

The Reminiscences of Thomas Green

Introduction

In 1896, Thomas Green, octogenarian ex-soldier and early settler in Natal, provided 'Kit' Bird, senior civil servant and chronicler of settler Natal, with a lively set of reminiscences which have proved to be a fruitful source for histories of early colonial Natal. The original manuscripts are in the *Bird Papers* in the Natal Archives Depot and, rather inaccurate, typescript copies are held in the Killie Campbell Africana Library in Durban.¹ Bird had set himself the task of recording the reminiscences of early settlers before they all died and through press reports, questionnaires and circular letters he tried to contact as many old colonists as possible. The *Bird Papers* in the Natal Archives Depot are the result. Bird did not publish much of his information, but the *Bird Papers* were extensively used by Hattersley and by later historians. Some ten years ago, two archivists, Avenal Geldart and Verne Harris, began preparing the collection for publication. Regrettably they both left the Archives in Pietermaritzburg before completing their task. The *Bird Papers* still await their editor and publisher.

It is well worth noting that while Bird was actively engaged in collecting settler reminiscences around the turn of the century, a fellow civil servant, James Stuart, was equally energetically collecting the reminiscences of many Zulu informants. The *James Stuart Archive* has been appearing under the editorship of the late Professor Colin Webb and Professor John Wright for several years.² The intellectual atmosphere in Natal among the colonial élite that gave rise to these parallel historical endeavours and the joint and separate impacts of Bird and Stuart on Natal historiography still needs exploration.

Both Bird and Professor Alan Hattersley published short sections of Green's reminiscences, but omitted those parts which add flavour, biographical details and background.³ Hattersley seems to have specifically omitted parts of Green's reminiscences which refer to settlers living in similar styles to the black inhabitants of Natal, either through their deliberate choice or through dependence on similar resources. Further research into Hattersley's editing of settler reminiscences would be necessary for this to be established as part of an editorial policy. In addition, Green's reminiscences have been referred to in several general histories of Natal and his lists of early settlers have been used, in conjunction with other sources, by Shelagh Spencer in compiling her register of Natal settlers.⁴ Clearly these reminiscences must be regarded as important source material.

Green's reminiscences are in three sections: An introductory note to Mr Bird, his extensive reminiscences and a short memoir on Dick King, his brother-in-law. Although not present at the Battle of Congella between Capt Smith's detachment and the Voortrekkers under Andries Pretorius, Green provides us with a unique description of conditions at Port Natal in the aftermath of the clash between the Trekkers and the British. He also describes the skilled work in civil construction and the manual labour done by the British troops, both in Port Natal and Pietermaritzburg: work which provided the basis for the infrastructure of the British colony.

There is extensive discussion of fellow-colonists and a variety of amusing anecdotes on the wild life and the environment in Natal. Green was as prejudiced as the next colonist and, at one level of mental consciousness, he regards Natal's black inhabitants as invisible, almost non-people; white settlers are the only real people in Natal. Yet, throughout his reminiscences, expressions of underlying respect for his black compatriots appear, even if phrased in terms, such as 'Kaffir' or 'Kafir' — he uses both spellings — which are now regarded as insulting. Furthermore it is clear from the reminiscences that the settlers and the army were heavily dependent on the black peoples among whom they lived, for providing food, shelter and for communications.

Thomas Green was born in County Cavan in Ireland and learned the trade of a stonemason. His

date of birth is not recorded in the reminiscences, but the KCAL holds a typescript copy of an unidentified newspaper report which gives his date of death as 1903.

Green joined the British army and came to South Africa in 1843 with the 45th Regiment, the Sherwood Foresters. Ironically, the 27th Regiment, the Inniskilling Fusiliers, an Irish regiment which recruited from Green's home and neighbouring counties, also claims him as a veteran. It is clear from his reminiscences that he served with both the 45th and the 27th regiments and with the Royal Engineers.

Green was stationed at Port Natal with the veterans of the Battle of Congella, but marched to Pietermaritzburg with the detachment of the 45th Regiment that established Fort Napier. During his years of service in Pietermaritzburg, Green was deeply involved in the construction of Fort Napier and of many public buildings and private homes. He also assisted the Royal Engineers with land and harbour surveys in Durban and after taking his discharge from the army, he settled in Durban. He speaks with pride of his life in Durban in general and, in particular, of the fact that he built the monument to the fallen of the Battle of Congella and the Siege of Port Natal. In 1879, he added an additional plaque to the monument to commemorate the fallen colonial volunteers in the Anglo-Zulu War.

