

# **A History of the German Settlers in the Eastern Cape, 1857 – 1919**

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by

GISELA LESLEY ZIPP

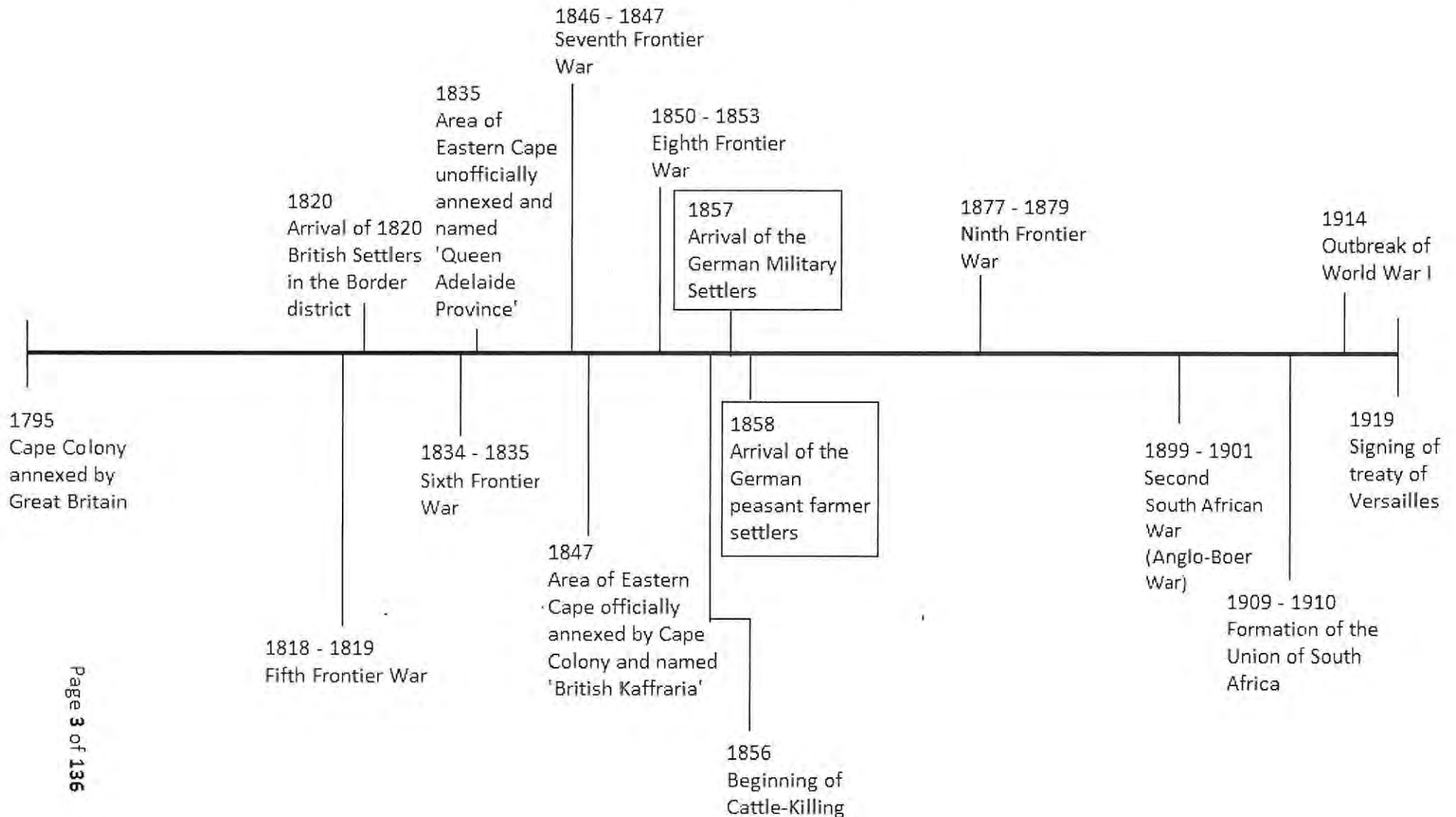
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## **Acknowledgements**

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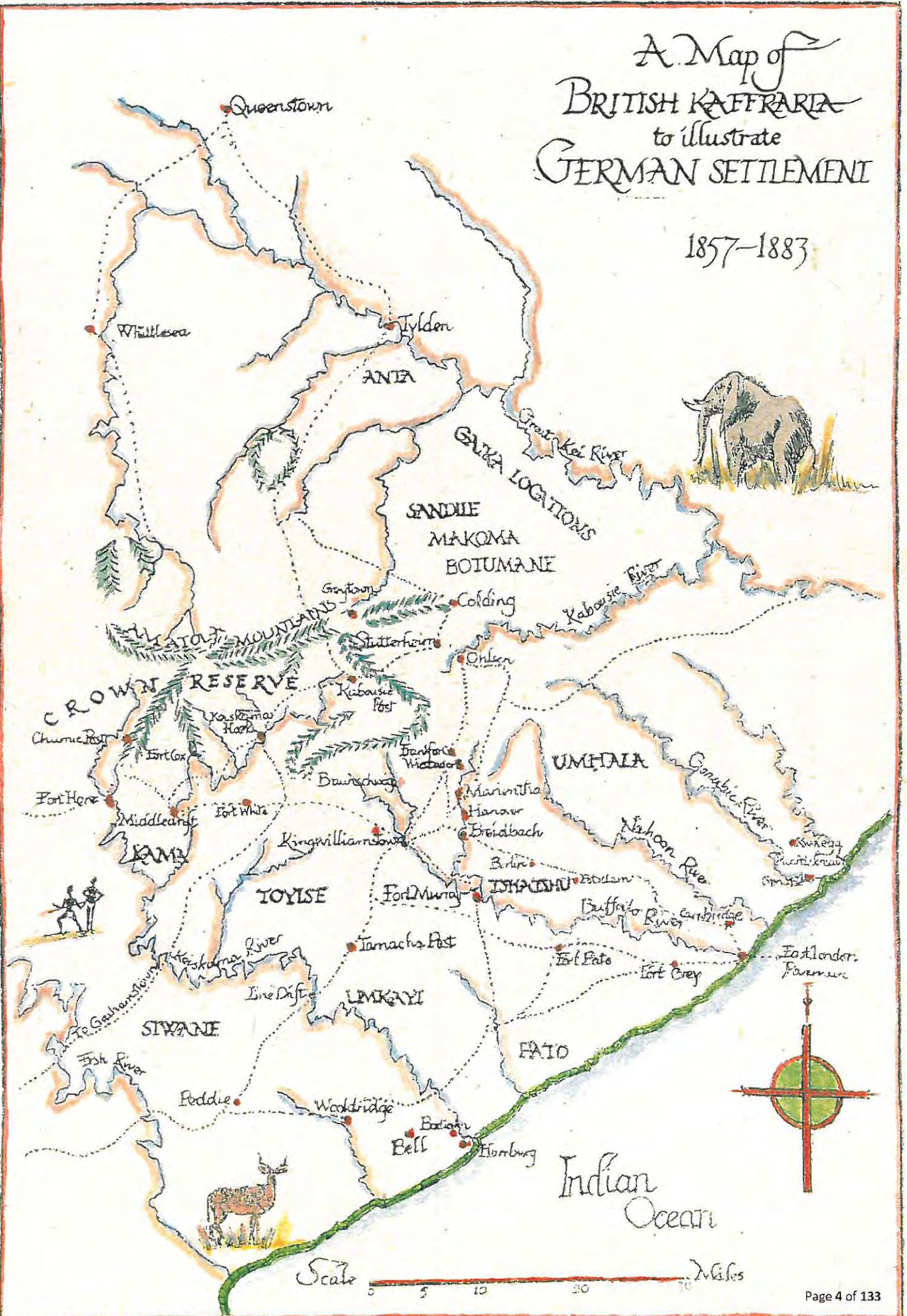
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# Timeline for events concerning the German Settlers



# A Map of BRITISH KAFFRARIA to illustrate GERMAN SETTLEMENT

1857-1883



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### Some Notes on Formatting

- I have made use of a variation on the Harvard referencing system, which means in-text citation in the format of (Author Year: Page number).
- I have placed full stops after quotation marks, except in cases where the quotation is a stand-alone sentence, where I have placed the full stops before the quotation marks.
- I have placed citations after full stops so that they hover in sentence limbo, but have placed citations before commas where they occur in the middle of sentences.
- The text is fully justified, meaning that sometimes words and especially spaces are stretched out much more than they should be, but it is generally more attractive than left alignment. I apologise for any perplexing spaces which have resulted from this.
- When referring to the amaXhosa, I have used 'amaXhosa' to designate the plural noun, 'isiXhosa' to designate the language and 'Xhosa' to designate the adjective.
- When using the term 'South Africa' in reference to government, I am designating the Cape Colony under British rule between 1815 and 1909 (Worden 1998: 39) and the Union of South Africa after 1909. (Worden 1998: 156) When using the term in reference to geography, I am equating it with the area covered by modern-day South Africa.
- I have retained the original spelling without correction in older German texts, except in cases where the spelling obscures the meaning, in which case I have added a [sic] as appropriate.
- I have retained the original derogatory terms (such as 'Hottentot' or 'Kaffir') used by settlers or theorists in translation in order to accurately convey their attitudes.
- Some authors in the bibliography lack first names and have initials instead. This is because some the authors' names were not provided, and could not be found after further research.

## **1. Introduction**

This thesis came into being as the result of a question innocently posed to me three years ago: Why do some towns in the Eastern Cape have German names? This thesis is not so much an answer to that question (which is answered in the following paragraphs) as an attempt to answer the questions that followed: Were the Germans really as benevolent and hard-working as much of the most readily available literature implies? Why did the military settlers leave and the peasant farmer settlers remain? What was the nature of relationships between the German settlers and other groups in the area? How did the German settlers see themselves? The existing literature provides the historic details, more or less, but not the context and explanations I sought. As such, I set out to find them and document them myself, addressing three main questions: 1. What was the (changing) nature of the German settlers' day-to-day lives between 1857 and 1919? 2. How was a German identity maintained/constructed within the German communities of the Eastern Cape between 1857 and 1919? 3. How did the Germans interact with other groups in the area? In answering these questions, I have also provided the necessary background as to why these settlers chose to come to South Africa, and why some of them left. I have limited this study to the period between 1857 and 1919 so as to include the First World War and its immediate aftermath, a time when enmity between Great Britain and Germany would have made life difficult for German descendants in the Union of South Africa.

However, an exploration of these topics must be preceded by an outline of the course of events which led to the arrival of German settlers on Eastern Cape shores, and those events that occurred as a result of their arrival.

In 1855, after a mere year in office, Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner of what was known as British Kaffraria at the time (Pienaar 2009: 1), introduced a plan to attract more European settlers to British Kaffraria (now incorporated into the modern Eastern Cape). They were to be brought to South Africa in order to 'civilise' the local amaXhosa against whom the governments of the Cape Colony had by that time already fought eight Frontier Wars. (Rutherford 1961: 306) According to Cook (2002), the first of these wars in 1779 began because "land-hungry Dutch settlers from the Cape Colony and the exploding Xhosa populations of the South African coast converged and clashed in the frontier called Zuurveld". (Cook 2002: 151) The first conflict between the British colonial powers and the amaXhosa came in 1799, with the third Frontier War. (Cook 2002: 151) A common theme in all nine of the Frontier Wars was the

pressure created by white expansion into Xhosa lands. George Grey first tried to attract British pensioners and their families for his settlement scheme, but many declined the offer of land he used to entice them. (Rutherford 1961: 361) After this, just under 2400 members of the British-German Legion, who had been recruited to fight for England in the Crimean War but never had the chance due to its early conclusion (Erasmus 1995: 283), were recruited instead. (Watters 2000: 11) The conditions of enrolment as laid out by the British government were in hindsight not particularly favourable. Schwär and Jardine (1975: 2) summarise the conditions thus:

All settlers were to receive free passages and rations on the journey. The rations were to continue from the day of landing and for one year after they had reached their settlement areas. The men were to serve as military settlers from the date of their arrival and for seven years after settlement. The actual number of duty-days was 30 per year for the first four years and 12 days per year for the next four. Church parades were to be attended and at any time they could be called out in defence of the Colony and placed on full pay. (Schwär & Jardine 1975: 2)

The settlers would, according to the conditions, receive land, but only at the price of eight years in service of the Cape Colony. General Richard von Stutterheim had been appointed as Commander of the Legion upon its formation, and retained this title after the Legion's immigration to the Eastern Cape. (Schwär & Jardine 1975: 1) These (mostly single) men arrived over the course of three months, from late 1856 to early 1857, and advanced into the interior, later settling there. Although there was a later influx of German peasant farmer settlers into South Africa, it was this group of Germans who founded and named the German towns in the Eastern Cape such as Stutterheim, Hamburg, Berlin, and Frankfort<sup>1</sup>. (Grüner 1986: 7) The numbers of the German Legion, or the German military settlers as they were officially known, declined rather rapidly however. Schnell (1954: 134) puts this down to four main factors: "1. Desertion; 2. Volunteering for India; 3. Transference to other military bodies, deaths, etc.; 4. Discharge and disbanding". Schnell uses records of desertions from the time to estimate that by the end of 1860, 195 men had successfully deserted the German settlements, and many more had tried and failed. (Schnell 1954: 128) This is indicative of dissatisfaction in the ranks.

A mutiny which had broken out in the British colony of India had raged on for so long that by 1858 British troops were severely depleted. When offered the chance to go and fight in India, a large number of the German military settlers took it, "30 officers and 1028 men" to be exact. (Schnell

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<sup>1</sup> The name changed from Frankfurt to Frankfort over time. The ship logs for the peasant farmer settlers show that the town was originally called Frankfurt. (Spanuth 1958: 8)



1954: 139) Given that just under 2400 men had immigrated to South Africa in the first place (Daphne & Brett 1987: 59), this is a significant depletion in numbers. Estimates of the number of men who returned vary, but Schnell states that “386 N.C.O.s and men returned” of whom “only 43 [...] reverted to their original position as military settlers”. (Schnell 1954: 140) What this ultimately means is that the military settlers became less and less significant as a community over time due to their rapid reduction in numbers.

Schwär and Pape (in Schwär & Jardine 1975: 4) assess the military settlement as a failure for a number of reasons:

The sites were chosen to suit military requirements and not because they offered good soil for cultivation. [...] They had no conveyances and no market for their produce. Immediately upon their arrival they faced four years of drought conditions, dysentery [sic], and stock diseases. [...] There was a general lack of wives and no prospect of getting any. [...] They were isolated from all contacts with civilization. (Schwär & Jardine 1975: 4)

Under such circumstances the military settlers were eager to leave. As it stands, by the time the German military settlers had arrived, their military service was no longer required, because the resident amaXhosa had already been decimated by the Cattle-Killing of 1856, and the Mfengu had already been secured as allies of the British government of the Cape Colony. The Cattle-Killing was ultimately a key factor in the interactions between the Germans and the amaXhosa, particularly in the formation of the Germans' initial impressions of Xhosa cultural traits, and is therefore worth describing further. In April 1856, a girl named Nongqawuse was down by the Gxarha River, and heard voices which told her that if all the amaXhosa would kill their cattle and stop growing crops, all their ancestors would rise from the dead and drive out the white colonisers. (Peires 1989: 78f.) Peires (1989), whose account of the Cattle-Killing remains the seminal work in the field, summarises the tragedy thus:

Few people who hear the story of Nongqawuse – the young girl whose fantastic promise of the resurrection lured an entire people to death by starvation – ever forget it. Tens of thousands of Xhosa died; tens of thousands more fled their homes; hundreds of thousands of cattle were slaughtered, the pathetic victims of a beautiful but hopeless dream. And as the Xhosa nation was lying prostrate and defenceless, Sir George Grey, a self-proclaimed benefactor of the non-European people of the world, trampled on this human wreckage; he exiled the starving, crushed the survivors, and seized more than half of Xhosaland for a colony of white settlement. (Peires 1989: ix)

This chain of events ultimately brought the Xhosa people to their knees and certainly affected the

German impressions of them, given that the German settlers arrived in the immediate aftermath of this tragedy. Theorists such as Mtuze (2004: 152) and Mabona (2004) claim that Sir George Grey was the one responsible for the Cattle-Killing, but Peires (1989: ix f.) indicates scepticism of this theory, and an equal scepticism of the colonial theory that it was a plot by Xhosa chiefs to bring about war. He states, "I believe [...] that the Cattle-Killing was a logical and rational response by a nation driven to desperation by pressures that people today can barely imagine". (Peires 1989: x) As Peires points out, the amaXhosa had already been urged by a previous prophet, Mlanjeni, specifically to kill only yellow-coloured cattle (and many had indeed done so) as a sacrifice to the ancestors which would ensure the survival of the Xhosa nation. This meant that the demand allegedly issued by the ancestors through Nongqawuse was not an unprecedented request. (Peires 1989: 10) In addition, the amaXhosas' cattle were at the time of the prophecy plagued by a lung sickness which was killing many of the cattle anyway, with cattle deaths among the amaXhosa estimated by Peires at "5000 cattle a month". (Peires 1989: 71) This was compounded by failing crops as the result of pests, birds and waterlogged soil. (Peires 1989: 71) The situation was indeed desperate enough to bring about a movement as drastic as that of the Cattle-Killing. Peires does however add that "the Cattle-Killing would not have been so fatal an error had it not been for the measures of Governor Grey [mentioned above], which first encouraged and then capitalized on the movement. [...] The Nongqawuse catastrophe was as much a murder as it was a suicide". (Peires 1989: x) This event was a formative one in inducing many amaXhosa to become manual labourers, a forced decision from which many German settlers benefited.

The amaMfengu, another group living in the Eastern Cape at the time of German immigration, were a people displaced by the *Mfecane* (the wars started by the Zulu chief Shaka) who took refuge in the Eastern Cape among the amaXhosa. (Kaschula 1997: 9; Mtuze 2004: 163) They settled among the Gcaleka but soon turned against them and became soldiers for the British army. (Kaschula 1997: 44f.) Bundy (1979: 33) muses that

much has been written that stresses their subordination, ill-usage, and unhappiness among the Gcalekas. Research in recent years has substantially revised the earlier (and mainly missionary-inspired) version. The Mfengu were, in fact, in the process of becoming 'rehabilitated' among the Gcaleka; that is, they recovered morale and group cohesion, as well as regaining a measure of material prosperity.

Due to cultural differences which will be discussed more fully in chapter five, the amaMfengu were more amenable to an alliance with the British government than the amaXhosa. They quickly

converted to Christianity (Ade Ajayi 1989: 139) and forged an alliance with the colonial government in return for land. (Bundy 1979: 33) The colonial government wished for them to serve as a buffer against the hostile amaXhosa, and they exceeded their duties in this regard: “The Mfengu did more than serve as a buffer: they were active combatants in the wars of 1846, 1850-53, and 1877-8, on the imperial side. For these services, the Mfengu were rewarded in land.” (Bundy 1979: 34) The allegiances of the amaMfengu at the time of German immigration were therefore in sharp contrast to the allegiances of the amaXhosa, who remained loyal to their chiefs and resisted colonial control. This dichotomy created tension between the two groups, as will be seen in chapter five.

The German military settlers were not the only group of Germans to be brought out in an attempt to populate the Eastern Cape with white settlers. The German peasant farmer settlers were brought out later at the behest of George Grey by the Hamburg shipping company *Mssrs. Godeffroy and Sons* for the precise purpose of bolstering the existing German communities (i.e., the military settlements). (Schnell 1954: 161; Pienaar 2009: 2) Schnell (1954: 180) describes the strict conditions of enrolment: “Messrs. Godeffroy wanted only farmers and agricultural labourers; as far as possible they chose all of them from the country and avoided taking town residents”. Grey felt that the injection of women was sorely needed, as there was a dire shortage in the military settlements which he believed threatened community stability. (Schnell 1954: 161; Rutherford 1961: 362) According to Schwär (1958: 7), “[d]ie Deutschen in Kaffraria gehören hauptsächlich drei Stämmen zu: den Preussen, den Wenden und den Thüringern”.<sup>2</sup> It can therefore be concluded that the majority of the German peasant farmer settlers came from northern/ eastern Germany, and this is supported by the passenger lists kept for each of the ships that brought the settlers out to South Africa. These logs show a preponderance of immigrants from the Uckermark, Pomerania, Hanover, Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein. (Spanuth 1958: 8-12) However, they also show that some of these settlers were from Hesse, Swabia and even Switzerland. (Spanuth 1958: 8-12) Despite the majority of these settlers being from north-eastern Germany (the majority of these being Pomeranian), this was by no means a homogenous group in terms of language or culture. Although most spoke German dialects, there among them a significant number of Wendish Sorbs, whose language was unrelated to German. These settlers were to form the backbone of the future German communities of the Eastern Cape, naturally having superior reproductive capabilities to the military settlers due to the presence of more women. The experiences of these settlers are

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<sup>2</sup> “The Germans in Kaffraria belong mainly to three groups: the Prussians, the Wends and the Thuringians.”  
(Own translation)

described in more detail in chapter three.

It must be emphasised at this point that this study focuses exclusively on the German immigrants of 1857 and 1858, although there were German settlers to the area who arrived in 1877. I have chosen to do this for a number of reasons. Firstly, the later settlement scheme was much smaller in scale than these first two schemes – only 700 Germans arrived in the Eastern Cape in 1877 under the auspices of this later recruitment drive. (Schnell 1954: 217) Secondly, these later settlers largely did not settle in the same places as the previous German settlers, and most moved to “Kwelegha, Lilyfontein and Paardekraal” (Schnell 1954: 218), with only three locations showing any overlap at all between the 1857-58 settlements and these later settlers, namely Keiskammahoeck, East London, and King Williams Town. (Schnell 1954: 218) None of these towns feature heavily in my analysis of the establishment of German culture in the Eastern Cape, so the omission of these later settlers should not produce any significant bias in my description and analysis of culture in the German towns. Lastly, the information available on the 1877 settlers is scarce, and therefore no in-depth analysis of their history and behaviour can be embarked upon at this stage.

One problem which becomes evident when surveying recent literature on the German settlers is that many of the researchers who have published or written articles on this topic (e.g., Vernon 1992, Tankard 2007, Pienaar 2009) cannot read German, which naturally limits the scope of their research. Schnell (1954) appears to be the last published English-language writer to make use of both English- and German-language references in his research. I plan to synthesize German- and English-language research papers on this topic which have been published more recently than 1954 into this paper in an attempt to make it more accessible to English-speaking researchers.

This thesis is an attempt to address a dearth of published critical analysis of the race relations and cultural identity of the nineteenth-century German settlers. The seminal work in this field is *For Men Must Work*, a published doctoral dissertation by E. L. G. Schnell (1954), a culmination of thirty years of research, which explores in depth the arrival of the German settlers and their struggle for survival making use of parliamentary papers, interviews, diaries and German published works on the subject. Other well-known works published around this time are Schmidt-Pretoria's (1955) *Deutsche Wanderung nach Südafrika im 19. Jahrhundert* and Schwär's (1958) *Deutsche in Kaffraria*. The most obvious problem with these and most other texts regarding the German settlers (excluding of course those texts actually written by settlers) is that they were written

during apartheid, by people who were resident in South Africa. Apartheid was a construct under which the continued existence of the Afrikaner nation was seen to be contingent on the oppression of the majority black population of South Africa, which the Afrikaans-run government of South Africa believed would otherwise come to dominate them and threaten their identity. (Louw 2004: 29) They further believed that if the black and white populations were to develop separately ('apart'), black development would no longer be a threat to Afrikaners. (Louw 2004: 29) This policy was implemented from 1948 onwards (Guelke 2005: 5) and lasted until 1991, justifying the perpetration of a number of human rights atrocities committed by the government. (Guelke 2005: 1) Even texts on the German settlers which were written or published well after the end of apartheid still almost exclusively make use of these texts as their references. This naturally means that commentary on race relations takes a decidedly prejudiced stance or is ignored. The apartheid binary construct of 'black' and 'white' (Louw 2004: 29f.) also meant that German identity and culture was, in the eyes of the government, subsumed under 'white identity'. Due to later analyses also making use of material from this era, the questions of race relations and the German construction of identity has not, to my mind, been dealt with sufficiently. Given that apartheid was essentially an extension of colonialism, apartheid texts can be categorised as being written from the colonial perspective (Seidman 1999: 420), and this area of study has therefore not truly been addressed from a postcolonial perspective. I want to fill this gap in the knowledge regarding these settlers.

The elevation of the German settlers both by their descendants and by researchers (including Schnell 1954, Schmidt-Pretoria 1955, Baillie 1990, Pienaar 2009) is at best idealistic and at worst a misrepresentation of German settler behaviour and values. I wish to create a more realistic picture of the German settler community in the Eastern Cape and the individuals in it. Unfortunately, personal accounts or community-generated texts (such as newsletters) are not particularly numerous, so that third-person accounts have to be combined with the first-person accounts from later generations to reconstruct the most probable cultural characteristics which the military settlers and the peasant farmer settlers possessed. Extant literature on factors that determine or impact culture offers a number of interpretations as to how factors such as climate, isolation and natural resources affect cultures. I will compare these hypotheses with the behaviour of the military and peasant farmer settlers in order to establish whether these factors can be said to be at work, and in turn what this shows about the culture that was developing among the Germans in the Eastern Cape. All speculation is however firmly grounded in the descriptions and accounts of

the settlers, rather than in the random application of a suitable theory to their context.

This thesis is also an opportunity to highlight and evaluate unpublished research on the German settlers and their descendants, especially interview data collected by Welz and Webb (1990), and used as the basis for papers by both Welz and Webb and Baillie (1990). These unpublished papers were the first known attempt to gather and interpret oral history data on the German settlers since Schnell (1954) interviewed first- and second-generation German settlers for his book. These papers offer a unique opportunity to discover the attitudes, beliefs and experiences of third- and fourth-generation German settler descendants. There is also much unpublished material housed in the archives of the Amathole Museum of which I have made use where appropriate.

This thesis deals with previously neglected areas of study as regards the nineteenth-century German settlers in the Eastern Cape and their descendants, specifically cultural identity and race relations, thereby adding to the body of knowledge and expanding the scope of possible future research into this area. In addition, this thesis is the first to incorporate more recent research from Welz and Webb (1990), Baillie (1990) and German publications, making what was previously archive material, and what was previously unintelligible to English speakers, available to future researchers.

### Literature Review

This literature review will address the existing interpretations of the experiences, interactions and culture of the German settlers in the Eastern Cape who arrived in 1857 and 1858, and will focus on the most significant works to have emerged on this topic in the last century and a half.

To view history briefly from a statistical point of view highlights its problems rather well. The entirety of history as it happened could be viewed as the target population, and all recorded history as the sample. According to Hand (2008: 37), “[a] data set is incomplete if some of the observations are missing”. In history, most of the observations could be said to be missing. Only that which was recorded remains, whereas the thousands of unrecorded opinions and recollections are lost. This must at least create some kind of bias in favour of the literate<sup>3</sup>. Thus the first difficulty of any researcher is the nature and quantity of the raw materials at their disposal. The second difficulty for any researcher delving into the past is the nature of what they are trying

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<sup>3</sup> Or, in prehistoric times, the artistically gifted.

to achieve, consciously or subconsciously.

The following questions, posed by Curthoys and Docker (2006), provide a good starting point for the necessary self-reflection required of the historian prior to and during the research and writing process: “[C]an historians tell the truth about the past? Should history be written for the present or for its own sake? Is it possible to see the past in its own terms? Should we make moral judgements about people and actions in the past?” (Curthoys & Docker 2006: 3) I have considered these questions throughout my investigation, although this does not mean that I have come up with definitive answers. A pertinent follow-up question might be, “What is truth?” Of course, this could begin a long and cumbersome exploration into epistemology, but I shall attempt to answer this question briefly - the truth can be approximated. This is similar to the version of truth postulated by Thomas Aquinas who, as Pasnau and Shields (2004: 94) explain, believed in a supreme truth, which justified the identification of propositions as either truer or less true when compared with this supreme truth. I, however, cannot reach this supreme truth because different versions of the 'truth' exist, and tend often to contradict each other (Curthoys & Docker 2006: 18), and because deciding which of the perhaps many accounts is true is more or less arbitrary. (Blackburn 2005: 147) Certainly in selecting material for my own study I am applying criteria such as consistency between narratives, degree of obvious bias (such as racism) within the narrative, and context under which the narrative was written, but this selection is based on my experience of the world, limited as that may be. In addition, my quest for the truth is hindered by background factors of which I may not immediately be aware, such as subconscious prejudices. In short, this history is shaped as much by my preconceptions as it is by the preconceptions of those whose resources I reference. This is however presumably no more the case than with any other study of history, such that this does not inherently render my study invalid as a reference point (although it certainly does render it invalid as *the* reference point – hence my claim that this is 'A History' not 'The History').

Many sources focus on the subjective experiences of the settlers, which is natural given that personal accounts make up the bulk of their research material, but this does lead to a general tendency to romanticise these experience. Steinbart's (1975; 1978) journals and letters, written in 1857 and 1858, are yet to be evaluated critically but continue to be quoted in various works (Schnell 1954, Tankard 2007, Pienaar 2009) without questioning Steinbart's assertions. Steinbart's accounts provide access to the events in only one of the German military settlements, and only

through his eyes. The problem with using Steinbart's letters and journals (1978) as the only account of daily life for the military settlers is that it is not representative of all the military settlers. Certainly, Steinbart, being a sergeant, could not be said to speak for those of the other military ranks who settled in the Eastern Cape. All history is by its very nature documented in a subjective way (White 1985: 43), hence Steinbart's account needs to be viewed as subjective, rather than as a factual record, as it appears to have been viewed until now. As Keay (2008: 517) asserts, "personal recollection distorts as much as it verifies." However, his writings have been used for just such a purpose in the works of Schnell (1954), Tankard (2007) and Pienaar (2009). Steinbart's predominance as a source needs to be addressed through reference to other accounts of the military settlers, however brief or scattered these accounts may be. For this reason I have made use of the accounts of Gropp (1981) and Bauer (in Oswiecinski 1875) to provide alternative accounts of the settlement. As evidence of the clearly Eurocentric perspective of Steinbart's account, his description of the amaXhosa people whom he passed during his hike from East London to Fort Murray demonstrates a disdain for what he perceives to be their way of life: "Die Arbeitsscheu und Stumpfsinnigkeit, welche diese sonderbare Menschenrasse besitzt, lässt sich nicht beschreiben, und man weiss wirklich nicht, ob man sie dieserhalb bemitleiden oder verabscheuen soll."<sup>4</sup> (Steinbart 1978: 22) His use of the impersonal pronoun 'man' is particularly interesting, implying that his thoughts on the amaXhosa were shared by his fellow soldiers, rather than being solely his own personal opinion. As such, his accounts are useful, but need to be scrutinised for bias and referenced with caution.

Von Oswiecinski (1875) provides information on his personal experience of being recruited for the British-German Legion during the Crimean War, and the recruitment drive for emigration to the Eastern Cape that followed. He however chose not to emigrate to South Africa, but provides letters sent to him from the Eastern Cape so as to depict what life was like for the military settlers. I am sceptical of a number of these letters, the reasons for which I will discuss in more detail in chapter two. The testimony of Lieutenant Bauer (in Oswiecinski 1875) on the other hand correlates with a number of accounts of the military settlements, making it likely that his is a genuine testimony. It is advisable to be wary of von Oswiecinski due to the fact that he appears to blatantly plagiarise Steinbart, whom he identifies as an anonymous source, writing,

Ja, wenn unsere Nachbarinnen ein bis[s]chen heller in Kopf und Haut wären, ein bis[s]chen

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<sup>4</sup> "The laziness and [general] apathy which this peculiar race possesses, is indescribable, and one really does not know whether to pity them or loathe them because of this." (Own translation)



appetitlicher, man käme in Versuchung, solchen Staatsstreich zu wiederholen.<sup>5</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 217)

This passage bears a striking resemblance to Steinbart's letter to his sister, written on 8 November 1857, which reads, "Ja, wenn unsere Nachbarinnen ein wenig heller in Farbe und nicht so roh wären, wir all kämen in Versuchung, aus ihrer Mitte eine Gattin zu holen".<sup>6</sup> (Steinbart 1975: 102) Ultimately, von Oswiecinski is more interested in weaving a riveting yarn than being historically accurate or crediting his sources, which is why I have chosen only to heed those extracts to which he has assigned a specific source, rather than the alleged testimony of some (in this case allegedly) anonymous correspondent.

There is no more surprising reference in this thesis than an article written by the infamous Hans Grimm telling the story of three generations of the Tissendorf family who came to South Africa under the auspices of the peasant farmer settlement scheme. (Grimm 1915) This article was written for the 1915 yearbook of the *Jungdeutschland-Bund*, an organization founded in 1911, the stated purpose of which was to prepare the youth of Germany for imminent war by inspiring in them a fervent nationalism. (Koch 2006: 91) There is certainly evidence of Grimm's nationalist inclinations in the text, with frequent references to the importance of speaking German (in South Africa), as well as his depiction of the father at first refusing to leave Germany because of his strong patriotic feelings: "Ich habe die Heimat dennoch zu lieb".<sup>7</sup> (Grimm 1915: 118) This may well have been the actual sentiment of Mr. Tissendorf, but it is to be expected that Grimm may have embellished the storyline somewhat in order to further the *Jungdeutschland-Bund* agenda. Grimm's racism is at times very much evident, as when he attributes the following to Wilhelm Tissendorf: "Den Kaffern selbst gönnen sie ihre Mutterrede, und die Regierung hilft ihnen dabei zu bleiben. Wir aber sollen unsere Art wegwerfen und sind hier die Pioniere gewesen".<sup>8</sup> (Grimm 1915: 1924) This passage seems to show a belief that the original inhabitants of South Africa did not have as much of a right to maintain their own language as the German immigrants did, because the German immigrants were 'pioneers'. The story also ends with one of the third generation leaving for Namibia, showing his strong belief in the importance of German colonies<sup>9</sup>: "Da ging Wilhelms

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<sup>5</sup> "Yes, if the neighbouring girls had lighter skin and quicker minds and were a bit more appealing, one might be tempted to repeat such revolutionary behaviour." (Own translation)

<sup>6</sup> "Yes, if the neighbouring girls were a little lighter-skinned and not so barbarian, we would all be attempting to find a wife among them." (Own translation)

<sup>7</sup> "I simply love my motherland too much." (Own translation)

<sup>8</sup> "Even the kaffirs are allowed to speak their mother tongue, and the government helps them to maintain it. We however, who were the pioneers here, have to give up all our ways." (Own translation)

<sup>9</sup> Later to be fully manifested in his novel *Volk ohne Raum*. (Grimm 1932)

Sohn [... nach Deutsch-Südwestafrika] als Aufseher, und seine Absicht war, sich das Land anzusehen. Das Land gefiel ihm wohl, obgleich es natürlich noch nicht fünfzigjährige deutsche Arbeit in sich hatte [...]".<sup>10</sup> (Grimm 1915: 124) Notable is Grimm's use of 'obgleich', implying that no land could be up to standards, particularly the standards of a German descendant, without some German contribution which, as Grimm characterises it, could only be of a positive nature.

I have used this source sparingly, but as shall be seen it is nonetheless useful in elucidating the second-generation adaptations to the South African context.

