

SOME ATTITUDES IN GRAHAMSTOWN TOWARDS THE ADVENT OF THE SECOND ANGLO-BOER WAR

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Aspects of the history of Grahamstown have frequently featured in *Contree*.¹ But it has generally been a Grahamstown in its own intimate local setting where this study also places it, though it also locates it on the periphery of events that occurred on a wider South African scale. It is a Grahamstown set against the backdrop of the conflict still popularly best remembered under the shortest, and perhaps aptest appellation: the Boer War.

The "pot-pourri" in this article constitutes an irresistible combination. As the author of a recent thesis on the history of Grahamstown wrote, this was the time when "events in the microcosm, or locality, lends clarity to the cross-current of affairs at the ... level" of what was happening elsewhere in South Africa.² Or as one modern British scholar, writing the history of 19th century Liverpool, observes in much the same vein: "Without a wider national quantity local history is parochial history".³

FIN DE SIÈCLE: SETTING THE STAGE

Grahamstown at the turn of the century was at a crossroads. Yet in another sense it was even then already timeless, and a description accorded the city in 1887 was as easily recognisable a description twelve years later as it would be still today:

"Laid out in the valley, the settler city presents a refreshing sight with the white houses peeping out among the numerous trees and bushes, and awakened thoughts of similar looking dear spots in the old country ... At various times the Cathedral bells resound in grand chimes over the city. The public gardens abound just now in an immense variety of roses, and some of the private gardens are beautifully kept, and show almost a tropical vegetation".⁴

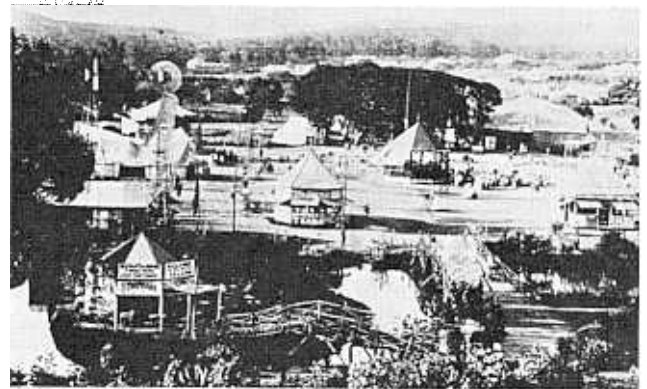
In yet another sense, Grahamstown in 1899 was in the doldrums. She was past her peak of prosperity during the mid-Victorian era when as a garrison town she had attracted a large volume of frontier trade.⁵ Once the troops were finally withdrawn in 1870,⁶ the city was "commercially impoverished, with no function of real importance to fulfil".⁷

Later on, once Rhodes University College was founded in 1904, Grahamstown was firmly planted in the still operative phase of its existence as first and foremost an important tertiary educational centre.⁸ But in 1899 that identity had not yet crystallised. The return of the troops to the city during the Boer War blurred that vision of the future because it enabled Grahamstown to catch for the time being a last fleeting glimpse of its old martial self.

OUT OF SORTS

Grahamstown in 1899 — a community of about 7 000 whites⁹ (as well as 5 000 blacks,¹⁰ living in three locations¹¹) — was in the process of adjustment. It boasted 207 business addresses,¹² which was a far cry from its mid-century identity as a thriving commercial and military outpost. That identity it was unwilling to surrender. Hence the staging of two industrial exhibitions in the city; the first in 1887-1888,

and a still more ambitious one — an event magnificently described elsewhere¹³ — in 1898-1899. Both these ventures were intended to attract back to Grahamstown the commerce and economy which had left this city for other centres in the Cape in the early 1880s.¹⁴ But the 1898 exhibition "had an additional goal". This is where developments on



The grounds of the South African Industrial and Arts Exhibition, Grahamstown, 1898/9.