Thomas Green married Dick King's sister and his description of his famous brother-in-law, while awe-struck and uncritical, provides some intimate details. It is strange that Green does not mention Ndongeni, who accompanied King for much of his ride, at all.⁵ Green does mention, however, the role of Mnini, the pro-British chief on the Bluff, who covered King's tracks and deliberately misled the Trekkers as to his route.

The manuscript in the *Bird Papers* has been taken as the most accurate version of Green's reminiscences. Illegible words in the manuscript have been cross-checked with the typescript and the clearer version has been taken. Editorial interventions such as this are indicated in the notes or in square brackets in the text. The original spelling, grammar and phraseology (including now offensive terms, such as 'Kaffir' and 'Bastard') are retained. Green is inconsistent in his spelling and slightly repetitive in his style, but changes have been kept to a minimum in the interests of conveying the flavour of the man and his times. Minor changes have been made to punctuation and to the paragraph structure, simply to improve the flow of the narrative; they do not alter the meaning in any way.

Green mentions numerous early settlers by name and checks have revealed that most, if not all, the 'British' settlers are included in Shelagh Spencer's lists of settlers.⁶ Those whose surnames begin with the letters A–F, have already been provided with comprehensive biographies. Green usually provides sufficient detail for a general reader on Natal history to identify the person being referred to, therefore the editorial policy here is to note only exceptionally important, or obscurely described, persons.

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NOTES

1. Natal Archives Depot: A79 '[C.J.] "Kit" Bird Collection', Vol. 6 ('Reminiscences of early settlers': G–H). The typescripts in the Killie Campbell Africana Library [hereafter KCAL] are in 'Uncatalogued Manuscripts'.
2. C. de B. Webb & J. B. Wright (eds & trans), *The James Stuart archive of recorded oral evidence relating to the history of the Zulu and neighbouring peoples*, Vols. 1–4, (Pietermaritzburg & Durban, 1976–1986 continuing).
3. C. Bird, 'Echoes of the past: records and reminiscences of old Natal', *Regimental annual*, 1921 [45th Regiment — The Sherwood Foresters]; and 'An Irishman of the 45th Regiment reaches Durban in 1843' in A. F. Hattersley, *More annals of Natal with historical introductions and notes*, (London, 1936), pp. 71–3.
4. S. O'B. Spencer, *British settlers in Natal 1824–1857: a biographical register*, Vols. 1–6, (Pietermaritzburg, 1981–1992 continuing).
5. Jacqueline A. Kalley quotes Elizabeth Watt as refuting Ndongeni's claims to have accompanied King on his ride: See 'Dick King: a modest hero', *Natalia* 16, 1986, pp. 39–44.
6. Spencer, *British settlers*, 6, (1992): See list between pp. 288–305.

GRAHAM DOMINY

I

Reminiscences of myself

On the 3rd May 1848 I purchased my discharge from the 45th Regiment after spending some 7 years and 150 days in the Army with the Engineers (& the 27th Regt) & the 45th Regt, so I have had a varied experience. The Colony of Natal has a great deal to thank the 27th for. They fought & bled, & handed over Natal watered with their blood. The 45th kept a firm hold on it, & tried to develop it. The 27th of that date was not like the 27th of late years that came to Natal.¹ They were about as true fellows as ever carried arms for Her Majesty.

I brought from the Army an exemplary character which I tried to keep up as well as I could. I was always a great favourite with my officers, and began in PMBurg as a Builder & Contractor. In 1851 I married Dick King's sister, & was brought to belong to the family of the famous Dick King. His sister — my wife — was the second volume of her famous brother & was a good wife & mother, and never afraid to rough it or give her help when required. She lived with me 36 years & died in Durban. We had a large family of daughters, not one of whom ever brought a blush to the cheek of father or mother. I can safely say no gentleman in Natal need ever be ashamed to shake hands with any of my generation, and believe there are 56 grandchildren, all good respectable citizens in Natal.

I became one of the people of Durban. I revered and respected them & think the men of Durban the finest, warmest hearted people in the world. On this 26 Oct 1896 I am four score years of age and am proud to say all my faculties are unimpaired & as sound as a bell. So I have a good fortune left me — long life, good health, a great fortune. Strange that I should have been appointed to put up the first monument to the slain of the 27th, and in 1879 I put up the military monument on a large scale [illegible — 27th?].² The public could not raise money enough (£80) so I said give me what money you have, I will do the labour for love, there it stands in the Military Cemetery, Durban, today.

