

MAKHOSI
MAHLANGU

OUR FOOD, OUR HERITAGE, OUR FUTURE
Traditional African Cooking

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BY MAKHOSI MAHLANGU

**WITH PATHISA NYATHI, DELTA MBONISI SIVALO, SARAH SAVORY,
ROGER COIANIZ AND CHEF NJATHI KABUI**

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PREFACE

Chef Njathi Kabui

I have lived in the west for three decades now and I have seen many changes during that period. Yet there are things that have remained consistent. One of those things is the soft spot that all Africans have for their motherland. Having been born in Kenya, and considering that I moved to America as a young man, I have to admit that my sentiments towards Africa were anything but strong. The strongest and most conspicuous idea of an African world view was springing from Bob Marley's song, Zimbabwe. As most young men growing up in the seventies and eighties, this song might as well have been our unspoken national anthem. There were many ideas why the song had such great appeal and the message so timeless. Jamaica was a small Caribbean island but the history of its people's desire to connect with the motherland was unparalleled. The long desire for freedom and for self-actualization as African was explicit and heavily enshrined in the music and religious expression of this group of African in the Diaspora. This is one accomplishment that few other Africans in different regions were able to do, at least to the same degree. The more impressive thing about that obstinate commitment for Jamaicans to strengthen their connection with the motherland facilitated their creation of a spiritual system that enshrined a consciousness to the some of the masses of Jamaicans. It is commendable that this spirit of an African consciousness has been spread from this island to all parts of the world, including Africa itself. Today, the largest group of Rastafarians is found not in Jamaica but in South Africa.

Reggae music and the attendant religious expression are known and admired all over the world. There are a few other types of music that are as easily recognizable across generations.

But one of the things that is of great interest here is that Jamaicans have also shared food of resistance that matches that dub music. The Jamaicans have not just done something different but do it well. Ital food is a recognizable brand that is based on a specific cultural experience of Africans in the Diaspora. This culture has been rather specific and unapologetic about its connections to Africa and the need for freedom to repatriate back to Africa. For this reason I am most respectful for the role that Reggae music played in planting a seed of revolutionary thinking in my head. I obviously did not know this during the young days. I was just singing along to what was the fad during those formative years. What I did not know at the time is that my love for Reggae music was simply a foundation of a bigger thing to come. As fate would have it, a young brother from the Caribbean island of Jamaica would be just a conduit for me to get in touch with my African self. During the same time I was jamming Reggae music from my one room that my brother and I shared in the village home, our oldest brother was dancing to a different tune. He was jamming some fat sounds

that were distinctively African, but with a futuristic twist. I loved the music but did not bother to learn much about it. All I knew is that my brother and his best friends were crazy about the musician they called Fela Kuti.



Fela Kuti. Photo credit: The Guardian

Fela Kuti, or simply Fela, was a Nigerian multi-instrumentalist, musician, composer, pioneer of the Afrobeat music genre and human rights activist.

Fast forward to about a decade later when I came to the U.S and the Fela Kuti's bug bit me again. I had started to read more about activism and to expand my repertoire of Black music, especially music that pertained to resistance. It turned out that no other musician and activist could match what Fela had done. Fela story also mirrored my own. He was rather ignorant and unaware of the deep struggle for Africans that affected even his own people in Nigeria. The thing that changed his perception was the introduction to the Black Panthers work in Oakland California by his then girlfriend, Sandra Isadore. Fela Kuti's life changed forever. He became more conscious about the struggle for African liberation. Even his music changed. He now focused on addressing the social issues that the country was facing. He criticised the Nigerian government for corruption and failure to serve the people. Fela was neither fearful nor just interested in making money. He spoke openly and no amount of intimidation would deter him from fighting for justice.

When I finished culinary school, I understood that food should have been the first chapter of any revolutionary movement towards decolonization or slavery. I became very clear from my research that food had been a key, though subtle, weapon in the process of colonizing or enslaving any group of people. It makes sense then, that to be fully liberated, African food had to be liberated. It did not take much though for me to realize that I had to come up with my own cuisine as a first step towards decolonizing our food. I named my cuisine Afro Futuristic Conscious Cuisine. Fela Kuti called his genre of music Afro Beat. Since I had so much respect for the work and spirit in which Kuti, did his work, I decided to continue with that spirit in the culinary world. It is from that idea that I came with the name. The kind of food I prepare is deeply rooted in freedom and based on the African struggle.

Following his new found awareness, Fela Kuti changed his name to Anikulapo, which means that he had captured death in his pouch or rather that he would never die. Whatever I may think about the idea of capturing death in one's pouch, one thing is for sure: we must regain our food sovereignty or we will certainly die. Africa is waking up to the new consciousness of food liberation. Our indigenous food have to be the base of the futuristic food that will cast us into the future. As Africans were commemorating the 400 years anniversary since the first African was brought to America as a slave, Ghana was initiating the year of return for those Africans in the Diaspora who wanted to return. It would be a great Renaissance for this to be the century of return to our food consciousness. Our food is our heritage and there is no future in Africa without liberating food. The kind of food that most of the Africans are consuming today is enslaved food and it can only lead to sickness and continued colonization.



The Black Panther Party. The Black Panther Party wanted education that taught true history and had an influence on Fela Kuti.

Photo credit: Black Past

Since Africa is fondly referred to as the Motherland all over the globe, food must be viewed as the fatherland. That would make Africans complete. Having a mother without a father does not make us a complete family. We are acutely aware that the process of colonization and enslavement, at its heart, if at all it had one, was the breakup of the African family. Hence my focus in food is deeply tied to fatherhood and freedom. Those three things are all connected to our indigenous food as we bring about a new rebirth of freedom on the continent.

This would mark a great step towards dealing with all the food related health problems whose main cause is our failure to understand that our food is colonized. Liberated food will nurture liberated minds and hence a liberated Africa. The struggle for land in Africa would be meaningless if that land cannot feed Africans indigenous healthy and sustainable foods. How healthy and the degree of food security are the highest marks of our degree of liberation.



Typical African cooking on an open fire



Africa could be the leader of future food trends if only they adopt and promote their own local foods (Photo credit: <https://imgbin.com/>)



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When I came back from Europe, I met Voti Thebe who was then the Director of the Art Gallery. We spoke a lot about my food experience in Italy, which became the climax of what would be a life changing conversation... he told me that it was imperative that we document and promote our own food culture. He called me the next day to his office and gave me a book that would be the blue print to the development of this culinary book. The book was written by one of my grandmother's friends D.N Ndlovu and entitled Ukudla Kwesintu. The moment I received that book I knew we were onto something big. That is redefining African food. I would also like to thank the following individuals for their tremendous efforts in fulfilling of this project:

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Our Food, Our Heritage, Our Future



A typical traditional Ndebele kitchen in Matopos, Zimbabwe. (Photo credit: Amagugu Publishers)

Introduction

OUR FOOD, OUR HERITAGE, OUR FUTURE

(Makhosi Mahlangu and Delta Mbonisi Sivalo)

As Michelin Star Chef Heston Blumenthal puts it ‘Question Everything’. The major questions, that we often ask ourselves, which inspired the penning of this book, focus on knowing more about our history and heritage. Questions around who we are as a people, where we come from (our ancestry), what our forefathers used to eat, why we are obsessed with materialism, our role in the modern food chain and how can we preserve our food culture. These questions cannot be understood without considering what constitutes happiness in our lives, our goals and objectives in developing the African food industry in addressing food insecurity in Africa. More inquisitively, in our heads, we hope answering these question can help revolutionize African culinary discourse and practice by envisioning what future African restaurants will look like and how we can make African food a global craze without importing food ideas. These are some of the crazy questions we often ask ourselves. Some of the answers to these questions lie within great individuals who have kept local traditions in African villages such as our grandparents, historians, and village elders.