PHOTOGRAPH: CORY LIBRARY, RHODES UNIVERSITY, GRAHAMSTOWN

¹ K.S. HUNT, The Blaauwkrantz Bridge, *Contree* 5, January 1979, pp. 27-32; K.S. HUNT, When the railway came to Grahamstown, *Contree* 6, July 1979, pp. 24-28; S. SAMPSON, Fort England as a military base, *Contree* 8, July 1980, pp. 16-20; K.S. HUNT, The Grahamstown City Hall ..., *Contree* 10, July 1981, pp. 27-31; S. SAMPSON, The Fort England chapel, *Contree* 12, July 1982, pp. 10-14; J.M. BERNING, United Albany Benefit Society, *Contree* 16, July 1984, pp. 24-29; K.S. HUNT, Grahamstown's Assumption Convent, *Contree* 17, January 1985, pp. 25-28.

² R.M. SELICK, *A study in local history: Grahamstown 1883-1904* (M.A., RhU, 1983), p. vii.

³ P.J. WALLER, *Democracy and sectarianism. A political and social history of Liverpool, 1868-1939* (Liverpool, 1981), p. xiv.

⁴ *Eastern Province Herald*, 9.11.1887 (quoted by SELICK, *op. cit.*, p. 296).

⁵ SELICK, *op. cit.*, p. 237; M. GIBBENS, *Two decades in the life of a city: Grahamstown 1862-1882* (M.A., RhU, 1982), p. 34.

⁶ GIBBENS, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁷ SELICK, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

⁸ *Ibid.*, chapter 8 (pp. 237-283), especially p. 282.

⁹ *Statistical register of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope for the years 1899 ... March quarter 1900* (Cape Town, 1900), p. 34 (1897 population figures for the electoral district of Grahamstown).

¹⁰ SELICK, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹² *The general directory of South Africa, 1898-9* (Cape Town, n.d.) pp. 199-200.

¹³ W.A. MAXWELL, *The Great Exhibition at Grahamstown, December 1898-January 1899* (Grahamstown, 1979); also —, The diamond jubilee, 1897. London and Grahamstown: a tale of two cities, *Annals of the Grahamstown Historical Society* 2(4), 1978, pp. 79-82, and SELICK, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-90.

¹⁴ SELICK, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

the wider regional level impinged on the consciousness of our locality. The 1898 extravaganza sought to “draw South Africans together in a venture which might foster unity in a land divided by the Jameson Raid and the tension between English and Afrikaner”.¹⁵ It was a case of Grahamstown tapping the resource which had made good relations between Boer and Briton so notable a feature of the early years of its existence.

Yet like that other priceless springhead of the city’s survival, the local water table, relations in Grahamstown across language and ethnic barriers have a habit of fluctuating alarmingly. And so like her unpredictable water resources, Grahamstown’s resource of human goodwill all but dried up in the months of tensions which preceded the outbreak of Anglo-Boer hostilities in October 1899: “Jingoist fervour obliterated the voice of moderation, and Grahamstown was swept away on the crest of emotional patriotism.”¹⁶

The most strident such voice was that of *The Journal**, at the time a daily publication.¹⁷ Not far behind, but noticeably somewhat more measured in tone¹⁸ was the city’s other very active local paper, *Grocott’s Daily Mail*.¹⁹ What the readership of these two papers was at the time and, therefore, quite how representative they were of local opinion would be difficult to establish, because such press records as existed were destroyed by the devastating fire which burnt down Grocott’s premises in High Street in 1906.²⁰ There ought also to be the complement of private reminiscences, but of the apposite letters and diaries available in local archival repositories,²¹ very few have anything significant to add about the attitudes which prevailed in Grahamstown after the collapse of the “peace” talks held between Boer and Briton at Bloemfontein from 31 May to 5 June 1899. Willy-nilly, therefore, it is a careful reading of the columns of the local press which can convey the most composite picture of Grahamstown which, because it was a community that was in limbo, was out of sorts. So it often adopted the rather strident tones as reflected particularly in the columns of *The Journal* with which to give vent to its many frustrations and impatience.



East end of High Street, Grahamstown, 1 December 1899: the volunteers are riding to the front.

