

Memory, identity and inheritance amongst Zululand traders

Much of the contemporary lives of Zululand traders is reliant on memory and nostalgia, and the legacy of their past perpetuates not only orally and in written form, but also in practice. Their past thus bleeds through to their contemporary lives. History and anthropology merge in the assimilation of interpreting how people see their lives and understand their legacy. It is thus that these 'voorloper' histories construct who they are and the manner in which they approach their worlds.

This paper is part of a greater investigation which melds the architecture of the trading store, the social histories of the Zululand traders and their various networks, and anthropology in the creation of identity through memory and nostalgia.

Introduction

The Zululand traders identify themselves as such, even if they are no longer trading. Jean Aadnesgaard is one of many informants who say that 'trading is in the blood', yet she has not effectively traded for thirty years. Besides being experiential, much of this comes from the generational responsibilities that being 'in trade' has inculcated, and the stories of trade, located within the social remoteness of Zululand are reinforced by stories and memories of close-knit ties. The focus of this paper is the manner in which memory and stories of some of the white traders in Zululand

assisted in the creation of their identity, and contributes to a larger study that synthesises social and material culture and history.

The reality and non-reality of nostalgia and memory

'We had a good time' is a phrase constantly reiterated by the traders still trading, and by those who stopped many years ago. It is a statement about their pasts which are generally perceived as difficult times, and is located in relative contrast to the comfortable, affluent lives that they are living today. For many, trading is the stuff of



Mahommed's Store at Ahrens

memory, so strong that it creates identity. The good times of trading are remembered, and nostalgia is, on the surface, a primary response to their pasts.¹

Given that most of these people no longer trade, nostalgia is the vehicle for these traders' presentation of their lives. At the same time nostalgia is that which causes other people to remember minute details of the trading stores without pictographic reference. In *The imagined past – history and nostalgia* Christopher Shaw notes that 'Of all the ways of using history, nostalgia is the most general, looks the most innocent, and is perhaps the most dangerous.' (Shaw in Shaw & Chase 1989: 1) Nostalgia alludes to the romanticisation of elements of the past, embracing a comfort blanket which forgets the personal, economic, social and political challenges which were faced at the time. 'The sick man of Europe had taken to his bed, dreaming of a childhood that he had never had, regressing into a series of fictitious and cloudless infantile summers.' (*Ibid* 1989: 1). The authors prefer to address nostalgia in a

'combative' manner rather than challenging, interrogating what they perceive as a cultural phenomenon that chooses to represent the present through 'falsification of the past'. Nostalgia, they established, was something rooted in the medieval period, and a large part of the ethos behind Victorian landscapes.²

Memory has different roots. Given that much memory is in narrative or narrative textual form, the difficulties of capturing the senses of memories form contentious discussion.³ A malleable personal memory is described by Julian Thomas as

Memory is not the true record of past events but a kind of text which is worked upon in the creation of meaning. Identities are continually crafted and re-crafted out of memory, rather than being fixed by the real course of past events... (Thomas 1996 in *Bender & Winer 2001: 4*)

Identity is therefore, for Thomas, contextually legitimated by the reconstitution of memories.

Maurice Bloch expands on this, in part as a means to understand how memory and

time may be constructed from a variety of different types or remembering. (Bloch 1998) He says simply, that we use stories to make sense of the world we live in and that it is the characteristics of these stories that define and construct our worlds and how we perceive ourselves in them. Time and space he uses specifically, as examining the representations of both the past and the present reveals the parameters of considered experience. (Bloch 1998: 100)

Bloch also states strongly that narratives within which people consider themselves to act are bound to that person and questioning the participation within that narrative is both arrogant and imposing, what he calls, an 'intellectual imperialism'. (Bloch 1998: 101)

Thus, a distanced view has to be employed in reading these texts, as events that precipitated the memory have hooks on which the memory is pegged.

These individual memories or ways of creating memory are then extended to a greater social interpretation by Paul Connerton in his monograph 'How Societies Remember'.

Here he notes that in the case of social/collective memory

images of the past commonly legitimate the present social order. It is an implicit rule that participants in any social order must presuppose a shared memory. To the extent that their memories of a society's past diverge, to that extent its members can share neither experiences nor assumptions. (Connerton 1991: 3)

In the collective sense Bloch, too, maintains that this has unifying creativity in that 'the phenomenological maintenance or otherwise of past states is, in real circumstances, largely determined by history and people's view of themselves in history and hence, via notions of persons and places and various views of ethics and intentions (Bloch 1998: 69).

However, at the same time, he is critical of singular interpretations of group practice, finding it 'totally unacceptable' that the examination of narratives reveals a generalised concept of the mechanisms of the functioning of other people's worlds. (Bloch 1998: 102)

Narratives, then, in the interpreting and presenting of the primary sources of Zululand traders, are potentially malleable in the direction of the topic, and exist on both personal and group/communal levels.

It is not the nature of the memory that is important here, nor a deep investigation into the source of the memory, but rather that stand-alone memories have their own tales which contribute to the construction of identity and define the lives of the Zululand traders.

I remember when....

