

AR2A011

Taming the landscape:
*the multifaceted legacy of mission station
infrastructure in the Eastern Cape, South
Africa*

Anna Hauff
TU
6177603
Supervisor
B.L. Hansen

Delft

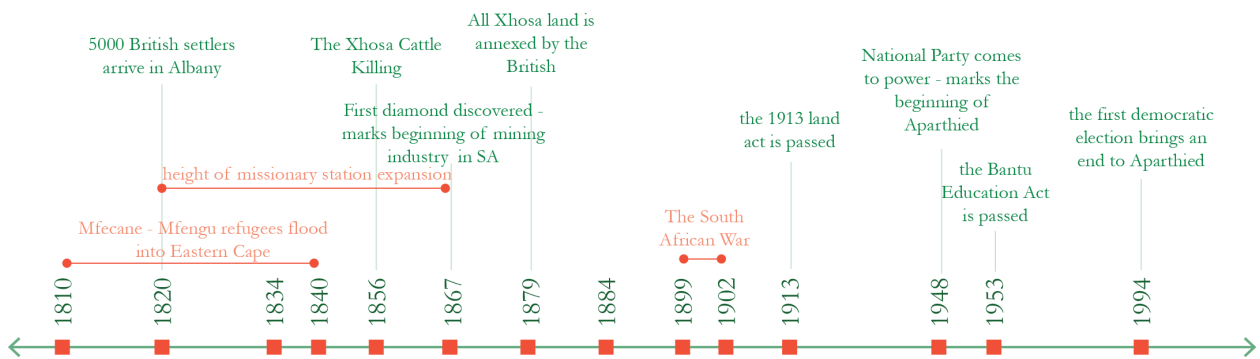


figure A
 time line of major events from 1810 to 1994
 by author (2025)



figure B
 Current map of South Africa highlighting the former Transkei and Ciskei homelands
 Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2010)

Table of Contents

Situating Research |pg 3

1.1 Methodology and structure

1.2 Context

1.2.1 The ‘station’: current academic discourse, and gaps in research

1.2.2 The land

Mission stations and the landscape |pg 7

2.1 The spread of the mission station

2.1.1 Literature review

2.2 Mapping Missions

2.3 The Landscape

2.3.1 Literature Review

2.4 Lovedale Case Study

Mission station buildings – the spread of colonial school and healthcare infrastructure and the impact of the post-colonial era |pg 16

3.1 The ‘station’ buildings

3.1.1 Literature review

3.2 Analysis of buildings from archival photographs

3.3 The impact of Apartheid on missionary infrastructure in the post-colonial era

3.3.1 Literature review

People in the buildings |pg 23

4.1 Image Analysis: British colonial missionary spaces and post colonial educational and healthcare spaces

Discussion |pg 28

Conclusion |pg 28

References |pg 29

Situating Research

1.1 Methodology and structure

This research investigates the impact of the mission station in the region formally called “Kaffraria” by the British colonists during the 19th century. Later, during the 20th century much of the land from this region formed the Transkei and Ciskei ‘Bantustans’ for the Xhosa and now forms part of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. This research focusses on the impact of missionary stations in the eastern frontier of South Africa with a particular focus on the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMS) and the Glasgow Missionary Society (GMS) which transferred its work to the Free Church of Scotland (FCS)¹ in 1845 (Duncan, 2013).

The paper is structured around three topics:

1. *the mission station and the landscape*: contextualising the mission station at landscape level and understanding its development and impact on the land
2. *mission station buildings* – the spread of education and healthcare infrastructure: analysing what missionaries built, how and why they were these institutions created.
3. *people in the buildings*: analysing educational and healthcare spaces people to which people had access, the impact they had on people and how this was changed by the Apartheid government coming to power in the post-colonial era

This research uses a historical – analytical methodology. A literature review is conducted around each topic and primary resources such as books, maps and photographs are analysed and synthesised with literature. Regarding *topic 1*, the author used a range of archival maps and contemporary sources to form her own mappings of mission stations in order to synthesise and visualise source material. The data in this essay is relevant as although the impact of mission stations in South Africa has been researched in sociological ways, there is scant research on mission stations as a tangible arm of colonial infrastructure, from the broader landscape level all the way down to the actual spaces occupied by people.

1.2 Context

1.2.1 The ‘station’: current academic discourse, and gaps in research

The 19th century marked the height of mission station establishment in Africa –sites where missionaries where could settle and proselytize the local population (Hoveland, 2024). However, these sites did not contain spaces solely for religious activity. The term ‘mission’ often referred to the church, the school and the dispensary” (Uduku, 2018: 5), while the surrounding landscape was often claimed for agricultural purposes (Hovland, 2024). Mission stations and their surroundings often formed multifunctional complexes which were linked together through road and later rail access forming a network that facilitated a flow of goods and ideas. This notion is not far from Larkin’s (2013) definition of infrastructure as “material structures and networks that “facilitate the flow of goods, people, or ideas and allow for their exchange over space” (Larkin 2013: 328).

The role and impact of the mission station in colonial territories has been described as an ambiguous one (Frescura, 1985). Moloantoa (2016) highlights a public lecture given by Professor Monica Wilson of the University of Cape Town who aptly describes the liminal space occupied by the mission station by underlining two contrasting positions, seeing missionaries as people

1 FCS changed to the United Free Church of Scotland (UFC) after 1900

“who, in seeking to spread the Word, created literacy, schools and hospitals. Others see missionaries as agents of conquest, tools of imperialism, tools of a capitalist system, who fastened the yoke on a subject people and sapped the will to resist.”

Monica Wilson in Moloantoa (2016)

The topic of colonial missionary activity and its impacts is not new to the academic discourse. There are two broad topics which much of the documentation of this subject fall. Firstly, there is colonial era material which documents the history of these missionary endeavours, in the form of archival sources (such as dairies of missionaries), books, reports, maps and articles - Du Plessis' (1911) book documenting missionary history in South Africa is a notable source in this regard which has informed this paper. These sources were mostly written by white missionary men, who placed themselves at the centre of the narrative (Hovland, 2024). Secondly, there is post-colonial era material which considers missionary histories through a socio-economic lens to understand the sociological, political and economic impacts of missionary activity. Authors such as Elphick, Etherington and the Comaroffs consider these different positions. Other researchers have considered missionary stations through an archaeological lens (King & McGranaghan, 2018). Although their work was centred around the history of education in South Africa, Soudien et al., (2024) describe the importance of the mission station in building South Africa's education system. Architect and researcher Franco Frescura has done crucial work in understanding the proliferation of missionary stations in South Africa. Frescura has compiled a list of mission stations highlighting multitudes of these buildings within the landscape and has mapped the broader development of these stations in Frescura (1985) and analysed the impact of the mission station on African societies in Frescura (2015). Hovland (2024) explores the history of a South African mission station using a 'spatial lens' by highlighting that these sites were not just religious institutions but physical spaces where multiple meanings and power dynamics were intertwined with the buildings and lived experiences of people. However, despite the spatial framework of this research, there is not one visual which supports this concept. The notion of space is treated as a conceptual tool in this literature, rather than as a visual depiction of the ambiguous history of the mission station.

Therefore, there is less research into how the proliferation of the mission station became part of the tangible colonial infrastructure (road, rail and military networks) which crept into the African landscape. Importantly, Frescura (1985, 2015, 2021) lays the groundwork for this by documenting the multitude of mission stations within the South African landscape, as well as their impact on the societies in which they were established. This research aims to close this gap by pulling together the establishment of mission stations in the Eastern Cape and their relationship to other functions such as healthcare and education. These relationships were precursors to the subsequent expansion of the British colonial empire. The sequential chain of mission infrastructure spaces and buildings are explained through maps constructed by the author, archival photographs and drawing analysis. The data depicts a range of infrastructure networks, from broader transport/logistical and governmental infrastructure to spaces of exchange (what is happening in an individual classroom at a granular level). This essay further explores the repercussions of this infrastructure history on the present day education system in the former Transkei/Ciskei regions in the Eastern Cape.

1.2.2 The land

The south eastern coast of South Africa where the former Transkei and Ciskei 'Bantustans'² were located, was disconnected from the Trans-Atlantic slave markets present in West and Central Africa. Therefore, the inhabitants of this area did not bear many of the detrimental effects of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Most of this territory is characterized by mountains, rolling hills, grassland and fertile soil. East of the Fish River, deep valleys have been carved into the landscape as perennial rivers make their way to the Indian Ocean (Meisler, 1968).