To move forward we need to go re-trace our roots to find out what our forefathers ate to keep themselves healthy and to survive in lean times, in most cases without the use of money and the development of the supermarket. The question is ‘How did they do it?’ This book looks at traditional/indigenous foods from a Ndebele cultural perspective. In doing this, there is need to learn the primary production systems, fruit and vegetable processing methods, milk processing and other typologies of foods consumed by these people. This journey goes back into time highlighting our quest to develop new food culinary trends. Food involves all senses from taste, to sound, to sight, to feelings (touch and smell). A combination of nostalgic effects can evoke positive or negative emotions and food has that effect on people. In our food journey, we have found friends who no longer eat certain foods due to the overconsumption of that specific food for instance LACTO which is a fermented milk product in Zimbabwe. As food scientists and chefs we are developing new gastronomic African cuisines which embrace technology and history with a futuristic eye.



World renowned Chef Heston Blumenthal (Photo credit: Andrew Crowley)

Heston Blumenthal states that the future of food will embrace emotion, feeling, human connectivity, nostalgia, storytelling, and water. We as Africans feel the same way as commensality has been practiced as an eating tradition for centuries in Africa. This brings about the point of human connectivity. The emotions and nostalgia could be enhanced using new recipe formulations which are attached to the good family eating habits rather than the tough daunting tasks associated with producing the food. A lot of food stories have still not been fully exploited and told in Africa, as most are still hidden as oral stories in the minds of our grandmothers. The future of African food will embrace all these elements and create a new food industry which embraces the spirit of UBUNTU, sustainable harvesting, and basic food processing techniques. Our African villages remain the main source of food information in Africa and still this rich source of food literature remains underutilized. This book brings science, human determinism, intuition, food artistry, history, and technology into one pot to develop future food production systems using locally based resources and techniques.



Ubuntu is a Nguni Bantu term meaning “humanity.” It is often translated as “I am because we are,” or “humanity towards others,” or in Nguni, “umntu ngumntu ngabantu

CHAPTER 1

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NDEBELE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE

Pathisa Nyathi

Mnguni had four sons Xhosa, Luzumani, Ndebele and Mswati who were the founders of the Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele and Swazi nations respectively

Introduction

Whereas this book is largely concerned with the culinary traditions of the Ndebele people of Zimbabwe, a rendition of their history is pertinent for a better understanding and appreciation of their culinary traditions as will become apparent in Chapter 2. Ndebele speaking people occupy the south western part of Zimbabwe where they have been domiciled since their arrival from KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) in about 1839 under the leadership of their founding King Mzilikazi kaMatshobana who is thought to have been born in the 1790s. It is their origins in KZN that help to explain similarities between their culinary traditions and those of the Zulu and other Nguni peoples found in the south eastern seaboard of what today is known as South Africa. Theirs was a long trek that commenced in about 1820 and ended in 1839 when they settled in present day Zimbabwe.

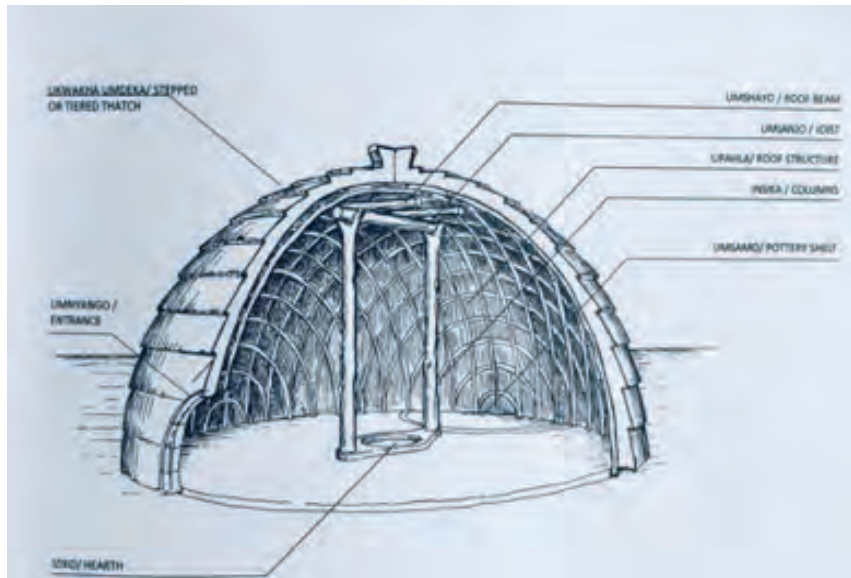


It is generally recognized that a people's cuisine is a function of their culture, history, worldview and critical beliefs, cosmology, and the defining natural environment. As we render the narrative of Ndebele history, our attention is drawn, in particular, to the links between their historical origins and culinary traditions. There was what was distinctly Nguni culture with its attendant ideas concerning food, related cultural expressions and reflections of that culture in what they ate, how they prepared their food, how food was served and in some instances, culture informed and underpinned their culinary traditions. This is apparently the case with regard to other peoples of the world. When archaeological excavations were undertaken at Old Bulawayo in the 1990s, it came as no surprise when faunal remains that were unearthed

Sculpture of King Mzilikazi the founder of the Ndebele nation

(Photo credit: http://www.artparks.co.uk/artpark_sculpture.php?sculpture=6890&sculptor=michael_j_mawdsley&src=pinterest)

did not include fish bones or indeed any bones of water animals. Instead, there were several bones of bovine specimens which constituted an important part of Nguni diet; from milk, to meat and blood products.



Old Bulawayo with the classic traditional huts called amaqungwana (Photo credit: John Knight/Amagugu Publishers)

Culinary arts, alongside architecture, visual arts, performing arts, sculpture, ritual and ceremonial expressions, festivals, folktales and proverbs express a people's culture, in particular their thought, beliefs and worldview which underpin them. As will be pointed out in Chapter 2, food is much more than mere nutritional content. It goes beyond its nutritional value to express essential fundamentals of a people's culture. Why do the Ndebele consume their food in age and gender defined groups? Why is meat picked in some pecking order based on chronological age? By just observing the culinary traditions we get to know a lot about the Ndebele. The natural environment provides scope in terms of what constitutes a people's diet. Beliefs and traditions underpin what is chosen as food and what is not. It is generally accepted that the Nguni initially occupied the coastal areas where fish teemed in the Indian Ocean and yet fish did not become a part of their diet. Totemic considerations dictated otherwise.

