

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY AND LOCAL HISTORY

Dr A.J. Christopher

The two disciplines of historical geography and local history have experienced considerable growth in the last twenty-five years. They operate in the borderland between the wider subjects of History and Geography, with the aim of elucidating the history and appearance of particular portions of the earth's surface. This may be summed up in the study of the evolution of the man-made landscape, including an attempt to unravel its origins and reconstruct its appearance at significant times. The relationship between the two has been a profitable one, and has been explored on a philosophical plane by writers such as Darby from the geographical viewpoint, and Hoskins from the historian's point of view.¹

In a journal devoted to local history some apology for historical geography is undoubtedly needed. The simple idea that history is about past events and geography is about present places dies hard, and the concept of an area of co-operation between them had little place in most geographical writings before the 1950's. However, an increasing awareness of the imprint of the past upon the landscape of the present led to a re-appraisal in the 1950's.² Historical geography has advanced rapidly in the last quarter of a century and is an accepted field of study in most countries.

WHAT IS HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY?

Seeking an answer to this question presents a number of problems. Historical geography has had a multitude of definitions.³ As fields of study, such as cartography and exploration, have become separate disciplines, so the focus has sharpened. Probably only four definitions remain of significance today, namely: the geography behind history; the reconstruction of past landscapes; the evolution of the cultural landscape; and the study of relict features. As will be seen, the impact of local history upon the direction of historical geography has been profound, while its deviation from what might be regarded as pure geography has been cause for concern in some quarters.

the geography behind history

The concept of geography as a service to the study of history is an old one. Macaulay's survey of late Stuart England at the beginning of his *History of England* (1848) remains a classic which has to some extent been emulated by others.⁴ Thus the eight-volume *Cambridge history of Iran* (1968) devoted the first volume to a geographical appraisal of the country.⁵ However, the *Oxford history of South Africa* (1969–1971) did not devote more than a few pages to the geographical background, and these were contributed by an economist.⁶ Such an approach is basically unsatisfactory from the geographer's position, as he remains the servant of the historian. Such, however, is the position under Marxist-Leninist thought in the U.S.S.R where historical geography remains essentially background reading for economic history.⁷

the reconstruction of past landscapes

This has long been regarded as the most orthodox of approaches to historical geography and indeed the only one recognised by Hartshorne in his major philosophical work published in 1939.⁸ The reconstruction of the landscape as it existed at a particular time has elicited some major pieces of research. Probably Darby's monumental five-volume study of Domesday (1086 AD) England is one of the most thorough and scholastic works to come out

of this field.⁹ Historical geography as a series of reconstructions of the landscape at different dates remains one of the major approaches. Thus in the *New historical geography of England* (1973) reconstructions of the England of several significant dates have been made, with commentaries on the changes which occurred between them.¹⁰ Other authors have attempted to produce studies of one particular year as a complete work in itself.¹¹

Reconstructions rely heavily upon the sources of material available. Many reconstructions have had to use what has been accessible and the dates have been determined by censuses, inventories and so forth. Thus Goheen in his study of Victorian Toronto had to rely upon the censuses at ten-year intervals.¹² Indeed the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are generally more fully documented and readily lend themselves to the time series of reconstruction because of the regularity of