In her beautiful home overlooking indigenous bush and the Indian Ocean, Ursula Morrison puts the jam tin of roses that I have bought for her into water, and introduces her husband Jimmy, wheelchair bound and mute after a massive stroke some time before. She tells a much told story, reinforced in the iteration and relation of other's histories and memories. In 1918, she says, David Brodie, a partner in a trading firm named G.A. Challis & Co. was looking for a young man to take over from Challis. The latter had returned from war with bad shell-shock and was not able to continue running the shop which they owned at Makakatana, known as 'Lake Store'. Both Challis and Brodie were ex-Natal Government Policemen. In addition, Brodie travelled a lot and needed a reliable person to look after the shop in his absence. At the time, 'Jock' Morrison, Jimmy's father, was eighteen and working in Mtubatuba, and had to borrow money from a family friend to be able to enter into this partnership. Trading suited him

and it was not long before he opened a store at Maphosa when he got married, as well as at the railhead at Nyalazi and at Hluhluwe.

Jock Morrison died at the end of the 1930s. His son Jimmy had gone off to war, serving in the South African Air Force, whilst his mother, characteristically, continued to run the family store at St Lucia. Maphosa Store was being run by an uncle who had built it into a viable concern whilst keeping the other stores at Makakatana, Nyalazi and Hluhluwe running. Jimmy Morrison was demobbed and returned to South Africa, studying accountancy before returning to Zululand and re-entering the store business. Ursula Morrison takes up the story.

The businesses were not in good shape, only one of the three shops showing a fair return, and the buildings, which were built of wood and iron, needing replacement. There were shortages of goods for a number of years after the

end of World War 2 and customers would queue for their daily rations of brown sugar as this item was necessary for the brewing of home-made liquor. Black people were not permitted to buy 'white liquor' at that time so concocted and sold their own version of moonshine as well as tapping the *ilala* palm to make palm wine, a potent liquor.

James married Ursula in 1949. She had grown up on a farm at Ballito, and had attended boarding school at Eshowe. Thus she was not really thrown into a totally foreign environment when she moved up to the wild, remote Makakatana in the 1950s where, she tells, the only drinkable water came from rainwater tanks and there was no electricity and no telephone.⁴ Light came from paraffin-fired Coleman lamps.

The railhead may have reached Somkhele by 1903, meaning that one could catch the train, but nevertheless it was still quite a trip to get to the siding at Nyalazi.



Esikeni Store past Riverside

She remembers that fresh milk was provided originally by a local man named Mncube at the time when they took over the running of the store, but as the store allotment provided for a grazing area they soon got their own cows.⁵ She paled when asked whether they slaughtered for meat, and replied that they had slaughtered only once. An old man named Maphosa would walk from Makakatana Store to Nyalazi Store at the railhead every morning to collect two sacks of bread. These stores, she says, stocked everything from a 'pin to a plough'. She remembers the complexity of the relationship between the customer and the storekeeper as being totally different from other trading relationships and over the counter service was particularly important. They also served as a postal agency. The post arrived three times a week, she says, and was collected from Nyalazi by an African man on foot, carrying the canvas post bag on a stick on one shoulder and a *knobkerrie* and an *asegai* in the other hand. In operating this postal service, they had to send telegrams for customers, and receive registered mail for families of migrant workers. This meant that they had to identify officially every recipient of the registered letters, which meant knowing your customers by face and name. She also remembers that traders, operating within a telephone exchange system, and a party line (which they had until the late 1980s), had to dial the numbers for their customers, most of whom could not read or write, as well as facilitate some phone calls. In addition, she remembers offering legal advice, as well as holding and managing accounts.

Her son Hugh and his family live next door to the old store at Makakatana.

Leanne's father was a rep for Spar or OK or something and he always asks to look at the store, with fond memories. All of this is exactly how it was. I am afraid it is

my storeroom at the moment, but I try and keep it tidy. Those bins over there are actually ration bins which were dropped out of DC 10s when we were in Angola.

Shelves are piled high with all of Jimmy Morrison's records. There are the boxes of papers dealing with staffing at the stores, others documenting Morrison's involvement with the Rural Licensing Boards and the Zululand Chamber of Commerce and files and ledgers containing all the company's accounts. A perfect incarceration of memory.

All is exactly how it was when we closed. Here are the rods that we hung cloth from, look at these fish hooks – they are the original ones, all for five cents each. I don't think that I would do anything about the store, but the roof does need a good fix.

We peer up through the gloom to the ceiling where tell-tale signs of water and rot show lack of maintenance. Hugh and Leanne's house is set in a large garden, with remote control and electrified fence in the middle of the forest with a view out across Lake St Lucia. Outside the gates you see warthogs, and, if you are lucky, a rhino or two. Hugh and Leanne run the luxury Makakatana Lodge, some kilometres through the thickly forested sand dunes. Through the vagaries of fortune in the 1930s, Jimmy Morrison's father acquired the land freehold, an unusual situation for traders on trading allotments, especially in Zululand. Hugh declares: 'We keep way out of the goings on at the Lodge – foreign visitors just have no respect for personal space'.