The diary of Marie Gropp (1981<sup>11</sup>) provides a rather harrowing account of the German military settlers' experiences, although she did seem to have inordinately bad luck and an incredibly gullible husband. (1981: 2) It has not been referenced a great deal in other works on the subject, firstly because it was published relatively recently (all works being relative to the publication of Schnell's book), and secondly, because of the unconventional spelling and choice of vocabulary. English was Gropp's second language and she seems to have never quite mastered it. For this reason, I have tried to paraphrase her as much as possible. Gropp's (1981) account of life as a military settler is interesting because it is the only known account of German military settler life written by a woman. Judging by her upbringing (which consisted of piano lessons and other such womanly pursuits), I would have to say that she was probably middle-class. This account was written in the early twentieth century, but only published in 1981. The fact that it was written in the early twentieth century does however mean that there was a gap of a few decades between Gropp's experiences of the settlement and her chronicles of those experiences. I would not expect her to recall exactly dates or lengths of time or discuss any recollections in particular detail save those that particularly struck her at the time. In this way smaller details which Steinbart, for instance, saw fit to write down at the time, Gropp has with the passage of time forgotten.

Schnell's (1954) *For Men Must Work* is the authoritative text on the German settlers to the Eastern Cape in the nineteenth century. Schnell spent thirty years undertaking research for this book (as evidenced by his oral interviews, many of which took place in the 1920s) – there are not many who show that level of dedication. There are a few reasons, however, why Schnell's (1954) research cannot be considered the final word on this issue. Firstly, *For Men Must Work* was written in the 1950s and tends, despite a generally fair-minded approach, to reflect the resultant Eurocentric

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<sup>10</sup> "Then Wilhelm's son went [...to German South-West Africa] as a supervisor with the intention of viewing the country for himself. He liked it, even though it had not yet had the benefit of fifty years of German toil." (Own translation)

<sup>11</sup> Written in 1913.

biases of that era. The statement that “an earlier version of ‘segregation’ or *apartheid* [...] meant excluding European settlers from Native territories and retaining all land for the Natives” (Schnell 1954: 245), is an example of this. Schnell tentatively concludes that the introduction of white settlers to the Eastern Cape promoted peace in the region. (Schnell 1954: 245f.) Such conclusions should be re-evaluated in view of the resources (both in terms of theoretical frameworks and physical resources) available to the modern researcher. In terms of theoretical frameworks, post-colonial discourse in German Studies is comparatively novel (Dunker 2005; Albrecht 2003) and existing literature needs to be re-examined in this context. This thesis is able to deal with a topic that Schnell was not, namely the nature of the interactions between the German settlers and other groups, including the amaXhosa. More recent theoretical frameworks can add depth to a study of the German settlers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, I wish to look at two areas of study that Schnell largely ignored: The experiences of subsequent generations of the German settlers, and how their identity as Germans in South Africa was constructed, maintained, and changed. The Amathole Museum in King William's Town is in possession of a great number of recollections, records and artefacts, more and more of which are being made available to the researcher. The material available to a researcher starting afresh is greater than that available to Schnell at the time of his research. This is not to say that Schnell's (1954) work lacks merit – it is certainly well-researched and thoroughly fair-minded for its time. It also displays exhaustive research into parliamentary papers regarding the German settlers of 1857 and 1858, possibly the first work on the subject to do so. It should therefore not be disregarded, but rather should be considered a useful source of information which nonetheless is an inevitable product of the time and place in which it was produced.

Schmidt-Pretoria's (1955) German-language account of German immigration to South Africa, published a year after Schnell's work, exhibits a number of problems. Schmidt-Pretoria exhibits a strong tendency to exaggerate the achievements of the German settlers as well as their contributions to South Africa – he dedicates an entire chapter to the “Leistung der Eingewanderten”<sup>12</sup> (Schmidt-Pretoria 1955: 202), and reiterates the apartheid emphasis on 'die swart gevaar'<sup>13</sup> when he claims that “[i]n Kaffraria mußte seit langem damit gerechnet werden, daß die Neger unter straffer Führung in der Lage sein würden, die wenigen Europäer hinauszutreiben oder zu vernichten”.<sup>14</sup> (Schmidt-Pretoria 1955: 202) Schmidt-Pretoria demonstrates a more racist

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<sup>12</sup> “Achievements of the [German] immigrants.” (Own translation)

<sup>13</sup> 'the black danger'

<sup>14</sup> “In Kaffraria it has long had to be reckoned with that under the right leadership the negroes would be perfectly capable of pushing out or annihilating the few Europeans.” (Own translation)

outlook than that evident in Schnell's account of events which does not favour the use of his book as a reference. However, Schmidt-Pretoria does make use of a large number of German sources which Schnell does not, thus rendering the book a useful resource, although naturally one which is of greater use in locating German texts on the subject than in ascertaining facts.

Bauch and Mertens' (1964) work on German contributions to the Cape, while providing a contextualisation of the German presence in South Africa prior to the arrival of the German settlers in the Eastern Cape, seems rather more intent on poetic language than reconstructing history. The book opens with the claim that

[t]he flourishing busy life of to-day has been won over the centuries from an ancient land; wrung out of the trackless wastes, this timeless silence. Below the glittering surface of the present, below this wealthy people and these rich natural resources, there lies the depth of dark Africa, on which they are based. (Bauch & Mertens 1964: 14)

Such an introduction is more the hallmark of a novel than a reference book. I mention this text in order to illustrate the often romantic lens through which German immigration to South Africa is viewed, rather than because it is a valuable resource to the modern researcher.

In this thesis I also make use of a number of anecdotal accounts of German settler life as provided by the German settler descendants Elfrieda Winkelmann (1979), Valma Meier (1992) and Auguste le Roux (1975, 1992). What is notable about these settler descendants is that they are all female, but nevertheless do not provide any subversive feminist history of the settlers. Meier (1992) in particular does not place any emphasis on the lives of women in her generation or those preceding it. Le Roux (1992) mentions such day-to-day details as “[c]akes were made on Saturday morning and baked in the stove (only way to judge correct heat was to put hand into oven and “feel” the heat)” (le Roux 1992: 50); and “[w]e crocheted lace by candlelight [...]. We also took orders to make lace, a way of making a little extra money”. (le Roux 1992: 51) Of course, this lifestyle was and is as valid as any other, but one does not sense that these women in any way recognised that society was organised to the detriment of women. Le Roux indicates her acceptance of the status quo in writing that “sons helped fathers, and daughters left home to get married. It was as simple as that”. (le Roux 1979: 15) In any event, gendered or not, this anecdotal evidence needs to be evaluated in terms of its historical usefulness. Can anecdotal evidence be trusted? Anecdotal information could be said to be completely useless in terms of making generalisations about the past. However, when correlations are found between testimonials, it would be churlish of me to

ignore these correlations simply because they were anecdotal. Another perhaps more obvious problem with these anecdotal data is that they are for the most part people's recollections of themselves and their own lives. Anderson (2001: 123) posits

a need to be sceptical about the claim that the personal can ever automatically guarantee authenticity [in an autobiography...]. 'I' can [...] raise problems about privilege and exclusion, and create anxieties not only about who is speaking and who by implication is not, but also about where 'I' am speaking from and for whom. (Anderson 2001: 123)

Anderson specifically shows that autobiographies (or variations thereof) do not guarantee truth simply because that person was indeed there for all their own life experiences. Crucially, she adds that "it may be impossible to gain direct access to ourselves". (Anderson 2001: 127) Just as we view others through a lens, so we view ourselves through a lens, but it is a lens which cannot encompass how others see the autobiographer – the view is entirely self-contained. It would be reasonable to expect in these texts a method of storytelling which allows the authors to maintain their perceptions of self, rather than challenge them. These kinds of stories provide a rather more personal view of settler life at the level of the individual and their family, and thus add colour to depictions of the German settlers, although I make no claims as to their verity.

A more recent collection of anecdotes is that recorded by Webb and Welz (1990). Webb and Welz (1990) conducted a series of interviews with aged Germans in the Eastern Cape, obtaining first-hand accounts of their culture and beliefs. It is unfortunate that this paper was never published, as it provides much first-hand information which is not available elsewhere, and the accompanying recordings are also useful resources. Webb and Welz's (1990: 13) research progress report is one of the few texts to propose that the German settlers were anything other than saints. However, the paper in general appears biased in favour of the German settlers. The bias appears not to originate particularly from the authors themselves, but rather from their acceptance of the verity of their interviewees' assertions without really questioning or critically evaluating them. Although this study provides a good guide to how these people perceived themselves, it does not necessarily offer a reliable historical account. When a woman interviewed about the Second World War claims that "we didn't know or say the Germans were right in what they were doing but at the same time we felt that blood was thicker than water, and so we didn't want to go as far as to... fight against the Germans" (Webb & Welz 1990: 10), Webb and Welz say of this merely that "[c]learly a large number of German settler descendants tried to remain aloof during the war". (Webb & Welz 1990: 10) This firstly downplays the tacit support of Nazism that the interviewee espouses, and secondly

makes a generalisation about “a large number” of the German settler descendants on the basis of one testimony. Only four references are listed in the bibliography, which seems to me insufficient for an academic paper. Overall, the paper does provide a much-needed inside perspective on the German communities of the Eastern Cape, but tends to downplay the darker aspects of the German settler descendants, such as their racism. (Webb & Welz 1990: 12) Relying almost solely on personal accounts means relying mainly on individual, subjective portraits of historical events without any outside verification, which is unwise.

Baillie (1990) wrote a BA Honours research essay based on testimonies of German settler descendants. There are a couple of problems with this essay, most notably that the data were collected by Webb and Welz (1990), who were researching the same topic, and he was therefore subject to whatever biases they had and whatever questions they had asked. Baillie has moments of great insight, but also has a tendency to make sweeping statements with scant evidence, often using only one testimony as evidence. On the other hand, the research by Webb and Welz (1990) was never completed and published (only a draft of their intended paper exists), so that this Honours paper is actually more extensive and reveals more on the opinions of the German settler descendants than the paper by those who collected the data. It also allows access to the testimonies of third-generation German settler descendants who could provide details of life as German settlers that no book can. Overall, testimonies from 36 different people are used in this paper, making it a compelling portrait of life as it was for the German settlers and their descendants. I have supplemented this study with the testimonies of Grimm (1915), le Roux (1975 & 1992), Meier (1992), and Winkelmann (1979), as well as genealogical studies by Neseemann (1988), Watters (2000), and Armstrong (2008), to form a more complete picture of these settlers, their descendants, and their lifestyle. The genealogical studies tend to be more detailed than overviews such as those by Schnell (1954) and Pienaar (2009), because they are focused on a smaller section of the total population. Using details provided by these genealogies in combination with information from Grimm (1915) and Winkelmann (1979), I paint a more detailed picture of the life of the settlers and their descendants than has hitherto been available.

In a similar vein to personal anecdotes are genealogies, four of which I refer to in this thesis: Neseemann (1988), Corrigan (1992), Watters (2000) and Armstrong (2008), which chronicle the histories of the Neseemann, Andre and Bode, Peinke and Köpke German settler families, respectively. I also make use of Cunningham (1999), who produced an unpublished study of

German families in Bodiam. Although his study is not strictly a genealogy, as it deals with a number of unrelated families, it nonetheless bears the hallmarks of a genealogy, as will be shown, and I have therefore included it in this group of texts. Each of these genealogists betrays to a certain extent their own interests and values through their histories. Neesemann's (1988) genealogy is distinctive for its narrative style. Neesemann's (1988) history of his family also shows his keen interest in military aspects of the family's lives, and tends to linger over accounts of warfare rather than everyday life. Corrigan (1992) highlights the personal characteristics of her predecessors, using such descriptive words as "courage", "stalwart", "determination", and "apt and capable". Corrigan is also rather forthright in ascribing the personal qualities of her ancestors to herself and other family members. In particular she notes that "[a]pparently the Andre family were a strongly individualistic bunch of people – so much so that one parson made a pun with the surname - "Die Andre [M]ens[c]hen sind anders wie andere [M]enschen". [...] This trait runs in the family descendants still!!" (Corrigan 1992: 26ff.) She also says that "[a] strong musical bent was surely in the Andre genes because many of the grandchildren followed suit". (Corrigan 1992: 26) Watters (2000) emphasises the details of each family member's life, even to the extent of noting down those of a mundane nature. Watters (2000) provides a detailed look at six generations of the Peinke family, including all available documentation on and recollections of the family. This provides a valuable insight as to where exactly each generation of the family was and what they were doing at any given time (even to the extent of sharing how they decorated their balconies). Armstrong's (2008) focus appears to be on the personalities of her ancestors, with a particular emphasis on the personal qualities of the women of the family, and their particularly feminine achievements: "Friedericke was an excellent wife and mother, a truly remarkable person who brought 13 of her 15 children to adulthood" (Armstrong 2008: 35); "[Hulda] enjoyed farm life and was an extremely hardworking farmer's wife who, with quiet efficiency, took meticulous care of her home, her family and everything else that fell under her control" (Armstrong 2008: 119). Aside from Armstrong's blatant plagiarism of Schnell (1954: 177) when describing the lot of women in her introduction, and the popularity of an unreferenced web article on Pomerania<sup>15</sup> by one Carol Bowen, with both Watters (2000) and Armstrong (2008), these genealogies are quite thoroughly researched - they are after all not intended as academically rigorous articles. The problem lies in the nature of genealogies themselves. As Fairclough (1989: 23) warns in *Language and Power*, "[l]inguistic phenomena are social in the sense that whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways that are determined socially and have social effects". In this way, discourse (in this case, a genealogy) is both shaped by the culture whence it comes (which includes family

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.emecklenburg.de/Mecklenburg/en/pommhist.htm> Accessed on 24/07/2012.

culture, as discussed below) and is intended to create an effect. Fairclough draws attention to the fact that authors have intentions when they write; they wish to affect their audience in a specific way<sup>16</sup>. In the case of genealogies, this audience is generally other members of the same family. Bertaux and Thompson (2005), in discussing the significance of the family, note that

the family remains the main channel for the transmission of language, names, land and housing, local social standing, and religion; and beyond that also of social values and aspirations, fears, world views, domestic skills, taken-for-granted ways of behaving, attitudes to the body, models of parenting and marriage - resulting in the condensation of experiences characterizing particular class groups [...]. (Bertaux & Thompson 2005: 1f.)

Families are more significant than other historical figures for those who study them by virtue of the fact that the family is such a crucial aspect of one's social life, whether one knows them personally or not. Thompson (2005: 13) asserts that "[f]or most of us it is a commonplace that who we are, who we have become both socially and personally, is rooted in our families and yet also - for some much more decisively, for some much less - distinct from them". This being the case, those who conduct genealogical studies discover the histories and characteristics of their ancestors, *but also of themselves*. The researcher does not believe that the lives of his/her ancestors have nothing to do with the researcher personally, but rather that these histories are somehow a reflection on the researcher, and all of the researcher's extended family. It should therefore come as no surprise that the genealogies I reference do not show their predecessors in a negative light, at least not what they themselves perceive to be a negative light, and tend to emphasise the positive aspects of their kin. Armstrong in all sincerity begins her book with the following dedication: "This book is dedicated to our Köpke forebears who, impelled by need and with a courageous spirit, uprooted themselves from their native soil to resettle in a strange land in the hope of realising their dream of a better life". (Armstrong 2008: 3) This dedication does not read, "This book is dedicated to our Köpke forebears who took a huge risk in emigrating to a country of which they knew nothing and from which most derived no personal benefit", which, on the basis of the evidence Armstrong herself provides, is as valid an interpretation as that which Armstrong includes in her book. Armstrong would however presumably rather associate herself with courage and hope than foolhardiness and despair. I take the claims of these genealogists for the wonderful nature of these German settler families with a pinch of salt – not disregarding them entirely, but certainly viewing them with a degree of scepticism.

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<sup>16</sup> This is of course by no means limited to genealogies – these are merely used as an example of a principle which applies to all texts.



Keith Tankard is a researcher who appears to have looked quite extensively into the history of the German settlers, although the depth of his research remains unclear. An early published article of Tankard's (1992), entitled *The Boer War and the Germans at East London*, addresses the problem of German loyalties during the South African War<sup>17</sup>. This is to my knowledge the only article to address this subject directly. Despite its potential utility for this thesis, I have a number of doubts about the conclusions that it draws. Although Tankard provides evidence in the form of newspaper articles for his claim that "the war did foster a jingoistic attitude among many of the English residents at East London and some even regarded a neutral attitude as downright disloyalty" (Tankard 1992: 13), he does not provide any tangible evidence for his assertion that "[a]lthough many of the Germans had already been resident in the Colony for over 30 years and had been assimilated into the community, some believed themselves to be citizens of the Cape and Germany but not of Britain". (Tankard 1992: 15) This is quite a sweeping declaration to make without any supporting evidence. In addition, Tankard provides as evidence of the German residents' dilemma the example of the German consul in East London, who was still a German resident and who had nothing in common with the German settlers save the country whence he and they had originally come. When this consul did not raise the British flag above his business after a British victory, he was labelled a traitor. (Tankard 1992: 17) That someone defended this consul in a letter to a newspaper, by pointing out that this consul was obliged by the German government to remain neutral, has nothing necessarily to do with the German settlers. (Tankard 1992: 15ff.) The author is not specifically identified as being German. Evidence is however provided of anti-German sentiment in East London at that time, and that would at least have had some effect on the German settlers, particularly the call to boycott German businesses. (Tankard 2007: 17) Despite this, I have come across no further evidence of the boycott taking place. This source therefore proves overall to be of limited value.

Tankard's (2007) paper on German military settlers to the Eastern Cape is both concise and interesting, and it raises some legitimate criticisms of Schnell's claims, such as the claim that the women the men of the German Legion took for wives were all women of ill repute. His defence of the women who married Legionnaires does have some merit. He refutes Schnell's (1954: 72) claim that "many of these English brides were not of the best class" because "it is obvious that as a rule girls of good families, good social standing and sound character would hesitate to marry men who could hardly speak their language, who were more or less strangers to them, and whose prospects were, to say the least, somewhat uncertain". (Schnell 1954: 72)

<sup>17</sup> Also known as the Second Anglo-Boer War.

It is clear from his phrasing that this is conjecture on Schnell's part, and Tankard counters that

The Legion had been encamped in Britain for almost a year while being trained for combat. They had a great deal of leisure time on their hands and were often within the notice of young women in the military towns whose heads would have been turned by the unusualness of their military uniform. (Tankard 2007: 3)

Having provided the context, Tankard (2007: 4) goes on to contradict Schnell in claiming that “the majority of the women were the essence of Victorian modesty – and [...] allied themselves to a legionnaire partner with the full blessing of her [sic] parents.” However, what this paper achieves in brevity it lacks in exactitude, which amounts at times to a misrepresentation of the facts. Tankard's (2007: 4) claim that the soldiers of the German Legion were deceived by descriptions of the Eastern Cape as a paradise, as described by a “trusted Swiss officer” is a direct contradiction to Schnell's and von Oswiecinski's descriptions of a vibrant debate within the Legion in England regarding the truth of such descriptions (Schnell 1954: 62f.) and the Legion's distrust of Captain Hoffmann (Schnell 1954: 54), whose claims they were. Therefore, although the soldiers who eventually accepted the offer of farmland in the Eastern Cape may have been fooled by misleading descriptions, this was not for want of conflicting opinions, which Tankard's description of events does not explain. Overall, the piece lacks objectivity, often hinting at hero worship of Governor George Grey, who Tankard portrays as a champion for the underdog as well as a cunning strategist, claiming for instance that “[o]ne cannot fault Sir George for his fearlessness [...]” and referring to his “ability to pull the wool over Colonial Office eyes.” (Tankard 2007: 6) Knowing how Grey exploited the Cattle-Killing to his own political ends, it is difficult to share Tankard's high opinion of Grey. Tankard's paper, having been orally presented in a relatively informal setting, lacks references. This makes checking his assertions nigh impossible. It also conceals how in-depth Tankard's research is – it may consist of any number of sources, and the reader has no idea of the quality of these sources, being unable to evaluate them for him- or herself.

Tankard's (2009) [knowledge4africa](#) website (similarly lacking in references) launches a scathing attack on Schnell's (1954: 247) claim that the military settlement was a failure: “If the legionnaire scheme had NOT been a success, then the agricultural settlement would itself have been a calamity because the farmers depended on the soldiers to help rescue their settlements.” (emphasis in original) He also points out that “Dr Schnell based his conclusion on the simple but erroneous belief that only 50% of the soldiers remained but he was wrong in this because some

63% of the soldiers were on their plots when the contracts expired." This claim certainly warrants further consideration and investigation, but is, due to lack of referencing, at this stage unsubstantiated. Furthermore, Schnell does not state that the military settlement was unequivocally a failure, admitting that it may have been of some use in that "[a]t least partially, the presence of the German Military Settlers prevented a Kaffir War breaking out." (Schnell 1954: 155)

By contrast, Pienaar's (2009) paper on German settlements does identify her sources, even if there are only two of them. It does betray a somewhat sentimental approach to the German settlers, which is most evident when Pienaar (2009: 5) states that "[t]he German settlers, perhaps more than any other white community[,] experienced at least a part of the emotional disruption and dislocation that was forced onto some black communities during the Apartheid era." This seems something of an exaggeration, and the paper as a whole portrays the German settlers as victims of circumstance who overcame adversity through force of will, a narrative which is suspiciously similar to every other settler mythology passed down through the generations in immigrant communities. For instance, from the American perspective, Foner (1997: 13) admits that "Americans like to see their history as a chronicle of progress". A high school textbook written by McNeese (2002) claims that the story of the American frontier is one "filled with adventure, risk, courage, tragedy, and dreams. It is a saga of movement and endurance; of seeking a new place and a better life, a search for what lies beyond the next mountain, the next river, the next forest, the next rolling prairie". (McNeese 2002: 1) In this introduction the courage, adventurous spirit and hardship evident in Pienaar's description of the lives of the German settlers is used to characterise an entirely different group of settlers in a completely different place, suggesting that these characteristics may perhaps be more mythology than fact. Settler life was undoubtedly difficult, just maybe not quite as epic as these two accounts make it sound.

This does not lead me to conclude that these beliefs are correct due to being so uniform across cultures and contexts. Rather, I am forced to conclude that they are uniform because they all promote positive self-image as well as in-group unity. (Joffé 1999: 18)

### Theoretical Framework

Choosing a theoretical framework limits the view of the actual events by choosing the lens through which to view them. Perhaps in an attempt to broaden my view as much as possible, I have made

use of a number of different disciplines in viewing the data, including statistics (as has already been seen), critical discourse analysis, anthropology, psychology, social psychology, sociology, and of course historiography. The distinguishing line between similar disciplines such as psychology and social psychology or sociology and social psychology is a thin one, therefore rather than engage in a lively debate about where such lines fall, I make use of the self-identification of the various theorists. I do not simply wish to know what the German settlers and what those with whom they came into contact did, I want to know how and why they did it, and these various disciplines allow me to explore the means and motivations of the subjects of this study.

Given the relative importance of the chapter on German settler identities to this thesis, it is necessary to examine how contemporary culture has been defined by key figures in the various relevant schools of thought. My position in relation to each of these researchers is made evident over the course of the chapter.

The most obvious choice for a definition of culture for the purpose of defining cultural constructs would naturally appear to be cultural studies. In line with this perspective, Lewis (2002) defines culture as

an assemblage of imaginings and meanings that may be consonant, disjunctive, overlapping, contentious, continuous or discontinuous. These assemblages may operate through a wide variety of human social groupings and social practices. In contemporary culture these experiences of imagining and meaning-making are intensified through the proliferation of mass media images and information. (Lewis 2002: 15)

This is an inclusive definition, allowing for almost anything to be interpreted as an expression of culture, which is its main weakness. Although it is certainly possible for any belief or action to be representative of the culture whence it comes, this definition is too vague to be of help to the researcher. Cultural studies is defined by Rojek (2007: 7) as contending that "the content and form of culture is moulded by knowledge and power and is the means not only for controlling and manipulating people, but for resisting inequality and domination". In view of the colonial context of my subject, the emphasis on power relations is particularly relevant. Sparks (1996) nevertheless notes that

[i]t is extremely difficult to define 'Cultural Studies' with any degree of precision. It is not possible to draw a sharp line and say that on one side of it we can find the realm of cultural studies. Nor is it possible to point to a unified theory or methodology which are

characteristic to it or of it. A veritable rag-bag of ideas, methods and concerns from literary criticism, sociology, history, media studies, etc., are lumped together under the convenient label of cultural studies. (Sparks 1996: 14)

Given that cultural studies does not incorporate its own methodology but rather borrows from the methodologies of other disciplines, it is not particularly advantageous to use it as a framework. Furthermore, it is not particularly useful in recreating the daily lives of the settlers or explaining intergroup relations. It is however an excellent blanket term under which to conduct my research, drawing as it does from so many diverse disciplines.

Another potential framework is that of psychological anthropology. LeVine (2010: 1) defines psychological anthropology as “the study of the behavior, experience and development of individuals in relation to the institutions and ideologies of their sociocultural environments, across all populations of the human species”. This is a valid perspective in that it acknowledges non-Western approaches to psychology and self. Psychological anthropology's perspective on culture may be exemplified by Hofstede's (1984) definition of culture. Hofstede (2003: 9) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another”. This definition is indicative of culture being viewed as a collective consciousness, rather than as a set of (loosely defined) behaviours and beliefs as postulated by scholars of cultural studies. Hofstede's definition is ambiguous with regard to whether collective programming is the source of culture or vice versa. In Hofstede's study of international culture differences, this ambiguity does not negatively affect the research; however, in my case, it does not sufficiently narrow down the field of culture to be suitable as a primary framework because it does not expound on specific cultural beliefs and practices, but provides a broader definition based on his five dimensions of culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity and long-term orientation. (Hofstede 2003: xixf.) It is nevertheless useful in explaining cultural differences as well as motivations. I therefore make use of it in this thesis, particularly in chapter four. It should also be noted that I also make use of anthropological studies such as those conducted by Foster (1965) and Dobrowski (1987) periodically throughout the thesis.

Sociology can also provide useful leads. Neubeck and Glasberg (2005: 3) define sociology as “the scientific study of society, of the ways in which society is organized and operates, and of the factors contributing to both social stability and social change”. Sociology attempts to explain group behaviour, and as such can be applied to many aspects of this thesis, particularly the motives of

the German settlers for emigrating, race relations between the Germans and the amaXhosa and amaMfengu, and understanding the culture of the settlers. Abraham (2006: 54) defines culture as “a complex system that consists of beliefs, values, standards, practices, language, and technology shared by members of a social group”, adding that “[c]ulture refers to learned ways of behaviour. Cultural objects are not organic or biological; they can only be acquired through social life”. In addition, Abraham (2006: 55) identifies five key components of culture: “beliefs, values, language, norms, and technology”. In that this definition begins to specify more clearly what constitutes culture, it is much more applicable to my purposes. Sociological studies such as those conducted by Seidman (1999), Inglehart and Baker (2000), Mtuze (2004) and Mabona (2004) have proved invaluable in elucidating cultural attitudes and their effects.

Social psychology, a subgenre of sociology, unsurprisingly focuses on society as a system consisting of free-willed individuals. Wiggins, Wiggins and Vander Zanden (1994: 1) claim that “[h]ow behavior is influenced by and influences other people is the substance of social psychology – the study of behavior, thoughts, and feelings of an individual or interacting individuals and of their relationships with larger social units”. This is the predominant perspective in my thesis because I am reconstructing culture from fragments recorded by individuals. No sociological surveys were conducted of the communities I am studying; therefore individual accounts are my only way to access a society and culture now largely assimilated into either South African English or Afrikaans (but mainly English) culture. A breakdown of cultural elements even more detailed than that provided by Abrahams (2006) is furnished by Chiu & Hong (2006: 16f.), writing from the perspective of social psychology, who claim that culture consists of “a set of shared meanings, which provides a common frame of reference for a human group to make sense of reality, coordinate their activities in collective living, and adapt to the external environment” which is manifested in various ways: “the shared physical environment (such as spatial layout of a rural village, the subsistence economy), social institutions (e.g., schools, family, the workplace), social practices (e.g., division of labor), the language, conversation scripts, and other media [...]”. (Chiu & Hong 2006: 17) Chiu and Hong's (2006) definition of culture is useful in terms of elaborating on the various elements of culture and their manifestations. Furthermore, this definition does not clash with the sociological or cultural studies definitions of culture, but rather complements them. As such, I shall be using both the sociological and social psychological definitions of culture as a starting point in my investigation of German identity in the Eastern Cape.

The man considered the founder of modern social psychology is Harry Triandis. (Wyer, Chiu & Hong 2009: ix) Triandis' (2009: 189) theory that culture can be dependent on ecology predicts that if ecology were to change, culture would also change. Thus the Germans, transplanted from Germany to Africa, would have to adapt their culture to their new environment. The eleven factors which Triandis (2009: 193–196) lists as pertinent to shaping culture are: resource availability or abundance, resource mobility, cultural isolation, activity interdependence, dangerous activities, population density, simplex-complex societies, migrations, climate, the unpredictability of the environment, and terrain fragmentation. Certainly, resource availability, resource mobility, cultural isolation, population density, migrations and climate all apply to the German settlers in the Eastern Cape. It is useful to compare the changes Triandis' model predicts with the actual changes the Germans underwent. This and the writings of other social psychologists, such as Chiu *et al.* (1997) and van de Vliert *et al.* (1999), will be used in this thesis.

Another less explicit framework used throughout my thesis is that of linguistics, more specifically sociolinguistics from the perspective of Fairclough (1989). Fairclough (1989), as mentioned in the literature review above, draws attention to the ways in which language is used to control, persuade and perpetuate social norms. He encourages awareness of how utterances are phrased the way they are, and what goal a particular language choice seeks to achieve. My critical evaluation of language choices, based on this assumption, is apparent throughout this thesis. Having access to these tools means being able to take a more in-depth look at texts, particularly primary historical texts, in order to uncover their intentions and more subtle methods of persuasion.

Spivak (2007: 186f.) points to an historic bias in favour of the West and suggests a solution: “The point is to negotiate between the national, the global, and the historical as well as the contemporary diasporic. We must both anthropologize the West and study the various cultural systems of Africa, Asia, Asia Pacific and Americas as if peopled by historical agents.” This is a reminder to avoid the traditional Western mistake of viewing 'natives' as empty vessels to be controlled and acculturated, rather than active agents of their own destinies, but also a reminder to view Western customs and values with the critical eyes of an outsider.

A key framework for my analysis is post-colonialism, of which Spivak's musings above are one example. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1999: 186) claim that post-colonialism “deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies”. I am therefore investigating the German settlers

and colonists from a critical standpoint, with a view to the prevailing attitudes at the time of colonisation (Steinmetz 2007) as well as to current evaluations of colonialism. Young (2003: 2) elucidates that post-colonialism

has developed a body of writing that attempts to shift the dominant ways in which the relations between western and non-western people and their worlds are viewed. [...] It means realizing that when western people look at the non-western world what they see is often more a mirror image of themselves and their own assumptions than the reality of what is really there, or of how people outside the west actually feel and perceive themselves.

Young's claim is a reasonable one, but it fails to address the inaccuracy in individuals' and social groups' perceptions of themselves, whether they are western or non-western. As Ferguson (2009: 193) puts it, "[s]elf-identity is not a story; it is a fiction". This is also substantiated by Joffé's (1999: 18) claim that in-groups project their own negative characteristics onto out-groups, thus maintaining a fictional, positive self-image. What can be said about post-colonialism is that it grants a voice to the formerly voiceless, but it cannot, as Young claims, represent "reality." It is important to note the problems with a definition such as post-coloniality, as Thomas points out:

I find that a great deal of writing on 'colonial discourse' fails to grasp that field's dispersed and conflicted character. ... [T]he modes of analysis that are typically employed often paradoxically characterize 'colonial discourse' in unitary and essentialist terms, and frequently seem to do more to recapitulate than subvert the privileged status and presumed dominance of the discourses that are investigated. (Thomas 1994: 3)

Thomas' criticism of post-colonialism is that it refers back not to colonialism, but an imagined colonialism in which colonial subjects were passive victims and colonisers active oppressors, excluding the nuances that were present in the reality of colonisation. Post-colonialism is according to Thomas a troubled approach if it does not regard that which it is studying with a clear eye. However, a subject as emotive as colonialism, with its connotations of slavery and exploitation, is a difficult one to approach. It is not surprising that many contemporary theorists (such as Said and Spivak) have approached post-colonialism from the perspective of firstly righting a wrong and giving a voice to the voiceless, with rigorous evaluation of the original materials and their ambiguities coming second. Despite its shortcomings, post-colonialism can still be considered a helpful perspective from which to evaluate the findings of my thesis. Post-colonialism is history interpreted and written from an alternative perspective, with the implicit belief that alternative



histories are as valid as mainstream histories. Colonialism on the other hand, is a perspective that by and large validates exploitation, annexation of land, and racism. (Kozlowski & Weber 2010: 1) Post-colonialism may in time prove to be just as invalid a perspective as colonialism itself, but it cannot at the present time be disregarded. Post-colonial perspectives I refer to in this thesis include Peires (1982; 1989), Mabona (2004), Mtuze (2004), Cooper and Brubaker (2005) and Steyn (2005).

## **2. Why did the Germans come to South Africa?**

### Why did the military settlers come to South Africa?

It may at first be puzzling to consider that the German soldiers who chose to fight for the British-German Legion would be willing to leave their homes and families (possibly forever) to fight for a country which did not speak their language or share their customs, and then further to emigrate to a country (South Africa) completely unknown to them. However, as will be shown, they did so with the belief that it would ultimately better their financial and professional situation.

One set of justifications for why German soldiers joined the British-German Legion is provided by Maria Gropp. Maria Gropp, one of the few women who immigrated to South Africa with their legionnaire husbands, reveals that her husband was a lieutenant in the Hanoverian army, and that he and many of his fellow soldiers enlisted in the British-German Legion out of boredom. (Gropp 1981: 6) Gropp claims that the Prince Consort personally promised that the troops would not be disbanded but would remain a part of the British army after the Crimean War, although he was assuming that they would at least fight in the war. (Gropp 1981: 7) Gropp, who travelled to Constantinople to be with her husband, details how she awoke one morning four months after her arrival to the sound of bells ringing and the news of British victory, which meant that “our [German] soldiers were to go back to England, without having once drawn their swords”, as the Crimean War ended earlier than anticipated. (Gropp 1981: 9)

Von Oswiecinski (1875), a Schleswig-Holsteiner member of the British-German Legion who chose not to settle in South Africa, sheds light on many aspects of life for this group before their journey to South Africa, including their motivations for joining the Legion, and the debate that raged over the settlement scheme. He also paints a picture of life in South Africa from alleged correspondence with military settlers (this correspondence has a number of suspicious characteristics, which will be discussed in full in the chapter on the daily lives of the settlers).

