

The Cape Colony underwent enormous change in the first decades of the 19th century. During the 1820s, the legal, administrative and political structures were largely remodelled on English lines. The labour market was reformed, and slavery was ameliorated and eventually abolished in the 1830s. Many of the monopolistic practices of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) were swept away in line with the prevailing ideology of free trade[1]. Meanwhile, the arrival of large numbers of British settlers, especially in the Eastern Cape, formed a community with a far more aggressive economic ideology of accumulation than the older European settlers. These settlers became "intent on initiating processes of dispossession and subjugation against indigenous peoples", and were an extremely destabilising factor on the eastern frontier[2]. Settlers soon found that there were other competing agendas in the new British establishment. Both the colonial and imperial governments were reluctant to incur the costs of dispossession on the frontier, where fierce resistance from the amaXhosa was often encountered. However profitable the frontier wars may have been to the settler elites, they seldom brought any

[1] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 44.
[2] *Ibid*.

benefit to the British government. Furthermore, the evangelical revival of the late eighteenth century had created an interest in certain religious circles in England in the fate of the indigenous inhabitants of South Africa, and of slaves. The desire of these evangelicals to "better" the lot of Africans and slaves was seen to be at variance with the settler desire to control labour and acquire land, and as a result was met with hostility. In the face of these pressures and in reaction to the insecurity of life and property on the frontier, settlers in the eastern Cape began to formulate a distinct colonial identity, differing from that of the western districts. As the major town in the east during the early 19th century, Grahamstown played a key role in this process. Not only did Grahamstown provide many of the major propagandists for the settler agenda, such as Robert Godlonton, but it provided a convenient centre for meetings and petitions. The intellectual elite of the town came self-consciously to consider themselves to be the representatives of the eastern province generally (although they were never actually as dominant as they supposed). The propagandists claimed that the settlers were maligned and misunderstood, especially in the wake of such formative experiences as the Sixth Frontier War and the controversy surrounding its outcome, and so fought a bitter and protracted campaign against their enemies, real and perceived. The settler elite in Grahamstown also struggled to gain control of the local state, above all through the separatist movement. They enjoyed only limited success during the early decades of the nineteenth century. However, the Grahamstown propagandists came to cast a long shadow on South African historiography. The "settler" historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came to adopt the "Grahamstown line" in their discussions of early nineteenth century debates. So views that were strongly contested in the 1830s

came to receive the sanction of subsequent historians. It was only in the twentieth century that these views were again decisively challenged.

Grahamstown's rise to prominence in the 1820s occurred during a period of extensive political, legal and administrative reform in the Cape Colony. The Cape had been seized for reasons of strategy in 1806, and its unclear status before 1815 made British authorities reluctant to institute many changes in the colony[3]. Little alteration was made to the structures of government inherited from the Dutch East India Company, and a succession of governors had been happy to rule in accordance with established practice. In general the colonial government was characterised by considerable corruption and inefficiency[4]. By the 1820s, however, movements towards colonial reform in Britain began to have an impact in the Cape. In particular, a Commission of Eastern Inquiry was appointed in 1822 to make a wide-ranging investigation of conditions in the Cape, Ceylon and Mauritius and make suggestions "for the purpose of prospective regulation and improvement"[5]. Although it did not finally submit its report until 1831, many of its suggestions were adopted, and its mere presence offered impetus to others interested in reform, not least in Grahamstown[6]. Richard Bourke, acting governor between 1826 and 1828 and himself a reformer, described the outcome of the commissioners' investigations as "a kind of revolution"[7]. The judiciary was restructured, including, in the districts of the colony, the replacement of the boards of *Heemraden*, local notables who with the landdrost exercised

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 43.
[4] Peires, "The British and the Cape", in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), *Shaping of South African Society*, p. 491.
[5] Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 494.
[6] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 96.
[7] Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule*, p. 92.

minor judicial functions, with resident magistrates appointed from Britain[8]. Some effort was also made to separate the executive and judicial functions which had been performed by landdrosts by appointing civil commissioners, although financial constraints often resulted in the two offices being held by the same individual. In Grahamstown, Duncan Campbell came to be both magistrate and commissioner between August 1828 and 1831, after the demise of the magistrate Lawson, who had fallen "victim to intemperance"[9], and then again after 1834. English was established as the language of the judiciary, a further move towards Anglicisation[10]. Simultaneously, many of the VOC restrictions on trade, such as monopolies on various goods, were abolished[11]. Port Elizabeth was established as a free port in 1826 in line with the metropolitan impetus towards free trade[12].

The desire to remove archaic economic restrictions also had a profound impact on the labour market. Slavery was approaching its demise in the 1820s, reflected in various attempts to "ameliorate" the conditions of slaves in the 1820s. This was unpopular among white colonists and the final emancipation of slaves in 1834 was the result of a directive from London. More immediate attention was given to the improvement of conditions for the ostensibly free Khoekhoe labouring class. In particular, Ordinance 50 of 1828 removed many of the legal restrictions which had been placed on the Khoekhoe under the so-called Caledon Codes of 1809 and 1812, including the carrying of passes. The ordinance was a product of reforming and evangelical influences both at the Cape and in Britain, and attracted a great deal of controversy, both at the time and in subsequent

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 92.
[9] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 341.
[10] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 101.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 101.
[12] *Ibid*.

historiography. It certainly seems to have been widely unpopular among white colonists, who feared that it would deprive them of their labour force[13]. This view came to be accepted by historians sympathetic to the settlers" point of view, such as Cory, who suggested that removing legal restrictions on the Khoekhoe amounted to "abandoning them to the worst enemy they had, namely, themselves"[14]. In contrast, later historians such as W. M. Macmillan came to see the ordinance as a victory over settler racism and illiberalism and a foundation stone of a distinctive Cape "liberal tradition". More recently the significance of the Ordinance has been played down. Newton-King has argued that it was an effort to regularise the labour market in favour of the colonists[15], while Keegan argues that the weakness of the colonial state severely limited the effectiveness of the measures[16].

The rapid and far-reaching changes in the colony in the 1820s did not go uncontested. Governor Somerset (1814-1826) was far more comfortable with the old order and only reluctantly accepted reforms, to which he eventually fell a victim. Somerset is a figure who has attracted a great deal of controversy in South African historiography. He has acquired some staunch supporters, whose works verge on hagiography[17]. Millar, for example, argues that "his high sense of duty and his genuine and unsparing efforts to promote the welfare of the colony were not unworthy in some degree of the great services rendered to England by the Plantagenet line of sovereigns of which he was a direct

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 105.
[14] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 372.
[15] Newton-King, "The Labour Market" in Marks and Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society*, p. 200.
[16] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 104.
[17] See Key, G, "A Critical Study of the Administration of Lord Charles Somerset during the Period 1821 to 1826", (Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1935); Millar, A. K, *Plantagenet at the Cape: Lord Charles Somerset* (Cape Town, 1965); Rivett-Carnac, D, *Hawk's Eye* (Cape Town, 1966).

descendant"[18]. Nevertheless, the antipathy in which he was held by many of the settler elite in the Eastern Cape strongly influenced historians sympathetic to the latter's cause. Cory claimed that he possessed a "despotic disposition" and that the later years of his tenure were characterised by "dissensions, turmoil and arbitrary measures opposed by independence of thought and fearlessness of action"[19]. Hockly, too, suggests he was "autocratic, headstrong and hostile" and that his policy after 1820 was characterised by "petulance"[20]. His opposition to the establishment of a free press in the 1820s, as well as a series of court cases which loom large in Theal and Cory but are described by Macmillan as "almost meaningless wrangles"[21], are seen as especially invidious examples of his authoritarian tendencies. Leaving aside questions of personality, it seems clear that Somerset's background in the eighteenth-century world of aristocratic wealth and privilege did not make him the ideal candidate to oversee extensive liberal reforms in an underdeveloped and semi-bankrupt colony. Peires perhaps is closest to the mark when he argues that it was Somerset's "misfortune to govern the Cape at a time when the new social forces generated in a rapidly industrialising Great Britain engulfed the colony, sweeping aside not only Somerset but the entrenched power of the local oligarchy and the established rhythms of the local economy"[22].

The British settlers, newly arrived at the eastern extremity of the colony, thus found themselves in the midst of considerable change and conflict. Their responses and reactions to these currents, as well as the exact role they played in the reforms that

[18] Millar, *Plantagenet at the Cape*, p. 2.
[19] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, p. 123.
[20] Hockly, *The Story of the British Settlers*, p. 89.
[21] Macmillan, *Cape Colour Question*, p. 66.
[22] Peires, "The British and the Cape", p. 472.

occurred, are a matter of debate. Settler historians have seen the arrival of the "democratically minded settlers" as a key impetus for the reforms of the 1820s[23]. Hockly claims that Somerset‟s polices "roused the opposition and indignation of the settlers to such heights that after four years the British government had to bow to the storm of protest and recall him", implying that the agitations of the settler elite were a direct cause of Somerset‟s recall[24]. Guy Butler argues that even the "humblest settlers" were "imbued with a sturdy independence of spirit", and suggests that "some at least did not find the independent spirit of the Yankees abhorrent"[25]. (He does, however, acknowledge that the settlers‟ role in political change has been "somewhat exaggerated"[26]). The settlers‟ objection, outlined in a memorial to the British government in 1823 (described by Butler as "a sober and impressive document, cool and rational in tone"[27]), to having their "whole interests and prospects committed to the unlimited control of one individual", is regarded as an assertion of democratic rights[28]. The struggle for the freedom of the press in the 1820s, although only peripherally connected with the settlers[29], is seen as an outcome of the demand of free Englishmen for freedom of expression.