Hugh Morrison is a child of a different period of trading.

In February 1949, James married Ursula Rogers and their first son John was born in December of that year to be followed by four more sons and a daughter⁶ –



Map of Zululand showing some trading sites discussed (Author)

Barry, Pamela, Bruce, Keith and Hugh. Fortunately they were a reasonably healthy bunch because the nearest doctor was 23 miles away over rough dirt roads. All the children grew up speaking English and Zulu and Hugh spoke only Zulu until he was three. Makakatana is a lovely place for children, especially the boys, who started fishing at a young age but the one big drawback, is the distance from schools. There was no boarding facility at Mtubatuba so all ended up at Eshowe School⁷ which is about a two-hour journey away. Pamela still tells of crying into her porridge when she was sent away at the age of five-and-a-half years!⁸

Ursula Morrison presents an inscrutable and distant history, devoid of personal involvement and perfected through reiteration.

Her memories are verbatim and captured. Hugh Morrison's memories are locked up in the store, the physical repository that created them. From the litany-like presentation of her personal

and the family history, Ursula Morrison creates a linear story from a collection of different happenings. Bloch elaborates, suggesting 'that a narrative is not stored as a narrative but as a complex re-representation of a sequence of events like the sequence of events that happen to oneself.' (Bloch 1998: 122) Adding inference, such as Pamela crying into her porridge, fleshes out the story and it is this which aids memory – making sense of the narrative includes being able to contextualise it in a greater picture. (Bloch 1998: 123)

Some voices and memories are immortalised, and their endurance is largely due to the written word. The late Roy Rutherford's memories are captured in his memoirs. He remembered as a boy driving in a Willys Overland motorcar with his parents to take up the Ndumu Store.

From Othobothini we travelled on an ill defined old wagon track that led to Ndumu. At times we had to get out to walk to higher ground in order to see where the track continued. We proceeded on, and duly arrived at the banks of the Ingwavuma River, a spot approximately two kilometres from Ndumu store. The river was flowing strongly and was quite impossible to cross by car. There was a small pont which the natives managed to pole backwards and forwards, and onto which our belongings were loaded. (Rutherford 2000: 3–4)

During this trip, Roy and his sister suffered from bad bouts of malaria and had to be carried the final two kilometres to their new home.

When he was a child his parents were farming at Mfolozi. The legendary flood of 1918 washed away their sugar crop, so

on moving north to Ndumu, his father, 'RH' Rutherford (known to the locals as *Mthwazi* or 'monkey ropes' and everyone else as 'RH') together with a consortium of Mfolozi sugar farmers, formed the Ndumu Group⁹ and took over a store owned by the Von Wissels¹⁰. Peter Rutherford says of his grandfather 'RH' that he had traded in the Transkei before coming to Zululand to 'do sugar', and says that 'the trading spirit was in the blood'. Rutherford continues with a small child's memories.

The first few years at Ndumu were pretty tough going. My mother did not see a single white woman for the whole of the first year. The Ndumu residents consisted of our family, the shop assistant and one white police sergeant. The assistant was a Goanese and he ran the shop. (Rutherford 2000: 6)

Rutherford speaks often in his stories of Goanese traders in northern Zululand and southern Mozambique. Given the remoteness, some had evidently managed to cross the border to trade in South Africa despite the restrictions on Asians trading in Zululand. He describes them as anomalies, being brought up in British India and fiercely loyal to the Crown, but at the same time speaking fluent Portuguese.

Hazel Ueckerman, the only living informant who traded through this period, has just turned 100. I sit with Hazel Ueckerman, her son David Irons and his wife Dawn as she conflates two different stories of two different events. Whilst they were trading at Hlabisa, during the war, 'all these Zulus arrived at the store naked!'... we raised our eyebrows until she elaborated that they were actually wearing their *ibheshus* and *isinenes*, traditional loin cloth and rear covering. The reason for this dress, Hazel Ueckerman explains, was that they were protesting – a local farmer named De Wet was charging people to dip their cattle, an action not regarded

lightly by local people. Anyway, a local Hlabisa man was then stabbed to death, 'Remember David, he was such a nice man', and all he was doing was trying to mediate in this chaos. His five children were then to be looked after by his eldest daughter, who at the time was in her mid-teens. David pipes up that she later became the postmistress in Hlabisa. David Irons, it must be recalled, was still a small child at the time. Then Hazel Ueckerman tells of African women arriving at the store laden with bundles of reeds on their heads, in which are concealed assegais. Dawn Irons chips in, 'Ja, that was a common way of doing it'. So then they get a missive from Nongoma about this uprising. There are few men around (white men, that is) due to the war, and they go speeding off to Nongoma to find assistance in quelling the uprising. At the same time, De Wet the farmer speeds past in a cloud of dust. The story somehow shifts to Nongoma, where a Zulu man riding a donkey declares he is Jesus and promptly gets shot through the stomach by another Zulu brandishing a Martini Henry rifle. David describes how his innards were spewing out all over the neck of the donkey. Hazel tells how all the women at Nongoma came to stay in her rondavel, and how a man named Mabaso ('he was such a sweet and caring man') patrolled their rondavel all night, looking after the women.