The unsettled coastal seaboard

Arrival of whites in the eastern coast heightened both enslaving and commercial activities. The resources exchanged at the coast were sourced further inland and clan-based communities along the trading routes sought to control the lucrative trade. Competition among the communities

led to rivalries and wars. In order to control the ownership of the sought after resources, there appeared more powerful nation-states that possessed the military capacity to defend territory and offer security and protection to themselves and their subjects. Weaker groups joined such emerging protective states and the political configurations began to change during this period referred to as Mfecane. The Ndwandwe State under King Zwide kaLanga Nxumalo and that of the AbaThethwa under Dingiswayo Mthethwa began to rise as powerful but competing conquering state. More groups placed themselves under these powerful nation-states which embraced people of diverse ethnic identities. It was against this background that the Zulu nation under the brave and innovative leadership of King Tshaka emerged and further caused the emergence of new political configurations and loyalties. Militarily powerful states, able to offer protection to the more vulnerable groups were on the ascendancy.



King Tshaka Zulu (Photo credit: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Shaka-Zulu-chief#/media/1/537814/14234>)

The Khumalos were one such group that initially was under the suzerainty of the Ndwandwe State in the northern part of what is now KZN. The Khumalos were at that time living in the Ngome-Esikhwebesini area having arrived there from Nquthu where they left some of their relatives such as Magugu. Matshobana was leader of one of the several sections of the Khumalos loyal to King Zwide Nxumalo. When King Tshaka was consolidating his hold on the emerging Zulu State, Chief Matshobana was killed by King Zwide's forces, prompting the Khumalos to switch allegiance to King Tshaka. Prince Dwangubana Khumalo who was the heir apparent lived among his maternal



Main movements of the Mfecane as depicted in the 1978 text African History by Philip Curtin, Steven Feierman, Leonard Thompson, and Jan Vansina. The map appears at p. 307 of both the U.S. (Boston and Toronto, 1978) and the UK (London, 1978) editions.

uncles, the Ndwandwes. It was a common Nguni succession practice to have the heir live not where his father lived but among his maternal relatives. Prince Dwangubana's mother was one Nompethu Nxumalo.

Following the demise of Chief Matshobana, Prince Dwangubana was called back to take charge of his section of the Khumalos. That move took place at the time of King Tshaka's lightning ascendancy. The Khumalos found Prince Dwangubana Khumalo to be too weak and not in a position to stand against the rising star in the person of King Tshaka. A secret plan was hatched by the Khumalos to get rid of Chief Dwangubana Khumalo. Seeing as there was no son of Queen Nompethu Nxumalo to replace him, the one son that was picked on was Prince Mzilawegazilikamatshobana who, it would turn out, would have "two mothers"-a biological mother and a cultural mother. His biological mother was Cikose kaNdlovu of the Ndiweni section of Amangwe people who also included the Mbambo and Zwane clans. His cultural mother was Queen Nompethu Nxumalo who was the mother responsible for his ascendancy to the Khumalo throne. Queen Cikose Ndiweni was a junior wife of Chief Matshobana who was attached to the senior house, that of Queen Nompethu Nxumalo. As a result, Prince Mzilawegazilikamatshobana took over as leader of one of the Khumalo sections. He was so named because his father, Chief Matshobana Khumalo, while on a raid, got injured and experienced a trail of blood, umzila wegazi. Upon returning home, Chief Matshobana found a boy son having been born to him and he appropriately named him uMzilawegazilikamatshobana.

Later, the son too went to live among his maternal uncles and was accompanied by these relatives when he took over the mantle. It was for this reason that when he was brought back a song was crafted which would several years later be sung during the King Mzilikazi commemorations originally at Old Bulawayo and later at Mhlahlandlela outside Bulawayo to mark the day the King died on 5 September 1868. The song goes like this:

*Enkulu, enkulu,
Eyabekwa ngaMangwe,
Ilondolozeni maZulu,
IngangoNdlovu.
The mighty, mighty one,
Who was installed by Amangwe people,
Please do take great care of him,
He is as mighty as Ndlovu (an Amangwe king)*

Apparently Mzilikazi, the shortened version for Mzilawegazilikamatshobana, was appointed military commander under King Tshaka alongside other distinguished men such as Mncumbatha kaKholo kaManzamnyama Khumalo. At one time, he was sent to undertake a raid on a Sotho chief by the

name Haniisi (Somnisi). He managed to capture some cattle but chose not to surrender them to his master King Tshaka. The disputed cattle are remembered to this day. The incident led to the flight of Mzilikazi with no more than 500 people. Other army generals who had been under King Zwide kaLanga Nxumalo had already moved out when their master was defeated by King Tshaka and his armies. General Sotshangane Nxumalo left and went to settle in what is today Zimbabwe and the eastern parts of Mozambique. Another General, Zwangendaba Jele, also left and traveled far north where he died in Tanganyika. His followers, the Angoni (actually the Nguni), retraced their footsteps and settled both in Malawi and Zambia. King Mphezeni settled in Chipata at the royal capital of Mutenguleni.

Mzilikazi begins his journey to the north

When Mzilikazi left KZN in about 1820 he was not king, a status that he acquired along the way when the salutation, “Bayethe” agreed with him. To avoid possible clashes with King Zwangendaba and King Sotshangana, Nqaba and Ngwana Maseko, he chose a more north westerly route. The Zulu army dispatched Izimpohlo and later uMbelebele against him, but managed to survive and struck beyond Ingome Mountain:

*Inkom' ezavul' inqaba ngezimpondo,
Ngoba zavul' iNgome,
Zahamba kithi kwaZulu*

This was a major victory for Mzilikazi and his fledgling migrant kingdom. More successes soon followed. He conquered the Sotho nations that lived within the boundaries of the Nguni people east of the Drakensberg Mountains (*uKhahlamba*).

*Inyang' abath' ifil' uZulu,
Kant' ithwasile,
Ithwase ngoNyokana kaMpeyana*

The few lines of King Mzilikazi's praise poem do express that now he had conquered and survived. In addition to Nyokana kaMpeyana, he dispatched Sambane and was on his way beyond the Drakensberg Mountains. Along the way he captured some groups which became part of his expanding mobile kingdom.

Two challenges faced him. In order for his kingdom to survive, he needed to incorporate other diverse people either voluntarily or involuntarily in order to reach a threshold population that was going to enable the new state to survive militarily. That consideration brought in its wake another

problem. Incorporates and assimilates brought along cultures that were not Nguni. Political survival would soon translate to cultural invasion and supplant Nguni culture. King Mzilikazi and his people were thus, from the outset, faced with the challenge of balancing political survival against seemingly contradictory cultural survival.

The initial stock of people that left with Mzilikazi were predominantly Nguni. As a result, Nguni culture was the dominant culture. However, there were some Nguni-ized Sotho elements amongst them. In terms of geographical location, these people were coming from the south and they were



Drakensberg Mountains in South Africa

appropriately referred to as Abezansi, that is people from the south. In due course the term referred to people of Nguni stock as these were the people that had occupied the southern parts of KZN.