Many at the time also considered the settlers to constitute a force for change, and one possibly imbued with democratic ideals. Somerset himself described the settlers as "Radical" and claimed that their "chief object is to oppose and render odious all authority, to magnify all difficulties and to promote and sow the seeds of discontent

[23] Hockly, *The Story of the British Settlers*, p. 82.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[25] Butler, *1820 Settlers*, p. 157.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 233.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[28] Hockly, *The Story of the British Settlers*, p. 101.
[29] One of the main protagonists in this struggle, Thomas Pringle, was an erstwhile settler leader, though he clearly had no ambitions in this direction and spent only a couple of years on his lands.

wherever their baneful influence can extend"[30]. John Philip, initially an ally of the governor but soon to become a champion of the settlers, used similar language:

> The Radicals soon began to murmur at their new situation. With no end to their claims and arrogance, they had their lands assigned to them and were left to ruminate on visionary schemes, and to talk of Cobbett and Hunt and Radicalism in English to the Boers and Hottentots who understand nothing but Dutch[31].

Of course the wealthy settler gentry who led the protests against Somerset were not "radical" at all; in fact, they were strongly conservative. Nevertheless, many seem to have relished the conflict, and gloried in their new-found role as advocates for freedom. Thomas Philipps boasted that he was regarded as a "leader of the opposition" in the settlement. Duncan Campbell, another settler leader, claimed that the Commissioners were cautious in receiving "communications respecting the highest power" and that "there is no one but P…t [sic][32] and myself who will make a direct charge against *him* [Somerset][33]". Despite his courage, Campbell came to exhibit a certain degree of paranoia, asserting that Somerset's regime was a "reign of terror" and requesting that Pringle direct his correspondence to him through a third party[34]. The settler elite showed some aptitude for political organising, enthusiastically arranging public meetings, petitions and memorials. Although there were considerable restraints on public meetings, the settler elite eventually were able to send a memorial to Britain in 1823 outlining their

[30] Quoted in Hockly, *The Story of the British Settlers*, p. 97.
[31] Macmillan, *Cape Colour Question*, p. 111.
[32] i.e. Major Pigot.
[33] Macmillan, *Cape Colour Question*, p. 116.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

grievances[35]. The memorial has been seen as an early assertion of a distinct settler agenda and an adumbration of many of the issues around which settler identity would be constructed in coming decades[36]. After reaching England it was handed to the already-appointed Commissioners of Enquiry, whose departure for the Cape aroused considerable excitement and expectation.

The arrival of the Commissioners of Enquiry in Grahamstown in February 1824, resulted in the so-called "Grahamstown Riot", the somewhat farcical high-water mark of the settler elite"s agitation against Somerset. Although the incipient settlement of Bathurst was briefly a rival, Grahamstown had retained its position as the administrative capital of the area, and became the most convenient centre for political activities. It was thus in Grahamstown that the commissioners investigating the state of the colony were to be based. On the day they were expected to arrive, Philipps "immediately went to Grahamstown and with a few friends had to enjoy the speculations of the good folk as to the movements [of the commissioners]"[37]. When the commissioners eventually did arrive that evening, the town was "illuminated" (a few candles were placed in windows), and shots were fired in celebration – a common practice in the Cape. The echoing of this gunfire alarmed the military, some of whom claimed it was reminiscent of the war of 1819[38]. Soldiers were turned out of the barracks and apprehended a few residents on the assumption that they were a rioting mob. A report after the event suggested that the confusion gave opportunity for Philipps to berate the unpopular Landdrost, H. Rivers,

[35] Hockly, *The Story of the British Settlers*, p. 101.
[36] Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 10.
[37] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 208.
[38] Proceedings of Landdrost and Heemraden, Cape Archives, 1/AY 1/1.

calling him a "big-headed fellow"[39]. He claimed in his correspondence, however, that he had done no such thing[40]. The trouble was not serious, and the military clearly overreacted. They compounded the error by reporting to Cape Town that the disturbance was a "tumult of a most dangerous character", a report which earned the army much contempt[41].

Philipps considered that the riot was a good thing, as it had exposed the "mean underhand arts" and the "despotic measures" which the colonial government resorted to[42]. He, as well as Campbell and Pigot, attempted to impress the commissioners with their grievances. But the settler gentry had interested motives. Although the apparently unrestrained despotism of the colonial government does seem to have genuinely shocked some of them, the extent to which any of them were actually interested in liberal politics should not be exaggerated: few of them would have been voters in the pre-reform parliament, and the vaunted freedoms of expression and assembly were under pressure in Britain itself in the wake of post-war repression[43]. Their protests were "obviously moved by personal interests and grievances rather than questions of principle, or concern for the general good"[44]. In particular, it was the sensitivity of local officials to settler interests rather than concern at the powers they wielded that influenced attitudes towards them. The popularity of the acting governor at the time of the settlers" arrival, Sir Rufane Donkin, was due in large measure to his willingness to dish out extra land grants to the

[39] *Ibid*.
[40] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 209.
[41] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, ii, p. 198.
[42] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 209.
[43] Macmillan, *Cape Colour Question*, p. 4.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

settler elite[45]. He also obligingly appointed some of the settler gentry, such as Philipps, Pigot and Campbell, as *Heemraden*, a gratifying acknowledgement of their feelings of importance in the community. Similarly, the amiable and accommodating landdrost James Jones enjoyed far more popularity than irritable and irascible officials like Captain Trappes, the temporary magistrate at Bathurst, or Jones‟ successor, Henry Rivers. Even the Commissioners of Enquiry were able to win the esteem of the gentry through flattery[46]. The whole government of Albany (and of the Cape generally) at the time was a complex web of patronage and advantage. The letters of Thomas Philipps, who was himself constantly on the lookout for advancement, reveal the shifting alliances of officials and settlers.

By this stage the LMS missionary, John Philip, was a supporter of the settler gentry in Albany, corresponding with the likes of Duncan Campbell, Thomas Philipps, J. C. Chase and Donald Moodie. He was also involved in relief efforts for the "distressed settlers", an attempt to raise money for settlers who had lost capital in unsuccessful farming endeavours. This effort had aroused the suspicion of the governor in regard to its true motivations (he felt that the plight of the settlers was seen as a negative reflection of his administration)[47]. In a letter to Major Pigot, Philip gave a clear idea of the true agenda of the settler gentry. He recommended the forgiveness of debts to the colonial government, the granting of more land, the importation of Khoekhoe labour (albeit under "missionary supervision"), the legalising of trade across the frontier, and the selection of "the local authorities of the district from among the settlers", all matters close to the settler gentry‟s

[45] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 99.
[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 211-213.
[47] Macmillan, *Cape Colour Question*, p. 113.

hearts[48]. In fact, Somerset had already co-opted other less genteel settler leaders as local officials. Fearing to make "Dukes of Bedford" out of the likes of Philipps, he had replaced the gentry as *Heemraden* with more commercially minded and pliable individuals such as W. Cock, H. Crause, W. Currie, and C. Bisset[49]. These came to be labelled by Pringle as the "serviles" (as opposed to the "radicals") but they too were simply pursuing their own interests. Cock in particular was eager to develop the Kowie River as a port to further his trading ambitions, a project Somerset regarded with favour[50]. Although poorer settlers had some grievances against Somerset, the gentry never enjoyed general support. There were always some who found cooperation more advantageous than opposition.

Nevertheless, the gentry did not go unrewarded, and Somerset was able to neutralise their opposition during his visit to Grahamstown in 1825, though his career was already in ruins. Just as the gentry had eagerly sought audience with the Commissioners of Enquiry the previous year, so too did they rush to Grahamstown to gain the ear of Governor Somerset. Small gestures, such as the removal of his hat to a knot of "radicals" in the crowd in Grahamstown to greet his arrival, and invitations to dinners and interviews, soothed the vanity of the gentry[51]. Land grants were awarded and patronage dispensed. Although disappointed in his hope of becoming magistrate of Bathurst, Philipps was gratified by the grant of the farm "Rietfontein", which he had long coveted[52]. Moodie became magistrate of Port Frances, newly named after the wife of Colonel Somerset, the

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[49] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, p. 52.
[50] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 214.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 225. It is notable that Philipps takes to referring to Somerset as "H.E." in his correspondence.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

Governor's son, in a show of gratitude. Duncan Campbell, disappointed and jealous, remarked that Moodie was "mighty timid and shy since he has become a functionary"[53]. Campbell himself had to wait until 1828 to secure the prize of Landdrost of Albany. The Governor's visit left the gentry satisfied, and they subsided into quiescence.

The settler gentry faded from the scene in the late 1820s, either finally making good as farmers or becoming officials in the colonial government. The new elite, centred on the Grahamstown mercantile community and the rising sheep farmers, possessed a very different character and pursued different agendas. Nevertheless, the movements of the early 1820s had both begun the process of the formulation of a distinct identity amongst the British settlers in the Eastern Cape, and established Grahamstown as the centre for white political agitation in the region. The Grahamstown riot in particular revealed the manner in which the town could become a centre for political passions. As Bathurst steadily declined in importance, Grahamstown became the main location of the stormy public meetings of the 1830s. Grahamstown's political importance was also enhanced by its status as the centre of the local administration. Governors and other government visitors tended to base themselves in the town, attracting many seeking patronage and advancement. After 1831 Grahamstown also possessed a prolific press, producing not only influential newspapers such as the *Graham's Town Journal*, but also numerous pamphlets and books on political topics.

Many of the themes which were to become more pronounced in the 1830s had their origin in the 1820s. Above all, there was the notion that the settlers in the Eastern Cape

[53] Macmillan, *Cape Colour Question*, p. 119.

had different needs and priorities to the rest of the colony, and that the colonial government in the west was persistently unsympathetic to reasonable demands. This had had its origins in the sufferings of the white settlers in the early 1820s. Although the long litany of drought, disease and floods which plagued the early agricultural endeavours of the settlement were exaggerated at the time and have since been romanticised by settler historians, it is certainly clear that the first years of the settlement were difficult times, and the seeming lack of sympathy from a government which had placed them in such a predicament in the first place was deeply upsetting to the settlers. In particular, the perceived opposition and contempt of Governor Somerset before 1825 produced a mark lack of trust in the colonial government.