PHOTOGRAPH: CORY LIBRARY, RHODES UNIVERSITY, GRAHAMSTOWN

What went under the name of responsible reporting was very one-sided — in truth, blatantly biased; some of it was quite irresponsible, even inciting to war. Paul Kruger, president of the Transvaal, was the arch-villain of the peace: he was pictured as unscrupulous, untrustworthy, self-seeking, stubborn, scheming, underhand and wily.²² Kruger was

even portrayed as bending his own studies of the Scriptures to the purposes of war. This was the gist of a news report contained in *The Journal* of 18 August 1899, and taken seriously enough by the editor to reflect it in his own leading column of that specific issue:

“The story goes that the President had no sleep at all on Saturday night, owing to the fact that he was engaged in the study of appropriate scriptural texts and wrestling with the Lord, with the result that it was revealed to him that he must consent to a Conference, but that in any case there was to be a war, with excellent results. This story would not be repeated here were it not told on excellent authority and at the same time quite in accord with the President’s proclivities for trusting to such means for deliverance from an uncomfortable position”.

The drift of *The Journal*’s reporting left no doubt that if any one single individual deserved to be “skinned alive” such a person was “Oom Paul”. A notable illustration of this was the news report which appeared under the double caption, “Oom Paul’s whiskers; the Dragoon’s promise”.²³ This little item related the story of a company of Inniskilling Dragoons who were landed at Durban from India as British troop reinforcements in the last days of peace. On disembarking, the report goes,

“One stalwart young Dragoon as he sprang ashore shouted to the crowd: ‘Is Krooger (sic) going to fight?’ ‘Oh yes, he’s going to fight!’ volunteered an obliging bystander. ‘Hooroosh’, said our Dragoon, ‘that’s all right. I promised my dear old mother a pincushion made out of his whiskers, and now I shan’t disappoint her!’ ”²⁴

There with a touch of humour and bravado, *The Journal* wished to extinction, and confidently predicted the defeat of anyone who dared to challenge the right of Britain to supremacy in Southern Africa. Indeed, as the gathering crisis reached climax, *The Journal* quite openly argued that the grievances of the *Uitlanders* on the Rand were no longer the issue. It was now a case of Britain resuming her “effective control over the Transvaal as an integral part of the British dominions”. The Transvaal had never been intended to be anything other than a British colony.²⁵ Or as the leader article of 19 September 1899 spelt out the message:

“... we do not believe that talk will ever settle the question ... the great mistake of 1881 [Majuba and the first Anglo-Boer War, leading to the return of the Transvaal to a qualified independence under the Pretoria and London Conventions of 1881 and 1884 respectively] must be reversed, and Imperial Control be effectively reasserted over a country which is really part of British South Africa”.

Anyone who looked like obstructing that goal was brushed aside impatiently as evidenced even as early in the ultimate crisis as 2 August 1899 when it looked as if the conflict could still be resolved by peaceful conference means, to which prospect *The Journal* responded in a tone that must have

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

²⁰ I owe this information to Mr J.M. Berning, Cory Library, Grahams-town.

²¹ This observation is based on my reading of 27 private letter collections in the Cory Library and the Albany (Settlers) Museum, Grahamstown.

²² *The Journal*, 2.8.1899 (leader). See also SELICK, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-239.

²³ *The Journal*, 12.10.1899.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.8.1899 (leader).

*Until 1864 known as *The Grahamstown Journal*.

gladdened Lord Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner's heart:

"Argument is threadbare; patience has become ridiculous; what we need is for England to show who is master in South Africa".