Von Oswiecinski paints an interesting picture of the recruitment of the German soldiers into the British-German Legion and the threats with which they were faced. He writes, “Der deutsche Bund war ein neutraler während des Krimkrieges; von einer offenen Werbung für die englische Armee konnte daher keine Rede sein. Wohl aber war im Strafgesetzbuch recht viel von strenger Bestrafung heimlicher Werbung die Rede.”<sup>18</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 68) The German soldiers, if

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<sup>18</sup> “The German Confederation was neutral during the Crimean War; open recruitment for the English army was therefore out of the question. Indeed the penal code had much to say about harsh punishments for the crime

caught joining the Legion, faced severe punishment. He tells also of Stutterheim's fugitive status as a recruiter for England: "Die Polizei war dem, die Werbebureaus organisierenden Stutterheim immer dicht auf den Hacken."<sup>19</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 68) In addition, the German press was encouraged to produce articles which would dissuade the Germans from joining, with such heart-rending sentiments as "kein Auge wird beim Fortgange um sie weinen, keine Thräne soll auf ihr Grab in fremder Erde fließen".<sup>20</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 69)

Why then would German soldiers choose to join the Legion? Von Oswiecinski (1875: 70) explains firstly that soldiers had nothing to do in Germany at that time. He adds rather dramatically that professional soldiers had no other calling than that of fighting, and that they could not adjust to civilian life. He then reproaches the writers of the aforementioned articles, saying,

Glaubten die Herren Offiziere von der Feder wirklich, daß die Phrasen ihrer sittlichen Entrüstung die hart bedrängten Männer veranlassen würden, das gebeugte Haupt gegen die Strahlen der, ihnen von England, nach so vielen dunklen Polarnächten, hell aufgehenden Sonne zu verhüllen?<sup>21</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 71)

England's recruitment drive, according to von Oswiecinski, offered the excitement and adventure for which all these men had been waiting. This longing for war is a difficult one for civilians to understand, but Hedges (2003: 3) explains that "[t]he enduring attraction of war is this: Even with its destruction and carnage it can give us what we long for in life. It can give us purpose, meaning, a reason for living. Only when we are in the midst of conflict does the shallowness and vapidness of much of our lives become apparent." This may provide an explanation as to why the German soldiers generally made such discontented settlers and left as soon as the opportunity for fighting presented itself. There was also another motivation for the German soldiers: "Außerdem war bekannt, daß auch der alten englisch-deutschen Legion von 1815 nichts versprochen war; dennoch genossen z. Z. noch viele Hannoveraner den Halbsold, welchen England nachträglich bewilligt hatte."<sup>22</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 72) It can therefore be inferred that at least some of the recruits were hoping for some of the rewards granted to the King's German Legion which had fought in the

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of clandestine recruitment." (Own translation)

<sup>19</sup> "The police were always hot on the heels of the man who organised the recruitment, General Stutterheim." (Own translation)

<sup>20</sup> "No eyes will cry at their passing, no tears will flow at their grave on foreign soil." (Own translation)

<sup>21</sup> "Did these officers of the quill truly believe that their expressions of moral indignation would cause these embattled men to cover up their bent heads touched by the warm rays of the sun rising from England, after they have suffered through so many dark polar nights?" (Own translation)

<sup>22</sup> "It was in addition generally known that nothing was promised to the King's German Legion of 1815 either. Nevertheless they now enjoy the half-pay which England subsequently granted them." (Own translation)

Napoleonic Wars. This legion was formed in 1803 (Unknown 1827: xx), and selected German soldiers from the state of Hanover, of which King George III of England was elector. (Woods 1987: 311f.) The members of this legion performed so admirably, according to an officer of this self-same legion (Unknown 1827: xxiii), "that its brilliant services obtained for the officers permanent rank in the English army, as was subsequently confirmed by Act of Parliament, in 1812". Their courage is borne out by Vigors' testimony that a number of the former King's German Legion were awarded medals of honour. (Vigors 1984) Being confirmed as a member of the British army meant an army pension, and this may well have been among the rewards for which the British-German Legion recruits were hoping.

Superintendent Böker (1955) worked in South Africa in the Lutheran church from 1911 to 1924, and made the acquaintance of one Schütz von Brandis (who is also mentioned by Schnell 1954: 192). Von Brandis recounted his adventures to Böker. (1955: 12) This account serves both to confirm the testimony of other German settlers such as Steinbart (1975) and Gropp (1981) and to illuminate some aspects which had not been dealt with in detail by others. Böker confirms that both the British and the Germans were aware of the King's German Legion and its reputation: "Noch war die Erinnerung wach an "Des Königs deutsche Legion" die unter englischer Fahne 1803-1815 ruhmvoll gegen Napoleon gekämpft hatte."<sup>23</sup> (Böker 1955: 12) Böker mentions that the then British-owned Heligoland was the main drafting station (Böker 1955: 12), which ties in with Steinbart's (1975: 8ff.) account of sneaking out of Germany via Heligoland. What is also noteworthy about Heligoland as a drafting station is its northern location. This may explain the preponderance of northern Germans who signed up for the British-German Legion.

In short, the German soldiers saw in the British recruitment an end to their boredom and the chance to make some quick money and perhaps also a profitable retirement, as exemplified by the King's German Legion who had served England in the Napoleonic Wars.

After the members of the British-German Legion discovered that their legion was to be disbanded, and without any offer of the generous benefits they had expected to receive, they were forced to decide on a new course of action. One option presented to them, and indeed strongly marketed to them, was emigration to the Eastern Cape. The British government estimated that 8000 German soldiers would sign up for the scheme (Schnell 1954: 53), but only 2400 men eventually signed up. (Schnell 1954: 70) The following paragraphs explore why so few soldiers signed up, and why the

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<sup>23</sup> "They still remembered the "King's German Legion" that fought so gloriously in the English campaign against Napoleon between 1803 and 1815." (Own translation)

soldiers who signed up did so.

After it was announced that the German Legion was to be disbanded, von Oswiecinski complains that,

Unsere Wünsche waren zumeist auf Indien gerichtet, da die Indische Compagnie, wie verlautete, Anträge auf unsere Uebernahme gestellt hatte. Auch war bekannt, daß die Gehalte und Löhnungen dort das Dreifache der englischen betrug. Das Gouvernement, und hauptsächlich Prinz Albert, hatten aber nur Sinn dafür, uns nach dem Kap zu schicken, um eine Militär-Kolonie zum Schutze des Caplandes gegen die Räubereien der Kaffern zu gründen. (von Oswiecinski 1875: 169f.)<sup>24</sup>

This reveals that even prior to their being sent to South Africa, the members of the German Legion were eager to be sent to India. It was perhaps not only disenchantment with the Eastern Cape but also the potential fulfilment of a long-held wish that induced the German soldiers to leave for India. It also shows that the military settlers were probably expecting some form of military action after their arrival in South Africa. Von Oswiecinski also expresses disdain for Captain Hoffmann, the man charged with the fact-finding mission to South Africa. Although he expresses great admiration for General Stutterheim ("Das war der richtige Mann! Ein fideles Haus, *gentleman* durch und durch"<sup>25</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 65)), he shares his doubts regarding Stutterheim's judgement:

Dem General Stutterheim fällt hier die große Schuld zur Last, daß er seinen Adjutanten Hoffmann mit dieser wichtigen Sendung betraute, zu der dieser weder feinem Character, noch feiner Kenntnisse nach qualifiziert war. Er sprach weder englisch, das er erst auf der Reise lernte, noch französisch[,] und hatte von Colonisations-Verhältnissen und Bedürfnissen keine Idee, war nicht einmal ein nüchterner Mensch.<sup>26</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 172)

This is a rather damning character assessment of Captain Hoffmann, whose florid advertisements of South Africa made the soldiers wary of his claims: "Nach seiner Rückkehr nach England machte er nun den Reiseprediger für die Kolonie, die er als ein Paradies schilderte[,] und namentlich die frohe Botschaft aus derselben verkündete, wie ungeheuer billig der Schnapps dort sei! Das war der

<sup>24</sup> "We largely wished to go to India, as the Indian Company, it was being reported, had applied for our transfer. It was also known that the salary there was three times as much as our English salary. The government, and principally Prince Albert, were however only interested in sending us to the Cape to found a military colony in order to protect the Cape territory from the thievery of the kaffirs." (Own translation)

<sup>25</sup> "This was the right man for the job! A great deal of fun and a gentleman through and through." (Own translation)

<sup>26</sup> "A large part of blame falls on General Stutterheim – in that he entrusted this important mission to his aide-de-camp Hoffmann, who was qualified neither by good character nor by good judgement. He spoke neither English (which he learnt first on the journey) nor French, and had no idea of colonisation conditions and requirements. He was not even level-headed [can also be translated as 'sober']." (Own translation)

richtige Weg, um mißtrauisch zu machen!“<sup>27</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 172f.)

Von Oswiecinski was also a prolific collector of newspaper articles (albeit mostly ones which aligned with his point of view), and this collection provides an assessment of the debate amongst the German soldiers regarding the settlement scheme. He quotes the *United Service Gazette* of 4 October 1856 as saying,

Das Gouvernement selbst hat die Leute [...] mißtrauisch gegen Versprechungen desselben gemacht, daß sie u. A. nicht die versprochenen 5 Lstr. [£], sondern nur 3 Lstr. Werbegeld erhielten. Außerdem sind sie während ihres Aufenthaltes in England fortwährend mit Zahlung der “barracs-damages” gestraft worden. Es ist daher gar nicht so wunderbar, daß die Leute zögern.<sup>28</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 176f.)

Von Oswiecinski also transcribes in full an open letter written by a certain Dr. Ingwersen, who admits that the scheme did not offer extremely generous salaries, but ultimately recommends that the soldiers take up the offer, because

[i]n den Ansiedlungen auf dem Lande erhält jeder Mann neben seinem Haus einen Acker Gartenland. Im ersten Jahr, wo die Regierung dazu die Ration ihm ertheilt, erspart er seinen ganzen Sold; seine müßige Zeit verwerthet er im Dienst der größeren Grundbesitzer. Im zweiten Jahr bringt er selber, für 3 Schilling der Acker als den von der Regierung gesetzten Preis, größere Ländereien in seine Hand; kauft er sich das nöthige Vieh [...].<sup>29</sup> (Ingwersen in von Oswiecinski 1875: 186)

The plan was not in itself a bad one, but relied much on Hoffmann's fictionalised account of South Africa, supposedly blessed with bountiful fruits, fertile land and numerous cattle. Ultimately, the German military settlers did not make their fortunes in this way, if at all. The above-mentioned Cattle-killing which took place just prior to the arrival of the military settlers rendered this advice tragically impractical.

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<sup>27</sup> “After his return to England he designated himself the itinerant preacher of the colony, which he depicted as a paradise and out of which he especially proclaimed the joyful news of how unbelievably cheap the schnapps was there! That was really the right way to make people suspicious.” (Own translation)

<sup>28</sup> “The [English] government itself has made people suspicious of its own promises that they would not be getting the promised £5 sign-up money, but £3 instead. In addition, during their stay in England, they have been constantly slapped with the payment of “damage to the barracks”. It is therefore not so remarkable that people are hesitating [to sign up].” (Own translation)

<sup>29</sup> “In the settlements in the countryside, every man gets one acre of land next to his house. In the first year, while the government is providing rations, he saves his entire salary. He spends his spare time in service of the large landowners. In the second year he can, at the government-fixed price of 3 shillings per acre, buy his own larger plot and buy the necessary cattle [...].” (Own translation)

Lastly, von Oswiecinski transcribes a criticism of the settlement scheme by Captain Adolf Bliesener, which is noteworthy for its pessimistic view of the settlement scheme. Bliesener's distrust of Captain Hoffmann is evident throughout the text, with the author derisively referring to him as "Herr Oberst Ritter Hoffmann" or "Herr Ritter Hoffmann"<sup>30</sup> several times. Bliesener however expounds a criticism of the settlement scheme that is far ahead of its time. Regarding the claim that German soldiers were needed to subdue the restless natives, Bliesener (in von Oswiecinski 1975: 191) points out in a sarcastic tone:

Daß laut Befehl die in einem abgegrenzten Distrikt einzeln betroffenen Kaffern gehängt werden, beweist dreierlei: erstens die Humanität der dortigen Behörden, zweitens die Gerechtigkeit, Weisheit und Strenge der Straßenpolizei und drittens die Richtigkeit der Grundsatzes, daß es im Interesse der Kultur liegt, alle unkultivierten Landeseinwohner aufzuhängen.<sup>31</sup>

Before reading this passage, it would be easy to assume that the racism of military settlers such as Steinbart (explored in more detail in chapter five) was merely a product of the times. This appears unfortunately not to be the case. Bliesener took a more humanist perspective of "the natives", but seems to have been wilfully ignored by the future military settlers (perhaps unsurprisingly, given that his purpose was to dissuade them from going). This does serve as a reminder that a variety of viewpoints prevailed even in an era which in modern times we look back on as racist.

Böker recounts the opinion of Albert Kropf, the pastor at Bethel mission (which later became Stutterheim), on the settlement scheme as shared with Major Grant and Hauptmann Hoffmann:

Er scheint nicht besonders grosse Erwartungen von der Eignung dieser Siedler gehabt zu haben, denn er soll die Befürchtung ausgesprochen haben[,] dass es den Legionären an zwei Dingen fehlen möchte, an der Arbeitsfreudigkeit und der Mässigkeit im Alkoholenuss. Es sollte sich später zeigen, dass seine Bedenken nicht grundlos waren [...].<sup>32</sup> (Böker 1955: 13)

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<sup>30</sup> "Mister Colonel Chevalier Hoffmann" or "Mister Chevalier Hoffmann." 'Ritter' can also be translated more directly as 'knight'. It should be noted that Hoffmann did not possess any of the titles Bliesener ridicules him with.

<sup>31</sup> "That affected individual kaffirs in a particular district are being hanged under orders shows three things: Firstly, the humanity of the authorities there, secondly, the fairness, wisdom and severity of the district police, and thirdly, the accuracy of the policy that it is in the interest of culture to hang all uncultivated inhabitants of the country." (Own translation)

<sup>32</sup> "He appeared not to have particularly high expectations regarding the aptitude of these settlers, because he is purported to have expressed the fear that the legionaries possibly lacked two things: work ethic and moderation in their enjoyment of alcohol. It was later shown that these concerns were not without basis [...]." (Own translation)

It is clear from this statement that Kropf did not have high hopes for the military settlement scheme. Böker notes that the fulfilment of the originally proffered compensation for the German soldiers would be rather costly, and this is what led the British government to campaign so intensively for the settlement scheme. (Böker 1955: 12)

Upon their return to England, the Gropps took up the offer to settle in British Kaffraria, believing it was their opportunity to make their fortune: “The gover[n]ment had promised to keep us for seven years in pay, but nobody of us [ ] thought to stay there after that time. We all thought [ ] by that time [ ] we would be quite rich, and would return triumphant to our fatherland”. (Gropp 1981: 10)

It certainly seems that the critics of the scheme won over the majority of the members of the British-German Legion, but those that signed up appear to have done so with a view to acquiring land and perhaps in the further pursuit of adventure.

#### Why did the peasant farmer settlers come to South Africa?

The German peasant farmer settlers who were shipped out the following year were a group of people essentially hand-picked by the firm of *Mssrs. Godeffroy and Son* as ideal settlers for the Eastern Cape. (Schnell 1954: 165) In this regard, they did not much resemble the military settlers, who had been selected merely for their willingness and disposability rather than any particular skills that they possessed. What, however, motivated this second group of people, who had for the most part never even left their own localities, to move to the other side of the world? This chapter explores that question, bearing in mind that economic conditions were probably not the sole contributing factor to their departure. It is particularly difficult to surmise their motives because they have tended not to write about themselves, due either to limited literacy or lack of leisure time, and therefore have not shared their views on their own cultures and societies, meaning that exploration of the topic is left to members of other social classes. These people in many cases do not view the motives of the peasantry in a positive light, or go to the opposite extreme and idealise the pastoral nature of peasant life. The peasants in question here are viewed from the outside as in so many other instances, and despite post-colonial advances in publishing the opinions of many formerly disadvantaged groups, the peasantry is not yet among them. This chapter is an attempt to understand their choices through the limited lens available to the researcher of today.



Kitchen points out that life in the 1830s and 1840s was difficult for the German underclasses:

The vast majority of Germans lived in conditions far removed from the comforts of the bourgeois household. There was precious little room for self-fulfilment, emotional development, or even basic privacy in poverty-stricken and overworked lower class families. (Kitchen 2006: 35)

While the middle class had the opportunity for an artistic escape from stifling public life, those of lower social strata had none. Their displeasure became increasingly evident:

In 1844 the Silesian handloom weavers, driven to desperation by a catastrophic fall in prices that led directly to mass starvation and a typhus epidemic, rose up in revolt only to be brutally crushed by the army. It was a horrific series of events that awoke the conscience of the nation and inspired generations of socially critical artists. Heinrich Heine's passionate poem, "The Silesian Weavers," Gerhardt Hauptmann's play *The Weavers*, and Käthe Kollwitz's harrowing series of prints are moving testimony to the lasting impact of this tragedy. There were similar uprisings elsewhere in Germany in the 1840s, albeit on a smaller scale, such as the "Potato Revolution" in Berlin in 1847. (Kitchen 2006: 43)

In the violence of these uprisings, desperation, rather than proletarian solidarity, is most evident.

What is perhaps most puzzling about the 1848 revolution that followed a few years later is the lack of involvement of the proletariat. This is not to say that they did nothing: in Vienna, for instance, "looting was widespread, and a considerable amount of property was destroyed." (Kitchen 2006: 74) In the German countryside, peasant uprisings

were directed against the great landowners, the administrators of the demesne lands, and Jewish money lenders and cattle dealers. Deeds were burnt, taxes were left unpaid, poachers had a field day, committees of public safety were formed, and in Wiesbaden thousands of peasants demanded that noble estates be taken over by the state and divided up among the people. (Kitchen 2006: 76)

The surprise is that the peasants did not rise up and take political control, as happened in the French Revolution. Instead, "[f]ar from forming the vanguard of a socialist revolution, workers indulged in an orgy of Luddism." (Kitchen 2006: 77) Although the working class had much to complain about, they were scattered and disorganised. (Kitchen 2006: 77)

The rapid economic development of the 1850s (Fulbrook 2004: 121) meant that the biting poverty of the 1830s had abated to some extent. This raises the question of why the peasant farmers and German soldiers would emigrate at a time when Germany was beginning to prosper. It is of course

a mistake to equate economic development with widespread prosperity, but the food shortages of the 1830s and 1840s were over. (Kitchen 2006: 37f.) Remembering that the majority of the settlers came from Pomerania, it is however worth noting that the Pomeranian government was more hesitant than most in implementing *Bauernbefreiung* (the freeing of peasants from feudal duties to their overlords), only introducing it into the legal system in 1856. (Schmidt 2009: 18)

Baillie concurs that although changes were being implemented, this had not yet had any effect on many of the workers on the land: “[T]hey left Germany at a time when most still lived on the estates of their squires.” (Baillie 1990: 5) The 1848 revolution had illustrated that the feudal system was still very much alive in the German states. What this meant is that many peasants were still at the mercy of their overlords at a time when Europe was considered to be modernising. This modernisation offered no benefit to them. August Peinke (1992: 46) describes his parents' hardships in Germany: “My parents were servants or labourers to landed gentry in the country. The pitiful conditions made my father change his job several times. From Repplin we went to Liptow, from Liptow to Dölitz, everywhere the same, neediness and poverty”. Given this set of circumstances, the offer of immigration to South Africa promised land ownership, independence and the possibility of becoming wealthy, which their lives in the German states would most likely never achieve. This was the possibility not only of wealth for themselves but also a better future for their children. Grimm (1915: 117) for instance mentions that the Tissendorfs chose to emigrate so that their children might have better lives than they did. Suárez-Orozco (2004: 130) also describes immigrant parents in general as making sacrifices in order to create a better future for their children. The cultural factors involved in this kind of decision will be discussed in chapter four.

Foster provides another explanation for the emigration of the peasant farmers, based on his interpretation of peasant culture. He states that “[t]he Anglo-Saxon virtues of hard work and thrift seen as leading to economic success are meaningless in peasant society” and that peasants believe in the powerful forces of fate as their best chance of improving their situation. (Foster 1965: 308) “[T]he prudent and thoughtful man is the one who seeks ways in which to maximize his luck-position. He looks for the places in which good fortune is most apt to strike, and tries to be there”. (Foster 1965: 308) Given the relatively positive light in which those who take chances are seen in peasant societies, it should not perhaps be so surprising that the peasant farmer settlers were willing to make what seems in hindsight to be a reckless move, betting everything that this move would improve the situation of them and their families.

In summary, these writers argue that the emigration of the peasant farmer settlers from Germany was due to their desire for land and freedom, and their culturally inculcated willingness to take dramatic risks.

### **3. The lives of the German settlers, 1857 – 1919**

#### The lives of the military settlers, 1857-1858

The arrival of the German military settlers, as they became known after the Legion was disbanded, marked the first immigration of a significant number of German people to the Eastern Cape, and indeed to South Africa. Until now, many texts on the German military settlers have focused on Steinbart (1975; 1978) as the primary source of information about the lives of the military settlers after their arrival in South Africa. This offers a view of the military settlers from the perspective of someone receiving the relatively high salary of 11d. a day, almost double that which a private was receiving (Schnell 1954: 67), and therefore someone who did not necessarily sympathise with those below him. In his eighth letter to his sister, he blithely groups deserters with murderers as though their crimes were of equal weight. (Steinbart 1975: 89) I have found two other accounts of the military settlements, one by Marie Gropp (1981), wife of one of the legionaries, and one by Lieutenant Bauer (in von Oswiecinski 1875), but neither of these is able to provide a viewpoint on the settlements from the lower ranks of the Legion. Presumably the privates were not at leisure to write down their thoughts, or their accounts did not survive. However, as mentioned in the introduction, their actions (particularly desertion) provided some clues as to their view of the settlement scheme. Lieutenant Bauer was a high-ranking official in the army, receiving pay between 3s. 3d. and 4s. 6d. per day depending on whether he was an infantry lieutenant or a cavalry lieutenant. Gropp's husband was also a lieutenant, thus if anything, these people were of even higher social station than Steinbart. What they do provide is a surprising diversity of opinions which makes the perspective at least a little less one-sided, although unfortunately not more balanced from the point of view of social tiers. I have also supplemented these testimonies to some extent through the opinions of von Oswiecinski (1875), who did not settle in the Eastern Cape, but was acquainted with some of those who did, including Lieutenant Bauer.

Von Oswiecinski (1875) has much to say on the nature of the settlement in the Eastern Cape, although his information is always second-hand, given that he did not himself take up the offer to settle. The first half of his account can be viewed as somewhat suspicious as he recounts a letter from a farmer, and one letter each from Stutterheim, Keiskamma Hoek and Ohlsen, but does not at any time mention who authored them. The letter from an Eastern Cape farmer states that, “[i]n Friedenszeit ist die Lebensweise des Farmers in nichts von der seiner europäischen Genossen verschieden. Anders ist es zur Zeit des Krieges. [...D]ie häufigen Wiederholungen dieser Unruhen haben ihn zu einem so trefflichen Krieger gemacht, daß die Kaffern einen einzigen Farmer mehr

respektiren, als ein Dutzend Soldaten.”<sup>33</sup> (von Oswiecinski 1875: 199f.) This letter has to pre-date the arrival of the German military settlers, because they were all trained soldiers and would therefore not have assessed farmers as being superior fighters to soldiers. This leads one to wonder how von Oswiecinski managed conveniently to be in possession of a letter from a (presumably English) farmer whom he happened to know before he even knew that such a letter would be significant. Furthermore, to state that farming in the Eastern Cape was exactly the same as farming in Europe is scarcely believable. Daphne and Brett (1987: 59) assert that “[t]he German legionnaires found farming difficult in a region plagued by drought [...]”. They also refer to the differences between Europe and the Eastern Cape: “The Kaffrarian settlements followed closely on medieval tradition, being suited to fertile land and designed for high density living. The arid eastern frontier proved to be unsuitable for settlements of this nature”. (Daphne & Brett 1987: 61) Bauer (in Oswiecinski 1875: 224) also complains of the unhelpful weather conditions. I therefore treat this letter with a degree of suspicion, although it does appear to be well-researched in some respects (the question is by whom). All of the German settler letters (save those from Bauer) are written in May 1857, one on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the other two on the 17<sup>th</sup>. It seems doubtful that everyone chose to write to von Oswiecinski at exactly the same time, which leads me to suspect that the letters are amalgamations of many different letters. Von Oswiecinski, who faithfully wrote out letter after letter concerning the debate about the settlement scheme in England, referencing each very carefully, suddenly provides no details whatsoever of the writers of these letters. My suspicion is that the letters are an easy way for von Oswiecinski to provide information about life in the Eastern Cape without having to credit his multiple sources. I have not made use of these letters due to the doubtfulness of their origin.

The correspondence that follows, from Lieutenant Bauer, stationed in Panmure near East London, is more likely to be real, given that his name is actually provided, and that the details of his experience match those of current historical records while containing details which are unlikely to have been known to outsiders at that time. Firstly, he produces a very accurate transcription of the Xhosa language when he testifies that “[d]ie Kaffern selbst fürchteten uns sehr. Gott weiß, was Alles die Engländer ihnen über uns weiß [sic] gemacht hatten. Oft genug hörten wir sie sagen, daß die *Ama Germani boni skilem ama doda*, d. h. sehr schlechte, nämlich sehr grausame, gewissenlose Männer seien”.<sup>34</sup> (Bauer in von Oswiecinski 1875: 222) It is unlikely that von

<sup>33</sup> “In peacetime, the lifestyle of the farmer is in no way different from that of his European counterpart. It is something else altogether in times of war. [...] The frequent recurrences of these unrests have made him into such an able warrior that the kaffirs respect a single farmer more than a dozen soldiers.” (Own translation)

<sup>34</sup> “The kaffirs were very afraid of us. God knows what the English told them about us. Often enough have we

Oswiecinski or Bauer could have fabricated such a detail. Bauer points out many interesting details which Steinbart does not, such as the obstacles to success of the colony resulting from the Cattle-Killing of that time (which rendered Dr. Ingwersen's in chapter one above useless):

Durch das Schlachten des Viehs ist natürlich der Preis desselben in's Ungeheure gestiegen, so daß ein Ochse, den man sonst mit 1 bis 2 Lstrl. bezahlt, jetzt 10 – 12 Lstrl. kostet. Ohne Ochsen ist aber an's Farmen nicht zu denken, weil Zugpferde noch viel theurer sind, auch gar nicht zum Aufbrechen des Bodens geeignet wären.<sup>35</sup> (Bauer in von Oswiecinski 1875: 224)

This testimony indicates that cattle prices increased steeply, which is not surprising given that a large percentage of the cattle population had been decimated by believers of Nonqawuse's prophecies. Becoming beef or dairy farmers was therefore no longer an option for the German military settlers. As Bauer (in von Oswiecinski 1875: 225) notes, “[d]ie besten Geschäfte sind *Shop-Keeper* und *Cantiners*, zu denen sich Viele bequemt haben.”<sup>36</sup> He also writes about the military settlers' experience of farming, the failure of which Pienaar (2009: 1), for instance, blames on the lack of farming skills. Gropp also confirms the military settlers' lack of experience in farming, claiming that they “made often great mistakes, and so did my husband, although not so great ones [...]” (Gropp 1981: 11) Bauer mentions two factors which had an impact on the farming capabilities of the settlers. Firstly,

[d]ie Witterungsverhältnisse, hier speziell, erlauben keine Landwirtschaft [...]. Winde herrschen vor, die Pflanzen kommen schön hervor aus dem Boden, dann aber hat es ein Ende, wenn sie nicht ganz vorzüglich geschützt sind. Ich habe deshalb meinen bereits angelegten Garten wieder liegen lassen.<sup>37</sup> (Bauer in von Oswiecinski 1875: 224)

Secondly, “[a]ndere Stationen wieder, wie Eifeln, Wiesbaden u.a., haben sehr gutes Land und ganz schöne Ernten erhalten, können aber nur zu so billigen Preisen verwerthen, daß sie, statt daran zu verdienen, noch Schaden leiden.”<sup>38</sup> (Bauer in von Oswiecinski 1875: 225) One can therefore

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heard them saying, that the *Ama Germani boni skilem ama doda*, which means the German men are very bad, that is to say very cruel and unscrupulous.”

<sup>35</sup> “Due to the Cattle-Killing the price of cattle has gone up phenomenally, so that an ox, for which one would otherwise pay £1 or £2, now costs £10-£12. Farming without oxen is however unthinkable, because draft horses are even more expensive, and not suitable for breaking the earth.” (Own translation)

<sup>36</sup> “The best trades are shopkeeper and canteen owner, trades for which many have decided.” (Own translation) Ironic when one considers von Oswiecinski's insistence that soldiers can never be anything but soldiers.

<sup>37</sup> “The weather patterns especially here allow no agriculture [...]. Winds prevail; the plants come up beautifully out of the ground, but that is then the end of it if they are not extremely well protected. I have for this reason stopped working on the garden I started.” (Own translation)

<sup>38</sup> “on the other hand, other posts, like Eifeln, Wiesbaden etc., have obtained very good land and bountiful crops, but get such low prices that they, instead of turning a profit, have even suffered losses.” (Own

conclude that the settlers had trouble with farming due to unfavourable weather conditions, and when they did succeed, they were not rewarded for it. It is therefore no surprise when Bauer admits that “[i]m Allgemeinen farmt nun niemand mehr [...]”<sup>39</sup> (Bauer in von Oswiecinski 1875: 225)

Given that the German soldiers were not engaging in farming on any large scale, how were they whiling away their time? Steinbart (1975) is the only legionary to provide any detail of this. Their most pressing activity appears to have been that of building a house, and many of Steinbart's activities, such as felling wood or cutting thatch, relate to this activity. One leisure activity in which Steinbart himself engaged was excursions, whether for social (Steinbart 1978: 36), for practical (Steinbart 1978: 38), or for hunting purposes. (Steinbart 1975: 92ff.) He also appears to have engaged in much reading. He mentions to his sister that he had been reading widely about the geography and history of the Eastern Cape (Steinbart 1975: 96) and writes in his diary that “[m]eine geistige Beschäftigung, welche um 8 Uhr abends, nachdem ich mich zu Bett gelegt habe, beginnt, beschränkt sich gegenwärtig nur auf Lesen unterhaltender Bücher, die ich nur mit Mühe aufzutreiben vermag”.<sup>40</sup> (Steinbart 1978: 61) It cannot be said however that all the legionaries spent their time on such intellectual pursuits. Schwär and Jardine (1978: 6) say of them that “[i]t is clear that the majority of the Legionaries were not teetotallers”. They further describe that

[t]he soldiers were lured by the bustle of the canteens. There were three canteens at Stutterheim, one at Ohlsen. Dancing floors and bowling alleys were set up. All the needs of joy and recreation were catered for at these places. The businesses of the canteen-keepers flourished, brandy and wine were consumed throughout the night. (Schwär & Jardine 1978: 7)

Steinbart himself chronicles his enjoyment of these establishments:

Ich belustigte mich nachmittages, nach deutscher Weise, mit wenigen anderen mit Kegelspiel auf der neu etablierten Bahn unseres Cantiniers, und als der Abend dem Vergnügen ein Ende gebot, war es eine lustig tönende Tanzmusik, die uns nach der Kantine berief. [...] Ich war nur Zuschauer und Beobachter der Tanzlustigen und kann nur sagen, dass die ganze freie entwickelte Fröhlichkeit den Charakter eines landlichen Festes der alten Heimat an sich trug.<sup>41</sup> (Steinbart 1978: 90ff.)

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translation)

<sup>39</sup> “In general no one is farming anymore [...]” (Own translation)

<sup>40</sup> “My intellectual pursuits, which begin at 8 o'clock in the evening once I am in bed, are limited to reading entertaining books, which I find it very difficult to acquire.” (Own translation)

<sup>41</sup> “In the afternoons, I enjoyed the German custom of playing skittles with a few others at the newly established alley of our cantine keeper, and when the evening brought an end to our amusement, an entertaining

When the German military settlers arrived in their allotted villages (and before they put up bowling alleys), they each received five acres of land (Daphne & Brett 1987: 61), in contrast to the peasant farmer settlers, who received twenty acres. (Pienaar 2009: 3) These five acres of land did not form a solid whole either, but rather were split up: “[A]s holdings consisted of three scattered pieces they were difficult to control”. (Daphne & Brett 1987: 61) This would have left the military settlers vulnerable to theft of their produce or livestock. Böker (1955: 14) estimates that “[j]eder, der in Kaffraria als Siedler existieren will, braucht in fruchtbaren Gegenden nicht 1 oder 2 Acker Land, sondern etwa 100 und mehr, in unfruchtbaren Gegenden das vielfache”.<sup>42</sup> This suggests that the military settlers would never be able to become successful farmers, because their landholdings were too small. This estimate would also imply that the peasant farmer settlers, who also received far fewer than 100 acres, were also destined to fail, although in the sense of remaining on the land in the long term, they did not. It was however clearly not easy to do so, and they struggled to make a living off the land allocated to them. (Pienaar 2009: 3) Gropp's (1981: 10) hope that the one acre offered by the settlement scheme would make her family rich appears to imply a belief that the same amount of land in Germany would have been sufficient to create wealth. Dickinson's (1964) overview of the cultivation of land in Germany over the last few centuries suggests otherwise. According to Dickinson, “[t]he small-holding of less than five hectares is normally not adequate to meet all the requirements of the farmer and his family and he usually has another string to his bow, working for a wealthier peasant, engaging in a handicraft on his own account, or as a worker in a factory”. (Dickinson 1964: 214) In addition, Dickinson explains that the most common crops were wheat and rye, but that these were grown separately, “wheat on the good soil, rye on the poor soils. Rye was the main grain in north and south [Germany...]”. (Dickinson 1964:130) The ubiquity of rye in Germany at that time indicates that German soil was generally of poor quality, and therefore cannot be considered inherently superior to the soil of the Eastern Cape. What can be said is that rainfall in Germany was as a general rule rather more constant. The Eastern Cape was (and still is) plagued by droughts (Daphne & Brett 1987: 59), whereas Germany had both summer rain and winter snow keeping the soil moist. (Dickenson 1964: 53)

There were many ways in which the original settlement contract was not carried out quite

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sounding dance music summoned us to the tavern. I was only a spectator and observer of the dancers and can only say that the entirely spontaneous joyfulness bore the character of a country festival in the old country.” (Own translation)

<sup>42</sup> “Every man who wishes to exist as a settler in British Kaffraria needs in the fertile areas not one or two acres of land but a hundred or more; in unproductive areas many times more than that.” (Own translation)



according to specifications. The settlement contract specified military service, with no more than 30 days of army exercises per year, and participation in weekly church parades. Böker claims that the reality was a little different to these stipulations, although in his particular example to the benefit of the settlers: "Von den militärischen Übungen ist später, soviel wir wissen, nur in den ersten Jahren die Rede gewesen, doch sind die Kirchenparaden anscheinend mit Regelmässigkeit gehalten worden."<sup>43</sup> (Böker 1955: 13) The contract also stated that the settlers would receive rations for the first year or an equivalent amount of money. Tankard (2007: 5) mentions that the settlers were unable to begin farming because their land was allocated in the winter, but he does not make any mention of rations. Schnell (1954: 95) claims that the military settlers stationed at Greytown had to request rations, asking "if it were not possible for the commissariat to send a wagon load of potatoes, meal and other articles every week or fortnight, so that they should not have to pay twice as much for their requirements as their comrades at other stations". Schnell also came across a petition from Breidbach written less than a year after the arrival of these settlers, in which the inhabitants request rations, writing in broken English that "we cannot put same in the ground which give us the needful sustenance." (Schnell 1954: 275) This strongly suggests that the military settlers were not receiving the rations promised to them. The contract also stated that those who were settled in towns would not receive an acre of land, but only a building lot. (Böker 1955: 14) Given that many of the soldiers wished to become landowners, and given that locations were more or less randomly assigned, this must have displeased some of the settlers. Also, according to the original contract, settlers were supposed to have log houses erected for them (Böker 1955: 13), whereas in reality, they had to build their own houses, usually crude huts. (Schnell 1954: 92 – 95)

Gropp writes bitterly of the government's change of heart about the German settlers after two years, and that after the amaXhosa "were quit[e] subdued, and the country safe, [the government] thought better of it, and put us upon half pay and after 18 month's [sic] more, discarded us althogether [sic], as of no more use to them". (Gropp 1981: 13) Bauer and Steinbart do not express any opinions on this matter, perhaps because they had already left their South African homes for India by that time.

