

The Origins of the Natal Society

CHAPTER 4

1850-1851

Notice of the 1850 annual general meeting to be held on 19 August appeared in the *Natal Witness* on 5 July, saying that the Rev. J. Green would give an address on the occasion. By now, long lists of immigrants arriving by various ships were being published in the newspapers, so the local population was swelling. But meanwhile, it is fairly clear that the library, in the hands of complacent authority, was declining.

Hints that all was not well were given in a *Natal Independent* leader appearing four days before the meeting.¹ The opening paragraph was solemn:

Intellectual knowledge is the day light of the mind and the reign of despotism recedes at its approach as does the darkness of night at the approach of the diurnal luminary. To watch carefully, therefore, and to guard diligently the interests of public institutions which have for their object the intellectual improvement of a country is a sure sign of certain progress to freedom and prosperity. The period has again arrived for the annual meeting of the subscribers to the public library . . .

The writer was James Archbell, editor of the *Natal Independent*, which he had founded in March 1850. He goes on to urge that the committee should be fully representative, and free from people with party obligations. (It will be recalled that the last committee elected were the Rev. James Green, Marquard, Shepstone, Moodie, Stanger and David Dale Buchanan.) Archbell adds:

In the library committee, we believe Mr. Buchanan stands alone, all the rest being in government pay.

Archbell felt that this was very bad for public confidence. He urges the public through his columns to reorganize the committee and not tamely to submit to a re-election, only to grumble for a whole year afterwards. In the same editorial, Archbell was also critical of the library's situation, placed as it was in the government school room at the corner of Chapel and Longmarket Streets, opposite the Methodist Church. He felt that the library should be in the most public part of the town, and that the present locality was highly unsuitable. He confesses that he knows no other building where the library could be housed without rent, but bemoans the fact that it has its present home by favour of a committee so largely in government pay, for mistrust occurs where official authority gains the ascendancy. He urges that application should be made for land on which to build a neat library in a suitable part of the town. The coming meeting, he feels, should appoint a special committee to consider this matter and carry it out.

The public had ample time before the meeting to be inspired by Archbell's wisdom, but it seems that this was not the case, or if they were inspired they were over-ridden. The 1850 annual general meeting duly took place on 19

August, in the public school room, with Henry Cloete (not James Green, as announced) in the chair.² The report for the year was read by the Secretary, J. D. Marquard, but neither the *Natal Witness* nor the *Natal Independent* printed it, so it is not known what form it took, nor who was finally elected to the Committee, although it is clear from later references that the hard-working Marquard was re-elected as Secretary, and that Stanger was also re-elected. However:

The meeting was honored with the presence of his Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, and several ladies. The attendance upon the whole, though rather select, was not numerous, and did not reflect great honor upon the mental taste of the inhabitants generally.³

After the Recorder had given his address (which will be mentioned later) a vote of thanks was moved to him and to the ex-committee, and a resolution of reform was then moved, but was withdrawn. The *Natal Witness* tells a little more about this:

The interest excited by the discourse⁴ gave rise to a bold proposition to appoint a special committee to adopt measures for raising a fund for the erection of a building, to be used as a public library, lecture hall, etc. But the opinion seemed to be that this was not the proper time and place for entering upon such speculations, there being no need at present for a better room, at least for library purposes, than that already granted by the government.⁵

That the meeting caused disappointment among some members is proved by two letters in the *Natal Independent*,⁶ which appeared just after this meeting. The first is signed by 'a subscriber' who says that the state of the library is such as to excite the greatest pity in the minds of the subscribers. He calls the library 'inaccessible and inert, . . . a feeble agency in our intellectual culture'. He feels the meeting *ought* to have adopted the resolution for reform and appointed a committee to carry it out, and this committee could have applied to the government and to the commissioners of the municipality for help. For his part, he had hoped to propose a series of lectures by able, intelligent individuals, which would have rendered the institution a great public blessing, 'but who will attend to hear as the Institution is now circumstanced?'