Along the way, especially beyond the Drakensberg Mountains more and more Sotho-Tswana people were incorporated into the fledgling state. Whilst increasing numbers was celebrated from a military viewpoint, it was at the same time a threat to preservation of Nguni culture. The strategy that was used to avoid erosion and possibly ultimate demise of Nguni culture was to place strong social stigmas calculated to control the marriage institution. The measure was implemented following a realization that culture is transmitted and preserved in the main by mothers/wives. Nguni culture

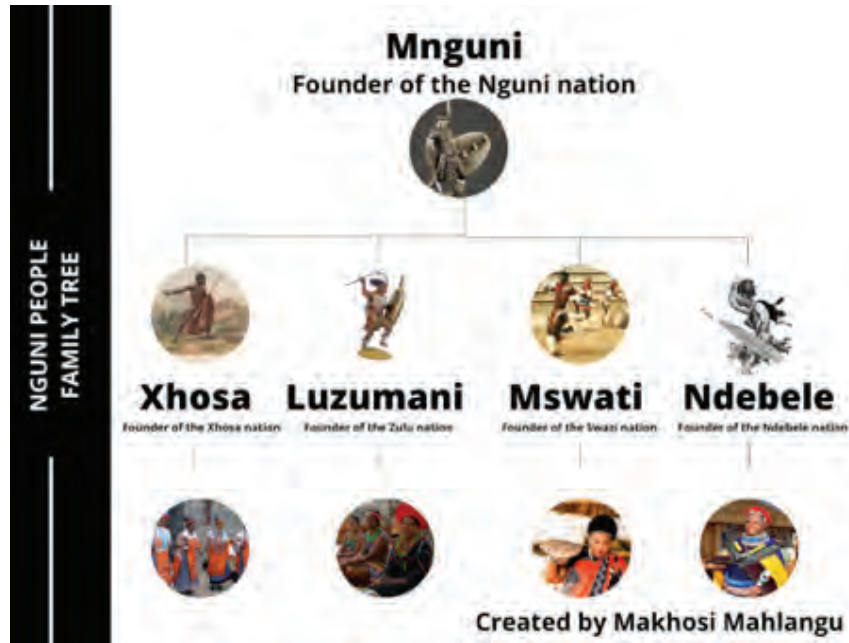
was thus the culture of the state and that ensured the continued use of the Nguni language although it was somewhat minimally imbued with words from the Sotho language. For example *umthi* became *isihlahla* (tree) and *Modimo* was adopted alongside *uNkulunkulu* as the term for God.

The migration route was influenced by the presence of enemy forces ahead of the advancing nation. Water availability and pastures for livestock were other factors that influenced the migration route. Fight or flight were the two options open for political survival. Where political and military opposition were a threat, the Ndebele fled to new areas far away from the source of danger. However, if they reckoned the potential danger was within their power to diffuse and dispel, they stood up to fight. These strategies explain the settlements that the Ndebele created south of the Limpopo River. All in all there were three major settlements south of the Limpopo River. The first was at Ezinyosini close to the Vaal River (*uLikhwa*) where the Ndebele were domiciled for five years from 1822 to 1827.

Incorporation of the Ndebele at Ndubazi

Prior to settling at Ezinyosini, the migrating kingdom had changed route when it realized there was a Nguni presence ahead of them. Nqaba's forces lay ahead and the presence of tsetse flies forced a return along the Steelpoort River to the land of the BaPedi who became some of the early incorporates and assimilates into Ndebele society. Trekking in a south-westerly direction got the Ndebele into an area settled by their relatives the Ndebele (Nzuza) under King Magodonga Mahlangu, the Manala under Sibindi and the Ntungwa under their chief, Mabhena. These were people that were regarded as the Ndebele and had earlier lived east of the Drakensberg as a Nguni people descended from one of the sons of Mnguni, who went by the name of Ndebele. The Khumalos were also descended from the same son while the Swati/Swazi were descended from Mswati another son of Mnguni. The eldest son was Xhosa from whom descended the Xhosa people. The second son was Luzumani the founder of the Zulu people.

For a while the migrating kingdom settled at Ndubazi where they fought the Ndebele, married some of the women and fought and captured these people too. People of various surnames were assimilated into Ndebele society. These people went by various surnames such as Mabhena, Mahlangu, Sibindi, Mgutshini, Lusinga, Sikhosana, Masombuka, Msimanga, Mkhwananzi (*uGawu*, *uMakhwentaba*), Masuku (*uPhenyane*), Jubane, inter alia. After settling among the Sotho people, they adopted some cultural practices and ideas of the people amongst whom they temporarily lived. As a general rule, these people, on account of having been domiciled in the north, *enhla*, came to be known as *Abenhla*, those from the north. With time, the term acquired ethnic connotations and the King never married any of their daughters. They constituted the second socio-political, cultural and economic tier within Ndebele society. A look at their marriages will reveal that they married within their social groups.



The descendants of the great Mnguni the founder of the Nguni nation

Settlement at Ndubazi was more temporary in comparison to settlement on the Vaal River.

Settlement at Ezinyosini (1822-1827)

As the Ndebele advanced further away from the cataclysmic KZN, more population scattering took place. King Zwide's State collapsed and some of its people left the areas where they had lived to seek refuge under powerful states where protection and security were guaranteed. King Matiwane of the Ngwane had unleashed terror on the Hlubi of Mpangazitha (the Dlodlos) and sent them packing in a westerly direction. Some of them settled among the Sotho where they are still found as the people of Pakalita. Some went to the more secure and peaceful areas among the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape. These fleeing groups came to be known as Amamfengu, the beggars and, included amongst them the Bele and Zizi people. While King Mzilikazi and his people were settled at Ezinyosini they received several refugees fleeing from the Mfecane-induced turmoil in the east. King Mpangazitha had been killed and his people were led to the Ndebele by his son Mehlomakhulu. King Matiwane's people, the Hlongwane also joined the Ndebele at Ezinyosini. A large group that joined the Ndebele at the time were refugees from the collapsed Ndwandwe State. The Mafus, Nxumalos, Masukus were among those who sought refuge in the area then occupied by the Ndebele under King Mzilikazi. Some of these people, notably the Dlodlos and the Mafus came to play a prominent role in further building and consolidating the Ndebele State. Mahubo, later known as Dambisamahubo Mafu on account

of his military exploits, Loyiswayo Dlodlo, Linganisa Dlodlo, Mbiko kaMadlenya were some of the leading men who became chiefs or military commanders within the Ndebele State.

Settlement at Ezinyosini was attended with threats largely from the presence nearby of the Griqua, amaHiligwa or amaLawu. These were a group of people of mixed misogyny who possessed guns and used horses to move around swiftly. There were times when they collaborated with the Sotho/Tswana groups and attacked the Ndebele. These frequent attacks on the Ndebele with the rustling of Ndebele cattle herds introduced insecurity to the region. The Ndebele responded by fleeing away from the source of insecurity in search of more peaceful zones further to the north.