Flohr (1970), who conducted a geographical survey of the land used for agriculture by the German settlers, provides a number of useful visual representations of German settler statistics. These

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<sup>43</sup> "Military exercises were only, as far as we know, carried out for the first few years. It appears however that the church parades were regularly carried out." (Own translation)

reveal that the two largest settlements of the German military settlers were in Stutterheim (354 people) and East London (235 people). (Flohr 1970: 272) The two smallest settlements were in Peddie (43 people) and Marienthal (45 people). (Flohr 1970: 272) Of the twenty settlements, only ten had populations over 100, which illustrates how thinly spread these military settlers were, as well as the extremely small populations of half of these settlements. (Flohr 1970: 272) Schnell's statistics reveal that in 1862 the German settlers in the Eastern Cape numbered 2379 people in total, with 3294 other 'Europeans' in the region. By 1864, the number of German settlers had gone up to 2427, the number of other white settlers had gone up to 3380, but the number of German military settlers had actually gone down by 257 people in that time, indicating that the increase in German population was due to the peasant farmer settlers alone. (Schnell 1954: 199f.)

Daphne and Brett (1987), who visited the former German settlements in the Eastern Cape shed light on the way these villages were designed by the British government. They explain firstly how the villages were laid out and surveyed: "The settlements were laid out by British surveyors and the road pattern reflected the survey system applied to flat country. Village plans were rectangular in shape and each block was divided into a number of lots [...], each lot measuring roughly 20 metres by 30 metres". (Daphne & Brett 1987: 60) This rather impractical method for surveying hilly countryside may well have been used because "[m]uch of the surveying was undertaken by young, inexperienced surveyors". (Daphne & Brett 1987: 61) Daphne and Brett also found unexpected parallels between the German settlements in the Eastern Cape and German settlements in America, also frontier country. They claim that the villages were built in a defensive style (Daphne & Brett 1987: 61), although they do not specify the exact characteristics of a defensive settlement. They add that these "settlements followed closely on Medieval tradition, being suited to fertile land and designed for high density living". (Daphne & Brett 1987: 61) The fertility of the land in Germany was not a given, although the rainfall was, to a certain extent, predictable – more predictable than Eastern Cape rainfall patterns. However, it can be said that the settlements in the Eastern Cape did not have a high population density, and constructing them as though they did would have been an impractical choice.

Flohr claims that the legionaries assisted in educating the second-generation peasant farmer settlers: "Schulunterricht erteilten Legionäre und andere Lehrer, die dafür befähigt zu sein schienen".<sup>44</sup> (Flohr 1970: 285) This shows that the legionaries that remained played a key part in

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<sup>44</sup> "Teaching was undertaken by legionaries and other teachers who appeared to be competent." (Own translation)

the creation of stable German communities in the Eastern Cape. Flohr goes even further in defending the contribution of the legionaries:

Dieses Siedlungsunternehmen schlug nach Ansicht vieler Beteiligter und nachträglicher Kritiker fehl. Dennoch hat es kulturlandschaftsgestaltend gewirkt: in Reihen wurden kleine Hofgrundstücke ausgelegt und auf deren rückwärtigem Teil Behelfsbehausungen aus Grassoden errichtet. Auf der straßenwärtigen Seite wurde der Bau der endgültigen Bauernhäuser begonnen und teilweise beendet. Hausgärten wurden angelegt, die ersten Produkte zum Markt gebracht. [...] In manchen von [...] den Bauernhäusern] rückten die Einwanderer von 1858 ein.<sup>45</sup> (Flohr 1970: 288)

Flohr argues that the legionaries were key to the success of the peasant farmer settlements, and indeed lived among of them as members of the community, despite the large numbers who went to India.

#### The lives of the peasant farmer settlers and their descendants, 1858-1919

The arrival of the peasant farmer settlers is considered by many (Schnell 1954; Spanuth 1958; Welz & Webb 1990; Pienaar 2009) as the true beginning of a German community in the Eastern Cape. This was so in the sense that most of these settlers and their descendants remained in South Africa, whereas nearly half of the military settlers left the country for India as soon as the opportunity presented itself. Furthermore, without the arrival of these settlers, the military settlers who had remained would most likely have been unable to maintain a community, given that the men greatly outnumbered the women. Here I make use of a number of first-hand and second-hand accounts of the lives of these settlers and their descendants in order to create a multi-dimensional portrait of them.

Watters (2000: 12) details the contractual conditions under which the peasant farmer settlers were brought out to South Africa. An outline of the contract is provided by Spanuth (1958), but this does not include the actual amount of money each settler was required to pay, which Watters is able to provide:

Passage money amounting to £12, 10s [£12.50] was to be paid for every adult emigrant.

<sup>45</sup> "According to many affected parties and later critics, this settlement scheme was a failure. However, it changed the cultural landscape: small farming plots were laid out in rows and behind these, makeshift rooms made from sod were put up. On the side facing the street the building of the final farmhouses was begun and partly finished. House gardens were laid out, the first produce brought to market. [...] The settlers of 1858 moved into some of these houses." (Own translation)

Half this amount was charged for children from one to ten years of age; only babies under a year were to travel free. Each head of a family was to receive a building allotment in a village free of charge, twenty acres of good ground at £1 an acre, five acres for each child above 14 years of age, and three acres for each child between 10 and 14, at the same price. (Watters 2000: 12)

Calculating the total cost which would have been applicable to the Watters' great-grandfather, Michael Friedrich Peinke, who travelled out with a wife and five children, one of whom was over fourteen, and two of whom were between ten and fourteen years old (Watters 2000: 15), he would have had to pay £70 for passage for the family, and £31 for the land he received<sup>46</sup>. Knowing that many of the immigrants of 1858 were poverty-stricken peasants, this was no small sum of money. A deposit of 30s. had to be paid immediately upon signing up (Schnell 1954: 178), but the passage money and cost of land was to be repaid over the course of eight years. (Watters 2000: 12) The memoirs of August Peinke<sup>47</sup>, the eldest son, explain how the money was raised: "To take this big step required not only courage, but money as well. My mother came from a better-to-do family and could help father with her inheritance". (Peinke 1992: 46) Corrigan (1992) notes that one man was the exception who proved the rule: Wilhelm Bode, who came out on the *La Rochelle*, "actually owned a shoe-making business in Germany and apparently was fairly well-to-do for, unlike most of the immigrant[s], he was able to pay the passage money for himself, his wife, Eliese [his daughter] and the family before they left Germany". (Corrigan 1992: 30) Schnell explains that many of the settlers sold most of their possessions, ostensibly because their luggage had a size limit, but probably also in order to raise some money. (Schnell 1954: 179) Due to August Peinke already being a young adult of sixteen at the time of his immigration to South Africa, he was able to recall details of their lives after arrival. He states, "[a]s my parents were only granted land after more than a year, father and children had to earn a living. [...] At last Father was given his land in Keiskamma Hoek after long and painful waiting". (Peinke 1992: 46f.) August however explains that it took much longer than expected for his father to pay the quit rent for the land:

According to contract he was obliged to pay 1/5 of the purchase price and £1 per acre after four years and henceforth another fifth from year to year so as to pay off the full amount at the end of the eighth year. [...] There was such a drought and consequently no harvest and the first re-payment could not even be put down in the eighth year! (Peinke 1992: 47)

As a result of this drought, "[the] father and the family left the land to go to Kubusie as overseer to

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<sup>46</sup> In total, this would be equivalent in buying power to about £6000 in 1998. (Twigger 1999: 11-14)

<sup>47</sup> Translated by C. Parker and published in volume 30 of *The Coelacanth*, as well reproduced in full by Watters (2000).

80 hectar[es] of land belonging to a Cathcart [...] farmer. My parents were paid out 6 pounds in cash yearly. [...] After 2 years – back to Keiskamma Hoek”. (Peinke 1992: 47f.)

This is the first of a number of accounts of peasant farmer settlers leaving their land with their families in order to find other work, only to return at a later time. Ferdinand Köpke, eldest son of a German immigrant family, left home for Grahamstown soon after arriving in the country in order to earn a living, later buying a farm of his own. (Armstrong 2008: 33) His future wife Friedericke Köpke (née Hildebrandt) walked from Bodiam to Grahamstown in her teenage years to find work, therefore it would seem this hardship was not merely a male burden. (Armstrong 2008: 35) August Peinke describes his own experience of poverty after his marriage and the purchase of his farm: “[A] week [after they were purchased] one of the oxen died of lung disease. Had to borrow money for its replacement. Amazing how little money we possessed. To be in debt to buy one ox for £4. Enough to eat, but money – no!” It is therefore not too surprising that the German settlers would have simply done what needed doing and moved to wherever they could make a living. One example of a German peasant settler leaving his allotted plot for good is that of Friedrich Wilhelm Neseemann, who arrived on the *Caesar Godeffroy* and was allocated to the village of Braunschweig. (Neseemann 1988: 10f.) He left Braunschweig for Cradock as soon as possible. G. R. Neseemann (1988: 15) speculates that “[h]e must have sold off his rights to the land allotted to him in order to obtain sufficient funds for the move to Cradock some ten months later”. Once in Cradock, he worked first as a farm manager then as a prison warden and also at one time as a market master. (Neseemann 1988: 16) His great-grandson recounts a rather terrifying story of an incident which took place while Neseemann was a prison warden:

From time to time his Prussian temperament must have asserted itself. William Mills Urie often told the story of how Wilhelm quelled a sit-down strike amongst the prisoners in the Cradock gaol. He was obliged to take matters into his own hands when his staff failed to rise to the occasion. Nothing daunted he grabbed a pick handle and with this flailing weapon tackled the offenders single-handed. Afterwards he was heard to say: “That is how to deal with such people.” (Neseemann 1988: 24)

This reaction, Prussian or not, would be considered by modern standards to be an unprovoked attack on people engaged in peaceful protest. It would appear, however, that this was a popular family story.

Armstrong offers a similar story about her grandfather (Ferdinand Köpke):

On one occasion when he was in Keiskammahoek, he was involved in a fight with some soldiers at the hotel. He was highly upset when he was arrested and detained. His place of confinement was a hut with walls made of wattle and daub. These weak walls offered no resistance as, in his anger, he chopped and battered his way through the structure and walked home! Apparently, he had a volatile disposition and was quite a character. (Armstrong 2008: 33)

This seems very much a euphemism for Ferdinand Köpke being a violent man, but the genealogies of which I have made use do not seem to place too fine a point on negative characteristics or incidents, therefore the description above is not surprising.

A clear trend in Watters' genealogy is that the majority of the second-generation settlers were not farmers by trade, nor did they stay in the area to which they were originally allocated. August Peinke moved from Keiskamma Hoek to Hanover in 1882 (Peinke 1992: 56), while Michael Friedrich Peinke (Junior), the second child of the Peinke family, became a baker in King Williams Town. (Watters 2000: 63) His son, Arthur Hugo Peinke, did however become a famed pineapple farmer in the East London area. (Watters 2000: 86f.) The profession of 'farmer' is however not listed as frequently as might have been expected. Cunningham's (1999) research into German families in Bodiam reveals a similar trend. A variety of occupations are noted in addition to that of farmer, including teacher, carpenter, sergeant major, trader, market gardener, and shoemaker. (Cunningham 1999: 3-7) This is perhaps obvious when one considers that a town cannot survive by farming alone, but also requires people with other skills. Cunningham's study may be considered skewed in favour of a farming majority in the sense that it is a survey of the families of Bodiam, an area almost exclusively dedicated to farming.

It is perhaps worth asking what those who did own plots of land grew on these plots. A number of accounts are provided in answer to this. August Peinke's recollections of his life indicate that he grew potatoes and corn (the latter of which his horses enjoyed eating, leading him to sell the horses). (Peinke 1992: 51f.) Le Roux (1992: 49) claims that "[m]ealies, beans, peas, potato, wheat, pumpkin, sweet potato, marrow, [... white] corn, [and] barley were planted and the surplus tak[en] to King by ox wagon and sold". Peinke reveals what he calls "the other side of the story" about such wagon trips:

There were always 5-6 waggons [sic] nose-to-tail going to town like the trail of the children of Israel! When the prices were good a number of the settlers halted near the cheapest

places to buy brandy either by the bottle or even in gallons. Imagine what scenes could be witnessed on the way home! I have not taken part in any such trips, I simply can't take to brandy. (Peinke 1992: 52)

Clearly the settlers were not averse to a good slug of brandy when means allowed. Luckily this would not have meant starvation as the German settlers also grew small gardens to sustain themselves, as le Roux exemplifies:

Mother planted vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, beet, carrots, onions, shallots, cucumber and tomato for our daily use. For herbs we had thyme, parsley, marjoram, celery; peach leaves were sometimes used instead of lemon essence for flavouring. We made jam from oranges, gooseberries, kaffir melon and figs". (le Roux 1992: 49)

Grimm (1915) and Winkelmann (1979) provide detailed accounts of other German settlers who left their posts and what they did thereafter. Although both are in large part second-hand accounts of events recounted to the authors by acquaintances or family members, they provide a valuable alternative construction of settler history where the settlers do indeed give up and leave their farms rather than heroically struggling on.

Grimm recounts the experiences of the Tissendorf<sup>48</sup> family, who emigrated from Pomerania as part of George Grey's scheme to bring German farmers to the Eastern Cape. According to Grimm, the family consisted of father, mother and two sons, but the mother died on the journey to South Africa. (Grimm 1915: 119) The family was assigned to Braunschweig, but

sie merkten bald beide [Vater und älterer Sohn], daß es auf dem mäßigen Stück Boden, das sie bei Braunschweig bekamen, so nicht anginge. [...] Es blieb nichts über, als daß sie ihren Grund einer anderen Familie gaben und bei ihr den jüngeren Sohn zurückließen mit dem Versprechen, später für dessen Unterhalt zu bezahlen.<sup>49</sup> (Grimm 1915: 119)

These two men started their South African working lives in the service of an Afrikaans farmer, who gave them room, board, and a sheep every week for their services. (Grimm 1915: 119) After this, "halfen [sie] in einem Steinbruch Steine [zu] brechen für eine englische Kirche. Da erhielten sie guten Lohn. Sie kamen zu einem Gärtner und arbeiteten dort und dann wieder auf einer Farm

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<sup>48</sup> Documented in the passenger list of the *Cäsar Godeffroy* as Tessendorf. (Spanuth 1958: 10)

<sup>49</sup> "They both [father and older son] quickly noticed that they would not be able to get by on the modest piece of land allocated to them in Braunschweig. [...] There was nothing to do but give their land to another family and leave the younger son with them with the promise that they would at a later point in time repay his room and board." (Own translation)

oben am Oranjefluß”.<sup>50</sup> (Grimm 1915: 121) After five years, these men returned to Braunschweig to reclaim their land and the younger son. From this short narrative it can be seen that the Tissendorf's assets did not stem from their land but from labouring for others.

Winkelmann's story is similar. Her grandparents on both side were German immigrants. Winkelmann (1979: 12) indicates that her paternal grandparents came to South Africa with the German military settlers, but she does not specify whether her maternal grandparents were military or agricultural settlers. She recounts that “[m]y grandparents were struggling to raise a growing family. When the gold mines opened in the Transvaal several of the men left their families and went to work at the gold mines, my grandfather Ehrke being among them”. (Winkelmann 1979: 6) He did not however leave his family behind, but took them with him. (Winkelmann 1979: 7) Winkelmann (1979: 7) also indicates that her family was not the only one of the settler families to do so: “What a blessing it must have been when they at last reached their destination [Johannesburg] and were among people who had left the Colony earlier, some being relatives, others friends”. The family did however return to the Eastern Cape “before 1891”. (Winkelmann 1979: 7) The eldest daughter, Friederecke (the author's mother, actual spelling), was at the age of twelve “engaged as a companion” to a two-year-old child and was by her own account treated very badly: “I was a real little slave, had to sleep on the floor, was allowed a loaf of boer bread a week [...]. Just imagine! Three meals a day for one week from one loaf of bread!” (Winkelmann 1979: 8) After this unpleasant experience, Friederecke worked for another family with whom she emigrated to Edinburgh, and lived there for a time after which she returned to South Africa. (Winkelmann 1979: 10) Winkelmann continues the story: “[I]n 1891 [, ...] Friederecke Ehrke returned from Scotland and settled with her parents in Fort Murray for a further two years, where she had to do all kinds of rough work AND ALSO herd cattle”. (Winkelmann 1979: 11, emphasis in original) The family then moved once again to Johannesburg where they remained for a few years. (Winkelmann 1979: 11f.) Thereafter they returned for the second time to the Eastern Cape. Winkelmann surmises that “Johann Ehrke [the author's grandfather] must have saved enough money as he was able to open a trading station at Bishop's Hoek (Bishop's Farm), in an area about 9 miles from Berlin, to the south of Berlin”. (Winkelmann 1979: 12) Her father's family, despite the general tendency of the German military settlers to desert their plots as soon as possible, remained in Berlin for three generations. Winkelmann says of her paternal grandparents, “I don't know

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<sup>50</sup> “They helped in a quarry to break stones for an English church. There they earned a good salary. They came to a gardener and worked there and then again on a farm on the upper reaches of the Orange River.” (Own translation)



anything about my grandparent's [sic] early married lives, but I do know they had a general dealers business and bakery in Berlin". (Winkelman 1979: 13) This side of the family seems to have been rather more prosperous than the Ehrke side, with the author's widowed Winkelman grandmother being monied enough to buy herself a house and farmland. (Winkelman 1979: 14)

Grimm's (1915) and Winkelman's (1979) accounts do not depict settler life as easy, but nor do they represent the settlers as staunchly clinging to their allocated land in the face of hardship, showing them to be rather more adaptable than other research (e.g., Baillie 1990, Pienaar 2009) has shown them to be. Both these accounts reveal a determination to return to allocated villages once fortunes had been made, perhaps indicating the continued attraction of owning farmland despite acquiring relative wealth elsewhere.

An event in the lives of the German settlers which has thus far not been discussed is that of the Ninth Frontier War. Accounts of the Ninth Frontier War are not particularly numerous. Meier (1992: 37) writes that "[d]uring the 1877-1878 Frontier War the men had to fight and the rest of the family went into a camp to save their lives. After the war, on arrival back at the farm, they found that it had been totally destroyed by fire and they had to begin all over again". Armstrong (2008: 17) mentions that "[m]any Settler men were enlisted and their wives and children had to leave the farms and move to places of safety". She in addition relates a family anecdote about Emelië Auguste Köpke, daughter of Ferdinand Köpke:

The incident took place when she was a little girl during the Frontier War of 1877-1878. Her family, like many other families in the vicinity of Keiskammahoek, had to leave their farms and move to the army barracks known as Castle Eyre in the village, for safety. This rudimentary and most unsuitable accommodation was a horse stable, an exposed area with a roof but no doors. One Sunday afternoon an extremely violent thunderstorm developed. [...] Emelië remembered how terrified she was as she was surrounded by all the frenetic activity and mayhem caused by the approaching downpour. (Armstrong 2008: 48)

This account, though probably very terrifying for the child at the time, is not particularly terrifying for the reader, especially given that this is a war-time story, which should therefore feature some foe other than the weather. The most detailed German perspective on this war is that of Christian Kaschula, an inhabitant of Ohlsen near Stutterheim. He details the furore in Stutterheim at the time of the war. He explains that the Stutterheim inhabitants felt very vulnerable:

Schon fürchtete man, die Sandilas könnten jeden Augenblick über den nächsten Berg

kommen. Truppen waren nicht da und konnten auch nicht geschickt werden; sie fochten in anderer Gegend. 30-40 Polizeisoldaten war alles, was von kriegerischer Macht sich in Stutterheim befand.<sup>51</sup> (Kaschula 1908: 4)

Those who lived in outlying areas, such as Kaschula, trekked into the centre of town, bringing their livestock with them. (Kaschula 1908: 4) All able-bodied men were recruited into the "Freiwilligenkorps" or the "Bürgerkorps". Kaschula outlines the duties of these two regiments: "Das Bürgerkorps bildete die Besatzung des Forts. Sämtliche Frauen und Kinder wurden in den Schutz der Festung gebracht. Das Freiwilligenkorps bezog einen befestigten Kraal bei der englischen Kirche. In diesem wurde alles Vieh hineingetrieben; wenigstens 8000 Tiere waren hier zusammen".<sup>52</sup> (Kaschula 1908: 4) The cattle were taken out to pasture under armed guard. (Kaschula 1908: 4) After two months of living in suspense in this way, many people chose to return to their farms because no war appeared to be forthcoming. A few weeks later, however, "machten [... die Xhosas] sich daran, die Farmen am Walde, die grösstenteils von Deutschen bewohnt waren (auch heute noch), auszurauben und anzustecken und das Vieh wegzutreiben".<sup>53</sup> (Kaschula 1908: 5) Kaschula does admit however that the Xhosa invaders were entirely capable of mercy:

Einen Mann unserer Gemeinde, namens Schemel – er lebt heute noch – überraschten die Kaffern ebenfalls bei seinem Vieh. Das trieben sie ihm sofort weg. Als er aber meinte, es wäre doch nicht recht, einem Menschen alles wegzunehmen, gaben sie ihm einige Kühe wieder".<sup>54</sup> (Kaschula 1908: 5)

When news broke of a Xhosa invasion of the town itself, there was general panic as everyone ran for the fort. When the alleged invaders finally arrived they were in fact the amaMfengu, sent by the British to help the beleaguered Stutterheimers. (Kaschula 1908: 5) The town centre was never attacked. The war came to an end with the death of Sandile, of whom Kaschula says:

Den mächtigen Fürsten Sandila habe ich selbst gekannt. Er war von hoher schlanker Figur. Alle Kafferhäuptlinge übertraf er durch seine übermässige Trunksucht. Das mag auch beigetragen haben, dass er gegen seine Untertanen oft ungerecht und grausam war.

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<sup>51</sup> "Everyone was afraid that Sandile's people could come over the hills at any moment. There were no troops and none could be sent either – they were fighting in other locations. Thirty to forty army policemen were all the military might Stutterheim had to speak of." (Own translation)

<sup>52</sup> "The civilian corps formed the garrison of the fort. All women and children were placed in the safety of the fortress. The volunteer corps moved to a fortified kraal by the English church and drove all the cattle into it – at least 8000 cattle were in there together." (Own translation)

<sup>53</sup> "the amaXhosa set about robbing and burning the farms closest to the forest (which were and are mostly German farms), and driving away the cattle." (Own translation)

<sup>54</sup> "The kaffirs surprised a man in our community by the name of Schemel – he is still alive today – with his cattle. They immediately drove the cattle away, but when he complained that it was not right to take everything away from a man, they gave him a few of the cows back." (Own translation)

Trotzdem hatte er unbegrenzten Einfluss auf sie. Obwohl im letzten Krieg viele seiner Leute davon überzeugt waren[,] dass ein Krieg ihnen Tod und Untergang bringen würde, hielten sie zu ihm und gingen mit ihm in den Tod.<sup>55</sup> (Kaschula 1908: 5)

This is for its time a balanced tribute to a powerful king; balanced perhaps because Kaschula was himself one of the Wendish minority and therefore no stranger to discrimination. But on the subject of the Ninth Frontier War, one may be excused for believing that the German civilians spent rather more time dreading the arrival of the amaXhosa than actually fighting them – indeed by these accounts the majority of the German settlers did not engage in fighting with the amaXhosa, nor were they attacked by them. In truth, Kaschula's account suggests that the Xhosa's activities could better be described as cattle-rustling than as warfare.

As regards civilian life in these times, a couple of letters recorded in the municipal letter book over the years indicate that the living conditions in Stutterheim were unsanitary and that diseases spread rather easily. One letter indicates that “[t]he matter of cleanliness of the [town's water] furrow” lay ever heavily on the hearts of the Council. War was waged on [the] “dirty, disgraceful, dangerous and dilapidated state of various cesspools and water closets in 1890”. (“Municipal Letters...” 1957: 14) The Stutterheim municipal letter book for the period 1896-1898 reveals that there was an outbreak of both typhoid fever<sup>56</sup> and smallpox in the area (“Municipal Letters...” 1957: 14), which was exacerbated by unsanitary practices: “There is a little story extant of the bedroom utensils from [...] a sick-room, washed in the furrow to the natural indignation of th[o]se lower in the course of the furrow”. (“Municipal Letters...” 1957: 14) Around the same time, a stern letter had to be written to one Stutterheim resident: “Sir, report having been made to the Council that you are using the street near your place as a Latrine, I am therefore instructed to request you to clean the same and discontinue using or otherwise you will be prosecuted”. (“Municipal Letters...” 1957: 14) A rather more widespread outbreak was the Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918. The German community was not spared this hardship, as le Roux details:

When Spanish Influenza or the Great Flu of 1918, as it was called, swept the land, and so many died, sometimes an entire family perished, we were very fortunate for we had, of necessity, come in contact with the sickness, there were no deaths, in fact only one case of infection – Mrs Ernest Horn, who was pregnant, caught the disease, but made a complete

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<sup>55</sup> “I knew the powerful king Sandile personally. He was a tall slim figure. He outdid all other k chiefs when it came to dipsomania. This might have been one of the reasons for often treating his subjects cruelly and unfairly. Despite this he had a boundless influence on them. Despite the fact that many of them believed in the last war that a war would bring them death and downfall, they remained loyal and followed him to their deaths.” (Own translation)

<sup>56</sup> Referred to in the letter book as “enteric”.

recovery – her baby, Laura Margery, born later, died. (le Roux 1992: 53)

Mention is made of the epidemic in both Armstrong and Watter's genealogies. Armstrong (2008: 57) states that Carl Friedrich Köpke “died of double pneumonia which could possibly have been a complication of the flu”. Watters (2000: 117) records that “August Ferdinand died at the age of 67 years and 3 months during the 1918 influenza epidemic”. Meier (1992: 40) lists a number of home remedies, found in old family diaries, used by the German settlers to address health problems such as those mentioned above:

For Mumps – “Grandmother tied two lumps of fat bacon over the swollen area. When the cure was completed the dogs polished off the bacon”!

Diphtheria - “Sulphur was blown into the throat through a hollow reed”.

Colds - “Gumtree leaves were boiled and the tea drunk with sugar”.

Burns - “Fresh cream and white of egg were used on burns”.

Typhus fever was treated in this way - “The sick were wrapped in “wring-out” sheets in cold water and then wrapped into woollen blankets to perspire, sometimes several hours. Afterwards they were changed into dry clothing”. (Meier 1992: 40)

Le Roux (1992: 49f.) remembers that “[c]hopped parsley infused in hot water, strained, cooled and a tablespoonful at a time was largely used for kidney disorders”. She adds slyly that “[c]elery was said to be of great help to men to maintain their virility”. (le Roux 1992: 50)

Flohr provides information on the planning of the German settlements. It is noteworthy that the settlements had commonages (Flohr 1970: 284), just as villages in Germany would have done. (Dickinson 1964: 132) George Pomeroy Colley surveyed Izeli Post and produced a village plan (Colley 1856) which indicates that Izeli, being a small village, lacked both a commonage and a town square in the original plan. This would have been an ideal situation for the settlers, as town plans go, because there would be no hindrance to designing the village as they saw fit. A reproduction of letters from the Stutterheim municipal letter books sheds further light on whether commonages were included in the original town plans:

In February 1886 Mr. Bousfield wrote to the Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works. “Although the Commonage was not defined till 1868, the German Settlers had in common with other towns and villages a certain area of commonage allotted to them, which they have now used and enjoyed for about 29 years, and the present Town Council represent, and have succeeded to, the rights of the original settlers. (“Municipal Letters...” 1957: 13)

This suggests that a commonage was not in the original town plan for Stutterheim either, but was a

later addition. This letter is however ambiguous as to whether commonages were a part of all Eastern Cape towns or just the German-founded towns. Another letter in the same article shows that

[o]n July the 9<sup>th</sup> [1887] notice was given that stock to be grazed on the town commonage was to be limited. Each erf-holder might graze 500 sheep and 20 head of cattle, and the first monthly general impounding would take place a week later. It was rather surprising to note that after twenty years of privation any settler could have as many as 500 sheep. ("Municipal Letters..." 1957: 13)

One can conclude that the commonage was very much in use, even excessively so, in 1887, which encourages a view of the peasant farmers as rustic and pastoral. Flohr elaborates on his previous description of German villages by describing the settlements as a whole: "Die Dörfer waren als locker gebaute Reihendörfer geplant [...]: Haus mit kleinem Hofland, weiteres Ackerland in der Gemarkung, Anteil an der Gemeinweide".<sup>57</sup> (Flohr 1970: 284) He points out that the towns were structured around the church, and that the church was of paramount importance: "Trotz ihrer Armut baute eine Gemeinde nach der anderen sich überraschend schnell eine Kirche: Stutterheim 1861/62, King William's Town 1862, Keiskamma Hoek und Potsdam 1865, Braunschweig 1866/67, Berlin 1869, Frankfort 1870, Bodiam 1872 [...]".<sup>58</sup> (Flohr 1970: 285) Flohr however fails to mention that the Stutterheim church was not only German. "[T]he first traces of established religion date from 1862, when the first church (now the Anglican Church of St. Barnabas) was built by English and German people. It was known as the Anglo-German Church and services were conducted in both languages". ("A Short Ecclesiastical History of Stutterheim" 1957: 13) The construction of these churches would have been a uniting factor in the peasant farmer communities, because

The more interdependent the jobs in a culture, the more likely it is that the culture will be collectivist. Large-scale projects that require the work of many individuals also require cooperation, which emphasizes the existence of the in-groups and even can foster one's identity as a member of the team that is getting the project done. (Triandis 2009: 200)

Daphne and Brett (1987) provide evidence that these churches were not part of the original {British} town plan but rather a German addition: "Unlike the case in an Afrikaner dorp, the church is not situated in a prominent position within the settlement, nor is it allocated its own block in the

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<sup>57</sup> "The towns were planned as loosely built "row villages" [...]: A house with a small farm, some more farmland in the district, a share of the village pasture." (Own translation)

<sup>58</sup> "Despite their poverty, one community after the other build a church with surprising speed: Stutterheim 1861/62, King William's Town 1862, Keiskamma Hoek and Potsdam 1865, Braunschweig 1866/67, Berlin 1869, Frankfort 1870, Bodiam 1872 [...]." (Own translation)

grid system". (Daphne & Brett 1987: 62) The villages revolved around these churches – schools, post offices and shops sprung up around them. (Flohr 1970: 285) Flohr (1970: 285) points out the uniqueness of this type of town construction: "Diese Art von Bauerndörfern mit einem auffälligen Zusammenrücken der Gehöfte und der Ausstattung mit Gebäuden zentralörtlicher Funktion, die in diesen Fällen sehr enge örtliche Grenzen hat, ist in Südafrika nahezu einmalig".<sup>59</sup> (Flohr 1970: 285) Flohr suggests that German villages are strongly identifiable as such, in contrast with English and Afrikaans villages, which Daphne and Brett (1987: 62) also substantiate, providing as evidence that "[the] church-school complex is a familiar German feature and occurs widely in German-settled areas of Natal". Daphne and Brett detail how the peasant farmer settlers proceeded to redesign the villages assigned to them to better suit their needs and habits. The villages were all allocated town squares by the British surveyors, but these remained unused. (Daphne & Brett 1987: 61) In line with Flohr's claim that the villages centred around the churches on the outskirts, Daphne and Brett (1987: 61) note that "[i]n Berlin and Frankfort, focus roads bypass the town square. Commercial activities in these villages have concentrated along one focus road on the periphery of the settlement".

Another characteristic distinguishing German villages from those of other white groups is the location and layout of the graveyards. Daphne and Brett (1987: 62) make the point: "Unlike the case in British settlements graveyards are not situated adjacent to the church. In the settlements visited, all graveyards are situated at least 500 metres from the church. Despite the distance, a distinct corridor often links the church and the graveyard". In addition, the arrangement of the German graveyards is distinctive. According to Daphne and Brett (1987: 62), "[German] graveyards are noted for their geometric layout. All headstones face east, and the width of the graveyard is roughly three times the length. Cypress trees are planted around the periphery and along the pathways between graves".

Flohr (1970: 276) says of the peasant farmer settlers that they managed to cultivate the land of the Eastern Cape in a way that no other settlers had managed to do before them<sup>60</sup>, but not without the concerted effort of all family members. In his survey of the land, he mentions that "[h]äufige Kälte verkürzt die Vegetationsperiode"<sup>61</sup> (Flohr 1970: 280), meaning that the cultivation period of fruits

<sup>59</sup> "This type of farming village, with farmsteads distinctly moved closer together, and the infrastructure of buildings of central function that in these cases have very tight local boundaries, is almost unique in South Africa." (Own translation)

<sup>60</sup> A questionable assertion, given that the 1820 British settlers also cultivated the land with a large degree of success.

<sup>61</sup> "Frequent cold shortens the vegetation period." (Own translation)

and vegetables would be shortened by the Eastern Cape's unfavourable weather conditions. Flohr notes the persistence of thorn bushes and other shrubbery, which are very attractive to cattle, leading to the fields being trampled. (Flohr 1970: 280) It is however worth contemplating the difficulty of farming land which has never before been used for the purpose, including clearing shrubs and ploughing the land for the first time. Flohr (1970: 280) asserts that much of the soil in the vicinity of Stutterheim contained iron concretions, which would have made ploughing all the more difficult. Dumont (1987: 151f.) notes that European soils by contrast “are highly artificial. In many cases they have been worked with plough and harrow for thousands of years, corrected for deficiencies and enriched with manure and every kind of fertilizer, natural or artificial”. Consistent with my estimate of the soil quality, Gropp (1981: 11) claims that “the ground of our farm was of course virgin[ ]soil and as hard as rock”. The settlers were also reluctant to implement contour ploughing to prevent erosion, thereby allowing unnecessary leaching of the soil to occur. (Flohr 1970: 284)

The pattern of hardship continues today, according to Baillie. (1990: 14) Although Pienaar claims that “they had to overcome various hardships to successfully establish themselves as farmers, wagon-makers, iron-mongers and traders” (Pienaar 2009: 2), and Baillie himself claims that the peasant farmer settlers were a “major force in the economy and society of the Border region” (Baillie 2009: 5), it seems that the farms in most cases did not lead to prosperity, and success was linked to leaving them. If the German farmers were indeed a major force in the economy it did not seem to benefit them. Baillie (1990: 11) concedes that “many descendants have stories of such little takings [at the market] that it was sometimes not enough to buy a bag of meal”. Some of the settler descendants who live on the farms admit they are still poor. (Baillie 1990: 14) Although the descendants gradually expanded their farms (Baillie 1990: 11) from the original 20 acres (Baillie 1990: 8), “[m]any of the German descendants left the farms to take on other work. Often the Germans on the farms did not make enough money so that when the sons grew up there wasn't enough land or enough water irrigation to support them, so that many of them drifted into the towns”. (Baillie 1990: 11)

Another interesting aspect of daily life is the lives of the women who settled in the Eastern Cape. A Mrs. Winkelmann states that

[t]hey all wanted a bit of ground and they grew vegetables, mealies, pumpkin, whatever they could grow they grew for something to eat. And the men, those that could, would find

a job. And the woman, the wife, would stay at home and look after the family, and do the work that had to be done at home and if she had a little baby[,] that baby went on her back, and she still carried on the work. (Baillie 1990: 9)

This was not a pleasant life. A Mrs Langheim says of her mother, "It really was hard life. [...] They had to cook, they had to do everything." (Baillie 1990: 13) Even female children were not exempt from hard labour, as Watters (2000: 117) mentions: "The girls also did their turn in the fields". For the female German settlers, their farms did not represent freedom, but rather the same societal bondage as they had experienced at what was once home. Schnell depicts the lives of peasant women back in Germany as very difficult: "The lot of women was probably the hardest. They had, of course, to attend to their own households and their children, but, in addition, they were obliged to work at the manor [of their lords]." (Schnell 1954: 177) Women who settled in the Eastern Cape did not have the option of finding jobs and had no choice but to stay home. (Baillie 1990: 13) The hostile environment provided by the ninth Frontier War and the unfamiliar expansive countryside with potential danger around every corner no doubt meant that the women were confined to their homes and other spheres deemed to be safe.