The magistrate Braatvedt tells this story in a more coherent light. For him it was October in 1942. Serving at Maphumulo at the time, he was ordered to Nongoma where there was a report of an uprising in which a number of people had been killed.

A certain religious fanatic had succeeded in organising a gang of about fourteen men and several women. Not much notice had been taken of this man's activities, either by the chiefs or government officials until one day, when he marched into the

court house grounds, accompanied by his adherents. The men were all clothed in various animal skins, and had a peculiar bundle with them, resembling a large telescope holster about eight feet long.' This bundle contained the assegais. Eventually four of the attackers were killed using 'an ancient muzzle-loader. (*Braatvedt 1949: 129*)

His story continues without the gory memories of Hazel Ueckerman which were passed on to her son, David, with the guts of the fanatic spilling all over the donkey.

Both she and David discuss those brief years in Hlabisa fondly, intertwining family folklore with fact in the telling of the stories. She tells, particularly of an incident when she had just moved to trading in remote Hlabisa with her first husband Jack, of an elderly Zulu man coming into the store whilst she was serving at the counter. He wanted a prepuce cover and pointed to them.¹¹ She had no idea what these unusual grass constructed things which were hanging up in bunches were. Getting them down, she handed them to the old *kehla* who solemnly inspected each one and measured it for size. He then chose the appropriate item, which was then paid for in pennies. She had no idea why her husband was doubled up with laughter, until he revealed all after that particular shopping episode was completed and the old man had left. She recalls with a laugh that she was absolutely mortified with embarrassment! The Irons family traded at Hlabisa from 1942 to 1945, when Hazel's younger brother was discharged from the army, and they opted to move to Nongoma. Relatively urbane Nongoma was a far cry from the remote Hlabisa. The store at Nongoma was more lucrative and bigger than the Hlabisa one, and instead of a series of collapsing rondavels with flattened paraffin tin roofs which had served as their ac-

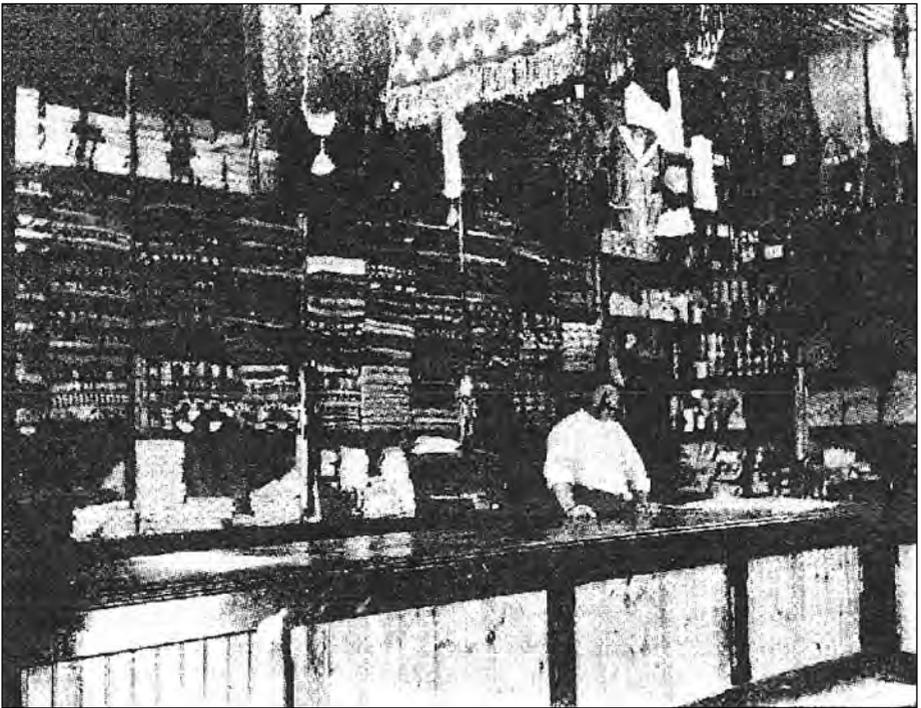
commodation, there was a chemist's shop situated next to the store, which became the family's home until they could afford to move. Thus, for some time they lived in the chemist's shop and traded from the store next door.

