

BATTLEGROUND

**Charles Bell's Drawings of the War of the Axe, 1846,
in Historical Context and in Relation to Recent
Representations of the Frontier/Wars of Dispossession.**

Front Cover

Francki Burger, *7th Frontier War: The Méléé, 8 June 1846, Captain Napier taking a Prisoner*, 2015, digital photograph on Hahnemuhle photo rag paper, 100 x 73cms, Artist's collection.

Henry Hall, *Map of the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony*, detail, London: Edward Stanford, 1856, 96 x 101cms, University of Cape Town Libraries.

Back Cover

Hentie van der Merwe, *Cape Mounted Rifles (Dukes)* from the *Trappings* series, 2000/2003, laserchrome print, 150 x 100cms., Collection Luan Nel and Neil Pendock.

Nompumezo, *Cpl Cape Mtd Rifles, 1846*, detail from *The Keiskamma Tapestry*, 2004, Wool and Thread on Canvas, Houses of Parliament Collection, with kind permission of Carol Hofmeyr.



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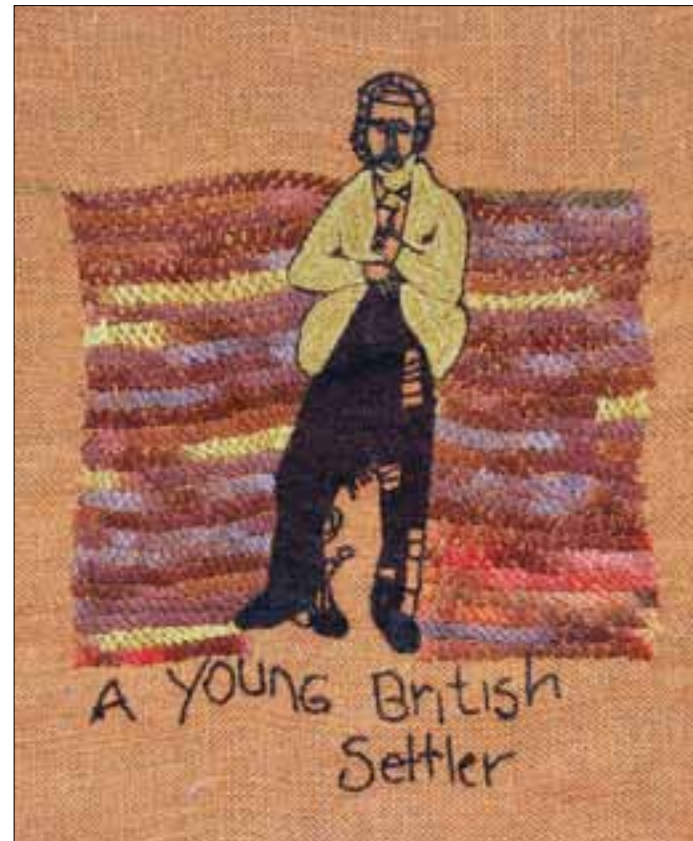
Michael Godby

**With an Essay on The War of the Axe by Jeff Peires, and
Notes on Historical Weapons by Rod Hooper-Box.**

PRIMAVERA PUBLISHING

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Unnamed Weaver, *A Young British Settler*, detail of the *The Keiskamma Tapestry*, 2004, wool and thread on canvas, Houses of Parliament collection, by kind permission of Carol Hofmeyr.

1: BATTLEGROUND

Charles Bell’s sixty drawings of the War of the Axe constitute an extraordinarily extensive record of any war before photography – so authoritative, apparently, that they were consulted by none other than the Duke of Wellington in London before he gave his opinion on the conduct of the war to the House of Lords. But however impressive as a collection, the drawings are not entirely coherent: they are haphazard in origin, uncertain in intention, and unresolved as a sequence. The use of the medium of pen and wash, together with several written instructions to engravers, indicate that Bell intended to publish certain drawings – and some were actually reproduced anonymously in the pages of the recently-founded *Illustrated London News* (see Section 4) – but these few do not explain Bell’s purpose in the full collection of sixty drawings. And, not least because he drew on the work of military and other artists (see Section 7), and his own earlier work (see Section 9), Bell changed style and method as he moved between groups of different subjects – such as forts, portraits, ethnographic studies, etc., - and narrative accounts of ambushes and battles, without imposing a coherent structure on the series. The collection, therefore, remains a collection, a sketchbook rather than an edited account. But, as an agent of the British administration at the Cape, Bell was, of course, not a neutral observer. He presents the War as an heroic achievement, celebrating the victory of civilization over barbarism, in what is unapologetically a colonial account of the contest.

This catalogue presents 38 of the original 60 drawings, mostly in the groups devised by the artist, together with a series of installations that provide contexts for Bell’s project. As indicated, Section 4 relates Bell’s project to the *Illustrated London News* and so to the Empire that enabled colonial settlement of the Eastern Cape and the naturalization of its self-proclaimed civilizing mission. Other sections (3, 6 and 13) reproduce extracts of the *Graham’s Town Journal* that seem to give voice to aspects of Bell’s representations. Other sections fill out the history of the war, its beginning and end – at least as Bell saw them (Sections 2 and 19); the various combatants

(Section 5); and the tactics devised by both sides (Sections 7, 14, 15 & 18). Moreover, Bell’s project represents a moment in the history of European representation of African peoples: Section 8 seeks to elucidate this history and demonstrate how the application in the mid-nineteenth century of the visual language of stereotype and caricature to African subjects was profoundly defamatory (also Sections 10 & 12). Such negative representations of African peoples evolved in close relationship with hunger for their land and constituted, in effect, as powerful a weapon in these Frontier/Wars of Dispossession as the Longarms, Handguns and Swords that are exhibited alongside them. Finally, Bell’s period in Grahamstown between 1842 and 1844 adjudicating land claims as 2nd Assistant Surveyor-General (see Section 17), involved him directly in the colonial acquisition of land, not militarily, of course, but in legitimating title to conquered territory.

The second part of the catalogue showcases recent works on the subject of the Frontier/Wars of Dispossession that are radically different from Bell and, in a sense, may be seen as a response to Bell and what he stood for. Thus land is represented as a contentious issue in several recent works, especially one that reproduces an early map of Albany that is literally soaked in blood. Moreover, the obvious violence of warfare is treated in very different ways in the nineteenth-century and now, both in the representation of battle and in the understanding of its consequences. Memory, particularly the understanding that trauma lives on both in the physical bodies that were involved in the contest and in the land that was being fought over, has been a frequent subject amongst recent artists; and the idea of masculinity that Bell clearly took for granted in his heroic depiction of warfare has also been widely questioned. Similarly, whereas for Bell, the victory of one side in the conflict appears to have been sufficient resolution, some recent artists have questioned the issue of reconciliation, while others have considered these wars as the traumatic portal into modernity for the local population – that has had obvious devastating consequences.

WARNING

Bell’s drawings of the war contain language and imagery that many will find offensive. Since 1994, curators and others have usually replaced or concealed offending terminology (see Section 2) but, in the belief that it is an integral part of the artist’s expression, this catalogue leaves it exposed. Moreover, it is obviously not possible to conceal the caricatural elements of Bell’s treatment of different racial groups that he, like others,

derived at some remove from contemporary scientific, or pseudo-scientific racial theories. In fact, to better understand Bell’s project, this catalogue has taken the decision to draw attention to these prejudices – that were routinely repeated in newspaper accounts of the war – in order to show that he shared the widely-held view at the time of the innate inferiority of African people to Europeans that was used to justify the appropriation of Xhosa lands.

CHALLENGE

In drawing attention to the less palatable parts of Bell’s art, this catalogue is issuing a series of challenges. The first challenge, obviously, is to those who continue to regard Bell’s work – in these war drawings and elsewhere - as an objective record of events: no image can ever be entirely objective and the saturation of his work by contemporary racial ideology, amongst other obvious prejudices, should show that it was, in its way, propaganda. The response that Bell was a “man of his time” sharing widely-held views of the limitations of other races obviously excuses neither Bell nor the times: there was, of course, debate at this time on racial theory, land policy and other matters – between settlers and missionaries, for example, between London and the Cape, even between Cape Town and Grahamstown – but Bell clearly aligned himself with those who used multiple strategies, from military incursion to propaganda, to justify the colonial project of acquiring both land and the labour to work it.

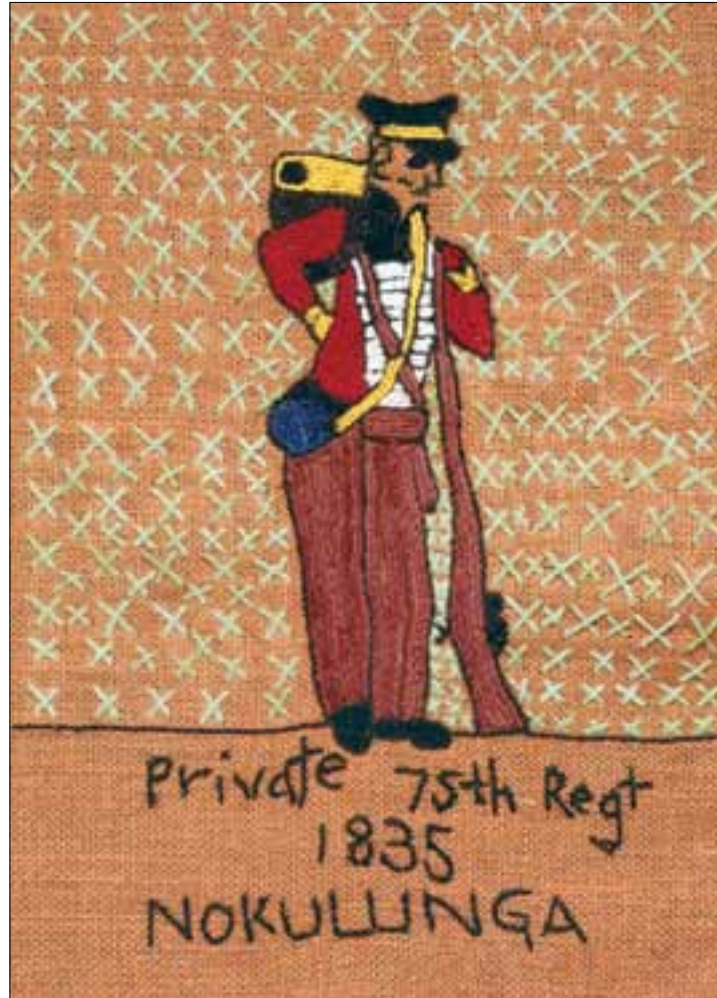
Others might dismiss both the events and Bell’s record of them as “history” that has little or no relevance today: in response, this catalogue would want to invoke Achille Mbembe’s remark that South Africa has a common, but not a shared history, to suggest

that what may be important, or conversely unimportant, for some will certainly not apply to all. But divisions in public opinion occur through, as well as across time. By exposing rather than sanitizing – or concealing in aesthetic discourse – the objectionable parts of Bell’s art, the catalogue intends to challenge modern viewers, on the one side, to distance themselves thoroughly from this mindset and, on the other, to recognize that few of those that would be racially identified with Bell today still hold such pernicious views: the contemporary view of frontier history represented in the second part of the catalogue by both black and white artists are included in the project to demonstrate these points.

The final challenge, of course, is to consider whether it is possible to read through Bell’s prejudice to a rare account of an important moment in South Africa’s history that his work uniquely records; and, beyond this historical value, notwithstanding the obvious difficulties in his work, for us all to discover, and appreciate, the merit and interest that clearly do exist in his work – his description of form and movement, his construction of narrative, his search to convey the fullness of landscape experience, etc. No amount of prejudice, surely, can obliterate Bell’s undoubted skill in these aspects of his art.

THE WAR OF THE AXE, 1846-1847

by Jeff Peires



Nokulunga, *Private 75th Regt 1835*, detail from *The Keiskamma Tapestry*, 2004, wool and thread on canvas, Houses of Parliament collection, by kind permission of Carol Hofmeyr.

Of the three major Frontier Wars of the mid-nineteenth Century, the War of the Axe [Seventh Frontier War, 1846-7] is the only one to have been initiated on the colonial side. Both the Sixth War [War of Hintsa, 1834-5] which preceded it, and the Eighth [War of Mlanjeni, 1850-3] which succeeded it almost immediately, were launched by the amaXhosa, striking first to gain maximum advantage from surprise. To understand the context of Bell's pictures, therefore, we almost need to devote more attention to the circumstances giving rise to the War of the Axe than to the War itself, by which time Bell had relocated to Cape Town, far from the scene of battle.

Stockenstrom's Treaty System, 1836-1844.

During the interregnum between the Sixth and Seventh Frontier Wars [1835-1846], relations between the Cape Colony and its independent Xhosa neighbours were regulated by a "treaty system", devised by the controversial Lieutenant-Governor Andries Stockenstrom. Stockenstrom's system pivoted on the management of frontier conflict by three Diplomatic Agents, stationed at strategic points along the frontier, who would, in conjunction with their Xhosa counterparts, resolve all local disputes in the spirit of friendly co-operation and international law. Gone were the colonial frontier posts and the colonial armed patrols (commandos) which, in Stockenstrom's opinion, had inflamed racial friction and directly precipitated the Sixth Frontier War.

Whatever the potential merits of Stockenstrom's system, it was damned in settler eyes by the concomitant retrocession of the extensive territory seized from the amaXhosa during the Sixth Frontier War. Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban, who presided over that war, had led the settlers to believe that most of the land between the Fish and Kei rivers would be allocated to them, while the surviving amaXhosa awaited expulsion elsewhere. Over four hundred settler applications for Xhosa land had

already been received by the Colonial Office, when the British Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, abruptly cancelled D'Urban's arrangements in favour of Stockenstrom's "treaty system". Glenelg's decision was influenced by the British humanitarian lobby, but clinched by the horrific news that the Xhosa King Hintsa, held hostage by D'Urban, had been callously killed and his body gruesomely mutilated. The settlers blamed not themselves, for murdering Hintsa, but the treacherous Stockenstrom who, in their view, had sold them out to the British Parliament in order to secure a lucrative appointment as Lieutenant-Governor.

By 1838 the settler lobby headed by Robert Godlonton, the editor of the *Graham's Town Journal*, had succeeded in forcing Stockenstrom's resignation. The new Governor, Sir George Napier, and the new Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel John Hare half-heartedly continued with the treaties, but were daily bombarded with complaints of Xhosa "depredations", that is, cattle theft. Knowing cattle theft to be a problem, Stockenstrom had formulated very precise regulations, binding Xhosa chiefs to return stolen cattle, provided however that the settler farmers could prove the cattle stolen. The diary of Captain CL Stretch, the only colonial official who sincerely tried to make the system work, demonstrates conclusively that the Xhosa chiefs did indeed comply with the treaties, either by tracing stolen cattle or else paying compensation to their owners. But this was not good enough for the extreme settler element which agitated for the return of all cattle allegedly stolen, even if these were "not reclaimable" because the farmer had failed to adhere to the stipulations of the treaty. Abused as a coward and a weakling, Lieutenant-Governor Hare was pressurized into putting forward "not reclaimable" claims, and Colonial/Xhosa meetings soon degenerated into squabbles over detail, with neither side being entirely honest and straightforward.

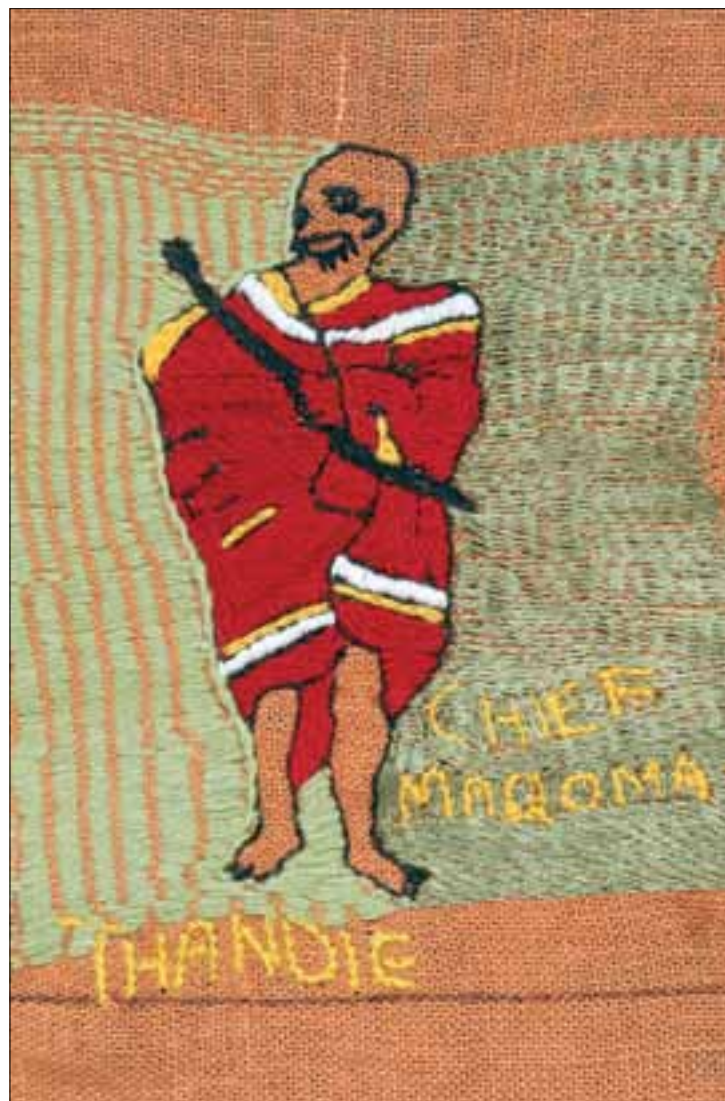
Frontier relationships were further complicated by instability within the Xhosa royal house. Following the death of Chief

Ngqika in 1829, the leadership of the Rharhabe Xhosa had passed to Chief Maqoma, the son of his *kunene* (right-hand) house, acting as regent during the minority of Sandile, the son of Ngqika in his Great House. Generally acknowledged as a brilliant mind and a military genius, Maqoma was however rather erratic and depended heavily on the support of another brother, the solid and consistent Chief Tyhali. But in 1842, shortly before Sandile was due to be installed, Tyhali suddenly died. Maqoma thereupon attempted to declare the lame and somewhat slow Sandile an idiot, and thereby seize the throne for himself. But the other chiefs rallied around Sandile and Maqoma, frustrated, sank into despondency and alcohol, just at the very time when the Treaty System was taking so much strain.

Colonial historians have tended to blame the outbreak of the War of the Axe on the emergence of a "war party" among Sandile's councilors, young men anxious to dip their spears in settler blood. Sandile, however, was hesitant by nature and strongly influenced by his mother Suthu, who was certainly opposed to war. Unfortunately, the weakness at the Xhosa Great Place gave free rein to minor chiefs such as Tola of the imiDange Xhosa, robbers with strongholds in the Fish River bush with nothing much to lose. It was Tola who provided the settlers with the pretext they needed.

The War of the Axe: First Phase, 1846.

Given time, the equilibrium might well have been restored, as Sandile grew in stature and Diplomatic Agent Stretch calmed things down. But time was precisely what the Treaty System did not have. In 1844, Governor Napier's term of office came to an end, and he was succeeded by Sir Peregrine Maitland, an even more elderly veteran of the Napoleonic Wars. The new Governor was immediately confronted by the demands of the extreme settler party, whose hunger for Xhosa lands was compounded by their thirst for increased military expenditure, the lifeblood of such



Thandie, *Chief Maqoma*, detail from *The Keiskamma Tapestry*, 2004, wool and thread on canvas, Houses of Parliament collection, by kind permission of Carol Hofmeyr.

small garrison towns as Fort Beaufort. As Governor Sir George Cathcart so memorably put it, less than ten years later:

The fact is, peace is ruin to them (the white colonists), and the expenditure of public money during the war has been the making of their fortunes ... in short the expenditure of a million of British sovereigns in this otherwise miserable place. As to the losses by the war, they bear no comparison to the gains. I am heartily disgusted and sick of these mean, dishonest people; the [Xhosa] is much the finer race of the two.¹

Within a week of his arrival in Grahamstown (September 1844), Maitland had announced unilateral changes to Stockenström's treaties. Far from being negotiated with the Xhosa, these changes were not even discussed and Sandile received the news second-hand.² Maitland's "treaties" provided for the revival of patrols and the construction of forts in a buffer zone occupied by the Xhosa but known as the Ceded Territory. Tensions reached breaking point when military engineers surveyed a fort at Block Drift on the Xhosa side of the boundary line. It was just then that Tsili, one of Chief Tola's subjects, was caught stealing the eponymous axe from Holliday's store in Fort Beaufort. He was rescued by Tola's men en route to Grahamstown but, most unfortunately, another prisoner – a Khoikhoi handcuffed to Tsili – was killed in the process.

Colonel Hare demanded that Sandile give up the "murderers", and invaded Xhosaland when he refused. A massive convoy of 125 ox-wagons, five kilometres in length, laden with stores and munitions headed along the Burns' Hill road to establish a military headquarters near Sandile's Great Place. They marched for three days and, on the fourth, were overwhelmed in one of the greatest Xhosa victories of the nine Frontier Wars (Burns' Hill wagon "disaster", 17 May 1846). Maqoma, still loyal to the former Treaty System, dropped out early, but, closer to the coast, the Gqunukhwebe Xhosa chief Phatho joined the war. The territory of Phatho's father, killed in the Fourth Frontier War (1812) had stretched almost as far as Port Elizabeth, and the Gqunukhwebe penetrated deeply into the settlers' Albany heartland, killing Joshua Norden, the elegantly accoutred captain of the Grahamstown Yeomanry less than fifteen kilometres outside town.

The Gqunukhwebe and Ndlambe Xhosa surrounded Fort Peddie, the military headquarters of the Ceded Territory buffer zone, and

cut it off from the outside world. Again and again wagon convoys sent from Grahamstown for the relief of Peddie were ambushed at Trompetters Drift in the Fish River bush, their oxen driven off and their contents seized. Governor Maitland, in desperation, attempted to raise the siege of Peddie by landing troops at Waterloo Bay (now the Mpekweni resort). The Xhosa could not stop the troops landing, nor could they ambush the wagons in the flatter open ground near the coast, but they burnt the grass all around and the colonial oxen starved.

Controlling the mountains and the forests, the Xhosa were nevertheless helpless against fortified positions such as Fort Peddie, where about seven thousand Xhosa warriors were driven off with considerable loss but "not the hair of a white man was touched".³ The major Xhosa military disaster of the entire war occurred at the Gwangqa River near Peddie, when the British cavalry killed something like 500 Xhosa on the open plain, losing only two of their own men.⁴

In September 1846, Sandile attempted to break the stalemate:

As many people had been killed on both sides, we had better, he says, drop the war, and cultivate the fields. He says he will return to his place and cultivate his gardens; the soldiers may come and kill him, but he will not fight any more.⁵

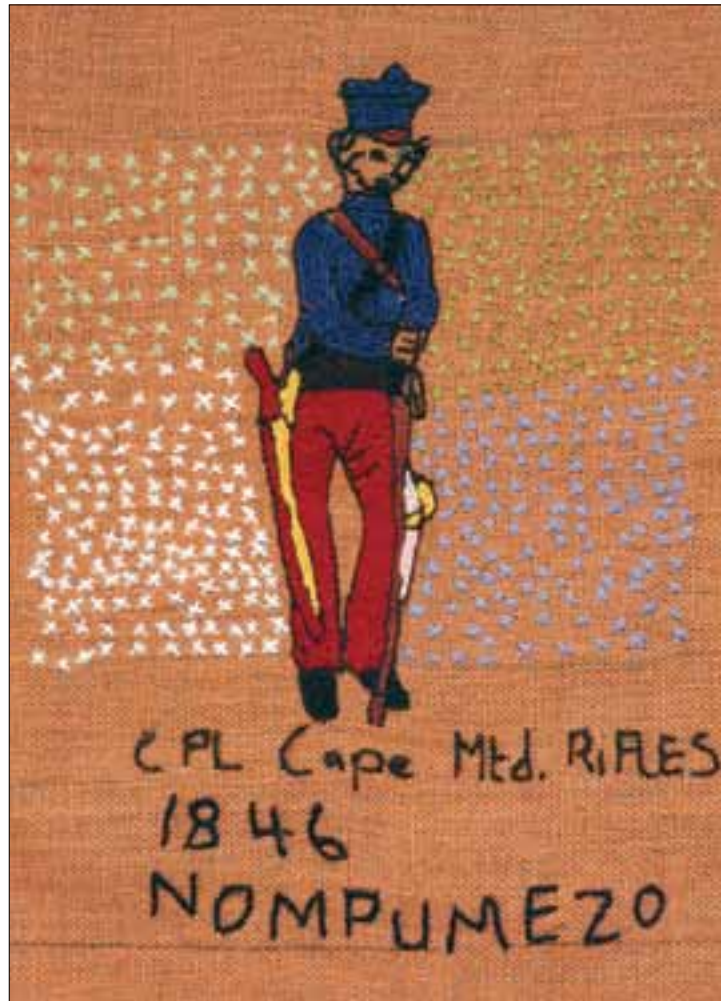
Maitland, we may imagine, accepted Sandile's offer with great relief. Claiming victory over the Xhosa food supplies (though not over the Xhosa themselves), he informed the British Colonial Secretary:⁶

Their crops are absolutely in our power. We have captured some of their cattle and more have perished .. in a time too of severe drought. Their hordes of corn .. have been taken by our coloured patrols. Great scarcity among them has been the result; many of them are much wasted, and the women have extremely suffered the horrors of famine.