The genealogies of the German settlers available to me, and particularly Armstrong's genealogy, emphasise the role of woman as homemaker. Watters provides a portrait of a third-generation daughter of the Peinke family, detailed by her niece: "I can remember her helping in the home with many chores, drying dishes, peeling vegetables and odd sewing, mainly mending and hemming the flour and meal bags Mom had collected and washed out". (Watters 2000: 25) Another example of this is Armstrong's description of her mother: "She enjoyed cooking, baking and cake icing which was self[-]taught. Her pantry shelves were always well-stocked with jars of preserved fruit and jams [...]". (Armstrong 2008: 137) She adds that her mother "was a fun-loving, generous, friendly and hospitable person". (Armstrong 2008: 131) These are of course admirable traits, but what these accounts show is a focus on family rather than the individual intelligence of the women – any demonstration of intelligence outside the family sphere apparently was not considered worth noting. However, attitudes began to change over time. Mrs. Langheim noticed this within her own family:

I always wanted to go and work and my parents said: no ways, there's lots of work at home. [...] I used to do everything just like a maid would do. But then I could take it. But my younger sister she said: I'll be damned if they ever think I'm going to do this, once I've left school. You know the younger ones, they started already, being different, and so she came to town. And the younger ones in every family began to show this change. (Baillie 1990:



14f.)

A move to town would have been a liberating transition for the women who had lived on farms, allowing them more opportunities to socialise, as well as a chance to find paid work and have a life outside the home.

In line with the changing attitudes of and towards women came a changing attitude to the value of education. Education was originally seen as not particularly important to the settlers. Mrs. Fetting's father, for instance, believed that education past the grade-eight level (13- to 14-year olds) was a waste of time. (Baillie 1990: 14) Winkelmann (1979: 14) also testifies that her father never received more than six years of school education. Mr. Durrheim speaks of attending a farm school where the teachers themselves were not educated beyond this level: "Sometimes we came to standard five [grade seven], if the teacher couldn't do the sum she said, ask your parents [...]" (Baillie 1990: 14) Baillie claims that "[i]ncreasingly the German settler descendants have put value on a university education". (Baillie 1990: 15) I believe that this change probably began to happen when more of the farmers or farmers' family members moved into the towns, where education would have become more important than farming skills.

It can be seen from this chapter that a gradual shift was taking place in the German communities of the Eastern Cape over the generations. More of the descendants began to move to the towns, fewer spoke German at home or at school, and the hardship known by their forebears became something of the past for many of them. The life of the initial settlers was indeed difficult, and they showed (according to their descendants) a great deal of adaptability and ingenuity in working around the obstacles placed before them. It appears however that the claims that they succeeded and made significant contributions to the Eastern Cape economy have been exaggerated or are at the very least unsubstantiated by figures.

#### **4. German settler identities**

##### German national identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Before German culture in the Eastern Cape can be recorded and evaluated, German culture in Germany, and more specifically German culture in Germany at the time that these immigrants left, has to be defined. Given how troublesome defining culture in general is (as seen in chapter two), the task of defining German culture seems nigh impossible. It cannot for instance be assumed that modern German culture is the same as German culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, given the huge changes which Western society in general has undergone in the last two hundred years. What is most important, however, is how the Germans in the Eastern Cape saw themselves and created or perpetuated their culture. In order to do this, their cultural background needs to first be examined.

Most of Germany was, until 1806, part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, which for hundreds of years had been led by the Austrian Habsburgs, and included the German-speaking territories of Austria. (Whaley 2010: 18f.) Austria had already in the eighteenth century begun pursuing a policy which indicated a desire to separate from the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and to dedicate more time to its own empire. (Whaley 2010: 19) The end came when Napoleon's French forces invaded Germany. (Kitchen 2006: 9) Napoleon wished to add a German counterweight, under his control, to the Prussian and Austrian powers. (Kitchen 2006: 1) In the southern German regions (most notably the states of Bavaria, Württemberg, and Baden), the French instituted a number of reforms, those instituted by Montgelas<sup>62</sup> being most pertinent to later events in Germany (particularly the 1848 revolution):

[T]he secularization process required the state to take over the universities and schools, as well as other former ecclesiastical institutions. Montgelas's vision of a state based on equality of all before the law led to an assault on noble privileges and to the promulgation of a constitutional edict which envisaged a representative system. (Whaley 2010: 29)

The granting of freedom and a measure of power to the middle classes in these states can be viewed as a direct cause of the later attempts at political involvement by the middle classes, many of which originated in these states.

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<sup>62</sup> A Bavarian official who instituted a number of reforms on the behalf of the French. Weis (2005: front cover) refers to him as "der Architekt des modernen bayerischen Staates" (the architect of the modern Bavarian state).

After the wars of liberation and the withdrawal of French forces from Germany, Germany was for most of the nineteenth century an association or confederation of states, rather than anything which could be said to resemble a nation state. Clark (2010) clarifies the situation:

In the eighteenth century, German Europe had been divided into some 300 territories. After the secularizations and territorial resettlements of the Napoleonic period and the readjustments made at the Congress of Vienna, only 38 sovereign states (39 after 1817) remained. These were joined in a loose association of independent sovereign entities known as the 'German Confederation'. [...] As in the old Reich, the small outnumbered the large. In 1818, there were only seven German states with populations in excess of one million; 21 had fewer than 100,000 inhabitants. (Clark 2010: 39)

It is important to remember that until the middle of the century, Austria was a member of this confederation, as were Luxembourg and Liechtenstein (Waldman & Mason 2006: 486; 500), so that the German Confederation cannot simply be equated in a crude manner with modern-day Germany. Nevertheless, all members of the Confederation ostensibly had the German language as a uniting factor. Smith (2010: 7) agrees that language can be a powerful consolidating factor for nationalism, but that language alone is not enough:

A national symbolism is, of course, distinguished by its all-encompassing object, the nation, but equally by the tangibility and vividness of its characteristic signs. These start with a proper name. [...] Proper names are chosen, or retained from the past, to express the nation's distinctiveness, heroism and sense of destiny, and to resonate these qualities among the members. Similarly with national flags and anthems. [...] It matters little that to many outsiders the differences between many flags appear minimal, and that verses of anthems reveal a limited range of themes. What counts is the potency of the meanings conveyed by such signs to the members of the nation. (Smith 2010: 7f.)

Given that Germany was not even a nation state until 1871, it is clear that although Germany allegedly had a uniting language, the state that was to become Germany in 1871 lacked the symbolism which, according to Smith, is integral to strengthening national identity. That is to say, one cannot say that "Germany" possessed national identity without saying that all regions of the ever-expanding and -contracting Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation shared this national identity, which they clearly did not, given that a number of them, such as Luxembourg, Austria and Liechtenstein, became independent nations, and did not identify themselves as German. Austria is the most obvious example of this – it broke from Germany despite a common language and their common history as part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. This was more about politics than identity (Carr 1993: 48), but it nonetheless indicated a belief that on some level

'Austrians' and 'Germans' were different.

James (1989: 38) claims that by 1815, "German 'nationalism' (rather than the more widespread xenophobia and hatred of the French) is better described as a national awakening that took place among a relatively limited cultured class." As such, the perception of nationality was probably at that stage more a middle-class ideology than a lower-class one. The nationalism that followed in the 1830s and 1840s, which was partly the result of revolutions in France and Belgium and partly the result of the potential threat from Austria, rebelled against the bourgeois notions of German culture which had preceded it:

Each successive generation of patriots believed their predecessors had not been sufficiently near the people (*Volk*) – not sufficiently *völkisch*. The previous group's absence of a genuinely *völkisch* character had condemned it to political impotence. The debate about *völkisch* nationalism became a discussion of the role of intellectuals in the formation of national consciousness. Each wave of intellectuals accused its predecessors of being over-intellectual and over-rationalistic. The newer the wave, the more anti-intellectual the stance adopted. (James 1989: 49)

James' analysis suggests that German society was gradually moving towards a more rustic, pastoral collective self-image. This explanation for the surge in nationalism is however incomplete, not least because it fails to explain the move towards anti-intellectualism. After the Hambach festival of 1832, which "attracted at least 20,000 participants and has [...] been described (by Theodor Heuss) as 'the first political demonstration in modern German history'" (Clark 2010: 51), measures were put in place to discourage political disruption:

the [Federal] Diet introduced new and stronger censorship regulations, forbade public assemblies and festivals, as well as the foundation of political clubs, organized new forms of surveillance over travellers and 'conspicuous' persons, and established procedures for the extradition of political suspects. (Clark 2010: 42)

An intelligence bureau, the Frankfurt Investigation Authority, was also set up, and despite its mandate to gather intelligence from undercover sources, "tended increasingly to act preventatively against those merely suspected of subversive activity". (Clark 2010: 42) This picture of the German Confederation at that time indicates a society in which civil liberties were effectively suppressed. Evans (1997: 165) describes the situation succinctly by stating that "there can be little doubt that the wide-ranging powers of the police created a considerable potential for arbitrary arrest and punishment against which the possibilities of redress were severely restricted."

When placed in this context, the trend towards anti-intellectualism appears less a frivolous trend and more a matter of survival. Under such conditions, it is almost surprising that there was not more emigration during these years. The oppressive hand of the government could be construed as a strong factor in promoting a pastoral self-identification of the people and a subdued form of political activism, especially among the peasants, who instigated social, but not political, protests. Its most obvious consequence would also have been the suppression of individual opinions, although this was probably of no importance to the peasantry and industrial lower classes, whose capacity for public self-expression was minimal in any event. On the other hand, the more sinister aspects of these decrees, such as preventative arrests and extraditions, could certainly have been abused by officials to the detriment of the under-classes.

The course of the 1848 revolution reveals a couple of trends relevant to the German emigrations of 1857 and 1858. This requires a brief history of this revolution. Fulbrook (2004: 114) claims that despite the many reasons for revolution (such as food shortages) within the German Confederation, "the spark that finally ignited revolutionary upheavals in 1848 came not from within, but [...] from another revolution in France." King Louis Philippe had been overthrown in France, and Poland, Italy, and many German states decided to follow suit. (Fulbrook 2004: 115; Carr 1993: 32) In most principalities, "the individual authorities capitulated almost without defence". (Fulbrook 2004: 117) As Kitchen (2006: 74) notes, "[t]here was precious little violence and it was only when governments resisted that force was used". A revolution which is an imitation of another does not bode well, and indeed the German revolution lacked organisation, and perhaps more importantly, unity. Fulbrook describes the revolution as middle-class liberals making use of an opportune moment:

In the face of widespread peasants' insurrections, artisans' riots and liberal pressures, rulers all over Germany rapidly made concessions in a panic attempt to ward off the feared threat of worse disturbances. The liberals then took advantage of the volatile situation to try to effect changes at a national level, through the subsequent electing of a national parliament to discuss constitutional reform and German reunification. (Fulbrook 2004: 117)

The use of the term 'reunification' rather than 'unification' indicates Fulbrook's conviction that the middle-class parliamentarians believed in the prior existence of a German nation. The views of the middle classes did not necessarily have any bearing on the views of the peasantry, however.

While the 1848 revolution was underway, the princes of the various states were sitting comfortably, if somewhat nervously, at home, with heads still attached to their bodies and estates intact, biding their time until the revolution had lost steam, “later to return to take control of the situation with their armed forces intact, and even strengthened by concessions to peasant demands”. (Fulbrook 2004: 117) No political power was taken by force, meaning that the liberals had not actually wielded any power, as evidenced by the fact that control over the German states was relatively easily regained by the princes in late 1848 and early 1849. (Fulbrook 2004: 121) Ironically, the proletariat which should have been rising up against the aristocracy was the key to their success: “[p]easants in particular, who formed the backbone of the conscripts to the army, were bought off by conservatives who made concessions to ensure their loyalty in the troops.” (Fulbrook 2004: 121) This was by no means an uprising as Marx<sup>63</sup> had envisioned it. Carr (1993: 55) notes that “radicals made no attempt to forge that alliance between *Handwerker* and peasantry which enabled the French revolutionaries to transform the social structure of their country”. The liberals were actually not even interested in social change: “When liberals spoke of ‘the people’, they were thinking of the educated minority [...] which sought to alter the structure of politics, not the structure of society.” (Carr 1993: 55) They were more interested in a united Germany than fair wages. German society was, in short, not ready for change. The feudal system was too entrenched at that time to be rooted out by a short-lived, disorganised revolution. (Carr 1993: 55) Fulbrook (2004: 121f.) contends however that the revolution did have positive effects:

Feudal social relations on the land, effectively abolished all over Germany by 1850, did not return. The organisation of economic life continued in a liberal mode, allowing rapid economic development in the 1850s. The particular system of repression associated with Metternich [who had resigned and fled to England in 1848] did not return. The articulation of grievances, the opening of concerns with issues transcending the immediate demands of the day, aided the formation of a range of national groupings and political orientations, which were to develop into more party-political forms in the next couple of decades.

What can be surmised from the 1848 revolution with regard to the German settlers in the Eastern Cape is that the peasants of the 1800s seem to have been quite a politically inactive group of people, appearing willing to engage in violence only for personal gain, and never staging protests about their rights, but rather protests addressing the more immediate concerns of food shortages and lack of jobs. The peasantry and urban proletariat had largely been deprived of both the

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<sup>63</sup> Marx himself was censored many times before leaving Germany, claiming while editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* (for which he also wrote) that “every day the censorship mutilates our paper so much that it has difficulty in appearing.” (in McLellan 2006: 48) The paper was banned in 1843. (McLellan 2006: 49)

opportunity and the leisure to develop any political awareness. (Carr 1993: 55) They had not yet reached a point where they questioned their lack of political power.

It is important to consider the extent to which a nationalist feeling had developed by the middle of the century in order to gauge the extent to which emigrants to South Africa considered themselves to be a homogeneous group with a common culture. Both James (1989: 38) and Clark (2010: 44) espouse the view that anti-French sentiment could not be equated with nationalism, with Clark (2010: 44) describing German nationalism as a “reactive” counter to a perceived threat from France. This perception of the early nationalist movements fails to take into account the extent to which a common enemy can consolidate a collective identity. As Joffé (1999: 18) explains, “people establish a positive sense of identity by way of the juxtaposition between what can comfortably be associated with 'others' and elements with which 'self' seeks to affiliate.” Anti-French sentiment cannot be underestimated as a nation builder. The mere existence of the German Confederation indicated a belief (at least at state level) that allying oneself with those who speak the same language is advisable (and preferable to an alliance with those who do not speak the same language).

In reference to this, it would be remiss to omit those peasant farmer settlers who were not first-language German (or at the very least Germanic) speakers – the Wendish Sorbs. This group inhabited more or less the same area as the other peasant farmer settlers, but was distinguished from them in a number of ways, not least of which was language. The Wendish Sorbs spoke (and in Europe still speak) Sorbian, a Slavonic language. According to Montgomery (1997: 8), there were 247 Wends among the peasant farmer settlers, not an insignificant number. It is therefore relevant to also assess the culture whence they came before beginning to address collective identity in the Eastern Cape. Goebel (1985) describes the lives of the Wends under the Prussian government: “The Prussian king denied them citizenship, property ownership, and admission to professional guilds. They were ordered to speak the German language, take German names, and join the Evangelical and Reformed Church, the state-regulated Protestant body.” (Goebel 1985: 40) In other words, the Prussian government demanded cultural assimilation. It is therefore unsurprising that such a group might wish to emigrate. The rural life filled with hardship is however a key component of their cultural identity. (Neumann 1997: 214) Glaser (2007: 284) details that “‘authentic’ Sorbian culture is strongly associated with life in the countryside, and at least for the older generation, rural life had mostly been associated with hard physical labour, low incomes,

limited education and low prestige". Given this set of distinguishing properties, the Eastern Cape would have seemed familiar to, and reinforced these particular aspects of their collective identity of, these settlers, who would indeed continue to suffer from hard physical labour, low incomes, limited education and low prestige within the German community. Webb and Welz observe that "Wendish seems to have carried connotations of inferiority. Although a number of people of Wendish extraction were interviewed, all tended to minimise this aspect of their background". (Webb & Welz 1990: 4)

It is evident that peasant communities in Germany were in many ways an unknown quantity. No one saw fit at that time to study the peasantry or ask their opinions, nor were the peasantry particularly interested in sharing them, as evidenced by their lack of political involvement within their German states. All that has been proposed about the peasants has been conjecture by educated analysts rather than accounts from the peasants themselves – no one really knows for sure why they did not seize political control or why their involvement in the 1848 revolution appears more of a random outburst of anger and violence than any kind of statement they were trying to make. It is evident that German culture as most would imagine it<sup>64</sup> is a middle-class conception of German culture, which did not necessarily have very much to do with the actual lives or culture of the German peasantry.

Overall, it seems unlikely that the peasant farmer emigrants of 1858 saw themselves as being a united, homogeneous group, at least not when they set out on their journey to South Africa. Lastly, it is clear that the entrenched system of feudalism may have been abolished but its impression on the German psyche, especially that of the peasants, remained. Fulbrook (2004) argues that there was never any coordinated nationalist movement in Germany pushing for unification. She claims that even eventual German unification in 1871 "was less a result of budding German nationalism than a form of Prussian expansionism and colonisation of non-Prussian Germany, in rivalry with an excluded Austria." (Fulbrook 2004: 125)

What has yet to be resolved is whether the German military settlers or the peasant farmer settlers considered themselves to be in possession of a collective German identity. Cooper and Brubaker (2005: 62) define identity as

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both a category of practice and a category of analysis. As a category of practice, it is used by

<sup>64</sup> Beer festivals, opera, and the Protestant work ethic, most likely. (Schulz & Haerle 1995: 31)



“lay” actors in some (not all!) everyday settings to make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share with, and how they differ from, others. It is also used by political entrepreneurs to persuade people to understand themselves, their interests, and their predicaments in a certain way, to persuade certain people that they are (for certain purposes) “identical” with one another and at the same time different from others, and to organize and justify collective action along certain lines.

This is a helpful definition in that it provides different levels on which people construct collective identities: shared activities, shared beliefs, shared interests and differences from other groups. Joffé (1999: 22) adds that “the tendency to infuse others with unwanted parts of the dominant culture becomes magnified in representations which flourish at times of crisis”. This is relevant to the settler perception of the 'natives' as a threat, which will be dealt with later in the chapter, with reference to Lester (2001).

Cooper and Brubaker (2005: 63) advise that “[w]e should seek to explain the processes and mechanisms through which what has been called the “political fiction” of the nation – or of the ethnic group, race, or other putative identity – can crystallize, at certain moments, as a powerful and compelling reality.” This conception of identity takes it beyond notional definitions and into concrete manifestations of that identity, which is relevant not only to my study of the collective self-perception of the German settlers, but also to my investigation of their interactions with other groups.

One of the most obvious ways in which the German settlers distinguished between themselves and other groups is language. In terms of Cooper and Brubaker's (2000) definitions of identity above, language can be considered a shared activity. Edwards (1988: 3) indicates that “many have considered that the possession of a given language is well-nigh essential to the maintenance of group identity.” Edwards (1988: 23) outlines the rise in linguistic nationalism, which began in Germany:

In 1772, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744 – 1803) published his first major philosophical work, *Ueber den Ursprung der Sprache* [...]. Herder argued against both the divine origin of language and its origin in human invention. He stressed, rather, that man was innately endowed with the capacity for reason and speech. The diversity of languages was seen to be rooted in the variety of social environments and thus, over time, a group comes to share a common language. Further, these speech communities only survive as discrete entities as long as they preserve their language as a collective inheritance.

This argument indicates an early version of the belief that people who speak the same language

are similar, a conception of language which was brought into the mainstream in the twentieth century by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. (Sapir 1949; Whorf 1972) This belief in turn indicates a belief in the unity of German-speaking people. Fichte took this belief a step further, as Edwards (1988: 25) explains:

Of all the 'Teutonic' peoples (roughly, Europeans, including the French)<sup>65</sup>, only the Germans remained in their original location and retained and developed the original language. Fichte dismissed the first difference as unimportant. But, the language shift of others was the central pillar in his argument. He pointed out that it was not German *per se* that was superior to, say, French; rather, it was superior, because it was the original, and French was inferior because it represented an adoption of foreign elements (i.e. Latin). Given that the original German was superior to the bastardised French (and other 'neo-Latin' languages), it followed that the German *nation* was superior. (Emphasis Edwards' own)

Thus the German language and identity became tightly intertwined, at least in the minds of the educated middle classes. Edwards (1988: 26) adds that “[i]t would be incorrect [...] to assume that the linguistic nationalism of the time was purely a German production. It is, however, fair to say that the German influence was the greatest and was the most systematically presented [...].” One problem with the theory of linguistic nationalism is that such perspectives ignored that there was one German standard written language, but many spoken German dialects, some mutually unintelligible, and many very different from the standard, which made up the German Empire. In heralding German (standard German) as a perfect language, theorists were probably also denigrating local dialects, as well as other non-Germanic languages (such as Wendish) spoken in Germany. Linguistic nationalism was, like the 1848 revolution, an intellectual pursuit driven by the middle classes.

#### The development of a collective German identity in the Eastern Cape

Anderson (1983), who outlines the means by which nationalism is invented, may be of help in clarifying how language could provide nationalist solidarity, not just to intellectuals but to all members of the soon-to-be German nation. Anderson points out that one key component of the belief in a unified nation is print media such as books and newspapers. He reports that

[i]n pre-print Europe, and, of course, elsewhere in the world, the diversity of spoken languages [...] was immense; so immense, indeed, that had print-capitalism sought to exploit each potential oral vernacular market, it would have remained a capitalism of petty

<sup>65</sup> This was according to Fichte's own personal definition.

proportions. But these varied idiolects were capable of being assembled, within definite limits, into print languages far fewer in number. (Anderson 1983: 46f.)

The simple act of adapting languages to better suit publishers had a profound effect on the perceptions of nationality, because it created the perception among speakers of related dialects that there were other people *like them*, insofar as language was concerned, and that furthermore there were others *unlike them*, whose language(s) they could not understand. (Anderson 1983: 47) The political machinations of such bodies as the German Confederation did not particularly affect the perceptions of the imagined unity of Germany, but perceptions of language – a shared language – were much more likely to bring about nationalist feeling.

A key question therefore would be, “Did the German legionaries and/or German peasantry have access to print media?” Given the evidence provided in chapter four, the answer must be “yes”. There is sufficient evidence that both the military settlers and the peasant farmer settlers were literate (although to a limited extent in the case of the peasant farmer settlers). Whether the peasant farmer settlers read newspapers in Germany prior to their emigration is unclear, but one piece of print media they all possessed, or at least had read, was a Bible, as is substantiated by Baillie (1990), Watters (2000) and Armstrong (2008). This Bible would have been published in standard German, often *Luther-Deutsch*. It is evident from von Oswiecinski's (1875) detailed reproductions of newspaper articles (and the fact that a German-language newspaper was printed in England while the legionaries were there (von Oswiecinski 1875: 176f.)) that the legionaries did read the newspaper relatively regularly. This is further supported by the publication of German-language newspapers after their arrival in South Africa, namely the *Germania* and the *Deutsche Beobachter*. (Denfield 1964: 10f.) Therefore these settlers were familiar with standard German, whether they used it in their daily lives or not. It consequently seems likely that some kind of fellowship would develop in the community, although not necessarily along nationalist lines. It is interesting to note that neither of these two German papers survived long. Bauer (in von Oswiecinski 1875), one of the military settlers, laments that the German-language newspaper of the region was no longer even written in German (Denfield 1964: 11) and was no longer in German hands:

Die Zeitung ‚Germania‘ (im April 1857 gegründet) ist schon in die Hände eines Engländers übergegangen und ißt [sic] jetzt weiter nichts mehr als ein Annoncenblatt. Es schrieb zuletzt kein Offizier mehr für das Blatt und bissen sich Unteroffiziere und Soldaten zuletzt darin

herum, daß es eine wahre Schande war.<sup>66</sup> (Bauer in von Oswiecinski 1875: 226)

The observation that this newspaper ceased to be published a short while later, and that it was not replaced by another German-language newspaper (Denfield 1964: 11), indicates that the peasant farmer settlers were not particularly interested in reading, or writing for, newspapers, or at least German-language ones. One could therefore conclude that the Germans may have begun to lose their ties to their former country and language relatively early. An extreme example of language loss is provided by the story of the Neseemann family who, soon after arriving in Braunschweig, moved to Cradock. (Neseemann 1988: 16) What became of their cultural identity? Other than the observation that the first-generation Neseemanns were members of the Baptist church in Cradock (rather than the Dutch Reformed, Anglican or Methodist churches), there is not much evidence that they retained any vestiges of German identity at all. The children were educated in English (Neseemann 1988: 19) and married English speakers. (Neseemann 1988: 25f.) In the space of a generation the German language and culture were lost due to isolation in a town where only English and Afrikaans were spoken. The rest of the genealogy recounts the extremely South African English lives of the following generations. The fourth-generation brothers Wilfred Taylor Neseemann and Gordon Raymond Neseemann even fought in the Second World War on the side of the British and were captured and imprisoned by the Germans. (Neseemann 1988: 33)

Pastor Riechers, a man from Germany who carried out his church duties in Port Elizabeth, wrote an article in 1915<sup>67</sup> from a prison camp in Pietermaritzburg addressing what he considered to be the problems with German identity in South Africa. This is only an opinion piece, but it provides an interesting perspective on the collective identity of Germans in South Africa at that time. He urges all *Auslandsdeutschen* to strengthen their ties with Germany. (Riechers 1920: 166) Riechers also mentions that before the start of the war, the German government had begun investing in infrastructure in South Africa: "Die Behörden des Reiches nahmen sich seiner an durch Gründung und Sicherung von Schulen, Krankenhäusern und Kirchen, durch Entsendung von Lehrern und Geistlichen."<sup>68</sup> (Riechers 1920: 167) Pastor Riechers was presumably himself evidence of this, having been sent out from Germany to tend the German church community. He admits, however, that those who wished to sustain German culture in South Africa were fighting a losing battle: "Ich

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<sup>66</sup> "The newspaper *Germania* (started in April 1857) has already passed into the hands of an Englishman and is now nothing more than an advertising paper. None of the officers wrote for the paper after that, and subalterns and soldiers niggled around in it disgracefully towards the end." (Own translation)

<sup>67</sup> Only published in 1920.

<sup>68</sup> "The German authorities took care of their own through the foundation and securing of schools, hospitals and churches, through the despatch of teachers and pastors." (Own translation)

möchte nur das Urteil eines Mannes anführen, der seine ganze Lebensarbeit dem Deutschtum und seiner Erhaltung gewidmet hat, und der nach 30-jähriger Tätigkeit einmal äußerte, man habe oft den Eindruck, daß man an einer sterbenden Sache arbeite.“<sup>69</sup> (Riechers 1920: 167) In Riechers' opinion the South African Germans were already losing their identity. Schwär (1937: 408) was to reiterate this opinion seventeen years later, noting the almost inevitable loss of German language and culture in an English-speaking environment. Riechers (1920: 167) claims that at that time (1915) there were 30–40 000 Germans in South Africa. Riechers (1920: 167) guesses that 10–12 000 of these lived in the cities, but that these people did not have strong ties to the country and usually returned to Germany. Those Germans that lived in the country had a different view of the situation, according to him (Riechers 1920: 167):

Anders liegen die Dinge auf dem Lande, wo wir fast ausschließlich Farmerbevölkerung haben, die zum Teil schon seit mehreren Generationen ansässig und darum mit dem Lande fest verwachsen ist und es als Heimat betrachtet. [...] Die Beziehungen zur alten Heimat [Deutschland] sind im allgemeinen nicht lebhaft; teilweise sind sie ganz abgebrochen. Das vergrößert die Gefahr, das Volkstum aufzugeben [...].<sup>70</sup> (Riechers 1920: 167)

He argues that many German farmers in South African lived isolated among English- and Afrikaans-speaking farmers, having no real contact with other Germans. (Riechers 1920: 167) He claims that the identity of South African Germans was too closely tied to that of other white South Africans, resulting in the loss of German culture. He complains that many South African German men took English- or Afrikaans-speaking wives, resulting in their children being unable to speak German, and that German parents did not send their children to German schools. (Riechers 1920: 1698) It is important to mention that he was observing the urban German population more than the rural population descended from the 1857 and 1858, which explains perhaps why he keeps mentioning Afrikaners. The Germans of the Eastern Cape just so happened to live in towns populated mostly by Germans or by English speakers at least in the time period being studied (1857-1919), judging by the fact that Afrikaners are almost never mentioned by either German or English inhabitants of these towns.

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<sup>69</sup> “I wish to mention the judgement of a man who dedicated his life to the preservation of German culture, and said once after thirty years of work that he often had the impression he was flogging a dead horse.” (Own translation)

<sup>70</sup> “Things are different in the countryside, where the population is made up almost exclusively of farmers, some of whom have been there for generations and are thus tightly bound to their land and view it as their true home. [...] Their relationships to their motherland (Germany) are mostly not active; in some cases they have broken off altogether. This increases the risk that they will give up their national [German] traditions.” (Own translation)

Of course, that Riechers observed a trend of language loss does not make this the rule. It does contradict the statements of Pienaar (2009: 2), who asserts that the loss of the German language among the settlers began during the First World War due to the German schools being shut down, not before it, as Riechers claims. Riechers may be right, and language loss may have begun earlier than previously assumed, as he was certainly in a position to observe whether Eastern Cape Germans were losing their language or not, although it seems likely that he was exaggerating the extent of the problem. As possible evidence of this, Grimm (1915: 121) recounts Mr. Tissendorf telling his son (a second-generation German settler), "Du sprichst auch kein richtiges Deutsch mehr. Du mengst<sup>71</sup> die Worte. Der Mutter wäre das nicht recht".<sup>72</sup> It must however be noted that Mr. Tissendorf and his son had been working in the Free State for a period of five years and would therefore have been isolated from other German speakers. (Grimm 1915: 121) Marie Gropp's diary was written in English for her grandchildren to read, which shows that as far as this particular family was concerned, the third generation presumably was already unable to speak and read German. This gives a small measure of credence to Riechers' claim that language loss began before the First World War. Elfrieda Winkelmann, a third-generation German settler from Berlin born in 1912 (Winkelmann 1979: 14), admits that she was unable to speak German from the time she began attending school, although this would have been during or just after the First World War, at a time when speaking German would have been frowned upon in a British colony. (Winkelmann 1979: 16)

This language loss that the German settlers appear to have suffered within the span of three or four generations was not reflected in a number of other German settlements, such as those in America and Russia. Why did these German communities continue to speak German whereas the Eastern Cape German communities did not? In the case of the American settlements, the answer is simple – the sheer force of numbers. Between 1717 and 1775 alone, 80 000 Germans emigrated to America (Fogleman 1996: 6), and they tended to live together in what became predominantly German-speaking areas. (Fogleman 1996: 81) Nineteenth-century German immigrants to America had a ready-made large German community to join, should they have desired it. Goerke (1987: 32) explains the rather unique situation of the Volga Germans in Russia, noting that they were able to preserve their language due to the prestige their language was assigned in czarist Russia, and due to their isolated settlements. Eastern Cape Germans were not particularly numerous, nor did the

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<sup>71</sup> This is not entirely correct German either, but these are technically Grimm's words, not Tissendorf's.

<sup>72</sup> "You are not speaking proper German anymore either. You mix the words. Mother would not like that." (Own translation)

government offer them any particular protection of their language and customs. Some of their settlements were quite isolated, but the largest settlements, Stutterheim, King Williams Town, and East London, had a large number of non-German inhabitants. Furthermore, the German settlers in the Eastern Cape, even in rare cases where they made up the majority of inhabitants, did not have administrative control of their villages. This control remained in the hands of the British government, and the German settlers could not simply do as they pleased. The first mayor of Stutterheim, appointed in 1879, was British. ("Mayors of Stutterheim..." 1957: 4) Granted, there is a twenty-year gap between the arrival of the German settlers and the appointment of a mayor, but this nevertheless does not approximate the freedom that the American Germans and Volga Germans enjoyed in terms of self-determination. This may well have been a precipitating factor in their language loss.

Baillie reveals that "although High German was always used in church, in their homes the majority of the Germans spoke *plattdeutsch* – and different dialects for that matter". (Baillie 1990: 21) *Hochdeutsch* could not even truly be used as a lingua franca: "The Germans [...] never used a common language in the community. Some settler descendants refer to church members, in the early years, who spoke a particular dialect being unable to understand the 'Hochdeutsch' services". (Baillie 1990: 31) Mr. Durrheim reveals the linguistic diversity of the settlers: "Even there in our little community [Frankfort], there were the high German, the low German, the Pommern and the Wenden. The Kaschulas [who were Wends] – you reckoned when they spoke, they could only talk to themselves, the others didn't understand them". (Webb & Welz 1990: 4) As evidenced by Christian Kaschula's written testimony, the Wends were able to speak and write German. A similar tale of language adaptation is told of the Wends who emigrated to America: "Since many of the people who lived in the area were German, it was easier for the Wends to transact business and make contacts with their new neighbors if they spoke German. So, increasingly, more members wanted to worship in the German language, too." (Goebel 1985: 42) How much more necessary would this have been for the Wends in the Eastern Cape, who were vastly outnumbered by the German speakers in their communities? But the pressure acting on the Wendish Americans was also acting on the German community in the Eastern Cape as a whole. They too were outnumbered by other linguistic groups, particularly the English and the amaXhosa. English could be considered the dominant group both in terms of political power and degree of contact, but a Mr. Schuch (a more recent immigrant) claims that many of the German community spoke isiXhosa amongst themselves (Baillie 1990: 21) – a surprising *lingua franca* indeed.

Nowadays, most of the settler descendants are unable to speak German “though they know the odd word”. (Baillie 1990: 21) Some of the settler descendants thought that “because the German settlers did not speak a common version of their vernacular that German had almost died out in the area”. (Baillie 1990: 21) Schuch blames the First World War for this state of affairs. One piece of evidence for this provided by Baillie (1990: 22) is that “in September 1914 the German school in East London closed down” and that teaching German in farm schools ceased at around the same time. (Baillie 1990: 22) In keeping with the loss of German fluency among later generations, the German language was gradually phased out in the churches. (Baillie 1990: 22) Webb and Welz (1990: 3) claim that the Lutheran church in Stutterheim continued to alternate between English and German services until 1980, but this was stopped due to lack of demand. (Webb & Welz 1990: 4) Given its apparently pivotal role in guiding the community, this move on the part of the church may well have further discouraged learning and maintaining German in the area. It is worth noting that a continued demand for German-language services late into the last century indicates that language loss was neither universal nor particularly rapid. Studies on immigrant language loss (Pfaff 1991; Wong Fillmore 1991; Johanson 1993) looking at language loss in minority immigrant communities in other countries show that language loss begins as early as the second generation, so the Germans' retention of their language in adverse circumstances (even if the language was only maintained by a small minority) is rather impressive. As seen in Goebel's (1985: 44) report on a Wendish community in America, having members of the community who can speak the language of their heritage reinforces a common identity. This American community actually has only one person who can speak Wendish with any degree of fluency, but nonetheless “he has become so proficient as the community's only Wendish vocalist that he performs at funerals, weddings, and other occasions that call for Wendish music”. (Goebel 1985: 44ff.) Similarly, the presence of German-language services in German settler towns would have reinforced German identity even if much of the congregation had no idea what the pastor was saying.