To some extent the lack of sympathy was ascribed to distance: the colonial government could not appreciate the settlers‟ grievances because it was too far from the scene to have a true understanding of the issues. This was expressed as early as the memorial of 1823:

> It has long, and from the most distressing proofs, become evident to the settlers that the colonial government (situated at the opposite extremity of the colony, where every particular, whether of soil and climate, or the constitution, pursuits and interests of society, is totally different) possesses no adequate means of ascertaining their actual wants[54].

The reiteration that Albany was remote from both the colonial and imperial seats of government – the phrase “600 miles from Cape Town and 6 000 miles from London” was

[54] Hockly, *The Story of the British Settlers*, p. 102.

the usual formulation – became a familiar trope in settler propaganda[55]. Twelve years later, for example, Robert Godlonton argued that the distance of the colonial government from the frontier contributed to the outbreak of the 1834-35 war[56]. It also became a key argument for the removal of the capital of the colony to the East, or the division of the colony into two. This "separatist" movement was the attempt by the settlers to gain control of the colonial state. Although it only became a powerful force after the late 1830s, it too was adumbrated in the political agitations of the 1820s.

While the lack of understanding of the western Cape and Britain could be regarded simply as a matter of ignorance, it could also be ascribed to more sinister motives. There was a growing belief in the 1820s, which became almost an obsession after the 1834-35 frontier war, that the whites on the frontier and the settlers in Albany were being deliberately slandered by missionaries, philanthropists and others with similar sympathies. The result of these efforts in the western Cape but above all in Britain was to "blacken the reputation" of the settlers, thus making the British authorities even less sympathetic to settler aspirations. The settlers became embroiled in a political and ideological debate with more liberal elements in Cape Town and Britain. Grahamstown, with its press and increasingly assertive and self-conscious elite, came to play the role of champion of the settlers generally. The interests of the town and the countryside were not always the same, and as we have seen, the diversity within the urban settler community made the extent to which the Grahamstown elite could speak for everyone even in the town itself doubtful. But a broad commonality of aims and attitudes in the east did arise,

[55] E.g. Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks to a Narrative of the Irruption of the KaffirHordes* (Reprint Cape Town, 1965).
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

and the settlers often found it advantageous to bury their differences and rally around Godlonton and other Grahamstown-based propagandists and polemicists.

The debate revolved around the treatment and status of Africans within the colony and relations with those, in particular the amaXhosa, who were on its immediate borders. The 1820s saw the settlers drawn into ever closer relations with the Khoekhoe and the amaXhosa. The rising prosperity of the eastern Cape in general and Grahamstown in particular became ever more dependent on the trans-frontier trade, as well as the labour of the Khoekhoe. The remaining settler farmers‟ turn from agriculture to pastoralism, however, saw increasing conflict over cattle. Invariably characterised as "Kaffir depredations" by the settlers, Xhosa raids became a source of deep grievance. The occasional murder of a Khoekhoe herdsman or white settler added to the bitterness. Certain incidents, such as the murder of two young boys in 1822, are frequently cited by settler historians attempting to illustrate the dire plight of the hapless settlers[57]. As Lester points out, "the British settlers‟ collective exploitation of Khoesan labour *necessarily* raised fears of rebellion and their expropriation of Xhosa land *necessarily* generated anxieties about Xhosa reprisals"[58]. As the settlers became ever more economically dependent on Africans, so too did they develop a feeling that they were beleaguered by hostile forces.

The settlers‟ hostility to the amaXhosa came to be expressed in racial terms during the 1820s, and the conflict between the two communities was ascribed by the settlers to the inherent racial characteristics of the latter – "a kafir and a thief are synonymous" in the

[57] Hockly, *The Story of the British Settlers*, p. 109.
[58] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, p. 46.

words of one frontier farmer[59]. The development of racial prejudice among the British settlers in the Eastern Cape, and indeed in European culture generally, is clearly a complex process. Clifton Crais argues that settler racism was the outcome of "processes first of projection and subsequently of inversion"[60]. He suggests that initially the response of the settler elite towards Africans was a positive one. Such positive feelings were not a result, however, of any merits that Africans themselves might have possessed. Rather, the settlers, largely ignorant of African societies, projected onto Africans what they regarded as their own virtues – "the settler imagined himself in the African"[61]. Subsequently, as frontier conflict became more intense, the settlers came to project their vices rather than their virtues onto Africans. In this situation, Crais argues, "what the British-settler elite „saw" was all that they considered repugnant in their own culture"[62] . Crais is not the only writer to argue that it was the experiences of the settlers after they arrived in the colony that resulted in the development of racial prejudice. A number of writers have pinpointed the mid-1830s, and in particular the war of 1834-35, as the primary cause of settler racism. Butler writes that "Before the war of 1834-35…the settlers showed a willingness to live in amity with the Xhosa, and even assist them if necessary"[63]. Lester, although tracing the roots of settler racism to the 1820s, argues that "it would take other, more emotionally disturbing and more collective experiences [i.e the war], for a general settler discourse of a savage Xhosa „other" to be created"[64]. Before the 1830s, he argues, racism was generally determined by personal experiences. The farmer who had lost cattle to

[59] *Graham's Town Journal*, 13 March 1834.
[60] Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 128.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 129.
[63] Butler, *1820 Settlers*, p. 254.
[64] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, p. 56.

Xhosa raids was far more virulent than the trader dependent on Xhosa customers[65]. Some of the settler writers themselves believed that racial prejudice only developed in the mid-1830s. William Shaw claimed that "up to the period of my departure [in 1833], the prevailing feeling was undoubtedly that of kindness and good will towards [the amaXhosa]"[66]. Even Robert Godlonton asserted that "as the emigrants entertained no prejudices on account of colour, their sable neighbours were treated...with a degree of kindness and attention"[67].

The 1834-35 war was unquestionably a formative experience in the development of settler racism. It is clear, though, that a good deal of racial animosity existed long before the war. Much of this can be ascribed to the experiences of the 1820s. Alan Lester has argued that both the increasing economic dependence on Africans and the rising conflict of that decade led to an increase in race consciousness. As Crais points out, it was no coincidence that negative racial attitudes came to be centred on these very areas of interaction: the "thievishness" of the amaXhosa on colonial property, and the "indolence" of Khoekhoe resisting absorption into the colonial labouring class[68]. In this vein the editor of the *Journal* could write of the amaXhosa in 1832 that "accustomed to arms from their childhood they are taught to consider marauding enterprises as their principal employment"[69]. On another occasion it was asserted that "the Caffres are a most determined set of thieves…so long as they have more to gain by the plunder of the colonists than by leading quiet and peaceable lives, so long will the farmers have to

[65] *Ibid*., p. 56.
[66] Shaw, *The Story of My Mission*, p. 159.
[67] Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks*, p. 131.
[68] Crais, *Making of the Colonial Order*, p. 129.
[69] *Graham's Town Journal* 8 November 1832.

complain of the plunder of their property"[70]. Correspondents to the newspaper expressed even more virulent views. One correspondent wrote of the Khoekhoe:

> The disposition in the Hottentot is to idleness, is a leading feature in his character, and the principal cause of their poverty and distress…I am perfectly aware of the antipathy entertained against the Hottentot, not by one only, but by all; their want of gratitude, their indifference, their idleness, their dishonesty, all of which operate to steel the heart against them[71].

The passage is a revealing one. One can infer from this that racial prejudice was a widespread phenomenon. There is also the idea that the faults supposedly possessed by the Khoekhoe are inherently part of their character – an essentialism which is inherent to racist belief. Similar remarks can also be found regarding the amaXhosa. One correspondent argued in March 1833 that the "character of the Caffre may be summed up in a few words – he is cunning – dishonest – superstitious – and cruel"[72].

However difficult and embittering the early years of the settlement were, it is also true that the settlers did not arrive in the Cape with neutral attitudes about race. Racism was by no means an unknown phenomenon in Britain. On the contrary, Maylam argues, "racist discourse was rife in England, at least from the middle of the eighteenth century"[73]. He goes on to describe the stereotypes which had become familiar to the English, and which were exported to the Cape along with the settlers" other baggage – "Blacks were represented as being innately savage, indolent and stupid; they were

[70] *Graham's Town Journal* 20 June 1833.
[71] *Graham's Town Journal* 8 November 1832.
[72] *Graham's Town Journal*, 6 March 1833.
[73] Maylam, P.R, *South Africa's Racial Past: The History and Historiography of Racism, Segregation, and Apartheid* (Aldershot, 2001), p. 85.

deemed to possess a voracious sexual appetite and the prowess to satisfy it"[74]. Alongside these prejudices, inevitably, seems to have been massive ignorance of Africa and its peoples. The much reproduced Cruikshank cartoon, *Emigration to the Cape of 'Forlorn Hope: All Among the Hottentots Capering Ashore*, was printed in 1819 as a warning to prospective settlers of the dangers they would face in South Africa. It depicted the settlers being devoured by cannibalistic Khoekhoe (as well as ferocious snakes and crocodiles), reflecting both crude assumptions of African savagery and almost total ignorance of Khoekhoe culture. The semi-fictional *Journal of Harry Hastings*, written by John Ayliff, reflects similar ignorance – Harry's mother seems to have believed that all children born in Africa are necessarily black, a point "which seemed greatly to trouble her"[75]. Another settler feared that he would be "scalped by savages" at the Cape[76]. Often settlers seem to have simply lacked familiarity with people of different physical appearance. The young Thomas Stubbs fled in alarm the first time he encountered a Khoekhoe man[77]. Jeremiah Goldswain also found the "otherness" of the Khoekhoe alarming, describing them as "the most dispisable creatours that I ever saw: most of them ware half-nacked having nothing more to cover them with but six or eight sheep skins"[78]. Ignorance could lead to offence even where none was intended. This was particularly noticeable in the use of names. The colonists soon came to realise that the amaXhosa did not refer to themselves as "Caffres". Thomas Philipps[79], Thomas Pringle[80] and Dr Philip[81] all noted that the word was a European invention, and yet all continued to use it. Similar misunderstanding