II

Reminiscences of early Natal

I arrived in Cape Town with my regiment (45th) on the 3rd of May 1843, but was sent by general order of Sir George Napier, military General and Governor of the Cape, to join the Engineers, then the Sappers & Miners. They were short handed, I was a tradesman, my services were required. The route came, We were ordered to march for Natal. We marched on the 9th to Simons Town and got aboard the *Thunderbolt*, War Steamer, for Natal. We arrived at the outer anchorage on the 26th May,³ landed 200 men, 14 Engineers, some Artillery, and some 25 men of the Cape Corps. The Cape Corps were then all Bastards & Hottentots, and supposed to be the best light cavalry in H.M. Service.⁴

The landing was done by the Steamer's Long Boat, as no other boat or ship appeared. It was a difficult task, landing troops in so small a boat, however it was done successfully. So we pitched our tents, about where the Custom House stands at present and took up a position of defence, for the Boers were all about.

I stood amazed at the grandeur of the scene. Everything was primitive, the hands of man had not defaced it. The Inner Bay was like a sheet of silver, with the wild fowl that man had never frightened. I thought the Bay the most beautiful sight that I had ever seen. But the Sunset that evening in May with the Golden tints beggars any description that I can give. I have never seen the like before in Ireland where I came from. The beautiful Berea untouched, all one sheet of Evergreen, and I was told that Elephants were there, and lots of other animals, which I soon found to be true.

I was satisfied with Natal then, though uninhabited, for this was my first day in Natal.⁵ The first man I noticed was Mr Mesham salting beef in a tub with a *voorloper* shirt on. He was afterwards a magistrate, but then he wore no coat nor boots.

The schooner *Fawn* was lying inside [with] some guns and a few men. Her back was broken when crossing the Bar. Capt Nourse commanded her. A few of the *Fawn's* men stayed. Jack Cotton and Fred Philips both quiet and respectable citizens. Old Hugh MacDonald who afterwards owned the Royal Hotel in Smith St. Durban. Also Charlie MacDonald his brother — both good men. Hugh brought a ship called the *Pilot*, once a month, with the little supplies we wanted, but often she would not come for 4 months and there was then almost a famine.

There was no 'Misters' in those days,⁶ each called the other Bill, Tom and Dick. We were very scant of clothing then, Military as well as Civilian. We were at one time so reduced for trousers that we shot a large Buck, the skin was Brayed and the Hottentots made trousers for us, sewed with the sinews of the buck.

There was one particular man we almost worshipped for his heroism, Dick King, his farm was at Isipingo. Chief Ogle was here, his farm was Wentworth. Also, Fynn had a farm on the Bluff by right of squatting long before anyone was here. George Cato was here and his brother Joe. Mr Beningfield, old Mr Kahts, John Hogg. Mr Dunn father of John Dunn and I believe he was the Doctor of the *Fawn*. John Dunn's Father was a medical man. I well remember Mr Dunn drinking with Dr Best, One evening in 1847. The night was stormy with sudden heavy showers of rain. Dunn was advised not to go home that night (it was Saturday) but persisted in going home. But early on Sunday morning, the report came in that Dunn was dead. Just as you turn up to go to Sea View, there were no marks on the body, so I believe his death was from apoplexy, or from a fall from his horse. But a report soon spread that he was killed by an elephant. I said at the time it was strange, killed by an Elephant and no marks.

It was wartime (1843) and martial law was proclaimed.⁷ We had a 'shook up' thing of a guard room, enough to keep the sun off. I was musing on Sentry. There was a dull moon and plenty of Phosphorus on the Beach. I saw something come out of the Bay like a sheet of fire, As to its size and ugliness I never saw anything like it. Being young and coming from Ireland, the Country of lakes, where every lake has its traditions, of River Bulls and huge Eels showing up at various times, I was thoroughly frightened, and as it was death to quit your post, I came down to 'resist cavalry'. The monster passed me by

and went on towards Cato's Creek, but I was so frightened that I kept half way between my post and the Guard [room] so that I could run either way. It was a weary two hours for me, but at last I got relieved. I never opened my lips to mortal man. I knew I dare not fire, or give a false alarm, and my comrades might say I was a coward, so I held my tongue. Early next morning, Longhinds, a Grenadier of the 27th, six feet eight high, came down from the Trench, where the old military camp stands, he was on fatigue, he shouted, 'Boys, what a fine seacow passed by last night'. All went to see the tracks, it was then I opened my mouth and told my comrades what I had seen. Since that time I had seen them on the Inner Bay, and seen them chased by Mr William Qusted who lived at Congella.