Agreement in principle was reached. The Xhosa would surrender their guns and register as British subjects. But at least they would keep their land. Maitland, whatever his other faults, was wary of settler expansion. Moving the colonial boundary to the Kei would, they thought, only replicate the frontier conflict further east. Any vacant land in the Ceded Territory buffer zone should be filled up,



Victoria, *Chief King Sandile*, detail from *The Keiskamma Tapestry*, 2004, wool and thread on canvas, Houses of Parliament collection, by kind permission of Carol Hofmeyr.



Nompumezo, *Cpl Cape Mtd. Rifles 1846*, detail from *The Keiskamma Tapestry*, 2004, wool and thread on canvas, Houses of Parliament collection, by kind permission of Carol Hofmeyr.

not with settlers, but with colonial auxiliaries, Khoikhoi, Mfengu, even baSotho. The War of the Axe, begun in April was all but over by September 1846.

The Second Phase of the War of the Axe, 1847.

The settler press was against any peace that allowed the Xhosa to retain their lands. “They do not admit they are a conquered people”, thundered the *Graham’s Town Journal*.⁷ Tragically, events played into their hands. A month before Sandile’s unilateral declaration of peace, Earl Grey, the British Colonial Secretary in London, having realized that Maitland was not up to the job decided to replace him with a younger man. The new Governor, Henry Pottinger, arrived in Grahamstown in February 1847 with instructions from Grey that “the Kaffir tribes no longer be left in possession of their independence”.⁸ By this time, only Chief Phatho was still in arms but he had retreated beyond the Kei River and was begging for peace. Sandile’s Xhosa were “perfectly quiet,” as even Pottinger had to admit. The very peacefulness of the Xhosa infuriated the *Graham’s Town Journal*.⁹

What punishment have we inflicted? What use have we made of the sword of redistributive justice? No use at all. It has rusted in our hands... Our arms and our people have .. excited the ridicule and contempt of the Kafirs. They are now living on their lands in peace and quietness. They are cultivating their fields and gardens. They are contemptuously laughing us to scorn.

It was not enough for the settlers that the Xhosa should, though undefeated on the battlefield, accept colonial rule for the sake of peace. They had to be visibly humbled, more particularly Sandile, the symbol of Xhosa nationhood. On 15 June 1847, on the pretext (never proved) that Sandile had connived at the theft of fourteen goats (!) from the neighbouring Mfengu, his Great Place was attacked at night. Sandile himself escaped but this time the settlers got what they wanted – the resumption of the war. Fighting only ended when Sandile – expecting a peaceful negotiation – was taken prisoner by a military officer and confined to Grahamstown gaol.¹⁰ He was still in gaol when the new Governor, Sir Harry Smith, arrived (December 1847). Smith refused to shake Sandile’s hand, and insisted that the Chief kiss his foot instead.

After that, it was downhill all the way. Sir Harry Smith, beloved of the settlers, had been Governor D’Urban’s military commander during the Sixth Frontier War and he now proceeded to implement D’Urban’s system with a vengeance. The Seventh Frontier War (1846-7) was barely over, but the run-up to the Eighth (1850-3) had already begun.

Losing Faith in the Civilizing Mission.¹¹

The War of the Axe crystallised a growing disillusion with the “civilizing mission”, which Andrew Bank has characterized as “the transition from an era of early 19th Century optimism to that of mid-century pessimism”. The fruits of slave emancipation and mission activity had both fallen short of expectations. Even so liberal a missionary as James Laing of Burns’ Hill attributed Xhosa misfortunes to the fact that they had “rejected the gospel and now they are to be called to account for their abuse of the mercies of God”.¹² John Fairbairn, the editor of the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, who had in 1829 asserted the Xhosa to be “men who differ from us only by the colour of their skin” now spoke of them as differing as much from the colonists “as any two varieties of the same species ever did or can do”. “Not victory but conquest is to be the end of this outbreak”, he proclaimed. With the War of the Axe, the age of colonial expansion at the Cape had well and truly begun.¹³

Endnotes

1. G. Cathcart, *Correspondence of Lieut-General the Hon. Sir George Cathcart, K.C.B.*, London: John Murray, 1857, p. 349.
2. N. Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa’s Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1992, pp.841-4; J.S. Galbraith, *Reluctant Empire*, Berkeley: California University Press, 1963, pp.164-175.
3. J. Appleyard, *The War of the Axe and the Xosa Bible*, Cape Town: Struik, 1971, p.64.
4. Appleyard, p.67.
5. J.B. Peires, *The House of Phalo: The History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1981, p.152.
6. Ibid.



Zita Zukiswa, *Private 74th Highlanders 1851*, detail from *The Keiskamma Tapestry*, 2004, wool and thread on canvas, Houses of Parliament collection, by kind permission of Carol Hofmeyr.

7. Ibid, p.154.
8. B. Le Cordeur and C. Saunders, *The War of the Axe*, Brenthurst Press, 1981, p.21.
9. *Graham’s Town Journal*, 15 June 1847, cited by Le Cordeur and Saunders, p.119.
10. For the heated correspondence on this issue, Le Cordeur and Saunders, Chapter 7.
11. A. Bank, *Liberals and their Enemies: Racial Ideology at the Cape of Good Hope, 1820 to 1850*, Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1995.
12. Quoted Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks*, London: Routledge, 2001, p.148.
13. Quoted Bank, pp.349, 351, 352. For more on the liberals’ equivocal position, see B. Le Cordeur and C. Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*, Brenthurst Press, 1976, pp. 265-266.

Charles Bell (1813–1882)

Charles Bell came to South Africa in 1830 when he was just 16 years old to join his uncle, John Bell, then Colonial Secretary at the Cape, seemingly to prepare for a career in the colonial civil service. John Bell was a veteran of the Napoleonic wars and had no experience of surveying, which is the career Charles was soon to follow, but he was a draughtsman, with a taste for caricature, and it is likely he who encouraged his nephew, who had no official training in art, to draw. In the household of John and Lady Catherine Bell, Charles entered the elite of Cape society and amongst his early drawings are portraits of such as Lady Frances Cole, wife of the Governor. Other early works trace his solitary journey around the peninsula. In 1834 his connections secured him the place as second draughtsman on the Andrew Smith Expedition to the Tropic of Capricorn on which he made ethnographic and zoological studies as well as hunting and genre scenes, many of them comic. In 1838, Bell joined the Surveyor-General's office in the Old Slave Lodge which remained his headquarters except for stints such as his residence at Grahamstown between 1842 and 1844, and his documentation of the Namaqualand copper belt in 1855. Bell continued to draw throughout his life alongside his career as government surveyor, and he found ways to market his work anonymously, both in the print shops of Cape Town, through which he sold 'typical' Cape scenes and personalities, and in designs for engraving in periodicals, such as his war scenes in the *Illustrated London News*.

Bell's official career culminated in his appointment as Surveyor-General to succeed Colonel Charles Michell in 1848. By that time he had achieved considerable stature for himself and his family in the colony. He was a founder member of the South African Mutual Life Assurance Society in 1845. And he was prominent in the establishment of the Fine Arts Exhibitions from 1850, making regular contributions himself, notably the well-known Van Riebeeck paintings which are ambitious attempts to introduce the genre of History Painting to the Cape. Always something of a polymath Bell designed, amongst other things, the trigger that

Prince Alfred used to open the Breakwater, the commemorative epergne for Andrew Geddes Bain, the crest of the South African College, and the celebrated Cape triangular postage stamp. Bell retired with his family to Scotland in 1873, where he continued making drawings; and he died in 1882. The town of Bellville in the Western Cape is named after him.

The Drawings of the War of the Axe, 1846

Charles Bell appears to have hit upon the subject of the War of the Axe by accident while he was preparing a loose collection of 'Rough Sketches of Scenes illustrative of late events in Southern Africa', as he named the first drawing of the series. Once the War broke out in 1846 Bell, who had spent the early years of the decade working as 2nd Assistant Surveyor-General in Grahamstown (see Section 17), clearly decided to use the knowledge he had acquired in the Eastern Cape to illustrate its progress for the new phenomenon of the illustrated periodical. Bell incorporated into his account drawings he had made in and around Grahamstown, such as the Xhosa dignitaries that appear in Section 9; and he certainly used the connections he had made at that time with military and other personnel to furnish himself later with both verbal and visual accounts of the war (see Section 7). Bell also drew on reports in the Cape media and, as several early drawings attest, he himself witnessed subjects such as the mustering of troops in Cape Town.

The collection, therefore, comprises mostly drawings of a single type – in the same style and on the same kind of paper, etc. – but several were clearly made at different times and in different styles, notably those copied from the work of other artists and his own earlier work. At some point, Bell collected all the drawings of the War that he had retained – some had been sent for publication and not returned – and mounted them onto the pages of a new sketchbook that was given the designation of 'Sketchbook No.5'

when his collection was accommodated at the University of Cape Town. Bell had inscribed many of the drawings with titles or other descriptions but, when he mounted them into their new sketchbook, he inscribed new captions onto its pages directly below his original drawings. These captions are reproduced in this exhibition as the titles to the works. When the sketchbook was dismembered for restoration, the drawings were allocated 'C' numbers in the sequence C31 to C90 and stored with drawings from other sources.

All the drawings were made in 1846 during the course of the first year of the War, except for a few that were likely made between 1842 and 1844: the captions in this catalogue do not repeat this information. All the drawings were made with pen and wash and a few include some pencil work.

Bell's artistic estate was divided into three. On part was lost in a fire; another, with many of the Andrew Smith Expedition drawings, was acquired by what is now MuseumAfrica in Johannesburg; and the third, which includes the War of the Axe series, passed by descent and was gifted to the John and Charles Bell Trust which accommodates the collection in the University of Cape Town Libraries: for ease of reading, this information is not repeated in the captions.



Grave of victim of the War of the Axe, 1846, Fort Beaufort, Photograph by Francki Burger.

2: The Death of Captain Norden

Joshua Norden, Captain of the Grahamstown Yeomanry and, according to the diarist Thomas Stubbs, overly fond of splendid dress, was ambushed at Woest Hill, about 12km from Grahamstown towards Port Alfred, by Gqunukhwebe followers of Phatho from the coast, on 25th April 1846. His body, stripped and mutilated, was retrieved by comrades the next day and a monument raised to him in Grahamstown Cathedral.

By placing this violent scene at the start of his series, Bell suggests that it was the amaXhosa who were responsible for the original aggression in the war when in fact Colonel John Hare first invaded Xhosaland to punish Sandile for refusing to hand over Tsili, the thief of the axe, and the rescue party who killed Tsili's Khoi fellow prisoner: see Proclamation in *The Graham's Town Journal*, 4th April 1846 in Section 3.

Bell's drawing was reproduced in the *Illustrated London News* of 25th July 1846 with the title 'Kafirs Bush-fighting'.

The Word 'Kaffir'

At some point after 1994, the Cathedral authorities systematically covered words that were deemed to be offensive on Captain Norden's and other monuments in the building – the principal object of this campaign being the word 'Kaffir' that had been as freely used in this ecclesiastical space as it was by Bell in his drawings.

The Cathedral campaign clearly indicates that there has been a change in understanding of the meaning of this word, at least between the settlers and their descendants. To look briefly at this history is not to question whether the word should be found objectionable today – opinion on this matter currently is both vehement and universal – but, rather, to ask whether it has always caused such profound offence.¹

Writing in 1811, the German traveller, Henry Lichtenstein explained that the word 'Caffre' was originally used by the Swahili of the East African coast to refer to all 'infidels' or non-Muslims and that the Portuguese adopted it initially in their colonies but gradually discarded it as they became better acquainted with their



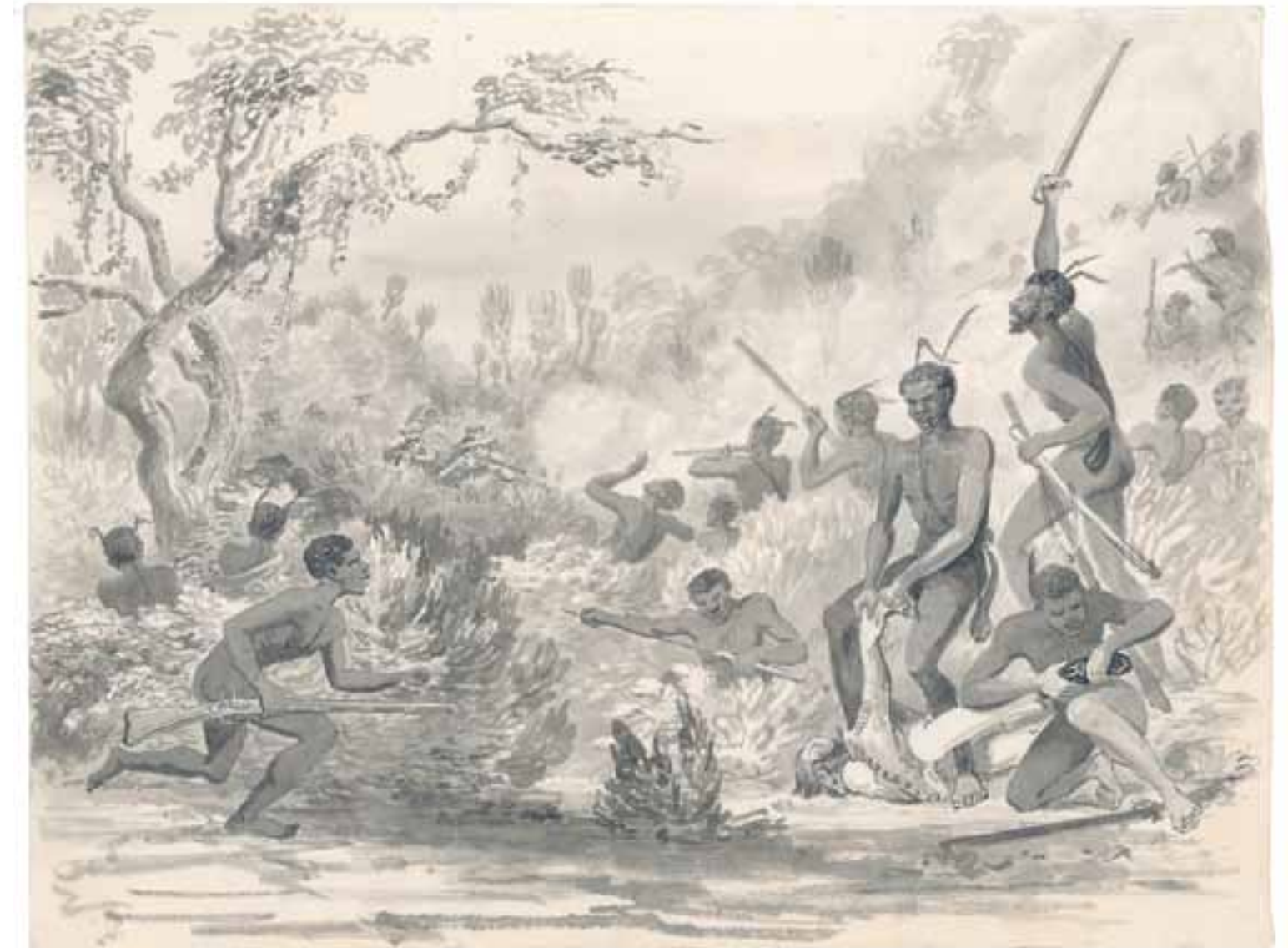
Alexander Erskine, *Monument to Joshua Norden*, 1846, in Grahamstown Cathedral, showing the covering done since 1994 of language thought to be offensive in the original inscription.

Photograph by Brent Meistre.

African neighbours.² Then the Dutch, extending from the Cape, applied it to "a small tribe eastward of the colony" who they distinguished from other groups such as the Thembu, the Mpondo, the Tswana, etc.

S.E.K. Mqhayi's account in *Ityala lamaWele*, that was first published in 1914, differs from Lichtenstein mainly in overlooking this specific application of the term:

This name of "Kiaffir" is a name from the Arabic; by this name the Arabs were saying "heathen" ("Nqhola"). They used it to refer to all people, including whites, who did not believe in the prophet Mohamet. The Portuguese, when they did not want us, liked to use the term to belittle us (literally, to make us disappear). From there, it spread to the other white nations who called us by that name when they came to understand that we were inclined to be obstinate ("Nqhola" meaning both 'obstinate' and 'heathen': translation by Jeff Peires).



The Kafirs invade. Grahamstown Corps defeated. Capt Norden left dead. Ap. May 1846. (C32, pen and wash, 18 x 24cms).

The difference is significant because during the early years of the formation of the Xhosa polity – the gradual assimilation of the Thembu, the Mpondo, and others into a larger Xhosa identity – the word appears to have been used specifically to describe the Xhosa people without necessary derogatory intent: early travellers and artists, such as John Barrow and Samuel Daniell, who clearly admired both the physical and moral dimensions of the amaXhosa, missionaries and Xhosa champions such as ‘Justus’ (A.G. Campbell), all used this word, as did the colonial and London media, such as the *Illustrated London News*, and the British Government itself in the formation of the province of British Kaffraria. Moreover, if colonial records are to be believed, leaders such as Sandile,³ Maqoma⁴ and Botomane⁵ used it to describe their own people.

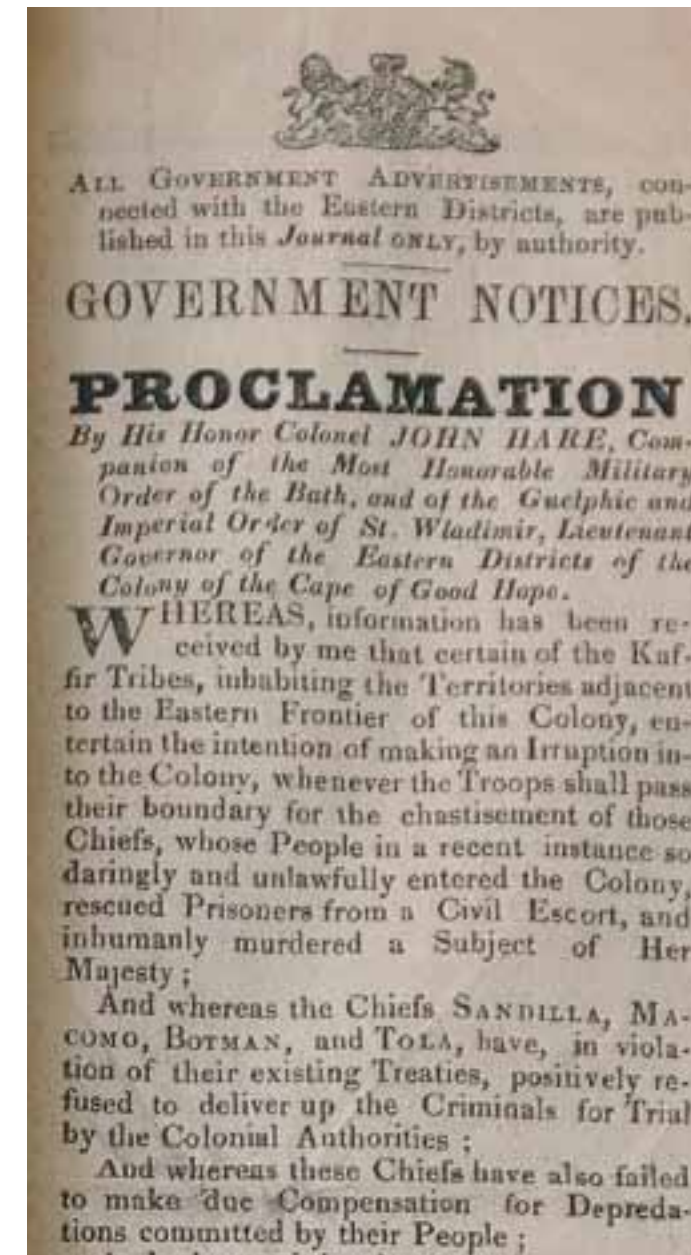
Subsequently, the use of the word changed in acquiring unmistakable derogatory connotation and in being applied indiscriminately to all African people. A very early instance of its negative use is in the missionary newspaper *Isithunywa senyanga* of 11th December 1850 in which the new convert Mary Anne wrote a letter headed *Lahlani ke obu buKafire*. Mary Anne claimed that English ways – of dress, furniture, housing, etc., were superior to Kafir ways and so: *nisiti nje elogama lokuba ngu-Kafire (nam andililtandi), lahlani ke obubuKafire nitukwa ngabo* (“If you do not like that word that says “Kafir” (and I myself don’t like it), leave off the Kafir things that you degrade yourself with”).⁶ Further North, meanwhile, “The swear word *ikhafula* in Zulu country referred to a Natal African under the yoke of whites; free Zulu served none but their king”.⁷

The Rev. Joseph Shooter, in *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country* (1857), seems to have had no derogatory intention when he stated simply “The Kafirs – a name borrowed from the Arabs – lie on the east coast between the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay” while remarking that *Amalala* was “apparently an opprobrious term”.⁸ By the early twentieth century, S.E.K. Mqhayi, understanding that the term was being applied to all Black people, rejected it strongly in favour, ironically, of “the people of Ntu” that was taken up during apartheid as

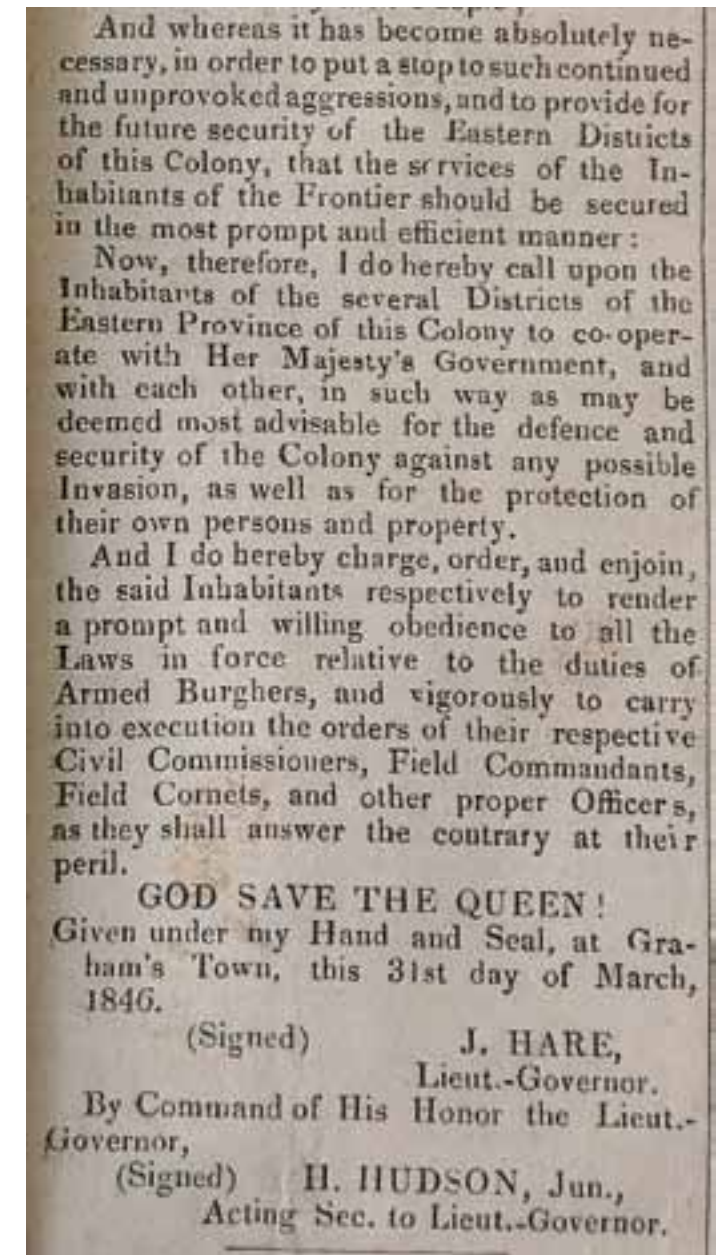
“Bantu”. But, while it is clear that many colonials, perhaps including Charles Bell, used the word without derogatory intent, Lichtenstein, who described its early history, is clear that from the beginning “Koossas or Kaussas ... are exceedingly offended at being called Caffres”.