Settlement at Mhlahlandlela/Magaliesberg (Mogale's) (1827-1832)



Nguni warriors getting ready for battle (Photo credit: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/>)

When the Ndebele could no longer stand the heat at Ezinyosini they relocated their settlements further north. This time they settled where present-day Tshwane (Pretoria) is located. There the King established a new capital town which he named Mhlahlandlela (Pathfinder), close to the Aapias River. The BaKgatla/Kgabo/Khabo/Mnkandla people were close by and many of them were incorporated into the Ndebele society. The Taung (Sibandas, oMdawini) also joined the Ndebele State. While the Ndebele were resident in the Magaliesberg area the King hosted Reverend Doctor Robert Moffat, a Scottish missionary from the London Missionary Society (LMS) in Kuruman, the land of the BaThlaping who was keen to open a mission station among the Ndebele. On the other hand, King Mzlikazi had come to realize the power of the gun. The two men developed a relationship for different reasons. Reverend Moffat regarded the Ndebele as a warlike group that posed a threat to his evangelizing mission. He thus sought to open a pacifying Christian mission among the Ndebele. The Griqua were the upper dog on account of them possessing guns and swift movement on horseback. The King thus sought to acquire these if he entertained any intention of standing against the Griqua.

That first visit by the LMS missionary took place in 1828 and that was the year the first Queen Mwaka Nxumalo gave birth to her second child, a son who was named Nkulumane (Ilitshelamilasenkulumane) on account of the visit by a white missionary from Kuruman. From the missionary, the King saw for the first time an ox-wagon which he fell in love with. Two men arrived at his capital town and demonstrated the use of guns. The men were McLuckie and Schoon who were traders.

Once again, the Ndebele faced military threats from many quarters. In 1828 King Tshaka was assassinated by brothers Dingane and Mhlangana with collusion by their aunt Mkabayi kaJama.

Reverend Doctor Robert Moffat was a missionary from the London Missionary Society





Nelson Mandela's statue at the Union Building in Pretoria (South Africa) (Photo credit: brandsouthafrica.com)

King Dingane resuscitated the story of cattle that King Mzilikazi had failed to surrender. As a result, he dispatched an impi to attack the Ndebele and claim the cattle. General Ndlela kaSompisi led the army which was repulsed. The Griqua continued to harass the Ndebele and deprive them of their wealth in the form of livestock. The military situation was once again untenable, and once again the Ndebele were on the move.

But while they were domiciled in the Magaleisberg area more people joined the Ndebele society. The most notable to join were those that were given to the King following his failed attempt to storm Thaba Busiu, the mountain fortress of King Moshoeshe of the Sotho. Both cattle and humans were given to the King and that gesture introduced more Sotho people into the Ndebele society such as the Halimana (Ndlovu) and Mloyi, inter alia. Whereas the King moved in a westerly direction, the populated areas remained intact in situ. This westerly movement in particular by the King and the royalty translated into increased territory for the Ndebele State. The King was safe far away in the Marico Valley while his generals continued to hold fort in the old territories.

Settlement in the Marico Valley (1832-1837)

Altogether King Mzilikazi and his people settled at three different sites south of the Limpopo River. At each settlement they stayed for a duration of five years. The formula to use as a reminder is 3:5, where 3 stands for three sites (Ezinyosini, Magaliesberg/Mhlahlandlela and Marico/Egabheni) and 5 represents the five years of settlement at each of the three settlement sites. The most westerly settlement was a valley where the King lived at Egabheni within the headwaters of the Limpopo River.



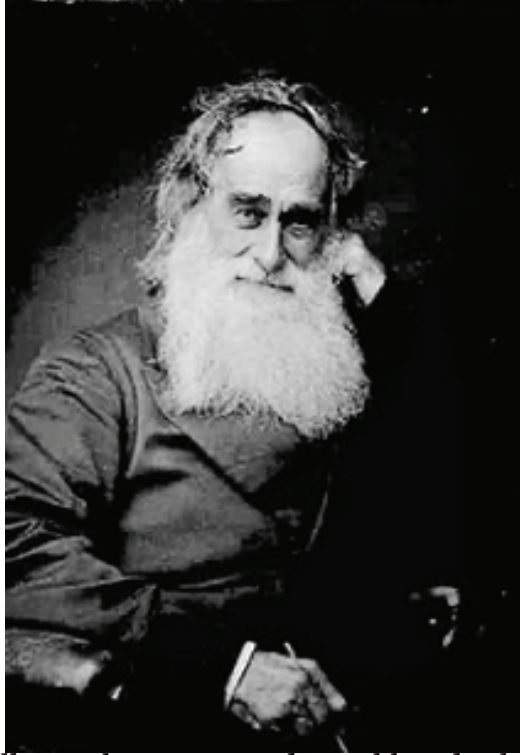
King Moshoeshe was the first son of Mokhachane, a minor chief of the Bamokoteli sub-clan of the Basotho people (Photo credit: <https://www.bmarchives.org/items/show/77793>)

More or less the same pressures were brought to bear on the Ndebele, prompting them to move on, this time to settle in the south western part of Zimbabwe where they felt secure from attacks by the various groups that caused their move to the north in the first place. Reverend Doctor Robert Moffat paid the King yet another visit in 1835. His desire, as before, was to establish a mission among the Ndebele but at the time the monarch was not favourably disposed to allow an establishment of such a mission. In any case, there had been the Paris Evangelical Mission whose missionaries abandoned the mission preferring to go and minister among the Sotho of King Moshoeshe.



Marico River in South Africa (Photo credit: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Marico-River>)

Egabheni was the name that pointed to the continuing process of incorporation and assimilation which, by this time, resulted in the Abenhla (the Sotho/Tswana) outnumbering the Nguni. The name Igabha, from Egabheni registered that altered ethnic composition within Ndebele society. Ndebele society was organized into villages which were created out of military regiments which came into being when mature young men were conscripted into regiments upon which commanders or chiefs were appointed. Each regiment/settlement/village had a territorial expression. Initially, there had been two regiments Amhlophe and Amnyama. When more and more people were incorporated into the state, more regiments were created or spawned by existing ones. When incorporation was heightened, the result was the spawning of more regiments to take care of new recruits coming to join the state either voluntarily or involuntarily. At the same time, there was natural population increase which translated into the creation of more regiments, amaxhiba to absorb new recruits resulting from the natural process of birth. Spawned regiments or villages kept a special relationship with their parent or proto-village. Such villages were led by senior chiefs who were high up in the political and administrative hierarchies.



Reverend Doctor Robert Moffat
(Picture credit: Wikipedia)

After the original two proto-villages there emerged Amakhanda that were established when there was increased influx of refugees following the collapse of the Ndwandwe, Hlubi and Ngwane states. Amakhanda came to be dominated by the Dlodlos when villages such as Inxazonke, Insinda, Insingo and many others were presided over by the Dlodlos. Other villages within the group included Indinana under Mfangilele Matshazi and Inzwananzi under Malevu Magutshwa. By the time the Ndebele settled in the Marico Valley and incorporated more Sotho/Tswana people it became necessary to create more regiments/villages to take care of the incorporates. The Abenhla were then outnumbering Abezansi who had left KZN with King Mzilikazi. Maqhekeni Sithole was appointed chief of Igabha and when the Ndebele arrived in south-western Zimbabwe where more people were incorporated from among the Babirwa, Nambya, Shona, Kalanga and Lozwi, more Igabha-aligned villages were established.