Baillie also raises the possibility that the limited literacy of the peasant farmer settlers meant that they did not have strong cultural links to Germany. In evidence of this, “the Bible was one of the only books owned by the settler families”. (Baillie 1990: 15) In Watters' (2000: 25, 70, 73) genealogical study of her family, the only book any member of the family is noted at having read is a German Bible, although this may simply be because it was the most significant as well as being a reflection on the character of the person who owned it. This limited literacy may effectively have



cut them off from German literature and perhaps also German newspapers. It seems unlikely, however, that they were illiterate. As has already been mentioned, the majority of the settlers came from Pomerania, which was located in the state of Prussia. Schnell (1954: 177) indicates that all Prussians had received a basic education back in Germany, regardless of their social standing: “[A]s a rule, [...children] attended school and received a tolerable education, as Prussia at that time had [...] the system of compulsory school attendance”. (Schnell 1954: 177) Given the lack of emphasis on education in the earlier generations, one would not expect the reading and writing skills of the community to be particularly advanced. August Peinke's memoirs, for instance, were not written by him but rather dictated to Pastor Paul Rode. (Watters 2000: 19) This suggests that Peinke may not have been able to write very well. There is further evidence on August Peinke's death certificate, which his wife Auguste signed simply with three X's. (Watters 2000: 162) August and Auguste's death notices are both filled out in the same style. Therefore it seems likely that a third party, such as one of their children, filled in both forms. (Watters 2000: 169f.) This may have been due to a lack of English fluency on the part of the second-generation settlers, rather than illiteracy, but limited literacy, particularly the inability to write well, would have made maintaining the German language without any government support very difficult.

The preponderance of Pomeranians did not simply determine whether the peasant farmer settlers were likely to be literate, but would surely to some extent have determined which German cultural practices were upheld in the South African context. Certain settlements showed an overwhelming number of Pomeranians, and passenger lists indicate that either Pomeranians or *Uckermärker* were in the majority in every settlement, insofar as places of origin are provided for passengers. (Spanuth 1958: 8-12) To draw a distinction between Pomerania and the Uckermark is for our purposes more or less arbitrary, because these two areas overlap to a significant degree. It is safe to say the Pomeranians would most likely have dominated the cultural landscape of the German settlers in the Eastern Cape. The nature of the customs they imported and presumably also imparted are however unclear. Many of the customs mentioned by settler descendants in Baillie (1990) and Webb and Welz (1990) are not particularly regional, such as celebrating Christmas on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, or decorating Easter eggs. One custom which may perhaps stem from Pomerania was that of *Osterstiepen*. One Mrs. Gombert describes the nature of this custom: “The German people on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April they used to have a little green branch and dip it in water and they'd come while you're still in bed, they'd smack you... with it. Yes, ah, that was great fun, ja.” (Webb & Welz 1990: 8) This custom is noted by Radde (1998) as being a Pomeranian

custom. There does not appear to be an equivalent custom in other regions of Germany, but Serra (2008) describes a very similar ritual practised in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in which men travel from house to house on Easter Monday spanking women with willow branches. It therefore seems likely that this custom was spread from eastern Europe into the north-east of Germany, but did not spread any further. Mrs. Gombert's family were allocated to Potsdam, which consisted principally of settlers from Pomerania and the north-east, with the Gomberts themselves originating from Eichstedt in what is now Saxony-Anhalt. (Spanuth 1958: 12) It would therefore not be surprising that peculiarly north-eastern customs such as this one were maintained. Webb & Welz note that this custom died out within a couple of generations, and speculate that “[p]resumably this was some kind of spring ritual that did not transfer easily into the southern hemisphere where April [...falls] during autumn”. (Webb & Welz 1990: 8)

### Forging a settler identity

It is important, prior to examining the more specific details of German culture in the Eastern Cape, to consider how a collective German identity might have formed in ways other than the sharing of a collective language, which, as seen above, was not noticeably effective in maintaining a community identity. The 1820 British settlers are a good benchmark with which to compare the German settlers due to a number of similarities. Firstly, they were recruited for the purpose of settlement and were allocated land. Secondly (and perhaps more obviously), both groups were sent to the Eastern Cape, and had to struggle with its unique weather patterns as well as its other challenges. Lastly, they lived in communities with other settlers who spoke the same language, experiencing this uniting element. There were a number of salient differences between these groups as well, and these will be mentioned as they become relevant to the discussion of collective identity. Lester (2001) mentions a number of factors which helped the 1820 settlers to forge a collective identity in the Eastern Cape, including the use of black labour, collective insecurity, print media, and correspondence with England. Each of these factors will be considered as they pertained to the 1820 settlers so that their relevance to the German settlers might be evaluated. Even if none of these factors pertained directly to the German settlers, English settlers did in many towns (such as East London, King Williams Town, Stutterheim, Bell and Bodiam) coexist with German settlers, which may have resulted in transference of attitudes.

The first unifying factor for the 1820 settlers was the growing equality between them. When the

settler parties first came out, there was a wide range of social classes, from working class to aristocracy. (Lester 2001: 51) Although the upward mobility of the lower classes was at first resisted by those of higher station (Lester 2001: 53), it was in the medium and long term a great equaliser. Ironically, this upward mobility took place as a direct result of English settlers taking advantage of cheap Khoesan labour. (Lester 2001: 56) The formerly exploited made their fortunes by exploitation. Due to their experience of the Khoesan as underlings, they were provided with a convenient 'Other' (Joffé 1999) on whom to project negative characteristics. This was useful in the construction of group identity. By the time the Germans arrived in the Eastern Cape, the Khoesan had already been emancipated from the restrictive pass laws (the ordinance being passed in 1828), with one humanitarian describing the Khoesan situation prior to this as "analogous to that of slavery". (Lester 2001: 57) The German settlers therefore would not have inherited this convenient source of cheap labour for themselves. There is however evidence that the German settlers did have Xhosa servants and workers.<sup>73</sup> They therefore would have been able to construct a master-underling relationship along racial lines similar to that which the British settlers constructed, allowing them to foster a sense of community with other white settlers, if not necessarily exclusively with other German settlers. Indeed, as shall be seen in the next chapter, the relationship and distance between the German settlers and their workers was not as clear-cut as that of the British settlers and their workers. Moreover the peasant farmer settlers did not exhibit the class differences which the 1820 settlers did, so that it may well have been easier for them to develop a sense of community.

The 1820 settlers' experience of collective insecurity may well have been the key uniting factor for them. After their arrival, opinions of the amaXhosa in the British settler community were divided. (Lester 2001: 55) Those who traded (illegally) with the amaXhosa in the Transkei were much more understanding of the plight of the amaXhosa under colonial rule, and rebuked the government for its repressive policies. (Lester 2001: 56) This changed with the Sixth Frontier War, as Lester notes:

The war of 1834-5 [...] was the most vicious yet and it was beyond anything that the British settlers on the frontier had experienced. In total, forty-three colonists were killed and 765 farms burnt or pillaged. [...] It was the collective experience of the war, and the metropolitan and colonial debates to which it gave rise, which prompted most of the settlers to close ranks and to forge an unprecedentedly clear and embattled political identity. (Lester 2001: 63)

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<sup>73</sup> This is discussed in more detail in chapter five.

From this moment on, the amaXhosa were viewed by the British settlers as irredeemable savages, and the settlers began to view themselves as a community under siege, with particular emphasis on the word 'community'. (Lester 2001: 63) A collective view of the amaXhosa and their situation allowed them to begin viewing themselves as a homogeneous group with characteristics distinct from other groups. It is debatable whether the German settlers had an equivalent experience to that which brought together the British community in the Eastern Cape. Fear was certainly evident among the settlers at that time. Rutherford (1961: 305f.) describes the mood in the Eastern Cape in 1854:

The settlers were convinced that the Kafir chiefs were inveterate enemies bent on war and pillage and that their tribesmen were incorrigible thieves. They expected war and imagined it. Frontier alarms occurred every three or four months throughout Grey's governorship [...]. The Kafirs were just as fearful that the Europeans might on some trivial pretext invade their locations, seize their cattle, burn their kraals and occupy their lands. (Rutherford 1961: 305f.)

This was the environment into which the Germans came in 1857 and 1858. There is certain to have been a degree of fear of the amaXhosa among the German settlers for one particular reason: The German military settlers who came out were influenced by British opinions of the amaXhosa, both while in England and after their immigration, falling as they did under the command of the colonial government after their arrival. (Schnell 1954:67f.) Those military settlers that remained in their settlements would perhaps in turn have 'warned' the arriving peasant farmer settlers of the perceived danger. A baseline of unconscious fear would certainly have encouraged the German settlers to unite as a community, but then again it would also have encouraged bonding with other white settlers, so would not necessarily have been a conduit for 'German-ness' as such.

One factor which aided the 1820 settlers in maintaining their sense of community was the role of print media in solidifying this identity. In this regard, the figure of Robert Godlonton, editor of the *Graham's Town Journal* and author of *A Narrative of the Irruption of the Kafir Hordes* (published after the Sixth Frontier War), became a central figure in a campaign of rewriting history to suit this new sense of community. Lester comments on Godlonton's book that "[t]here is no mention here of the frequent references made by settlers in the 1820s to Graham's Town as a 'dismal, depressing place', nor of a high rate of suicides within the early settlement, nor of the *GTJ*'s own 'countless stories of failed settlers returning to Britain'". (Lester 2001: 70) The failure of German settlers to attain their goals of a better life is also glossed over by German settler descendants.

The German settlers did not have newspapers printed in their own language after 1858, and therefore would not have had the steady stream of propaganda which the British settlers received. Print media would not have been able to amalgamate German communities in the same way. Significantly though, the mythology created in order to foster a sense of British identity appears to have later been borrowed wholesale by German settler descendants to describe their ancestors. Take for instance Lester's observation that "[t]he [British] settlers' sense of self-legitimation was attached firmly to what they saw as the 'improvement' of this landscape, partly through the construction of European-style 'towns and villages, fields of grain and vineyards'". (Lester 2001: 68) Baillie (1990: 6) for instance claims that the German settlers "came to a still wild country. Mrs. Zeelie describes Berlin not as a town as it is today, but a few houses spread out with wild animals and hostile blacks". The British settlers espoused the notion was that they had turned this savage patch of earth into "a busy, productive and utilitarian landscape". (Lester 2001: 69) If there is one adjective it would be safe to say has been applied liberally to the German settlers, it is 'productive' and its many synonyms. This is clear from many of the settler descendant descriptions of daily life in the previous chapter, and is also evident in the following descriptions of German settler identity.

In German settler descendant accounts of German settler history, the emphasis is on their forefathers' simplicity, and rustic lifestyle. As Baillie (1990: 13) puts it, "the old Germans are remembered as leading a hard and simple life." A Mr. Durrheim claims, "[w]e weren't rich people. We were brought up very plain, you know. We started off with nothing." (Baillie 1990: 13) Stories are told of children walking to school with no shoes and coming home to work on the farm in the afternoon (Baillie 1990: 9f.) and families taking their produce to market by wagon (Baillie 1990: 11). Child labour is of course by modern standards considered exploitation, but it was the norm among peasant families of Europe for centuries. As Galeski (1987: 138) reveals, on the peasant farm, "[t]he work is done by the family. What is more, the generally accepted pattern of the organization of labour on an individual farm assumes family participation. Otherwise, it is either not fully accomplished, not done properly or it meets with considerable difficulties". Winkelmann provided further details of German settler hardships: "So far as I know the German settlers had no tanks but they used to cart water from the nearby rivers or springs for domestic use. They usually had a sledge with one or two barrels on it and this would be drawn by one or two oxen. [...] Also, the German settlers made their own candles and soap." (Winkelmann 1979: 19) Settler descendants also tell of the German settlers' ruggedness and frugality in every aspect of their lives.

One Mrs. Fetting tells of her grandmother's habits: "She used to fatten geese and kill them herself. She's put her big doek on and a big apron and sit there and nobody was allowed to touch it, and they would collect the blood and make sausages from that. And she'd cut the legs off and the side parts but everything was used. Even the feathers." (Baillie 1990: 17) In fact, it is unlikely that the original peasant farmer settlers would have considered these virtues at all noteworthy:

[I]n the traditional peasant society hard work and thrift are moral qualities of only the slightest functional value. Given the limitations on land and technology, additional hard work in village productive enterprises simply does not produce a significant increment in income. It is pointless to talk of thrift in a subsistence economy in which most producers are at the economic margin; there is usually nothing to be thrifty about. (Foster 1965: 307)

This provides some indication that the values of the settler descendants have meandered away from those of their ancestors, and toward South African English perceptions and values.

One method for maintaining British identity among the 1820 settlers which has no counterpart among the German settlers is the correspondence between British women of the colony and their relatives in England. (Lester 2001: 74) This was not limited to letters, but also often stretched to ordering the latest fashions and furniture, using relatives in Britain as intermediaries. (Lester 2001: 74) The German peasant farmer settlers in particular had no such ties to the fatherland. There is no evidence whatsoever of correspondence between German peasant farmer settlers and their German relatives. As with personal accounts, the German peasant farmer settlers were presumably not at leisure to write long letters to their friends and family, nor did they have the money to order German goods. It is as though family and friends in Germany ceased to exist for them as soon as they stepped onto the ships bound for South Africa. They did not have a constant stream of news from Germany. A lack of ties to Germany meant that it was more difficult for the German settlers in the Eastern Cape to maintain a German identity than it was for the British settlers to maintain a British identity. Their only means for connection with Germany was through the church and the pastors it sent out from Germany.

One last means whereby a British identity was maintained by the 1820 settlers was the observance of daily rituals associated with 'British-ness', particularly taking afternoon tea. (Lester 2001: 74) Not only was this a communal activity, it also provided a daily reminder of the settlers' British identity. There is no mention in outstanding accounts of German settler life of any equivalent ritual (which is to say any equivalent *daily* ritual). The closest equivalents would be weekly church

services, religious holidays, and rituals associated with weddings. These did indeed provide an opportunity to assert a uniquely German identity, through uniquely German customs. According to Baillie, the church was essential to the formation and retention of German culture in the Eastern Cape: "To a large extent they [the German settlers and their descendants] looked to the church to maintain traditions such as German hymns, the German form of Christmas and other holidays and the German language." (Baillie 1990: 15) This appears to have been essential because the settlers did not have language as a unifying factor, as shown above.

Although the church seems to have been unable to provide a common spoken language for the Germans in the Eastern Cape, it did provide a cultural backbone for the community. Religion was an important uniting factor for the German settlers and their descendants, and Suárez-Orozco (2004: 133) identifies religious affiliation as a positive factor in aiding cultural adjustment. She adds that "[a] well functioning social support network, quite predictably, is closely linked to better adjustment to the new environment". (Suárez-Orozco 2004: 133) Given Gropf's account of life in her settler village in chapters three and five, it can be concluded that the military settlements did not provide a reliable social support network, nor could this type of social network be considered particularly functional. This may provide one explanation for why the peasant farmer communities were more stable than those of the military settlers. Baillie emphasises that the cultural influence of the church was greater "in the early years when ministers were still recruited from Germany for the different communities." (Baillie 1990: 15) This appears to imply that the community was relying on their pastor to show them what exactly German culture was. If this was indeed the case, the German culture manifested in the Eastern Cape is the construct of the various German pastors, rather than of the German communities themselves. These reverends were indeed very important in shaping the community in a number of ways. Albert Kropf and his future son-in-law Dr. Wilhelm Beste (both missionaries) taught the children of the German settlers in Stutterheim, thereby maintaining their German, at least for a time. (Zöllner & Heese 1984: 38) That Kropf was fluent in isiXhosa (he had after all completed a translation of the Bible into isiXhosa, and also wrote a *Kafir-English Dictionary*, one of the first dictionaries of isiXhosa) would have been helpful in terms of German-Xhosa relations. (Zöllner & Heese 1984: 219f.) The Reverend Carl Hugo Gutsche, a Baptist minister based in King Williams Town, often travelled between German settlements to perform religious ceremonies (see for example Watters 2000: 63; 65; 169), thereby providing a link between these communities which for the most part had no other contact with each other. Mrs. Köpke (Baillie 1990: 15) claims that "[i]n those days a minister was... a doctor, a teacher, a chemist,

a lawyer and even a mid-wife". This shows how central the role of minister was to each German community. Whatever the case, German cultural activities, whether imported by the community or by the church, allowed the settlers to maintain and express their identities, particularly a cultural identity which differentiated them from other white groups in the area. They made their own German sausage (Baillie 1990: 18), took part in German wedding traditions such as *Polterabend* (Baillie 1990: 19), the traditional German Christmas on 24 December, and colouring eggs at Easter. (Baillie 1990: 20) In this way, some kind of communal identity could be formed, albeit a rather reduced one.

As much as the church brought the German communities together, it also created division between the two main denominations, the Lutherans and the Baptists. A Miss Ballack asserts that "Braunschweig is Lutheran and we are Baptists so we don't really mix with them". (Baillie 1990: 16) Mrs. Fetting confirms, "You seldom got them marrying out of their church". (Baillie 1990: 16) On the other hand, a rival church within the community probably strengthened the in-groups' sense of group identity, so that although at the town level it was divisive, it created a sense of unity at the level of church community. (Newman, Duff & Baumeister 1997: 996)

One potentially divisive factor in the German communities would have been the psychological effects of immigration on both first- and second-generation settlers, which has not been discussed by others who have studied these settlers. Although my data comes from studies of modern immigrants to America, much of the conclusions drawn can be applied to the German settlers. If anything, the effect would have been even more dramatic, given the finality of their separation from their homeland. Suárez-Orozco (2004: 128) notes that "[f]or many, migration results in substantial gains", particularly financial gain, making it a tempting offer for many. This was as true for German immigrants to South Africa in the nineteenth century as it is for immigrants today. Suárez-Orozco (2004: 128) cautions that a psychological price must be paid for these potential gains, one which affects both parents and children, but particularly children. She describes the peculiar intercultural space which immigrant children must inhabit:

Immigrant parents often have to make dramatic sacrifices for what they hope will be a better future for their children. They are frequently fiercely protective of their children, with deep-seeded concerns about the perceived dangers of the new environment [...]. They may set limits that are significantly more stringent than they would have been had they stayed in their country of origin. At the same time, immigrant parents are often quite dependent on their children, who may develop language skills more quickly than they do.



As a result they often serve as interpreters and errand-runners for the family. (Suárez-Orozco 2004: 130)

Second-generation settlers experience both a new level of freedom due to their quicker adaptation to new cultures and languages (Suárez-Orozco 2004: 131) and greater restriction due to their parents' sense of danger in their new surroundings. This leads to “a dissonant combination of precocious worldliness and sheltered naiveté”. (Suárez-Orozco 2004: 138) This is evident for instance in Michael Friedrich Köpke's reluctance in allowing his daughter Auguste to marry August Peinke – he was most likely being somewhat overprotective, because there does not appear to have been any reasonable objection to their union. (Peinke 1992: 49) Another example provided by Watters (2000: 117) is that of Marie Emilie Peinke's surveillance of her children: “[She] used to sit and watch (through field glasses) her sons working in the lands – so they dared not shirk their labours!” The second-generation child also begins to question their affiliations: “Many [adolescents] are torn between the attachment to the parental culture of origin, the lure of the often more intriguing adolescent peer culture, and aspirations to join the [...] mainstream culture”. (Suárez-Orozco 2004: 138) This will be seen in chapter five in Grimm's (1915) account of the Tissendorf family. The elder son's ability to learn languages and local cultural practices quickly became essential to both father's and son's survival, but it also meant that he began to lose his identity as 'a German'.

#### The nature of German culture in the Eastern Cape

There are a number of factors relevant to the German settlers which would have helped to ameliorate their cultural transition. As already mentioned, religion one was one of these factors. Suárez-Orozco (2004: 133) adds that the immigrants' humble origins would have provided an advantage: “The poorest immigrants, who are largely members of the lower classes in their country of origin, often suffer tremendous adversity as a result of immigration. Despite these difficulties[, ...] they often achieve relative improvements in their economic and social circumstances”. This means that the German settlers, consisting largely of peasant farmers, would have been accustomed to adversity and were therefore able to adjust to adversity in their new home without too much difficulty.

Of the self-identification of the German military and peasant farmer settlers, Riechers (1920: 168) has this to say:

Für die vor 50, 60 Jahren oder noch früher Ausgewanderten gab es den Begriff "Deutschland" und was sich für uns Jüngeren alles damit verbindet, gar nicht. Sie kannten noch das Elend deutscher Kleinstaaterie. Sie waren Württemberger, Bayern, Preußen, Hannoveraner, in zweiter Linie erst Deutsche. Wie konnten sie da ein starkes Deutschbewußtsein erwerben?<sup>74</sup> (Riechers 1920: 168)

According to Riechers, German settlers probably did not see themselves as people with a common heritage and bond of blood. If this were indeed the case, I would expect to see evidence that the German settlers fraternised mainly with those from the same state or region, but this does not seem to have been the case. The German settlers fraternised with those who lived in their settlements, whether from a different region of Germany or not, and indeed whether they were German or not, as shall be seen in chapter five. Although the peasant farmer settlers came from many regions of Germany, they were more similar than they were different. Fogleman (1996: 80) describes how German settlers in America in the eighteenth century created a single German identity for themselves: "The German-speakers were well aware of their diverse backgrounds – more so than their new neighbours were – but these differences paled in comparison to those between them and the English, the Scots-Irish, Scots, and others". Similarly, the German settlers in the Eastern Cape, having only the English, the amaXhosa, and the amaMfengu with whom to compare themselves, would most likely have come to the conclusion that they were a community at least in some ways separate from these other groups.

As for the manner in which German culture developed and manifested itself in the Eastern Cape, it appears that the German military settlers and the German peasant farmers settlers may have had very different cultures, at least until such time as they amalgamated into one community. After the arrival of the peasant farmer settlers, their cultural practices appear to have become the dominant ones in German communities. The military settlers were already clearly stratified in terms of class, with higher-ranking military personnel coming from the upper middle class and aristocracy, and ordinary soldiers coming from the lower classes. (Schnell 1954: 170) The peasant farmer settlers had no such obvious class differences. Winkelmann (1979: 21) points out the diversity of the resulting German communities in the Eastern Cape, stating that they "came from good families, some were even looked upon as wealthy families, others working class, others peasants [...]". This statement rather downplays the currently available evidence that the overwhelming majority were

<sup>74</sup> "For those who emigrated 50 or 60 years ago or even before that, the concept of 'Germany', and everything that it means to us younger ones today did not exist. They still knew the misery of German scattered regionalism. They were from Württemberg, Bavaria, Prussia and Hanover first, and from Germany second. How could they acquire a strong sense of their German identity in such circumstances?" (Own translation)

in reality peasants, but nonetheless shows that the German settlers communities, like the 1820 settler communities, were not entirely homogeneous.

What I wish to propose is that the cultures of the military settlers and the peasant farmer settlers were in a number of ways very different, and that these cultural differences may explain the mass exodus of the military settlers and the contrasting persistence of the peasant farmer settlers. Given the class differences in nineteenth-century Germany, it is clear that the middle class, aristocrats and lower classes all inhabited very different day-to-day realities and therefore probably exhibited differences in cultural practices and beliefs.

One factor which can explain cultural variance is the influence of the environment. This is not a field without controversy, perhaps most evident in the furore over Jared Diamond's (1997) *Guns, Germs and Steel*, a book which hypothesises that all cultural differences, including developmental differences, can be attributed to environmental factors. This book and its author have attracted particular criticism in the field of geography. Sluyter (2003: 813) accuses Diamond of "neo-environmental determinism", while Judkins, Smith and Keys (2008: 17) criticise his hypothesis as being "simplistic" and claim that it "privileges the environment as the primary influence on human-environment relations". (Judkins, Smith & Keys 2008: 17) They caution that "[d]ecades of research have demonstrated that human-environment relations are a complex of intertwining influences and limitations that resist single-factor causal correlations". (Judkins, Smith & Keys 2008: 27) This is to say that environment does influence culture, but not in a simple linear fashion. They also note that the environment is not simply imposed on societies; societies also affect the environment in various ways (Judkins, Smith & Keys 2008: 28), including building roads and houses, and engaging in agriculture. This being said, the environment can play a part in catalysing cultural change as far as immigration is concerned. If a group moves from one climate to another, or one landscape to another, it would follow that they may have to adapt their cultural practices accordingly, for instance, changing their dress. This kind of adaptation can be seen in the loss of the *Osterstiepen* custom, presumed by Webb and Welz (1990: 8) to be due to seasonal differences between the northern and southern hemispheres. If one accepts Triandis' (2009: 197) assertion that environment plays a key part (but not the only part) in the evolution of culture, then it is logical that peasants and city-dwellers, for instance, would have different cultural traits. Triandis does however claim that cultural practices that were particularly useful in a group's adaptation to their original environment (in this case, Germany) may persist even after these conditions no

longer exist. (Triandis 2009: 190) This can be seen in religious traditions in certain other cultures which prohibit the consumption of foods such as shellfish or pork, and which persist long after they are no longer necessary for survival. This indicates that although a change in environment may result in cultural changes, it will probably not result in radical cultural change, as some former customs will persist.

Triandis points out a number of ways in which the environment affects culture, and which could pertain to the peasant farmer settlers. Firstly, “[c]ultures where wealth is easily moveable (e.g., cattle can be moved more easily than trees) develop a “culture of honor” in which people are socialized to be fierce and to react aggressively to insults, so that strangers will be discouraged from stealing their moveable goods”. (Triandis 2009: 193) Foster (1965: 300) notes the same characteristic in peasant societies, citing a related cause – the belief that all resources (including honour) are available in finite quantities. Cattle can reasonably be considered a finite resource. This principle applies both to the amaXhosa, in whose society cattle played a number of important roles, and to the German settlers, once they had acquired cattle. Note that this aggression is directed at outsiders, not the in-group. Dobrowski (1987: 274) explains, “[a] village community with a strong sense of solidarity had also a well-defined sense of distinctness in relation to the outside world. Thus the inhabitants of neighbouring villages were always treated as strangers. They were treated differently, though with varying degrees of antipathy”.

Can this characteristic – aggressive responses to insults – be attributed to the German settlers? Other than the isolated examples of Ferdinand Köpke and Friedrich Wilhelm Neemann mentioned in chapter three, there is scant evidence that the German settlers displayed much overt aggression to outsiders. They were surrounded by other groups whose property (cattle) was also moveable, i.e., the amaXhosa and the English settlers. If interactions between these two groups are examined, it seems clear that there was a lot of aggression and fear in their interactions – there were, after the arrival of the 1820 settlers, four frontier wars between the British government and various factions of the Xhosa people<sup>75</sup>. My hypothesis is that the German settlers' small numbers (as noted by Flohr 1970) prevented them from acting aggressively as this would be counter-productive to self-preservation, or indeed the preservation of livestock. The theft of cattle increased during the Ninth Frontier War, so that warfare would have in no way bettered the situation of the German settlers. It may also be the case that the German settler communities did

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<sup>75</sup> It should be noted however that there were five frontier wars prior to the arrival of any settlers whatsoever. For further detail on these wars, see Peires (1982).

not acquire many cattle at first due to the exorbitant prices mentioned by Bauer (in Oswiecinski 1875) in chapter three, which therefore would have meant that they did not initially need to worry about moveable goods.

I would argue that the German military settlers exhibited more individualist tendencies whereas the peasant farmer settlers exhibited a more collectivist approach. There are no doubt many societies (such as the amaXhosa or the Chinese) that exhibit much stronger collectivist tendencies than the German peasant farmer settlers did, but viewing them on a spectrum as being more collectivist than usually expected of Europeans appears to explain a number of the unusual aspects of their behaviour. A significant observation is that “[t]he less social change is occurring in a culture, the more it is likely to be collectivist. The more social change is occurring in a culture, the more likely it is to be individualist”. (Triandis 2009: 200) As has been noted by Carr (1993: 55), Germany was not ready for the industrialization it was going through in the nineteenth century; this applied most particularly to the rural peasantry, who demonstrated a strong distrust of it, expressed most clearly during the 1848 revolution when they destroyed industrial machinery. (Kitchen 2006: 77) Furthermore, in-group social change would essentially have slowed to a standstill after immigration to South Africa. Dobrowski (1987: 268) asserts that “[a] very slow rhythm and tempo of development is a characteristic feature of every traditional culture. Many technological arrangements and economic habits have shown unusual tenacity throughout the centuries of feudalism, and even after the nineteenth-century emancipation the position was not radically altered”. This is evident in the peasant farmers' hesitation in adopting new ploughing methods to prevent erosion. (Flohr 1970: 284) What this indicates from a cultural perspective is that the rural peasants were more likely to be collectivist than both the urban working class and the upper classes, meaning the German peasant farmer settlers were more likely to be collectivist than the German military settlers.

This has further implications. Chiu, Dweck, Tong and Fu (1997) indicate that members of collectivist societies “believe they live in a fixed reality with a rigid moral order” and “have a greater preference for duty-based morality”. (Chiu, Dweck, Tong & Fu 1997: 924) This affects the stability of the cultures: “Whereas duty-based morality is a system-oriented morality that serves to maintain the status quo, rights-based morality is a person-centred morality that promotes social change”. (Chiu, Dweck, Tong & Fu 1997: 924) It is not difficult to anticipate which of these groups (duty-based or rights-based) would make better settlers. Due to the fact that the military settlers

came from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, they are more likely to have been on the individualist side of the spectrum, meaning that they would have been more willing to change the status quo by deserting or volunteering for service in India than persist in the duties assigned to them by the British government. If this assumption is correct, then social unity would also have been threatened by in-group quarrels, because “[t]he more individualist the culture, the more people express negative emotions within their in-group”. (Triandis 2009: 202) Steinbart (1975; 1978) provides a number of examples of fights and attacks of military settlers on other military settlers, so this seems feasible. On the other hand, the peasant farmer settlers would be duty-bound to stay as stipulated by their contract, as well as demonstrating greater social cohesion. As noted in chapter three, the situation regarding the peasant farmer settlers remaining on their farms is more complicated – many left initially, only to return again at a later time. This indicates that they were more practical than foolhardy, but nonetheless determined to return to their allocated land. The main reasons for the immigration of the German military settlers were boredom and the possibility of owning land, whereas a number of peasant farmer settlers accounts indicate that they made the move in order to improve the prospects of their children.

Another significant factor determining cultural differences between the military settlers and peasant farmer settlers is that the vast majority of the German military settlers were male, whereas the peasant farmer settlers were rather more balanced in terms of gender. As Poston and Glover (2005) indicate, the German legionaries were already creating a problem of excess males back in England after the Crimean War, judging by the manner in which the government dealt with them:

Authorities in the past have [...] recruited excess males into dangerous law enforcement and military occupations, or into large-scale public works projects, often in remote regions, both of which were characterized by higher than average mortality rates. Governments have also used the extra males in the development of unexplored territories; they have also encouraged the males to migrate to other countries. (Poston & Glover 2005: 14)

This is what happened in the case of the German military settlers, but of course the British government was merely moving the problem elsewhere, rather than genuinely solving it. It is natural that a mostly male community would develop a different culture to a community in which the male-to-female ratio is balanced. Hesketh and Zhu (2006) provide a number of consequences of abnormal male-to-female ratios, which normally hover around 1: 1. (Hesketh & Zhu 2006: 13271) China, traditionally considered problematic due to couples favouring male children, has a

male-to- female ratio of 1.2: 1. (Poston & Glover 2005: 7) Compared to the 3: 1 ratio of the military settlers, this is not a big discrepancy, but can already be seen to be causing social problems. Hesketh and Zhu (2006: 13273) caution that current predictions about the consequences of a disproportionate number of males are speculative, but suggest that violence levels would increase, and that those males lower on the social ladder would remain unmarried due to women having a greater choice of partners. (Hesketh & Zhu 2006: 13273) Poston and Glover's (2005: 20) available evidence also supports this claim. They do nevertheless assert that "[t]here is [...] evidence [from other research] that, when single young men congregate, the potential for more organized aggression is likely to increase substantially". In essence, the cultural patterns seen among the German military settlers (outlined in the thesis introduction) are exactly those predicted by sociologists for societies in which male-to-female ratios are high, namely, high levels of violence and community instability. Steinbart describes the behaviour of a number of the men in the settlements:

Wir haben im Bereiche der ganzen deutschen Ansiedelung leider schon mehrfache Beispiele aufzuweisen, wo wehrlose Kaffern von [...] Bösewichtern schändlich ermordet wurden, und selbst eigene Kameraden unter ihren Händen ein tatkräftiges Leben schmachlich aushauchten, ja sogar Desertionen en masse mit den Waffen in der Hand zur Ausführung bereits angebahnt werden.<sup>76</sup> (Steinbart 1978: 88)

This is characteristic of the sociologists' predictions regarding unbalanced sex ratios.<sup>77</sup> In addition to the problematic aspects of an unbalanced sex ratio, a recent long term study of German soldiers indicates that military training and service makes people less 'agreeable' (Jackson *et al.* in press), which would also increase the likelihood of aggression. What Barber (2000: 265) posits, using 70 years' worth of Interpol data, is that although an uneven ratio is detrimental in the short term, it acts as a stabilising force in the next generation, because a scarcity of females (according to his thinking) encourages fidelity and marital stability, whereas "[c]onflict between the sexes, associated with marital instability and divorce, would be predicted to increase the probability of violent crime because children who are raised in conflict-ridden, coercive homes are more likely to be antisocial in their attitudes, delinquent as teens, and to commit crimes of violence". (Barber 2000: 265) As such, the military settlers with families who remained may have been a stabilising

<sup>76</sup> "Unfortunately, among all of the German settlements, we have had several examples of unarmed kaffirs being disgracefully murdered by [...] villains [certain members of the Legion], and even of some of their own comrades pitifully breathing the last breath of their vigorous lives at their hands. Even mass desertions, armed with weapons to carry it out, were initiated." (Own translation)

<sup>77</sup> In one of the more bizarre episodes of South African history, the British government, realising that so many males made the German community an unstable one, decided to ship out Irish women for them. The majority of these women never became wives to German legionaries.

force on the peasant farmer community who joined them.

The argument that the peasant farmer settlers fell on the collectivist side of the spectrum is compelling. Another supporting assertion is that “[t]he more children there are in most nuclear families in the culture, the more likely is the culture to be collectivist. That is because when there are many children, it is necessary to have more norms and rules that apply to all the children and to enforce these norms; otherwise, there can be chaos”. (Triandis 2009: 200) Using Schnell's (1954: 199f.) 1862 and 1864 survey figures as a guide, the ratio of children to women among the peasant farmer settlers was 3.2: 1 in 1862 and 3.4: 1 in 1864, whereas the ratio of children to women among the German military settlers who remained was 2.1: 1 in 1862 and 1.8: 1 in 1864. This suggests that the peasant farmer settlers were at least *more* collectivist than the military settlers, even if this does not prove their collectivism absolutely. Meier (1992: 44) notes anecdotally that “[l]ong ago [German settler] families were very large, having as many as 20 children in one family. The ones I recorded had up to 14 children in one family”. Using the example of the Peinke family, the children of the original immigrants numbered five, and the eldest son August, and the second eldest Michael Friedrich in turn each had fourteen children, the eldest daughter Dorothea Luise had eight children, and the youngest son August Ferdinand had eleven children. (Watters 2000: Appendix C) In the following generation, the number of children in each family unit ranged from three to ten, with most having at least five children. (Watters 2000: Appendix C) The study of families in Bodiam by Cunningham (1999) further supports this claim by indicating that many families had nine or ten children.

A piece of research which further proves this hypothesis of a collectivist attitude among the peasant farmers is that of Inglehart and Baker (2000: 23), who suggest that “the world views of the peoples of rich societies differ systematically from those of low-income societies across a wide range of political, social, and religious norms and beliefs”. Inglehart and Baker (2000: 25) argue that traditional poor societies “emphasize social conformity rather than individualistic striving, believe in absolute standards of good and evil, support deference to authority, and have high levels of national pride and a nationalistic outlook”. These characteristics are strongly reminiscent of collectivist culture, and indicate that differences in social position can indeed result in cultural differences. It has also been sufficiently demonstrated by the various accounts that the peasant farmer settlers were living, at least for the first decade after their immigration and often longer, in



subject poverty. This would logically have had some effect on their view of the world, especially given the feudal background whence they came.