This, indeed, was one of a number of occasions when local opinion as expressed in *The Journal* criticised even the home government, which was attacked for its lack of firmness and resolution in dealing with the Transvaal. Criticism of British colonial secretary Joseph Chamberlain's relatively more moderate stance than Milner's was only thinly disguised.²⁶ By contrast, Milner as the imperial pro-consul who was as impatient to settle the dispute by force of arms as *The Journal* itself, was pictured as the model of statesmanship, sagacity and decision.²⁷ Sir William Butler, Milner's deputy — an outspoken proponent of Anglo-Boer conciliation — was by reverse contrast pictured as "foolish",²⁸ and an article from the *Cape Times* which welcomed his recall to Britain in August 1899 was given due local prominence.²⁹

The Cape parliament, because it was dominated by the Afrikaner Bond, earned its own share of local odium even to the extent that *The Journal* called loudly for its suspension.³⁰ As for the Bond itself, it was seen as nothing but a fifth column, as party to the plot "to subvert British supremacy" by "carrying on its divisive and traitorous policy in our midst".³¹ When 53 Cape Afrikaner Members of Parliament petitioned Kruger to maintain the peace in late September 1899 and the Transvaal president responded to that memorial politely but gave nothing away, that tightfisted reply gave *The Journal* the opportunity to condemn afresh what it pictured as "the alliance between our secret intriguers and the conspirators at Pretoria".³²

WAR FEVER UNLEASHED

As both sides drifted into war and tensions rose — especially the tensions unleashed by the flood of mainly white English speaking but also some black refugees,³³ most of whom poured into the Cape Colony in the last weeks of peace³⁴ — reports of atrocities and war preparations attributed to the Boers became at best, somewhat exaggerated, at worst, highly alarmist. As early as 26 August there were reports of British nationals crossing the border into the Cape being sworn at, insulted and threatened by mounted Transvaal burghers.³⁵

By the end of the same month, war fever even crept into local advertising. Chas H. Abbott, a tobacconist and general dealer of Oatlands and Bathurst Street, made a special feature of such advertising. On 28 August he ran the following "advertisement":

"RECRUITS REQUIRED

What for?

Time alone will tell, but we can assure you we have just

unpacked, at the undermentioned stores,

ANOTHER 25 000 CIGARETTES, OF

VARIOUS KIND

WHICH ARE BEING SOLD AT

4 d per pkt., 30/- per 1 000 etc."

A local fruiterer actually used the caption "WAR FEVER" to introduce his catchy sales talk:

"The state of our English Blood at this time requires watching to keep the system cool. Nothing like good Fresh Fruit and those lovely oranges, naartjes and strawberries — eautiful (sic) fruit, at A J Webber's shop are the thing. Call and try."

He signed off by telling his customers that all that enumerated package of juicy freshness was, "Sure cure for Fever Enemy".³⁶ After the war had actually broken out, Abbott's stole back the limelight with a front page advertisement under a banner headline which read:

"LATEST WAR NEWS

The Battle Royal has now commenced, and
Death

is seen on every hand.

Woe to the flies, for they fly no more

TANGLEFOOT

THE NOTED STICKY FLY PAPER

is sharper than a two-edged sword, and this
special line is being

sold at

21/- PER BOX OF 25 DOUBLE SHEETS".³⁷

Such commercial items lent weight to the alarmist first-hand accounts of harassed train travelling Britishers and other refugees who were beaten or otherwise molested by Boers, all of which were prominently featured in *The Journal*. The fullest such description was the story told by a Mr C.W. Lake of Pritchard Street, Johannesburg who arrived in Grahamstown on 5 October. Emblazoned by such evocative headings as "Thrashed by Boers", "Sjambokking the passengers who Ask for Bread", "A Shameful Incident", the account of Lake's experiences included the description of an incident at Kroonstad in the Free State where eight to ten English-speaking passengers looking for bread, were ridden down by a posse of Boers, armed with Mausers and sjamboks. As they were sjambokked "all the way back to the train", some of the victims had their faces slashed as a result of this beating.³⁸ Despite prompt denials of the incident by the landdrost of Kroonstad, *The Journal* stuck by its story, and reinforced its earlier account of it with the testimony of more eye-witnesses.³⁹ By now it was the very eve of war, and there



The Drosty Barracks and British troops during the Anglo-Boer War.
PHOTOGRAPH: ALBANY MUSEUM, GRAHAMSTOWN

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.9.1899 (leader).

²⁷ SELICK, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

²⁸ *The Journal*, 15.8.1899.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.8.1899.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.10.1899.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 16.9.1899.

³² *Ibid.*, 23.9.1899.