In 1844 an elephant was killed by Dunn or John Hill then known as Black Jack. I don't know for certain which killed the Elephant. His bones were all carefully carried, and kept in the garden of an old butcher named Webb. Afterwards the same garden was owned by Mr Todmen. The Berea had all sorts of animals then, and was so unsafe, and if offered to any man to live there he would say 'No'.

Men in Durban when I arrived [the following section approximates Green's original layout]:

Mr Mesham		English
Dick King	Petty chief	" (Devonshire)
Henry Ogle	Chief	" (B'gham) [Birmingham?]
– Fynn	Kaffir Chief	"
– Beningfield Snr	"	
Geo. [George] Cato	A wonderful man	S. African
Jos. [Joseph] Cato	Clever Architect	"
Frank Armstrong	Shoe Maker	Irish
John Mackenzie	Blacksmith	Scotch
(later owned Craigie Burns Sugar Estate at the Umkomaas)		
Thos [Thomas] or Wm [William]		
Proudfoot		Scotch
(Partner afterwards with Dick King)		
John Hogg		English
(son of Pete Hogg)		
Old Mr Leathern		English
(a man of superior ability and a dear friend of mine afterward Mayor of P'maritzburg).		
William Leathern Junr known and respected by all born in Africa.		
John King	a good and successful	Africander
(brother of Dick)	citizen	
Hookey Walker		
afterwards Attorney Walker, kept a little half way house between Durban and Maritzburg, afterwards one of Natal's ablest criminal lawyers.		

A German Naturalist and Dr lived near where Escombe⁸ now lives, a wonderful man of Science, Carl Quincias.

Polydore Short, known as Polly Short who died on the Bluff lately.

A German called Jung, and Jargal a Frenchman who were afterwards partners in business.

Mr Shield	Commissary at P.M.Burg	Irish
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Carl Behrens, was here but with the Dutch, he was German.

Joe Kirkman, who had been with Grout.

Rev Adams, who was missionary at the Congella.⁹

Rev. Archibald	military chaplain
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Black Jack an American¹⁰ and Elephant White.

Dr Toohy	chemist but called Dr	Irish
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adopted Kaffir life, settled at Tugela.

Dr John Dunn, settled at Sea View as a squatter, also a man named Kinloch, a clever Poet and a highly learned man, Scotch, some of his poems are in the hands of Mr Leathern Junr and should be published. Kinloch took to Kaffir life.

There lived then in Durban, where the club is now, a Dutch Widow named Strydom, who had a numerous family of sons and daughters. One of her daughters married Pete Hogg and another Jim Rorke and settled somewhere up country.¹¹ Mrs Strydom, was a general favorite in Durban, she was almost a Dr and everyone ran with their ailments to Mother Strydom.

There was no post offices (*sic*) then and there were no Banks nor Courts in Durban. Furniture was unknown, nor houses except Kaffir houses. We had four sticks, stuck in the ground for a bedstead. We put bearers (*sic*) on them, and crossed pieces of brushwood with Grass on the Top. With a grass pillow and a blanket we slept the sleep of the just. It was almost laughable to see some of us. Capt Hugh MacDonald brought some flour from the Cape. We rushed for the bags and made trousers out of them and were afraid lest 'Mills Cape First' would show.¹²

There was one Napoleon Wheeler in later years Market Master of P.M.Burg.

The Bar then was a straight line in a diagonal direction from South to North with a very small mouth. We went out in 1843 with the *Fawn's* men and hadn't to strip our clothes to kill 3 porpoises which were cast up on the Bar. We killed the porpoises and ate a portion of them.

A couple of years after (in 1845, I think) the 3 brothers Milner, came out. They seem to be nautical men and traded with the ship *Sarah Bell* between Natal and Mauritius in later years. There was no money in the country in 1843. Kaffirs or Natives would take no money. They would take a few strings of beads for the produce of [or?] Honey and Potatoes which I found they had nice Kidney Potatoes at that date, but now extinct. Frank Bird was in the Ordnance Dept at the Cape, and came to Natal at intervals of perhaps a month or 4 or 6 months. He was the first man to bring any money to Natal. He brought the Military Money. I think he was a lieutenant in the Ordnance Dept because when we saw him coming we used to say the 'Bird is flying'. At one time the

Military Money came up in Cartridges of 3d bits. The first time the tickey was introduced.