In contrast to these theories, Kitayama *et al.* (2006) argue that life on a frontier is likely to encourage individualism, which they substantiate using data from America and from northern Japan. The authors “hypothesize that voluntary settlers are likely to have a highly autonomous, independent, goal-oriented mental set. This goal-oriented mental set predisposes the individuals to seek novelty and to take risks”. (Kitayama *et al.* 2006: 370) This seems to apply in particular to the German military settlers, who came to the Eastern Cape seeking adventure and fortune. Kitayama *et al.* find that “frontier life is often harsh, and every endeavor entails substantial risks—both economic and corporeal—and, thus, more often than not, mere survival is at stake”. (Kitayama *et al.* 2006: 370) They argue that

In this way, the cultural environment is gradually structured to sustain the ethos of independence. In the process, the dispositional lay theory of independence becomes fully legitimized and normative; as a consequence, it is likely to be transmitted over generations, even when the frontier ceases to be a reality. (Kitayama *et al.* 2006: 370)

The German peasant farmer settlers were living on a frontier, so why did the rampant individualism predicted by Kitayama *et al.* not come to pass in this case? The key phrase here is voluntary settlement. Certainly the German settlers all chose for their various reasons to come to South Africa, but Suárez-Orozco notes that the situation is a little bit more nuanced than whether the immigrants chose or did not choose to come:

Was the individual “pushed or pulled” out of the country of origin? If the immigrant is pulled out of his homeland by the promise of opportunity and adventure, he is likely to be more positively disposed to the experience than if he is “pushed” out by ethnic, religious, or political conflict, chronic hardship, or famine in the homeland. (Suárez-Orozco 2004: 132)

The German peasant settlers, given the circumstances under which they left their home countries (as discussed in chapter three), could not be said to have been 'voluntary settlers', knowing that their choice was driven more by desperation than adventurousness. They consequently could not be characterised as 'novelty-seeking' and 'risk-taking'. In addition, Foster (1965) has in chapter two provided a cultural explanation of peasant risk-taking behaviour which does not require any particular individual trait and is therefore a more likely explanation for large numbers of German immigrants from the same area leaving Germany for South Africa. It seems unlikely that a large group

from one of the poorest regions in Prussia just so happened to consist only of individuals who were the German equivalent of David Livingstone. The German military settlers on the other hand did emigrate for “the promise of opportunity and adventure” and it therefore could be surmised that they would exhibit stronger individualist traits, as predicted by Kitayama *et al.* (2006)

Baillie (1990: 6) notes the pride the German settler descendants have in being German, although he cites only one interview in substantiating this. Webb and Welz (1990: 2) cite two additional sources to support this, thereby providing further proof of the claim. Despite the many factors that made the cohesion of these German communities unlikely, such as their small numbers, isolation, and lack of government support, there were some tight-knit communities in the Eastern Cape. Baillie (1990: 25) maintains that “Frankfort, Keiskamma Hoek, Brauschweig and Izeli were very much German communities”. There is insufficient data in the passenger logs for the peasant farmer settlers to identify the origin of Keiskamma Hoek inhabitants, but my collation of the data available in Spanuth (1958: 8-12) indicates that Frankfort consisted almost entirely of settlers from Pomerania and the Uckermark, and that Braunschweig demonstrates a majority of Pomeranian families. It may just be coincidence that these particularly cohesive communities consisted mainly of northern Germans, or it may indicate that a commonality in regional culture forged closer links than the more abstract conception of common nationhood. Flohr asserts that “[d]ie jungen Ciskei-Deutschen wählten bis zum zweiten Weltkrieg [Ehegatten] noch fast ausschließlich unter Deutschen”.<sup>78</sup> (Flohr 1970: 186) This may show the belief in some kind of cultural sanctity on the part of the German settlers, although this statement does contrast the assertions of Riechers (1920). Also in contrast with Riechers (1920), Flohr claims that the naturalisation process of the German settler descendants is “natürlich und nicht aufzuhalten”.<sup>79</sup> (Flohr 1970: 286) One Mr. Radloff claims that members of the Keiskamma Hoek community did not sign up to fight in the Second World War against Germany because “[t]hey were sort of German, there was a German thing, ja.” (Baillie 1990: 24) Despite years of living in an English colony, it seems that certain communities clung to the German way of life as they interpreted it, which included not fighting against Germany in World War Two.

Baillie's final word on the state of German identity in the Eastern Cape is this: “[T]hey were never a truly unified group. They were from the outset split geographically into small communities. At the

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<sup>78</sup> “until the Second World War, the young Ciskei Germans choose their future spouses almost exclusively from the German community.” (Own translation)

<sup>79</sup> “natural and not to be stopped”. (Own translation)

same time, despite all being of German origin, they were divided culturally as well, as shown both by the lack of a common language and of a common church". (Baillie 1990: 31) As has already been shown, their lack of common language and common church is not necessarily as extreme as Baillie implies it to be. Baillie also demonstrates awareness that the histories provided by the German settler descendants are not necessarily accurate: "The Germans are proud of their settler past. It is one which they romanticize". (Baillie 1990: 31) Although these descendants may view their past with rose-tinted glasses, their testimonies are one of the only ways left to understand the nature of the settlers' lives, and how they saw and see themselves. That they view the past the way they do reveals something of their collective identity. Their self-identification as German does not refer back to Germany, but rather is based on the German identity constructed in South Africa. As Baillie points out, "[t]he majority of the German settler descendants no longer know from which area of Germany their families came and have never maintained links with relation[s] in Germany". Baillie (1990: 31) "Most of the German settler descendants agree that the majority of German influences in the area have died out with the last generation". (Baillie 1990: 29) The outside influences of other groups as well as their long connection with the land means that the descendants now identify themselves as South Africans. (Baillie 1990: 30)

Despite this later exodus of the German settler descendants from their former settlements, Daphne and Brett claim that

the initial German imprint is still visible. It is witnessed by the existence of barns in the centre of villages, bake ovens in back gardens, and the remains of old abandoned wagons, all of which give small pockets of this area an Old World atmosphere – an atmosphere out of keeping with the Cape Colony of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and with the African continent of today. (Daphne & Brett 1987: 63)

These relics provide proof of the German cultural practises unexpectedly maintained in an environment so different from the one whence these settlers had come. Despite the many factors which could have torn the community apart, and the salient factors which held it together, the most powerful factor in maintaining a community was that of the church. The church became the sole link to Germany, and the pastors became guides in maintaining German customs and language. Granted, the church in Stutterheim had been built in collaboration with the English settlers in that town, but services in the church were separated along language lines, thus creating separate German and English congregations, despite sharing a place of worship. ("A Short Ecclesiastical History of Stutterheim" 1957: 13) A secondary factor which may have played a role in

the close-knit communities of Frankfort and Braunschweig is regional commonality. Once the German communities had been established as such, they could be said as a group to have demonstrated a number of characteristics *as a group* (rather than as individuals, where differences were bound to be evident), the most evident of which was a collectivist outlook distinguishing the peasant farmer settlers from the military settlers who volunteered for service in India. This collectivism explains a number of idiosyncrasies in their behaviour and may well be a useful framework to apply to other peasant migrants of this time. Over time, the cultural characteristics of the peasant farmer settlers came to apply to the German communities of the Eastern Cape as a whole, thus including the military settlers who remained, and their descendants. It nonetheless appears that there were at every juncture cultural influences not just from within the German community, but also from outside it. This will be explored more fully in the following chapter.

## **5. Interactions with other groups**

### Interactions with other white groups

There is not much literature on interactions between the Germans and other white groups prior to the First World War, presumably because it was mostly uneventful. Tankard (1992: 17) provides a measure of evidence that German settlers in East London experienced some antipathy during the South African War. This did not go further than a few angrily worded letters to the local newspaper, one of which called for the boycott of German businesses and the discharge of Germans from any public office. (Tankard 1992: 17) This suggestion was never acted on, and it would therefore seem that the general public of East London bore no ill-feeling toward their inhabitants of German origin. Watters (2000: 124) states that her father and grandfather both fought in the South African War on the side of the British, and therefore relations between the two groups must have been good at that time. Le Roux's father was a member of the Cape Mounted Rifles: "Dad came back to Bodiam from the Boer War[;] he left the Cape Mounted Rifles to help run the land for grandfather – a mistake, as he was totally unfit [...] for farming in any form and later on much regretted leaving the Police Force, for, after all, in the C.M.R. he was with his own kind, English speaking military men. Now he missed his tennis, bridge, his authority in the outpost [...]. [H]e remained an outsider in that close German community". (Le Roux 1975: 15f.) This is an example of German settlers being prejudiced against the English, rather than the other way around. This attitude did however change over time, as will be seen below. Schnell (1954: 202ff.) writes of many Englishmen praising the Germany military settlers and peasant farmer settlers, including the eminent historian George McCall Theal and former prime minister of the Cape Colony John Merriman. This attitude only seems to have changed with the declaration of war in 1914. Le Roux (1975: 16) and Meier (1992: 42) both share recollections of dances which took place in Bell. Meier's account of these dances indicates that a certain degree of interaction between English speakers and the German community was indeed taking place: "People came from as far as King [Williams Town] to these dances at Bell [...]. The Tarrs, Timms, Currins, Reynolds and many others were among the dancers [at a dance] which was not an "invitation" dance but one given by the then [p]roprietor [...]". (Meier 1992: 42) Le Roux (1992: 53) provides a list of her neighbours when she was living in Bodiam; these have distinctly British-sounding names, such as Nelson, Woods, Marsh, Bradfield, Shaw and O'Reilly. The intergroup interactions in this particular area must have been relatively extensive. Le Roux (1992: 52) confirms this by stating that "the Settlers (German and 1820) began to link up and inter-marry. The Germans remained in their area from Hamburg to Bell, but the British Settler descendants drifted closer [...]. My sisters all married Englishmen". The period of

which le Roux (1992) is speaking would have been after the First World War and possibly even during the Second World War, depending on her age at the time of writing. Anti-German sentiment clearly had not had much effect on this particular community of Germans and English living together. Nevertheless, according to Webb and Welz (1990: 9), “a considerable amount of anti-German sentiment was experienced by the descendants of the settlers” during the First World War. A Mrs. Zeelie recalls her experiences during this time: “When we were children going to the Girls High School ... we were called 'bloody Huns', we were called 'bloody Germans' we were spat in the face; our bread was hit out of our hands...” Riechers (1920: 169) places in his article a plea to all South African Germans: “Wollen wir uns noch länger wegwerfen und denen nachlaufen, die uns Hunnen und Barbaren schelten?”<sup>80</sup> This indicates that the Germans in South Africa were looked down upon by English speakers, most likely as a result of the war they were engaged in at the time of writing. This is unlikely to have been a pleasant time for the Germans, especially if Riecher's claim that many German farmers lived in non-German communities is true. Tankard contends that there was a great deal of anti-German sentiment in the Eastern Cape. He claims for instance that “[w]hen the Lusitania was sunk in 1915, it aroused an anti-German crusade in the town [of East London]. Hanover and Berlin Streets were promptly renamed and even little Berlin became known as Brabant for a very short time”. (Tankard 1992: 20) This does not appear to have universally been the case, however. Le Roux (1975: 16) remembers that “[d]uring the War Mr Carl Meier gave a concert in his big store in aid of Red Cross Funds. [...] The evening proved a great success and ended with “Rule Britannia” loudly sung by audience and cast”. It appears that in Bell and Bodiam at least there was no animosity between English and Germans, with one German resident (i.e., Carl Meier) even going so far as to raise funds for the war effort. Baillie (1990: 22) observes that “in September 1914 the German school in East London closed down and those children then had to go to English schools. [...] Before 1914 German was also taught at the farm schools but this was ended with the outbreak of the war”. The First World War therefore detrimentally affected the German communities' access to education in, and about, the German language. This war also stoked anti-German feelings in certain communities, feelings which were to be strengthened during the Second World War (Baillie 1990: 23; Webb & Welz 1990: 9f.), although the related experiences of the German settler descendants are beyond the scope of this research.

Riechers claims that the Afrikaners (“die Buren”) were sympathetic to the German cause at the time of the First World War: “Das beweist u. A. die Tatsache, daß die Regierung des Oranje-

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<sup>80</sup> “Do we want to continue to throw away our culture and follow those that vituperate us as being Huns and barbarians?” (Own translation)

Freistaates Deutsch als Pflichtfach an den höheren Schulen einführt.”<sup>81</sup> (Riechers 1920: 166) An article in the December edition of *Der Auslandsdeutsche* corroborates Riecher's assertion that German was a compulsory subject: “Aus der Bestellung einer großen Anzahl deutscher Lesebücher geht hervor, daß der südafrikanische Freistaat [...] in der Tat in seinen höheren Staatsschulen Deutsch als Pflichtfach eingeführt hat.”<sup>82</sup> (“Südafrika” 1919c: 486) The fact that the Afrikaners considered German a language worth studying does not however necessarily indicate political support, although it does at least seem to indicate a belief that Germany would continue to be significant in world politics. Another reason for the popularity of German language as a subject may simply have been its similarity to Afrikaans.

Interactions between the German settlers and the Afrikaners seem to have been limited. A large number of Afrikaans settlers who settled in the Eastern Cape during the eighteenth century had between 1836 and 1838 moved further north to Natal, the Orange Free State or the Transvaal. (Etherington 2001: 243) Afrikaans people remained, but not in any significant numbers in or around German towns, judging by their absence from German accounts of these towns. There are two instances of direct interaction that I was able to find, one being that of Mr. Tissendorf and his son with their Afrikaans employer (Grimm 1915: 119), and the other being the presence of Afrikaners in Cradock, the town in which Friedrich Wilhelm Nesemann settled. (Nesemann 1988: 13) As already noted, Tissendorf and son were paid for their wall-building services in kind, namely room, board, and one sheep a week. Lester (2001: 59) explains that this was a common master-servant relationship among the Afrikaners at that time, with payment in kind and the servant eating at the master's table being common practice. A more indirect interaction would have been between German settlers recruited to fight for the British in the South African War and the Boer soldiers. (Watters 2000: 124) It appears that Afrikaners in the German settlement towns were either absent or so small in number so as to have been considered not worth mentioning. Therefore the Free State Afrikaners' opinion of the German language during the First World War is unlikely to have been of consequence to the German settler descendants in the Eastern Cape.

An August 1919 edition of *Der Auslandsdeutsche* reveals that 1480 Germans had already been deported from South Africa during the First World War, with another 100 pending at that time. The article reports that “[e]s handelt sich dabei um ‚Verdächtige‘ und um solche, die ihre Heimsendung

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<sup>81</sup> “This is evidenced by, among other things, the fact that the government of the Orange Free State is introducing German as a compulsory subject in high schools.” (Own translation)

<sup>82</sup> “It can be concluded from the order of a large number of German primers that the South African Free State [...] has indeed introduced German as a compulsory subject in high schools.” (Own translation)

selbst gewünscht haben.”<sup>83</sup> (“Südafrika” 1919b: 262) Given that the legislation was only enacted in March 1919 (“Südafrika” 1919a: 218), that is a rather large number of deportations in a short period of time.

Another article from the newspaper *Der Auslandsdeutsche* published in October 1920 indicates that many Germans had their estates confiscated during the First World War. It is also noteworthy that many of these Germans were actually British citizens, i.e., citizens of Great Britain or one of her colonies (most likely South Africa). It was therefore not their German nationality, but their German heritage that made them targets:

Einer Bekanntmachung des Finanzdepartements der Union ist zu entnehmen (10. Juli 1920, Gouvernement Gazette vom 16. Juli), daß das Eigentum einer größeren Anzahl von Personen vom Custodian freigegeben wurde. Einer uns zur Verfügung gestellten Liste entnehmen wir die Namen der Eigentümer, wobei das in Klammern gesetzte B jeweils die britische Staatsangehörigkeit des Betreffenden kennzeichnet [...].<sup>84</sup> (“Von deutschem Eigentum in Südafrika” 1920: 592)

Of the approximately 160 names listed, 52 were British (most likely South African) citizens, given that all white citizens of British colonies were citizens of the crown. This is not a small number of people who had their property seized despite their citizenship. The experience of Pastor Riechers (1920) also demonstrates that many Germans were arrested and placed in prison camps, although this serves only to verify that people who were still citizens of Germany (such as Pastor Riechers) were imprisoned, not that South Africans with German heritage suffered the same fate.

A notice in an October 1920 issue of *Der Auslandsdeutsche* indicates that possessions to the value of £9 000 000 were confiscated by the South African government. After the war, the government had the problem of returning these possessions. Instead of giving the sum to a “Wiedergutmachungskommission”, which they claimed provided no guarantee that the property would be returned to the rightful owners, the state decided to treat the money as a government loan at 4% interest for thirty years. “Darüber würden Urkunden ausgestellt werden, die für 5 Jahre unübertragbar bleiben sollen, damit sie nicht in falsche Hände fallen.”<sup>85</sup> (“Für Südafrika-Deutsche”

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<sup>83</sup> “They are “suspects” and those who have themselves expressed a wish to be sent home.” (Own translation)

<sup>84</sup> “According to a public notice (10 July 1920, government gazette from 16 July) from the Union of South Africa's finance office the property of a large number of persons will be released by the custodian [government administration]. We quote the names of the property owners from a list made available to us, and we use a 'B' in brackets to designate the British citizens among those affected [...].” (Own translation)

<sup>85</sup> “Furthermore, documentation will be issued about these funds. They should remain non-transferable for five years in order to prevent them falling into the wrong hands.” (Own translation)



1920: 592) This action is applauded by the author, although it also seems an underhand way of earning interest on the sum.

In October 1919 *Der Auslandsdeutsche* had reported that “[d]er gesamte Wert dieses Eigentums beträgt ungefähr 12 ½ Millionen Pfund Sterling.”<sup>86</sup> (“Südafrikanische Union” 1919: 389) One wonders how that same sum was estimated at 9 million the following year. As regards South African Germans, “[d]ie Regierung habe die Absicht, den Deutschen, die beim Ausbruch des Krieges in der Union ansässig waren, ihren Besitz so bald als möglich zurückzugeben. Der Wert diese Eigentums beträgt ungefähr 1 ¼ Millionen Pfund Sterling.”<sup>87</sup> (“Südafrika” 1919b: 389) This amount was only a small percentage of the total property confiscated, but nevertheless not insignificant, especially given the buying power of such an amount at that time.

There are surnames on the list of people whose property was seized that could correspond with German settler surnames on the original ships' logs, such as “Burmester”, which may correspond with “Burmeister”, “Muller”, which may be a corruption of “Müller”, and “Smidt”, similar to “Schmidt”. My thoughts regarding the possibility that farms belonging to Germans in the Eastern Cape were confiscated is that if settler descendants were still complaining more than 130 years after the fact that their ancestors had to pay quit rent for their land (Baillie 1990: 8), they would most likely have mentioned that farms were confiscated during the First World War. Nevertheless, their awareness of the events outlined above may have caused them to fear the confiscation of their own farms. Another report indicates that the government did plan to return property to South African Germans as far as possible:

Aus Kapstadt melden die Blätter, daß General Smuts im Parlament eine Regierungserklärung über die deutschen Eigentumsrechte abgab. Die Deutschen, deren Eigentum unter Regierungsverwaltung gewesen sei, sollten entschädigt werden. Bezüglich der Deutschen, die kein Domizil in Südafrika hatten, werde sich die Regierung an die Bestimmungen der Friedensvertrags halten.<sup>88</sup> (“Südafrika” 1920: 624)

This appears to indicate that from a government perspective, South African Germans were no

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<sup>86</sup> “The total value of these properties amounts to about 12½ million pounds sterling.” (Own translation)

<sup>87</sup> “The government has the intention of returning the properties of those Germans that were resident in South African Union at the time of the outbreak of war as soon as possible. The value of these properties amounts to about 1¼ million pounds sterling.” (Own translation)

<sup>88</sup> “From Cape Town the papers are reporting that General Smuts made a government statement about German ownership rights. The Germans whose property had been under government administration are said to be compensated. As regards those Germans who did not reside in South Africa, the government is said to abide by the stipulations of the peace treaty.” (Own translation)

longer enemies, although it seems somewhat unlikely that other South Africans would have been able to drop their wartime prejudices that easily, although as observed in communities such as Bell, where the Germans and English were fully integrated, this was not a prevalent phenomenon.

Overall, it seems that the interactions between the German settlers in the Eastern Cape and the English settlers were positive ones, with the exception, in less close-knit communities, of incidents during the First World War. The clearest indication of a positive association, and perhaps even a sense of shared identity, was that some of the German settlers fought on the side of the British during the South African War. The reason why they happened to affiliate themselves with the English and not the Afrikaans community appears to be simply that there were not many Afrikaners in the areas where the Germans settled.

In sum, the relations between the German settlers and their descendants and other white groups appears to have been largely uneventful, although as chapter five made clear, the English influence on the German communities became more and more evident through the generations.

#### Interactions with the black population

What must the amaXhosa have thought of the German settlers, as they witnessed them marching or riding ox wagons on their way to their new homes? What would the Germans have thought of the amaXhosa, observing them from the roadside? What kind of relationship would these two groups go on to have? As with much of German settler history in the Eastern Cape, there are many unknowns, but I wish to illuminate that information which is available as well as provide some educated estimates of the nature of early interactions between the German peasant farmer settlers and the amaXhosa and amaMfengu, an area where data is most scarce.

Any interaction between the German settlers and the amaXhosa or amaMfengu was and is complicated by the problem that the German settlers, whether military or peasant farmer settlers, were brought out at the behest of the British government, in order to accomplish British objectives. This is not to say that the German settlers (or indeed the amaXhosa and amaMfengu) were helpless victims of a British agenda, because they still had agency, however limited. What it does mean is that any interracial interaction would have been tainted by the much more extensive previous interactions between the British and the amaXhosa. There is evidence that the Germans adopted whichever stance the British government did towards a particular group, for instance, perceiving the amaMfengu as friendly and the amaXhosa as hostile. For example, August Peinke

(1992: 50) laments that after the Ninth Frontier War, “we could go back to our farms, but they were almost destroyed, not the work of our enemies [the amaXhosa] but our friends, the Fingos!” His surprise seems to indicate that he had adopted wholesale the official government attitude to the amaXhosa and amaMfengu. Furthermore, the German villages were a physical intrusion into former Xhosa territory - an invasion, as it were, planned by the British but ultimately carried out by the German settlers, unwittingly or not. To add insult to injury, the government proceeded to reorganise all Xhosa town dwellers. In Stutterheim “[i]n July of 1879 the first site was set aside for a native location. All “natives in the Municipality [were] required to locate themselves on this site by August 16<sup>th</sup> 1879.” (“Municipal Letters...” 1957: 13) The street-keeper would point out the site to anyone needing directions. (“Municipal Letters...” 1957: 13) The contact and relations between the amaXhosa and Germans was limited by government intervention, regardless of their opinions of each other. In addition to these limitations, later histories, including genealogies and anecdotes, were affected by the racial divisions of apartheid as mentioned in chapter one. Although the German settlers were an underprivileged white group, the nature of apartheid and its ideals meant that they became privileged relative to the black population between 1948 and 1990. The amaXhosa would no doubt have experienced a high degree of ambivalence towards the German settlers of 1857 and 1858, whose presence they would probably have likened to that of the Dutch and British settlers before them, some of whom had made use of devastating war tactics and humiliation, and some of whom had offered eternal salvation (and education) in the form of Christianity. Only time would tell the amaXhosa which one of these two groups the German settlers would most come to resemble.

Any description of interactions between the German settlers and the amaXhosa is incomplete without some explanation of Xhosa culture and history. Mtuze's introduction to Xhosa culture begins by stressing that “[t]here is no homogeneous Xhosa culture in the same way that there is no static language”. (Mtuze 2004: iii) He also explains that amaXhosa is a blanket term both for those who speak Xhosa and those “who derived their identity from the state and King they give allegiance to, e.g. the Xhosa under the two Xhosa chiefs or kings Rharhabe and Gcaleka [...]”. (Mtuze 2004: 4) The former group may consist of those who have a different ethnicity and who do not share the Xhosa origin mythology.

The British had a great deal of trouble securing the Eastern Cape as a territory, despite the fact that the Western Cape was firmly within their control: “Even though Europeans by then could supply

troops from their secure base at the Cape, it took nine wars and 175 years for their armies, advancing at an average rate of less than one mile per year, to subdue the Xhosa". (Diamond 1997: 397) This statistic makes Governor Grey's desperation to obtain white settlers for the frontier more understandable, as the British were by this standard not making any significant territorial gains in the Frontier Wars.

From the Xhosa point of view, the Frontier Wars were traumatic and exhausting. Neither the Boers nor the British played by their rules of war. For instance, in Xhosa warfare, "[t]o kill a woman or child, even if not deliberately, marked a man as a coward". (Pinnock 1988: 68) These principles were not necessarily honoured by the opposing side. The Frontier War of 1811 for instance "was [for the amaXhosa] a devastating ordeal. Never had they experienced a conflict so total in scope and so brutal in conduct. Traditional warfare typically excluded the wholesale destruction of huts and gardens, and the 'scorched earth' policies of Graham were 'a new and shattering experience!'" (Crais 1992: 100) Their dealings particularly with Governor Harry Smith (governor of Queen Adelaide from 1835-1836 and of Kaffraria from 1847 – 1851) had left a bitter taste in their mouths. According to Peires (1989: 5), "[f]or the Xhosa, Smith's hands were always red with the blood of their beloved King Hintsa, who had entered Smith's camp in 1835 with full assurances of his personal safety and never left alive". Harry Smith played a big part in leading the amaXhosa to expect trickery and humiliation from their white government and probably also from the white people around them, including the newly-arrived Germans.

The Cattle-Killing that followed in 1857 was both the physical and spiritual destruction of the Xhosa nation. Mtuze reinforces the importance of cattle in Xhosa life: "Of all the animals currently found in black communities not one surpasses cattle in significance. Cattle have a vital role to play in Xhosa life. Their value transcends social life to spiritual life." (Mtuze 2004: 106) Cattle represent wealth but also one's connection to the ancestors, to whom they were and are routinely sacrificed. (Mtuze 2004: 106f.) Crais (1992: 21) claims that cattle "represented a critical intersection of economics, authority and cosmology". To demonstrate this significance, Mtuze lists the seven Xhosa words which describe the shape of a cow's horns (Mtuze 2004: 107f.), and the twenty-five different words for their colouring. (Mtuze 2004: 108ff.) Bundy describes the custom of "eating up", where cattle were confiscated from wealthy owners to protect "against the ostentatious accumulation of wealth by an individual and against political ambitions which might accompany such enrichment". (Bundy 1979: 21) This reduction of wealth at the top had a corresponding

benefit for those at the bottom: "Those who were well to do offered at least one head of cattle to the poorer members of the community, normally a cow, to milk and provide for their children until it had given birth to a calf which they could keep when the original owner fetched the *'inqoma'*[,] borrowed cow." (Mtuzze 2004: 104f.) In this way, a certain degree of equality was maintained throughout the community. No one would be allowed to starve and no one would be allowed to prosper beyond what was considered reasonable (other than the chiefs). This contrasted strongly with the capitalist ideas, imported by the European settlers, which encouraged the accumulation of as much wealth as possible. This indicates a fundamental difference in value systems between the amaXhosa and the Europeans.

There were also differences in the nature of leadership between the British government and the amaXhosa. Whisson stresses that

with a few exceptions, like Shaka, chiefs did not have standing armies or police forces with which to enforce their will. "African democracy" under chief[tain]ship was thus a matter of reaching consensus in a situation where the chief would bring together the deliberations of the people in an acceptable way, and add his moral and spiritual authority to the decision. (More like contemporary bishops in a way). (Whisson in Mtuzze 2004: 112)

Mtuzze expands on Whisson's comments by claiming that "[a] Xhosa chief has no autocratic powers. He cannot wantonly take the life of any of his subjects, nor can he in any sense be a law unto himself. His chieftainship comes into being through the tribe, but, on the other hand, the tribe does not come into being through the chief". (Mtuzze 2004: 114) In terms of military might, this style of leadership would have weakened the amaXhosa somewhat because Xhosa warriors had to be convinced to fight, rather than simply being ordered to do so. Once convinced however they would go to the grave for their king. (Kaschula 1908: 5)

Mtuzze's (2004: 152) opinion on the Cattle-Killing is one worth noting:

This is one of the vexing problems in the history of Black people, complicated even more by the fact that recorded history is from the White perspective. They dismiss Black suspicions about a plot by the Europeans led by Sir George Grey to decimate Blacks so as to gain supremacy in the area[,] which they did gain after the tragedy. (Mtuzze 2004: 152)

Whether or not this claim is true, it would be difficult to prove given that the entire Xhosa history was oral until such time as Westerners saw fit to record it. Grey's response to the tragedy does not

ease the doubtful mind, however. Kaschula (1997: 50) details that “Grey refused to offer any relief against the starvation. He realised the famine would finally drive the Xhosa off their land and force them to become workers for the colonists. The population of British Kaffraria dropped from 105,000 to 37,000”. If Grey did not plan the Cattle-Killing, he certainly took advantage of them after the fact. Given the weakened position of the amaXhosa at this time, it is unsurprising that the German military settlers were not required for any military manoeuvres, as they had originally anticipated.

The amaMfengu were by and large less affected by the tragedy of the Cattle-Killing for a number of reasons. Bundy states that the amaMfengu were more receptive than the amaXhosa to the mechanisms of a capitalist economy (and the consequent accumulation of wealth), and reproduces some of the proposed reasons for this:

Omer-Cooper argues that 'their early association with the missionaries, their alliance with the British, and the degree to which traditional ways had been undermined by the *mfecane* meant that the Mfengu 'adopted western ideas much more rapidly than their settled neighbours', the adoptions including new agricultural techniques. (Bundy 1979: 34)

Another proffered explanation for their quick adaptation to capitalism was their lack of chieftains, who in Xhosa society acted as custodians who prevented the accumulation of significant private wealth. (Bundy 1979: 34) The Mfengu acceptance of Western attitudes to wealth and labour earned them favour among the British, and later among the Germans as well. For their docile acceptance of British rule and their help in the Frontier Wars, they were granted land in the Eastern Cape (usually land that formerly belonged to the amaXhosa). (Kaschula 1997: 45) Another precipitating factor in their accumulation of wealth was that the amaMfengu did not slaughter their cattle during the Cattle-Killing. A Mfengu man explained to George Cory that “a messenger came to us telling us we were to kill our cattle. We refused. One of the chiefs [...] said he did not believe in this thing. He had never seen dead people or cattle rise out of the ground”. (Cory 1989: 94) It therefore seems likely that the exorbitantly priced cattle which Bauer (in Oswiecinski 1875) complains about in chapter four were probably being sold by the amaMfengu.

Mtuzze (2004: 163) gives a brief description of the modern differences between the Xhosa and Mfengu cultures:

While some women have distinctive decorations on their ochre calico dresses, there are few if any social or cultural distinctives [sic] between Mfengu and Xhosa now outside predominantly Fingo areas such as Butterworth, Peddie, Keiskammahoek, Whittlesea and Lesseyton. (Mtuzze 2004: 163)

These differences, from a cultural point of view, are small, and as Mtuzze indicates, those outside of predominantly Mfengu areas do not go to the trouble of identifying themselves as distinct from the amaXhosa.

However, at the time of German immigration their differences, particularly their loyalties, meant that they remained distinct. The Ninth Frontier War was sparked by conflict between the Gcalekas and the amaMfengu. The Gcaleka were chased off their land by the British, only for half of that land to be granted to the amaMfengu. This incensed the Gcaleka, who attacked the amaMfengu, thus starting the Ninth Frontier War. (Kaschula 1997: 51)

If Steinbart's accounts of the Xhosa people were to be considered representative of the German military settlers as a whole, then they would have to be considered racist. His first description of the 'natives' is of the Khoi people of Cape Town. He mentions "[die] eingeborenen Hottentotten, welcher friedfertige Menschenschlag, von schwarzbrauner Farbe, und angenehmer Gesichtsbildung, jedoch mit manchen löblichen Eigenschaften begabt, die untergeordnete Volksklasse bildet".<sup>89</sup> (Steinbart 1975: 62) Most telling here is Steinbart's use of the word *jedoch*, indicating that he did not expect the 'Hottentots' to have any laudable characteristics. He also refers to these laudable characteristics as suitable for the lower classes. After arriving in East London, Steinbart caught sight of his first group of amaXhosa: "[wir] bemerkten [...] vor uns auf den Küstenbergen mehrere grosse Feuer, um welche die Kaffern nach Art der meisten wilden Völker sich tanzend belustigten [...]".<sup>90</sup> (Steinbart 1975: 66) He goes on to describe them as the epitome of "Arbeitsscheu und Stumpfsinnigkeit"<sup>91</sup> (Steinbart 1975: 70) in addition to being "blutgierig und raubsüchtig"<sup>92</sup> when given the opportunity. (Steinbart 1975: 72) In fact, according to Mabona (2004), the amaXhosa were anything but bloodthirsty, as a general rule:

There existed [...] many taboos against bloodshedding, and these were broadly observed

<sup>89</sup> "the native Hottentots, a peace-loving race of black-brown colouring and pleasant facial composition, who are however gifted with a few laudable characteristics, shape the lower social classes." (Own translation)

<sup>90</sup> "[W]e noticed on the coastal mountains in front of us a number of big fires, around which the kaffirs, the style of most wild peoples, amused themselves by dancing." (Own translation)

<sup>91</sup> "Laziness and general apathy." (Translated by J. F. Schwär and R. W. Jardine)

<sup>92</sup> "Bloodthirsty and with criminal tendencies." (Own translation)

especially before the Shakan wars, generally called **Mfecane**. Only the chief (**umntu wegazi** – man of blood) could permit shedding of blood of man or beast (in war or in hunt). Any death or injury including shedding of blood of man or beast had to be reported to the chief and he had to be compensated for it (**isizi** for persons; **ukuhlomla** for beasts, domestic or wild). This law was surrounded with many sanctions and taboos accompanied by rituals which had to be performed before and after actions involving shedding of blood. (Mabona 2004: 97, emphasis in original)

The sheer bureaucratic nature of what had to occur prior to and after giving anyone a quick stab would surely have been quite a deterrent to fighting in general. The arrival of the Dutch to their territory in the eighteenth century, and then the British in the nineteenth, would have made carrying out this custom more and more difficult, as they were assailed with superior weapons and bombarded with cultural propaganda, particularly that of Christian missionaries. Nevertheless, it is clear that Steinbart's opinion of the amaXhosa was not very high. Amusingly, the wife of Charles Brownlee, a missionary stationed at Stutterheim, considered by contrast the German military settlers to be a negative influence on the surrounding amaXhosa: "After a while the Natives, who came to Mr. Brownlee with their cases, got to mix with the German soldiers, drinking with them, quarrelling and sometimes fighting." (Brownlee 1896: 9) It is ironic, given Steinbart's rather scathing judgement of the Xhosa people, that his own community should be seen as a negative influence on them.

But can Steinbart's opinion be considered as representative of the German Legion? Bauer (in Oswiecinski 1875) does not appear to have any great feeling of antipathy towards the amaXhosa. He describes how the amaXhosa feared the German legion (Bauer in Oswiecinski 1875: 222), but he also explains that "[z]um Glück sah es damals im Kafferlande sehr unruhig aus"<sup>93</sup> (Bauer in Oswiecinski 1875: 221) as a result of the Cattle-Killing, indicating that his assessment of this tragic situation is presented with a view to personal gain. He does however concede that "[e]s gab aber auch unter den Kaffern Ungläubige, die klug genug waren, die Sache von einer etwas praktischern Seite aufzufassen, sich auf's Abwarten zu legen und ihr Vieh nicht sofort abzuschlachten".<sup>94</sup> (Bauer in Oswiecinski 1875: 222) He seems to have grasped that the amaXhosa were not a homogeneous group, a possibility of which Steinbart never demonstrates any cognisance.