Hazel Ueckerman would have still been living in Hlabisa at the time of the uprising, and David Irons, her son, would have been two years old. Yet both remember it vividly, reinforced in family legend. Maurice Bloch speaks of reiterative narrative amongst the Madagascan Zafinmaniry as being important in the 're-establishment of order' as a particular incident such as his seemingly random arrival is situated within an order of narrative explanation, and with the repeated telling becomes a 'prototypical present'. (Bloch 1998: 105) In addition, 'the characteristic of the individual's memory of what she has experienced during her lifetime – her autobiographical memory – is not all that different from her knowledge of more distant historical events which she cannot possibly have lived through.' (Bloch 1998: 115) Bloch distinguishes between autobiographical memory and semantic memory, quoting Courtois (1993) and Todorov (1995) by saying that its mutating, multi-dimensional and organic nature can render study problematic. (Bloch 1998: 116) In investigating recollections of the 1947 anti-colonial revolt which killed 80 000 people in Madagascar, Bloch collected narratives as told by people in the Zafinmaniry community. He describes the narrative as a 'private account' as it relates to the people of the village, but in the telling it becomes the authoritative one assisting in the reduction of the arbitrariness of the memory. Bloch then describes a separate incident when talking with his 'adoptive' father, who relates a totally different story. He then suggests that the 'same' narratives have different contexts and different purposes. One is a

ritual narrative related to community and the other is an *ad hoc* narrative which is produced in one-on-one conversations. (Bloch 1998: 108) This leads to two different ways of presenting history amongst the Zafinmaniry, where *Tantara* is a collective history that aims to 'reduce events to exemplary tales' which are couched in 'moral value', (Bloch 1998: 108) whereas the *Anaganon*, has the purpose of relating legendary events that have no temporal location. Bloch's approaches to telling 'fact', exists in the same framework as the relation of events of the 1947 uprising

in Nongoma. Hazel Ueckerman has these events as both *Tantara* and *Anaganon*, whereas Braatvedt presents them in a more empirical fashion.

Written sources such as memoirs have value in presenting a voice of opinions and ideas. The notes of the magistrates, some of the richer written oral histories surviving, are peppered with anecdotes and tales of man and beast. They are also valuable manuscripts in the telling of stories, of the relationships between the man that was meant to be in authority and the people that he served on the ground.



Umfolozi Store owned by Otto Anderson 1914 (Photo: Errol Harrison)

That smell that characterised the rural trading store was something mercurial, a mixture of scents and textures that were not always discernable but at the same time were recognisably comfortable. And there was the inside of the store, jam-packed with items hanging from the roof in colourful array – blankets, umbrellas, clothes on hangers, and others such as ploughshares, Zulu pots, medicaments, beads, and cloth which crammed the floor and wall space behind the wide, polished counter where you related with the storekeeper eyeball-to-eyeball and by name. People remember leaf tobacco, and sugar sold in twists of paper, and paraffin lamps. And on the counter would be a jar of sherbetty Zulu mottoes, proclaiming a variety of amorous declarations.

Some of the Native Commissioners, particularly, speak with a deep understanding of the culture of the people that they served, and often these works are themselves mini-anthropologies. They can be valuable and understated repositories of information collected over years of intimate dealings, and speak of ceremonies long disappeared.

H. Braatvedt, the magistrate and Native Commissioner, was stationed for a time at Ubombo. He arrived there in 1921, and makes mention of JD Smythe as being the trader at the time¹².

It was a wilderness of a place in those days. Our goods and chattels had to be transported the eighty-odd miles from Mahlabathini, by donkey-wagon. One load was sent on ahead, and we were therefore, able to manage until the second installment arrived. One wagon, unfortunately, had capsized into a *donga*, and practically all the furniture had been badly damaged. Not a single chair was fit to use.....The European population consisted of two constables and a bachelor storekeeper. Later, conditions improved somewhat with the arrival of another storekeeper and his wife. (*Braatvedt 1949: 69*)

Other voices also have value. The author William Plomer describes his family's move to Entumeni near Eshowe to trade, as well as the situation of the trading store and its micro-relationships. The decision to move was made by his father based, as Plomer notes, on nostalgia and a romantic view of trade in Zululand.

In 1922, having completed the administration involved in winding up the affairs of the Africans who had been serving in France in the war, and serving a couple more years in the Native Affairs Department, Plomer's father took the decision to move to Zululand.

Plomer notes that at the time his father was aware that there was little space left

for him in the new Afrikaner-dominated administration, and that his time was limited.

He had been thinking of his early adventures in Zululand trading with Africans, when he had seen Europeans – including quite unbusinesslike English gentlemen – making their own living at it, an adequate and honest living, while remaining their own masters... to take over a 'native trading-station', colloquially known as a 'Kaffir store', with some land attached, where I could live with my mother and him, our combined energies being given to a happy blend of agriculture, commerce and home life. The main flaw in this plan was that it did not allow for the amount of continuous hard work that it would involve. (*Plomer 1985: 149*)

Fundamentally, much of this experience influenced his writing what was at the time a contentious novel titled *Turbott Wolfe*. This was published in 1925 and dealt with inter-racial intercourse and marriage, predating the first Immorality Act (No 5 of 1927) by two years.

Positioning oneself and the creation of identity

Memory and memoir encapsulate that trader's version of their past. The original storekeepers left a recognisable world behind them for a variety of reasons, and stepped, mostly unwittingly, into a new and strange life, where one had to be constantly on guard for wild animals, sometimes hunt for food, and operate with resilience and large doses of creativity. Isaiah Bowman reinforces this in words written in the 1930s America saying that the early pioneers usually left very little behind them, thus the quality of life in his new home was not of prime importance. (Bowman 1931: 12–13) Hazel Ueckerman left an economically depressed Durban, RH Rutherford a desolate sugar enterprise but an experience

of trading in the Transkei. Geoff Johnson's father, the son of Archdeacon Charles Johnson, too, began to trade as farming in the 1930s was difficult.