Mr Jas [James] Brickhill was a clerk in the Commissioner's office. He was afterwards Manager of the Natal Bank. About 1846 an 'Umfezi' spat in his face and nearly blinded him.¹³ He was discharged on a pension of 2/8 1/2d per day for life. It was then he began Brickhill's Lotion. After he was discharged from the service his eyes got well and he was made Manager of the Natal Bank.

After I had spent 2 months at the Point on very severe duty we were removed to camp and joined the 27th Inniskilling Regiment. The men were the tallest men I have ever seen in the army — like a walking forest with their busbys on. They were all beloved by the civilians who were here. The men bore splendid characters. They were more like civilians than soldiers. Some had red on their coats of various colours and some were patched. Tho' these men had to lie in a wet trench; on 4 ounces of horseflesh & 3 ounces of biscuit dust there was no murmur and every man was obedient. They were only skeletons of companies after the Congella affair.

We got 'the route' (the 45th & Engineers) and marched to P.M.Burg on the 27th August. We were two companies of the 45 about 15 Engineers some artillery with 3 guns. We were commanded by Capt Kyle whose father was Bishop of Cork and Capt Hines Lieut Armstrong, Blenkinsop, Smythe and Miller. (The 27th remained in Durban) We marched loaded and carried 60 rounds of ammunition each and arrived on the hill of Maritzburg on the last day of August 43, planted the standard and called it Fort Napier. We marched up the hill the pipes and drum playing the 'Sprig of Shillelagh'. and 'Garry Owen'. Next morning the Engineers began to fortify by building a stone battery to the East and a traversing battery on the West. We were 75 (or 25?) men in a bell tent. And soon began to build a temporary barracks of stone which took two years to finish. The officials in town asked as a great favour to get an artisan to build their houses. I was recommended. I drew civilians pay as well as Engineers pay so did well and almost regarded myself as a civilian. The *Winchester* War Frigate was on the African Coast in Jan '43 and chased a pirate ship whose crew [took] to the boats and landed some where about Umzimkulu. They made their way overland and came to Pietermaritzburg in Aug or Sept '43. They stole every horse they could lay their hands on. Poor Mr Hooky Walker was a great sufferer — all the horses were taken. The military stables had to be doubly guarded. A few of the pirates settled down. Jack Linden and Joe the butcher among them, and lived and died in Maritzburg. It was laughable to see a certain lady serenading with the pirates and firing pistols in the night and glorying in being called 'The Pirates Bride'.¹⁴

Only a few of the 27th took their discharge including McKormick Patrick Bryan, Coope & a few whose names I forget. They were Irish. Mackormick married a Dutch lady named Sloppar, and did well. A Baker named Brewar with his wife came from the Cape about that time. They were very kind to many of us — there being no hotels or boarding houses in those days. — every man for himself. Van der Plank was here and a man of the name of Shears was his partner so report said. Shears was found dead in bed, but no enquiry was made in the circumstance. Shears was supposed to have been well off but no enquiry was ever made by the next of kin I believe.¹⁵ There was a notorious renegade who led the Kafirs against the whites in the old colony. He was in the Dutch Tronk in P.M.Burg for horse stealing, and died there. The *Waterloo*, convict Ship, was wrecked in Table Bay about March 1843. The chains were knocked off the convicts to give them a chance of saving their lives. Many of

these convicts were recognized in P.M.Burg. A refined German named Oatman, Jung and Jargal started wholesale houses. A Frenchman named Cauvin and Albrecht and the Boshoffs were there. The Marais — old Tass Marais, van Jargeveldt. Pretorius a fine gentleman whose farm was *Plessis Largaar* — in fact all the Boers were settled about P.M.Burg.¹⁶ Old Liversage was at Umgeni.

All in P.M.Burg seemed to live more comfortably than in Durban. There was no vegetables then. On account of bad roads in Durban you could not walk only to your neck in sand. Then the man who could build 'wattle & daub' was the man. To thatch a house was then an accomplishment. Education was of no use — manual labour was the thing in demand.