Before the British began to annex land on the eastern frontier during the 19th century, the landscape was densely populated with African societies, who practiced agriculture and did not interact much with Dutch colonists (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). However, the British annexation of the Cape Colony from the Dutch in 1806, following the Napoleonic Wars, marked beginning of the shift away from isolation of the Transkei and Ciskei territories. Europeans realised that South Africa's temperate climate and lack of tropical diseases (such as malaria) made it a much better prospect for settlement – unlike much of Africa where harsh climates and tropical disease prevented permanent European establishment. Thus, European settlement began to expand from the Cape Colony into a new territory of 'unbelievers' at turn of the nineteenth century (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). During this expansion the unannexed region on the eastern frontier was referred to as 'Kaffraria'. The etymology of 'Kaffraria' comes from the Arabic word 'kaffir' meaning 'unbeliever' – this term was used by Europeans to describe black people in South Africa and has become the most derogatory racial slur in the country. When the British annexed part of Kaffraria in 1847 they named this territory 'British Kaffraria'. Walker (1922) traces this expansion in 'The Historical Atlas of South Africa', where he notes that “the line of European advance was marked out by the missionaries, especially those of the Wesleyan and Glasgow societies” (Walker, 1922 : 15).



figure 1.1
Fichier:View of the River Kei and Fingoeland - Cape Colony
J. H. B. (1877)

note the european oxen and wagon in the foreground

2 Land allocated to the African population from 1913 Land Act, in which 87% of land was given to Europeans who only made up 20% of the population. Africans were resettled into the remaining 13% (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). The Transkei was significantly larger than the Ciskei, taking up an area roughly the size of Denmark (Meisler, 1968).

Mission stations and the landscape

2.1 The spread of the mission station

2.1.1 Literature review

In 1820, as part of a British government scheme, 5000 British settlers arrived and established themselves in Albany³ on the eastern frontier, adjacent to unannexed land across the Great Fish River belonging to Xhosa people⁴. The British government did this in order to consolidate the eastern frontier and defend land from the Xhosa (SAOH, 2011). With this influx of immigrants came a Wesleyan clergyman, William Shaw, who proclaimed “*there is not a single missionary station between my residence and the northern extremity of the Red Sea*” (Du Plessis, 1911:173). This marks the birth of the mission station beyond the banks of the Great Fish River as Shaw began planning ‘a chain of stations’ that would stretch from his village “to the Port of Natal, a distance of 400 miles” (Du Plessis, 1911: 173). According to Etherington (1978) by 1880 this region was the most prolific place of Christian missionary activity in Africa. The initial ‘chain’ of six stations implemented by Shaw (in order of construction) are: Wesleyville, Mount Coke, Butterworth, Morley and Clarke-bury (Walker, 1922).

After the completion of Wesleyville (WMS) formed guidelines for future missionary station establishment. There were three important specifications for the site: arable land, sufficient water and timber access. This “reflected the intention to make the station a farm community” (Fast, 1991:40). Typically, a station had a few hundred acres of land and was run by the missionary and his wife who sought to spread Christianity, taught basic secular education and oversaw agricultural and mechanical projects carried out by the local people (Walker, 1922). According to Fast (1991) choosing the site for the station was a “cooperative effort” between the missionaries and the chief. The validity of this statement comes into question when Fast (1991) describes the establishment of Butterworth station – where the missionaries settled despite chief Hinsta refusing them permission to do so. This prompted Hinsta to move 20 miles away – his disapproval “caused the workmen at the fledging station to abandon their work”(Fast, 1991:46).

3 Albany, also known as the Zuurveld, was a district of the Cape Colony. The region consisted of the hinterland beyond Gqeberha (formally known as Port Elizabeth) (Knobel, 1822).

4 Xhosa is often used a term which encompasses different groups of Xhosa speaking people such as the isiMpondo and Thembu and related language dialects (SAHO, 2018)

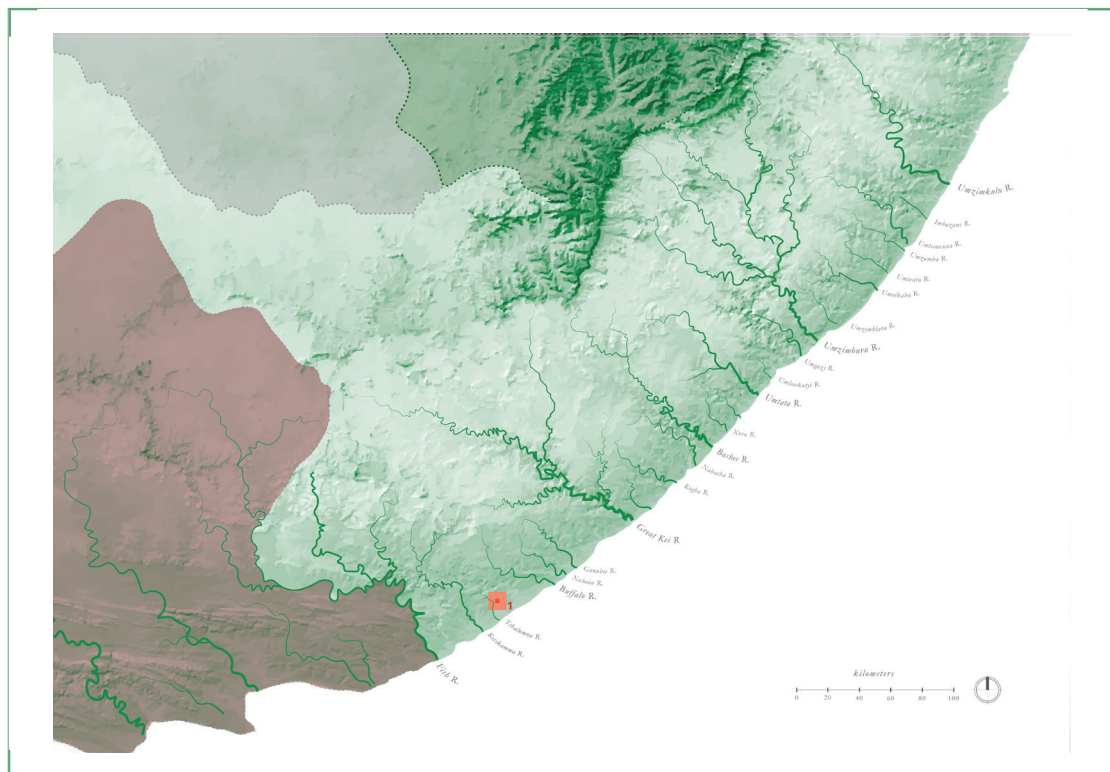
2.2 Mapping Missions

Although there are some sources which highlight that the mission stations had a logic of expansion which formed part of European civilization and conquest in Southern Africa (Walker, 1922; Fast, 1991; Du Plessis, 1911), this author could not locate any source which explains this expansion in order to visually support these claims. Therefore, this author gathered data from various historical maps⁵ and made use of a working document from Franco Frescura, in which he documents 1030 mission stations in South Africa (Frescura, 2021).

After creating the maps it is possible to analyse them in relation to literature. Through this mapping, the sequence of the mission station ‘chain’ conceptualised by Shaw becomes visible (Du Plessis, 1923). Although sources often cite the initial six stations, figure 2.2.7 reveals how by 1868 there was a ‘chain’ of 10 prominent WMS stations which stretch from Shaw’s initial station (Wesleyville) to the Natal border (Du Plessis, 1923). This is the first map which the author is aware of which highlights how the WMS achieved Shaw’s goal to create a chain of connected stations across Xhosa land. The change from Figure 2.2.4 to Figure 2.2.5 is particularly interesting because it shows how this initial cluster of WMS and GMS stations were the precursors to the British annexation of territory which became British Kaffraria. There was even a strip of unannexed land between this new territory and the Cape Colony (figure 2.2.5) This could suggest that this initial cluster of mission stations formed a network of colonial infrastructure which made the British annexation and occupation of land possible.

Fast (1991) mentions that one of the requirements for the site of a missionary station is water access. Figure 2.2.8 reveals that of the 13 initial stations highlighted on the map, 12 were on or very close to a river. Rivers also appear to play an important role in territory, as the frontier boundaries were often determined by the rivers themselves⁶.

Figure 2.2.1
First mission in Shaw’s ‘chain’ lying beyond the eastern frontier
by author (2025)



5 Maps from Walker (1922) and Bartholomew (1879)

6 See the annexed territory bordering rivers from figures 2.2.1 -2.2.7

Figure 2.2.2
land annexed by British
from 1824-1829
map by author (2025)

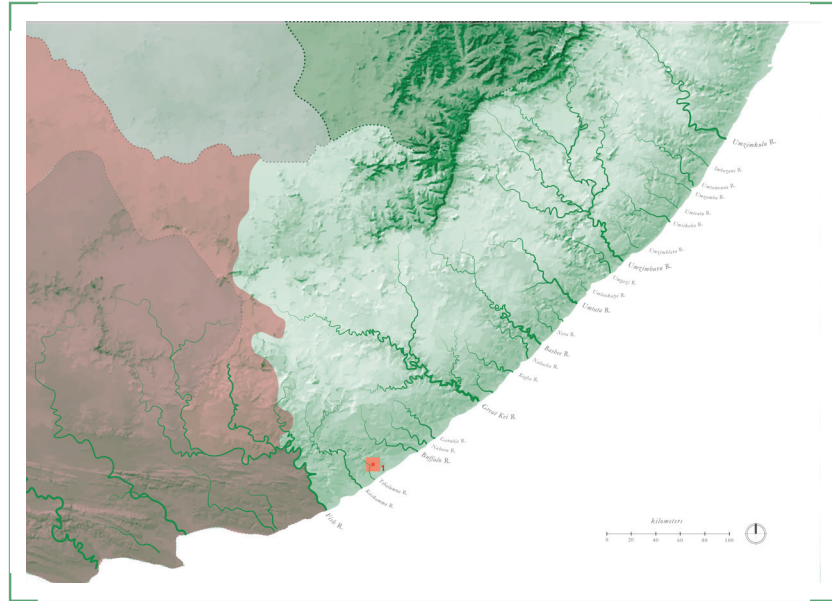


Figure 2.2.3
Extension of WMS
chain and establish-
ment of GMS cluster
map by author (2025)