Endnotes

1. This note, which is not meant to be definitive, is the product of several conversations between myself and Jeff Peires who has generously supplied me with most of the references. Jeff has always insisted that the word continues to cause great offence to this day.
2. H. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa* (1812; see Van Riebeeck Society reprint, Cape Town, 1928), Vol. 1, pp. 298-299.
3. Sandile is reported by an official interpreter on 21st and 22nd October 1847 to have asked “Where then are the other chiefs of Kafirland?": Basil le Cordeur and Chris Saunders, *The War of the Axe, 1847*, pp.227-228.
4. Maqoma is reported to have said in 1833 “I will allow you to inquire at Fort Willshire whether or not I have sent in horses and cattle, re-captured from other Caffres, which had been stolen from the Colony”: evidence of R. Aitchison, *Report on the Select Committee on Aborigines*, cited by Jeff Peires, *House of Phalo*, pp.90-91.
5. Botomane is reported in the *Colonial Times* as having said that although some officials “do not desire the blood of the Caffers to moisten their fields, nor to drink milk of the Caffers’ cattle. Others smell the grass of Cafferland, and therefore they regard not their own peace, but would drive us into the bush with our women and children”: Peires, *House of Phalo*, pp.127-128.
6. Translation by Jeff Peires who kindly provided the reference to J. Opland and P.T. Mtuzze, *Izwi Labantu*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1994, p.78.
7. Keletso E. Atkins, *The Moon is Dead! Give us our Money!: Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843-1900*, Portsmouth, N.H.: Heneimann, 1993, p.71, citing *The Natal Diaries of Dr W.H.I. Bleek, 1855-6*, ed. O.H. Spohr, Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1965, p.69.
8. Rev. Joseph Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country* (1857), reprint New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969, p.iii; similarly, G.F. Angas, *The Kafirs Illustrated*, London: J. Hogarth, 1849, p.viii.



3: *The Graham's Town Journal*, 4th April 1846. Lieut-Governor John Hare's Proclamation of a State of War between the Colony and the Xhosa Chiefs Sandile, Maqoma, Botomane and Tola.



4: **The Illustrated London News**

The Kafirs invade ... Capt Norden left dead was reproduced with the caption ‘Kafirs Bush-fighting’ in the *Illustrated London News* on 25th July 1846, together with ‘Rescue of the ammunition wagons, 17th April 1846’ (see Section 14). Founded in 1842, the *Illustrated London News* was the major British pictorial magazine of the nineteenth century.

The black-and-white tonality of Bell’s War drawings was clearly designed for reproduction in engraving and it is likely that several designs published anonymously in the magazine derived from drawings by Bell that do not survive. For example, Bell was most likely the “clever artist at Cape Town” to whom the illustration of the ‘Missionary Station of Tyumye’ is attributed in the *Illustrated London News* 3rd April 1847 (see Section 8: The amaXhosa through Colonial Eyes). Conversely, several more of Bell’s drawings were submitted to the magazine that were not published in the event.

The double-format that Bell used in four of his drawings seems to have been intended for this publication; and the (shamelessly racist) instructions to the engraver on one of them, the *Bushmen attacking the Kafirs*, confirm that he did intend to have it printed: for an account of the incident portrayed in this drawing, and the involvement of Khoi in the war, see Section 5.

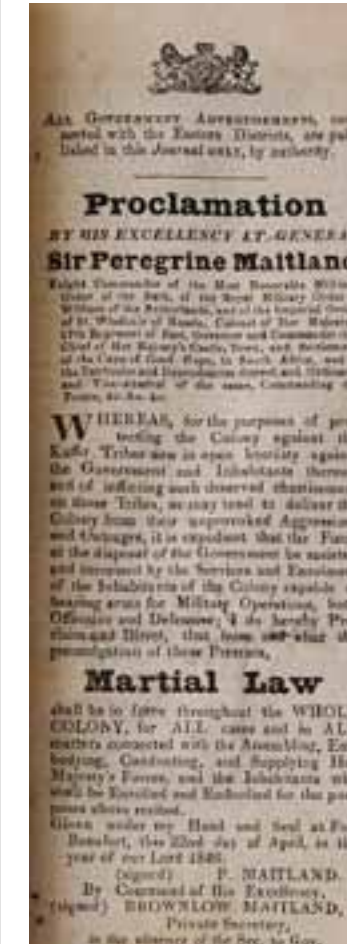


Fingoes attacking the Krantz (C89, pen and wash, 36 x 24.5cms).



Bushmen attacking the Kafirs (C90, pen and wash, 36 x 25cms).

6: **The Graham’s Town Journal,**
25th April 1846



Proclamation of a State of Martial Law in the colony. Note also the two notices of Licences for the sale of gunpowder in the colony, and the notice reporting the promotion of Charles Bell to the rank of Assistant Surveyor-General.

5: White vs Black?

Although the War of the Axe, like other mid-century wars, is generally understood as a conflict between British settlers and the Xhosa inhabitants of the Eastern Cape, the composition of both sides was rather more complex.

Bell's *Malay Volunteers* shows that Moslem people in the Cape signed up for the War of the Axe, with as many as three divisions serving on garrison – if not fighting – duty under their flag of a crescent moon on a green ground with the Union Jack in the top corner.

Similarly, Bell's drawing of the *Liberated African Corps* shows that many freed slaves from Mozambique and elsewhere, for whatever reason, joined the campaign.

The colonial forces also included 'Burghers' – 'Boers', 'Africans' or 'colonists', as they were also called – both, as in *Cape District Mounted Burghers* and *Stellenbosch Burghers fighting in Hell Poort* (C86-88), recruited from the Western Cape, and those already settled in the Eastern districts, as in the attack on Nel's Camp (C68-70). Bell's treatment of these Afrikaners was very much more positive than their image in the aquatints of Samuel Daniell and writings of John Barrow, and other early British commentators, who generally portrayed them as cruel and indolent and blamed them for the unrest on the Eastern Frontier. Bell showed these Burghers fighting alongside the colonial forces, for example in the Battle of the Gwanga (C75, Section 18), but in reality they maintained their independence and in January 1851 refused to join Harry Smith's renewed campaign, blaming the Governor's policies towards the amaXhosa for the outbreak of hostilities.

Similarly, the Eastern Cape Khoi generally fought on the side of the colonists. The scene of *Bushmen attacking the Kafirs* (Section 4, C90), is Bell's only record of the war on the northern front that erupted in July 1846. Joseph Read, the son of the London missionary James Read and his Khoi wife, led a heterogeneous party from the 'Bushman Station' against Chief Maphasa's Thembu people and captured some fifteen hundred head of his cattle. But conditions on the frontier remained volatile. By 1850,

settler hunger for their land, and Government arrogance caused Kat River people to side with the amaXhosa against the colony in the Eighth Frontier/War of Dispossession.

The most controversial of the colonial forces were the Mfengu – or Fingoes – named by the amaXhosa as "homeless people seeking work" who, having been displaced by the Mfecane wars in KwaZulu Natal, found refuge amongst the amaXhosa only to join the British army when it crossed the Kei River during the Sixth Frontier/War of Dispossession in 1835. They were settled around Peddie in the 'Ceded Territory' buffer zone but also supplied labour to the burgeoning wool industry in the colony. Many accepted Christianity and European education and fought for the British in order to secure and extend their own land. Consequently, there arose enormous resentment of the Mfengu amongst the amaXhosa, particularly Phato and his amaGqunukhwebe who considered themselves betrayed by them.

Captain Granger's Company of Malay Volunteers at drill in the Main Barracks, Cape Town, 8th May 1846 (C34, pen and wash, 18 x 24cms).

Levy in Cape Town. Cape District Mounted Burghers muster in Caledon Square, 11th May 1846 (C35, pen and wash, 18 x 24cms).

Levy in Cape Town. Liberated African Corps mustered for embarkation 1846 (C38, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24cms).

Colonel Hare leading on the Fingo levies (C85, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24.5cms).



7: Frontier Forts

Borrowing from sketches by military men, Bell sets the scene of the War of the Axe with a group of drawings of frontier forts.

Fort Beaufort, founded as a fort in 1822, and developed as a town from 1837, is where the cause of the 7th Frontier/War of Dispossession, the theft of the axe from Holliday's store, took place.

Fort Peddie was established in 1835 during the 6th War – and became the military headquarters of the Ceded Territory buffer zone. The *Graham's Town Journal* reported on 6th June 1846: "A fortress like Fort Peddie is absolutely impregnable to any army not having artillery – to fire on it with musketry only would be of as little avail as shooting at Table Mountain with a pop-gun, and 100 men might hold it against all Kaffirland". See also Section 15 for the Attack on Fort Peddie 21st May 1846.

Fort Brown was also first built in 1835 and during the War of the Axe was one of the strongest forts on the frontier. But Private Buck Adams of the 7th Dragoon Guards noted sardonically that within two days of the declaration of war, the extensive stores of this fort "could not furnish us with a feed of corn for our horses".

Fort Dacres, in contrast, was dug quickly from earth ramparts as a temporary repository for provisions brought by sea to Waterloo Bay when the road between Grahamstown and Fort Peddie was cut off early in the War of the Axe: see Section 14 for Attacks on Wagon Trains. Bell had depicted Captain Granger, the original author of this sketch, with his company of Malay Volunteers at the Cape Town Barracks: see Section 5 – and presumably the two men met again when Granger returned to the Cape.

W.F.D. Jervois (1821-1897) of the Royal Engineers was in the Eastern Cape from 1841 constructing fortified posts and gun towers and again, after a short interval in Cape Town, from 1846 conducting a survey that would be published in 1850 as the *Military Sketch of Part of British Kaffraria*: see Section 17.

Fort Beaufort from a sketch by Lieut. W.F.D. Jervois, R.E. (C42, pen and wash, 17.5 x 25.5cms).

Sketch of Fort Peddie by Lieut W.F.D. Jervois, R.E. (C43, pen and wash and pencil, 17.5 x 25.5cms).

Hermanus Kraal or Fort Brown from a sketch by Lieut. W.F.D. Jervois, R.E. (C44, pen and wash and pencil, 17.5 x 24cms).

Fort Dacres and the new ferry across the mouth of the Great Fish River from an original sketch taken from the ceded territory June 1846 by Captain Robert Granger of the Malay Volunteer Corps. (C49, pen and wash and pencil, 17.5 x 24.5cms).



8: The amaXhosa through Colonial Eyes

Images of Xhosa people in the nineteenth century derive from colonial sources – obviously, the only pictorial sources available – and reflect as much the changing colonial views of these subjects as they do any changes in their appearance.

Early representations of Xhosa people by Samuel Daniell (1775-1811), for example, reflect Enlightenment ideas of the benefits – physical and moral – of living close to Nature that are expressed in classicizing images of idyllic landscapes, on the one hand, and the human figure conceived in terms of antique sculpture, on the other: indeed, commentators at this time would routinely compare Xhosa men and women to classical sculpture. Thus John Barrow wrote of the amaXhosa in *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* (1806) that “There is perhaps no nation on earth, taken collectively, that can produce so fine a race of men...: they are tall, stout, muscular, well-made, elegant figures... (T)here are perhaps no unlettered people on the face of the earth whose manners and opinions have more the appearance of civilization”; and William Daniell in *Sketches Representing the Native Tribes, Animals and Scenery of Southern Africa from Drawings made by the late Mr Samuel Daniell* (1820) described one of Samuel’s portrait subjects as “A young man about twenty, of six foot ten inches high, was one of the finest figures perhaps ever created; he was a perfect Hercules, and a cast from his body would not have disgraced the pedestal of that deity in the Farnese Palace”.

Samuel Daniell’s ‘A Kaffer Village’ (Plate 4 in *African Scenery and Animals*, 1804-05) is composed in terms of Classical Arcadia, or perhaps even Ovid’s Golden Age when humankind was supposed to have enjoyed the bounties of Nature without labour or strife. And Bell’s contraposto figure in the foreground of the **‘Missionary Institution of Tyumie, Cape of Good Hope’**, a design he made to be engraved in *The Illustrated London News* of 3rd April 1847, suggests that in the protected environment of a mission station such idyllic conditions were imagined to persist until the mid-century.

Daniell’s letterpress for **‘Kaffers on a March’**, Plate 5 of *African Scenery and Animals*, describes the amaXhosa as “a race of

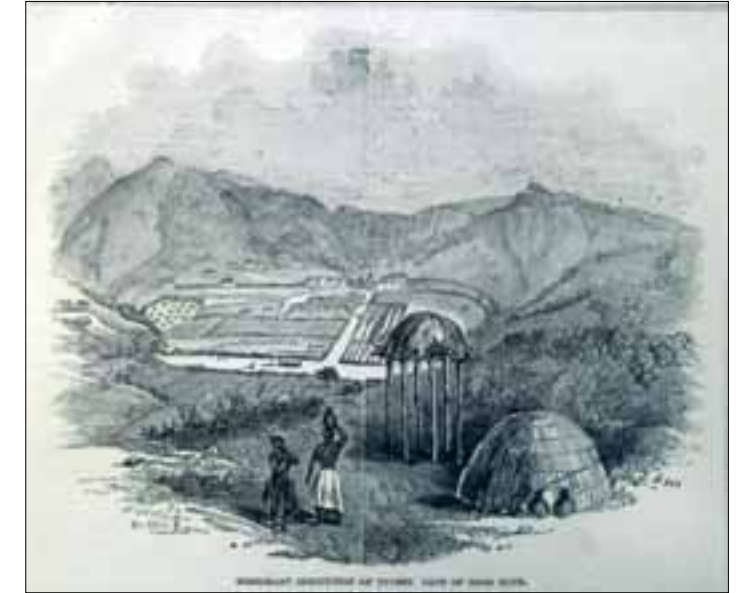
people very superior to what they have usually been considered, both with regard to their physical and moral character”, and his figures are clearly influenced by classical art. Forty years later, soon after the War of the Axe, Thomas Baines’s (1820-1875) **‘Kaffirs leaving the Colony for their Native Seat, with all their acquired property’**, painted in 1848 but lithographed in 1852, gives an entirely different view of the Xhosa subject. Barrow had maintained that the exemplary character of the amaXhosa was the result of their continuing freedom beyond the then borders of the colony; but Baines seems to make the point that his African subjects have been debased by their experience of service inside the colony: certainly, by this time, the amaXhosa were being valued for their labour, rather than their freedom; and colonial arguments to dispossess them further of their land were clearly reinforced by presenting them in this degraded form.

Samuel Daniell, ‘A Kaffer Village’, aquatint, Plate 4 in *African Scenery and Animals*, London: Samuel Daniell, 2 volumes, 1804-05, 32.5 x 45.1cms

Anonymous steel engraving after Charles Bell, ‘Missionary Institution of Tyumie, Cape of Good Hope’, *Illustrated London News*, 3rd April 1847. The drawing for this engraving does not survive.

Samuel Daniell, ‘Kaffers on a March’, aquatint, Plate 5 in *African Scenery and Animals*, 32.7 x 45.6cms.

Thomas Baines, ‘Kaffirs leaving the Colony for their Native Seat, with all their acquired property’, lithograph by Day & Son, Plate 6 in *Scenery and Events in South Africa*, London: Ackermann and Co., 1852, 33.4 x 48cms.



Baines himself in his *Journal of Residence in Africa, 1842-53*, frequently lamented the loss of stature that came with the Xhosa's (enforced) adoption of Western clothing. And he, Charles Bell and other artists of the mid-century often mocked the amaXhosa – amongst others – for their misuse of alcohol and tobacco. Inevitably, these critiques of their subjects were expressed visually in a gradual change from the heroic forms used by Daniell at the beginning of the century to the caricatural figures that appear in so many of Bell's works. An extreme case of this transformation of the image of the amaXhosa is Robert Godlonton's frontispiece to his *Narrative of the Kaffir War of 1850-51* (1851), that shows two of Baines's designs 'Kaffirs sketched at Sandili's Kraal on the Keiskamma' and 'Kaffir Police of the 1st Division, sketched at Capt. Davies' Station, near Fort Cox', reinterpreted by the engraver R. Branson as cruel caricatures. Godlonton was the editor of the *Graham's Town Journal* and perhaps the most influential and virulent opponent of Xhosa interests of his generation.

Military subjects constitute a special case in this story of the gradual debasement of the Xhosa image in the mid-nineteenth century imaginary. While many of Bell's depictions of warfare draw on racist stereotypes to attribute a sense of barbarity to the Xhosa fighters, others show a more heroic image of "warriors": as Baines himself remarked, colonial soldiers obviously benefitted from having their (vanquished) opponents depicted as "worthy of their steel".

R. Branson after Thomas Baines, 'Kaffirs sketched at Sandilli's Kraal on the Keiskamma' and 'Kaffir Police of the 1st Division, sketched at Capt. Davies' Station, near Fort Cox', frontispiece to Robert Godlonton and Edward Irving, *A Narrative of the Kaffir War of 1850-51*, London: Pelham Richardson, 1851, 8.7 x 12.5cms and 8.4 x 12cms.

These engravings are demonstrably more crude than Baines' original designs.



9: Xhosa Genealogy

Suthu

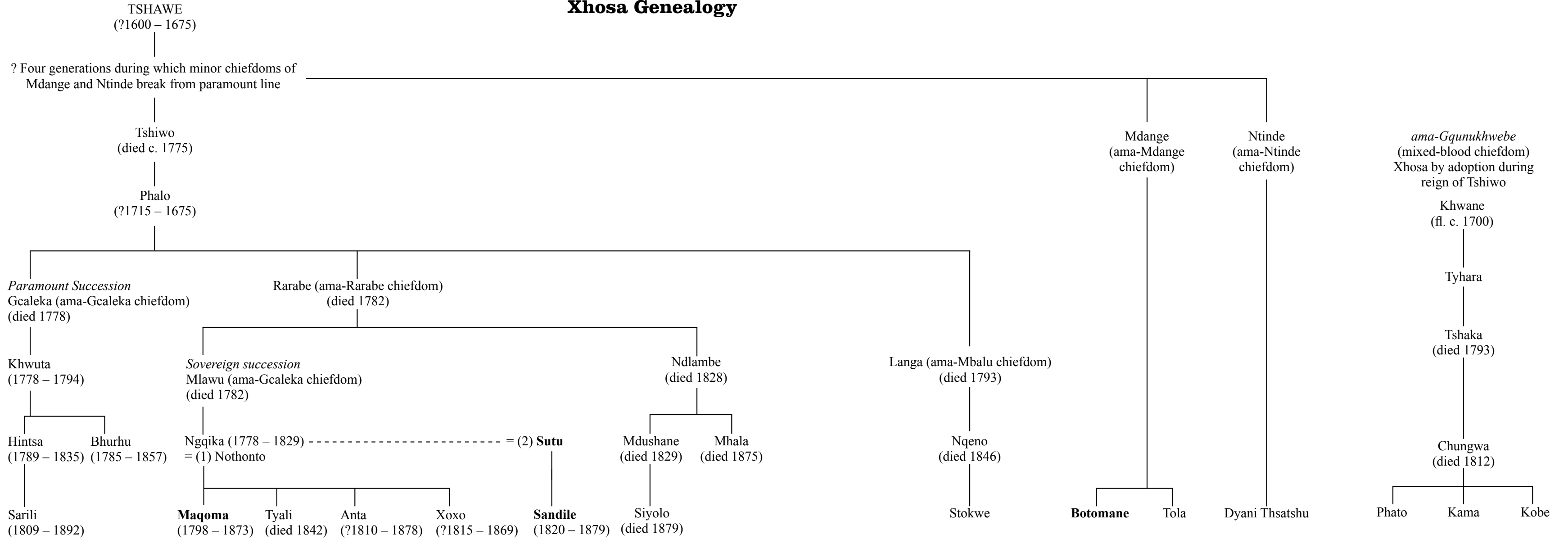
Daughter of the Thembu Chief Tshatshu, Suthu married Chief Ngqika about 1818. Ngqika died suddenly in 1829, some said poisoned by Suthu as he was about to marry a more senior wife. Suthu's son Sandile inherited the Chieftainship because she had been Ngqika's Great Wife. With the assistance of Sandile's half-brothers, Maqoma, Tyali and Anta, Suthu raised Sandile until his majority around 1840; and she continued to influence him towards peace for some time.

In her time, Suthu was compared occasionally with Sara Bartman, the so-called Hottentot Venus, but Bell seems to have introduced a satirical note in conveying her extraordinary shape and size.

Sutu. Great Widow of Gaika and mother of Sandili, Chief of the Amamosae (C50, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24cms).



Xhosa Genealogy



Adapted from Noël Mostert, *Frontiers : The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the amaXhosa*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1992.



Bell most likely made these portraits, and a few other drawings, while he was working as 2nd Assistant Surveyor-General in Grahamstown between 1842 and 1844.

Sandile (1820-1878), son of Ngqika and Suthu, was born in 1820 with a crippled leg that is usually concealed in portraits of him. He is said to have been named after Alexander the Great (“Alexander Omkulu”) “a Chief from overseas who was famous in those days”. Although Lieutenant-Governor Hare’s Proclamation of 4th April 1846 named Sandilla, amongst other chiefs, as responsible for the war in refusing to deliver up the thief of the axe, Sandile was reluctant to join hostilities, eventually giving himself up in December 1846. Sandile was killed in 1878 during the 9th and last Frontier/War of Dispossession.

Sandile’s Great Place is shown in the drawing of Burns’ Hill (C62, see Section 14).

Sandili, Chief of the Amagaika or Amaxosae (C51, pen and wash, 19 x 24cms).



The Chieftain Macomo of the Amakosa. Son of Gaika, The old war chief of the Amagaika (C54, pen and wash, 18.5 x 24cms).

Maqoma (1798-1873) was also named in Lt-Governor Hare’s Proclamation of 1846. He was the son of Ngqika’s *Kunene* (Right-Hand) wife and, as such, could never inherit the Chieftainship. He established himself on the Kat River in the Winterberg in 1821 but was expelled in 1829, which made him deeply suspicious of colonial authorities ever afterwards. Maqoma was one of the few Xhosa chiefs not present at the siege of Fort Peddie. He sought an early end to the War of the Axe and surrendered in November 1846. As the series of wars ground inexorably on, Maqoma was exiled to Robben Island for 21 years.

S.E.K. Mqhayi reported that when Sir Harry Smith humiliated Maqoma in 1847 by insisting that he prostrate himself so that he could place his foot on his neck, Maqoma responded: “You behave like a dog, because you are only a dog: this thing was not sent by Victoria who knows that I am a royal just like herself” (*Ityala lamaWele*, 109).



Botma, a Chieftain of the Amaxosa (C55, pen and wash, 24 x 18.5cms).

Botomane (c1775-1867) was also named, with his cousin Tola, in Hare’s Proclamation. They were descendants of Mdange, the founder of the imiDange chieftainship, and considered themselves distinct from the amaNgqika, although they lived close to them. Tsili, who stole the eponymous axe, was a subject of Tola although the colonial authorities blamed Botomane equally – as well, of course, as Sandile and Maqoma.