In the second letter, 'Vindex' says he had hoped something would be done at the annual general meeting to give life to the Public Library 'as it is called', but which is as private as any private library he knew. He urges letting the library go, and starting a company with 600 shares at £3. (Other libraries in South Africa had started with a company and shares.) He goes on:

This, Mr. Editor, will soon put the public in possession of an institution of public utility, and worthy of public patronage, which the snail going apparatus of which, on Monday last, we heard the report, cannot expect and will never attain. In short, Mr. Editor, had it not been for the literary treat to which you invited us last week, and in which we were highly gratified, the Committee would have had the satisfaction of passing their own report, and voting their own thanks.

'Vindex' adds that this library will surely die, and then apologises to the editor (Archbell) as he is now one of the six committee members. Commenting

at the foot of this letter, the editor said that this scheme, for shareholders, was not wise; reform must be the motto — ‘never forsake a sinking ship while hope remains’.

We return to the ‘literary treat’ offered by Henry Cloete at the annual general meeting. If there had been addresses at previous library meetings, they were not recorded in the newspapers. This time, at the 1850 annual general meeting, the annual report, as we have said, was not printed, but both the *Natal Witness* and the *Natal Independent* carried a report of Cloete’s address.⁷

The *Natal Independent*⁸ referred to the address as ‘animated and enlightened’. Cloete made some introductory remarks. He modestly regretted that his task could not be performed by the reverend gentleman who had formerly been announced. He could lay no claims for the honour conferred except his fondness for literature in general, and his earnest desire to support institutions of this character. He then spoke of the advantages of education and said that time should be set apart to read. It was not enough to depend on books in public libraries — access had to be had to periodicals too. Anyway, to call the present public library by that name was a misnomer, but he trusted that the time had now come to place the establishment on such a footing as to secure its permanent usefulness. To attain that object, he trusted that the committee about to be appointed would exert itself both with the government and with the municipality to obtain a central site where ready access would draw greater support from the public. He said he hoped the patronage of the Lieutenant-Governor, who had favoured the meeting with his presence, would further ensure its prosperity, and he also hoped that the time would not be far distant when the Public Library of Pietermaritzburg might be named conjointly with the excellent establishments justly deemed the pride of both Cape Town and Graham’s Town. Cloete then went on to his rousing address.

He said he did not wish to dwell on the Land question, the Kafir question or the Immigration question, all of which were agitating the public mind. He wished to avoid political matters. Nevertheless, he wanted to draw attention to the responsibilities of moral government. It was but twelve years since the emigrant farmers laid out Pietermaritzburg and it was then that Mantuun, an aged Kafir chief, emerged with 100 followers from the fortress of Zwartkop and stated that they were the sole survivors of a large population exterminated by Dingaan and Chaka. Asked how he felt about white settlement, he expressed entire satisfaction, as for years he had never slept with ‘but one eye closed’, the other open to fly from the Zoolahs. With gradual influx, the Zoolah population was probably now 130 000. This proved they sought to have their lives and property secure and their rights respected. Cloete added that because the white man was seen as a protector, a single unarmed British subject was as safe at 500 miles from this district as if he were travelling in Great Britain. He urged his listeners to contrast this with French colonies, where an army of 50 000 was barely sufficient to secure the colonists.

In this manner, then, as certainly as the sun sets today and is to rise again tomorrow, shall we see the British standing placed over the whole district of Southern Africa, and this district of Natal the centre of an extensive colony where the Zoolah and the European may enjoy equal rights and privileges. But to accomplish and work out this great problem, it behoves us all in our daily intercourse with these natives to consider



Natal Society Library, Pietermaritzburg. Longmarket Street Entrance, opened 1954.



Previous homes of the Natal Society Library.

the great responsibility resting upon each of us, and it becomes our sacred duty in all our dealings, more rigidly, perhaps, than ever otherwise, to apply the golden rule, and do to them as we would wish they should do unto us . . .

He called for the securing of peace and welfare in Natal by urging the natives to accept paternal government to find their happiness.