[74] *Ibid*., p. 86.
[75] Ayliff, *Journal of Harry Hastings*, (Reprint Grahamstown, 1963), p. 33.
[76] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 162.
[77] Maxwell (ed.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 67.
[78] Long (ed.), *Goldswain's Chronicle*, p. 20.
[79] Mostert, *Frontiers*,
[80] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 412.
[81] Philip, *Researches*, i, p. 161.

occasionally arose over the use of the word "Hottentot". Harry Hastings relates a dialogue with a Khoekhoe man in 1820:

> "I say Hottentot, is this berry good for skof?"
>
> The man looked at me very hard and I went right up to him, showing the berry in my hand, and repeated what I had said before, when he said, "Wat for ye call me Hottentot?"
>
> "Well," I said, "you are a Hottentot, ain't you?"
>
> He replied, "Ja ik is, but me don't like to be called Hottentot."
>
> "What," says I, with astonishment, "are you ashamed of your nation?"
>
> He then said, "What would you say if I was to call you Englishman?"
>
> "What would I say?" said I to him, "Why man, I glory in that name!"[82].

Clearly "Hottentot" was already a far from neutral appellation even in the 1820s, but this was lost on the newly arrived Hastings.

As well as ignorance of Africa and its societies, there was a widespread assumption, even among observers basically sympathetic to Africans, of British cultural superiority. This was often combined with a belief in the truth of Christianity and contempt for indigenous African spirituality – as William Shrewsbury put it, the amaXhosa, "while free from idolatry…are slaves to the most debasing fears and superstitions"[83]. The *Journal* was even more scathingly critical of "superstition", which it described as "that bondage in which this land of heathen darkness [i.e. Xhosaland] is cruelly held"[84]. Admittedly

[82] Ayliff, *Journal of Harry Hastings*, p. 48.
[83] Fast (ed.), *Shrewsbury Journal*, p. 36.
[84] *Graham's Town Journal* 24 August 1833.

neither Shrewsbury nor the *Journal* can be considered liberal. But even Dr Philip spoke of "elevating savages and barbarians to a state of civilisation, and cheering them with a hope of the life to come"[85]. Pringle spoke of his land grant on the frontier as a "dark nook of benighted Africa" and stressed that the amaXhosa, although not "savages", were yet "barbarians"[86]. Pringle's assumption of European superiority was curiously reflected in his assessments of physical beauty. He wrote of a young Tswana boy that he was "a model of juvenile beauty" who possessed a "high broad forehead and a nose and mouth [approaching] the European standard"[87]. Similarly, he said of a Tswana woman that she had "features of the most handsome and delicate European mould"[88]. Pringle evidently possessed a strong belief in physiology as a racial marker. He wrote of the amaXhosa that they were "a tall, athletic and handsome race of men, with features often approaching to the European or Asiatic model; and, excepting their woolly hair, exhibiting few of the peculiarities of the negro race"[89]. He was also not immune to the eccentric notions of racial history current at the time:

> In their [amaXhosa] customs and traditions, there seem to be indications of their having sprung, at some remote period, from a people of much higher civilisation than is now exhibited by any of the tribes of Southern Africa; whilst the rite of circumcision, universally practised among them without any vestige of Islamism, and several other traditionary [sic] customs resembling the Levitical rules of purification, would seem to indicate some former connection with a people of Arabian, Hebrew, or, perhaps, Abyssinian lineage[90].

[85] Philip, *Researches*, i, p. vii.
[86] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 135.
[87] *Ibid.*, p. 304.
[88] *Ibid.*, p. 360.
[89] *Ibid.*, p. 413.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 413.

Few of the liberal writers opposed imperialism in itself. On the contrary, most, including Dr Philip, favoured the extension of British rule over Africans, provided it was exercised for the benefit of Africans themselves. It was the *nature* of colonial expansion at the Cape, with its incessant conflict and inexorable land dispossession, which excited their disapproval.

Although liberals held many of the same cultural prejudices as the frontier settlers, they had a radically different understanding of the nature of racial conflict on the frontier. In response to the settler view that Africans were inherently thievish and idle, they argued that it was the colonial environment which discouraged the Khoekhoe from labour and forced the amaXhosa to steal. Inherent in their belief that Africans would be uplifted by European culture and religion was an assumption that a basic equality between races could be possible in the future. John Philip wrote that "so far as my observation extends, it appears to me that the natural capacity of the African is nothing inferior to that of the European"[91]. Kay, too, was sceptical of the settler notion of inherent racial inferiority. "The true character of the African," he wrote, "has been vilely and universally traduced; sometimes from sheer ignorance, - at others from malice; but more frequently, from absolutely mercenary motives"[92].

The belief that it was the colonial system that stymied the redemption of Africa hoped for by the philanthropist resulted in the publication of a number of works sharply critical of the Cape government and colonists. The most significant book describing the plight of

[91] Ross, *John Philip*, p. 95.
[92] Kay, S, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria* (London, 1833), p. vi.

the Khoekhoe was Dr Philip"s *Researches in South Africa*, published in 1828. Philip devoted little attention to the amaXhosa. Their case was more enthusiastically taken up by Thomas Pringle and (more ambivalently) the Methodist missionary, Stephen Kay, as well as by occasional visitors – dismissively described as "the tourists" in the *Journal* [93] - such as Bruce and Saxe Bannister, who published their impressions of the country. They were joined by John Fairbairn, editor of the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, a Cape Town-based paper critical of the frontier colonists and sympathetic to Africans. Fairbairn became a particular *bête noire* of the settlers. These writers listed a long series of injustices perpetuated against the Khoekhoe and the amaXhosa by the colonists. As Philip expressed it, "the growing colony presents on its borders an unbroken line of crimes and blood".[94] Frontier boers were for the most part the main targets of the liberal writers, "ignorant, semi-savage peasants" according to Pringle[95]. Nevertheless, they were clear that injustices were being committed both by the colonial government and the English settlers. They often assumed racial antipathy was a vice the settlers had acquired from the Boers. Dr Philip, for example, wrote that the settlers on their arrival were

> In the habit of expressing themselves in the strongest terms of reprobation against the old colonists for all the atrocities said to have been committed by the Dutch colonists against these oppressed people [i.e. the Khoekhoe]. But, alas! Poor human nature! Many of them had not been three years in Africa, when they imbibed all the feelings of the people whom they had so loudly condemned, and went beyond them in the worst part of their conduct[96].

[93] *Graham's Town Journal* 7 July 1835
[94] Philip, *Researches*, i, p. 2.
[95] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 461.
[96] *Ibid.*, p. 271.

Pringle agreed: "Nor would it be just to represent those feelings towards the natives as confined solely to the Dutch-African population. Some of the British settlers…and not those exclusively of the lower orders, appear to have imbibed…the same inhuman prejudices to the natives of the soil"[97].

The settlers in the eastern province felt threatened by this hostile press, and mobilised to present their own view of frontier relations and the nature of African society. Much of the settler discourse emanated from Grahamstown and its increasingly vociferous press. The first Grahamstown newspaper, the *Graham's Town Journal*, was established partly in response to these pressures. Even before the 1834 war had raised political temperatures in the east, the *Journal* railed continuously against the liberal writers, whom it described as "truly contemptible but pertinacious opponents"[98]. Its tone frequently verged on the hysterical. Of a certain Mr Bruce, a visitor from the Madras civil service who had published critical reflections on the Cape government's frontier policy in 1832, the editor wrote

> [his] nostrums were so spurious that they could only be palmed on the world at the expense of veracity, and the sacrifice of every sentiment which, in decent society, is deemed honourable[99].

Pringle, too, came in for severe criticism for his book published in mid-1834, before the outbreak of the war:

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[97] *Ibid.*, p. 456.
[98] *Graham's Town Journal* 3 March 1836.
[99] *Graham's Town Journal* 20 December 1832.

> We knew from his natural temperament of mind it was impossible for him to write dispassionately…but we never could anticipate that he would have the temerity to risk his reputation by the publication of a production [i.e. *African Sketches*] as mischievous, as partial and as unjustifiable as ever was penned for the purpose of being palmed upon the world as a work of authority[100].

Such denunciations occurred in almost every issue of the *Journal* in the early 1830s, either in editorial comment or from voluminous and bitter correspondence. Even visitors such as Bruce occasioned virulent objections. To local critics, such as Fairbairn or Philip, were ascribed deeply sinister motives. In the aftermath of the war the *Journal* developed an almost paranoid obsession with the settlers‟ liberal opponents, asserting that "the systematic attempt which is now in the making to bring disgrace and ruin on the inhabitants of this frontier would not be credited, were not the proof so irresistibly convincing, and the instances so frequent and striking"[101].