'The end of a new railway line at the frontier of settlement is one of the most engaging places in the world. As a focus of interest for the settler, it is far more important, as a rule, than any of the stations along the way. That is because a railway line once built, temporarily settles certain things about land values and transport that "freeze" the economic situation'. (Bowman 1931: 64) This was certainly the case for people in Zululand when the railhead reached Somkhele at the beginning of the twentieth century. Its arrival in 1903 has reached the annals of legend. Ursula Morrison says in her introduction to her short history of Makakatana:

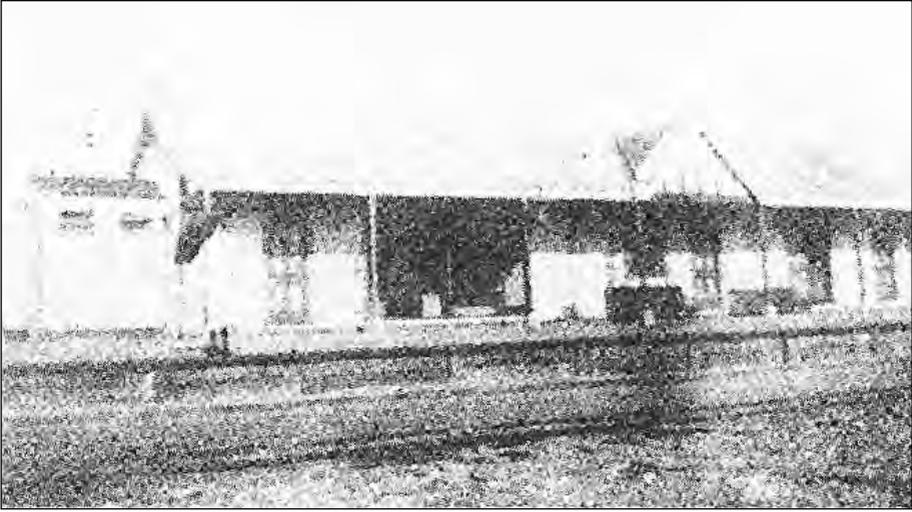
Can you imagine what it meant to live here 80 years ago! There was no reliable transport, the railway line ended at Somkele which is kilometres from Mtubatuba and all the goods for the shop had to be transported by ox wagon over rough tracks from that point. When there was much rain the track was often waterlogged and another way had to be found wandering around the pans which formed during the rainy season. Malaria was simply a nuisance to be endured if one wished to live on the Zululand coast – just a fact of life. Everyone kept a supply of quinine and although there were sprays which were usually diluted with paraffin and sprayed from a pump action can, this had a very limited effect. This was long before the advent of DDT and aerosols which did much to eradicate malaria¹³.

The European storekeeper arriving in Zululand broke personal, notional and physical frontiers, moving into a landscape populated by mainly Zulu-speaking people who were their potential source of income.

The customers came from round about the shop, where their grass huts were widely scattered at the edge of the forest. Some of the men may have worked at the sugar mill or on the sugar farms but many simply stayed at home with cattle in a kraal and their wives planting crops such as mealies, sweet potatoes, sugar beans, peanuts etc. The soil is poor so I do not imagine the crops would have been good. (*Ibid*)

The life of the trader was characterised by living and trading in the spaces of people with different cultures, languages and needs. Despite the maintenance of some 'English' practices, such as the social rounds of tennis, and gymkhana balls, which involved much logistical arrangement, this isolation from urban society sometimes became too much, and together with other pressures, often forced traders to move to urban centres. Florence Bateman who ran the store at Dlolwana recalls that dealing with eight small children whilst living on a remote trading station was problematic and the major consideration in their decision to move closer to town. Dee Hay too, from Phindu Store at Magogo, realised when her children went off to school that she could not stand the separation and boarding school was not an option.

'...after about nine years in the small house behind the old shop and a baby No. 5 on the way, the present home was built in 1958. Electricity was generated by a Lister Motor and it was many years before Eskom electricity was installed.' Ursula Morrison is speaking here of the frontier that she encountered moving to Makakatana as a bride. Coming from a farming family, with a country boarding school education, she was no stranger to hardship and the wilderness when she moved to Makakatana after she and Jimmy Morrison were married. She tells of the early times not with nos-