- H.C. DARBY, On the relations of geography and history, *Transactions of the Institute of British geographers* 19, 1954, pp.1–11; H.C. DARBY, Historical geography, in H.P.R. FINBERG (Ed.), *Approaches to history* (London, 1962), pp.127–156; W.G. HOSKINS, *Local history in England* (London, 1972).
- A.H. CLARK, Historical geography, in P.E. JAMES and C.F. JONES (Eds.), *American geography: inventory and prospect* (Syracuse, 1954), pp.70–105; R. HARTSHORNE, *Perspective on the nature of geography* (Chicago, 1959).
- A.R.H. BAKER, Rethinking historical geography, in A.R.H. BAKER (Ed.), *Progress in historical geography* (Newton Abbot, 1972), pp.11–28; A.R.H. BAKER, J.D. HAMSHIRE and J. LANGTON, *Geographical interpretations of historical sources* (Newton Abbot, 1970).
- T.B. MACAULAY, *The history of England from the accession of James II* (London, 1848).
- W.B. FISHER, *The Cambridge history of Iran I: the land of Iran* (Cambridge, 1968).
- M. WILSON and L. THOMPSON, *The Oxford history of South Africa*, 2 vols., (Oxford, 1969–1971). The geographical content was supplied by D. Hobart Houghton in Vol. 2, Chapter 1: Economic development, pp.1–48.
- R.A. FRENCH, Historical geography in the U.S.S.R., *Soviet geography* 9(7), September 1968, pp.551–561; V.S. ZHEKULIN, Some thoughts on the subject of historical geography, *Soviet geography* 9(7), September 1968, pp.570–574.
- R. HARTSHORNE, *The nature of geography: a critical survey of current thought in the light of the past* (Chicago, 1939).
- H.C. DARBY, *The Domesday geography of eastern England* (Cambridge, 1952); H.C. DARBY and E.M.J. CAMPBELL, *The Domesday geography of south-east England* (Cambridge, 1962); H.C. DARBY and I.S. MAXWELL, *The Domesday geography of northern England* (Cambridge, 1962); H.C. DARBY and I.B. TERRETT, *The Domesday geography of Midland England* (Cambridge, 1954); H.C. DARBY and R. WELLDON FINN, *The Domesday geography of south-west England* (Cambridge, 1967).
- H.C. DARBY, *A new historical geography of England* (Cambridge, 1973).
- R.H. BROWN, *Mirror for Americans: likeness of the eastern seaboard 1810* (New York, 1943).
- P.G. GOHEEN, *Victorian Toronto 1850 to 1900: pattern and process of growth* (Chicago, 1970).

census-taking. Furthermore, the wealth of illustrative material, personal writings, official reports and mapping makes this approach possible with greater refinement than in the pre-1800 period.

the evolution of the cultural landscape

The third accepted approach to historical geography attempts to trace the development of the cultural (man-made) landscape from its origins with the arrival of Man up to the present day. As such, this approach is often indistinguishable from the making of the landscape approach in local history.¹³ It is also closest to the classic evolutionary approach in other branches of geography, such as geomorphology, which is concerned with the history of the physical landscape of mountains and valleys, rivers and plains. It is rare to have a definite starting point in such a study, although German workers in particular have stressed the importance of the primeval landscape as a starting point.¹⁴ In Europe and Asia new beginnings from which the major processes of development and change began are often looked for. Thus Darby could state, "...the new work begins with the coming of the Anglo-Saxons in the belief that so far as there ever is a new beginning in history, that event was such a beginning."¹⁵ In large parts of the middle latitude world the new beginning was marked by the arrival of European explorers, traders and settlers. Such an approach from a 1652 base line would seem appropriate in South Africa, although the contribution of the pre-European population must have been substantial.

Starting at a base line, the classic approach of historical geography has been to study the processes of landscape evolution, such as woodland clearing, marsh draining, heath reclamation, industrial and urban development. In this manner Man becomes another agent of change as much as wind, water and ice. The deviation from the historian's approach is most noticeable, and the impersonality of geographical writing was criticised by Hoskins when he wrote, "...men are as important to town development as geography."¹⁶ One should remember the aphorism, "Cities do not grow: they are built". The historical approach looks more to the chronological development of the landscape, while Hoskins suggested that landscapes could be examined on the basis of the type of landscape, such as those that prospered or failed.¹⁷

Change in the landscape has increasingly been the direction of study in North America and Australasia, as well as Europe. The relative abundance of records illustrating change has resulted in the appearance of definitive works on parts of the comparatively 'new lands'. For example *The making of the South Australian landscape* (1974) followed closely the classic pattern tracing the transformation of a part of Australia from the primitive landscape of the early 1830's to the highly developed state of the 1960's.¹⁸ The approach borrowed heavily from the pioneering work by Hoskins, *The making of the English landscape* (1955), which may be regarded as a starting point of modern landscape studies in the English language.¹⁹ Numerous successor works on individual counties have followed, some by geographers, some by historians, but as questions are answered, new ones constantly arise, which in turn can only be answered by detailed examination of small regions.²⁰ Synthesis is thus still to be achieved in England, despite attempts to gather together the threads of present knowledge, and



The original farm Baakens River (No. 30, Port Elizabeth) has been cut up for smallholdings and suburban estates in the present century. The above air photograph shows Port Elizabeth suburbs on this farm in 1939. Compare the landscape change of the same area on the air photograph (below) of 1972.