Newspapers were not the only publications churned out in defence of the settlers‟ interests and reputations. Meurant and Godlonton‟s press was soon producing books as well as newspapers, and the Methodists in Grahamstown also established a press for the publication of religious works in isiXhosa, as well as a wide range of missionary memoirs and biographies[102]. Gordon-Brown has identified 48 books and pamphlets published in Grahamstown between 1830 and 1850. Of these, 19 deal with the history, politics and conflicts of the eastern province. Godlonton himself was a particularly prolific writer, producing no less than five works before 1850, three concerning the frontier wars. The most influential of these was the *Narrative of the Irruption of the Kafir*

[100] *Graham's Town Journal* 9 October 1834.
[101] *Graham's Town Journal* 11 February 1836.
[102] Gordon-Brown, A, *The Settlers' Press* (Cape Town, 1979), p. 57.

Hordes, written in 1835 in the last weeks of the war and offering a profoundly different version of frontier conflict to that of the liberal writers. The settlers‟ "struggles to defend their homes and their families against the continued invasions of the natives", wrote Godlonton, had been characterised by the liberal writers as "unjustifiable inroads upon a quiet and comparatively inoffensive people"[103]. The consequences of this were, of course, dire in the extreme. Philip, Pringle and Kay were seen as the primary villains in creating a false impression of the settlers‟ grievances. Godlonton argued that the misrepresentations of the liberals were a direct cause of the war, and jeopardised the possibility of the settlers receiving compensation for the losses. The sufferings of the settlers at the hands of the amaXhosa, without redress and without sympathy in Cape Town or in London, became a key theme in settler propaganda.

While highlighting the injustices and sufferings borne by the settlers, settler propaganda also aimed to encourage immigration to the eastern districts. It offered enthusiastic depictions of the climate, people and economic prospects of the area. Once again, Robert Godlonton was one of the leading writers in this endeavour, both through the columns of the *Journal* and in prospectuses such as *Sketches of the Eastern Districts of the Cape of Good Hope as they are in 1842*[104]. It was asserted in a editorial in the *Journal* that

> The customs which obtain here – the mode of life – and public institutions all savour so strongly of the parent country that an emigrant might be apt to forget that he was not in
>
> His own – his native land[sic[105]]

[103] Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks*, p. 6.
[104] Gordon-Brown, *Settlers' Press*, p. 78.
[105] From a poem by Walter Scott.

> if he were not forcibly reminded of it by the long absence of the tax-gatherer, as well as the train of ills which necessarily spring from a system of poor laws, and the support of a swarm of able bodied paupers[106].

Another enthusiastic settler propagandist, though only a sometime resident of Grahamstown, was J. C. Chase, who perhaps exceeded even Godlonton in his praises of the eastern districts. In his 1843 prospectus, *The Cape of Good Hope and Algoa Bay*, he offered a lyrical description of the province:

> The scenery of this Arcadian county has called forth the unqualified praise of every inhabitant and sojourner. Towards the sea, well grassed and gently undulating meadows are interspersed with park-like scenery. Natural shrubberies, variegated by flowers of a thousand hues, everywhere arrest the attention of the delighted beholder. These elegant prairies are covered by numerous flocks of sleek and healthy cattle, and sprinkled with the cottages of farmers, whose dazzling whiteness pleasingly contrasts with the freshness and brilliancy of the bright verdure. On the north the character of the landscape undergoes a complete and sudden change, passing at once into sublimity. There the bold ranges of the Winterberg, Kat River and Kaffrarian Mountains with their occasional crests of snow and their eternal diadems of hoary frost, stand out in sharp relief against an intensely azure sky, and give a grandeur to the scene not surpassed in any part of the world[107].

The picture of the eastern province, both an ideal destination for potential immigrants, and an unstable frontier unsupported in its efforts to resist the inroads of its savage neighbours, gave much settler propaganda a somewhat schizophrenic nature. However, increasing the settler population was seen to be closely related to security, so no inconsistency seems to have been felt by the propagandists.

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[106] *Graham's Town Journal*, 15 August 1833.
[107] Chase, *The Cape of Good Hope and Algoa Bay*, p. 33.

Both sides in the debate made increasing recourse to history in support of their arguments. Indeed, their contemporary disputes were inseparably tied to different understandings of the historical development of the Cape Colony. Andrew Bank suggests that to the "Great Debate", which occurred between the liberal writers and their enemies, can be traced the origins of South African historiography[108]. Philip's *Researches*, he argues, is the "first written history of the Cape Colony"[109]. Although aiming to highlight the contemporary status of the Khoekhoe, it traces the policies of various colonial governments towards them all the way to 1652[110]. This history, he argued, was characterised by "violent dispossession", "hopeless bondage", and "wrongs and outrages inflicted upon the innocent and defenceless"[111]. Other liberal writers pursued similar themes. Kay and Pringle traced the injustices committed against the amaXhosa, both suggesting, to the chagrin of the settlers, that the frontier wars of 1812 and 1819 were unjust and imprudent[112]. The settler writers stressed the importance of the 1820 settlement, which Godlonton argued was "an important epoch in the history of the Cape of Good Hope"[113]. The settlers responded with their own versions of Cape history centred on the creation of a distinct English community in the east. As early as the first years of the 1820s, both Pringle[114] and Philipps[115] had written historical surveys of the 1820 settlement scheme, largely to draw attention to the hardships of those initial years. Pringle's 1834 *African Sketches* offered a more detailed description of the progress of the

[108] Bank, A, "The Great Debate and the Origins of South African Historiography", *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (1997), p. 262.
[109] *Ibid*., p. 263.
[110] *Ibid*., p. 263.
[111] Quoted *Ibid*., p. 263.
[112] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 215; Kay, *Travels and Researches*, p. 254.
[113] Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks*, p. 1.
[114] Pringle, *African Sketches*, p. 345.
[115] Keppel-Jones (ed.), *Philipps 1820 Settler*, p. 121.

Albany settlement; together with Godlonton's *Irruption* it laid the foundations of the narrative of suffering, endurance and triumph which came to characterise later settler histories. The settler propagandists had an opposite view of frontier policy, arguing that it was in the weakness of the colonial government, rather than its oppressiveness, that the origins of conflict lay. "There can be little hesitation in ascribing most of those deplorable excesses which have been committed on this frontier", wrote Godlonton, "to a vacillating and mistaken policy on the part of the colonial government towards the native tribes"[116]. Another leading settler propagandist, Donald Moodie, compiled a set of official documents, published as *The Record; or a series of official papers relative to the condition and treatment of the native tribes of South Africa*, in defence of the settler view of frontier relations[117]. Moodie, too, worked with documents from the very earliest years of European settlement in South Africa. These histories had a profound impact on later works, and became greatly influential in South African historiography[118]. In the 1830s, though, Godlonton and Moodie felt they were fighting a losing battle, especially as settler aspirations seemed to be betrayed in the wake of the war.

It is clear that the foundations of the "Great Debate" had been laid before 1834. The settlers of the eastern province and their propagandists in Grahamstown already felt threatened by a liberal discourse that questioned the rectitude of frontier relations and seemed to undermine sympathy for the settlers in frontier conflict. Racial feeling was growing in this context, and works of propaganda and history were being produced in defence of the settlers' views. There is no doubt, however, that the war of 1834-35 was a

[116] Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks*, p. 21.
[117] Bank, "The Great Debate", p. 276.
[118] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

profoundly traumatic experience. Grahamstown had experienced war before; indeed, it was founded in the wake of the Xhosa expulsion from the Zuurveld in 1812[119]. In 1819 the settlement was actually attacked and nearly overrun, an experience which, despite the residents‟ apprehensions, was not repeated in 1834[120]. In 1819, however, the town was little more than a straggling military encampment. By 1835 it was the centre of a growing, and increasingly articulate and self-conscious colonial community. Although frontier conflict had been escalating from 1829, and, as Webster points out, the invasion was not really an "irruption" so much as the infiltration of numerous small parties[121], many on the frontier seem to have been taken genuinely by surprise. "It is impossible to describe", claimed the *Journal*, "the state of alarm into which Graham‟s Town and neighbourhood has been thrown in the last week, by the audacious and menacing conduct of the Kafirs"[122]. Most military positions and smaller towns on the colonial side of the frontier, such as Bathurst, were precipitously abandoned. Refugees poured into Grahamstown, and the spectacle of St George‟s Church transformed into a fortress, where "nothing was heard but the din of arms, and the bustle and noise of a guardhouse in times of war", was highly distressing[123]. So too was the glow of burning farmhouses, visible from the town[124]. Local notables, as well as senior military officers, organised a "committee of safety" for the defence of the town[125]. Inevitably, the merchant elite acquired the commissions of the "Grahamstown Municipal Force", a volunteer group of town residents. In the infantry, T.C. White became a major, W. Wright, W.R. Thompson,

[119] Maclennan, *A Proper Degree of Terror*, p. 133.
[120] *Ibid.*, p. 191.
[121] Webster, "Land Expropriation and Labour Extraction", p. 75.
[122] *Graham's Town Journal* 25 December 1834.
[123] Godlonton, *Narrative of the Irruption of the Kaffir Hordes*, p. 30.
[124] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[125] Cory, *Rise of South Africa*, iii, p. 82.

T. Damant and R. Godlonton became captains, and H. B. Rutherfoord, J. D. Norden, P. W. Lucas and L. H. Meurant were lieutenants. C. Griffith, C. Maynard and E. Norton became officers in the cavalry[126]. The effectiveness of this body, however, was open to doubt. Harry Smith described the town on his arrival in January 1835:

> On reaching the barricaded streets, I had the greatest difficulty to ride in…Consternation was depicted on every countenance I met, on some despair, every man carrying a gun, some pistols and swords too. It would have been ludicrous in any situation but mine, but people desponding would not have been prepossessed in my favour by my laughing at them, so I refrained, though very much disposed to do so. I just took a look at the mode adopted to defend Grahamstown. There were all sorts of works, barricades etc., some three deep, and such was the consternation, an alarm, in the dark especially, would have set one half of the people shooting the other[127].