The *Natal Witness*⁹ took up another part of the address. It seems that Cloete went on to refer to:

the vast scope for enterprise and discovery that lay beyond our boundaries, the opening up of which seemed to have been commenced by the discovery of the great Inland Lake. He also struck out a train of thought suggesting the desirableness of a resident exploring Agent being appointed, whose duty it should be to collect information of the interior districts where he might be stationed and make gradual advances farther inland, whither he would soon be followed by the enterprising traveller and trader. Some arrangement of this kind appeared to him to be far more feasible and useful than the excursions that were being attempted through the frozen regions of the north, which although they might be proved to admit of a passage, could not make the icebound way practicable, save for a very limited season of the year.

Cloete ended with the ringing words:

. . . all the idols of the earth shall fall before the true and living God, and all the families of the human races shall be but *one* fold, under *one* shepherd — the Saviour of the world.¹⁰

Cloete's talk proved stirring, but alas, even his strong influence did not, as we have seen, lead the meeting to decide upon reform of the library. The address sparked a movement for change, but it was dimmed, and so closed the 1850 annual general meeting.

Nettled, however, by the suggestions that the library was more private than public, the Committee lost no time over inserting a notice in the *Natal Witness*:

Notice to the public. The public library is open to the public as usual, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, except on Saturdays when the room will be open from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Donations of books will gladly be received. By order of the Committee, J. D. Marquard, Sec.¹¹

Did the Committee feel that the ship was sinking? We do not really know, and must not be too swayed by the disapproving letters in the press which have been mentioned. For when a library is running even at the top of its form, there will always be members to complain. A General Meeting of subscribers was called for 11 November 1850, 'for the purpose of considering a proposal calculated to promote the interests' of the Library.¹² Unfortunately, no newspaper carried a report of this meeting, so there is no way of knowing what was proposed.

1850 should perhaps not be left without a brief reference to two other towns. A library was started in Durban in that year by Mr. C. Hicks, supported by Mr. E. P. Lamport.¹³ It was discontinued in the same year when the building was purchased, the books being then deposited with Mr. Lamport and later claimed back by the third library.¹⁴ In January 1851 a second attempt to start

a Durban library was made. A meeting was held on 13 January in the government school room with Henry J. Meller, the Resident Magistrate, in the chair.¹⁵ Meller called upon J. Russom to address the meeting. Russom moved 'that this meeting cordially approves of the establishment of a Commercial and Literary Institution in D'Urban'. He was seconded by George Macleroy and the motion was carried unanimously. (Both Russom and Macleroy were in due course to serve on the Council of the Natal Society, not yet founded.) The idea was 'to provide a place of resort for commercial purposes, and to afford facilities for the moral, intellectual and general improvement of its members'.¹⁶ This second attempt also died an early death. In 1853 a Mechanics' Institute was founded and from this grew the present Durban municipal library.

A brief glance to the south might also be interesting. At Graham's Town, the Albany public library, opened in 1842, was keeping its head above water. Martin West had been a vice-president of this library during his term there. Albany library was controlled by shareholders. It failed in 1863 and shortly afterwards the present Grahamstown Library was founded, with a committee elected by subscribers instead of shareholders.¹⁷

Back now to Pietermaritzburg to the last year of the old public library's existence before being handed over to the Natal Society. A notice dated 7 January 1851 informed subscribers that a few books, and periodicals for June, July and August 1850, had been received.¹⁸ The postal delays of those days must have been very frustrating.

The 1851 annual general meeting took place on 4 July at the government school room.¹⁹ In the notices calling subscribers to the meeting, no mention was made of the possibility of handing over the library, but it was stated that the Rev. J. Green would give an address. All books and periodicals in circulation were to be returned before the meeting. The *Natal Independent* carried the report for the year ended 31 May, but made no mention of what business took place at the meeting, nor was there any reference to the Rev. Mr. Green's address.²⁰ The report was not very stimulating. Thirty-four volumes had been purchased which, with gifts made during the year, brought the total bookstock to 160 volumes exclusive of periodicals. An oblique reference was made to previous complaints that the library was a private concern:

Your Committee having observed at the last annual meeting that an impression existed that the library was not open to the public, lost no time to remove the impression by an advertisement in the local papers.