Air photographs reproduced under Government Printer's Copyright Authority 5788 of 17 November 1976.



13. H.P.R. FINBERG and V.H.T. SKIPP, *Local history, objective and pursuit* (Newton Abbot, 1973).
14. H. JAGER, Historical geography in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, in A.R.H. BAKER (Ed.), *Progress in historical geography* (Newton Abbot, 1972), pp.45-62.
15. H.C. DARBY, *A new historical geography of England*, footnote 10, p.xiii.
16. W.G. HOSKINS, *Fieldwork in local history* (London, 1967), p.73.
17. W.G. HOSKINS, *English landscapes* (London, 1973).
18. M. WILLIAMS, *The making of the South Australian landscape* (London, 1974). Compare this approach with D.N. JEANS, *An historical geography of New South Wales to 1901* (Sydney, 1972).
19. W.G. HOSKINS, *The making of the English landscape* (London, 1955).
20. Compare the approach of a geographer, F. EMERY, *The Oxfordshire landscape* (London, 1974), and an historian, H.P.R. FINBERG, *The Gloucestershire landscape* (London, 1975).

the same is true of countries such as the United States and Australia.²¹

the study of relict features

The alternative to progressive history is the regressive study of features remaining in the landscape. The starting point of this approach is the landscape of today, and study is directed towards individual features and groups and their origins.²² Often this leads to the dating and disentangling of the features, so that the individual or group can be more fully understood. Thus, using the evidence contained in the topographic map, Yates examined the survival of landscape elements tracing parts of the Sussex landscape back to Mediaeval times; but recognising others to be of relatively recent origin.²³ Hoskins, in the field of local history, has been concerned with elucidating the individual feature as a part of a dating process, leading to an awareness of continuity in the landscape.²⁴ Taylor, in his study of the Dorset landscape, was able to use relict features to disentangle many problems of an economic or social nature, where no documentary evidence was extant.²⁵ The scope of such painstaking work offers solutions to problems in detail, and has largely been left to local historians to pursue, with comparatively little attention from geographers, although significant work on road patterns has taken place.²⁶

A NEW APPROACH TO HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY — NEW DIMENSIONS

In 1971 Prince introduced the concept of a three-fold division of historical geography into the study of the real, imagined and abstract worlds of the past.²⁷ The real worlds were basically the subject matter of the foregoing discussion. The imagined worlds made use of developments in the behavioural sciences which delved into men's perceptions of the world in which they lived.²⁸ Thus William the Conqueror had a very different perception of his kingdom of England from that researched by Darby from the same survey (1086 A.D.). Men's attitudes are determined in part by the times and places in which they live. Hence during the exploration of the 'new lands', attitudes tended to reflect those of Europe, right down to accepted good taste in landscape gardening.²⁹ Thus places such as Natal or Western Australia were viewed as 'new Englands', and settlers attempted to reconstruct the landscape of rural and urban England in an alien environment.³⁰ The difference between their perception of their surroundings and reality was often great, but no full understanding of the landscape of their time or of today is possible without an understanding of how the pioneers viewed their surroundings. Perceptions changed as either greater knowledge became available or political and social circumstances altered. A number of studies in North America and Australia have developed this theme. The Great Plains were viewed variously as the Great American Desert and as fertile grasslands awaiting the plough, depending upon the background of the beholder.³¹ The Australian interior similarly changed appearance according to the background, status and age of the writer.³² In many perception studies sheer optimism probably explains the location of settlements which, on purely scientific grounds, should not have been located where they are.