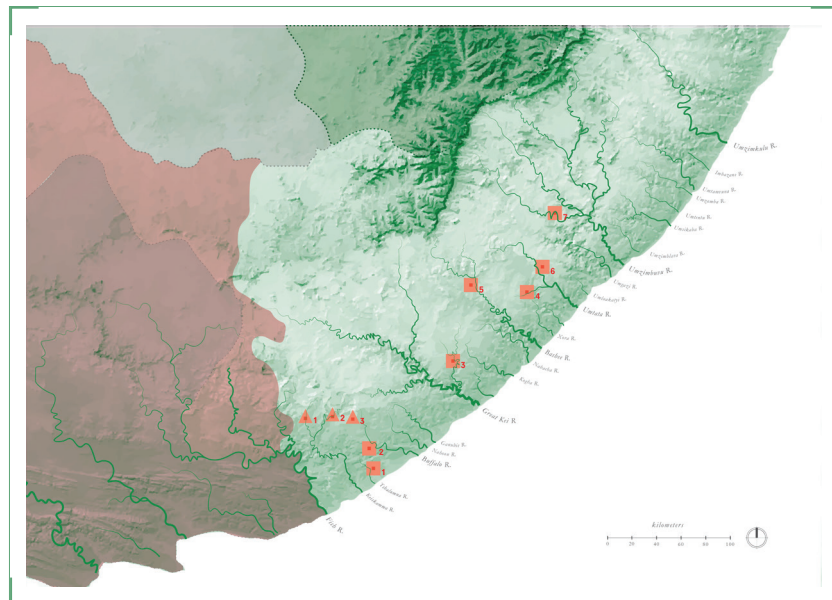
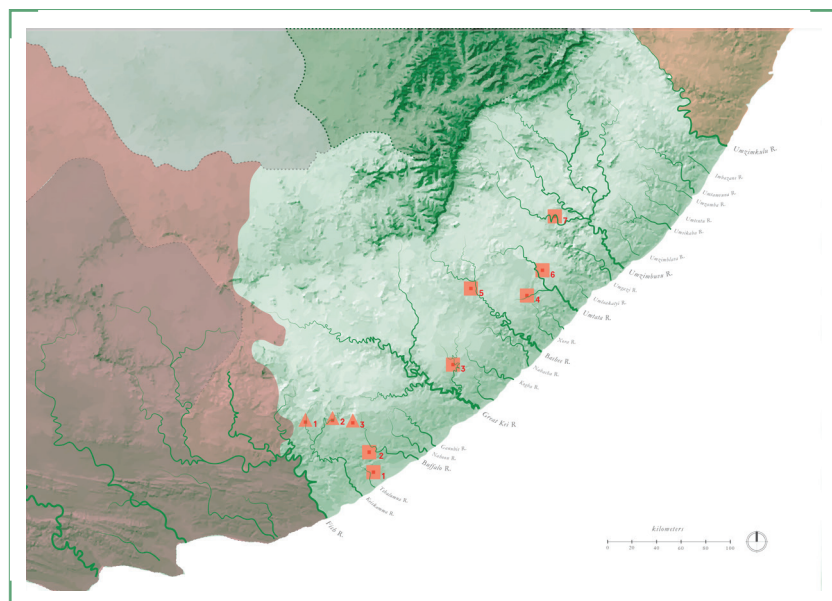


Figure 2.2.4
Natal is annexed by the
British in 1843
map by author (2025)



- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ■ Protestant Mission Station | ■ WMS | ▲ GMS |
| ■ Cape Colony | 1. Wesleyville | 1. Lovedale |
| ■ Annexed by British 1824-1829 | 2. Mount Coke | 2. Burnshill |
| ■ Annexed by British 1843 | 3. Butterworth | 3. Perie |
| ■ British Kaffraria 1847 | 4. Morley | |
| ■ Annexed by British 1853-1854 | 5. Clarkebury | |
| ■ Orange Free State | 6. Buntingville | |
| ■ Basutoland | 7. Shawbury | |
| | 8. Palmerton | |
| | 9. Ermfundsweni | |
| | 10. Etembeni | |

Figure 2.2.5
 1847: British annex a pocket of land beyond the frontier where the cluster of mission stations are located in map by author (2025)

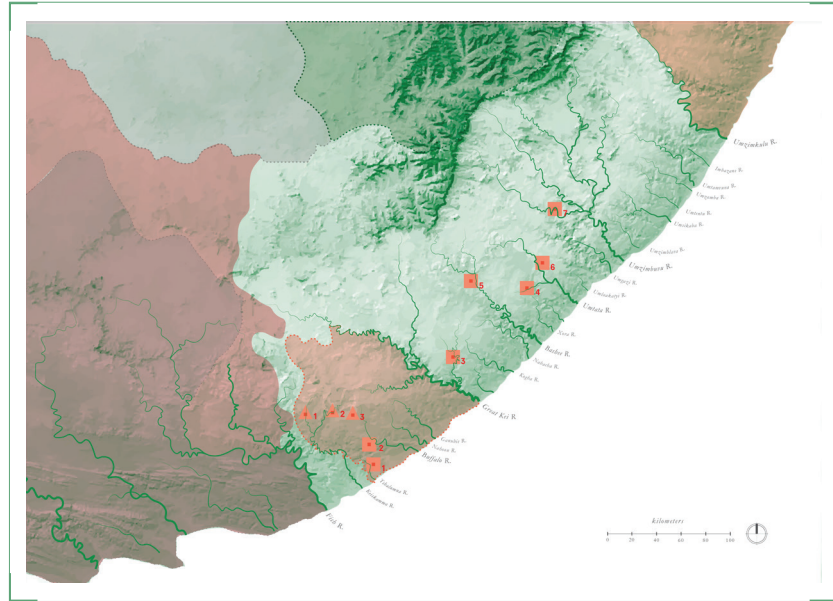


Figure 2.2.6
 1853 -1854: The strip of land between the two british occupied territories is annexed map by author (2025)

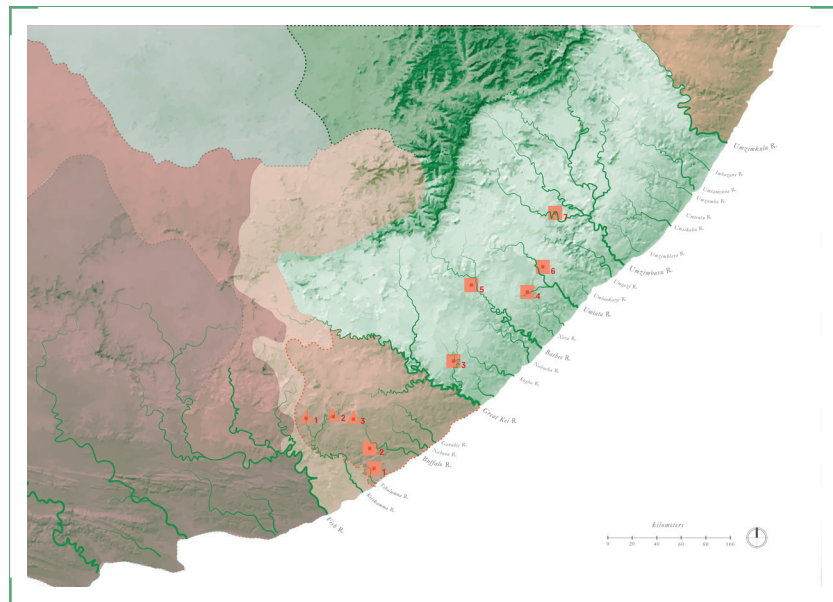
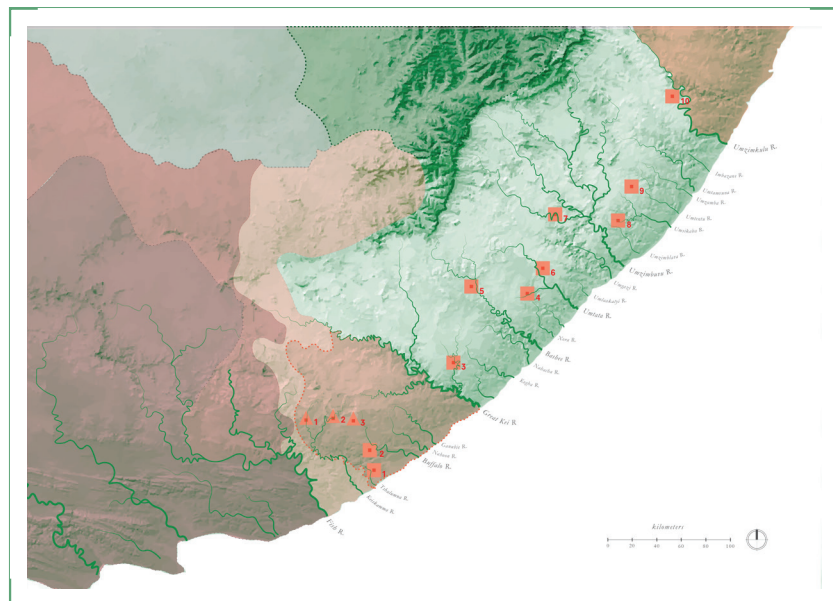