The Committee had taken steps to improve the internal appearance and comfort of the library room to make it more inviting, and felt from an eager resort to the shelves that the improvement had been appreciated. The Committee would have liked to have done more, but funds had not permitted. There had been a change of librarians and the old trouble about custody and care of the books was raised again:

The Committee has to report the resignation of Mr. J. Hiscock as Librarian and the appointment of Mr. C. Cock with a trifling salary of £4 per annum, as a temporary arrangement. The Committee would observe that it is desirable that the Librarian should be held responsible for the proper custody of the books and other property of the Library; but it is evident that such cannot be expected from Mr. Cock with his present inadequate salary.

The report ended on a rather wistful note:

In conclusion, your Committee have to remark that this institution was founded by a few gentlemen in the most infant state of the colony — till recently it has been the only institution of its kind; but the Committee congratulate the public in observing that both at Pietermaritzburg and at D'Urban great efforts are being made to establish Literary and Scientific Societies, and they would conclude by wishing each and all uninterrupted and progressive success.

The report and the treasurer's statement were signed by J. D. Marquard as both Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. So ended the last report of the Pietermaritzburg Public Library before handing over to the Natal Society.

Notes:

1. *Natal Independent*, 15.8.1850.
2. *Natal Independent*, 22.8.1850, 29.8.1850.
3. *Ibid.*
4. i.e. Cloete's address.
5. *Natal Witness*, 23.8.1850.
6. *Natal Independent*, 22.8.1850.
7. *Natal Witness*, 23.8.1850. *Natal Independent*, 22.8.1850, 29.8.1850.
8. *Natal Independent*, 22.8.1850, 29.8.1850.
9. *Natal Witness*, 23.8.1850.
10. *Natal Independent*, 29.8.1850.
11. *Natal Witness*, 6.9.1850.
12. *Natal Witness*, 8.11.1850. *Natal Independent*, 7.11.1850.
13. *Jubilee historical sketch of Durban Public Library*, p. 11.
14. Russell, G. *The history of Old Durban*, p. 118.
15. *Natal Witness*, 24.1.1851.
16. Russell, G., *op cit.*, p. 178.
17. Wiles, C. C. *The Tale of a library (1827-1948)*.
18. *Natal Witness*, 10.1.1851.
19. *Natal Witness*, 20.6.1851. *Natal Independent*, 19.6.1851.
20. *Natal Independent*, 10.7.1851.

CHAPTER 5

The Foundation of the Natal Society, May 1851

The foundation of the Natal Society grew out of an address to the landed proprietors, merchants, traders, agriculturists, and others interested in the prosperity of the colony of Natal. This address appeared in the *Natal Independent* of 1 May 1851, and was signed by 107 gentlemen from Durban and Pietermaritzburg. (On this same day, Queen Victoria, amid splendour unprecedented, opened the great exhibition at Hyde Park, and the talk of the day was the wonder of the Crystal Palace.) In 1851 the white population of Pietermaritzburg just topped a thousand.¹ A few of these settlers had come from the Cape; many were British immigrants brought out under various schemes. The most famous scheme was that of J. C. Byrne, who was in the process of being declared bankrupt. Byrne's commercial scheme offered the settler twenty acres which proved completely inadequate in Natal and led to considerable hardships.

The address began by saying that the schemes conducted by private enterprise had failed in their purpose, as in some cases the wrong people — colonists who possessed no capital and did not offer a trade—had been attracted. It was essential that the stream should start up again soon and that it should be natural and steady, and

not be thrown upon our shores from the force-pump of mercantile cupidity . . . Natal has suffered both from the exaggerated accounts and overdrawn pictures which have been published at home respecting her by interested speculators, or injudicious friends on the one hand, and by the ignorant or morbid misrepresentations of disappointed, because unsuitable immigrants, on the other.