If the Ndebele had thought this time they were going to settle permanently in the Marico Valley they had not bargained for the impending challenges that would see them leave hurriedly with immature crops standing in the fields. The Zulu had not lost hope of recapturing cattle that they wanted to wrestle from Ndebele ownership. Indeed, King Dingane sent more impis to capture the cattle. The Griqua and their Sotho/Tswana allies continued attacking the Ndebele. However, the decisive factor

were the Afrikaners who, after moving out of the Cape Colony, headed for the area already occupied by the Ndebele. The Afrikaners or Boers were under the leadership of Piet Uys and Andries Hendrik Potgieter the man the Ndebele called uNdaleka. The Great Trek commenced in 1835 and by 1836 the two were engaging in fights at the Vegtkop. Mkhali phi kaDlekezela Khumalo (of the Amanyangana section of the Khumalos) excelled in the military campaigns against Afrikaners. By 1837 the tide was against the Ndebele. They felt the heat and towards the end of the year they deserted their settlements and commenced the final leg of their trek to the north.

King Mzilikazi splits his people into two groups and they move north

When settlement in the Marico Valley became untenable, the Ndebele decided to move on. However this time the King created two groups out of the population in the Marico Valley and elsewhere. The one group which went ahead was placed under the leadership and command of his maternal uncle



Portrait of Andries Hendrik Potgieter around 1851-52 in Lourenço Marques, Delagoa Bay (Photo credit: Johan Wolfaardt)



A picture of Piet Uys with his sons (Photo credit: Stephen Luscombe)

Khondwane Ndiweni whose name appears as Gundwane in earlier history books. The King was confident his uncle would loyally and dutifully take care of his people. Within the Khondwane-led group there were villages aligned to Amnyama-angankomo and Amakhanda and within them were the queens, including the senior Queen Mwaka Nxumalo, Queen Fulatha Tshabalala and Queen Loziba kaPhahlana Thebe. The princesses and princes were in this group, notably Prince Nkulumane and Prince Lobengula whose mother was Queen Fulatha Tshabalala. Among the princesses was Princess Zinkabi who later got married to Chief Mbiko kaMadlenya Masuku, Princess Batayi who got married to Sifo Masuku the eldest son of Madlenya and Princess Makhwa who got married to the Godlwayo Chief Mthikana Mafu.

The group under Khondwane Ndiweni, after two years of trekking, finally settled along the Insiza and Incema Rivers while other sections of the group settled in the Mzingwane River area. The latter included uMzinyathi, aMatshetshe, iNtekelo, iNtshamathe and uYengo. Other villages were iNtunta, uGodlwayo, iNtemba, iNhlambabaloyi and uGibixhegu where Khondwane Ndiweni and the Queens lived. Among Amakhanda villages along the Insiza River were villages such as Indinana, Inzwananzi, Inxazonke, Insinda and Insingo.

The King himself and the section he led tarried for a while to allow time to the Khondwane-led group to cover some distance. An impression was created that the entire population was still intact in one place. The King had with him Igabha (under Maqhekeni Sithole) and Amhlophe (under Gwabalanda Mathe, akaMhlangandlovu) villages. When they finally left, they went in a direction different from that taken by Amnyama and Amakhanda in which there were queens, princes and princesses. There were also traditional doctors who saw to the spiritual and physical protection of the group. The group that the King led took a westerly direction into present-day Botswana. They went up a mountain to get a view of where they had come from. Their interest was in checking whether the Afrikaners were in hot pursuit. The two groups were going to rendezvous near present day Bulawayo, close to a hill later known as Intabayezinduna. It is not clear who advised them on the meeting place but its description was accurately captured. At the place, the two drainage systems parted with some rivers flowing northwards towards the Zambezi River while other rivers flowed southwards to the Limpopo River. A flat-topped hill was part of the description in addition to the sweet grass known as imbanjana which was ideal for the large herds of Ndebele cattle. Armed with this accurate description, King Mzilikazi's group struck northwards towards what is now known as Francistown.

However, Tswana cattle became so much an irresistible attraction the Ndebele changed the course of their travel and struck a more northwesterly route and passed through places that included Toteng, Secithwa, Kwente near Tsao, Nokaneng and Mothabanelo. The one place that they passed through is captured in the praise poem of the King:

*Utshani bude buseMahalihali,
Kabutshi nakutsha,
Bothi nyakana butshayo,
Buyokutsha nemitsha yamadoda
The grass stands tall in the Makgadikgadi (salt) Pans,
It will not burn,
But when it does burn,
It will burn with men's penis sheaths.*

The King without doubt did get to the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans. In their language, the place was referred to as Mahalihali and the name that was given to newly born babies, as part of the African tradition of documenting events through names. There was one Ndiweni man whose name was Mahalihali.

A further move in the northwesterly direction was bound to lead to conflict with Sebituane's Kololo, a Sotho-speaking group that was also a victim of uMfecane. A bruising encounter was inevitable.



Map of Botswana (Photo credit: <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/africa/botswana/>)

Besides, the area towards which they were travelling was tsetse fly infested and nagana disease was going to wipe out their cattle herds. A change in direction took place. Now King Mzilikazi and his followers entered the lands of the Tonga, Leya and Nambya. Chief Sekute (uSigude) of the Leya was attacked and killed. The King was apparently not in good health and he was forced to take a rest while the Nambya traditional doctors attended to his medical condition.

The two groups re-unite

Meanwhile, the Khondwane-led group faced challenges due to the absence of the King for a period of two years. The King alone was authorized to order raids. In response to the predicament, Khondwane and the chiefs decided to install Prince Nkulumane. The one man who is known to have been against the treasonous move was Mhlongana kaNkolotsha, also known as Mkhithika Thebe. He went in a westerly direction in search of the King who he found among the Nambya (AbaNanzwa). When told about what the Khondwane group had done the King got very angry. "There are never two suns in the same sky. No sun rises before the other has set. You have spoilt my son." The King loved his son whom he called Ilitshelamilasenkulumane."

King Mzilikazi led his people towards the Gwayi River and travelled up towards its source. When they got to its junction with Mbembesi River they traveled along with the latter till they got to Kokolombeni/Majiji area. There they left behind Mfulana Khumalo who attended to the royal herds.



Makgadikgadi Salt pans in Botswana (Photo credit: NASA Earth Observatory image by Joshua Stevens)

Further travel got them to a hill they called uMfaz'umithi very close to Bulawayo. The King was not keen to enter the territory of the rebels. He maintained his distance and arranged a meeting with Queen Nyamazana Dlamini who led a group of Swazi people who had hived off from Zwangendaba's group before crossing the Zambezi River at Zumbo in 1835. The King ended up marrying the Swazi queen even though they had been afflicted with smallpox. The sons, Princes Nkulumane and his younger brother Prince Lobengula, born in 1832, were summoned to confirm through a ritual test. The test arranged by Doctor Mphubane Mzizi proved beyond doubt that the older of the two brothers had indeed been installed as king.