Figure 2.2.7
 additional stations added to WMS chain, completing Shaws goal of establishing a presence from the eastern frontier to Natal map by author (2025)



- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| ■ Protestant Mission Station | ■ WMS | ▲ GMS |
| ■ Cape Colony | 1. Wesleyville | 1. Lovedale |
| ■ Annexed by British 1824-1829 | 2. Mount Coke | 2. Burnshill |
| ■ Annexed by British 1843 | 3. Butterworth | 3. Perie |
| ■ British Kaffraria 1847 | 4. Morley | |
| ■ Annexed by British 1853-1854 | 5. Clarkebury | |
| ■ Orange Free State | 6. Buntingville | |
| ■ Basutoland | 7. Shawbury | |
| | 8. Palmerton | |
| | 9. Emfundisweni | |
| | 10. Etembeni | |

2.3 The landscape

2.3.1 Literature review

The arrival of Europeans brought about physical changes to the landscapes they settled. They were determined to ‘tame the world they found’ (Soudien et al., 2024:63) by reflecting the landscape from which they came. Fences were erected; soil was cultivated with new crops; technologies such as ploughs and furrow irrigation were introduced; rivers and streams were diverted and alien vegetation was planted. (Frescura, 2015; Soudien et al., 2024; Stewart, 1894) In essence, the Europeans had an entirely different relationship to the natural environment compared to African societies. Instead of taming and dominating nature, “African traditional religion points to the fact that the existence of an African is that which treats nature as equal to human beings” (Chibvongodze, 2016: 165). Williams (1959) in Frescura (2015) argues that the missionaries’ ability to provide new technologies such as furrow irrigation systems to the Eastern Cape contributed more to their acceptance by local people than their teachings of Christianity.

Another important event at the landscape level that shifted socio-cultural dynamics in the former Transkei and Ciskei region is the Xhosa Cattle Killing (1856 – 1857).

“Nongawuse was a young Xhosa girl who in 1856 had a vision in which a “new people” from overseas announced to her that the ancestors were preparing themselves to return to life with new cattle. In order to prepare for their arrival, Nongawuse was told, all the Xhosa must burn their crops and slaughter their cattle. Despite reluctance in some quarters, and initial disappointments when the ancestors failed to arrive by the prescribed date, most Xhosas did destroy their livelihood. The ancestors failed to appear. A direful spectacle ensued.

Tens of thousands of people starved to death (probably about 40,000 [Peires, 1989:319]). The survivors, forced to seek assistance in the British Cape Colony, were driven into the service of the colonists. The colonial administration, under the leadership of Governor Sir George Grey (long reputed in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa for his humane treatment of “Native races”), brutally exploited the situation”.

(Ashforth, 1991: 582)

Depending on the politics and context of the story tellers, the reason for this event vary. The apartheid government called this event “The National Suicide of the Xhosas”, others say it was an attempt to eradicate the lung sickness epidemic besieging the cattle (Peires, 1987) while the Xhosa people often think that this event was orchestrated by the colonial government to annihilate them (Ashforth, 1991). Hundreds of thousands of cattle were driven into the rivers and sea. In the aftermath many people faced severe food shortages driving thousands of people to the mission stations for help – assisting the solidification of the stations’ presence in the landscap (Ashforth, 1991).

2.4 Lovedale Case Study

The European ‘taming’ of the landscape is reflected in figure 2.4.1 where Stewart (1894) describes the approach to Lovedale Mission Station. He explains how the landscape, when first occupied by the missionaries, was “merely a portion of African veldt (Stewart, 1894: 48). However, the transformation is clearly shown in these photographs, alien trees and shrubs have taken over this portion of landscape and in figure 2.4.2 Stewart (1894) describes how a man-made water channel which diverted water from the Tyumie river was constructed at great cost.

Figure 2.4.1
Stewart (1894b)

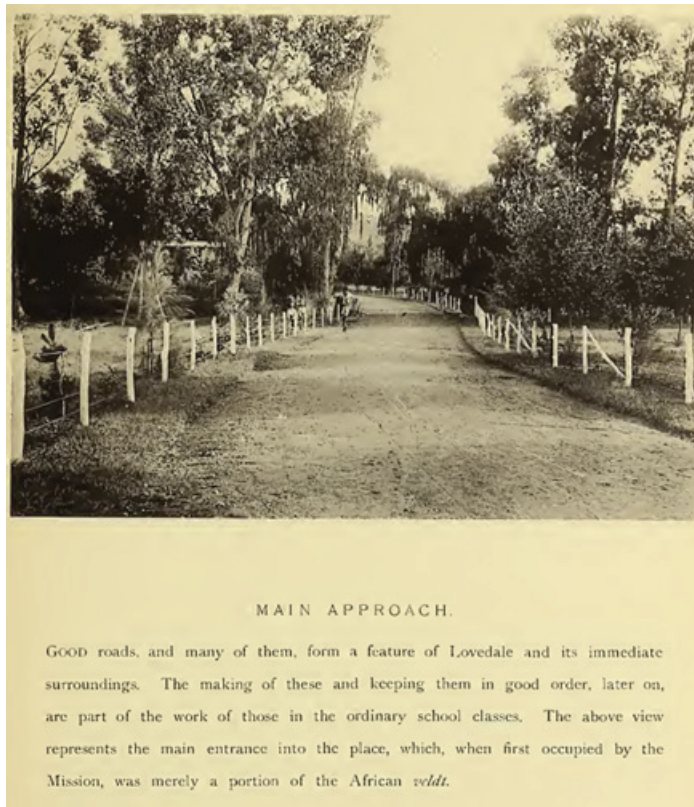
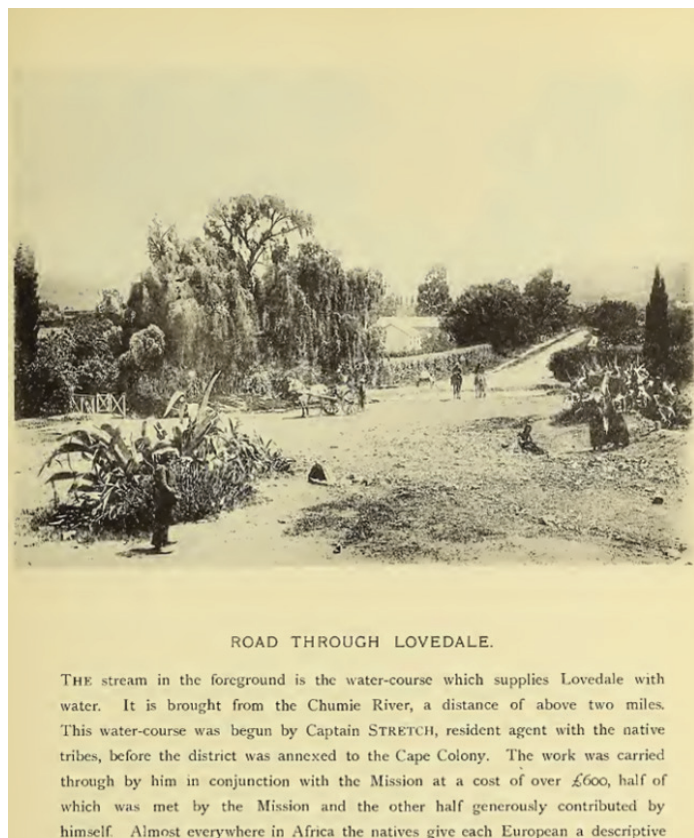


Figure 2.4.2
Stewart (1894c)