Smith was already casting himself in the role, as one biographer has put it, of "saviour of the eastern province"[128]. His vigorous activity and bluster did restore confidence to the town, and earned him an enduring popularity among the settler community. In any case, the town was never seriously in danger, and the war soon moved into Xhosaland.

The war had highlighted the sometimes divergent aims of colonial Grahamstown and the surrounding countryside, illustrating the limited extent to which the Grahamstown propagandists really spoke for the community at large. J. M. Bowker, a farmer near Bathurst, claimed that "Grahamstown does not suffer with the country"[129] in war, and drew attention to the profiteering which many Grahamstown merchants had engaged in.

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[126] *Graham's Town Journal* 9 January 1835.
[127] Smith, H, *The Autobiography of Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Smith* (London, 1901), ii, p. 17.
[128] Harington, A. L, *Sir Harry Smith – Bungling Hero* (Cape Town, 1980), p. 21.
[129] Bowker, *Speeches and Letters*, p. 241.

He was also critical of the missionaries, the less liberal amongst whom were supported by the largely Methodist Grahamstown elite. "These sentiments I know will not be palatable in Grahamstown", Bowker admitted. "The mission chest, with the military chest, are what they chiefly look up to, and I vouch that the former has done much in keeping the latter among them"[130]. Stubbs, too, thought that if the war profiteers had witnessed the "suffering and distress" of the countryside they would have been less enthusiastic about the benefits of warfare[131]. Nevertheless, the rising awareness that the liberal writers held the settlers largely responsible for the outbreak of the war, and the fear that this view would be transmitted to London, caused both urban and rural settlers to close ranks. Fairbairn gave an indication of the unsympathetic views of the liberals in the early days of the war. The *Journal* resuscitated a remark made by Fairbairn in 1829 describing the frontier settlers as "timid cockney pin-makers who shrink from the bold eye of a natural man"[132]. Similar remarks made in the last issue of 1834 resulted in a huge meeting in Grahamstown where those present undertook to boycott the *Commercial Advertiser* for the duration of the war[133]. The "cockney pin-maker" remark was repeated endlessly by correspondents to the *Journal*, demonstrating their hostility to the liberals, but Fairbairn was unrepentant. In 1836 he described the citizens of Grahamstown as "a set of miserable, selfish, unprincipled slanderers, who have enriched themselves by the Kaffir war, and would like nothing better than to see them [i.e. the amaXhosa] break out again"[134].

[130] Bowker, *Important Papers*, p. 146.
[131] Quoted in Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 71.
[132] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[133] *Graham's Town Journal* 2 January 1835.
[134] *Graham's Town Journal* 13 October 1836.

Fairbairn's attitude was not simply aggravating. It was the potential threat to the settlers' interests should it become generally accepted that concerned the settlers most. In the wake of the war, the eastern settlers craved both security from further conflict, and possession of the fine sheep-farming territory beyond the Fish River. Even before the war these slightly contradictory imperatives had been urged. One correspondent to the *Journal* argued in 1833 that "the nearer the colonists are placed to Caffres, the fewer would be their depredations upon us, and the better we should be able to trace and recover stolen property"[135] – thus squaring an unlikely circle. After the war hunger for Xhosa land was unambiguous. The *Journal* conveniently offered its justification:

> There are two methods by which a nation may extend its territorial possessions, both of which are strictly concordant with reason and justice. The first is by cession – the other is by conquest, arising out of war, commenced on fair and unquestionable principles of right, and prosecuted for the purposes of self-defence or to punish uncalled for or wanton insult and aggression[136].

In Governor D'Urban, the settlers found a champion in this endeavour. The extent to which D'Urban actually sympathised with the settlers is open to question. Tim Keegan argues that D'Urban became, in effect, a "rogue governor", hijacked by settler, rather than imperial, interests[137]. Alan Lester questions this view, arguing that D'Urban's attempts to extend British rule over the Rharhabe Xhosa and make some of their lands available for white settlement was motivated primarily by security concerns, and was

[135] *Graham's Town Journal* 5 September 1833.
[136] *Graham's Town Journal* 13 February 1835.
[137] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 142.

only coincidentally in concordance with settler plans[138]. D'Urban himself was occasionally disparaging of the Grahamstown elite, arguing that "alarm" was an "endemic disease" among them[139]. Whatever the case, the settlers certainly saw D'Urban as an ally, and retained a powerful loyalty and affection for him even after his eventual dismissal in 1838. When D'Urban announced in 1836 that land would be made available in the new province of "Queen Adelaide", as the newly conquered Xhosa territories were named, he received over 400 applicants[140]. These included many Grahamstown businessmen – Wood, Thompson, Nourse, Howse, Cawood, Jarvis, Ogilvie, Lee and others – purely for the purposes of speculation[141]. Even though the continued resistance of the amaXhosa in the area made this impossible, he still promised that at least some farms would be made available for his most loyal supporters.

It was not to be, however. The expense of controlling the new territories was not sanctioned by the colonial secretary, Lord Glenelg, who ordered that the province be abandoned[142]. Instead, a series of treaties were to be entered into with the various Xhosa chiefs along the frontier, and it was these which were to secure the peace and protect colonists from stock theft. All hope of gaining farms in Xhosaland was lost. But there was worse to come; the fears of the settler propagandists seemed to have been realised. The leader of the humanitarians in the British parliament, T. F. Buxton, established a parliamentary committee, known in South African historiography as the "Aborigines' Committee" to investigate the conditions of indigenous peoples in various parts of the

[138] Lester, *Imperial Networks,* p. 52.
[139] Le Cordeur, *Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 76.
[140] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 144.
[141] Le Cordeur, *Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 72.
[142] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 150.

empire. It became, in Keegan‟s words, "an inquisition into the iniquities of border policy towards African people on and beyond the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony"[143]. Many of the leading liberals testified, including Dr Philip. So too did the former Commissioner General of the Eastern Province, Andries Stockenström, soon to join Philip as one of the most detested individuals in Grahamstown. The result was the settlers themselves came to be held accountable for the war – their actions had given the amaXhosa, wrote Glenelg, "ample justification" for their attack on the colony[144]. Not only was it unlikely that the settlers would now acquire any more land, the prospect of any kind of compensation for their losses in the war seemed increasingly remote[145].

These developments were met with outrage in Grahamstown. The mid-1830s saw numerous huge meetings in the town, where white citizens met and gave vent to their grievances. Petitions were drawn up, and signed sometimes by over 700 people, a considerable number in a small community[146]. In early 1836, at "one of the most numerous and respectable" assemblies ever seen, the white townspeople demanded an enquiry "on the spot" into the allegations made by the Aborigines‟ Committee. This became a repeated demand, though considered impossible to comply with by the imperial government. A public meeting convened to send congratulations to Queen Victoria on her accession in 1837 contained further repetition of these concerns, a grave breach of protocol[147]. By then frontier settlers seem had become obsessed by the injustices done to them. This political mobilisation gave added impetus to the separatist programme. The

[143] *Ibid*., p. 149.
[144] *Ibid*., p. 149.
[145] Le Cordeur, *Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 72.
[146] *Ibid*., p. 73.
[147] *Graham's Town Journal*, 12 October 1837.

settlers became ever more eager for a separate authority in the eastern Cape, the better to deal with frontier crises. This desire had already been raised in the 1820s, and had seen partial but inadequate fulfilment in the appointment of Andries Stockenström as Commissioner General in 1828. Stockenström had not been invested with real authority in the eastern districts, and resigned in disgust in 1833[148]. The war impressed on the settlers the urgency of creating a separate government in the east which could better protect their interests. In response to concerns about the cost of two governments in the Cape, Godlonton asserted that "the expense of chastising and repelling the late irruption will amount to a sum equal to the cost of separate government for the eastern province for a period probably of fifty years"[149]. At last the imperial government seemed to agree. A Lieutenant-Governor was to be appointed, announced Glenelg, to be based in Grahamstown rather than a rival town such as Uitenhage. (Separatism was another issue that revealed cracks in the settler consensus in the east – the obvious economic and political advantages to be derived from the presence of a new government were covetously sought after by a number of frontier towns[150]).

The announcement that the position of Lieutenant-Governor was to be given to Stockenström, who had, in the eyes of the settlers, disgraced them before the Aborigines Committee, came as a shock. The *Journal* considered Glenelg's decision to appoint Stockenström, the "immaculate" as Godlonton derisively called him, an "act of consummate folly"[151]. A public meeting was called to oppose his appointment, but

[148] Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 50.
[149] Godlonton, *Introductory Remarks*, p. 75.
[150] Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 74.
[151] *Graham's Town Journal* 28 April 1836.

without success. The citizens of Grahamstown pointedly snubbed Stockenström when he arrived to take up his post in the town. Only two houses were illuminated, including one belonging to A. G. Campbell, one of Stockenström's few supporters in the town. The *Journal* claimed that "a most ominous silence prevailed in the crowd" – by which he seems to have meant the few white spectators, though it was "composed principally of coloured persons, which had assembled to witness his arrival"[152]. All this was in marked contrast to the reception given Harry Smith on his arrival from the now abandoned Province of Queen Adelaide a few weeks later. One hundred white residents of the town rode out to meet Smith, and the streets were lined with (white) spectators to welcome his arrival. That evening, the town was more comprehensively illuminated and a patriotic banquet, another favourite activity in the town, was held. Smith was presented with a silver plate in thanks for his services[153]. The white inhabitants of Grahamstown did not hesitate to show where their political allegiance lay. Having failed to prevent the appointment of Stockenström, yet another public meeting was held to draw up a petition demanding that he explain the evidence he had given to the Aborigines' Committee. This Stockenström declined to accept[154].