The King arranged that Prince Nkulumane be taken away from Matabeleland together with a large contingent of people. He went to settle among the BaFokeng in the present-day Rustenburg area where his grave is said to exist. The chiefs were tried and killed on the orders of the King. Their trial seems to have taken place close to the hill that came to be known as Intabayezinduna but the execution seems to have taken place far away at Emputshini. Queens Mwaka Nxumalo and Fulatha Tshabalala were equally found guilty and executed. Khondwane used a spear to take his own life. He



Ndebele warriors around 1890 (Photo credit-National Archives of Zimbabwe)

ran into the spear and dropped dead-and lifeless. One regiment comprising the incorporates from Ndubazi fled back to the land of the BaFokeng. Their regiment was known as Izimpangele. Among them was Mveleleni Mahlangu who left an expecting Mabhena wife whose son appropriately name Sivalo was destined to become an important man during the reign of King Lobengula who succeeded King Mzilikazi as the second and last Ndebele King.

King Mzilikazi set up his first capital town at a site west of Isiphongo Hill, off the Bulawayo-Inyathi Road. There, in 1854, his friend Robert Moffat found the ailing monarch. King Mzilikazi was to establish his seat of power at more sites: Amahlokohloko II near Gloag Mission, Inyathi and finally Mhlahlandlela his last capital. Reverend Moffat paid the King another visit in 1857 and the last one in 1859 when the LMS missionary led a party of missionaries to open the first Christian mission in Zimbabwe in December 1859. At the time, Loziba was the senior queen and died at Inyathi in 1861. The King relocated to Mhlahlandlela and the mountain fell on 5 September 1868 at Enqameni. His corpse was brought to Mhlahlandlela awaiting interment two months later in a cave on Entumbane Hill, an outlier of the Matobo Hills. It was the end of an era and what followed were troubled times when colonial interests were beginning to manifest themselves through a litany of imperial shenanigans and political intrigue that ultimately led to the demise of the Ndebele State in November 1893.

King Lobengula assumes the reins of power

Prince Lobengula's succession to the Ndebele throne was a contested affair. At the time, the British in South Africa were keen to establish a foothold within the Ndebele State. One Sir Theophilus Shepstone (uSomtswewu) muddied the succession waters by alleging the rightful heir Prince



Road to Ntabazinduna from Bulawayo (Picture credit: <https://twitter.com/mboendlov/status/1147569300020092928>)

Nkulumane was in his employ in Natal. Search parties were dispatched, one of them led by hunter Frederick Courtney Selous, uSilowe. Mncumbatha Khumalo was in charge of state affairs in the interregnum. Convinced the said Prince Nkulumane was no more than an impostor, Mncumbatha and Ndebele elders settled for Prince Lobengula to succeed King Mzilikazi. Indeed, in January 1870 King lobengula was duly installed King and established his capital which he named Gibixhegu.

There were however sections of Ndebele society that were against Prince Lobengula's accession. They argued that he was of low birth and used to fraternize with whites who ate zebra meat. The opposition was led by Mbiko kaMadlenya Masuku whose senior wife was Princess Zinkabi the firstborn child by



Mzilikazi's grave in Matopos (Photo credit: Fortune Muzarabani)

Queen Mwaka. Chief Masuku apparently had been promised support by Chief Mkhokhi Masuku of Inyamayendlovu. Chief Mkhokhi Masuku was together with Sifo Masuku, Mbhadi Masuku, Mlomo Masuku, Mkhanyeli Masuku and Mawewe Masuku were sons of Madlenya with Sifo as the most senior amongst them. King Lobengula summoned the soldiers loyal to him and waged a war of Mbiko and his Zwangendaba regiment. The latter were defeated with the chief being killed. Princess Zinkabi Khumalo committed suicide. Upon attaining military victory King Lobengula renamed his capital KoBulawayo, at the place of he who is being opposed, tormented and troubled or figuratively being killed.

Retribution against those who had opposed his succession was quick in coming. Some of his brothers, notably Prince Hlangabeza Khumalo and some chiefs were killed. Whites had started arriving in Matabeleland in bigger numbers as traders, hunters, missionaries, mineral prospectors and, explorers. Later another crop of a different and sinister kind came as colonists seeking concessions from the King. Search for minerals, especially gold, was heightened after the discovery of gold in the Tai Concession during the tenure of King Mzilikazi in 1867. John Swinburne and the group



King Lobengula who reigned after Mzilikazi (Photo credit: pinterest.it)

were extracting the gold. Diamonds were found at Kimberley in the same year and later gold was discovered at the Witwatersrand. The partition of Africa was about to take place. Cecil John Rhodes appeared on the scene and made money from both diamonds and gold. Stiff competition ensued between the British, the Portuguese, the Germans and Afrikaners. Rhodes formed the British South Africa Company that sought a concession from King Lobengula ahead of other concession seekers who were his competitors.

John Smith Moffat had, in February 1888, secured what was to be termed the Moffat Treaty. Finding it not sufficiently comprehensive to satisfy his desires, Rhodes dispatched a party under the leadership of Charles Dannel Rudd who secured the Rudd Concession in October 1888 which Rhodes used to get a charter from Queen Victoria of England. Opposition to the Rudd Concession did not succeed even when a party of two Ndebele men, Bhabhayana Masuku and Mtshede Ndiweni was accompanied by Eduard Maund and Johan Colenbrander to meet up with the queen to protest the said concession which gave Rhodes powers not only to mine minerals from the ground but also

to take the land. The trip was a waste of time as Rhodes had used money to bribe his competitors, including Maund himself. What followed was an occupation force that Rhodes assembled to invade Mashonaland in September 1890. The major motive was the exploitation of gold. When gold was not found in quantities that had been envisaged, an invading party of so-called volunteers under Major Patrick Forbes marched on Matabeleland. The invasion came hot on the heels of what has come to be known as the Victoria Incidents of July 1893 in which Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, the Administrator, and friend of Rhodes, hatched a plan to attack Matabeleland.