10: Stereotypes and Caricatures

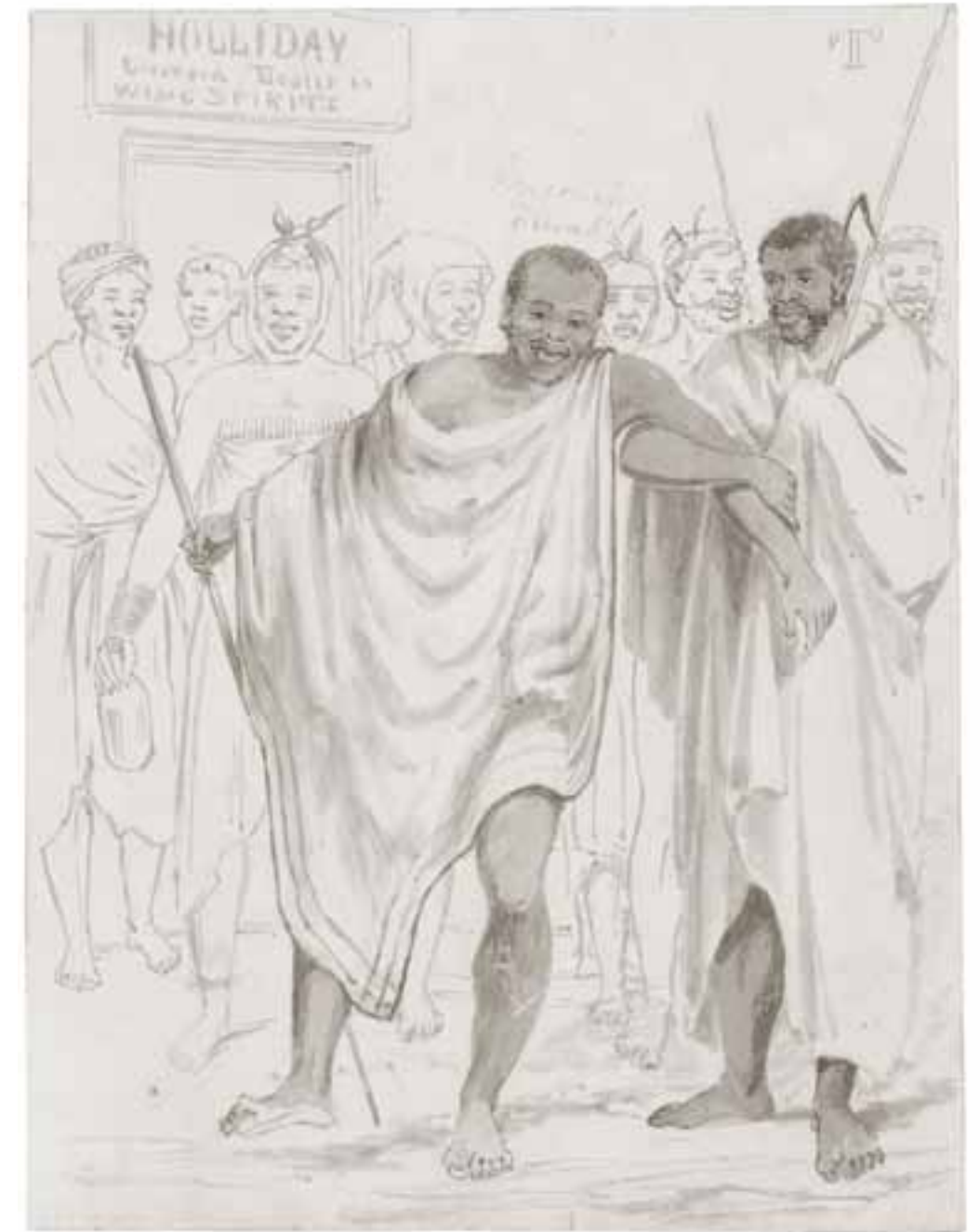
The difference in size and dissimilarity in style of these two drawings show that they were not originally designed as a pair but their juxtaposition in the collection renders their combined meaning greater than the sum of their parts.

In fact, *Macomo Sober* is close in style to the *Portrait of Queen Sutu* – and shares some of the caricatural quality of that drawing. Settler societies were often ambivalent about indigenous people adopting Western dress, regarding it as a necessary marker of ‘civilization’, while artists like Thomas Baines would simultaneously lament the loss of pristine dignity in traditional dress, comparing the kaross with the classical toga, for example. Similarly, chiefs were often presented with European clothes by colonial authorities only for their unconventional style of wearing them to be mocked by commentators like Bell: the artist’s description of Maqoma as “in full dress for visit of etiquette to colonial authorities” is clearly satirical.

Alcohol was another common theme in derogatory European comments on indigenous subjects: many of Bell’s representations of what he called “Hottentots” in the Cape feature alcohol abuse and alcohol-fuelled violence. Maqoma’s addiction to alcohol is well-documented. But Bell’s choice to represent *Maqoma Drunk* – as Baines later depicted Sandile – obviously contributed to the settler image of these leaders as incapable and irresponsible.

Incidentally, Holliday’s store in Fort Beaufort is where the axe, which gave the name to the 7th Frontier/War of Dispossession, was stolen.

Macomo Sober
(C52, pen and wash, 18 x 10cms)



Macomo Drunk
(C53, pen and wash, 18.5 x 14cms)

11: Nineteenth-century Racial Theory

Charles Bell, like Thomas Baines and Frederick I’Ons, employed a variety of styles to communicate different aspects of their Xhosa subjects in the middle years of the nineteenth century, ranging from heroic warrior to ethnographic specimen to outlandish barbarian to debased example of humanity: see Section 8 ‘The amaXhosa through Colonial Eyes’.

For their positive imagery, these artists, like contemporary writers, drew on ideas derived from classical art and literature. For their more negative representations of Xhosa people, they drew from popularized accounts of racial theory and the pseudo-science of phrenology. In these theories, the European was the ideal model against which all other races were measured. Thus John Elliotson wrote in 1835:

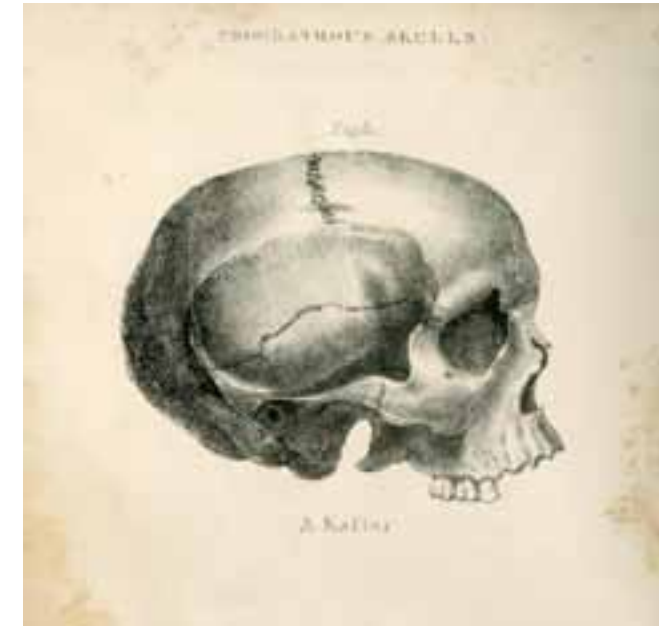
The Caucasian race is pre-eminent in all those mental and corporeal particulars which distinguish man from brutes ... The cranium is very capacious, the area of the face bears to its area but a proportion of one to four, and projects little or not at all at the lower parts: the intellectual faculties of its individuals are susceptible of the highest cultivation ... Philosophy and the fine arts flourish in it as their proper soil (*Human Physiology*, II, p.1069).

Physiologists, such as James Prichard in *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind* (I, p.285), claimed that the “general form of the marked Negro skull” contrasted with “the ordinary form of other races”, especially the Caucasian ideal, in being both “proportionally narrower, and the upper jaw is more protruded forwards”. This range of protrusion of the jaw – from Caucasian ‘orthognathism’ to African ‘prognathism’ – had led Pieter Camper to invent the notion of the ‘facial angle’ that was used throughout the nineteenth century as an indicator of the relationship between intellectual and sensual qualities in the subject, not only contrasting Europeans and Africans, but also within these different groups, usually along class lines: see Samuel R. Wells, *New Physiognomy, ‘A New Facial Angle’* and R.B.D. Wells, *A New Illustrated Hand-Book of Phrenology, Physiology and Physiognomy, ‘A Comparison of Four Profile Skulls’*. Similarly,

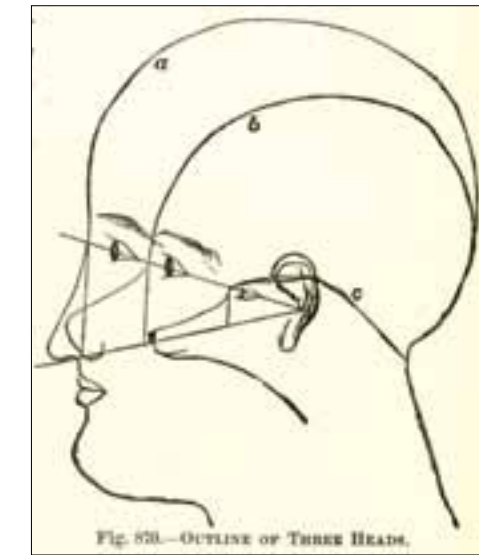
Prichard wrote of the ‘Kaffer Skull’, Plate 5 in *Researches* that “although it has evidently the prognathous form of African heads, a great improvement is very manifest, in the amplitude and convexity of the forehead, as well as of the occiput” (I, p.xviii).

The circulation of these ideas – and popular variants – in the Eastern Cape is apparent in Baines’ first description of Xhosa people on 23rd March 1848 in his *Journal of Residence in Africa, 1842-1853*. Baines remarks on the strength of the teeth; the fact that the lips and nose are too close to those of a Negro “to impart much dignity to the countenance”; and the fact that the forehead was “low and small”, all of which characteristics would tend to confirm the ‘prognathism’ of the subject and its propensity to sensual rather than intellectual activity. Moreover, “The back of the head seemed disproportionately large” and reminded Baines of an earlier amateur demonstration of phrenology in which he was made to observe “the great preponderance of the animal over the intellectual development”. Baines then offers the reader the opportunity of examining – and interpreting – his drawings of a skull he had picked up on the banks of the Keiskamma, annotating them with the question “**Was this man a cattle stealer?**”

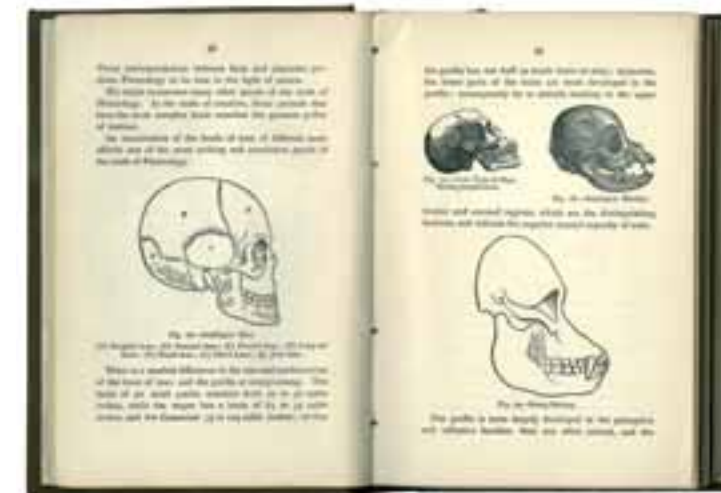
Charles Bell is not known to have invoked this racial science directly, nor to have collected human remains. But the obvious contrast between the ‘orthognathism’ of his European subjects and the ‘prognathism’ of his Africans, especially when inflamed by strong emotion, indicates that his view of the different races was indeed informed by these theories and that he would have adhered to the belief in the innate superiority of the one over the other.



James C. Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, 3rd ed., London: Sherwood, 1837, Plate 5 ‘Kaffer Skull’.



Samuel R. Wells, *New Physiognomy, or, Signs of Character, as manifested through Temperament and External Forms, and Especially in ‘The Human Face Divine’* (1865), New York: Fowler & Wells Co., 1896, Figure 870 ‘A New Facial Angle’.



R.B.D. Wells, *A New Illustrated Hand-Book of Phrenology, Physiology and Physiognomy*, London: H. Vickers, nd (1870s), 20-21, ‘Comparison of Four Profile Skulls’.



Thomas Baines, *A query for phrenologists “was this man a cattle stealer?” ... Kafir skull found on the banks of the Keiskamma ... Saturday August 25 1849*. MS.049/26/31. The Brenthurst Library, Johannesburg.

12: Ethnography and Stereotypes

Bell's inscription of the *Old War dress* indicates his recognition that conditions of combat on the frontier were changing – not least in the proliferation of firearms. But his appeal to a style of dress that was being replaced by European clothing also reveals an attachment to the romantic ideal of the 'noble savage' that could simultaneously represent the idea of a worthy opponent while also reinforcing the sense of their primitive status. In fact, images as well as styles of dress were in flux on the frontier at this time: in comparison with Samuel Daniell's heroic treatment of Xhosa warriors (see Section 8), the physiognomy of Bell's warrior is obviously far from noble.



Bell's caption to *War Dance from the rear* gives an ethnographically precise account of Xhosa preparations for war:

The dancers encircled by women as the commissariat each carrying some article of supply – all sing the war song & accompaniment – beyond the body of warriors in line four or five deep, and in advance the skirmishers boasting of past and ability for future achievements – a position from which men of no mark are speedily driven by the derisive shouts of the main body of warriors.

Interestingly, the *Illustrated London News* of 28th November 1846 reproduced a battle scene dated 16th August 1846, that might have been by Bell but the original does not survive, showing 'Kaffir Women advancing as a screen to the men' which would surely have upset Victorian standards of propriety.

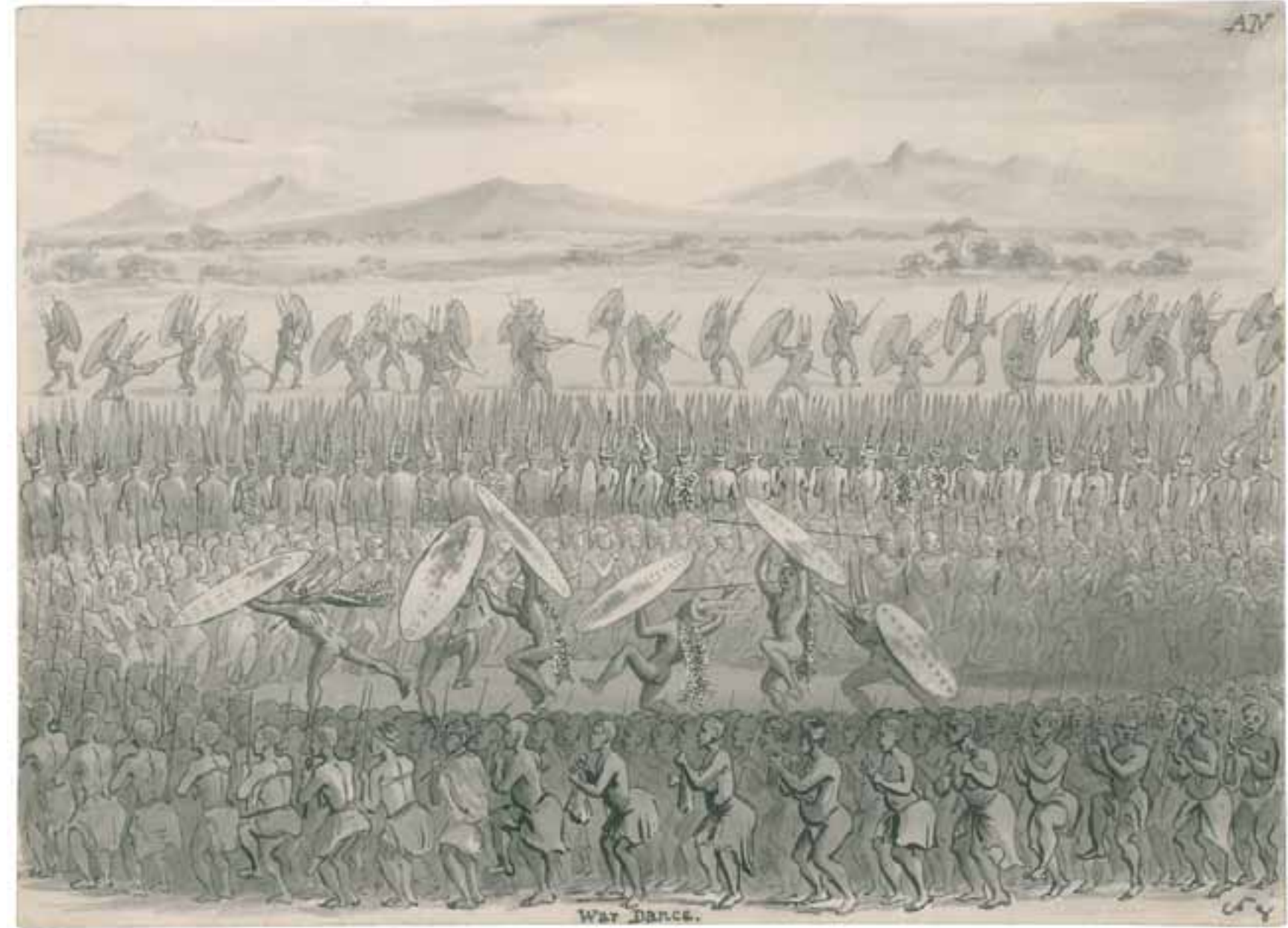
Jeff Peires described the battle formation in *The House of Phalo*, p.137:

When it drew up for battle every man had his place. The vanguard usually consisted of the youngest warriors, the *ingqukuva* or buds, followed by the older men. The most distinguished warriors wore crane feathers awarded to them by their chief.

Both these scenes may be considered a curious – and significant – combination of ethnographic description, romantic idealism and caricatural treatment of physiognomy, dance movement, etc.

Kafir Warrior in the Old War dress (C56, pen and wash, 24 x 18cms).

War Dance from the rear (C59, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24cms).



13: The Graham's Town Journal

This day the Lieut.-Governor met the inhabitants of Graham's Town, on the Drostdy Square. About 500 inhabitants were present, a great proportion of them armed, but for want of arrangement, little could be heard, beyond the very small circle around His Honor. As far as we could gather the Lieut.-Governor stated that it was highly expedient the inhabitants should make immediate arrangements for the defence of their town, as in the absence of the troops their own security must depend upon themselves. He recommended them to meet in their respective wards and to appoint leaders, so that all might mutually co-operate in one simple well-understood plan of general defence. He should, in the event of actual danger, have a gun fired from the battery; on which signal every man should be required to repair to his appointed post or rendezvous. He trusted that such arrangements would be made, and such a readiness displayed to conform to them, as would obviate any necessity for proclaiming martial law—a measure to which he should have recourse with great reluctance. His Honor hoped to have the hearty co-operation of all, it being his firm determination to enter Kaffirland, to chastise the Kaffirs severely, and to break their power, so as if possible to prevent them in future from committing those aggressions to which the inhabitants of that frontier had been so long exposed.

The Graham's Town Journal Supplement, 21st March 1846.

Report of a (somewhat chaotic) public meeting in which the Lieut-Governor required the citizens of Grahamstown to organize themselves in self-defense units – while he expressed his intention to “chastise the [amaXhosa] severely” and break their power.



The Amatola Mountains (C81, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24.5cms).

14: Ambush of Wagon Trains

Bell's copy of the sketch of *The Amatola Mountains* by Lieut. W.F.D. Jervis illustrates how vulnerable wagon trains were to ambush. Bell's annotation 'Luheri' refers to an original resident of the mountain, a San rainmaker, but, in another inscription, he has confused the Xhosa name of the mountain iNtaba yeGqirha, which means 'mountain of the traditional doctor' with the Ngqika or Gaika people, who lived close by.

Burns' Hill. Bell identifies in writing along the base of this drawing the principal features depicted in it:

The Great Place or Residence of the Chief Sandili, Church, Mission Houses and Native Houses & Huts, Wagons showing the Position of the rear of that portion of Major Gibson's baggage train burned by the Kafirs at the Commencement of the War.

Burns' Hill Mission Station (isiXhosa: eMkubiso) was established at the base of the Amathola Mountains by the Glasgow Missionary Society in 1831 near the grave of Chief Ngqika and, as the inscription states, his successor Sandile's Great Place. It was named after the Rev. John Burns, one of the founders of the Society. In the



Burns' Hill (C62, pen and wash, 18.5 x 25.5cms).

8th Frontier/War of Dispossession, the station was destroyed, the amaNgqika expelled, and the land given over to the Mfengu.

The inscription also refers to the attack on Major Gibson's baggage train on 17th May 1846. The cavalcade of some 125 wagons, each drawn by 14 oxen, amounting to almost three miles in length, was guarded only at the front and the rear leaving the large central part exposed to ambush from the thickets. In the fray between seven

and eight hundred oxen were lost and much of the baggage taken. The following drawing (C63) shows the four last wagons of the convoy with the majority of the ammunition being saved but the ambush nonetheless represented a major Xhosa victory in the War. The inscription 'ad libitum' in the foreground is Bell's instruction to engravers to complete that part of the design as they saw fit, but the drawing was not reproduced, at least not in the *Illustrated London News* in the event.



The Leading Wagon attacked and consequently Road blocked so that the train of forty one wagons were abandoned to the Kafirs, 20th May 1846 (C64, pen and wash, 18 x 24cms).

The Leading Wagon Attacked. A convoy from Grahamstown to relieve the garrison at Fort Peddie was disabled by the shooting of oxen outside Trompetter's Drift on 20th May 1846 and, notwithstanding reinforcements arriving from Peddie, forty-one wagons were abandoned. The amaXhosa discovered this strategy early in the war and used it successfully on several occasions.



Cape Mounted Rifles clearing the way from Committee Drift to Fort Peddie 31st May 1846 (C67, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24.5cms).

The British army countered this tactic in two ways. On the one hand, they constructed Fort Dacres at the mouth of the Great Fish River where they landed provisions for Fort Peddie from the sea (see Section 7). And, on the other, they increased the escort of the convoys. In the incident on 31st May 1846 illustrated in ***Cape Mounted Rifles clearing the way from Committee Drift to Fort Peddie***, the convoy of eighty-two wagons was protected by an escort of no less than 1200 men of the Dragoon Guards and Cape Mounted Rifles. Assisted by wide roads that prevented the wagons from getting blocked, this escort brought the convoy safely to Fort Peddie with very few casualties.



Attack on Fort Peddie by the combined Kafir Force, Thursday 28th May 1846 (C66, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24.5cms).

A combined force of Stokwe's amaMbalu, Sandile's amaNgqika, Mhala's amaNdlambe, Siyolo's imiDushane, Botomane's imiDange, Dyani Tshatshu's amaNtinde, and Phatho's amaGqunukhwebe, amounting to between eight and ten thousand men, surrounded Fort Peddie on 28th May 1846. But artillery fire and Congreve rockets, which are shown in the drawing, caused havoc amongst the attackers who were never able to get within musket-, let alone assegai-range, of the fort. Ninety-two Xhosa casualties were counted on the open ground around the fort but losses were estimated to be nearer 200. Inside the fort, the attack passed off, as Rev Appleyard noted "without a hair of our heads being touched".

15: **The Attack on Fort Peddie**



Sir Harry Darell & Mr Gore with their troop of the 7th Dragoon Guards (C65, pen and wash, 18 x 24cms).

The day preceding the combined assault, the 7th Dragoon Guards had been able to lure a force of around 800 amaXhosa out of the bush and cut down between 20 and 30 of them with their swords before they escaped back into cover: one man and three horses of the attacking party were killed.

Sir Harry Darell (1814-1853) drew on his experiences in this campaign and published four lithographs of South African interest, notably the 'Charge on the Gwanga' in London in 1852. The strategy of attacking the amaXhosa in open ground was used again within a few days to devastating effect at the Battle of the Gwanga (see Section 18).



Attack on Nel's Camp, 2 June 1846 (C68, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24cms).

16: Sheep

Three drawings, of which two are shown here, depict the attack on Nel's Camp in the Koonap District on 2nd June 1846. Nel's Camp appears to have been a temporary camp for Boer farmers in the area.

From the mid-1830s, supported by labour afforded by the Mfengu migration into the Colony, many settlers, and a few Boer farmers, adopted the Australian Merino sheep introduced by Richard Daniell and wool quickly became the staple of the frontier economy. Interestingly, most Afrikaners stuck to the fat-tailed sheep that they used for meat and tallow. Pressure on land



Recapture of part of the sheep (C70, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24cms).

increased accordingly with Nel's camp alone requiring several thousand hectares of grazing for its reported 21,000 sheep. From this time land was perceived through the lens of sheep-farming, with Holden Bowker commenting on the Ceded Territory: "the appearance of the country is very fine. It will make excellent sheep farms." (Jeff Peires, *House of Phalo*, p.163.)