But Natal needed only to tell the plain naked truth and to do this a society was needed to collect opinions and information respecting the physical capabilities, the social and political condition, and prospects, of the colony. Such information would command the respect and confidence of the public in Britain. The signatories wished it clearly to be understood that the proposed society would be connected with no political opinions or party whatsoever, that it would promote no emigration scheme, but its single object would be to collect and disseminate full and true information respecting the colony.

The subscribers to this address were called by James Archbell² to a meeting to be held in the Court-house on 9 May for the purpose of organizing the projected society. On that day, then, the Natal Society was born.

It was a cold night with snow over the Zwartkop and distant hills³ as the inhabitants made their way to the thatched Court-house. The *Natal Witness*⁴ gives a full account of this meeting. The Honourable the Recorder, Henry Cloete, took the chair soon after six o'clock. About thirty people were present, but the meeting subsequently increased to fifty or more.

The Recorder expressed his pleasure at the suggestion of a society free from party and political schisms which rather unpleasantly divided our society here. He had, therefore, consented to preside, on the express understanding of an entire absence of political discussion, where Greek and Trojan no longer contended for the body of Patroclus.

Mr. J. M. Howell moved the first resolution, but did not speak to it:

That the great and varied capabilities of this district as a field for British colonization — its important geographical position, with reference to African discovery and civilization — and the erroneous, defective and conflicting statements which have been published respecting it in Great Britain, and elsewhere — render it highly important that full and accurate information as to its physical resources, its social condition, and the practical advantages it offers to the European settler, should be collected and published under the auspices of an organization which by its freedom from political objects on the one hand, and from all connection with immigration schemes and private mercantile enterprise on the other, shall command and secure universal respect and confidence.

In seconding the resolution, James Archbell said that the necessity of an organization was obvious from the misrepresentations existing respecting the resources of Natal. Natal was the key for exploration towards the Great Lake and the interior. And had the agricultural and mineral resources of Natal been drawn out? He thought not. The Portuguese had exported gold and copper. Natal might possibly be as rich as California;

but he thought our best diggings would be those of agriculture, for which the soil and climate rendered this place so eminently fitted.

It was John Moreland (J. C. Byrne's disappointed agent in Natal) who spoke next. He referred to the conflicting statements that had been sent to England about the colony which had resulted in injury to individuals and to the community at large. He described the classes of people who could expect to do well. Men of education would probably be more at a loss than a labouring man.

Capitalists and laborers were the class required; and education and good character alone would not suffice to ensure success . . . In spite of all misrepresentations, eight vessels were now laid on, and probably as great a desire as ever (though accompanied with more caution) still existed for coming to Natal. The disappointed expectations of emigrants were ridiculous. For instance, two ladies, being unable to procure fruit, blamed their husbands severely for coming; while some newcomers were short of milk, and others would not go through the Berea in search of more solid soil than the sand of the beach. From a semi-tropical climate more luxuries were expected than existed at home.

George Macleroy moved the second resolution:

That to accomplish the ends proposed a society be now established to be designated 'The Natal and East African Society' for the development of the physical, commercial, agricultural and other resources of Eastern Africa.

He was seconded by Arthur Walker, an attorney and former editor of *De Natalier*. He referred now to his recent visit to London where he had daily been asked questions about Natal, some apparently clever men even thinking it was in America! Each day he had set apart time to answer questions, many of which were completely absurd. He had also found it impossible to dispel the idea that any man, of whatever previous profession, might soon make a fortune by farming twenty acres. Twenty acres would, in fact, be the ruin of an emigrant, as the same amount of capital and machinery would be required for it as for a farm. And men with merely £50 would in six months lose money, strength, heart and hope; so thus an injurious reputation had been created for Natal. To remedy this, a body separated from party politics was necessary. He agreed that two classes of people, capitalists and labourers, were required in Natal, the one to provide situations for the other.