The 27th Regt left and went to the Old Colony about 1845. Many of the 45th purchased their discharge, settled down and became good and useful citizens. To show what many of them were, Andrew Muirhead was a PD [BD?]. His family also followed education & his sons are now schoolmasters. He was of Irish extraction. Sergt Miller or White [?] also was Irish. He was hospital Sergt in the 45th and afterwards Superintendent of Durban Hospital. A good man, George Ross Nottingham kept the Aliwal Tavern in Longmarket Street & got rich. His son George is a successful farmer about Howick, I believe. Wm Burroughs was a good citizen. A man known to all named Gibby; A gentleman named Lamont kept a canteen, made money and died in Durban. Polly Short, money lender & great landowner died at the Bluff where his children are now. There was a Piet Otto, a farmer, & two brothers Zeederberg, two of the finest gentlemen [that] ever lived. They had land and farms over the whole country. Good, kind men but, shortsighted — would not sell land at any price and at last came to grief. Jacobus married Piet Otto's daughter and both are dead. Napoleon Wheeler came in 1843. English used to draw wood from Meyers Hoek. He was afterwards Market Master at P.M.Burg. Predicant Smith was a good old Dutchman his son a pettifogging lawyer.¹⁷ About that time came Dr French and de Villiers. The latter was an uncle of John Dunn. He came from the Cape. Both underwent 6 months in prison. De Villiers was a clever advocate but defrauded [defrauded?] his clients and embezzled their money. Dr French suffered for practising without a diploma and something about the death of Mrs van der Merwe. The whole of the Dutchmen were about P.M.Burg very quiet people but in 1844 they began to immigrate to Mooi River Dorp [Potchefstroom] so that in a short time the Dutch element vanished. The 45th were bridge builders and road makers between Maritzburg and Durban. They made that great cutting at the Inchanga under the supervision of the Engineers. They were paid so much per diem and did well. They were all temperate men for the old 45th were well ordered men and very submissive and quiet. They helped many emigrants later on.

I was sent down to get headstones for the graves of the men who fell at Congella & letter them. I got the stone at the Bluff. Time has so worn them that I cannot read the names myself now. The Bar was in such a state then that Capt Gibb of the Royal Engineers ordered a survey which lies in the Harbour Engineer's office today.

We had a surplus of £500 on the military estimate. The sum was dedicated to survey from Umgeni to Cato's Creek. We made the canal successfully with a view of turning the Umgeni to Cato's Creek to scour the bar. That was about the latter end of 1846 or beginning of 1847, but a great flood came and washed the banks in. We had no more money, so had to leave it. The marks of the canal works are there today.¹⁸

After I completed my job I had to sink a well at the old camp which is good today. I got assistance & had to build a Magazine at the Point which many may remember as it was slated. In 1844 I was ordered to attend in P.M.Burg and was on the Delimitation Survey of the colony. Mr Gibb of the Engineers with Captn Kyle, Theophilus Shepstone — he was our safeguard and everything to the party.¹⁹ Our Party was large. 15 picked men of the Royal Engineers, four artillery men and about 25 of the 45th. I was one of the picked men (Read Sir Theophilus Shepstone's reminiscences from 'Honey Bird'. He refers to his old friend Mr Thomas Green who doubted his story of the honey bird at Dugaza now Stanger).²⁰ The 45th were the real pioneers of the colony ready & willing to do every work that came in their way no matter whether civil or military. No grumble — it was for the good of Natal.

The Kafirs had four attributes no other man on this earth possessed. They were sober, honest, virtuous & obedient. No case of theft was known, though everything was under their noses. There were no locks or keys then. Order them to go 30 or 40 miles, give them a loaf of bread and a piece of beef and they completed their task honestly. The 45th was a sort of amphibious animal — half soldier, half civilian though poorly clothed and fed he pioneered the colony.

In 1845 headquarters arrived — Col. Boyes band & staff. After that Martin West, the first Governor came, & Judge Cloete, one of the best of men. Donald Moodie was Secretary to the Governor. Shortly afterward came a young lawyer chosen at home for his ability — Mr Gallwey, now Sir Michael. He found everything a blank page. He began & framed every law, and advised every Government in Natal up to the date of his promotion to the Chief Judgeship. The Country should be grateful to Sir Michael, who has done his work honestly and well. I am myself proud of him especially as my fellow countryman.

Mr John Bird, a Mr Pierce, & Lawrence Cloete, Surveyor, & then Dr Stanger, Surveyor General. It was the machinery of the Law got put in motion. The Courts began, though we had done very well without them in the past. Our young Attorney General greased the machinery and the law seemed to work very smoothly. Magistrates were appointed & people began to steal into Natal in ones and twos.

We were all men, scarcely any women, so that when the first shipload of emigrants came, the women were worshipped — It was so long since we had seen an English woman that we were all off our heads. In 1848 the ship *Henry Tanner* brought the first emigrants to Natal.²¹ You may think what was our state of mind was when we saw our countrywomen with the blush of rose or the daisy on their cheek, and the compliments or 'blarney' we paid to these fine women — I can assure you we laid on the butter so thick that many of them were thrown off their balance and 'balakiled'²² from their good husbands, poor things! They thought they had made a mistake in the choice of their husbands, for we had good money.