The abstract worlds of the past relate to the construction of general laws and models to explain past happenings. Thus models of colonisation patterns help to

explain the timing and process of settlement.³³ As yet this side of historical geography is but little developed, owing to the lack of basic information.

THE PROSPECTS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

South African historical geography lacks the volume of work appearing in countries such as Canada, Australia or the United States. In the period of background studies several chapters in books together with one complete historical geography appeared in the 1960's.³⁴ More recently (1976) a landscape evolutionary historical geography of southern Africa has appeared.³⁵ However, at the more detailed local level, there are ample fields for research. Owing to the progress made in other countries much interchange and borrowing of ideas is possible. Although much of the early work on historical geography and local history is of west European origin, it is the new lands of North America and Australasia which have most to offer geographers and historians in South Africa. The common settlement experience and similar sources of information inevitably lead to the adoption of largely American and Australasian approaches.

21. A.R.H. BAKER and J.B. HARLEY (Eds.), *Man made the land* (Newton Abbot, 1973).
22. H.C. PRINCE, Relict landscapes, *Area* 1, 1969, pp.29–31.
23. E.M. YATES, History in a map, *Geographical journal* 126 (1), March 1960, pp.32–51.
24. W.G. HOSKINS, *Field work in local history*, footnote 16.
25. C.C. TAYLOR, *Dorset: the making of the landscape* (London, 1970).
26. D. WARD, The pre-urban cadaster and urban pattern of Leeds, *Annals of the Association of American geographers* 52(2), June 1962, pp.150–166; R.J. JOHNSTON, An outline of the development of Melbourne's street pattern, *Australian geographer* 10 (6), September 1968, pp.453–465.
27. H.C. PRINCE, Real, imagined and abstract worlds of the past, in C. BOARD *et al.*, *Progress in geography: international reviews of current research* 3 (London, 1971), pp.1–87.
28. L.J. WOOD, Perception studies in geography, *Transactions of the Institute of British geographers* 50, July 1970, pp.129–142.
29. D. LOWENTHAL and H.C. PRINCE, English landscape tastes, *Geographical review* 55 (2), April 1965, pp.186–222; J.M.R. CAMERON, Prelude to colonisation: James Stirling's examination of Swan river, March 1827, *Australian geographer* 12(4), September 1973, pp.309–327.
30. B.P. BIRCH, Initial perception of prairie: and English settlement in Illinois, in R.G. IRONSIDE (Ed.), *Frontier settlement* (Edmonton, 1974), pp.178–194; J.M.R. CAMERON, Information distortion in colonial promotion: the case of Swan river colony, *Australian geographical studies*, 12 (1), April 1974, pp.57–76; A.J. CHRISTOPHER, Natal: the nineteenth century English emigrants' Utopia? An appraisal of emigration literature, *Historia*, 18 (2), June 1973, pp.112–124.
31. W.E. HOLLON, *The great American desert, then and now* (New York, 1966); W.M. KOLLMORGEN, The woodman's assaults on the domain of the cattlemen, *Annals of the Association of American geographers* 59(2), June 1969, pp.215–239.
32. R.L. HEATHCOTE, *Back of Bourke: a study of land appraisal and settlement in semi-arid Australia* (Melbourne, 1965).
33. E. BYLUND, Theoretical considerations regarding the distribution of settlement in inner North Sweden, *Geografiska annaler* 42, 1960, pp.225–231; W. NORTON, Constructing abstract worlds of the past, *Geographical analysis* 8 (3), July 1976, pp. 269–288; P.J. RIMMER, Politicians, public servants and petitioners: aspects of transport in Australia 1851–1901, in J.M. POWELL and M. WILLIAMS (Eds.), *Australian space, Australian time: geographical perspectives* (Melbourne, 1975), pp.182–225.
34. M.M. COLE, *South Africa* (London, 1961); N.C. POLLOCK and S. AGNEW, *Historical geography of South Africa* (London, 1963).
35. A.J. CHRISTOPHER, *Southern Africa: an historical geography* (Folkestone, 1976).