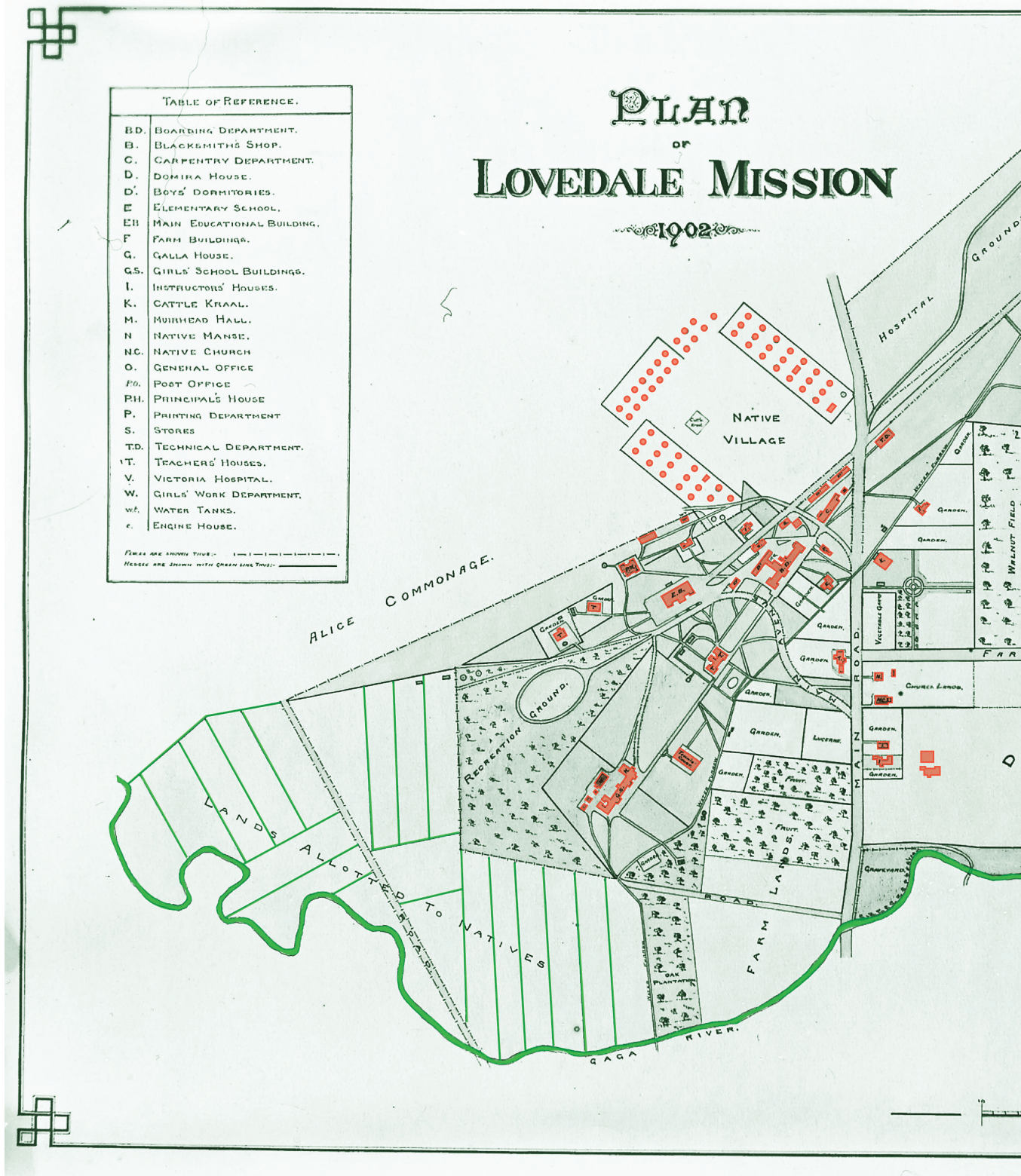


Figure 2.4.3
 Plan of Lovedale adjusted by author
 to to highlight rivers, furrow irrigation
 and buildings in the landscape
 unknown (1902)

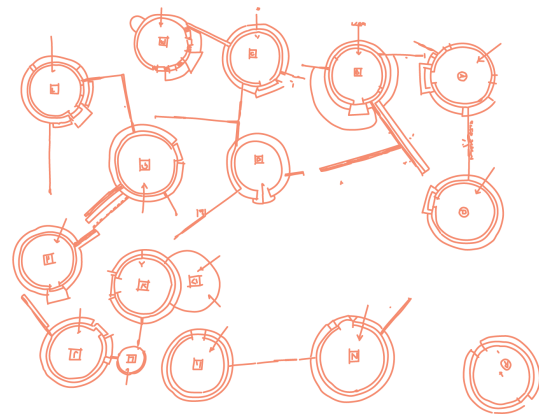


Figure 2.4.4
Homestead layout plan
Franco Frescura (1982)
 annotations removed and orange
 added by author

Figure 2.4.4 which consists of a typical homestead layout plan contrasts the grid like and rectilinear order in which the missionaries arranged the huts on Lovedale in figure 2.4.3. It also highlights how differently the Europeans and the Xhosa people built structures

Mission station buildings – the spread of colonial school and healthcare infrastructure and the impact of the post-colonial era

3.1 The ‘station’ buildings

3.1.1 Literature review

The emergence of western education system began in the 14th and 15th centuries with the establishment of religious colleges which began educating pupils. Winchester (1382) and Eton (1440) in England are two well-known examples of these institutions (Guedes, 2016). In a similar pattern, the establishment of western style education in southern Africa emerged out of missionary activity. In the context of missionary station building in the former “Kaffraria” region of Eastern Cape, missionary schools provided education to a relatively small number of African elites. They would go on to play important leadership roles in their communities – often in ways which opposed their colonial sponsors (Soudien et al., 2024). Linked to this, research has shown a correlation between missionary presence and political participation (Cage and Rueda, 2016).

The objective of colonial missionaries to proselytise the African population was not only about church building – it involved setting up schools and healthcare (Uduku, 2018). Local materials and building techniques such as wattle and daub for walls and grass thatch for roofs characterized the first mission schools (Uduku, 2018). Later, schools were constructed by missionary staff with the assistance of local converts – trained to have the construction and carpentry skills to work on missionary building projects (Uduku 2018). In the case of the initial WMS mission station chain, there was a designated missionary, who moved between the missions to plan and implement constructions (Fast, 1991). The need for permanent dwellings for European settlements as well as tools and technologies needed for their establishment meant that local people were trained in stone construction, bricklaying, carpentry and wagon building (Soudien et al., 2024; Frescura, 2015). The European approach to construction was viewed as superior by the British, who would assess the degree of ‘civilization’ of the Xhosa people based on how many rectangular buildings were constructed as opposed to the vernacular circular huts (Frescura; 2015; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). Frescura makes the argument that the missionary insistence on rectilinear dwellings ultimately failed because Xhosa people held onto their socio – cultural beliefs and values which are tied to the vernacular of the hut (Frescura, 2015).

According to Mostert (1992) the vernacular circular hut buildings in Southern Africa (to which Mandela was accustomed) are one of the most distinctive habitations in the world.

“Apart from being the most functional of all, it is probably the most classless habitation on earth. Through millenia it has readily functioned as required, whether for royal purpose or peasant’s”

(Mostert, 1992: 187).

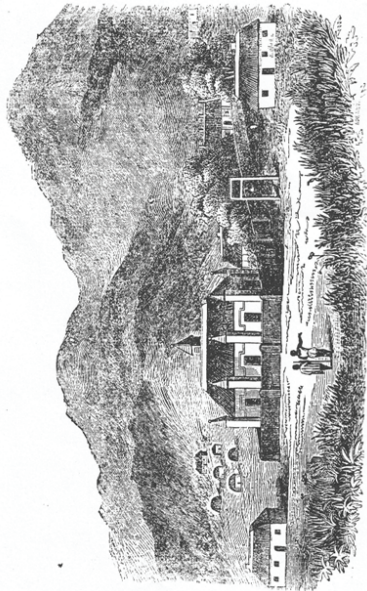
Traditionally, these huts had openings with no doors and windows - unlike most human habitations which represent a withdrawal from their environments, these structures instead represented an ‘outside’ life where the main function of the hut was “simply a place to sleep at night” (Mostert, 1992: 188). This notion is reiterated by Uduku (2018) who points out the contradiction between vernacular built forms designed for outdoor lifestyles and the requirements of the Western schooling system centred around the classroom⁷. Although the colonial architecture imposed was often out of place, later buildings show climate adaptations such as the veranda or covered exterior circulation – a sign of the British’s adjustment to their context (Jacobs, 2019). The “use of the veranda clearly relates to climate” (Vellinger et al., 2008 in Jacobs, 2019: 43). It was introduced because it created a shaded, dry space which allowed for ventilation and protected walls and windows from heavy rain and the heat (Jacobs, 2019).

7 This notion is further explored in section 4

No. CIV.

JUNE, 1846.

PAPERS
RELATIVE TO
THE WESLEYAN MISSIONS,
AND TO
THE STATE OF HEATHEN COUNTRIES.
(PUBLISHED QUARTERLY.)