Our experience we gave to the emigrants freely. Dr Addison arrived in that ship — the first M.D. in Natal. John Akerman was here then teaching in a Dutch Family and had hard work to make ends meet, 'But there is a tide in the affairs of men etc'. At that time there was a Chemist named van Sivel who went mad. He was successful, a good chemist, but a mad chemist was very dangerous, so Mr John Akerman stepped into his shoes and became a successful chemist.²³

The Emigrants all came to Maritzburg. Nothing was doing in Durban — it was a waste of sand. But most of them were free Yorkshire farm labourers,

who understood cattle and could work hard. There wasn't much education amongst them. A little flannel rag, soap & water would clean them of their education. There was a butcher amongst them Puckering?²⁴ by name, who was well off. Beef was cheap then — 1 1/2d per lb — so that there was no danger of hunger. Some I know worked at 3/- per diem. Cattle was cheap, & they soon got a cart and 4 or 6 oxen to carry loads to & fro; and most of these men or their sons, are wealthy men today. Amongst them was Mr Wakefield, a man of considerable means who started a large Bakery and confectioners shop and became wealthy. His family is settled all over the country — respectable good citizens. My daughter is married to a son of Mr Wakefield's and settled down in comfortable circumstances. Another daughter was married to 'Polly' Short, whose son is lighthouse keeper at the Point at the present day and one of her daughters is married to Pilot Gordon. All of the Wakefield family are respectfully settled in the colony.

I was talking to a gentleman in Verulam a year ago. I called his name Carter. He said 'No, my name is Mason. I was once Mayor of P.M.Burg'. He said, 'Don't you remember employing my cart to drive you to Ilovu where you were going to build for somebody there?' I then remembered, O What a surprise! Many who came at that time were by their own energy and perseverance to be the wealthiest men about the district of P.M.Burg. More power to them!

III

Dick King

I came to Durban to reside permanently in 1852. Dick King who was then my brother-in-law, brought me into more intimate acquaintance with that gentleman. I often sat trying to draw him out on many of his hair-breadth escapes. He was very unassuming. I asked him about the great ride. His reply was that taking the standpoint of 1842 when all was savage life there arose a difficulty. I asked him what road he took to Grahamstown. He said, 'once my two horses were landed on the Bluff I well knew the Boers would be on my track so I coasted it & swam all the rivers at their mouths. The Boers followed me for a length of time, but Chief Umnini put them on the wrong track. The Boers followed me for 24 hours'. I asked him how many rivers he had to swim. He said, 'over 200 between Natal & Grahamstown'. I asked him how his horses stood it. He said, 'I rode them as long as I could. A good missionary of the name of Eversides, carrying on his work at Umtata gave me a relay of horses'. He told me he was lying in the veldt for 24 hours with fever. I asked him how long it took him to do the ride. He told me he did the distance in 8 days, but taking the time lost with fever, he rode the distance in six days.²⁵ You must have been very fatigued I said. 'No', King said, 'I jumped off my horse when I went into Grahamstown'. I asked him how he got along with the Kafirs. 'Being a good Kafir linguist helped me very much, as I could obtain food, as every Kafir hated the Boer'.

My wife told me a different tale, she said she was one of the first to meet her

brother Dick in Grahamstown when he arrived, and two men had to take him off his horse — and likely enough. I asked the distance and he replied, 'I believe it is 600 miles to Grahamstown'. When the rivers are taken into consideration together with the nature of the anxiety and its savage [surrounding]²⁶ I believe that such a ride has never been accomplished by any other man. I said to him 'You are a hero and worthy to be called an Englishman — A man that England should never forget for time immemorial'.