Nel appears to have been one of the Burghers who refused to join Sir Harry Smith's campaign against the amaXhosa in 1850, accusing the new Governor of starting the 8th Frontier/War of Dispossession unnecessarily.

17: Maps, Battles, Land

On 11th August 1842, the attorneys Smith & Parker placed an advertisement in *The Graham's Town Journal* requesting around 50 of the approximately 250 claimants to land in the Albany Division to bring to their office in Grahamstown any further proof in support of their claims that the attorneys, acting as agents, could lay before the 2nd Assistant Surveyor General, then visiting the city. This officer was Charles Bell.

The large number of these claims, and the absence of Bell's name from the list of "authorities" from whom Henry Hall composed his *Map of the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony* of 1851 (p.49) suggest that Bell's work in the Eastern Cape was restricted to adjudicating land claims, rather than making surveys of the District. Thus the three maps in the War of the Axe sketchbook – the *Sketch of Fort Dacres* (C48), the *Exact Plan of the Defeat of the Kafirs, the 8th June 1846* (C71, p.50), and the *Plan of the Amatolas and Basin* (C80) – are all likely to have been derived from military maps that were used in the war: indeed, the *Plan of the Amatolas* closely resembles part of the *Military Sketch of Part of British Kaffraria* (p.48) by Lt. Jervois (1821-1897) who is acknowledged in the following drawing (C81), *The Amatola Mountains from a sketch by Lt. W.F.D. Jervois R.E.* (p.40) and several other drawings. Jervois was in the Cape between 1841 and 1848, in Grahamstown and Cape Town, and was commissioned in 1847 to carry out an exhaustive topographical survey of British Kaffraria. The military origin of all these maps is apparent in the precise topography and indication of distances, while Jervois' *Military Sketch* that was published at the end of the campaign, indicates many sites that featured in the war.

The *Map of the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony compiled by Henry Hall, from Military and other Surveys, dedicated by permission to Lt.Gen. Sir Francis Burgoyne K.C.B.*, of 1856, is a political, rather than strategic map of the area, and shows the boundary of the colony being moved gradually eastwards into

Xhosa lands through the first half of the nineteenth century. The strategy of naming new districts, such as the Ceded Territory, initially as neutral territories – or buffer zones – but soon incorporated into the Colony is illustrated in the bright colours of the map.

The **Brass Sextant** was made by Spencer Browning & Co., London, in business under this name between 1840 and 1870. The sextant, invented in 1759, was used to measure the position of a star from which the operator could then determine their geographical location. This instrument was likely used by Henry Carter Galpin who trained as a surveyor in Ireland before leaving for Grahamstown in 1848. The sextant draws attention to the underlying aim of The War of the Axe, as of all the other Frontier/Wars of Dispossession, which was the acquisition of Xhosa land by the colonists. Although Bell himself was not directly involved in this project, his work in adjudicating land claims amongst the settlers had the effect of legitimating this dispossession. Thirty years after Bell's work in Grahamstown, **Caesar Henkel's Sketchmap of the Country between the Kowie and the Chalumna Rivers** (p.47) shows the larger part of the region carved into precisely measured colonial farms, with the indigenous peoples neatly contained in "locations": obviously, many of the names on Bell's 1842 list of claimants recur on this map. The map also shows major battle sites, mission stations and military installations that featured in these wars.

NOTICE.

WHEREAS certain claims have been presented to Government for TITLE DEEDS to lands in the Albany District, by Messrs. NORTON & PARKER, of Graham's Town, in right, Notice is hereby given that further proofs in support of the undermentioned claims are required.

No.	Claimant.	Claim.
47	Mr. David Hanson,	Cultivation.
48	do.	Do.
49	do.	Do.
50	Mr. Bradford,	Do.
51	Mr. Kinnon,	Land at Graham's.
52	D. E. Kinnon,	Land in Cook's party.
53	Samuel James,	Land at Graham's.
54	Joseph Trevelyan,	Land in Hyslop's party.
55	do.	do.
56	William Kilmara,	Blue Kinnon.
57	do.	do.
58	John Bradford,	do.
59	James and Thomas Bradford,	Five on the Eastward's River.
60	do.	do.
61	Robert Noy,	do.
62	William Brownson,	New Year's Hill.
63	Thomas Brownson,	do.
64	Wesley Brownson,	do.
65	Widow of	do.
66	David E. Keyser,	do.
67	Thomas Hanson,	Land in Hanson's party.
68	Thomas Hanson,	do.
69	James Collett,	do.
70	do.	do.
71	do.	do.
72	John Stewart,	do.
73	John Stewart, as executor of John Jameson,	do.
74	Thomas Webster & Edward Bradford,	do.
75	Robert Joseph Painter,	do.
76	William Cockcroft,	do.
77	do.	do.
78	do.	do.
79	do.	do.
80	do.	do.
81	do.	do.
82	do.	do.
83	do.	do.
84	do.	do.
85	do.	do.
86	do.	do.
87	do.	do.
88	do.	do.
89	do.	do.
90	do.	do.
91	do.	do.
92	do.	do.
93	do.	do.
94	do.	do.
95	do.	do.
96	do.	do.
97	do.	do.
98	do.	do.
99	do.	do.
100	do.	do.

The said claimants are therefore requested to forward all documents in support of above claims, to the office of the Underigned, that he may exhibit the same to the 3d assistant Surveyor General, now in Graham's Town, in order that their several titles may be issued.

Any person having claims for titles to land, by transmitting them to the undersigned, the same will be immediately laid before the 3d assistant Surveyor General.

EDWARD PARKER, Attorney,
Church street, Graham's Town.

The Graham's Town Journal, 11th August 1842, Land Claims advertisement.



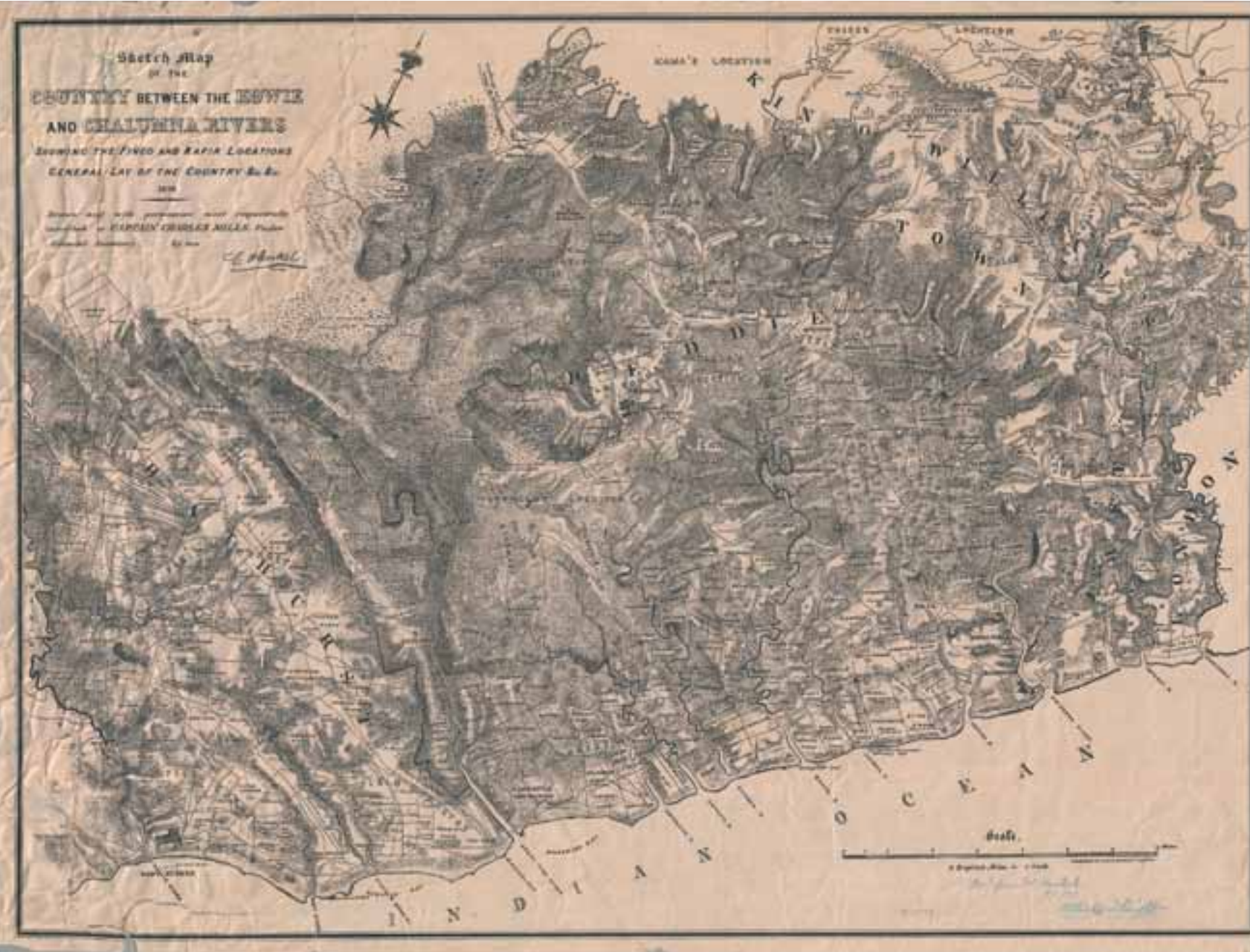
Title Deed: Area: Grahamstown, signed by Charles Bell, 1850. Albany Museum, Grahamstown, SMD 5419(4).



Brass compass. c1850. On loan to the Albany Museum, by permission of D. Galpin.



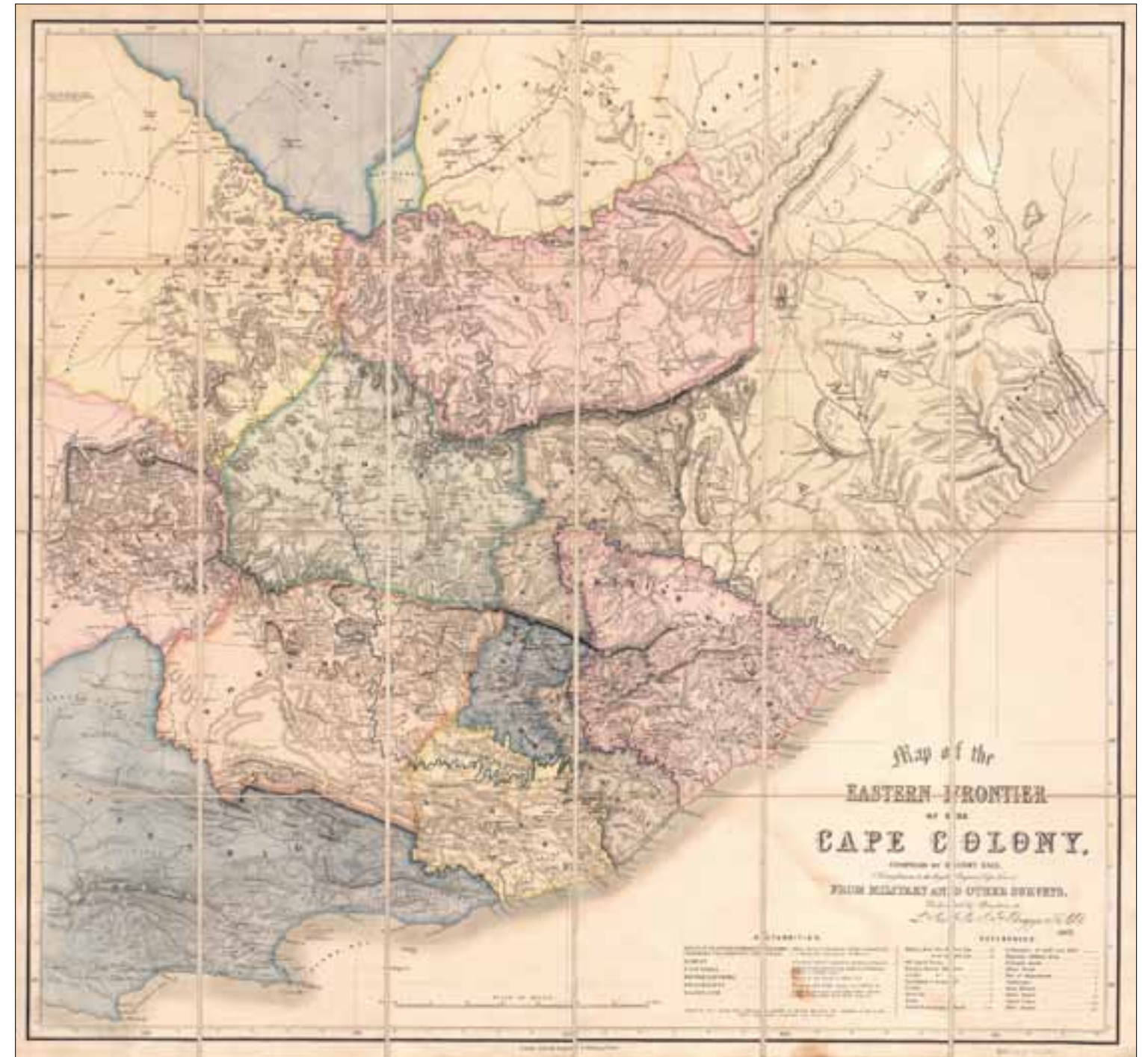
Brass Sextant by Spencer, Browning & Co., London, between 1840 and 1870. Albany Museum, Observatory, Galpin Donation, SM6867.



C.H. Henkel, Sketchmap of the Country between the Kowie and the Chalumna Rivers showing the Fingo and Kafir Locations, General Lay of the Country, etc., Cape Town: Saul Solomon, 1876, scale 1 inch: 2 miles. UCT Libraries.



Capt. William F.D. Jervis, R.E., *Military Sketch of Part of British Kaffraria*, drawn in 1847/48, published London: J. Arrowsmith, 1850, scale 1 inch: 2 miles. UCT Libraries.



Henry Hall, *Map of the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony compiled by Henry Hall, from Military and other Surveys*, dedicated by permission to Lt.Gen. Sir Francis Burgoyne K.C.B., London: Edward Stanford, 1856, scale 1: 536448. UCT Libraries.



50 *Exact Plan of the Defeat of the Kafirs, 8th June, 1846.* (C71, pen and wash and pencil, 31.5 x 38cms).



Burning of Stock's Kraal 8th June 1846 (C72, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24cms).



Narrow Escape of Captain Donovan C.M.R. - 8th June 1846 (C73, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24.5cms).

18: The Battle of the Gwanga

Exact Plan of the Defeat of the Kafirs indicates that Bell was aware of the importance of the battle on 8th June 1846 and the inscriptions about scale and the drawing of the woods suggest that he wanted to publish it, presumably with the other drawings of the battle: in the event, this drawing was never published.

The Battle of the Gwanga was the deciding moment of the War of the Axe, and arguably of the entire series of wars. As the attack on the wagons on near Burns' Hill on 17th May was the greatest Xhosa victory of the War (see Section 14), the Battle of the Gwanga, less than a month later, was their greatest defeat.

The Burning of Stokwe's Kraal served as a diversion to allow a convoy of wagons to reach Grahamstown from Trompetter's

Drift. But it also became settler policy to starve the amaXhosa into submission. The *Cape Frontier Times* exhorted a year later on 6th September 1847: "Let the war be made against Kafir huts and gardens. Let all these be burned down and destroyed. Let there be no ploughing, sowing or reaping." (Jeff Peires, *House of Phalo*, p.155.)

From the garrison at Fort Peddie, Rev Appleyard told the story of the *Narrow Escape of Captain Donovan* when he was rescued from two Xhosa assailants by a young Burgher who drew the Captain's sword and ran it through both attackers: the drawing is close enough to the description to suggest that Bell had direct access to the same source.



First Charge of the 7th Dragoon Guards (C74, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24cms).

The **First Charge of the 7th Dragoons** at the Gwanga was made possible by the fortuitous discovery of Siyolo's and Mhlala's amaNdlambe in open ground. Buck Adams, who charged with the Dragoons that day, gives a vivid account of the engagement in his *Narrative* : after the initial Xhosa musket volley passed harmlessly overhead, "It was now the sword against the assegai. We cut our way clean through them". Adams records that the Cape Mounted

Rifles could not join in the charge because their swords had been lost with the baggage train at Burns' Hill. But he acknowledged that they "did considerable execution with their double-barreled carbines", as did the Burghers with their *Bobbejaanboud* muskets. As the **Head of the Gwanga** shows, artillery was also used against the amaXhosa in the battle.



The Head of the Guanga 8th June 1846 Kaffirs driven off in confusion. (C75, pen and wash, 17.5 x 24.5cms).

*The Mêlée 8th June 1846 –
Capt Napier taking a prisoner*
(C76, pen and wash,
17 x 24.5cms).



*Collecting arms and the
wounded 8th June 1846*
(C77, pen and wash,
17.5 x 24.5cms).



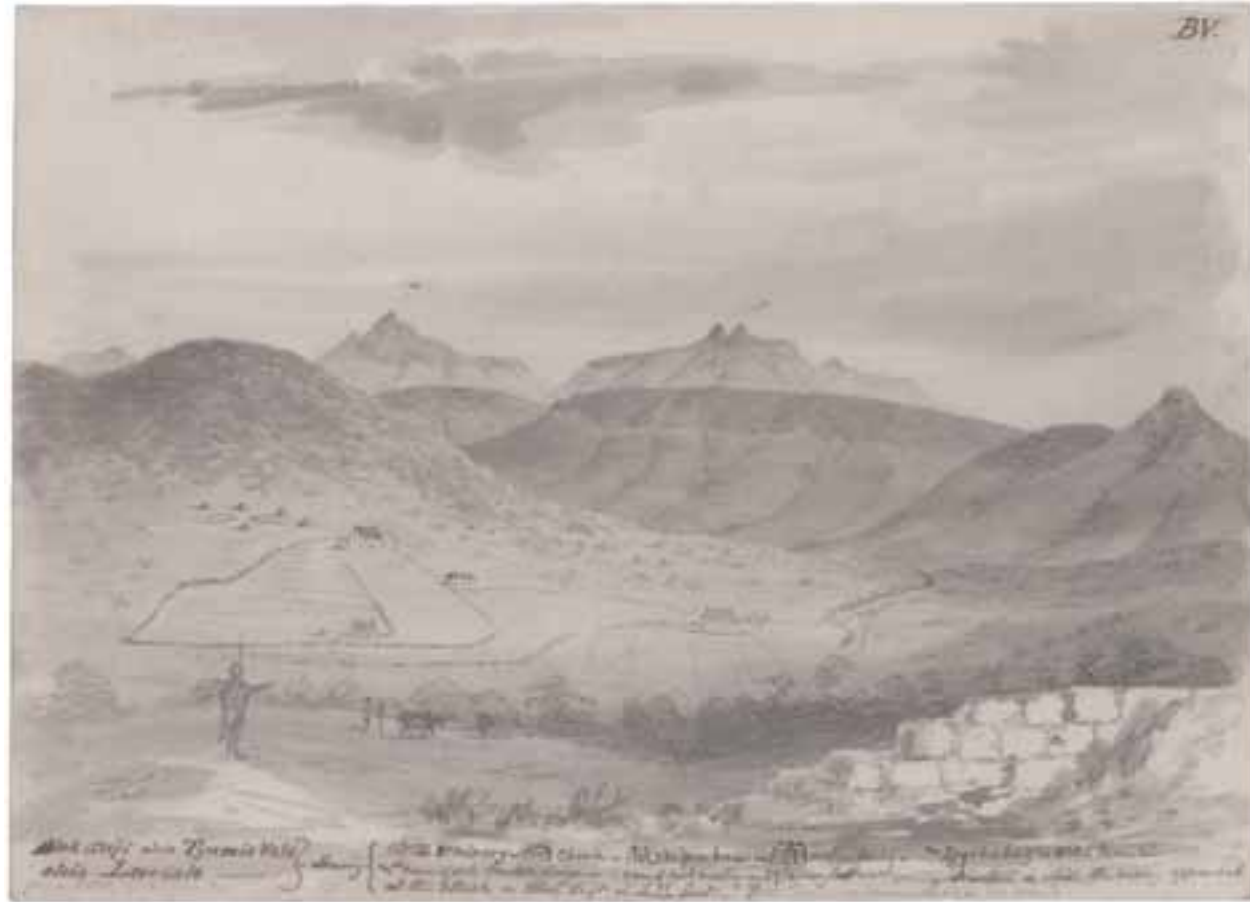
The full inscription on *The Mêlée* explains the British policy towards prisoners: “The troopers disgusted at the slaughter of unresisting men (or Kafirs) the riding over them like sheep find themselves still under necessity of closing accounts of sham dead who make a final struggle, one claimed quarter and it was granted – but parole being beyond his comprehension his captors being impatient he was not heard of afterwards”. Xhosa fighters, whether wounded or not, were generally dispatched if captured, but on this occasion Captain Napier kept two for interrogation.



The Gwanga
(C78, pen and wash, 18 x 25.5cms).

Estimates of Xhosa casualties vary. Rev Appleyard estimated that “Throughout the day from 300 to 500 must have been killed or severely wounded, whilst the only casualties on our side were two killed, namely a Fingoe and a Corporal of the Cape Corps, and ten

or twelve wounded, including 3 officers” (and Buck Adams). As the full inscription of *The Gwanga* makes clear “the scene at the Gwanga was not likely to be pleasant to look on about a week after the 8th June 1846”.



Block Drift or Tyumie Vale or Lovedale (C82, Pen and Wash, 18 x 25.5cms).

19: Mission Stations

To read the Rev Appleyard's account in *The War of the Axe*, in comparison with the reports in the *Graham's Town Journal* or Thomas Stubbs' *Reminiscences*, for example, is to gain a different sense of the struggle on the frontier: Appleyard not only enumerates the precise number of Xhosa and Mfengu casualties but also often gives their names and their relationship to chiefs and other notables in a strongly compassionate account of human suffering. But he would also have understood that missions could not escape the war: significantly, all Bell's drawings of mission stations, including Burns' Hill (C62, see Section 14), feature military activity.

Lovedale Mission Station, originally on the Ncerha River, where the ruins in the right foreground stand, was re-established on the west bank of the Tyhume in 1835. The drawing, which is copied from a sketch by the great geologist and road-builder Andrew Geddes Bain (1797-1864), is inscribed across the base with its main features:

Seminary, church, mission house, residency, Isqihakazi or Witch Mountain, comm of outer Amatola range, road from Fort Beaufort, Chumie River, *scene of great meeting on 29 January last, *direction from which the enemy approached at the attack on Blok Drift in June last.



Pirie Mission Station front
(C83, Pen and Wash and Pencil, 18 x 25.5cms).

The 'great meeting' was that between Sandile and Colonel Hare on 29th January 1846 that temporarily averted hostilities: the meeting was documented in prints by both Henry Martens and Sir Harry Darell. The June 'attack on Block Drift' followed immediately the loss of the wagon train near Burns' Hill in the same year (see Section 14).

Pirie Mission Station (isiXhosa eMgqakwebe) was founded in 1831 by John Ross of the Glasgow Missionary Society and named after its secretary Alexander Pirie, near the spot, as the inscription on the first drawing states, where Dr Johannes van der Kemp (1747-1811) first preached to the amaXhosa around 1799. Van der Kemp's Xhosa name uNyengane signified "secret giver".

The inscription on the second drawing locates the mission station at the source of the Buffalo River towards which, in a little-noticed incident, Colonel Johnstone would drive the main Ngqika forces in August 1846. The historian George Cory wrote that this action effectively reminded the amaXhosa that there was no part of those mountains which was not as accessible to



Pirie Mission Station from the rear
(C84, Pen and Wash and Pencil, 18 x 25.5cms).

burghers and soldiers as to themselves. This undoubtedly had some influence in inducing the chiefs to make overtures for peace as they did very shortly afterwards (*Rise of South Africa*, IV, p.476).