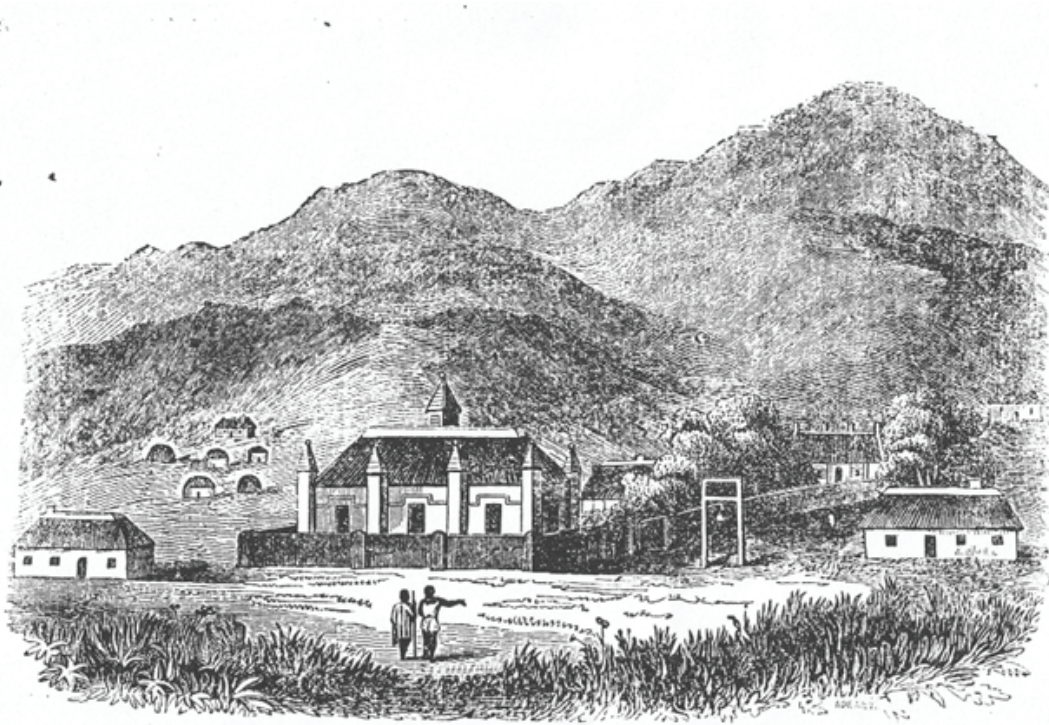


CHAPEL BUILT BY THE KAFFIRS AT CLARKEBURY, EAST KAFFRARIA.

Figure 3.1.1

Clarkbury buildings with bell post on the right and Xhosa buildings on the back left

Wesleyan Missionary Notices (1846) in Nanni (2020)



CHAPEL BUILT BY THE KAFFIRS AT CLARKEBURY, EAST KAFFRARIA.

Although some early colonial constructions used the vernacular approach (Uduku, 2018), the establishment of mission schools demonstrate how European architecture was imposed on the landscape. To the Xhosa society, whose buildings consisted of egalitarian typologies (Mostert, 1992) , western architecture which deploys monumentality, hierarchy and rectilinear geometry buildings such as Lovedale or Blythewood⁸ must have been extremely foreign objects in the landscape (Mostert, 1992; Frescura, 2015). A tangible account of the perception of these buildings is young Nelson Mandela’s first encounter with Clarkebury mission station (his first place of education) according to author Johny Steinberg:

“ he found Clarkebury awfully intimidating as first... here he confronted for the first time a place that felt entirely western. A compound of two dozen rectangular, mortar and brick buildings, it was truly a foreign place... soon he was to mortify himself. On his day in school, he ascended a flight of stairs clad in a brand new pair of boots. Nelson had neither ascended stairs nor worn boots in his life; and the task unmoored him”

(Steinberg, 2023:13)

Another foreign architectural element visible to all was the bell tower or bell post. This architectural element tangibly represents how the British not only colonised space, but also time (Nanni, 2020). The bell was used to regulate times of work, school and prayer. African missions used the bell to serve “an outwardly expansionist function” (Nanni, 2020: 164). The local population was dispersed around the mission station and Christianity was said to be present as far as “ the audible sound of the bell’ because the order of Christian time could be imposed on the surrounding people. Figure 3.1.2 is an extract from Nanni (2020) and shows how the British missionaries imposed their order of time at Lovedale missionary station

BELL RINGER
I. The Bell-ringer shall ring the bell punctually at the stated hours, and no one shall touch the bell at any other hour.
[...]
III. The bell shall be rung at the following hours:
[As the warning-bell for students and
At 5.30am In summer, {pupils for class duties; and the apprentices.
6.30am..... In winter, {to prepare for work.
6.00am..... In summer, {For masters and apprentices.
7.00am..... In winter, {to commence work.
8.00am..... Stop for breakfast.
8.05am..... Worship and breakfast.
9.00am..... Work and classes.
1.00pm Classes close, and workmen stop work for dinner.
1.15pm Dinner.
2.00pm Masters and apprentices resume work; native lads commence work in the fields and gardens.
4.00pm Native lads stop work.
5.00pm Apprentices stop work.
6.00pm Warning-bell for worship and supper.
6.05pm Worship and supper.
7.00pm Evening classes till 8.30.
10.00pm Closing bell, and lights out at 10.30pm. ²⁵

Figure 3.1.2
Lovedale time schedule
in Nanni (2020)

⁸ The buildings of Lovedale will be analyzed in 3. 2 as a case study

3.2 Analysis of buildings from archival photographs

Lovedale Mission Station was built by the Glasgow Missionary society and established on the Tyumie river in 1824. (Soudien et al., 2024).

Figure 3.2.1 shows the stone church which was the first public building erected at Lovedale. This simple rectangular structure with a hipped roof must have seemed foreign to the Xhosa people, who built circular buildings and did not use stone construction.

The main educational building of Lovedale (figure 3.2.2) was constructed from local sandstone – this choice of material results in a highly durable structure which still stands today. The building has strong Georgian influences, typical of British colonial architecture of this period. This is evidenced by the gabled roof structure, clean stonework with minimal decoration, and large sash windows with multiple panes. However, the tower in the middle suggests some influence of the Scottish Baronial style. This building shows no adaptations to its cultural or climatic context.

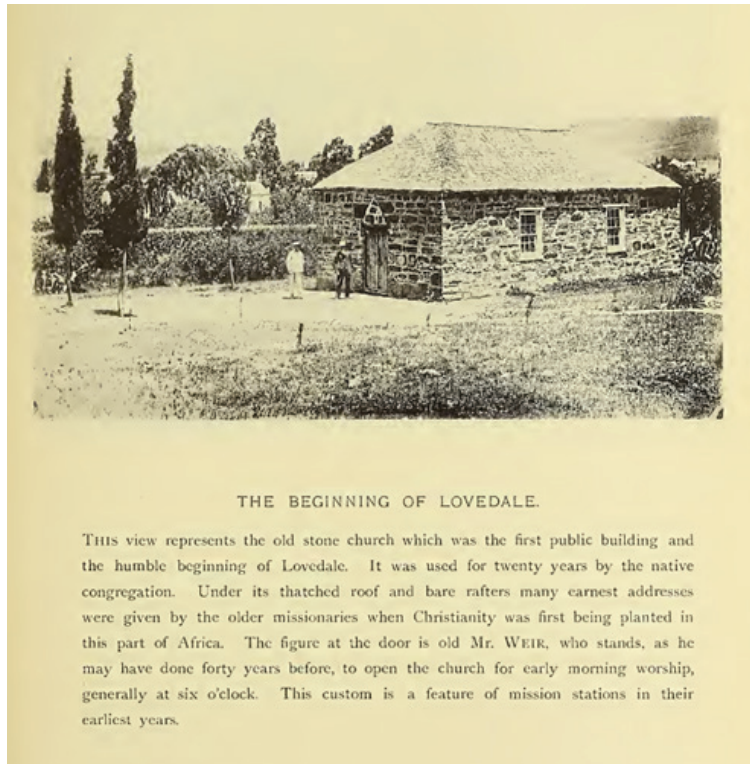


Figure 3.2.1
Stewart (1984d)

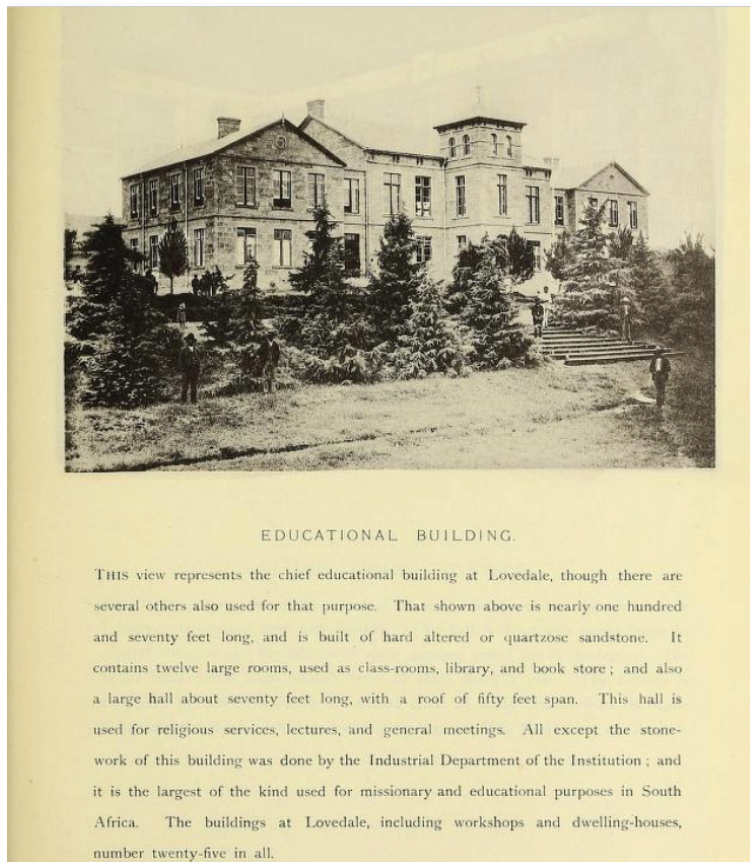


Figure 3.2.2
Stewart (1894a)

The hospital was built in 1898 – at a later stage than the educational building. Although there is still some Georgian influences in the symmetry of the façade, the deep veranda which has been created shows the adaption of the British colonial architecture to the climate as posited by Jacobs, (2019).