frontier studies

The major influence upon 'new lands' studies has been the frontier thesis propounded by Turner in 1893, which postulated the colonisation of the United States by a series of waves of settlers, each of whom contributed to the evolution of the landscape.³⁶ The groups recognised were the fur-traders, the miners, the cattle ranchers, the pioneer farmers, men equipped for arable farming and urban pioneers. Later studies have added the speculator and the wage earner.³⁷ Each of these groups entered a new area of settlement and changed it in a particular manner until the fully settled landscape had developed. The frontier thesis thus becomes a useful peg upon which to hang the landscape evolutionary approach in historical geography. In the early stages of development numbers of settlers were small but increases became progressively more rapid until near the end of the process when the country approached a state of equilibrium. Frontier studies have thus assumed considerable importance, with the identification of frontiers throughout the recently settled world.³⁸

Geographers have tended to ignore the social aspects of Turner's thesis, and pursue the concept of landscape transformation and colonisation, based on models of the evolution of the cultural landscape.³⁹ The various aspects of landscape transformation in the 'new lands' are frequently different from those identified in Europe.⁴⁰ Information on actual population numbers is often available and a statistical definition of the frontier may be produced. In the United States population densities of between two and six persons per square mile defined the frontier itself, although changes occurred on either side of this zone.⁴¹

The base line for evolution, the initial landscape before European settlement, was the subject of travellers' writings and subsequent analyses of them. Survey records are available for parts of the country to show what it looked like at the commencement of, or soon after, initial European settlement.⁴² The body of land survey records as a historical document has been explored in both the United States and Russia, but only preliminary work has been undertaken in South Africa.⁴³

Perception studies of the attitudes of officials, settlers, promoters of colonisation schemes, explorers and others have been undertaken widely.⁴⁴ In South Africa the gap in perception between officials and colonists was considerable and the subject of heated argument. In Natal close settlement schemes were planned in areas capable of supporting only a few cattle, while in other parts extensive cattle ranches were granted where small scale plantations would have succeeded.⁴⁵ Contradictions between initial perception and reality are reflected in the landscape, and provide a further field of study.

Probably the distribution and granting of land has excited most attention both in North America and Australia, and also in South Africa. Pioneering studies on the American rectangular land survey system have been followed up to show the impact of land survey on landscapes, and differences between landscapes as a result of differing land survey systems.⁴⁶ In South Africa the Natal system has been investigated in detail but elsewhere only the broad outlines have been drawn.⁴⁷ Themes in land disposal such as farm standardisation and planned settlements have similarly received attention but definitive statements have still to appear.⁴⁸

The material available in the Deeds Offices and offices of Surveyors-General in the country, despite some

regrettable gaps, would enable a systematic study of the granting of land and its subsequent ownership patterns to be undertaken. These sources of information, so intensively studied elsewhere, are capable of providing a firm foundation for frontier studies, which, because of their individual nature, would mean that regions of any size could be examined, without recourse to the districts which existed at the time of survey.⁴⁹ In more recent times the production of national topographic maps, more particularly the 1:50 000 series, and the periodic procurement of aerial photography have provided an additional