The encounter at Pirie Mission Station was the latest action that Bell represented and, as Cory suggests, contributed to bringing an end to the first part of the War of the Axe. In the Spring, with the country's grain stores destroyed and the planting season passing, Sandile sued for peace which was gratefully accepted by the Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland (Jeff Peires, *House of Phalo*, pp.152-153). The situation could have stabilized at that point, with the amaXhosa surrendering their arms and the agreed frontier being maintained. But Settler hunger for land, and the replacement of Maitland by the more aggressive Sir Henry Pottinger, led to the destruction of Sandile's Great Place in June 1847 on a pretext and the inevitable resumption of hostilities that would prove disastrous for the amaXhosa. By this time Bell had left Cape Town for a long leave in Scotland where, far from developments in the Eastern Cape, he busied himself making lithographs of his early war drawings.

Notes on Historical Weapons

by Rod Hooper-Box

20: Muskets, Rifles and Carbines

The India Pattern flintlock, the standard weapon of British Line regiments between 1793 and 1838, was still used by many regiments in the Seventh Frontier/War of Dispossession, the War of the Axe of 1846-47, and as late as the Eighth war of 1850-53 by the 27th Regiment (Inniskillings).

The India Pattern provided the core of most of the Trade guns which were made up from a variety of obsolete parts and sold into the colonies. These were the guns that were traded with the amaXhosa prior to the Sixth Frontier/War of Dispossession and widely used in the Seventh.

The percussion system, that involved a small copper cap containing a chemical fulminate igniting the gunpowder charge through the fall of a hammer, was invented in 1807 and in general civilian use by the 1820s. In contrast to the open pan flintlock system, the percussion cap was immune to weather and it eliminated the time lag between trigger pull and firing. Nonetheless, the British War Office remained unconvinced of its superiority over the flintlock until 1834. Between

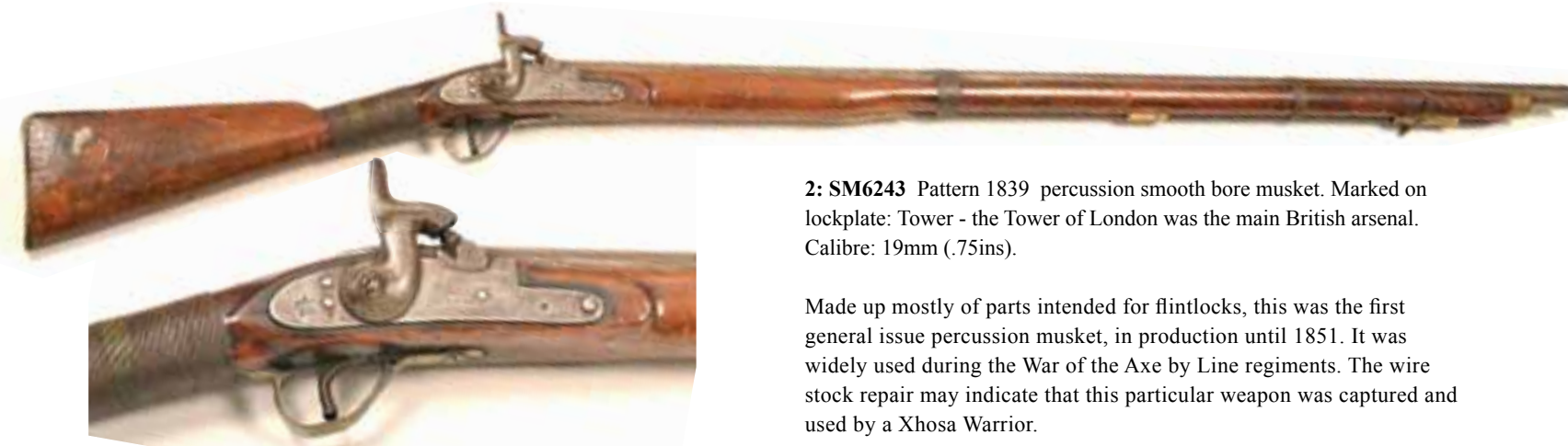
that date and 1842, most army muskets were converted from flintlock to percussion.

By the time of the War of the Axe, the barrel of the Baker, the Rifle Brigade flintlock, and certain civilian longarms, was rifled with spiral grooves that caused the bullet to spin and so achieve greater accuracy. But the War Office was slow to introduce this improvement on a broad front. The 7th Dragoon Guards had carried the Brunswick percussion rifle with two grooves in the barrel into which the belted ball had to fit at the Battle of Zwaartkopjes against the Boers in 1845 but, because this was so difficult to operate on horseback, reverted to the smoothbore Pattern 1843 Victoria carbine, with shorter barrels adapted for firing from the saddle, in the War of the Axe. Similarly, the Cape Mounted Riflemen carried a double-barreled smooth bore carbine that was used to devastating effect at close quarters in the Battle of the Gwanga; it was only in 1854 that a rifled version of the carbine was produced.

The infantry regiments retained the smooth bore Patterns of 1839 and 1842 through the War of the Axe, benefitting from the general army issue of the 1853 Pattern Enfield rifle only after the Eighth Frontier/War of Dispossession.

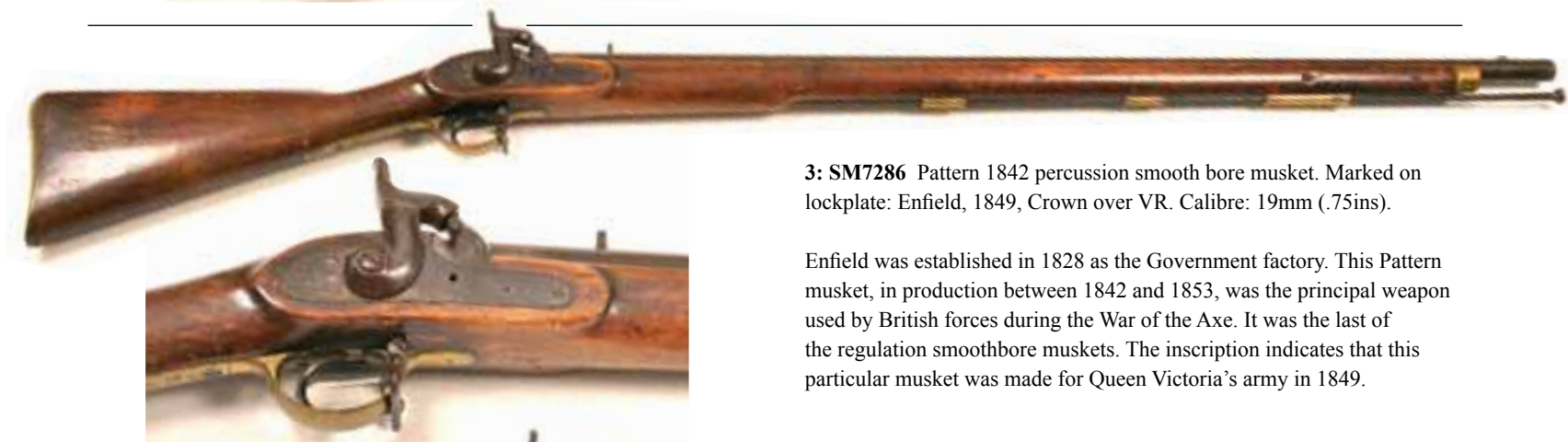
1: SM7268 Baker flintlock rifle. Inscription on lockplate: E.Baker; and on the barrel: Whitechapel, London. Calibre: 16mm (.63ins).

The Baker was the first regulation rifle adopted into British service around 1800 as the arm of the 95th Regiment of Foot, later known as the elite Rifle Brigade – the Greenjackets. Some Bakers were still in use on the Cape Frontier as late as 1851. Originally a 30 inch barrel with seven internal grooves making a quarter turn in its length. The musket features a sliding safety bolt; a brass butt-trap covering a compartment for greased patches and cleaning tools; a scroll trigger guard; and a raised cheek rest on the left side of the butt to aid accurate shooting.



2: SM6243 Pattern 1839 percussion smooth bore musket. Marked on lockplate: Tower - the Tower of London was the main British arsenal. Calibre: 19mm (.75ins).

Made up mostly of parts intended for flintlocks, this was the first general issue percussion musket, in production until 1851. It was widely used during the War of the Axe by Line regiments. The wire stock repair may indicate that this particular weapon was captured and used by a Xhosa Warrior.



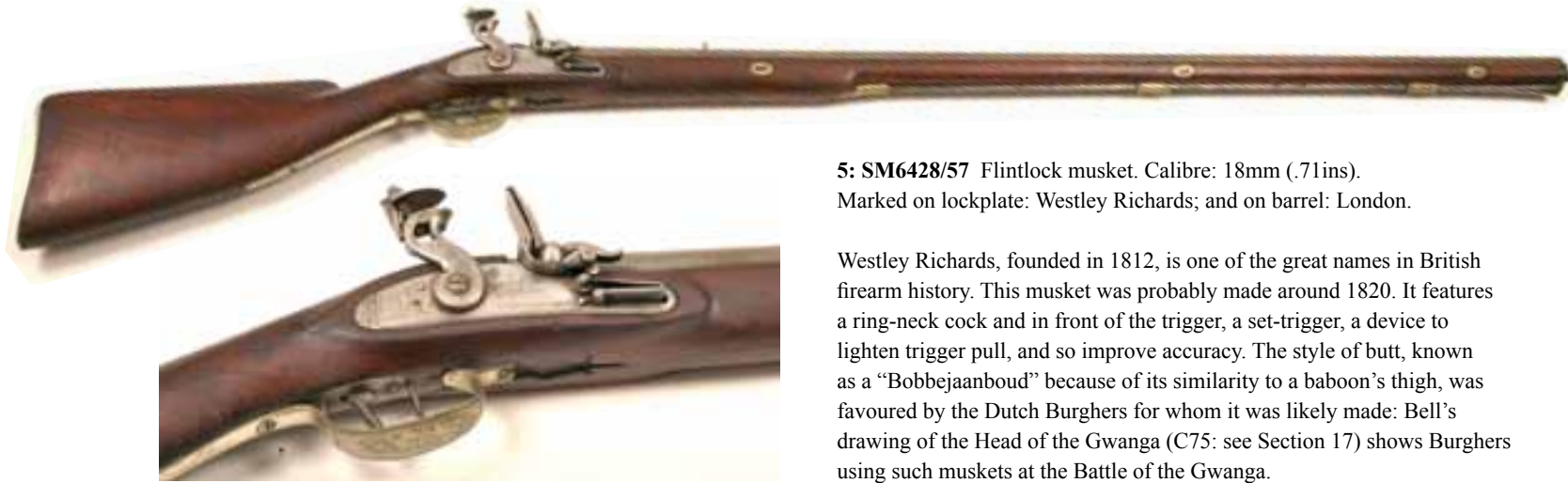
3: SM7286 Pattern 1842 percussion smooth bore musket. Marked on lockplate: Enfield, 1849, Crown over VR. Calibre: 19mm (.75ins).

Enfield was established in 1828 as the Government factory. This Pattern musket, in production between 1842 and 1853, was the principal weapon used by British forces during the War of the Axe. It was the last of the regulation smoothbore muskets. The inscription indicates that this particular musket was made for Queen Victoria's army in 1849.



4: SM6271 Flintlock musket, India Pattern, converted to percussion. Marked on lockplate: Tower and GR - indicating the arsenal of George III. Calibre: 19mm (.75ins).

This India Pattern or "Brown Bess" flintlock was probably made around 1810 and converted to percussion cap around 1840 – seemingly by a civilian gunsmith because the lock was originally military but the tube-shape design above the lockplate is not.



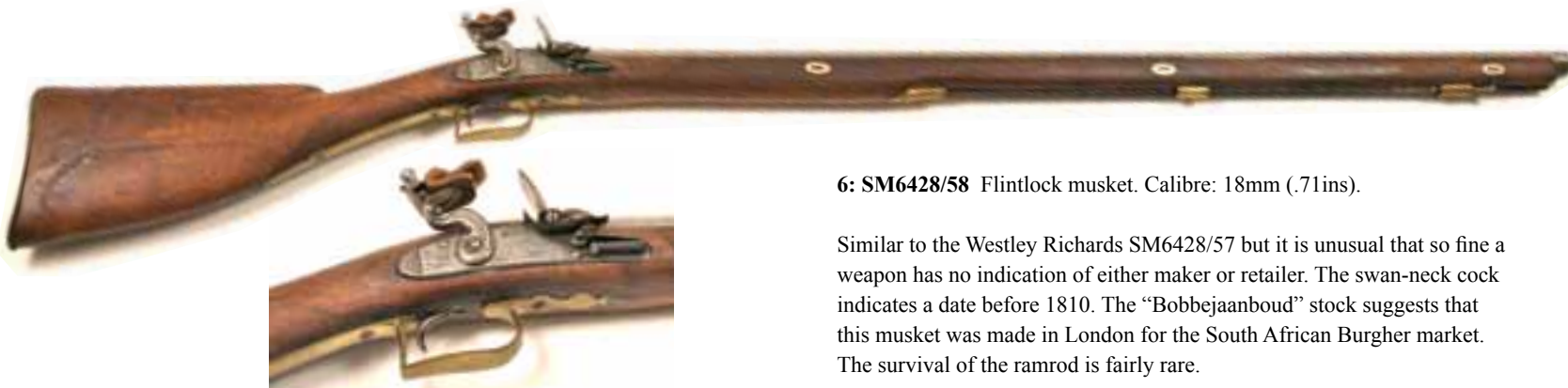
5: SM6428/57 Flintlock musket. Calibre: 18mm (.71ins).
Marked on lockplate: Westley Richards; and on barrel: London.

Westley Richards, founded in 1812, is one of the great names in British firearm history. This musket was probably made around 1820. It features a ring-neck cock and in front of the trigger, a set-trigger, a device to lighten trigger pull, and so improve accuracy. The style of butt, known as a “Bobbejaanboud” because of its similarity to a baboon’s thigh, was favoured by the Dutch Burghers for whom it was likely made: Bell’s drawing of the Head of the Gwanga (C75: see Section 17) shows Burghers using such muskets at the Battle of the Gwanga.



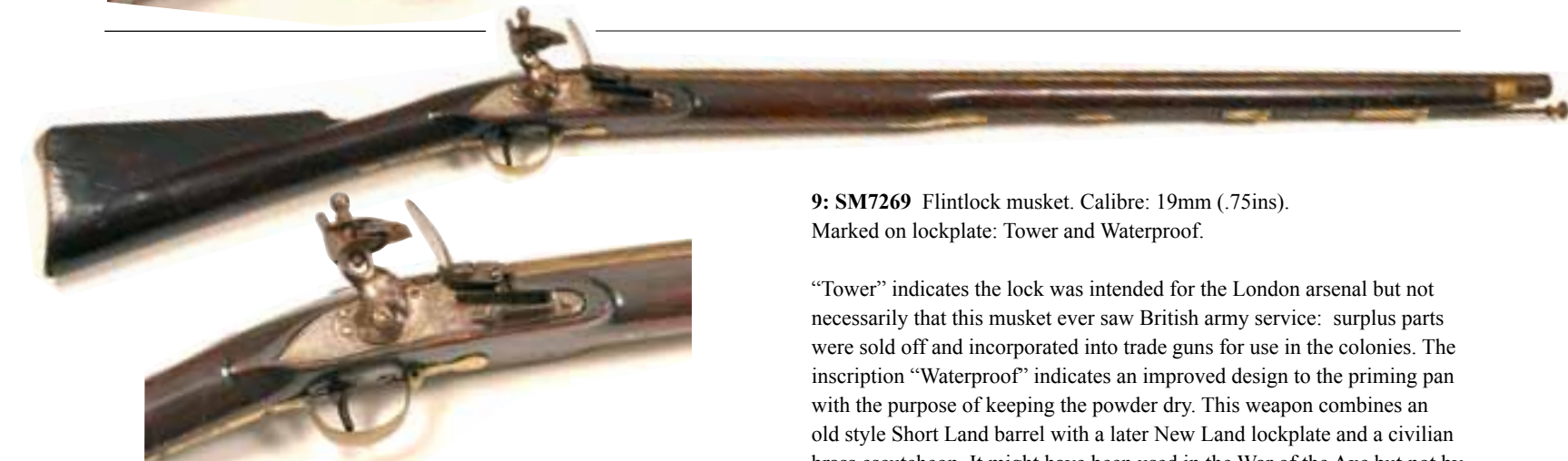
8: SM6428/69 A sporting rifle. Calibre: 16mm (.63ins).
Marked on lockplate: W.Greenier; and on barrel: Inventor of the expansive bullet.

Founded in 1829, and still operating, Greener is one of the most famous of British gunmakers. The claim on the barrel to have invented the expansive bullet in 1835, in place of the previous round ball, dates this firearm between that date and 1847 when the Frenchman Captain Minie’s patent was adopted by the army.



6: SM6428/58 Flintlock musket. Calibre: 18mm (.71ins).

Similar to the Westley Richards SM6428/57 but it is unusual that so fine a weapon has no indication of either maker or retailer. The swan-neck cock indicates a date before 1810. The “Bobbejaanboud” stock suggests that this musket was made in London for the South African Burgher market. The survival of the ramrod is fairly rare.



9: SM7269 Flintlock musket. Calibre: 19mm (.75ins).
Marked on lockplate: Tower and Waterproof.

“Tower” indicates the lock was intended for the London arsenal but not necessarily that this musket ever saw British army service: surplus parts were sold off and incorporated into trade guns for use in the colonies. The inscription “Waterproof” indicates an improved design to the priming pan with the purpose of keeping the powder dry. This weapon combines an old style Short Land barrel with a later New Land lockplate and a civilian brass escutcheon. It might have been used in the War of the Axe but not by a British soldier.



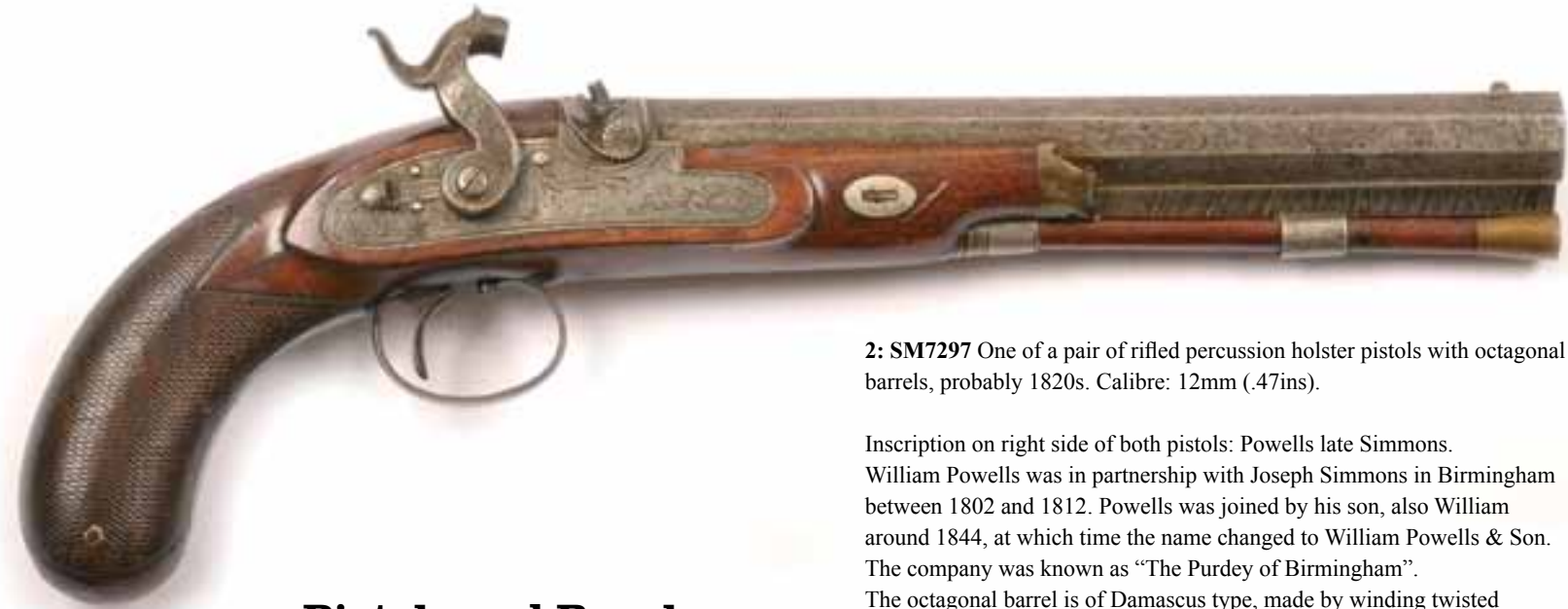
7: SM7319 A Fowling piece (shotgun), converted from flintlock to percussion, probably in the 1840s. Calibre: 19mm (.75ins).
Marked on lockplate: Warranted; and on barrel: W.Ogilvie.

William Ogilvie arrived in Grahamstown in 1816, and operated as a gunsmith from 1838 to 1850. The inscription “Warranted” indicates that this weapon has been tested. Both the “Bobbejaanboud” butt and the silver star (“Sterloop”) inlaid near the muzzle indicate that this gun was made for a Dutch Burgher.



10: SM6251 Flintlock musket. Calibre: 19mm (.75ins).
Marked on lockplate: Tower; and on barrel: London.

This musket is also a trade gun being quite crudely put together from an India pattern stock; a New Land lock of 1802 pattern; and a ring-neck cock dating later than 1810. Perhaps made up in the 1830s or early 1840s.



21: Pistols and Revolvers

Like muskets, pistols were first made as flintlocks which, while transforming hand-to-hand combat, had several significant disadvantages: they would not function in damp conditions; flints would need adjusting or replacement; two powder flasks were necessary, one for the charge and the other for priming; and the time lag between igniting the primer and discharging the pistol led to inefficient shooting.

Most of these drawbacks were eliminated by the invention of the percussion cap, a small thimble-shaped copper container of fulminate that was waterproof and ignited the charge instantly. During the 1820s Many flintlocks, like muskets, were converted to percussion fire; and, of course, new firearms were made to accommodate the new technology.

Single-shot pistols were made in the first instance, both with the screw-off barrel design and as the relatively cheap box-lock type. Double barrels followed quickly, first in the side-by-side, double-lock design, and then the more compact, single-lock turn-over, over-and-under pattern.

One of the most important consequences of the percussion cap was the search for an efficient revolver, capable of repeated fire. The

2: SM7297 One of a pair of rifled percussion holster pistols with octagonal barrels, probably 1820s. Calibre: 12mm (.47ins).

Inscription on right side of both pistols: Powells late Simmons. William Powells was in partnership with Joseph Simmons in Birmingham between 1802 and 1812. Powells was joined by his son, also William around 1844, at which time the name changed to William Powells & Son. The company was known as “The Purdey of Birmingham”. The octagonal barrel is of Damascus type, made by winding twisted threads of iron and steel that have been flattened into a ribbon around a mandrel and then welded into a tube and finished and filed into shape. The barrel was often treated with acid to bring out the delicate figuring. These costly pistols have a sliding safety catch behind the hammer. Note also the horn tip to the ramrod.

Pepperbox, six-barreled design, though heavy, proved efficient at close quarters. The barrels of the Pepperbox’ were arranged around a central spindle that was turned mechanically by the action of the trigger. The so-called Transitional revolver, whose barrel was attached without frame to the front end of the cylinder axis pin, was also used during the 1840s and 1850s.

Significant developments in the design of the revolver in the years following the War of the Axe include Samuel Colt’s machine-made Navy pattern of 1851, a few of which were used by officers of the 12th Lancers in the War of 1851-53; the production in England by Adams, later Beaumont-Adams, and Tranter of a heavier, higher-calibre five-shot revolver that by 1857 was in widespread issue in the British services; and, in 1867, the patenting by the Americans Smith and Wesson of the centre-fire brass cartridge that incorporated detonating cap, propellant and projectile in one cartridge and effectively enabled the modern firearm, both revolver and rifle.