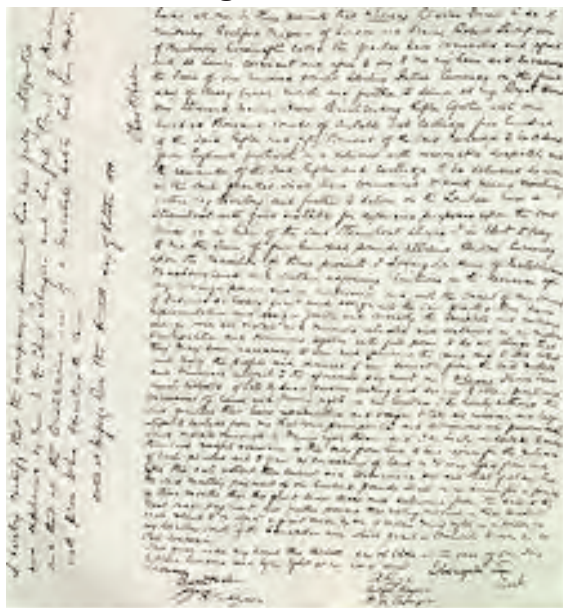
Indeed, two forces, one from Salisbury (now Harare) and another from Fort Victoria (now Masvingo) left and combined forces at Iron Hill Mine and began the march on Matabeleland. The first skirmishes took place at Lalaphansi, followed by a more serious encounter at Bhonko (Shangani) where the Bulawayo-Harare road crosses the Shangani River. That encounter took place on 25 October and was led by Insukamini whose leader was Manondwane Tshabalala. His men were beaten and the so-called volunteers proceeded towards KoBulawayo which, in 1881, had relocated from Enyokeni/Entenjaneni to Esagogwaneni/Emahlabathini near Northlea High School. Imbizo under the command of Mtshana Khumalo engaged the advancing forces of colonization at Gadade (Goddard) or Mbembesi on 2 November 1893. The Maxim gun developed by American Engineer Hiram Maxim came into effect and decided the outcome of the battle.



Vintage postage stamp of Cecil John Rhodes, founder of Rhodesia former Zimbabwe. (Picture credit: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecil-john-rhodes>)

On getting news that his crack regiment, Imbizo, had been defeated, King Lobengula fled northwards and ordered Sivalo Mahlangu to burn KoBulawayo. A few whites remained behind and the fleeing

King assured their safety. These were James Dawson, William Usher and James Fairbairn. On the 4th of November, KoBulawayo was occupied and the Union Jack hoisted. The King fled and a pursuing party was dispatched after the King.



Rudd Concession signed by King Lobengula of Matabeleland (1888)
(Photo credit: sahistory.org.za)

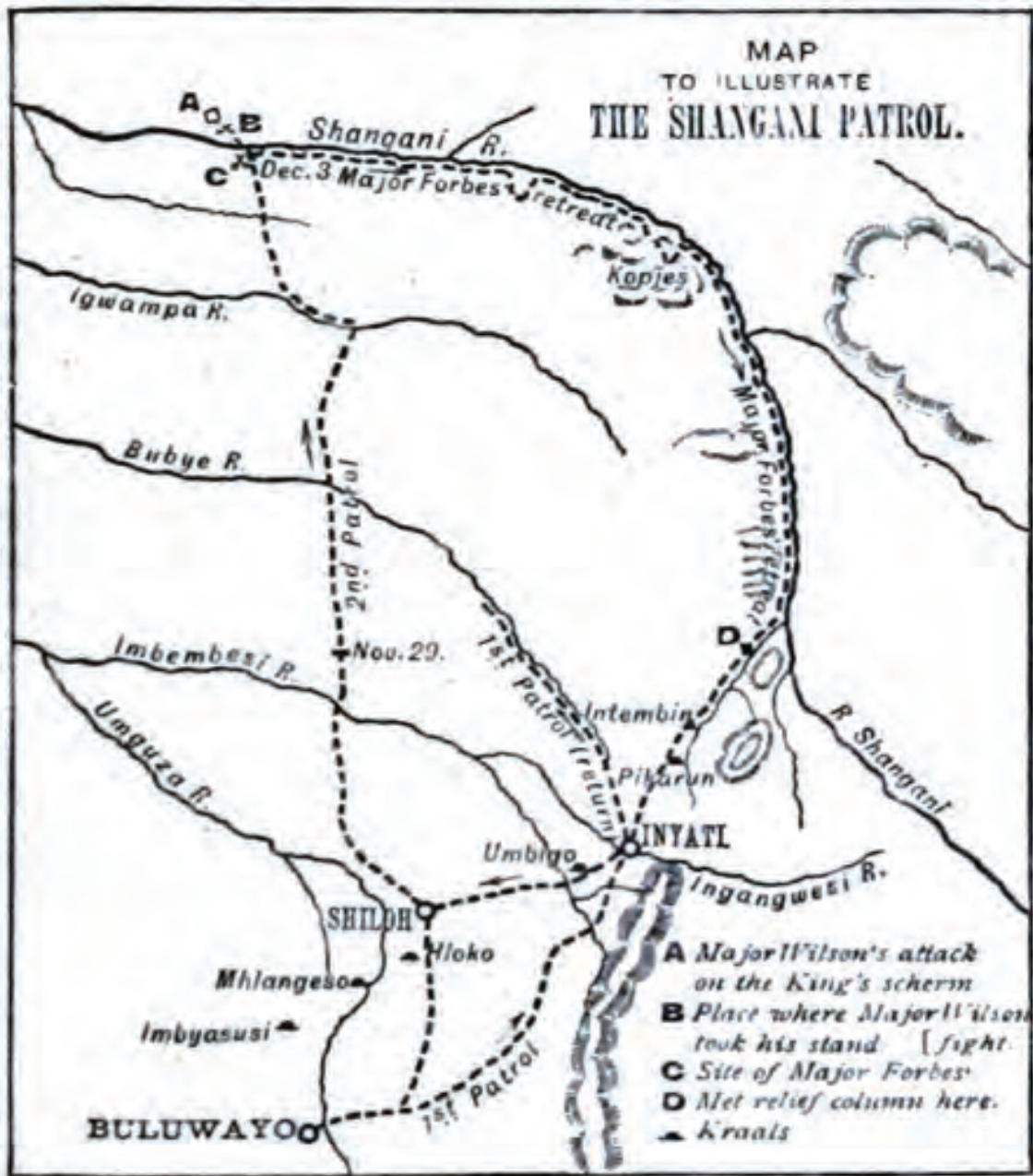
When the pursuing party was about to catch up with the King, the flooded Shangani River kept apart the two sections. Major Allan Wilson managed to get across and spent the night close to the Ndebele soldiers. Major Patrick Forbes' party which had a maxim gun, was kept away from the theatre of war. At first light the war began at Pupu where all the thirty-four British soldiers were speared or shot to death. Mdilizelwa Fuyana, son of Chief Maphisa of Esizindeni, thrust the spear that killed Major Allan Wilson. It was a victorious battle within a losing war.

It was all over but the King proceeded northwards till he got to the Zambezi River where the Tonga assisted him to cross the mighty Kasambabezi (Zambezi) River enroute to his Nguni relatives then under King Mphezeni the son of King Zwangendaba Jele. There he lived among the Angoni (Nguni) and when he died, his remains were interred in a cave on Nsanjika Hill in Chipata, Zambia, according to Ndebele burial rites that pertain to a king.

The rest of the nation including chiefs, queens and members of the royal family were sent back under the leadership of Mtshana Khumalo to go and surrender to Rhodes' administration. Colonial rule had been painfully ushered and would last almost eighty years before it was ended through the armed liberation struggle lasting nearly 14 years.



The last stand of the Shangani Patrol in 1896. A painting belonging to the Bulawayo City Council.



This map from Wikimedia Commons was originally from: *The Wars of the Nineties. A History of Warfare of the last ten years of the Nineteenth Century* by A.H. Atteridge