The next three resolutions are being left out here as they did not provoke any interesting discussion and will appear in the final fixed constitution which will later on be quoted in full. Lieutenant J. Walmsley moved resolution number six. Like Howell, Walmsley was a lieutenant in the Natal Native Corps, and was also son and heir of Sir J. Walmsley, M.P. for Leicester. Walmsley was seconded by Mr. D. B. Scott, one of whose sons was to build Scott's Theatre and another to establish Scottsville. The controversial resolution six was as follows:

That the following gentlemen be requested to form themselves into a provisional committee to frame laws and regulations:— Hon. H. Cloete, Hon. D. Moodie, Hon. W. Harding, Hon. J. Bird, J. N. Boshof, J.P., Theo Shepstone, J.P., P. A. R. Otto, J.P., George Macleroy, J.P., J. G. Thomson, J.P., Rev. J. Green, Rev. W. Campbell, Rev. H. Pearce, Rev. J. Archbell, Rev. R. Dickson, Dr. Addison, Dr. Johnston, Dr. Toohey, Dr. Gower, Dr. Torry, Dr. Poortman, C. Behrens, D. D. Buchanan, A. T. Caldecott, J. Henderson, P. J. Jung, R. Lawton, J. D. Marquard, R. Moffat, Jnr., W. Martin, J. E. Methley, J. Moreland, G. Robinson, J. P. Symons, C. R. Sinclair, A. Walker, P. H. Zietsman, T. Robertson, T. Nell, Capt. Struben, J.P., C. Landsberg, Lieut. J. M. Howell, Lieut. Walmsley, A. Clarence, J. P. Hoffman, D. B. Scott, J. P. Zietsman.

It was indeed a star-studded company. Cloete, Moodie, Harding and some others have already been mentioned. The Hon. John Bird was acting Surveyor-General; he was to play a large part in the Society's affairs, and to compile the famous *Annals of Natal*. Jacobus Nicolaas Boshof had been a chairman of the volksraad of the Natalia Republic, and was to become second president of the Orange Free State. P. A. R. Otto, after whom Otto's Bluff was named, had also been a member of the volksraad. George Macleroy, after his arrival in Natal in 1850, became government immigration officer, later registrar of deeds, and, not least, general manager of the Natal Bank. J. G. Ringler Thomson was appointed a Kafir magistrate by Lieutenant-Governor Pine. The Rev. William Campbell was Presbyterian minister in Pietermaritzburg, while the Rev. Horatio Pearce was Wesleyan minister. James Archbell had been in Pietermaritzburg almost from its earliest settlement; he was missionary, politician, agriculturalist, business man, legal man, landowner, editor, printer, explorer, pioneer, translator of the Gospels into the Bantu tongue, and mayor of Pietermaritzburg five times. He yet found time to become a very good friend to the infant Natal Society.

Dr. W. H. Addison was district surgeon of Durban County. Dr. Charles Johnston, a former surgeon in the Royal Navy, had brought emigrants out to Natal, and was a distinguished writer and lecturer. 'Dr.' Daniel Charles Toohey was a trader and farmer. Dr. Samuel Gower was the district surgeon, Pietermaritzburg County. Dr. John Cooper Torry was a Pietermaritzburg attorney. It was Dr. Bernardus Poortman, a Dutchman, who received a letter from Holland revealing how far the Boers had been deluded by Smellekamp; he had been a member of the volksraad and one of the first municipal commissioners of Pietermaritzburg. Carl Behrens was general manager of the Natal Land & Colonization Company at Durban. Alphonso Tarkington Caldecott, a merchant, was also one of Pietermaritzburg's first municipal commissioners. Joseph Henderson was a leading merchant of Pietermaritzburg and one-time chairman of the Natal Bank. Phillip J. Jung had been a municipal commissioner in 1847. Richard Lawton was a merchant, and son-in-law to Archbell. Robert Moffat was the eldest surviving son of the famous missionary, and brother-in-law of Livingstone; he was a trader and surveyor. William Martin was one of the founders of the Presbyterian Church in Pietermaritzburg. James Erasmus Methley was a farmer and author.

John Moreland (already mentioned as Byrne's agent in Natal) was a bitter and aggressive man after all he had suffered through his job. He carried a chip on his shoulder against government officials. He had many enemies including Stanger, Moodie, Cloete, Harding, Byrne, Buchanan, Macleroy, Sargeant and Allen.