³³ *Ibid.*, 25.10.1899 ("Cradock and the Refugees").

³⁴ SELICK, *op. cit.*, p. 240; T. PACKENHAM, *The Boer War* (London, 1979), p. 116; *The Journal*, 25.10.1899.

³⁵ *The Journal*, 26.8.1899.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.10.1899.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 21 and 30.10.1899.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.10.1899.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.10.1899.

was nothing stopping *The Journal's* spate of emotion-charged reporting. The editorial of 12 October included the following passage:

"The threats and annoyances to which Johannesburgers have been exposed in their own streets, the barbarities inflicted even on women and children in their flight from a rebel State, the ferocious treatment of peaceful passengers at Kroonstad, these and other incidents are sufficient samples of Boer Savagery to cause us to rejoice that our countrymen have retired in time".

In fairness to *The Journal*, every such reference was founded on some reported incident, and there was added cause for the paper's tone of heightened moral outrage in that the latest reported incident of a Britisher's manhandling by Boers — printed under the highly charged captions of "Vengeance! Vengeance", "The Boer Outrage", "A Terrible Scene", — was the most serious and ugliest to date. It concerned a Mr J.H. Lanham, chairman of the Krugersdorp branch of the pro-Milner and jingoistic South African League who, in an earlier issue of *The Journal*, was reported as having been murdered.⁴⁰ That information was later corrected, but the incident in question even then made bone-chilling reading as Lanham had been set upon by 50 rifle swinging Boers. He was rescued by a police officer who dragged him to the apparent safety of the nearest refreshment room only to be set upon again by his relentless pursuers who smashed down doors and windows to get at him. He was then removed to the local goal which, *The Journal* report added for effect, was "vermin-infested", with the sounds of the lynchmob ringing in his ears: "We'll hang him to the nearest Telegraph Pole as soon as the war begins, and shoot him so full of bullets, there won't be anything of him left."⁴¹

Meantime, Grahamstown alongside with other Cape centres⁴² (but also Natal⁴³) took steps to give succour to the refugees, who in Grahamstown alone numbered nearly 500 by the end of the year.⁴⁴ A local committee known as the Grahamstown Refugee Relief Committee was established at a public meeting on 12 October; but right from the start the response to translate words into deeds was only half-hearted. Several speakers at the inaugural meeting said so quite bluntly, and none more directly than Cannon Mullins, the local Anglican diocesan secretary and rector of two city parishes.⁴⁵ "Why", he said, "if there was an extra lamp wanted in the town the place would be crowded. He believed that it is because they are afraid of putting their hands in their pockets."⁴⁶

Even some of the councillors had failed to attend the inaugural meeting. The town council ultimately made generous contributions to the fund⁴⁷, but local business did not follow suit. Local property owners earned themselves the reputation for racketeering.⁴⁸ Some stood accused of raising local rents by between 25 and 30 per cent since the arrival of the poor refugees from Johannesburg,⁴⁹ and all in all, the prospects for gain rather than any philanthropic spirit dictated the local business response to the influx of the refugees. Local business houses were very quick to declare their willingness to take the hard Transvaal gold currency for purchases made on their premises,⁵⁰ and refugees were invited to purchase mementoes, including the cloth bound pictorial souvenir of the city, priced at 6/6 a copy.⁵¹

THE OTHER SIDE OF LOCAL OPINION

And yet — not only in fairness to *The Journal* but in essential fairness to the public whose views it represented — the views expressed by *The Journal* and its "devotion to the imperial cause", if "blind", and not always well supported by material



A group of Red Cross nurses and children dressed for a concert during the Anglo-Boer War in Grahamstown.