36. F.J. TURNER, The significance of the frontier in American history, *American historical association annual report for 1893*, 1894, pp.199–227.
37. P.W. GATES, *Landlords and tenants on the Prairie frontier*, (Ithaca, 1973).
38. R.G. CANT, The agricultural frontier in miniature: a micro-study of the Canterbury plain 1850–75, *New Zealand geographer* 24 (2), October 1968, pp.155–167; J.R. GIBSON, *Imperial Russia in frontier America. The changing geography of supply in Russian America 1784–1867* (New York, 1976); R.C. HARRIS, *The seigneurial system in early Canada: a geographical study* (Madison, 1966); J.M. POWELL, *The public lands of Australia Felix; settlement and land appraisal in Victoria 1834–91, with special reference to the western plains* (Melbourne, 1970).
39. R.L. HEATHCOTE, "Bread or Cake?" A geographer and a historian on the nineteenth century Wheat frontier: a review, *Economic Geography* 39 (2), April 1963, pp.175–182.
40. M. WILLIAMS, Delimiting the spread of settlement: an examination of evidence in South Australia, *Economic geography* 42 (4), October 1966; pp.336–355; M. WILLIAMS, Places, periods and themes; a review and prospect of Australian historical geography, *Australian geographer* 11 (3), March 1970, pp. 403–416.
41. R.A. BILLINGTON, *Westward expansion; a history of the American frontier* (New York, 1963).
42. V. FORBES, *Pioneer travellers in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1965).
43. J.W.M. TRYGG, *Composite map of the United States land surveyors' original plans and field notes* (Ely, Minnesota, 1964); A.V. GEDYMIN, The use of old Russian land survey data in geographic research for agricultural purposes, *Soviet geography* 9 (7), September 1968, pp.602–624.
44. A.J. CHRISTOPHER, Environmental perception in southern Africa, *South African geographic journal* 55 (1), July 1973, pp.14–22; M. WILLIAMS, More and smaller is better: Australian rural settlement 1788–1914, in J.M. POWELL and M. WILLIAMS, *Australian space, Australian time: geographical perspectives* (Melbourne, 1975), pp.61–103.
45. A.J. CHRISTOPHER, The British settlement of Natal, *Journal for geography* 3 (5), September 1969, pp.485–499; A.J. CHRISTOPHER, The closer-settlement movement in Natal 1875–1910, *Journal for geography* 3 (6), April 1970, pp.569–578.
46. W.D. PATTISON, *Beginnings of the American rectangular land survey system 1784–1800* (Chicago, 1957); N.J.W. THROWER, *Original survey and land sub-division: a comparative study of the form and effect of contrasting cadastral surveys* (Chicago, 1966); H.B. JOHNSON, *Order upon the land. The U.S. rectangular land survey and the Upper Mississippi country* (New York, 1976).
47. A.J. CHRISTOPHER, Colonial land policy in Natal, *Annals of the Association of American geographers* 61 (3), September 1971, pp.560–575; A.J. CHRISTOPHER, Government land policies in southern Africa, in R.G. IRONSIDE (Ed.), *Frontier settlement* (Edmonton, 1974), pp.208–225.
48. W.C. ELS, Die besproeiingsaksie in die Groot-Visrivierbesproeiingsdistrik tot 1925, *Journal for geography* 3 (2), April 1968, pp.115–126; A.J. CHRISTOPHER, The variability of the southern African standard farm, *South African geographical journal*, 58 (2), September 1976.
49. A.J. CHRISTOPHER, The Surveyor-General's office and the Deeds office as sources of historical and geographical information, *South African survey journal* 14 (2), August 1973, pp. 14–21.

source of information capable of detailed analysis.⁵⁰ Air photographs, in particular, have revealed unsuspected features in European studies and it is to be expected that their study in South Africa will help to elucidate the evolution of the landscape.⁵¹

In contrast statistical information is notoriously difficult to use, for the simple reason that the boundaries of districts changed and so comparison between years is often impossible. Thus the statistical analysis of the frontier in terms of population, livestock numbers and crop production remains often a matter of conjecture, where cartographic evidence is not available. The rigid form of analysis of the frontier of North American and Australian studies is not possible in South Africa, but undoubtedly some measure of precision can be aimed at.⁵²

Aspects of landscape transformation such as urban expansion and detailed population studies have been limited in numbers, largely as a result of a paucity of research workers in the field. There are a large number of questions to be answered before the 'Making of the Cape Landscape' or the 'Local History of the Transvaal' can be written. The urban frontier in particular needs close examination. Studies such as Davies' survey of the growth of Durban, or Henning's *History of Graaff-Reinet* are valuable for the contribution they offer to a fuller understanding of the region in which they are set, and also for the development of urban history or urban historical geography; but at the moment the number of such contributions is small.⁵³ Even individual urban problems such as the emergence of the trading pattern on the Witwatersrand can shed light upon the whole subject.⁵⁴ The urban frontier is an actively expanding one, as the population becomes increasingly urbanised. Thus it is one of the major current problem areas, in an age when the rural frontier is very largely a process of the past, and consequently most geographical research is currently directed towards the urban areas.