Figure 3.2.3
Victoria Hospital
National Library of
Scotland (1938)

By around 1938 with the construction of the new dormitory of the girl's school we can see that the building architecture had developed its own logic because of colonial adaption. Although the building looks very different to figure 3.2.2, the principles of symmetry, large sash windows and durability of the brick work are still present – instead they have been re-interpreted to respond better to the climatic context. The veranda facilitates circulation between the inside and outside of the building and protects the façade from the heat of the sun, while still allowing for good ventilation. The pitch of the roof appears to be steeper which indicates an adaption to better deal with heavy rainfall. The impact of Apartheid on missionary infrastructure in the post-colonial era

Figure 3.2.4
New Girls dormitory
National Library of
Scotland (1938)



3.3 The impact of Apartheid on missionary infrastructure in the post-colonial era

3.3.1 literature review

Prior to the apartheid government's 1953 Bantu Education Act, 90% of black South African schools were state-aided mission schools (SAHO, 2011). These schools became instrumental in the public school system and educated the majority of children (white and black) (Soudien et al., 2024). The 1953 Bantu Education act (which sought to segregate education between whites and non-whites) ended government assistance for the financing and construction of missionary schools (Uduku, 2018). The apartheid government sought to take control of education from the missionaries as they were seen as a threat – mission education was 'incompatible' with the 'ordering of society' (Overy, 2002) and deliberately under-invested in black schools (Skelton, 2014).

After the 1953 Bantu Education Act, the government began to construct schools with different designs and layouts for different racial groups. Schools for non-whites had 'generic plans' usually consisting of single bank classroom blocks with few spaces dedicated to anything other than rote learning. These were known as Department of Education and Training (DET) schools (Uduku, 2018:66). These became mono-functional spaces, unlike the diverse array of functions provided by mission schools.

The dismantling of the missionary infrastructure in the former Ciskei and Transkei homelands has left a stark legacy on the region today. It is no coincidence that the area which was once the centre of African education now contains the country's most "acute school infrastructure backlog" (Skelton, 2014) – 85% of inappropriate school structures are in this region (DBSA, 2023).

In 2010 an application was launched to force the Eastern Cape provincial government to provide basic educational infrastructure. This is often referred to as 'the mud school's case' (Skelton, 2014:1). 'Mud schools' are the tangible legacy of Apartheid - most of these schools are in former Ciskei and Transkei. Although earth has the potential to be a good building material, these 'mud schools' are dilapidated and lack basic infrastructure such as sanitation and electricity. These buildings are often in such bad condition, that when it rains children cannot attend school (Skelton, 2014). Until 2013, South Africa had no legally binding school building norms and standards, and the state could not be held accountable for implementing schooling infrastructure. It was only after the Minister of Education was repeatedly taken to court by a non-governmental organization (Equal Education) that minimum norms and standards for public education infrastructure were put into place in 2013 (Fairhead, 2013).

The first date set by the government to eradicate 'mud schools' was 2005. This date has been pushed forward many times – the latest date is mid- 2025. In 2013 the government claimed there were 510 of these schools, while in 2023 the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA)⁹ put this number as 1509 schools in the Eastern Cape alone. This indicates a gap in the understanding of the infrastructure required to provide equal educational environments. Too often the instructional aspect of improving education is considered without considering how to provide the physical context for this to take place (Equal Education, 2023).

⁹ DBSA (Development Bank of South Africa) is one of the major implementation partners of ASIDA (Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative) (DBSA, n.d.).

People in the building

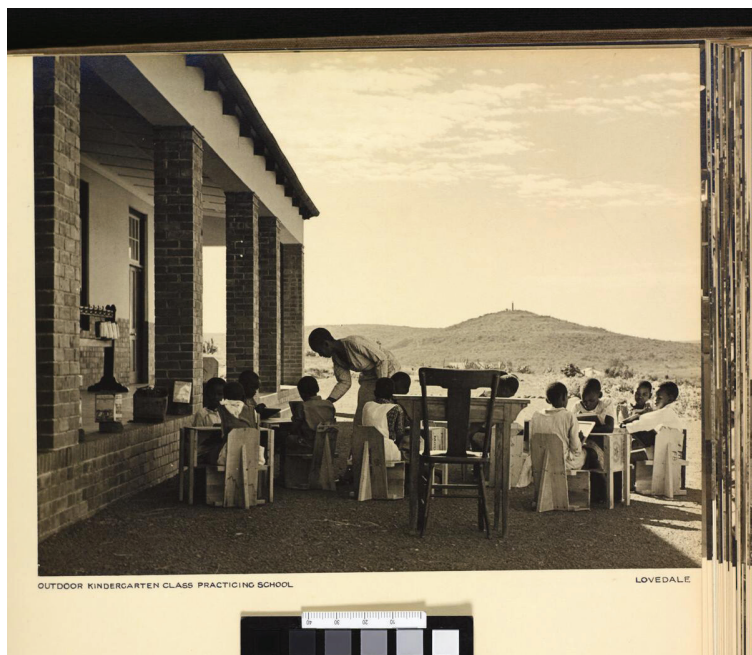
4.1 Image Analysis: British colonial missionary spaces and post colonial educational and health-care spaces

Western education revolves around the classroom – it is difficult to “adapt existing traditional built forms to respond to the specific functional requirements of the western educational classroom” (Uduku: 2018:28). While this is true in most cases as shown in figure 4.1, figure 4.2 hints at the potential of doing things differently.

Figure 4.1
Classroom at Lovedale
National Library of Scotland (1938)



Figure 4.2
Outdoor class at Lovedale
National Library of Scotland (1938)



The apartheid government's racist rhetoric infiltrated the physical environment of schools – there were even different thermal standards for white and black schools (Uduku, 2018). Figure 4.3 by photographer Ernest Cole is the first visual this author has come across which encapsulates this attitude towards the education of African students. The description from Cole of the photograph best describes the environment many young students found themselves.



Figure 4.3
“Earnest boy squats on haunches and strains to follow lesson in the heat of a packed classroom”
Cole (1967)

In contrast to figure 4.1 figure 4.4 and 4.5 show how spaces of education became completely overcrowded during Apartheid and lacked basic necessities



Figure 4.4
“Teacher above is struggling with one of her two daily sessions of 100 students each”
Cole (1967)



Figure 4.5
“Students kneel on the floor to write. Government is casual about furnishing schools for blacks “
Cole (1967)

Victoria Hospital was built as part of the Lovedale complex in 1898. An outdoor class takes place in the ward for young TB patients. The description from the archive reads. "Interior view of a ward on a wide veranda with a retractable roof" (The National Library of Scotland, 1938). Thus, the veranda itself becomes a crucial space for health and education with access to sunlight and fresh air. Hospitals constructed by missionaries, such as Victoria Hospital, provided the backbone of health infrastructure for non-whites, especially in the Transkei. In fact in 1943, the S.A. Medical journal describes these medical missions as important and "honourable" (Patterson, 1943).

In figure 4.7, the interior of a hospital ward in the Apartheid era contrasts figure 4.6. The ward is, dark and cramped and operates 50% beyond capacity with people even sleeping under the beds (Cole & Flaherty, 1967).

Figure 4.6
Childrens TB Ward
National Library of Scotland
(1938)



Figure 4.7
Interior of hospital during
Apartheid
Cole (1967)



Figure 4.8
**Women learning how
 to iron**
**National Library of
 Scotland (1938)**



One striking effect of colonial education was its impact on gender relationships. Women who were traditionally outside, tending to crops – they were the agriculturalists – were taught at ‘the girls’ department’ at Lovedale to be inside in the domestic space as Christian wives and ‘domestic servers in settlers homes’ (Elphick et al., 1997). Figure 4.8. highlights this

Sophie is loosely based on South African artist Mary Sibande’s maternal mother and grandmother – she represents the ‘domestic worker’ – one of the only jobs offered to black women before the end of Apartheid. Sophie wears the typical maids dress and apron as seen in figure 4.8. Figure 4.9 represents the space that created ‘Sophie’ – essentially making many black women into domestic workers (maids) for white people. This extremely problematic legacy still lingers in South Africa, which Sibande is able to surface through her art (Nair, 2020).



Figure 4.9
***They dont make them
 like they used to***
Sibande (2008)

Discussion

The mission station was a site of multiple functions. These networked stations formed a piece of infrastructure in the landscape, which simultaneously acted as an organ of colonial conquest (as shown by this author's mapping research) at landscape level yet also provided essential healthcare facilities along with educational opportunities at the building scale. The establishment of buildings that used foreign construction methods such as stone and brickwork introduced a sense of permanence in the landscape and often contained durable and dignified spaces. Yet these foreign rectilinear buildings, and the activities within them were also deeply embedded in the colonial ideology of 'civilising' the Xhosa people.