PHOTOGRAPH: CORY LIBRARY, RHODES UNIVERSITY, GRAHAMSTOWN

deeds, "was born of sincerity and a conviction of the importance of British culture, customs and authority"⁵² (and may I add, also of a surviving sense of British fairness). For even the editor of *The Journal* in one of his more sanguine moments expressed regret at the loss of unity and friendship "with the Dutch as of old", and though he saw the rise of Afrikaner nationalism attendant on the success of the Transvaal regaining its independence in 1881 as the main point of departure in the deteriorating relationships between the two white language groups in South Africa, he was yet prepared to admit that there was fault on both sides.⁵³

Who else saw fault on both sides were two men with strong Grahamstown connections. One was James Butler, grandfather of Guy Butler, who at the age of 22 in 1876 had been advised for health reasons to come out to South Africa.⁵⁴ It was in Grahamstown that he spent the first year of what soon became a permanent sojourn in South Africa.⁵⁵ At the time of the outbreak of the Boer War, Butler was editor of the Cradock daily, *The Midlands News and Karroo Farmer*, a joint venture of the Butler and Collett families dating back to 1892.⁵⁶ His correspondent on whom he relied to prevent the calamity of war⁵⁷ was the Grahamstown born James (later Sir James) Rose Innes, later second

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 13.10.1899.

⁴² In the case of Colesberg see Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown (CL), MS 15, 145, iii: Journal book of Arthur William Cragg (Methodist minister, Colesberg district), January 1899-December 1900, especially entry for 6.11.1899.

⁴³ E. CECIL, *On the eve of war. A narrative of impressions during a journey in Cape Colony, the Free State, the Transvaal, Natal, and Rhodesia, September 1899 to January 1900* (London, 1900), pp. 78-79.

⁴⁴ SELICK, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁴⁵ *The general directory of South Africa, 1898-9*, p. 685.

⁴⁶ *The Journal*, 13.10.1899.

⁴⁷ SELICK, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *The Journal*, 10.10.1899 (Letter of T. Condon to the editor).

⁵⁰ *Grocott's Daily Mail*, 14.9.1899 and 9.10.1899.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 12.10.1899.

⁵² SELICK, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

⁵³ *The Journal*, 29.8.1899 (leader).

⁵⁴ G. BUTLER, *Karoo morning: an autobiography (1918-35)* (Cape Town, 1977), p. 15.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16 and 21-27; J.M. GARNER 'Jim's Journal': *the diary of James Butler. A critical edition* (M.A., RhU, 1983), pp. 2, 24 and 57.

⁵⁶ BUTLER, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁵⁷ CL, MS 3479/1, James Butler's correspondence: Butler — J.R. Innes, 16.7.1899.

chief justice of the Union of South Africa, who as leader of the Progressive opposition in the Cape parliament,⁵⁸ shared Butler's dislike of the excesses of British imperialism.⁵⁹ Both men thought that neither side to the impending conflict was pulling its weight to prevent a war.⁶⁰ It is ironic that as attorney-general during the war, Innes incurred much criticism for something he hated to impose, and that was martial law.⁶¹ Both men laid great store by the parliamentary method.⁶² In this respect, also, Innes was no "stereotyped" Progressive, but a firm opponent of the demand to suspend the constitution of the Cape.⁶³

"Closer to home" than either Cradock or Cape Town as a yardstick of British fairness was Grahamstown's other local paper, *Grocott's Daily Mail* (or "*Grocott's*"), as it is still popularly known). In this paper there was acknowledgement of the fact that notwithstanding his unpopular political line, Sir William Butler, as a not infrequent visitor to Grahamstown, had won local approval for his personal qualities: "His general and gallant bearing won the hearts of all who came in contact with him."⁶⁴

Moreover, it was the same paper which published Olive Schreiner's immensely evocative and moving plea to England not to fight to take away from so proud, heroic and "little" a people as the Afrikaners, their right to their own land. In that appeal, she prophesied that the war would be no pushover for the British Empire. Britain might have the advantage of "vast" material resources at her disposal, but the Boers had the strength of moral conviction on their side: "Ours is a politicians's war; theirs is a people's war". She predicted the long bitterness that would follow the Boers' ultimate defeat. In vain as it proved, she appealed to a long legacy of British fairness to arrest the slide to war:

"We Englishmen in South Africa have never wholly lacked, from the days of General Dundas and Sir George Grey down to those of General Sir William Butler, a line of great Englishmen who have perceived that the true line of statemanship lay in dealing with the South African problems in a spirit of manly justice, simple straightforwardness and a broad humanity".⁶⁵



Return of First City Volunteers to Grahamstown after the Anglo-Boer War.