George Eyre Robinson was to found the *Natal Mercury* and to father Sir John Robinson, the first Prime Minister of Natal. John Philip Symons was Colonial Auditor, and afterwards a member of the Legislative Council. Charles Ross Sinclair was an advocate and attorney. Thomas Robertson was also an attorney. Captain Johannes Struben was a rather more questionable character; a one-time magistrate at Ladysmith, he was suspended for dishonest behaviour in 1856. C. Landsberg was probably the same man who held the key to the Reading Room in September 1846. Arthur Clarence was sheriff of Natal at one time. John Philip Hoffman had only just arrived in Natal; he became director of the Natal Bank, and held several other appointments. Johan Philip Zietsman was the former landdrost, and was now the postmaster of Pietermaritzburg.

In spite of the size of this committee of forty-six, Mr. J. M. Howell proposed that the committee should have power to add to their number. Mr. J. G. de Villiers, however, thought the resolution could not be carried out because of the distance from town of some of the people named. The Recorder felt that such a big committee could not possibly be efficient; six or eight people would secure more harmony, energy and efficiency. Mr. Archbell, however, argued that it was urgent to ensure a fair representation, and Mr. Robinson added that it was important to avoid the appearance of party politics; all sections of the public must be included. The Recorder then contented himself with having added: 'seven to form a quorum'.

Resolution seven concerned the subscription list, but the eighth resolution is quoted here as it serves to illustrate further the ambitions and high hopes of this inaugural meeting.

That copies of the foregoing resolutions be forwarded to those gentlemen resident at Durban who signed the preliminary address, with the

expression of a hope that a branch association will be forthwith formed at that place.

The eight resolutions being now all carried, David Dale Buchanan moved a vote of thanks to the chairman, Cloete, which was carried by acclamation:

That the warmest thanks of the meeting be given to the Hon. the Recorder for his kindness in taking the chair, and for the courtesy and ability of his conduct therein. The Recorder returned thanks for the honor which had taken him by surprise; and said this occasion was one of the most gratifying he had experienced during the many years he had spent in Natal. There existed here some diversity of political feeling and he had dreaded lest some jarring interest might have disturbed the unanimity which he had hoped to see prevail. In this fear he had been agreeably disappointed; and he trusted and hoped that when gentlemen came to sit down together, for the purpose of promoting the internal development of the district, they would eschew anything like party, hostile or alienated feelings. He begged and besought all present, as Christians, to come together on common grounds, and think of nothing else than the benefit of Natal.

And so the meeting, so full of promise for the future, drew to an end. It might be of interest to close with a list of those known to have been present. They were: Henry Cloete, Lieutenant J. M. Howell, John Moreland, George Macleroy, Arthur Walker, J. G. de Villiers, Thomas Robertson, J. P. Symons, C. R. Sinclair, J. Wade, Lieutenant Walmsley, D. B. Scott, A. Clarence, J. P. Hoffman, George Robinson, D. D. Buchanan, Rev. J. Archbell, and J. P. Zietsman.

Writing up the meeting for his *Natal Independent*,⁵ James Archbell 'hailed with unmitigated pleasure' the 'noble' institution being formed, and was glad to see names of faction become obsolete. He added:

The meeting of Friday last is fraught with great promise for the interests of Natal. The remarks that were made by different speakers on the occasion will not be lost, while the objects carried out are admirably adapted to place the colony upon a vastly more substantial basis than has heretofore been furnished.

It will be the melancholy task of this history to show that while much was achieved, nothing anywhere near the dazzling hopes of this inaugural meeting ever came to fulfilment.

U. E. M. JUDD

Notes:

1. Hattersley, A. F. *The Natal Society*, 1851-1951.
2. *Natal Independent*, 1.5.1851.
3. *Natal Witness*, 9.5.1851.
4. *Natal Witness*, 16.5.1851.
5. *Natal Independent*, 15.5.1851.