

K. Schoeman (ed). *The British presence in the Transorange 1845-1954*. Human en Rousseau, Cape Town, 1992. 147 pp. ISBN 0798129654

This book is the thirteenth volume in the Vrijstatia series source publications. Like the foregoing twelve volumes this volume on the British presence in the Transorange 1845-1854 is a most readable one, also containing valuable archival material on early Free State history.

The earlier volumes in the *Vrijstatia* series deal with the mission history of the area. The present volume, consisting of anthologies of excerpts from contemporary records, tends as Schoeman himself states, "to provide a sketch of the process by which the inhabitants of the Transorange were welded into the political entity known as the Orange River Sovereignty, which was to develop into the Free State Republic ..." Resembling the spirit and atmosphere as emanated by reading a newspaper, this anthology of contemporary writings allows the reader a vivid picture of the period with its tensions, rivalries and violence as displayed by the clashing of interests of different racial groups.

Based on archival sources which, as Schoeman himself admits, are not readily accessible except to dedicated researchers, the beginning of nine years of close British involvement in the affairs of the Transorange is described in six succeeding chapters.

The conflicting interests of the parties concerned, resulted in British involvement to uphold Griqua interests. The Orange River Sovereignty took shape then, including the largescale war between the Basotho and the Bathokwa of Sekonyela. Eventually the Bloemfontein Convention was signed in 1854 and British Sovereignty abandoned.

Schoeman quite rightly refutes the impression that the Orange Free State, as a modern political entity, was created and shaped exclusively by Dutch-speaking Boers. The English, French and German missionaries who settled in the area between the Orange and Vaal Rivers, exerted a considerable influence, both directly and indirectly on local affairs - a tendency which was continued by the English, Dutch and German inhabitants after 1854.

Technically this volume is also up to date. It incorporates a set of comprehensive and elucidative annotations, a map and nine other apt illustrations. Enclosed are also the sources of the quotations and a very useful annotated list of the main settlements which existed in the present Orange Free State, Lesotho and the immediate vicinity during the period 1845-1854. Suggestions for further reading and a comprehensive index, rounding off a book which makes for entertaining reading - a refreshing alternative to the ordinary secondary reproductions on this period.

With this volume, Karel Schoeman, besides his literary achievements, reaffirms his position as a person well-known with early Free State history. May Sasol Limited, who subsidised this publication,

and other parties interested in South African history, always be inclined to render their material support for such worthwhile features.

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P.H.R. Snyman. *Postmasburg: 'n eeu onder plaaslike bestuur, 1893-1993.* Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, Pretoria, 1993, 136 pp. Illus. ISBN 0796914087.

P.H.R. Snyman is 'n voltydse navorser-historikus in die afdeling Groep Samelewingsdinamika van die Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing (RGN). Hierdie afdeling spits hom toe op die bevordering van stads- en streeksgeskiedenis in Suid-Afrika.

Die skrywer is goed vertrouwd met die geskiedenis van die Kaapse streek noord van die Oranjerivier. In 1983 het hy 'n boek getiteld Postmasburg: 'n geskiedkundige oorsig tot 1982, onder die vaandel van die RGN uitgegee. Later volg nog drie boeke oor die streek: Olifantshoek - oase van die Langeberg (RGN, 1986). Daniëlskuil: van Griekwabuitempos tot dienssentrum (RGN, 1988) en Kuruman - vervloë pad na Afrika (RGN, 1992).

Die boek onder bespreking is die eeufeesuitgawe oor Postmasburg wat die 1983-uitgawe tot die hede opgedateer het. Dit is in sy geheel hersien en bygewerk om onder meer ook aspekte van die politieke ontwikkeling en verdediging in te sluit. Uit die lees van die boek blyk dit gou dat Postmasburg (vernoem na prof. Dirk Postma) sy plek in die geskiedenis van die streek volstaan. Ofskoon 'n relatief klein dorpie met 'n totale inwonertal van ongeveer 16 543 mense, het dit 'n beduidende rol in die verskillende samelewingsterreine gespeel: godsdiens, onderwys, handel en nywerheid, mynbou, boerdery, kultuur en militêr.

Die streek van Postmasburg het 'n interessante vroeë geskiedenis wat, sover vasgestel kon word, teruggryp na die Saan (Boesmans) van die Steentydperk. Hierna, meer reser, het die Tswana, Korana en Griekwa gevolg. Die skrywer het gepoog om die rol en aandeel van die swart en bruin gemeenskappe in die geskiedenis van Postmasburg te beskryf, maar, soos hyself tereg opmerk, is die terrein, weens 'n gebrek aan voldoende gegewens en samewerking uit die betrokke gemeenskappe, steeds 'n vrugbare terrein vir toekomstige navorsing.