PHOTOGRAPH: ALBANY MUSEUM, GRAHAMSTOWN

It was *Grocott's* also which reflected the less exaggerated — and because far more sober — probably much truer state of local opinion. It frequently admitted to a feeling of anxiety as to what might be the awful consequences should efforts to reach a peaceful settlement break down in failure.⁶⁶ It welcomed efforts at mediation by Free State leaders and chided the armchair sensationalists who were all for wanting a catastrophe to happen for it to take their minds off their humdrum lives "so long as it left themselves and their belongings intact".⁶⁷

Grocott's then — as still perhaps it is today — was the essential, and certainly the more enterprising, local news

organ. In mid-September 1899 it inaugurated the innovation of a "special edition" whenever the news warranted it. It simultaneously made an arrangement that the availability of such an edition should be announced by means of "two prolonged shrieks" emitted from the steam whistle which was part of the machinery of Messrs Brook & Pote who traded under the name of the Grahamstown Roller Flour Mills in Hill Street.⁶⁸ That whistle was audible in a radius of about thirteen kilometres.⁶⁹ For a time it was out of commission when the milling firm's machinery underwent an overhaul. To tide the new arrangement over, Grocott's arranged for its own steam whistle to alert the public to any startling new development in the crisis.⁷⁰

But even in wartime, Grahamstown ultimately looked to its own concerns. As already reflected in the rather tightfisted response to the plight of upcountry refugees, money was scarce and business hard to come by. When there was competition in any field, custom was fiercely contested as evidenced not least by a near local "newspaper war", prompted by *The Journal's* rather exaggerated claim against *Grocott's Daily Mail* in late August 1899 that the latter was quite deliberately pirating its access to its own long established overseas cable.⁷¹

LOOKING AHEAD

That crisis blew over without resort to litigation. But there is the link which suggests that in the last resort and even while the great regional armed conflict of the Boer War impinged in so many ways on the peaceful life of the city, Grahamstown looked already beyond its own immediate concerns to its more distant future. For on the very day of the public meeting in connection with the refugees, an earlier public gathering had heard the report of a steering committee that was working on the establishment of a state assisted teachers' training college in Grahamstown.⁷²

There lay the road ahead. There was the indication that the martial sounds which had ushered in Grahamstown's existence would again be left behind. Yet such is the rhythm of Grahamstown's existence that when the past and present of the city are merged, the martial sound is once more very prominent within its midst. Since the establishment of the modern military base off the Cradock road in April 1962, education and a permanent military presence once more co-exist in an environment which for all its dedication to the arts of peace can never quite shake off its genesis in a setting full of conflict. ◻

⁵⁸ *Standard encyclopaedia of Southern Africa (SESA)* 6 (Cape Town, 1972), pp. 102-103.

⁵⁹ CL, MS 3479/1: J.R. Innes — J. Butler, 18.7.1899; *SESA* 6, pp. 102-103; *Dictionary of South African biography (DSAB)II* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1972), pp. 329-332; BUTLER, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁶⁰ CL, MS 3479/1: J.R. Innes — J. Butler, 18.7.1899, and Butler — Innes, 2.9.1899.

⁶¹ *DSAB II*, p. 330.

⁶² CL, MS 3479/1: J.R. Innes — J. Butler, 18.7.1899, and Butler — Innes, 2.9.1899.

⁶³ *DSAB II*, p. 330.

⁶⁴ *Grocott's Daily Mail*, 18.8.1899 (leader).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.10.1899.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 11, 15 and 22.8.1899.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.8.1899.

⁶⁸ A. MACMILLAN (compiler), *The city of Grahamstown illustrated* (Grahamstown, 1902), p. 71.

⁶⁹ *Grocott's Daily Mail*, 20 and 21.9.1899.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.10.1899.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 28.8.1899.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 13.10.1899.