The Mfolozi railway station, photographed 1914

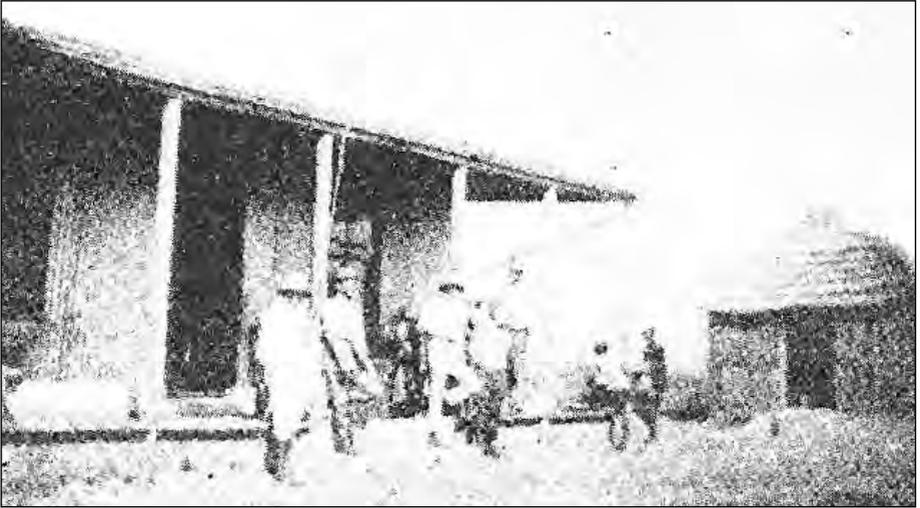
talgia, but more of a matter of fact ‘this is how it was’ approach. Although her lounge is frilly, she is not. Florence Bateman and Jean Aadnesgaard, both Calverley girls, tell snippets of their life and experience which today seem far-fetched in comparison, but they relate them with the wonder of retrospect – the Calverley (Sutton) girls were already third generation traders by this time, and any nuances of pioneering were beaten out of them. They often started from scratch – Jean Aadnesgaard speaks of building their store at Qudeni, and living and trading in the same space and Florence Bateman describes leaving iNtikwe where her parents had run the store and arriving at Dlolwana, their new venture as a young married couple, to find it in flames – it had been torched by the previous owner. This was merely disastrous information that one took in one’s stride and becomes part of a cornucopia of tales almost wondrous. Sue and Peter Rutherford missed the pioneering boat, only getting to Mkuze in 1970, but descriptions by Roy Rutherford, Peter’s father, tell of tall tales and battles fought against the odds – disease, wild animals and eccentric personalities.

(Rutherford c2000) At the same time, in an epilogue to his memoirs, Roy Rutherford tells that

On reading through these memoirs, I realise how very lucky I have been to have been through all these experiences – some difficult, some amusing, some exciting, and am sure there are not many people who have lived through such times. It is also with pride that I can look back and think what my folks started. The hardships and the difficulties they endured, especially my mother who was cook, nurse, mother and who played so many different roles.... I feel very proud to have been part of a company which, through hard work and honesty, has grown to what it is today. (*Rutherford 2000: 100*)

As oft reminded, traders are often wont to say, ‘We had good times’ or ‘We had fun’ or ‘It was a good life’. In many instances, nostalgia is measured against current comfort (Shaw & Chase 1989: 1) but unlike the endless balmy summers that Shaw and Chase refer to, these traders relate their discomforts with pride.

It is also important to relate nostalgia to the creation of identity. Common to



A group of Mfolozi settlers in front of the store

most traders, the KwaZulu Government closed their family stores (which were on a 99-year lease) or took away their family farmlands which, in some instances, had been worked for seven decades. Although people do not complain unduly or dwell upon this, they do remember feeling aggrieved that the government had removed totally viable businesses and placed them in the hands of new traders without any training. Traders recognise the lack of institutional support in this transfer, and the loss of holdings is a theme.

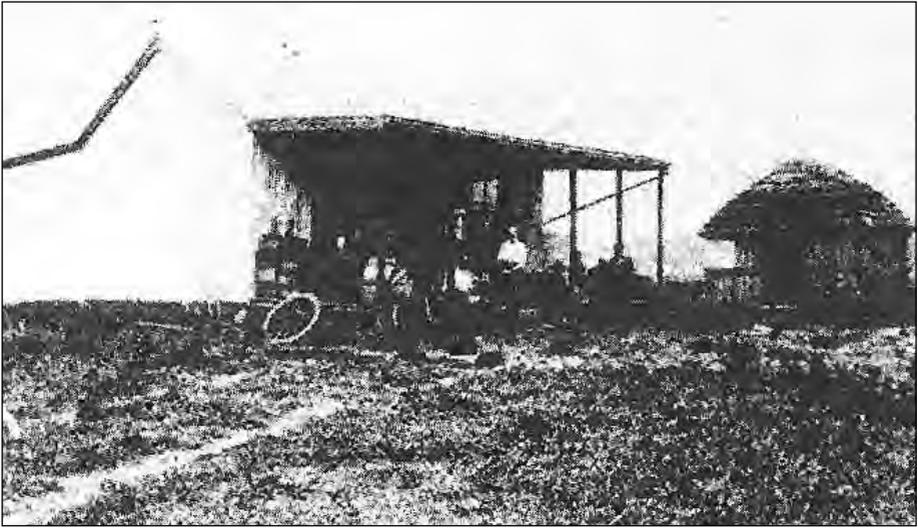
The discourse of dispossession in apartheid years concentrates on people of colour, and little is said of Europeans who also received little or no compensation for expropriated property. This theme then becomes a collective memory, an experience shared, which adds to group discourse and identity and possibly contributes in large part to the formation of identity as trader, and elucidates the type of nostalgia that they express.