NOTES

1. In 1887 the 27th Regiment served in Natal and Zululand and experienced a minor mutiny during its period at Fort Napier. Two deaths, a trial in the Supreme Court and a hanging resulted. See G. Dominy, 'More than just a "drunken brawl"? The mystery of the mutiny of the Inniskilling Fusiliers at Fort Napier, 1887', *Southern African-Irish Studies* 1, 1991, pp.56–72.
2. Green is referring to the Anglo-Zulu War monument in Durban which he describes below.
3. Green is incorrect: the *Thunderbolt* arrived off Durban on 21 July 1843. See George Russell, *The history of old Durban and reminiscences of an emigrant of 1850* (Durban, 1899 — reprinted 1971), p.54.
4. The 'Cape Corps', also known as the Cape Mounted Rifles, was a British-officered unit of the Imperial army raised largely from the Cape 'coloured' communities and used as cavalry and mounted infantry on the colonial frontiers. See Johan de Villiers, 'The Imperial Cape Mounted Riflemen in Natal — a preliminary survey' (Unpublished paper presented at the Workshop on Natal and Zululand in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 23–24 October 1990).
5. Green completely ignores the black population of Natal!
6. The KCAL TS incorrectly transcribes 'misters' as 'ministers'.
7. It was only after the acceptance by the Volksraad of the terms laid down by Henry Cloete and the occupation of Pietermaritzburg by Major Smith and the detachment of the 45th, that legal restrictions were relaxed. Natal remained in a 'curious state of transition'. — see E. H. Brookes & C. de B. Webb, *A history of Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, 1965), p.48.
8. Harry Escombe: Lawyer, politician and prime minister of Natal under responsible government.
9. The Reverends Newton Adams and Aldin Grout were missionaries of the 'American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions' who arrived at Port Natal in 1835 (Brookes & Webb, *A history of Natal*, p.27). Adams College near Amanzimtoti is named after the former and Groutville, near Stanger is named after the latter.
10. In the KCAL TS 'Negro?' appears in parentheses after 'Black Jack'.
11. James Alfred Rorke (1827–1875), after whom Rorke's Drift was named: See G. A. Dominy, 'Disputed territory: the Irish presence in the marchlands of the Zulu kingdom, 1838–1888' in D. P. McCracken (ed.), 'The Irish in Southern Africa 1795–1910', *Southern African-Irish Studies* 2, 1992, pp.214–23.
12. An 'Imfezi' — Zulu word for the rinkhals (*Hemachatus haemachates*), a snake which spits its venom at its victims.
14. Hattersley, in *More annals*, refers to the 'pirate's belle', p.73.
15. According to Mrs Shelagh Spencer, enquiries were made into Shears's death.
16. Andries Pretorius was Commandant General of the Voortrekkers' 'Republiek Natalia' and had a farm at Plessislaer until he trekked to the interior in 1847.
17. Green appears to be referring to Erasmus Smit, the unordained minister with the Voortrekkers.
18. Green may be referring to Lt. Gibb's efforts to bring pure water from the river to the military camp. This was a controversial work, both in funding and in execution which was destroyed by the Mgeni flooding in April 1848: See, Russell, *The history of old Durban*, p.71.
19. Green appears to be referring to the appointment of the first Locations Commission in 1846: See Brookes & Webb, *A history of Natal*, pp.58–9.
20. Theophilus Shepstone, *The honey bird: a Christmas chapter in natural history*, Pietermaritzburg, 1890? See Chantelle Wyley, 'A Bibliography of contemporary writings on the natural history of Natal and Zululand in the 19th and early 20th centuries', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, XIII, 1990–91, p.103.

21. The *Henry Tanner* was the third of the Byrne & Co. ships to arrive: I am indebted to Shelagh Spencer for this note.
22. Green seems to be using a corrupt form of the Zulu word *beleka*, or *beleta*, meaning to 'carry an infant or young child, on the back' — see J.W. Colenso, *Zulu-English dictionary* (Pietermaritzburg, 1905 — 4th ed.), p.31. See also A. T. Bryant, *A Zulu-English dictionary* (Pietermaritzburg & Pinetown, 1905) for an almost identical meaning. Green is obviously implying that the men carried off the newly arriving women with the ease of a mother carrying a baby on her back. I am indebted to Cmdt. S.B. Bourquin of Westville, for his assistance with the identification of this word. See also 'baleka':

- v. intr. 1. run away, flee.
 2. desert a husband, break contract.
 3. be a fast runner.
 4. pay runaway visit to lover (by a girl).'

In C.M. Doke, D. McK. Malcolm & J.M.A. Sikakana (Comps), *English-Zulu dictionary* (Johannesburg, 1985), p.6. I am indebted to Miss June Farrer for this reference.

23. Akerman entered the Natal legislative in later life and in 1887 he was created KCMG on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, the first Natal person in elective office to receive this honour. See Spencer, *British settlers*, 1, p.21.
24. The KCAL TS tentatively identifies him as 'Nuckering'.
25. Brookes & Webb claim that King took ten days: *A history of Natal*, p.39.
26. Word inserted from KCAL TS.