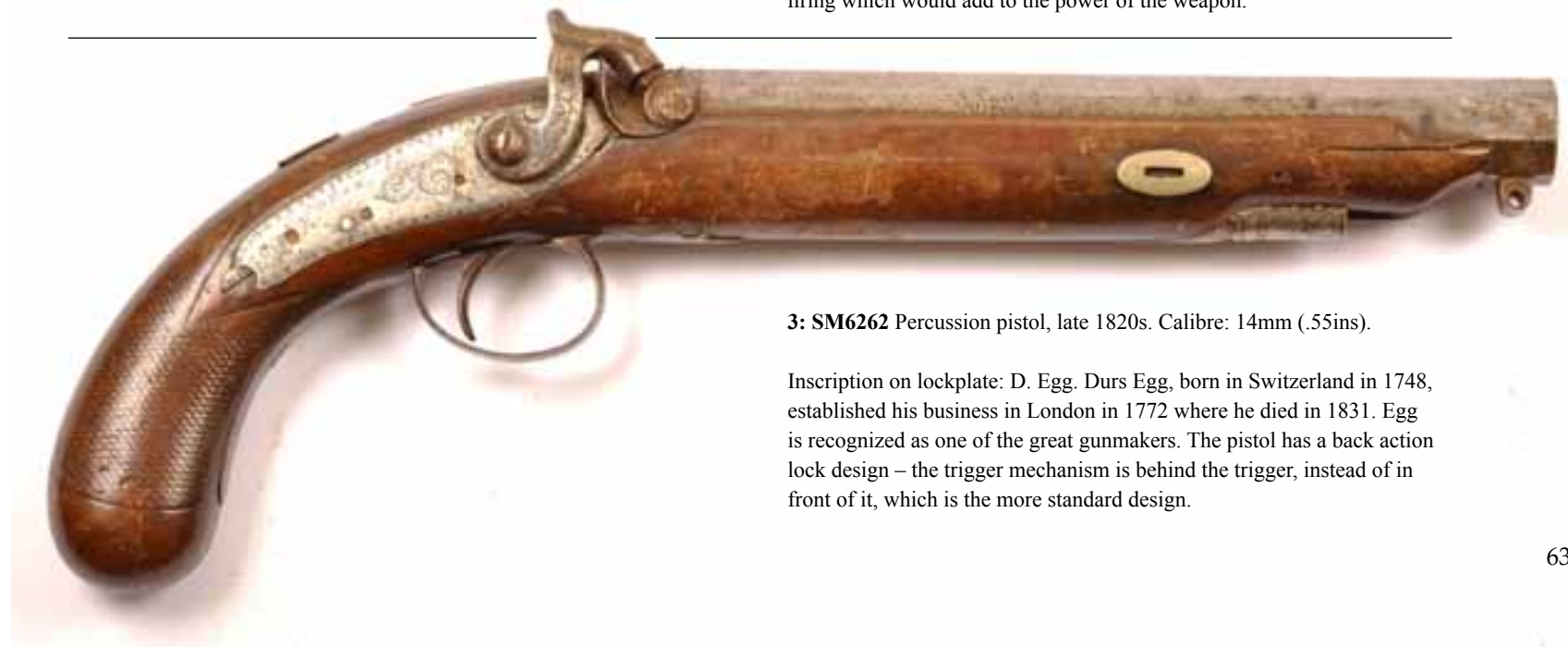


1: SM169 Pistol made as a flintlock 1820 or earlier, converted to percussion probably in the 1840s. Calibre: 15.5mm (.614ins).

Inscription on lockplate: A. Wilson: and on top of barrel: Alex R Wilson London. Alex R. Wilson was active as a gunmaker in London between 1805 and 1829. Octagonal barrel; horn tip ramrod. Note the large calibre of this pistol.

4: SM7296 Percussion box lock pocket pistol, mid 1840s. Calibre: 11mm (.43ins).

Inscription on left side: Noye’s. Box lock pistols have the hammer and trigger mechanism fitted centrally behind the barrel, in a box-like compartment. The trigger in this example folds forward into a recess to streamline the weapon for pocket carry. Cocking the action causes the trigger to pop up in readiness for firing. This pistol is unusual in having a device to prevent the percussion cap falling off while in the user’s pocket. It is also interesting in that it is an early form of breech loader: the barrel screws off; the charge and ball are placed inside the breech, which is of a smaller calibre than the barrel; the barrel is then screwed back. This is a time consuming loading procedure, but the result is a tight bullet upon firing which would add to the power of the weapon.



3: SM6262 Percussion pistol, late 1820s. Calibre: 14mm (.55ins).

Inscription on lockplate: D. Egg. Durs Egg, born in Switzerland in 1748, established his business in London in 1772 where he died in 1831. Egg is recognized as one of the great gunmakers. The pistol has a back action lock design – the trigger mechanism is behind the trigger, instead of in front of it, which is the more standard design.



5: SM6261 Percussion pistol, mid 1840s. Calibre: 15mm (.59ins).

Inscription on barrel: Pryse & Redman 260 Piccadilly London. Charles Pryse and Richard Redman were in partnership between 1842 and 1873. The white circular shape that can be seen below the nipple, on the chamber, is a platinum safety feature - it would blow out upon ignition if the pistol was over charged - indicative of a quality pistol. Note the very large calibre of this pistol.



6: SM7295 Percussion double-barreled, side-by-side, Box Lock pistol, possibly mid 1840s. Calibre: 2 x 12mm (.47ins).

No inscription: maker not known. Side-by-side double-barreled pistols are wide and somewhat bulky to carry. They gave way to single hammer, double-barreled, over-and-under designs, which were more compact and easily carried - but slower into action as the barrels had to be turned manually.



8: SM7292 Percussion pistol, about 1850. Inscription on barrel: Blanch & Son London. Calibre: 14mm (.55ins).

John Blanch was born in 1784 and started his business in 1813. In 1848 the name was changed to John Blanch & Son. This company is considered to have been one of the great gunmakers. The octagonal barrel is screwed into a patented breech, the powder chamber being of much smaller calibre than the barrel bore. This arrangement in a heavy-bore pistol compacted the powder which allowed quick and complete ignition. The screw below the nipple can be removed to give access to the chamber for thorough cleaning. The base of the butt incorporates a spring lidded compartment for percussion caps. This pistol originally had a swivel ramrod permanently attached (unless broken off as in this example) to the hole in the rib below the barrel, close to the muzzle.

9: SM7309 Percussion Pepperbox revolver, around 1850. Calibre: 9mm (.35ins).

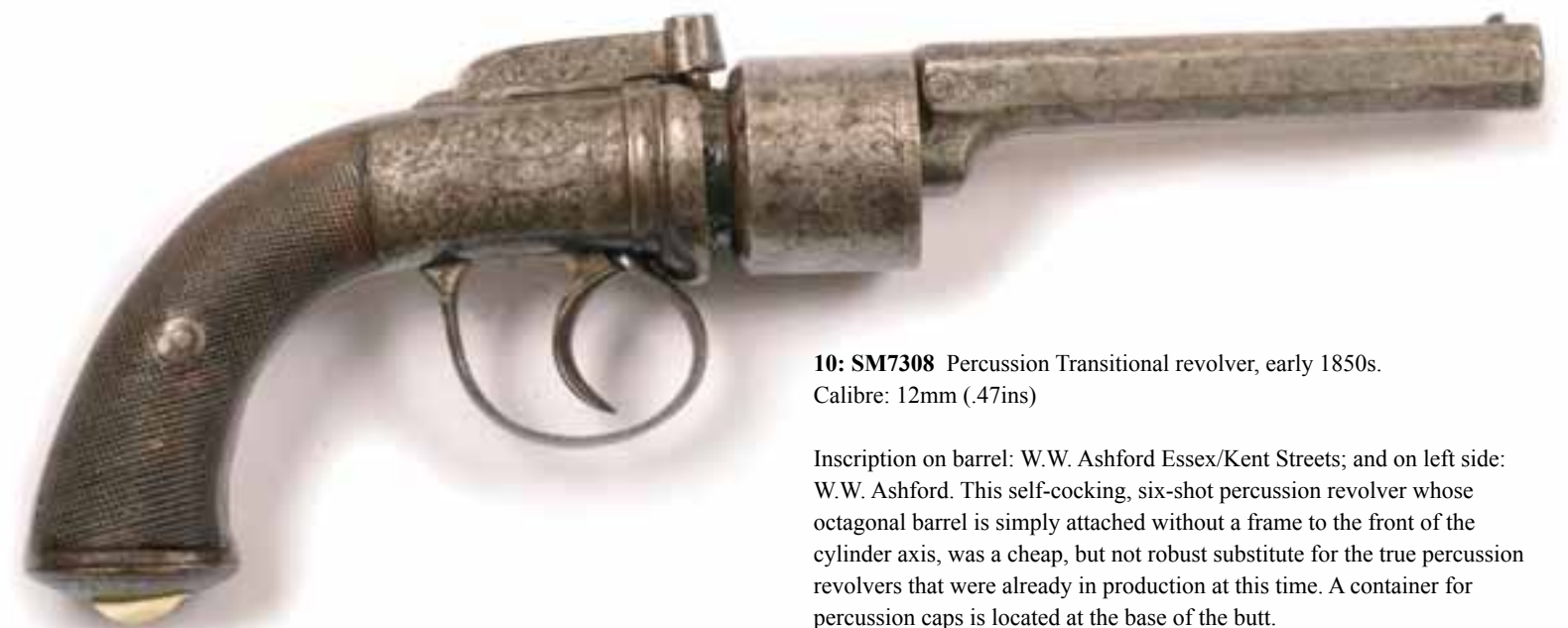


Inscription: C. Jones, London. Charles Jones, born in 1806, is recorded as a journeyman gunsmith in Plymouth, before establishing himself in London around 1848. This is an early form of revolver, with six barrels arranged around a central spindle, mechanically turned by the action of the trigger. It is a self-cocking muzzle-loader with bar hammer. Although accurate only at close quarters and the weight of the barrels rather heavy, Pepperbox revolvers remained popular much longer than 'Transitional' revolvers.



7: SM7294 Percussion over-and-under double-barreled pocket pistol, possibly mid 1840s. Calibre: 2 x 9mm (.35ins).

Inscription on barrel: J. Egg London; and on lockplate: Jos Egg. Joseph Egg was nephew of Durs Egg and carried on his business in London. The over-and-under double-barreled pistol replaced the side-by-side double-barreled pistol, but both designs were soon replaced by revolvers of the Pepperbox type.



10: SM7308 Percussion Transitional revolver, early 1850s. Calibre: 12mm (.47ins)

Inscription on barrel: W.W. Ashford Essex/Kent Streets; and on left side: W.W. Ashford. This self-cocking, six-shot percussion revolver whose octagonal barrel is simply attached without a frame to the front of the cylinder axis, was a cheap, but not robust substitute for the true percussion revolvers that were already in production at this time. A container for percussion caps is located at the base of the butt.

22: Swords

After Waterloo, the old argument was revived as to whether cutting or thrusting was the more important function of a cavalry sword; and because it was not yet appreciated that no sword can be designed which is really satisfactory for both, the weapon which eventually replaced the superb cutting 1796 Light Cavalry sabre was a compromise which was good at neither.

The new 1821 pattern cavalry sword's balance was quite altered, and this together with a straighter blade, resulted in a weapon far inferior at cutting. For thrusting it was more effective, though by no means totally satisfactory. Nine further patterns were produced during the remainder of the century, clearly indicating continued dissatisfaction: the swords were variously criticised as too short, too blunt, too brittle, too weak, or too flexible.

In 1822 a new sword was approved for infantry officers. The blade was the same length as the previous pattern, but it differed in being slightly curved. Its Gothic hilt gave better protection, though the blade was still weak. A very similar pattern was introduced in 1845 with the hilt remaining largely unchanged until the 1890s but the blade became increasingly heavy: a fuller, that is a groove cut into the side of the blade, was introduced to both lighten and strengthen the weapon.

In 1834 the Highland Regiments, which had been wearing the same infantry swords as the rest of the army, were issued with a sword of their own. This had the traditional Highland basket hilt, and the blade was a heavy broadsword type. The type has been retained to this day.

1: SM2474 Pattern 1831 General Officer's Ceremonial sword (top).

Presented to Sir Andries Stockenstrom, Lieutenant Governor of the Cape 1836–1838, probably upon his appointment.

This Mameluke scimitar design was brought to Britain by officers who served in the Egyptian Campaign of 1798–1801. It became popular wear for both cavalry and infantry officers. In 1822 it was officially adopted for dress purposes, and in 1834 it became the regulation sword for General Officers. It is still the pattern for wear by senior officers on ceremonial occasions. Hilt: Brass cross bar. Blade: A strong curve, flat, unfullered, length 75cm (29.75ins). Grip: Ivory.

2: SM3227 Pattern 1796 Light Cavalry Trooper's sword.

This pattern became known as the Waterloo sword. Because of its curvature, balance, and light weight, it became the most effective slashing sword of the Napoleonic Wars. It was in service until replaced by the Pattern 1821, and was used by Volunteer Regiments into the 1860s. Until the early 1840s, it was sometimes carried by Cape Mounted Riflemen.

Maker: Osborne & Gunney, Birmingham. Hilt: Steel stirrup guard. Blade: A pronounced curve, wide fuller, length 84.5cm (33.25ins). Grip: Ribbed wood, covered in leather.



3: SM6241 Pattern 1796 Light Cavalry Trooper's sword.

A second example of the Waterloo sword. Because of its curvature, balance, and light weight, it became the most effective slashing sword of the Napoleonic Wars. It was in service until replaced by the Pattern 1821, and was used by Volunteer Regiments into the 1860s. Until the early 1840s, these swords were sometimes carried by Cape Mounted Riflemen.

Maker: Woolley & Co, Birmingham.
Hilt: Steel stirrup guard.
Blade: A strong curve, wide fuller, length 83.5cm (33ins).
Grip: Ribbed wood, leather cover missing.

4: T743 Pattern 1821 Light Cavalry sword.

A compromise cut-and-thrust design, inscribed to the "Cape Mounted Rifles". The Imperial CMR was a unique Regiment, classed as cavalry, but acting as mounted infantrymen. Officers were British, troopers were eighty per cent Khoi, and twenty per cent British or Settler. This was the type of sword used by officers at the Battle of the Gwanga (troopers having lost theirs at Burns' Hill).

Maker (or possibly only the retailer): J & G Linney, 25 Regent Street.
Hilt: Steel three-bar, half-basket guard.
Blade: Slight curve, fullered, length 85.6cm (35.5ins).
Grip: Wood covered by fish-skin, bound with twisted wire.



5: T844 Pattern 1821 Light Cavalry sword.

The 1821 Pattern was first issued in 1823 and was in service for thirty years. Intended as a cut-and-thrust weapon, it was never considered a great success at either function. Nevertheless, it experienced no significant modifications during its lengthy service lifetime. The 1821's successor

was the Universal Pattern of 1853, which gave emphasis to the thrust function: Universal in the sense that from that time onwards all cavalry units, whether Light or Heavy, carried this one sword.

Inscribed: Col. A E Nelson
Hilt: Steel three-bar, half-basket guard.
Blade: Slightly curved, length 86cm (34.75ins).
Grip: Wood covered by fish-skin, bound with wire.



6: T695 Pattern 1822 Infantry Officer's sword.

This pattern was a radical departure from the straight bladed previous design of 1796. It introduced a Gothic hilt incorporating a crown over the Royal cypher (GR for George Rex from 1820 to 1830; WR for William from 1830 to 1837; and VR for Victoria Regina from 1837 to 1901) within an oval cartouche. This hilt design became the standard until near the end of the century. Early models had a pipe-back unfullered blade, later ones were flat backed and fullered.

Hilt: Brass half-basket.
Blade: Slight curve, length 71.4cm (28ins). Point damaged - originally 82.6cm (32.5ins).
Grip: Wood, covered by fish-skin, bound with twisted wire.



8: T696 Pattern 1845 Infantry Officer's sword.

Cartouche bears crown over VR. The pattern 1845 is similar to the 1822; the later blade being slightly wider, and the fuller being of the Wilkinson type which became standard thereafter. The hinged counter guard of the earlier models was changed to a fixed one in 1854.

Hilt: Brass half-basket.
Blade: Slight curve, fullered, length 82.5cm (32.5ins).
Grip: Wood, covered by fish-skin, bound with twisted wire.



7: SM6275 Pattern 1845 Rifles Brigade sword.

The first British Rifle Regiments (Green Jackets not the Redcoat Line Regiments) were formed in the early 1800s. Elite skirmishing troops, they were the first to carry the Baker rifles for long-range accuracy, rather than the smooth-bore muskets. From 1827 the guard of their officers' swords differed from that of Line Regiments. The oval cartouche, incorporated into a Gothic guard – so-called because of its supposed resemblance to tracery on a Gothic window – bears the insignia of a crown over a strung bugle. This recognizes the fact that Rifles' battlefield commands were given by bugle, not by drums, as for Line Infantry Regiments.

Hilt: Steel half-basket guard. Counter guard fixed – not hinged.
Blade: Straight, fullered, length 80.8cm (31.75ins).
Grip: Wood, covered by fish-skin, bound with twisted wire.



9: SM6249 1853 British Artillery sword.

Maker: Unknown.
Hilt: Steel three-bar, half-basket guard.
Blade: Straight, fullered, length 102cm (32ins).
Grip: Wood, covered by fish-skin, bound with twisted wire.

Recent Representations of the Frontier/Wars of Dispossession



Z. Pakama, *Troops carried ashore in P.E. 1856*, detail of the *The Keiskamma Tapestry*, 2004, wool and thread on canvas, Houses of Parliament collection, by kind permission of Carol Hofmeyr.



The Great Fish River, scan from the artist's book *Many Rivers to Cross*, 2011, Archival ink on cotton paper, 500 x 25cms. Artist's collection.

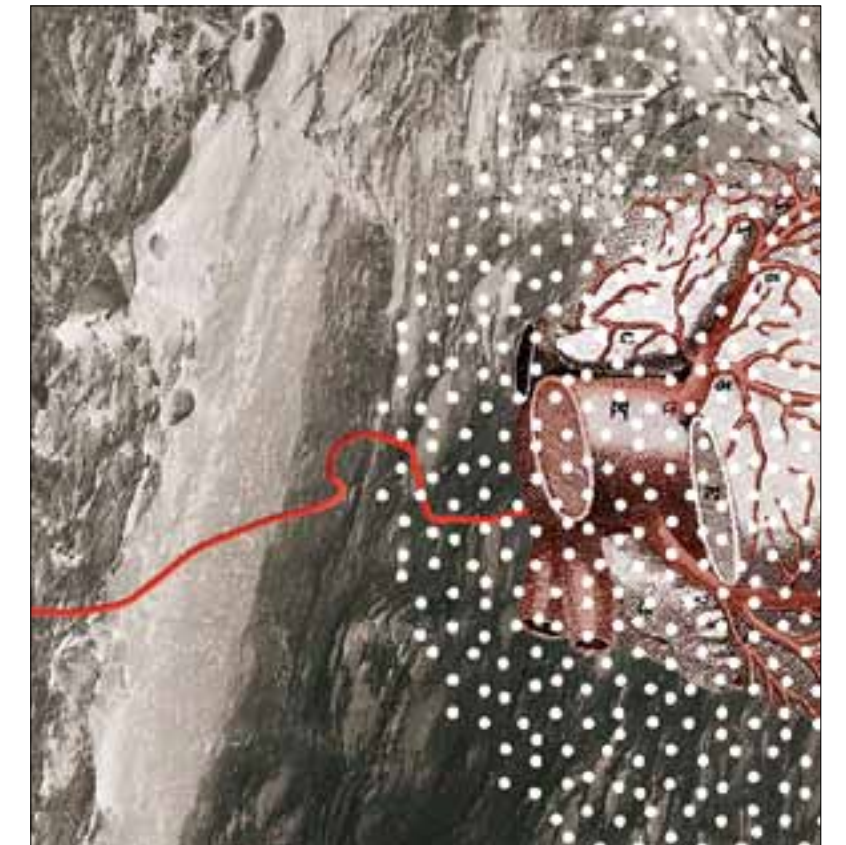
23: Land/Landscape

Landscape has long been one of the most popular genres of art – and, in South Africa, is strongly connected with the idea of property and, in the colonial era, the expansion of Empire. Bell's War drawings both document the acquisition of territory through military action and exemplify the means by which land, as the subject of acquisition, is represented in art: high viewpoints, extensive surveys, and verbal and other symbolic annotation all bring nature under the control of the viewer. Finding these conventions contaminated in this way, certain contemporary artists who are concerned with the history of dispossession in the Eastern Cape, and elsewhere, tend to focus on the means of representation as well as on the appearance of the land itself. This approach can complicate the reading of contemporary landscape representation: in this exhibition, the work of **Christine Dixie** and **Keith Dietrich**, for example, is manifestly layered and self-reflexive, and demands a high degree of critical engagement. Other work appears at first sight to be very much more direct, such as the images by **Stephen Inggs** and **Gabriel Clark-Brown**: but in their use of maps, for example, rather than pictorial forms of representation, these artists are also rejecting, actually with some vehemence, longstanding landscape conventions in part, at least, because of their association with the acquisition of property. A third approach is evident in the work of **Cedric Nunn** who draws on the basic understanding of photography, that the nature of the medium is to take its subject out of one time and place for contemplation in another. This simple act suggests that there is significance in what is represented and invites the viewer to think through the images – in this case, as the photographer has suggested, in terms of the history they both conceal and reveal.

The **Battle** and **Aftermath** sections that follow focus respectively on the violence of dispossession and its consequences.

Keith Dietrich

Imaged simultaneously as cartographic feature and, to suggest it is the life-blood of the country, with reference to the human vascular system, *The Great Fish River*, like Dietrich's depictions of the Gariiep and Vaal Rivers, to which it is linked, documents both its operation as a life-giving but threatened waterway and, pertinent to the theme of this project, its history as frontier between the colony and Xhosa territory.





The Great Kei, and Moni's Kop from the North, etching.

Christine Dixie

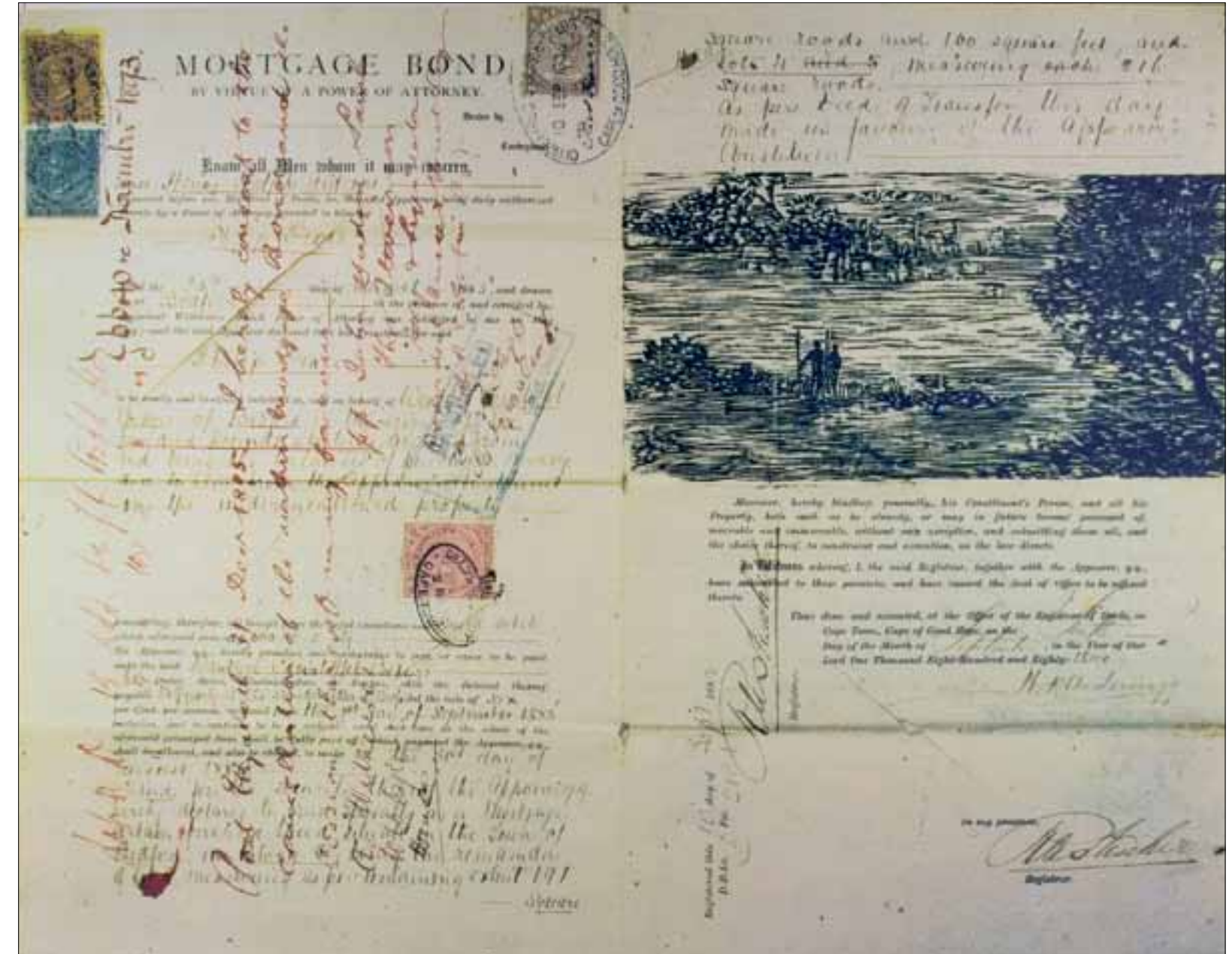
Three prints from the *Bloodspoor* series, 1997, all 30 x 41cms, Johannesburg Art Gallery. Photographs by Paul Mills.