The antipathy between Stockenström and the settlers was mutual. The Grahamstown petitioners were "conscientiously mistaken" in their views, he told W. R. Thompson. He would exercise his authority "without thirst for popularity or dread of the contrary"[155]. Stockenström's autobiography gives the impression that he was a man who thrived on

[152] Quoted in Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism,* p. 84.
[153] *Graham's Town Journal*, 22 Septmeber 1836.
[154] *Graham's Town Journal*, 8 Septemebr 1836.
[155] Stockenstrom, A, *Autobiography of Sir Andries Stockenstrom* (London, 1887), ii, p. 52.

opposition[156]. The settlers were able, though, to harass Stockenström until his position became untenable. As J. M. Bowker expressed it, "we upset him, bothered him from the first, and made him down right savage and careless"[157]. Godlonton took the lead in this assault through the columns of the *Journal*. He was joined by Grahamstown"s resident artist, Frederick I"Ons, who drew a series of cartoons highly insulting to Stockenström[158]. These were obligingly published by Godlonton. The most damaging attack was made by the Civil Commissioner, Duncan Campbell, who precipitated one of the Cape Colony"s more infamous court cases. Campbell began to collect dubious evidence purporting to show that Stockenström had killed a Xhosa youth in cold blood on a commando in 1813. Stockenström insisted on an enquiry to clear his name, which it duly did. Not content with this outcome, though, he also sued Campbell for libel. This application was lost. Campbell"s acquittal was received with jubilation in Grahamstown, some of whose citizens lit bonfires on the surrounding hills[159]. Stockenström himself claimed to have been unaffected by this expression of hostility. He told friends that

> These wretches believe themselves very clever. The plot was well arranged, every item regularly entered, except one, which they never thought of, and which must turn the balance against them. They make no allowance for the existence of a God[160].

The consolation of faith was not sufficient in the end. In 1839 he left for England to defend his reputation, and subsequently resigned. He was replaced by Colonel John Hare.

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[156] Whether this should be ascribed to the "inborn „chip" that every Afrikaner carries to this day", as one biographer has alleged, is perhaps debateable". Dracopoli, J, *Sir Andries Stockenstrom 1792 – 1864* (Cape Town, 1969), p. 126.
[157] *Ibid*., p. 128.
[158] Redgrave and Bradlow, *Frederick I'Ons*, 72-73.
[159] Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 95.
[160] Stockenstrom, *Autobiography*, ii, p. 182.

Although more personally acceptable to the settlers, Hare was still an appointment from London, and as such answerable to imperial rather than settler interests. Despite the failure of the Grahamstown elite to gain control of the local state, they were at least successful in gaining a substantial measure of autonomy for the town itself. The landdrosts and civil commissioners had been appointed by the central government in Cape Town. By the 1830s, however, the increasing complexity of local affairs, as well as the perennial desire for economy, had prompted the colonial government to grant towns the right to elect municipal commissioners to control local government. The ordinance establishing Grahamstown as a municipality was passed in 1837[161]. The right to vote was restricted to those who occupied a property or paid rent of £10 per year; to be elected a candidate had to possess at least £300 of property in the town. Inevitably the control of the municipal government fell to the mercantile elite. Of the 48 men who held office as municipal commissioner between 1837 and 1862, nearly half were wealthy merchants. The first seven commissioners were all prominent businessmen in Grahamstown: W.R. Thompson, G. Jarvis, P.W. Lucas, W. Shepherd, T. Hewson, B. Norden and G. Gilbert[162].

Securing control of the government of the town was one of a number of satisfactory developments for the Grahamstown elite from the late 1830s. Stockenström resigned, defeated, in 1839. One of his few supporters in the town, A. G. Campbell, attempted an opposition paper to the *Journal*, soon to be known as *The Cape Frontier Times*. An early

[161] Hunt, "The Development of Municpal Government", p. 16.
[162] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

editorial tried to stake out its own ground against the "editorial despotism"[163] of the *Journal*:

> We…beg to caution [the editor of the *Journal*] against supposing that similarity of purpose involves identity of means, or that we shall be less than himself the staunch friend of the British settler, or labour the less assiduously to promote the security, well-being and improvement of all classes around us, because we may not advocate his views, echo his statements, and deem ourselves sufficiently honoured in being permitted to steer our course according to the chart which he so condescendingly puts into our hands[164].

The paper's defence of Stockenström met with a hostile reception. In any case, much of the content was frequently indistinguishable from the *Journal* despite the editor's protestations. He wrote of the "continued utter barbarism of the border Kaffir tribes", and bemoaned that "the want of labour will continue to be felt by us, so long as the native labouring classes continue to lead the immoral, depraved and indolent course they are now following"[165]. The paper failed to prosper, and ceased publication in 1845. Godlonton continued to reign supreme.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the inception of the 1820 settlement scheme offered an opportunity for communal self-congratulation. The development of a distinct settler identity continued in the years after the war. History, propaganda, and a sense of racial exclusiveness contributed to this development. Connected with the establishment of a distinct history of the settlement was an environmental narrative of taming and

[163] *Cape Frontier Times*, 5 February 1840.
[164] *Cape Frontier Times*, 20 May 1840.
[165] *Cape Frontier Times*, 23 April 1840.

familiarising the hostile African landscape[166]. The interaction of these different themes in creating the settler identity has been well documented by Alan Lester[167]. One incidental but interesting point to note is the changing connotations of the word "settler" itself, and the way in which it, rather than any other term, came to be the preferred term of self-description among the British immigrants in the eastern Cape. In the early 1820s, the word was used in a disparaging sense as often as in a complimentary one. Early memorialists noted the jokes made at the expense of "Englis setlars" [sic] by Khoekhoe and boers[168]. Credit was notoriously withheld from settlers at auctions in Grahamstown in the early 1820s. As late as 1832 the *Journal* reported the court case of an altercation between a white labourer and a slave. In response to being called a "slave" in a way intended to cause offence, the man replied "if I am a slave, you are a settler". The insult was apparently so provoking that the white labourer proceeded to assault the slave[169]. The *nommes de plume* of correspondents to the *Journal* offered a variety of different terms which the immigrants used to denote themselves: "A Townsman", "Anglo-Africanus", "A Colonist", "An Inhabitant" were all used before 1834 as well as "Settler". A series of bitter letters in the wake of the war seems to demonstrate the increasing preference for the latter designation: "An English Settler", "Another English Settler", "Also an English Settler", "A Plundered English Settler" and "A British Settler of 1820" all aired their views in the *Journal*"s columns. The last phrase also indicates the increasing mythologizing of the 1820 settlers as opposed to other immigrants who arrived in a steady trickle over the decades. In a public address in 1836, L. Norton noted that "he was

[166] Lester, A, "Reformulating Identities: British Settlers in Early Nineteenth-Century South Africa", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, Vol. 23, No. 4, (1998), p. 526.
[167] Lester, *Imperial Networks*, pp.
[168] Ayliff, *Journal of Harry Hastings*, pp. 52-55.
[169] *Graham's Town Journal* 13 January 1832.

not a settler, but from all he had seen of them, he should have been proud to be one". One of the organisers of the anniversary celebrations claimed that although not a "British Settler in the literal acceptation of the term", as a son of one he could still claim a role in the celebrations[170].

The anniversary celebrations marked the "self-conscious beginning of the cult of the 1820 settlers"[171]. The settlers made protestations of loyalty and affection for their "beloved Fatherland"[172], and made it clear that they still considered themselves part of a wider British culture and society. As Godlonton put it, "the lapse of 24 years has not been sufficient to break the link which unites him to his Fatherland"[173]. But a specific identity was also apparent, underlined by the narrative of suffering and triumph which had come to be the popular perception of the settlement"s history. Godlonton wrote of the descendants of the settlers building on the "national foundation" that their forebears had laid[174]. Celebrations were held in Port Elizabeth and Bathurst as well as Grahamstown, but it was at the latter, with its self-conscious sense of being the settler capital, that the main commemoration took place. The extent to which the city of Grahamstown had become associated with the settlers can be seen in the suggestion of one correspondent to the *Journal* for a fitting monument:

> A square basement or pedestal, with a fluted column of the Ionic order of architecture resting on it…the whole to be surmounted by

[170] Quoted in Godlonton, R, *Memorials of the British Settlers of South Africa* (Grahamstown, 1844), p. xxiii.
[171] McGinn, M, "J. C. Chase: 1820 Settler and Servant of the Colony" (Unpublished MA Thesis, Rhodes University, 1975), p. 56.
[172] Godlonton, *Memorials*, p. vi.
[173] *Ibid.*, p. vii.
[174] *Ibid.*, p. xv.

> a handsome balustrade, capped with a full length marble or bronze figure of Col. Graham, the founder of this town, to be enclosed by iron pallisading, bearing say from four to six lamps, to be lighted up every night at the expense of the corporation of Graham's Town[175].

Graham, of course, had had nothing to do with any of the settlers. Such a project was evidently impractical in any case.

Shaw was given use of St George's Church, which was "filled to overflowing" with people eager to hear his sermon. Shaw celebrated the success of the "great temporal blessings bestowed upon us as a people by the good Providence of GOD"[176]. After the service the crowd moved to Somerset's estate at Oatlands, were five hundred children sang "God Save the Queen". Families and small groups then scattered settled among the trees for a picnic, and were entertained by military bands[177]. For those privileged enough to acquire a ticket, a dinner was held in the evening, presided over by the now elderly Thomas Philipps[178]. Patriotic and self-congratulatory toasts were made. The evening was marred by Thomas Stubbs, who had a somewhat jaded view of the whole proceedings – "a lot of men that had come out as settlers with but very scanty means had somehow or other managed to fill their coffers, [and] took it into their heads to have a rejoicing"[179]. He imagined that the celebrations understated the sufferings of the settlers. Shaw's speech he estimated as being "all upon the golden side" – a surprising appraisal since Shaw had characterised the adversities of the early 1820s as "a stroke of punitive justice for our sins, - or perhaps [a] mercy as a measure of discipline to prepare us for better

[175] *Ibid.*, p. xxv.
[176] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[177] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[178] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[179] Maxwell (ed.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 137.

course and higher enjoyments"[180]. It was Somerset's speech, though, claiming that the government had done all in its power to protect the settlers in 1834 that pushed Stubbs's patience to the limit. He called out to Somerset that it was a "damned lie" and threw a glass of brandy in face of the justice of the peace who tried to restrain him. There followed a general clamour while Stubbs outlined the grievances of the settlers, and his supporters broke off chair legs to use in his defence[181]. The organisers regretted this pandemonium, and published "a resolution in reprehension of conduct at once so unbecoming and ungenerous"[182]. So the settlers still had their differences, inevitable in a town never as homogeneous as its supporters liked to believe. But, as Alan Lester points out, the significance of Stubbs's outburst should not be exaggerated; he too shared in the identity generated by the settler propagandists.