The Gropp family was allocated to the village of Breidbach, the population of which was numbered at 66. (Flohr 1970: 272) Gropp mentioned that they were building "Kaffir huts" to live in, meaning

<sup>93</sup> "luckily, Kaffraria was very unstable at the time". (Own translation)

<sup>94</sup> "There were, however, also among the kaffirs disbelievers smart enough to grasp the matter from a more practical viewpoint, and who decided to wait and not to kill their cattle immediately." (Own translation)



presumably that they were imitating the building style of the surrounding amaXhosa. (Gropp 1981: 10) Gropp's racial attitude towards the black population of the Eastern Cape was a complex one. She mentions admiring the men she saw in traditional dress, but felt that they should not attempt to imitate the Europeans, which made a spectacle of them, as far as she was concerned. (Gropp 1981: 11) She also showed great distrust of the neighbouring chief, Cetwayo, who had sold her husband cattle that had a habit of finding their way back to the chief's kraal, an occurrence of which the chief claimed to know nothing. (Gropp 1981: 11) This distrust should not necessarily be taken as racism, however, as she distrusted everyone, with good reason. At one point she states, "It seems [ ] that the whole village had preyed on us". (Gropp 1981: 12) She found upon returning home after recovering from milk fever in an outhouse that most of her possessions had been stolen. Furthermore the carpenter who was working for them had stolen the shirt she had made for her husband, which he brazenly wore when he delivered the divan he had made (covered with one of her own tablecloths without her permission). (Gropp 1981: 12)

Overall, the diversity of attitudes towards the amaXhosa even in these three testimonies makes the dominant opinion of the military settlers difficult to discern. However, war creates a certain mindset, and as Hedges (2003: 9) warns, "even as war gives meaning to sterile lives, it also promotes killers and racists". In war, Hedges claims, "[w]e demonize the enemy so that our opponent is no longer human". (Hedges 2003: 21) For professional soldiers this is a habitual mental exercise making racism a very likely product of their battlefield experiences. This assessment of the psychology of the battlefield only means that the German military settlers were more *likely* to be racist, not that they actually were racist. That a number of 'defenseless' Xhosa men were killed by legionaries (Steinbart 1975: 88), may have been due to the cultural factors, particularly the predominance of males, noted in chapter five, rather than overt racism.

It is worth considering the mechanisms whereby racism works. A number of experiments have shown that stereotypes allow people to have faster processing times (Locke & Johnston 2001: 117) and process other information presented at the same time better. (Locke & Johnston 2001: 110) As a result of this, Devine (1989: 6) theorises that stereotypes are activated in everyone, whether they can be considered high-prejudice or not, but that low-prejudice people proceed to suppress this activation. Locke, Macleod and Walker (1994) disproved this by showing that low-prejudice people do not activate stereotypes at any stage of processing. As a result, "it seems that [it is] only those people who [...] believe the stereotype to be accurate and for whom the negative

components might be useful, that use it to judge others". (Locke & Johnston 2001: 117) This leaves the question of why people would lack prejudice when it offers processing advantages. Locke and Johnston (2001: 118) hypothesise that "cognitive economy is served by the tactical activation of information that serves to help you perform some task". If a person does not believe that prejudice is useful to them, then activating prejudice, particularly in scenarios where it is not relevant, would be more taxing on the mind than not. Another factor relating to prejudice that is particularly salient to the German settlers is that of social identity. As seen in chapter four, the German settlers overcame rather large internal differences to form a group identity. Terry, Hogg and Blackwood (2001) provide a comprehensive outline of social identity theory:

When people define themselves in terms of a self-inclusive social category [...] two processes come into play: (1) categorization, which means that differences between ingroup and outgroup and similarities among ingroup members (including self) on stereotypical dimensions are perceptually accentuated; and (2) self-enhancement which, because the self-concept is defined in terms of group membership, seeks behaviourally and perceptually to favour the ingroup. (Terry, Hogg & Blackwood 2001: 143)

The German peasant farmer settlers, who made up the majority of the German inhabitants, would have considered themselves not only members of this immigrant group, but also considered themselves to be affiliated with the German military settlers who remained, as well as the English with whom they cohabited. This means that the German peasant farmer settlers would most likely have adopted attitudes from the German military settlers and the English settlers. In terms of racial attitudes, this would not have been promising. As noted in chapter four, by the time the German settlers arrived, the opinion of the English settlers was exceedingly conservative and overwhelmingly racist in outlook, thanks to the formative experience of the Sixth Frontier War. Another aspect of this, already briefly mentioned, was the availability to the English settlers of cheap 'Hottentot' (i.e., Khoesan) labour. When the pass laws for the Khoesan were revoked by Ordinance 50 due to humanitarian efforts in Cape Town, the English settlers in the Eastern Cape were incensed. In legitimising their position, they could not simply say that they wished to maintain the cheap Khoesan labour so as to exploit them and make pots of money. "It was largely because of the requirement for 'morally legitimate' rather than blatantly rapacious capitalist behaviour, that settler protests about the effects of Ordinance 50 were couched in terms of the irrepressible criminality of the Cape's lower ('Coloured') classes." (Lester 2001: 60) The settlers characterised the Khoesan as lazy and immoral people in need of western guidance because they wished to exploit them, and needed to justify this exploitation both to themselves and to the

policymakers against whom they were rallying. Although this form of labour was unavailable to the German settlers, what was available were the desperate and starving Xhosa people, who after the Cattle-Killing had little to offer or trade to survive other than labour. (Pinnock 1988: 38) Due to their desperation, they would have been easy to exploit. Given that, as Lester shows, exploitation leads to discrimination (a point reiterated by Crais (1992: 44)), the opportunity of the German settlers to exploit black labour would probably have led at the very least to a patronising view of the amaXhosa. The Masters and Servants Act enacted in 1856 (Crais 1992: xvi) would also have bolstered their rights to exploitation while entangling paths of recourse for their black labourers<sup>95</sup>.

That interracial cooperation may have been essential to the survival of these European settlers is illustrated in Grimm's (1915) article on the Tissendorfs. Grimm chronicles the misadventures of Mr. Tissendorf and his eldest son after leaving their farm:

Danach machten sie sich auf zu Arbeitssuche zu Fuß in dem fremden Lande, und es war nichts besser, aber alles schwerer als zu Hause. Sie wanderten nach Nordwesten nach dem Kaplande hin, wo sich reiche Buren befinden sollten. Sie schliefen zuweilen im Freien, zuweilen in Kaffernhütten. Sie merkten bald, daß die Kaffernhütten mit ihrem Ungeziefer eine schlechte Unterkunft wären, aber die Kaffern gaben ihnen Mais zu essen und saure Milch zu trinken.<sup>96</sup> (Grimm 1915: 119)

Without the food and accommodation provided by the amaXhosa they met along the way, father and son may not have survived. An account by Armstrong of (her grandmother) Friedericke Köpke's journey to Grahamstown from one of the German settlements however suggests that this relationship was not necessarily one of mutual respect and trust: "They apparently only walked at night to avoid contact with the indigenous people who were not friendly and resented the presence of Whites in their area". (Armstrong 2008: 35)

The allegation that many of the settlers could speak isiXhosa and spoke it to each other, as Mr. Schuch (in Webb & Welz 1990) claims in chapter four, indicates that their contact with the isiXhosa-speaking communities must have been quite extensive. Armstrong (2008: 33) notes that her great-grandfather Ferdinand Köpke in 1873 "bought [a plot] from a man named Lusipo, (a member of the Mfengu tribe)". Clearly racial difference was no hindrance to a good business deal,

<sup>95</sup> Although the German settlers did not necessarily know this.

<sup>96</sup> "Thereafter they began their job search by foot in the strange land, and it was in no way better, and in every way more difficult, than at home. They walked north-west in the direction of the Cape lands, where there were to rumoured to be rich Afrikaners. They slept sometimes outdoors, sometimes in Xhosa huts. They soon noticed that the Xhosa huts with all their vermin were bad accommodation, but the kaffirs gave them maize/corn to eat and sour milk to drink." (Own translation)

nor did skin colour hinder land ownership, at least in the case of the amaMfengu. One Mr. Hempel claims, "I was born with the Blacks. Yes, from a baby, we learnt Xhosa because we were with them every day. You see the Blacks did the work at home and on the farm, and the younger ones, that were our age, we used to play with them." (Baillie 1990: 28) Baillie's essay provides certain indications that the association stretched back further in time than the third and fourth generations. Mrs. Langheim describes her mother's arduous set of household chores, noting that "the floors had to be smeared with cow dung and there's a child on the back<sup>97</sup> and a whole lot of others running around". (Baillie 1990: 13) Mrs. Winkelmann similarly describes her house as "something like the natives had a little while ago" (Baillie 1990: 7) and says of her kitchen floor, "this is just made of ant[ ]heap and it should be smeared with cow manure but that doesn't get done any[ ]more, although it was always done. It is something that the old Germans used to do". (Baillie 1990: 7) The practice of using cow dung to make the floor (Magona & Fraser 2006: 15) and carrying children on the back using blankets (Mtuze 2004: 16) is clearly derived from Xhosa culture. It is possible that carrying children on the back could have been learned merely from observing the Xhosa women, but it is likely that the method for making a cow dung floor would have had to be taught, which indicates early positive interaction between the Germans and the amaXhosa, or perhaps that the Germans already had Xhosa servants at this early stage<sup>98</sup>.

This association between Germans and amaXhosa is frowned upon by more recent immigrants from Germany, such as Mr. and Mrs. Schuch, who immigrated to South Africa in 1955. The extent of their pride in their German culture can perhaps best be illustrated by the fact that Mrs. Schuch "wears traditional German dress (Tracht) daily". (Baillie 1990: 29) Mr. Schuch says of the Eastern Cape German descendants, "Sie sind verkaffert".<sup>99</sup> (Baillie 1990: 29) This from Schuch's point of view seemingly undesirable transition is however probably the reason these settlers survived. Grimm provides an example of apparent cultural adaptation, as illustrated by the friendship struck up between Wilhelm Tissendorf (the elder son) and a Nqika (Xhosa subgroup) man named Go. Wilhelm had already begun learning to speak isiXhosa (Grimm 1915: 119), and Go taught the young man a number of useful skills:

Wilhelm lernte von Go Spuren lesen und Tiere sehen im Busch. Und Go zeigte ihm den Honigvogel, der ankündigt, wo wilde Bienen sind, wenn man ihn erst versteht. Er wies ihm,

<sup>97</sup> It is assumed that this was done using a blanket or similar fastening material because it would have made housework and farm work impossible if the child was hanging on by themselves – and they would only be carried if they were very young, even if that possibility were to be taken into account.

<sup>98</sup> So perhaps less positive.

<sup>99</sup> "They have been 'kaffirised'!"

von welchen wilden Wurzeln und Früchten einer zur Not im Felde leben kann, und wo die Pflanzen zu suchen sind. Und wie man ein Kochfeuer unterhalten kann mit einem einzigen schwachen Aste, dort wo Holz selten ist. [...] Um diese Zeit begann Wilhelm sich an Afrika zu freuen, obgleich seine und des Vaters Arbeit sehr schwer blieb.<sup>100</sup> (Grimm 1915: 121)

In addition to the numerous skills learnt from Go by Wilhelm, what is striking in this passage is the apparent shift in Wilhelm's affiliations. As he becomes more familiar with the landscape and how to survive in it, he appears to lose his nostalgia for Germany and develop a love for his new country.

Much has been made of the use of shweshwe (indigo cloth) by the amaXhosa, because of its allegedly German origins. DaGama Textiles, a prominent manufacturer of shweshwe, claims that “[t]he presence of indigo cloth in South Africa has a long and complex history. Its roots probably extend as far back as early Arab and Phoenician trade along the eastern seaboard before 2400 BC”. (DaGama Textiles, accessed 21/07/2012) It is also mentioned that this cloth was popular in Cape of Good Hope after its establishment. As regards the German connection, they assert that “in 1862 a German chemist developed synthetic indigo” (DaGama Textiles, accessed 21/07/2012) Another German link is “[d]ischarge printed indigo was manufactured and printed in Czechoslovakia and Hungary by Gustav Deutsch, and much of this cloth entered the South African market”. (DaGama Textiles, accessed 21/07/2012) I have come across no evidence that any German settlers imported or manufactured shweshwe, so it is doubtful that the German immigrants are the reason it got its nickname of “German print”. DaGama Textiles claims that “German settlers often elected to wear the Blue Print that [...] echoed the *Blaudruck* that they were familiar with in Germany”. (DaGama Textiles, accessed 21/07/2012) There is no photographic evidence of this, but that does not exclude the possibility that they did wear it.

Assion (1977) views the land occupation of the German settlers as colonisation, not only in terms of the Germans serving as instruments of British colonisation, but in terms of the Germans being colonisers themselves. Assion looks specifically at the Germans who settled in Natal, but many parallels can be drawn between these settlers and the earlier settlers in the Eastern Cape. Assion (1977: 6f.) claims that the peasant background of most of the settlers created a desire to own as

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<sup>100</sup> “From Go Wilhelm learnt how to read spoors, and how to see animals in the bush. Go also showed him the honeyguide that signals where wild bees were, once one learns to understand it. He showed him which wild roots and fruits of the veld one could eat if needs must and where to find them. He taught him how to maintain a cooking fire using only a single weak branch, when wood was hard to come by. [...] Around this time, Wilhelm began to be pleased with Africa, even though his and his father's work remained very difficult.” (Own translation)

much land as possible, because land was in their minds equated with freedom and self-determination. This dogged determination to better their situations resulted in a role reversal: "Ja, hier durfte er sich ohne Scheu den Feudalherren und Unterdrückern von einst vergleichen [...]. Die Rolle des "Untertanen" aber war dem schwarzen Landarbeiter zugeordnet [...]"<sup>101</sup> (Assion 1977: 7) In Germany they had been the serfs, but in South Africa they became the overlords. As one immigrant attested, "I am not sorry that we came to South Africa, [...] for after all, we are much freer here. In Germany, we were practically serfs – the subjects of our masters". (Schnell 1954: 205) Gropp (1981) indicates that she and her husband had black workers in their employ, which, along with the record that Steinbart (1975: 85) also kept a black servant (who is referred to as a "little brown devil"), indicates that Assion's (1977) assessment of the colonial relationship between white and black may be correct, at least in the case of the military settlers, and the testimonies by settler descendants above indicate at the very least that the peasant farmer settlers had servants in later generations. Fei (1987: 58) provides a perceptive explanation for this dominant behaviour:

Farm work under primitive techniques is drudgery. It is quite conceivable that those who can afford to live without being engaged in hard work will do so even at the expense of their standard of living. It seems that there are two ways of reducing the painful experience in productive pursuits: either to improve tools and utilize animal and natural power or to shift the burden to others. The first is exploitation of nature and the second is exploitation of man. (Fei 1987: 58)

However, as with any colonial relationship, the German settlers could not simply exploit Xhosa labour without justification. This justification was provided in the dichotomy between Christian and heathen. (Assion 1977: 10) Aschenborn (1955) attests that

[Afrikanische] Sitten und Gebräuche wurden als unerwünschtes Heidentum unterdrückt: man wollte christianisieren und europäisieren. Ausserdem wurde es oft selbst den Eingeborenen deutlich, dass die Mission zum Teil als politisches Machtmittel einer Regierung auftrat.<sup>102</sup> (Aschenborn 1955: 9)

By positioning non-Christian and non-European characteristics as bad, settler colonialists could justify the subjugation of the amaXhosa and the amaMfengu. Assion therefore argues that German missionaries paved the way for German settlers, by providing a ready excuse for land annexation. (Assion 1977: 10) This sense of entitlement due to allegedly superior moral conduct is most easily

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<sup>101</sup> "Yes, here he could unabashedly compare himself to the feudal lords and oppressors of yore [...]. The role of 'subject' though was now earmarked for the black farmworkers [...]" (Own translation)

<sup>102</sup> "[African] customs and habits were suppressed as undesirable paganism: they wanted to Christianise and Europeanise. It was also often clear even to the native people that the mission station was a conduit for the political might of a government." (Own translation)

seen in the racial attitudes of Steinbart (1975). Christianity provided a means of weakening the local population:

Selbst wenn der Eingeborene im wesentlichen geduldig und tolerant ist, so bedeutet die Christianisierung eine seelische Entwurzelung aus den Gemeinschaftsbindungen, die für den Einzelnen zu schweren Konflikten führt.<sup>103</sup> (Aschenborn 1955: 9)

Christianity had the effect, intentional or not, of dividing the Xhosa community into converts and heathens, and for the converts, conversion was a removal from their traditions and an induction into a new way of life. Converts were for instance introduced to a whole new conception of time: "Although the Xhosa divided the year into four seasons, they made no divisions into weeks until the missionaries introduced the naming of the seven days". (Pinnock 1988: 45) Crais (1992: 103) also stresses that "[w]ith the reorganization of space came the reorganization of time. Soon after the establishment of the station missionaries requested church bells which quickly became a central fixture of missionary life". The amaXhosa, whether converts or not, may have felt as though their time was being divided into smaller and smaller units, with no practical benefits resulting from this subdivision. The oppressive function of conversion comes from shifting the focus of these converts from their history, clans and land, on which they were experts, to Christianity, in which they were novices, thereby positioning them as uneducated and naïve.

Kaschula (1997) presents a more nuanced portrait of the missionaries than that offered by Aschenborn (1955) or Assion (1977). He admits that the missionaries forced the amaXhosa to give up many aspects of their culture, but also provided a measure of protection: "Many missionaries [...] wanted to protect their communities of converts against white colonials and the government. Since the missionaries spoke the Xhosa language, they could mediate between the Xhosa people and the white authorities to benefit the converts". (Kaschula 1997: 18) In addition, "[m]ission schools taught Western values to an educated elite that included many future leaders". (Kaschula 1997: 18) Although conversion did displace converts from their culture, as Aschenborn (1955) asserts, it also empowered them to fight for and eventually rule the country due to the education they had received. Crais adds that

over the course of the nineteenth century evangelical Christianity became a crucible within which a new and syncretic South African culture emerged. The integration of cultural symbols and knowledge could be both hegemonic and potentially revolutionary: religious

<sup>103</sup> "Even if the native is in essence peaceful and tolerant, conversion is a spiritual uprooting from the societal bonds, which leads to difficult conflicts for the individuals concerned." (Own translation)

belief could legitimate the inequalities of the present as well as provide a radical critique and understanding of the alienation with accompanied radical critique and understanding of the alienation which accompanied conquest and dispossession. (Crais 1992: 104)

In other words, South African converts, including the amaXhosa, began synthesizing Christianity into their existing culture, rather than completely replacing one culture with another, thus empowering themselves through selective use of Christian doctrine. The arrival of the missionaries was therefore very much a mixed blessing for the amaXhosa, with some resenting the presence of the missionaries and other rejoicing in it. It is important to realise that German mission churches and German community churches were not necessarily one and the same. Webb and Welz (1990: 4) say of the community churches that “both [Baptist and Lutheran] churches were, and still are, exceedingly conservative in political outlook. Contact with black Christians is minimal and blacks are not generally accepted as members of their churches”.

These theorists indicate that there are many subtle factors at play in interracial relations. Meier (1992) provides a personal account of a more positive working relationship than the subjugation described above, a family anecdote from the early 1900s:

Dad kept a Red Cross or Ambulance Box as we called it and the snake bite serum saved the life of one of our “hoeing” women who trod on a puffadder lying in the depression. For a time her life hung in the balance, her foot swollen to enormous size and [she was] very, very ill. Dad and Mother made her comfortable in the old outside room and tended her until she was on the way to recovery [...]. (Meier 1992: 41f.)

Deviating into discourse analysis for a moment, it is noteworthy that Meier's ancestor refers to the farm worker as “our “hoeing” woman”, i.e., making use of the possessive when referring to servants. This is language which is still in common usage in South Africa, but which also indicates a degree of condescension. Please note also that despite being life-threateningly ill, the woman was not brought into their home but nursed in a disused outhouse. This story does indeed reveal compassion, but on a limited scale where differences cannot be forgotten even in moments of emergency. Meier (1992: 42) does however add her forebear's opinion that “[s]omehow we were all living the same sort of life, with all its hardships and uncertainties[,] and illnesses and accidents were the things that happened to all of us – Black or White”.

Webb and Welz' (1990) take on race relations is rather less rosy than that proposed by Baillie<sup>104</sup>. They view the relationship as more of a patronising one. They claim that the German settler

<sup>104</sup> And using the same raw interview data, no less.



“attitudes are permeated with ‘we know our blacks’ and “we always treated them well” sentiments”. (Webb & Welz 1990: 12) Unbelievably, the feeling of superiority also manifested itself when it came to fluency in the Xhosa language. A Mr. Gudmanz insists that he “spoke the language better than they themselves could speak it. Not bragging, but this is correct. They don't speak a real fluent Xhosa any[ ]more”. (Webb & Welz 1990: 12) One Professor Gitywa, who lived among the German settlers, provides further proof of negative relations. His view of them is that they were “harsh people who were hard[-]working, but who also drove their workers hard”. (Webb & Welz 1990: 12)

Webb and Welz (1990: 12) suggest that relations with the amaXhosa were good, from the point of view of the German settlers and their descendants, as long as they remained obedient to the Germans and did not question their position. Once the amaXhosa became more educated, the German settler descendants' opinion began to change. A Mrs. Klackers claims, “[T]he educated native[,] he is civilised. It's the half[-]educated one that thinks he knows everything and he is the troublemaker”. (Webb & Welz 1990: 12) Mr. R. H. Durrheim also expresses the opinion that the education of the 'natives' led to animosity. (Webb & Welz 1990: 12) It is unfortunate that these interviews were conducted when black people around the country were becoming more politically active in a sometimes violent fashion (Johnson 1989: 116), as this may certainly have contributed to the German descendants' low opinion of them. It does however seem as if the German settler descendants were most annoyed about the subversion of power relations. Mr. Hempel says frankly, “I'm telling you that is such a big change... That the white man is below the black one, the black one is above now.” (Webb & Welz 1990: 13) Welz and Webb do however maintain that it would be incorrect to think that all the German settler descendants are racist. Miss Ballack seems to want to take the change in her stride: “I don't mind shaking hands with a black one. Only of course the trouble is today with all these problems going on that you're afraid to talk to a black one... But I'm so sad to think that when the blacks are really coming up... it's the most difficult now to really come and talk to them.” (Webb & Welz 1990: 13)

Assion also addresses the romanticization of the first German settlers by their descendants, as already discussed in chapter four in reference to Lester (2001):

Die Erstsiedler stellen sich in der Erinnerung durchweg als äußerst fleißig und pünktlich, geschickt und erfinderisch, sauber und ehrlich, erfolgreich, aber doch einfach und bescheiden geblieben, fromm und gottergeben dar – Eigenschaften, die man indirekt auch

für sich selber reklamiert, zumindest leitbildhaft [...].<sup>105</sup> (Assion 1977: 14f.)

In this way, the German settler descendants can depict themselves as virtuous, while remaining seemingly modest. The descriptions of diligence, ingenuity, honesty, success and piety are themes that run throughout the settler descendant accounts of the German settlers – chapter three is replete with anecdotes provided as evidence of exactly these characteristics. But the most intriguing of Assion's observations is that these German characteristics are the counterpoint of another set of characteristics: “[M]an hat in dem Tugend-Ensemble Punkt für Punkt die Entsprechungen zu den Negativ-Urteilen über die schwarze Bevölkerung”.<sup>106</sup> (Assion 1977: 15) The German settler identity therefore positioned itself as 'non-Black' identity. This is a classic example of 'othering'. It is natural for certain characteristics and beliefs to be prominent within any given society, but to view any society as homogeneous in its adoption of these characteristics is misguided. There were undoubtedly some lazy, proud, dirty, unsuccessful peasant farmer settlers. Mtuze refutes the stereotype of black people as outlined (and questioned) by Assion (1977). He asserts that “[t]he amaXhosa appreciated “*indoda enentsebenzo*” (a man who is able to work himself up and prosper). Contrary to popular myth, laziness was not encouraged”. (Mtuze 2004: 148) He adds that “[o]rdinary clean living was also highly regarded as such men were needed when it came to anointing newly circumcised men”. (Mtuze 2004: 148) This gives a strong indication that characteristics that were valued in German settler society were also valued in Xhosa society, despite cultural differences. It is actually difficult to think of any culture that emphasises dirtiness as a virtue, which exposes the illogical nature of 'othering'. This practice of 'othering' may be extremely inaccurate in its distribution of positive and negative characteristics, but it does serve a restrictive purpose in the in-group:

Im Zuge einer “selffulfilling-prophecy” verhält sich der Verachtete schließlich tatsächlich so, wie es sein Verächter von ihm erwartet, aber auch dieser ist in seinem Verhalten nicht mehr frei, sondern genötigt, mit entsprechenden Reaktionen auf der Gegenseite zugleich die Stabilisierung seines labilen Selbstwertgefühles zu bewirken.<sup>107</sup> (Assion 1977: 15)

The German settlers were able to maintain morality within the community by projecting

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<sup>105</sup> “The first settlers are throughout their memory extremely diligent and punctual, ingenious and inventive, clean and honest, successful, but remaining simple and modest, pious and devotional – characteristics which one claims also indirectly for oneself, at least as an ideal concept [...]” (Own translation)

<sup>106</sup> “One has in this ensemble of virtues point for point the antithesis of the negative judgements on the black population.” (Own translation)

<sup>107</sup> “In the course of a self-fulfilling prophecy, the subjugated begins to behave exactly as the contemptuous one expects him to, but even the contemptuous one is no longer free because he is now forced to produce opposite reactions in line with this, to ensure the stabilisation of his unstable self-worth.” (Own translation)

immorality onto entities outside the community, thereby requiring the in-group to exemplify the morals which the 'natives' were claimed to lack. This phenomenon is not somehow confined to the German settlers (and indeed it provides a good explanation for the remarkably similar settler mythologies throughout the world) and is present in every society. (Newman, Duff & Baumeister 1997: 980)

What is perhaps surprising is that given the similarities in both social standing and culture between the peasant farmer settlers and the amaXhosa, they did not develop a friendship or mutually beneficial relationship. Inglehart and Baker (2000: 26) explain that this would not have been likely:

[P]eople in societies shaped by insecurity and low levels of well-being [ ] tend to emphasize economic and physical security above all other goals, and feel threatened by foreigners, by ethnic diversity and by cultural change. This leads to intolerance of gays and other outgroups, an insistence on traditional gender roles, and an authoritarian political outlook. (Inglehart & Baker 2000: 26)

Both German and Xhosa inhabitants of the Eastern Cape at the time of German immigration would have, for the most part, been unable to see past their differences and acknowledge their commonalities due to their feelings of being constantly under threat.

On the basis of the evidence, it seems clear that German-Xhosa interactions could not be considered positive, but nor could they be considered particularly malicious. The Germans as a group tended not to get involved in the Frontier Wars. There were moments for both groups where the realisation dawned that the 'Other' was also a human being. However, these settlers and their descendants were not left to their own devices when it came to race relations but entered a country where race relations were tense, and they were surrounded by people (both English settlers and the earlier military settlers) who had already formed a negative opinion of the amaXhosa. Government policy also greatly limited the extent to which they could 'fraternise' with the amaXhosa, both during British colonialism and during apartheid. The amaXhosa were designated as underlings, and the Germans as white masters. It is not really clear if this was a role that the German settlers believed in, but judging by the patronising attitudes of their descendants, later generations did believe in that separation. The decision to socialise was never left up to either the German or the Xhosa people. However, small traces of cultural influence – in the style of building houses, in childrearing, in language – managed to assert themselves despite all the barriers erected to prevent them, and this is a heartening discovery, despite all the negative

aspects of German settler descendant attitudes.

## **6. Conclusion**

What happened to the German communities after the First World War? Certainly the most significant change for these communities came not in the immediate aftermath of that war, or even in the aftermath of the Second World War. Later apartheid policies tore apart the remaining German communities.

One of the most curious aspects of apartheid was the aim to create independent 'homelands' for each of the black ethnic groups in the hopes of one day 'emancipating' them, leaving behind a South Africa under white control. Louw (2004) elucidates that apartheid's phase two was about partition (not segregation). This partition plan – often called “grand apartheid” – was set in motion by the 1959 Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act. This precipitated self-government (1963) and the “independence” of the TBVC states: Transkei (1976), Bophutatswana (1977), Venda (1979), and Ciskei (1981). At great expense, these states were provided with all the paraphernalia of independence – for example, capital cities, parliaments, bureaucracies, independent stadiums, universities, armies, and embassies in Pretoria. (Louw 2004: 63f.)

All this would perhaps have been of no interest to German communities in the Eastern Cape were it not for the other side of the coin, that they were forced off of their land in order to create the Ciskei. (Louw 2004: 64) Beginning in 1955 and continuing up until the end of apartheid, the government forced German farmers in what was mooted to be the Ciskei to sell their farms and move away. Baillie (1990), Webb and Welz (1990), and Pienaar (2009) all view this as the death knell of the German communities in this area.

Much remains a mystery when it comes to these German communities. It is difficult, upon reviewing this thesis, to come to conclusions with any degree of certainty. The German communities were largely so scattered and isolated that it seems unlikely that generalisations could be made about them, and yet there were certain patterns that presented themselves in more than one town. Perhaps most importantly, many accounts of the German settlers have romanticised their struggles, their significance, and the extent to which they were tricked by the British government. On the other hand, the military settlers have been portrayed as inept or lazy or simply ignored. Regardless of their physical presence in the German towns, they arranged these towns and began ploughing the land. Those that remained promoted community stability by serving as teachers or maintaining stable families.

Dickinson (1964: 130) refutes the claim by writers on the topic of the German settlers (e.g., Gropp 1981; Daphne & Brett 1987) that Eastern Cape soil was inferior in quality to the soil in Germany. One significant difference was in the predictability of the weather patterns, which would have had an effect on farming. Bauer (in von Oswiecinski 1875: 224), for instance, complains more about the weather than the soil quality. I must conclude that the suffering of the German settlers has not been exaggerated, consistent as the accounts are from several different sources. What has been exaggerated, however, is the extent of their contribution to South Africa. There is no evidence showing that the Germans produced more food than their English or Afrikaans counterparts, even when taking into account their relative numbers. And as for their reputation as hard workers, this would surely apply to the 1820 settlers as well, who also had to toil out of sheer necessity. It cannot honestly be claimed that the achievements of the German settlers somehow exceeded those of the 1820 settlers. In addition, German settler descendants who continued farming may have worked hard, but this in most cases did not mean that they became prosperous. Many descendants interviewed by Webb & Welz (1990) struggled to make a living off their farms. Moving to cities offered better prospects in terms of wealth and also afforded women the possibility of emancipation from the confines of the farmhouse, and the opportunity to pursue higher education. Ultimately, Webb and Welz (1990: 13) put it quite accurately when they claim that the Germans in the Eastern Cape “were both perpetrators and victims of the system”. The Germans both suffered under the colonial and apartheid governments and caused suffering for a number of the amaXhosa. They were neither entirely innocent nor entirely to blame for racist policies carried out on the frontier.

The country whence they had come shaped the German settlers in a number of ways. Germany was at the time of the German emigration to South Africa a country not yet united (Carr 1993: 48), and enduring a painfully slow transition into industrialisation, due to the still entrenched feudal system. (Carr 1993: 55) This meant that the prospects for advancement for rural peasants were particularly bad, making it more likely that they would emigrate. It also meant that 'German identity' as a concept was at that time a rather fluid one. German settler identity in South Africa was therefore to a large extent constructed rather than maintained, as 'Germans' from all over what was to become Germany converged in the Eastern Cape and attempted to form a common identity. Although customs were brought to South Africa from Germany, it is difficult to tell which were brought out by the settlers and which by the German church. The church was at the centre

not only of German cultural life but also of German identity, and in this way a reverend could serve as a conduit between Germany and German customs, and German settlers who sought to maintain the German aspect of their identities. It was however difficult to maintain their identities as purely German when they cohabited and a number of cases were outnumbered by South African English inhabitants. A common German language was a strong uniting factor in the German communities, but the presence of English speakers in their midst meant that by the third and fourth generations the majority of German settler descendants were unable to speak German with any degree of fluency. German interactions with British settlers resulted in a more inclusive sense of identity in towns such as Stutterheim and Bell. This inclusiveness generally did not extend to the black population though.

In terms of cultural characteristics, the peasant farmer settlers demonstrated a greater flexibility than they have previously been given credit for, moving to where the jobs were, whether in Grahamstown, the Free State or Johannesburg, but usually returning to their farms or one of the German villages or towns. The German military settlers and peasant farmer settlers appear to have manifested different cultural identities until such time as they became one community. These two groups came to South Africa for different reasons – the military settlers with a view to adventure and personal gain, the peasant farmer settlers out of desperation. These different motivations ultimately led to these two groups displaying different cultural traits. (Kitayama *et al.* 2006: 370) The military settlers displayed a more individualist culture than the peasant farmer settlers and were generally more prone to violence and instability (Hesketh & Zhu 2006: 13273) until such time as the stabilising force of the peasant farmer settlers arrived.

When it comes to race relations between the German settlers and the amaXhosa and AmaMfengu, it is clear that events prior to the arrival of the German settlers, in particular the Frontier Wars and the Cattle-Killing, in many ways shaped their interactions. Germans such as Steinbart (1975; 1978) and Gropp (1981) misinterpreted the aftermath of the Cattle-Killing as laziness and foolishness, rather than the fight for survival that it was. The desperation of the amaXhosa, many of whom were starving to death, meant that they became available as labourers to German settlers. According to Assion (1977: 7) any economic progress made would have been at the expense of the black labourers who were being exploited. Lester's (2001) proposal that a master-servant relationship creates racism rather than being a result of it certainly offers food for thought, suggesting that employing servants would have inculcated the Germans with racist ideology.

According to Gitywa (in Webb & Welz 1990: 12), the Germans worked their labourers hard but did not themselves shirk labour. Under such circumstances, the German farmers probably worked side-by-side with their labourers, a situation which would certainly have been unusual at the time. Despite tense relations, the Germans appeared to get on better with the amaXhosa than other white groups. The Germans and amaXhosa were more similar than different. Many of the Germans spoke isiXhosa and the two communities displayed similar collective outlooks and values. Unfortunately, they never had the opportunity to coexist as equals, and this situation was compounded by apartheid policies.

The claim made by Schnell (1954: 245f.) in the introduction that the arrival of the German settlers promoted peace in the region is a dubious one. They certainly did not appear to cause any wars, but nor did they prevent the Ninth Frontier War from happening. They seem to have been too small in number to have had any tangible effect on the other groups in the Eastern Cape, in a peacekeeping vein or otherwise.

One area beyond the scope of this research which it would be fascinating to research further is the matter of German settler attitudes to the Second World War, as well as the discrimination German settlers suffered in South Africa during this time. Current research in this area is not particularly voluminous, and I feel it would be worth expanding.

I have to reiterate finally that Schnell (1954) remains the most trustworthy initial resource for researchers looking into the German military settlers or peasant farmer settlers. His material is thoroughly researched and remains as useful as it was in 1954. I hope however to have added to this body of knowledge through my research into the nature of the daily lives up until 1919, German culture in the Eastern Cape, and race relations. I hope that this research can bring the lives and values of these people back to life for the modern researcher, and perhaps inspire further research in the future.



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