relict landscapes

Concern with the rapid changes in the landscape in the present century has given rise to a desire to preserve relict landscapes of the past.⁵⁵ The pace of change is accelerating and as Plumb (1969) stated, "...the strength of the past in all aspects of life is far, far weaker than it was a generation ago: indeed few societies have ever had a past in such a galloping dissolution as this."⁵⁶ This statement could certainly be applied to the South Africa of today. Local history and historical geography are both concerned with the tangible features of the past and they have taken a part in the vast expansion of activities designed to preserve and learn from the past. Probably the development of Industrial Archaeology has been one of the major points of growth in Europe.⁵⁷ Relics of the industrial revolution from mills to houses of the period 1750–1900 have become the objects of study rather than items to be swept away or ignored in seeking a pure agrarian landscape. In South Africa, Walton's pioneering works on farm-

houses and mills deserve special attention.⁵⁸ Industrial towns such as Kimberley and Johannesburg have benefited from revived interest in industrial landscapes.⁵⁹ Owing to the pace of twentieth century industrialisation, South Africa has lost much of its pre-1914 industrial works, although sections of the railway, still using steam, are noticeable exceptions. The study of relict features involves field-work rather than pure documentary research and as such comes close to the essence of landscape interpretation in its widest spectrum, by looking at the intricate nature of the landscape and realising that "everything is older than we think".⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

Local history and historical geography aim to provide a greater understanding of the landscape of any region, whether it be an extensive tract or a single village or city. The concern with specific areas and with the time dimension often makes them indistinguishable, as is witnessed by the historians and geographers contributing to the Making of the English landscape series. The occupation of this academic frontier zone as a field of study opened up new insights which have been profitably pursued elsewhere. In South Africa the subject-matter has as yet been little touched. A systematic study of landscape evolution awaits the researcher and the interested layman, to elucidate the complex set of man-made features which make up the present landscape.

50. M.W. BERESFORD and J.K.S. ST. JOSEPH, *Medieval England: an aerial survey* (Cambridge, 1958); E.C. LIEBENBERG, Die plek van die topografiese kaart in die geografie, *South African geographer* 4 (3), September 1973, pp.228–237.
51. E.C. LIEBENBERG, *The South African landscape* (Durban, 1976).
52. A.J. CHRISTOPHER, *Southern Africa: an historical survey*, footnote 35; see also R.E. EHRENBERG (Ed.), *Pattern and progress: research in historical geography* (Washington, 1975), for an American survey.
53. R.J. DAVIES, The growth of the Durban metropolitan area, *South African geographical journal* 45, December 1963, pp.15–43; C.G. HENNING, *Graaff-Reinet: a cultural history, 1786–1886* (Cape Town, 1975).
54. G.P. COOK, *Spatial dynamics of business growth in the Witwatersrand* (Chicago, 1975).
55. R.M. NEWCOMB, Geographic aspects of the planned preservation of visible history in Denmark, *Annals of the Association of American geographers* 67 (3), September 1967, pp.462–480; R.M. NEWCOMB, Has the past a future in Denmark? The preservation of landscape history within the nature park, *Geoforum* 9, 1972, pp.61–67; J.M. HALL and J.A. PATMORE, Pilgrims in search of their past, *Geographical magazine* 47 (11), August 1975, pp.696–701; D. LOWENTHAL, Past time, present place: landscape and memory, *Geographical review* (65 (1), January 1975, pp.1–36.
56. J.H. PLUMB, *The death of the past* (London, 1969), p.15.
57. N. COSSONS, *The B.P. book of industrial archaeology* (Newton Abbot, 1975); R. SHERLOCK, *Industrial archaeology of Staffordshire* (Newton Abbot, 1976).
58. J. WALTON, *Homesteads and villages of South Africa* (Pretoria, 1965); J. WALTON, *Watermills, windmills and horse-mills of South Africa* (Cape Town, 1974).
59. B. ROBERTS, *Turbulent city. An illustrated history of Kimberley* (Cape Town, 1976).
60. W.G. HOSKINS, *English landscapes*, footnote 17, p.6.