The arrival of a new governor, Peregrine Maitland, provided further cause for satisfaction. The unimaginative Napier, D'Urban's successor, had not been popular. Maitland abrogated the hated treaties with the Xhosa, allowing for a resumption of commando raids across the frontier[183]. The *Journal* lauded this act:

> For this happy result, the inhabitants are indebted to His Excellency Sir Peregrine Maitland; and who by this act of good policy and justice, will inspire the minds of the people of this frontier that reliance upon the independence and integrity of his administration, which cannot fail to have the most powerful and beneficial effect upon the public interest[184].

[180] Godlonton, *Memorials*, p. 12.
[181] Maxwell (ed.), *Stubbs's Reminiscences*, p. 138.
[182] Godlonton, *Memorials*, p. 38.
[183] Keegan, *Colonial South Africa*, p. 215.
[184] *Graham's Town Journal* 26 September 1844.

So popular was Maitland that he became a fashion icon – a "Maitland hat" was soon available at the store of B. M. Shepperson[185].

The 1840s were a period of confidence and self-satisfaction for many of the Grahamstown settlers, especially the elite. Prosperity soon returned after the 1834-35 war and trade was booming. Not only had the devastation of the war been overcome, but the settlers could look back at their triumph over the adversities of the 1820s. What these experiences had achieved was the creation of a group identity among the British settlers in Albany, which could transcend the many divisions among them in times of necessity. This identity was fostered through newspapers, books and various celebrations and commemorations, mostly centred in Grahamstown itself. The elite of the town had a dominant voice in the politics of the east, and looked forward to greater influence in the colony as a whole. The time was coming, they believed, when the eastern part of the colony would win greater autonomy from the west, and they were well placed to take advantage of the political and economic benefits which would result. Grahamstown seemed destined for ever greater success.

[185] *Graham's Town Journal* 17 October 1844.

CONCLUSION

The praise heaped upon Maitland was unmerited. The abrogation of the treaties with the Xhosa chiefs intensified the growing tension on the frontier, and war soon followed in 1846. Despite brief periods of respite, this conflict extended into the mid-1850s. The seventh and eighth frontier wars resulted in significant change on the eastern frontier. British rule was again extended to the Kei, this time for good. The tremendous suffering endured by the amaXhosa in the wars contributed to the "cattle- killing" movement of 1856-57, an event which considerably contributed to the establishment of British colonial hegemony over the Rharhabe Xhosa[1]. In the wake of these conflicts, Grahamstown seemed initially to have reached its apotheosis. The self-confident capital of the east in the 1850s the town saw substantial development. New schools were established, such as St Andrew"s College in 1855 and St Aidan"s in 1858[2]. The town acquired a bishop in 1853[3], and cultural opportunities were broadened by the establishment of a museum and botanical gardens[4]. The town became the seat of the eastern districts court, enhancing its administrative importance. The 1850s represented the high-water mark of the separatist movement, which agitated for a division of the colony and the creation of a new capital in the east. The elite of Grahamstown naturally hoped that their town should enjoy the prestige, as well as the commercial benefits, which would accrue from a new administration[5].

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[1] Peires, J, *The Dead will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7* (Johannesburg, 1989), p. 53.
[2] Hunt, "Municipal Government", p. 136.
[3] Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 286.
[4] Hunt, "Municipal Government", p. 136.
[5] Le Cordeur, *The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism*, p. 286.

After the 1850s the town began to decline in importance. The 1860s were a period of drought and depression for the Cape Colony, and the economy of the town stagnated. The extension of the frontier to the east harmed Grahamstown‟s economy – new settlements such as Queenstown and King William‟s Town became commercial rivals. The army, that perennial source of commercial opportunity for the Grahamstown merchants, was relocated to King William‟s Town once and for all in 1870[6]. Meanwhile, the structure of the Cape‟s economy was changing. The midlands around Graaff-Reinet, rather than Albany, became the main wool-producing region, and farmers preferred to bypass the Grahamstown wool brokers in favour of the rapidly expanding city of Port Elizabeth. The decision to bypass Grahamstown on the railway line between Port Elizabeth and the interior partly reflected this loss of importance. The route of the railway owed more, however, to a much more fundamental shift in South Africa‟s economy. The development of the diamond fields in Kimberley marked the beginning of the "Mineral Revolution", which shifted the economic centre of gravity northwards and left the eastern Cape an economic backwater. Grahamstown declined from the second city of the country to a "dorp" of little importance.

The subjugation of the amaXhosa and the decline in strategic and economic importance of the eastern frontier was bound to impact negatively on Grahamstown. Its development, its prosperity and its political importance were all dependent on the location of the town. The economy of the town was heavily dependent on frontier trade – there is little reason to believe that the spectacular growth that occurred between the 1820s and the 1840s

[6] Gibbens, "Two Decades in the Life of a City", p. 60.

could have been achieved in any other way. The necessity of maintaining a large military presence on the frontier brought further economic opportunities, especially in war time, but these disappeared as soon as the colonial conquest of the amaXhosa was complete. There was little industrial development in the town, and it was only in education in the twentieth century that Grahamstown found another economic mainstay.

Meanwhile a distinctive society and culture had arisen in the town. Large numbers of British settlers arrived in the region, especially after 1820. These came to form a self-consciously distinct portion of the white colonial population. Grahamstown was the main urban area for these settlers, and as late as the 1840s, white settlers still constituted nearly four-fifths of the town‟s population. These settlers attempted to recreate as nearly as possible the environment and culture of Britain. This was reflected in the physical landscape of the town, whose architecture was often an imitation of British forms. But even more mundane, every-day activities reflected this desire. The settlers consumed huge quantities of British manufactured goods, wore English clothing, read English books and magazines, and ate English food as nearly as possible. Recreational opportunities in the town reinforced a sense of Englishness. Attending church or public lectures gave the settlers a sense of belonging to a wider British public. The school curricula conceded little to the peculiarities of the settlers‟ South African situation. Rather, they aimed to offer a "sound English education", as Heavyside put it. The settlers eagerly participated in rituals of loyalty to Britain, such as celebrating the sovereign‟s birthday. As the *Journal* expressed it, "in devoted attachment to the land of their

forefathers we hesitate not to say that there are no people on earth who surpass the British settlers of Albany"[7].

The attempt to create an "England in miniature" was a failure. Despite the dominance of the white settlers, Grahamstown"s population became considerably diversified, acquiring a significant African population by the mid-1840s. Racial tension and division were intense in the town, and the settlers soon developed strong racial prejudices. For the white settlers, the importance of Africans to the economy of the town conflicted with their fear and hostility towards an urban African presence. The result was a compromise, and a failure. Africans settled in the town, but were not granted the same rights and privileges of citizenship that whites enjoyed. The segregation of Africans into impoverished townships from as early as the 1820s was a powerful symbol of this unequal status. But although Africans were incorporated as an unequal and oppressed colonial labouring class, they should not been seen merely as passive victims. Many, such as the Khoekhoe after 1828 and the Mfengu in 1834, genuinely believed that moving to town could offer better opportunities in colonial society. Probably this was the case for many; dire as conditions in the township could be, servitude to white farmers could hardly have been a more appealing option. Africans made efforts to resist their unequal incorporation. Sometimes this found formal expression, such as the demonstration of Mfengu labourers demanding higher wages in 1840. More often it was manifested through go-slows, vandalism, absconding and "insolence", as the court records abundantly reveal. Africans as well as white settlers attempted to recreate familiar forms and practices in the town. This can be seen in the continuing importance of circumcision and other social rituals

[7] *Graham's Town Journal*, 7 April 1836.

among urban Africans, as well as the attempt to maintain traditional dress and architectural forms, often in the face of settler oppostion.

The conflict within the town and across the frontier had a major impact on the mindset of the white community. Increasingly insecure in their alien colonial context, yet also economically dependent on the African communities they feared and despised, the settlers in the eastern Cape came to see themselves as a distinct colonial community, with needs and priorities differing from those of the rest of the colony. Grahamstown played a key role in this development of a new "English settler" identity. Whether or not the settlers came to see themselves as "English South Africans" is perhaps debateable. But the white settlers in the east did develop a strong group identity, and this took them ever further from their desired self-image of a typically English community.

The extensive interaction and conflict of the nineteenth-century frontier radically changed the societies involved, white and black. Grahamstown offers a microcosm of this process. Inhabited by people of diverse origins, the town was characterised by economic cooperation and cultural conflict. English settlers, Khoekhoe, amaXhosa and other Africans all attempted to create spaces in the town which best accorded to their beliefs, practices and aspirations. Power was unequally distributed in Cape society, but despite the advantages enjoyed by the white settlers, they were not able to attain the political, cultural and economic dominance they desired. They, as much as everyone else, had to compromise in the face of unique frontier conditions. The result was a new, distinctively South African society.

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