Similarities exist with people dispossessed through the Group Areas Act in the 1960s who were moved from Kalk Bay to the Cape Flats. They view their time

living at Kalk Bay through rose-tinted spectacles, and then use this origin in their construction of identity on the Cape Flats. 'The sea is in our blood' they say. Anna Bohlin sees that the sea is constructed as a levelling factor: 'There is no *apartheid* here, ou *pellie* (old friend), the fish don't mind who catches them'. (Bender & Winer 2001: 280) 'Trading is in our blood' echoes this where the space of the trading store is a similar primordial functioning space: *apartheid* may have materially separated some of the trading store floors, but the traders didn't care where the money came from. Zululand traders are bound by retrospect, common rules and shared experience. Bohlin suggests, too, that the

fluidity of the sea is metaphorically brought into the sphere of social relations, and a collectivised, idealised identity is constructed that draws on, and is negotiated through, images of land- and seascapes. (Bender & Winer 2001: 280)

Identity is constructed through belonging within the exiled Kalk Bay community in that the memory of the place left is portrayed through the presentation of a



The small store and Post Office at Mfolozi, photographed 1914. A plough and mealie planter can be seen on the verandah, together with a wagon wheel, cases of beer and a paraffin tin.

cohesive and ‘intact’ community. But this, as Bohlin motivates, is important in the provision of a ‘constructive self-image.’

In the conceptualisation as the Kalk Bay that they left, their current place of residence is then thrown into opposition, constructing delineation which entrenches who they are and why they don’t belong there. (*Ibid*: 280)

The traders who left their Zululand stores present also a mythical landscape, where life was good. And in the same way that the Kalk Bay residents of old today view Kalk Bay as changed and ‘the Kalk Bay of the present as damaged’ (Bender & Winer 2001: 281) so too is the Zululand landscape of their memory much changed. It’s not like it was before ... even Johnson, still implicated and actively trading, living in Natal and travelling daily to Zululand says ‘trading is very different. There was no crime.’

As Bohlin refers, Kalk Bay, as a real place which is authentic in the minds of

the people who left, is a ‘landscape of the past.’

Conclusion

In Zululand even today, to a large degree the traders still operating occupy a social, economic and cultural interface which resonates with the pioneer and frontier lifestyle that their progenitors found. However, at the same time, the positioning of oneself, and creating the identity of ‘trader’ still situates one as an ‘other’. Thus memory, for the Zululand traders, is much of what their ‘trade’ is today. When considering long term and autobiographic memories, and interpreting them it becomes problematic in that the ‘memory’ of a person is extended beyond that of what happened.

Such recalling defines the person in relation to time by invoking, or not invoking, notions of a past interaction with an external world which contains truth and falsehoods, permanent and impermanent elements, which is, or not, in a state of continual creative dialectical

flux. These ways of remembering the past not only create the imagined external world but they create the imagined nature of the actor in the past which, in so far as this actor is seen as a predecessor, refers also to those living in the present. (Bloch 1998: 81)

The traders have a view of themselves as actors in the drama of the past, and continue to play those roles in contemporary times.

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NOTES

- 1 Anna Bohlin in investigating the Kalk Bay community says after Tonkin that 'Any account of the past must be understood as being in part a "social portrait", expressing ideas and sentiments concerning identity, morality and cosmology.' (Bohlin in Bender & Winer 2001: 274)
- 2 See Papworth's 1818 volume which recreated architectural tropes within romantic landscapes of a past and glorious England. (Papworth: 1818)
- 3 See Thomas (1996), Connerton (1991) and Bloch (1998).
- 4 Telephones were still problematic in the 1980s as Jimmy Morrison's letters testify.
- 5 Alfred Tembe, now working as the *maitre'd* at the Durban Club, was the herder for these cattle, whilst his sisters all looked after the Morrison children.
- 6 The closest hospital was in Empangeni, but the children were all born in Durban.
- 7 James and the children all went to the government boarding school at Eshowe High, and then the grandchildren went on to private schooling at Hilton College and St Anne's, both in Hilton, near Pietermaritzburg. This is a common feature of these Zululand stores, where the level of schooling increased with the wealthier generations.
- 8 This extract is from notes on Makakatana History, by Ursula Morrison on the Makakatana Lodge website <http://www.makakatana.co.za/history.htm#why> (8.04.08)
- 9 The Ndumu Group actually started on a labour hunt. The initial visit to Ndumu was made with the purpose of setting up a labour recruiting agency for the Mtubatuba Mill Group.
- 10 Von Wissel was trading in the area at the time of the Zululand Lands Delimitation Commission and family members are apparently still trading in Swaziland.
- 11 (KCM 1996: 142) *umNcedo*, a penis cover made from *iLala* palm leaf, *iNcema* grass and string 'A full loin-covering was not complete without the wearing of a prepuce cover.'
- 12 JD Smythe was trading before Jack Irons took over the Ubombo Store.
- 13 <http://www.makakatana.co.za/history.htm#why> July 22 2008