In the *Bloodspoor* series, Christine Dixie examines aspects of the 1820 Settler experience of claiming title to land in the Eastern Cape, and the role of her own ancestors in this history. The new sense of discomfort with this historical experience is expressed in a critical re-assessment of the role of visual language, particularly in the representation of landscape. In *The Great Kei*, for example, Dixie imitates the form of steel engraving that was used to legitimize the process of Empire building in the pages of the *Illustrated London News* – by Charles Bell amongst others! And her representation of surveying a prospect from a high viewing point suggests the close relationship between viewing and the ambition to acquire land. The entire series is marked by interrogation of conventions of representation, and the suggestion that they carry ideological as well as aesthetic dimensions.

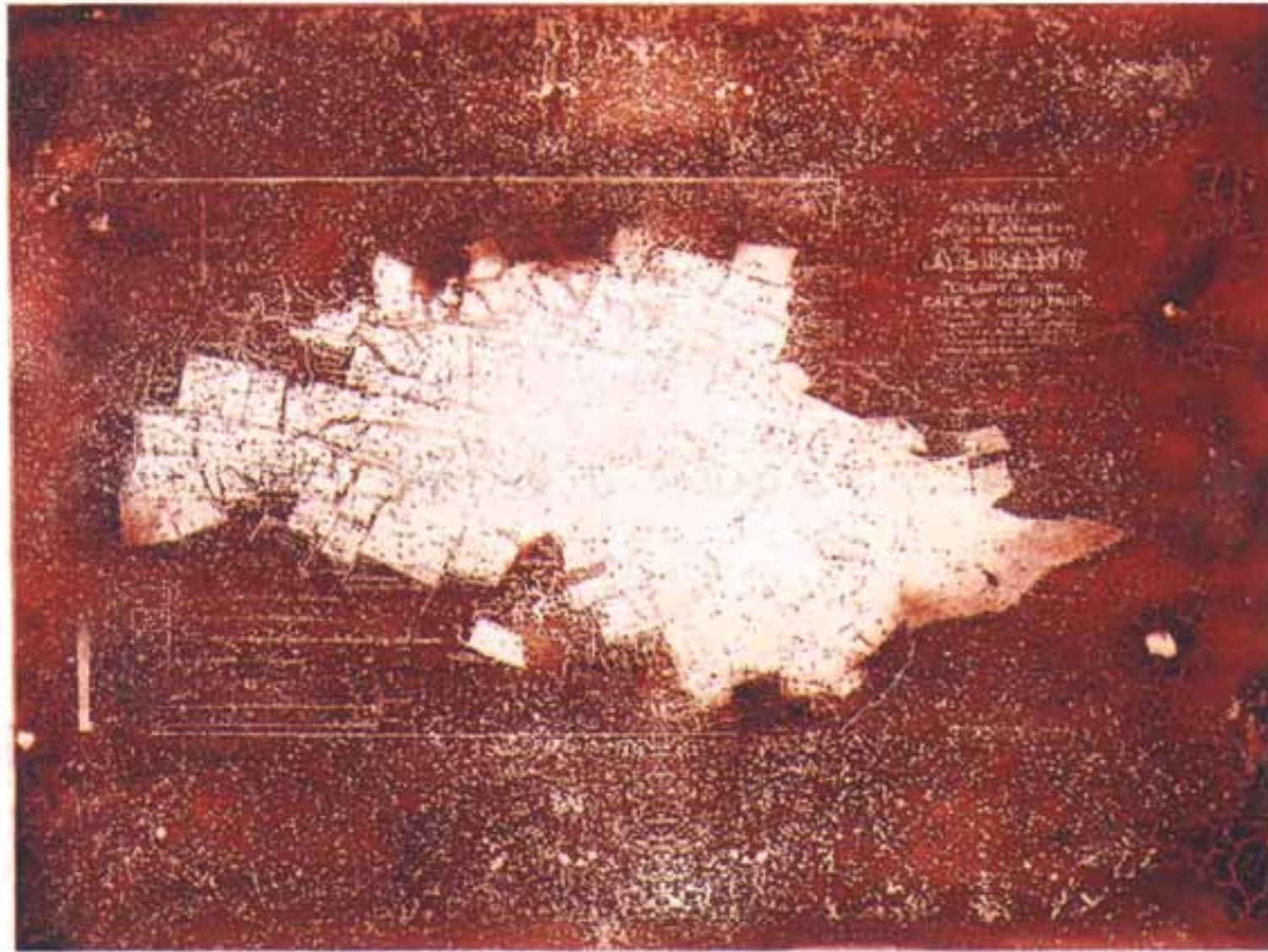


Watchtower; Fort Frazer, collagraph and etching.

The provocatively anti-picturesque image of *Fort Frazer* was intended to literally dominate the landscape as it dominates the pictorial field; and the use of the actual document in *Mortgage Bond* suggests that art, as it is traditionally understood, is not capable of radical political meaning while simultaneously, in the addition of the picturesque woodcut detail, that it necessarily adheres to the idea of property. This detail, incidentally, which occurs again in the background of *The Great Kei*, is drawn directly from the *Illustrated London News* engraving after Charles Bell's lost drawing of *The Missionary Station of Tyumye* illustrated in Section 8.



Mortgage Bond, woodcut on original mortgage bond certificate.



White Islands of Albany, 2000, screenprint of an historic map with Xhosa-speaker's blood, and soil, paper size 100 x 70cms. From the *Egazini Portfolio*.

Gabriel Clark-Brown

The representation of the historical map of Albany in the medium of a Xhosa-speaker's blood, and soil from the region, obviously points to the bloody dispossession of this land from its Xhosa-speaking inhabitants by the several waves of European invasion. But Gabriel Clark-Brown wants the image to represent the

continuous history of Albany into the present where, on the one hand, his purchase of the blood may represent the change from military to economic power and, on the other, the mixing of the blood with the soil, may suggest the inalienable association between people and their land.



Dividers, 2004, Hand-painted silver gelatin emulsion on paper, 39 x 35,5cms. Artist's collection.

Stephen Inggs

Stephen Inggs's imposition of a pair of dividers on a map of South Africa that completely fills the frame of his image is a powerful statement on measuring up the country and allocation of possession. The image gives the sense that nature has been reduced to order, and that freedom has made way for measure. Obviously,

there is a sense that this transformation occurred during the colonial era; and there may be a play on the name of the geometry instrument that mechanically separates one part from another, one people from another.



Cedric Nunn

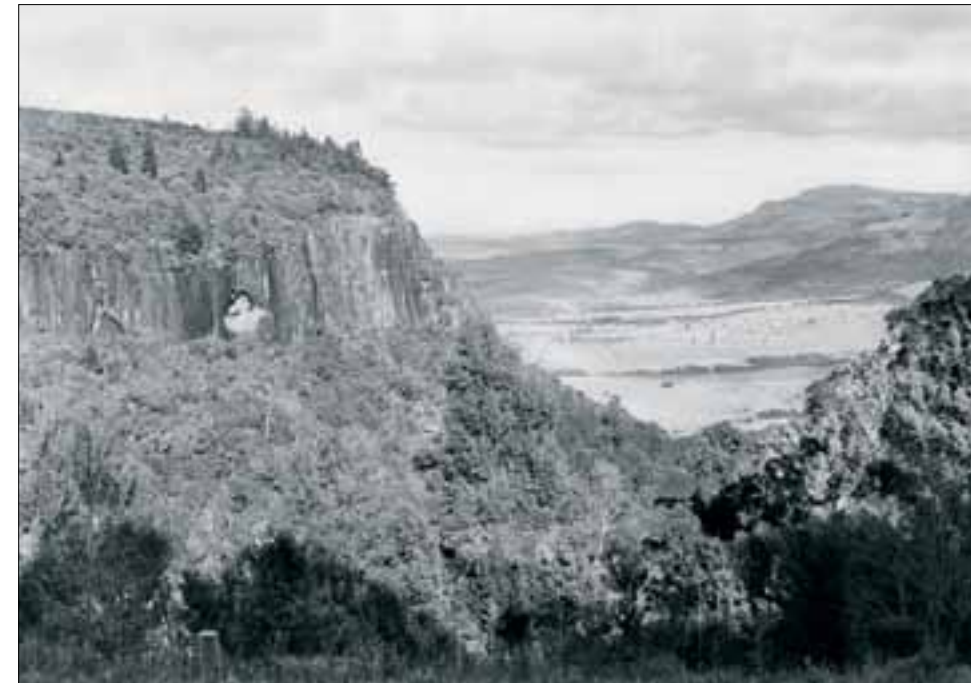
Four photographic prints from the series *Unsettled: One Hundred Years War of Resistance by Xhosa against Boer and British*. All images 46.5 x 31 cms. Courtesy of Seippel Gallery, Cologne and Johannesburg, copyright Cedric Nunn.

Grahamstown Cathedral. According to Nkosi Mxolisi Hamilton Makinana, descendant of five warrior chiefs who fought against the Boers and the British in the 100 Year War of Resistance to Settler and Colonial Domination, this was the site of Ndlambe's Great Kraal. 2012.



Fingo Village, Grahamstown. 2014.

Toposcope from which point 1820 Settler farms were surveyed and families disbursed to their various allotments. Bathurst. 2013.



The rugged heights of the Amathole mountains, which served as a refuge and strategic vantage point for embattled Xhosa warriors. 2013.

24: **Battle**

While great battles were a favourite subject in the privileged genre of History Painting in traditional European academies, few artists today dwell on the representation of actual physical combat: they are drawn either to the underlying causes of war, such as the struggle over land, or to the exploration of its consequences – such as are represented in the next section. Those contemporary artists who do reflect on the physical experience of warfare seem determined, in one way or another, to remove all sense of the heroic rendering of battle, that was the norm in traditional History Painting, and clearly affected Bell's presentation of *The War of the Axe*. As is evident in recent South African treatments of the Frontier/Wars of Dispossession, war today is seen variously as deceptive in its ideology, cynical in its imbalance of power, and outrageous in the brutality of its violence.



The Tragic Death of Hintza, panel 1, *Chief Hintza and Sir Harry Smith negotiate the return of stolen cattle*. Albany Museum.

Hilary Graham

Hilary Graham appears to have followed Samuel E.K. Mqhayi's account in *Ityala lamaWele* (1914) of the death of the Gcaleka chief Hintsa in 1835 which, as the Museum captions indicate, has been challenged as historically inaccurate: it is now thought that it was George Southey that shot Hintsa; and, in relation to the third panel, it is unlikely that Smith, or anyone else, cut off Hintsa's ears or, in fact, his head.

Graham's decision to follow Mqhayi's brutal account of the War that preceded the War of the Axe is in line with the current anti-heroic understanding of warfare that contrasts so strongly with historical renderings. Thus, where Bell used caricature to suggest the barbarity of the Xhosa warriors within a generally heroic presentation of these events, Graham exaggerates the features of all participants – and distorts and confuses his spatial settings – to suggest both the general savagery of warfare and the tragic inequality of this particular contest.



The Tragic Death of Hintza, panel 3, *Smith cuts off Hintza's ears*. Albany Museum.



The Tragic Death of Hintza, panel 2, *Sir Harry Smith shoots Hintza*, 1990, acrylic on board, each panel 102.2 x 149cms, Albany Museum.



Ukuzalwa wedwu ngumlu wanyama – To be the only child is a misfortune, 2000, linocut, paper size 100 x 70cms, from the Egazini Portfolio.

Zola Toyi

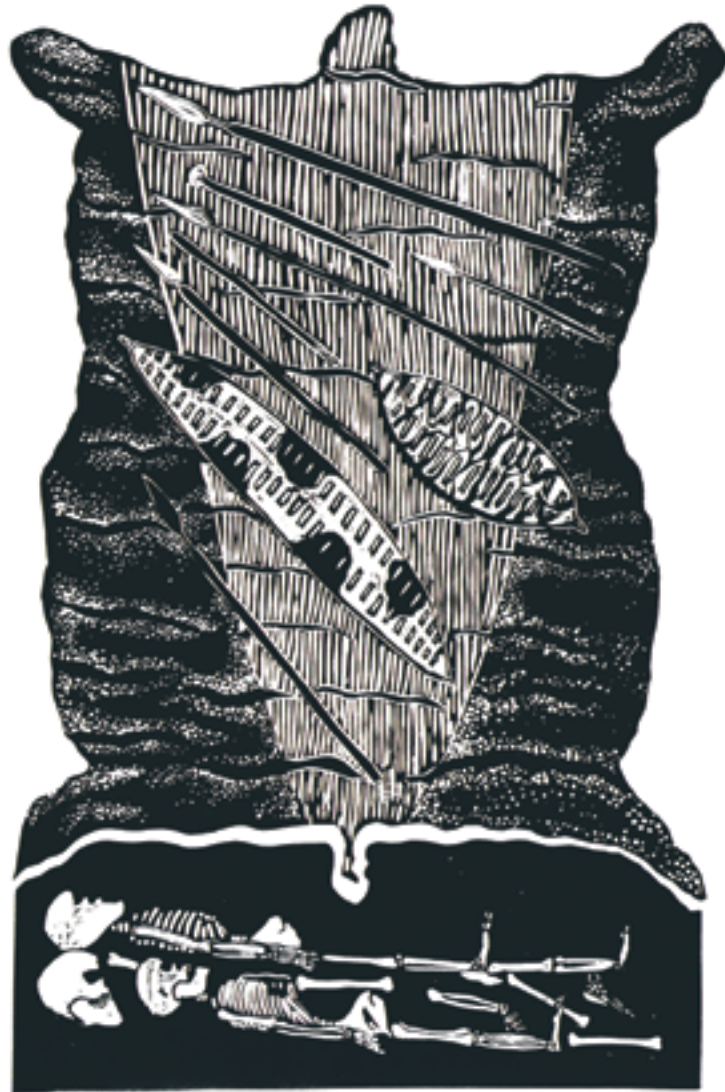
Zola Toyi’s linocut depicts Xhosa warriors waiting to attack behind the trees at what is now called Makanaskop. They were persuaded to fight by Makana, the figure standing in front of them, who told them that the soldiers’ bullets would turn to water and so cause them no harm. Toyi’s title alludes to the loss of life that resulted on that day, and its dire social consequences.

Francki Burger

Francki Burger turns Bell’s heroic account of the war back on itself by combining two scenes from his series on the Battle of the Gwanga in such a way as the dolorous outcome of the engagement, that is represented in the symbolic form of the hyaena, pervades the entire battle narrative: the violence, the opportunism and the cruelty that is symbolized by the hyaena infests this representation of the great colonial ‘victory’. Significantly, Burger’s choice of the subject of Captain Napier taking a prisoner draws attention to the ruthlessness with which Xhosa prisoners or wounded were usually despatched.



7th Frontier War: The Mêlée, 8th June 1846 – Capt. Napier taking a prisoner, 2015, Digital photograph on Hahnemuhle photo rag paper, 100 x 73cms, Artist’s Collection.



Umlom'awashaywa – The mouth is not struck, 2000, linocut, paper size 100 x 70cms. From the *Egazini Portfolio*.

Chumani Xonxa

Noting that, unlike the British, the amaXhosa have no written account of Egazini – or other battles in the Frontier/Wars of Dispossession – Chumani Xonxa discovered that they constructed their history by burying personal items and bones at the battle sites in the confidence that one day, it will be uncovered and made known.

25: **Aftermath: Memory**

When not concerned to represent either actual conflict, or the causes of conflict, such as the struggle over land, contemporary artists tend to treat the Frontier/Wars of Dispossession as episodes of tragic loss. In elegiac mode, artists explore both landscape as potential witness to the seismic events that occurred within it, and the human body that endured such violence that might be imagined to resonate to this day.

Francki Burger

Travelling the country Francki Burger documents sites of conflict from colonial times to the battlefields of the South African War. Working against the sense that landscape inevitably absorbs whatever has occurred within it, Burger traverses the ground like a mine-detector in search of any sense of the history that has played out in these traumatic spaces. By collaging historical photographs or, in this instance, separate photographs of her own that were taken from different points of view, Burger gives the sense of an animated landscape that somehow bears witness to the struggles that were enacted within it.

The Battle of the Gwanga, 2015, Digital photograph on Hahnemuhle photo rag paper, 110 x 110cms, Artist's Collection.





Cape Mounted Rifles (Dukes), Bandsman (1913-1926), from the *Trappings* series, 2000/2003, laserchrome print mounted on aluminium and framed behind glass, 150 x 100cms. Collection Luan Nel and Neil Pendock.

Hentie van der Merwe

In his *Trappings* series of photographs of military uniforms from various times in South Africa's turbulent history, Hentie van der Merwe presents these items of dress as museum specimens (which of course they are) seemingly ready for inspection. This invitation to gaze that is encouraged by their blurred form, brings out aspects of military identity that are usually concealed. As synecdoches for human presence the uniforms appear pensive, rather than active, vulnerable, rather than bold. The masculinity that is represented in these images, in other words, is absolutely not martial and yet, being military, suggests the false premise of war – Bell's war or any war. One is reminded that the first casualty of the War of the Axe was Joshua Norden who is reported to have had a taste for decorative dress.



Photograph of the complete installation of Paul Emmanuel's *The Lost Men Grahamstown* anti-monument on Monument Hill, Grahamstown, by Andrew Meintjies, courtesy Art Source South Africa.

Paul Emmanuel

The Lost Men Grahamstown was made for the National Arts Festival in 2004. Sadly, of the twenty-one voile panels, only one survives. Emmanuel's method is to research the names of the casualties, of this and other battles, irrespective of their rank or on which side they fought, and have them pressed into the skin of his naked body by hot metal plates, and then photograph and collage the images on voile fabrics that he suspends, like Buddhist prayer flags, in the landscape. Through this painstaking method, Emmanuel evokes a rich ensemble of meanings from the obvious sense of the vulnerability of individual combatants, to a feeling of kinship with all those who died, and a certainty that, in some way, their spirits still pervade the landscape.



Invitation...Presentation...Induction, 2013, wool and thread on tapestry canvas, 300 x 175cms, Martin Epstein collection, image courtesy of WHATIFTHEWORLD.

26: **Aftermath: Legacy**

As well as a tragic period in South Africa's history, the Frontier/Wars of Dispossession were also both the moment and the means through which a traditional society entered modernity. The legacy of this momentous event is being worked through to this day. Certain artists engage with this process and its effects on individual and cultural identities – and recent events make clear that there remains a great deal more work to be done on this score. Other artists, aware that the victory of one side over the other can never provide resolution, comment on the uncertain hope of reconciliation.

Athi-Patra Ruga

Starting in fashion Athi-Patra Ruga moved to performance as what he calls the most “democratic” medium – in that it depends entirely upon immediate spectator response – to explore changing ideas of cultural identity in a rapidly transforming South Africa. Ruga's series, in both performance and tapestry, on ‘The Future White Woman of Azania’ interrogates the idea of Azania that, he says, exists as “a place and a myth but somewhere in between it got lost and forgotten” to uncover notions of utopia and dystopia in our political thinking. Specifically, the stand-off between stereotypical Xhosa warriors and Ruga's own persona covered in 250 balloons that are “all air”, represents his claim that cultural identity is no longer determined by geographical or biological origins – and, in the context of this project, one can add, ‘history’ – but is inexorably becoming an increasingly hybrid construct.



Patience on a Monument: A History Painting, 1988, oil and collage on board, 180 x 200cms, William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley.

Penny Siopis

In her essay ‘Historical Delicacies’ in *Penny Siopis: Time and Again* (2014), Jennifer Law describes the scene as “An African woman is perched atop a mountain of cultural debris, idly peeling a lemon. Scenes of colonial wars and European settlement photocopied from school history books are collaged onto the surface of the [board] and painted over, stretching out infinitely around her, indelibly embedded in the landscape. This is the swag of history and she – Patience – waits indefinitely to reclaim it, as the plunder continues around her.”

The title is actually taken from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*: “She sat like patience on a monument, smiling at grief” that adds the sense that Africa, in the figure of Patience, endures the vicissitudes of colonial history – the wars and the appropriation of land that are the subject of Bell's drawings – as so much flotsam, and remains true to herself.



Inquietude I, 2009, Colour photographic print on archival paper, 96.5 x 128cms. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum.



Inquietude II, 2009, Colour photographic print on archival paper, 94 x 128cms. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum.

Nomusa Makhubu

Basing much of her work on what has been theorized as the labyrinthine conception of time, through which the present subject can act on the past as much as the past affects the present, Nomusa Makhubu both makes history come to life and, in some ways, re-writes historical experience. In her earlier *Self-Portrait* series, Makhubu projected an image of herself onto colonial portrait photographs to indicate the humanity of oppressed subjects while simultaneously asserting kinship with them. In the *Inquietude* series, conversely, behind the illusion of shattered glass frames, she inserts images of colonial conquest into commonplace urban landscapes to describe the traumatic precipitation into modernity that resulted directly from these wars of dispossession.



Reconcile, 2000, Collagraph, paper size 100 x 70cms, from the *Egazini Portfolio*.

Vusi Khumalo

The artist writes that the central figures symbolize the close encounter of the British soldiers and the Xhosa warriors in the Battle of Grahamstown, in particular, but also the whole sequence of Frontier/Wars of Dispossession. The Kowie River runs between the combatants' legs. Behind the soldier is Fort England; behind the warrior, Makanaskop from which the attack on Grahamstown was launched. Over the two figures, and over our history, as Khumalo puts it, hovers the dove with a flower in its beak that symbolizes peace and reconciliation.



Egazini Memorial, Fingo Village, Eastern Cape, South Africa, 2014, Black and White resin-coated photographic paper, paper size 50 x 50cms, Artist's collection.

Brent Meistre

The inscription on the Egazini Memorial is self-explanatory, but the present condition of the monument acts as an inadvertent comment on the present state of reconciliation over this troubled history. Brent Meistre's photograph focuses on the inscription within the kraal-like enclosure of the monument while also providing a glimpse into the landscape setting that somehow extends the significance of the memorial – and its delapidated state.

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Michael Godby is Emeritus Professor of History of Art at the University of Cape Town. He received his BA from Trinity College, Dublin, his MA from the University of Birmingham, and his Ph.D. from the University of the Witwatersrand. He has published and lectured on Early Renaissance Art, English Eighteenth-century Art, particularly William Hogarth, Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century South African Art, and the History of South African Photography. He has curated exhibitions on South African art, notably *Is there Still Life? Continuity and Change in South African Still Life Painting* (2007) and *The Lie of the Land: Representations of the South African Landscape* (2010). He is currently preparing a collection of papers for a book on the History of Photography in South Africa; and is planning a new exhibition on the theme of the Domestic Interior in European and South African Painting.

Jeff Peires is the author of two books on Xhosa history, *The House of Phalo* (1981) and *The Dead Will Arise* (1989). Between 1994 and 1996 he represented Ngcobo in the National Assembly, following which he joined the Eastern Cape Provincial Government. He left politics and government in 2007, and is presently attempting to write a history of the entire Eastern Cape “from the Mzimkhulu to the Tsitsikamma.”

Rod Hooper-Box graduated with a major in History from Rhodes University in 1964. Since then he has balanced a career in business – Human Resources and, more recently, Innovation Consultancy – with a passion for the past, particularly military history. He is, or has been a member of the South African Military History Society, the Antique and Blackpowder Firearms Association, the Transvaal Muzzleloaders, the Lower Albany Historical Society, and Historic Bathurst. Rod is particularly interested in the role that firearms played in the history of the Eastern Cape.