In the post-colonial era, Apartheid policies broke apart this mission station infrastructure because of the threat of mission educated African elites. The 1953 Bantu Education Act solidified the segregation of educational spaces – resulting in poorly constructed monofunctional environments which were either a result of government built schools or 'mud' schools built by communities in an attempt to provide classrooms for their own children. Photographer Ernest Cole offers an intimate glimpse into these spaces – in stark contrast to the infrastructure of mission schools like Lovedale. The dismantling of the missionary healthcare and schooling infrastructure reflects an ideological shift from the British colonial project of 'civilisation' to the apartheid government's endeavour to exclude and segregate the African population – Cole's photographs make this shift tangible. The impact of this is still vividly apparent in the landscape today.

Despite the significant role the missionary station played in South African history, it is largely forgotten in the built heritage discourse. Acknowledging these buildings shows how built environments shape and are shaped by shifting political regimes and have a crucial impact on contemporary access to healthcare and education infrastructure.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that mission stations in the Eastern Cape were not merely sites of religious conversion but formed part of the infrastructure utilised by the British during the colonial period to further their domination of the land and Xhosa culture. Through investigative mapping, the mission stations role as precursor for land annexation was visually surfaced while an analysis of archival photographs revealed how this infrastructure created a valuable network of educational and healthcare spaces. The way these stations became multifunctional nodes in the landscape could provide a precedent in understanding how to address the current schooling infrastructure crisis in the Eastern Cape. These spaces, although foreign objects in the landscape architected by the problematic attitude of 'civilising' the 'native' - provided dignified physical spaces which incubated many of South Africa's anti-apartheid activists. In fact, threatened by this educational infrastructure in the Eastern Cape, the Apartheid government sought to dismantle it. This destruction of infrastructure continues to affect access to sturdy and dignified educational and healthcare spaces in the Eastern Cape. Through investigating mission stations as part of South Africa's infrastructural and architectural heritage it is possible to further our understanding of what underpins enduring spatial legacies.

References

- Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity and poverty* (1st ed). Crown Publishers.
- Ashforth, A. (1991). The Xhosa Cattle Killing and the Politics of Memory. *Sociological Forum*, 6(3), 581–592. JSTOR.
- Chibvongodze, D. T. (2016). Ubuntu is Not Only about the Human! An Analysis of the Role of African Philosophy and Ethics in Environment Management. *Journal of Human Ecology (Delhi, India)*, 53, 157–166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09709274.2016.11906968>
- DBSA. (n.d.). *Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative | DBSA*. Wwww.Dbsa.Org. <https://www.dbsa.org/case-studies/accelerated-schools-infrastructure-delivery-initiative-asidi>
- Du Plessis, J. (1911). *A history of Christian missions in South Africa*. Longmans Green. <https://archive.org/details/historyofchristi00dupl/page/184/mode/2up>
- Duncan, G. A. (2013). The origins and early development of Scottish Presbyterian mission in South Africa (1824-1865). *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 39(1), 0–0.
- Elphick, R., Davenport, R., & Davenport, H. (1997). *Christianity in South Africa*. Univ of California Press.
- Fairhead, J. (2013). *A Victory for Equal Education in South Africa*. Wwww.Opensocietyfoundations.Org. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/victory-equal-education-south-africa>
- Frescura, F. (1985). *Major Developments in the Rural Indigenous Architecture of Southern Africa of the Post-Difaqane Period* [University of the Witwaterstrand]. https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/archive_files/Frescura%20Franco-PhD%20Thesis%20Indigenous%20Architecture.pdf
- Frescura, F. (2015). A Case of Hopeless Failure: The Role of Missionaries in the Transformation of Southern Africa's Indigenous Architecture. *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 28, 64–86.
- Frescura, Franco. 2021. "List of Mission Stations in South Africa | the Heritage Portal." Theheritageportal.co.za. 2021. <https://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/list-mission-stations-south-africa>.
- Guedes, P. (2016). *The Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architecture and Technological Change*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-04697-3>
- King, R., & McGranaghan, M. (2018). The Archaeology and Materiality of Mission in Southern Africa: Introduction. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 44(4), 629–639. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2018.1477312>
- Knobel, J. (1822). *The district of Albany, formerly t'Zuureveld, being the Eastern Frontier of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope: Shewing the locations of the settlers lately arrived from England and situation of the town of Bathurst established by His Excellency Sir Rufane Shave Donkin, K.C.B., acting governor of the colony and including also Algoa Bay, Port Elizabeth, the village of Uitenhage, different missionary settlements etc., accurately surveyed and respectfully inscribed to his Excellency the Acting Governor* [Map]. South East Academic Libraries System. http://vital.seals.ac.za:8080/vital/access/manager/Repository/vital:26834?site_name=GlobalView
- Larkin, B. (2013). The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 42(1), 327–343. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-092412-155522>
- Meisler, S. (1968). *The Transkei*. The Atlantic; theatlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1968/10/the-transkei/660838/>

- Moloantoa, D. (2016). *The contested but pivotal legacy of missionary education in South Africa* | *The Heritage Portal*. [www.Theheritageportal.Co.Za](https://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/contested-pivotal-legacy-missionary-education-south-africa). <https://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/contested-pivotal-legacy-missionary-education-south-africa>
- Mostert, N. (1992). *Frontiers*. The Bodley Head Ltd. <https://archive.org/details/frontiersepicofs-00most>
- Nair, S. (2020). *South African artist Mary Sibande discusses Sophie, her alter ego*. Stirworld. <https://www.stirworld.com/see-features-south-african-artist-mary-sibande-discusses-sophie-her-alter-ego>
- Nanni, G. (2020). *The colonisation of time*. Manchester University Press.
- Patterson, R. L. (1946). Medical Missions in the Transkei. *SA Medical Journal*, 154.
- Peires, J. B. (1987). The Central Beliefs of the Xhosa Cattle-Killing. *The Journal of African History*, 28(1), 43–63. Cambridge Core. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700029418>
- Soudien, C., Fischer, C., Cross, M., & Kallaway, P. (2024). *A New History of Formal Schooling in South Africa 1658–1910*. HSRC Press.
- South African History Online. (2011). *The first 1820 British Settlers arrive in South Africa* | *South African History Online*. [Sahistory.Org.Za](https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/first-1820-british-settlers-arrive-south-africa). <https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/first-1820-british-settlers-arrive-south-africa>
- South African History Online. (2018). *Xhosa*. South African History Online. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/xhosa>
- Steinberg, J. (2023). *Winnie and Nelson: Portrait of a Marriage*. HarperCollins Publishers Limited. <https://books.google.nl/books?id=9SIBzweEACAAJ>
- Stewart, J. (1894). *Lovedale missionary institution, South Africa*. Edinburgh, Andrew Elliot; Glasgow, David Bryce and son.
- Uduku, O. (2018). *Learning spaces in Africa: Critical histories to 21st century challenges and change*. Routledge.
- Walker, E. A. (1922). *Historical atlas of South Africa*. Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press; Internet Archive. https://archive.org/details/historicalatlaso00walk_0

Figures references

- Bartholomew, J. (1879). Africa - South Eastern Section [Map]. The Church Missionary atlas. Containing an account of the various countries in which the Church Missionary Society labours, and of its missionary operations.
- Cole, E. (1967a). Only the most urgent cases are admitted [Photograph]. In *House of Bondage*.
- Cole, E. (1967b). Earnest boy squats on haunches and strains to follow lesson in the heat of a packed classroom [Photograph]. In *House of Bondage*.
- Cole, E. (1967c). Students kneel on the floor to write. Government is casual about furnishing schools for blacks [Photograph]. In *House of Bondage*.
- Cole, E. (1967d). Teacher above is struggling with one of her two daily sessions of 100 students each [Photograph]. In *House of Bondage*.
- Frescura, F. (1982). *Accompanying plan of homestead to the layout plan* [Hand Drawing]. Frescura Archive . <https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/98555/drawing-connections>
- J.H.B. (1877). *Fichier:View of the River Kei and Fingoeland - Cape Colony* [Drawing]. Cape Colony Archives. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_the_River_Kei_and_Fingoeland_-_Cape_Colony_-1877.jpg
- Lotz-Sisitka, H., O'Donoghue, R., & Wilmot, D. (2010). The Makana Regional Centre of Expertise. *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*, 4(1), 73–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/097340820900400114>
- Sibande, M. (2008). *They dont make them like they used to* [Archival Digital Print]. Kavi Gupta. Photograph of original sculpture made by Sibande.
- Stewart. (1894a). Educational Building [Archival Photograph]. In *Lovedale missionary institution*. <https://archive.org/details/lovedalemissiona00stew/page/n47/mode/2up>
- Stewart. (1894b). Main Approach [Archival Photograph]. In *Lovedale missionary institution*. <https://archive.org/details/lovedalemissiona00stew/page/n51/mode/2up>
- Stewart. (1894c). Road Through Lovedale [Archival Photograph]. In *Lovedale missionary institution*. <https://archive.org/details/lovedalemissiona00stew/page/n51/mode/2up>
- Stewart. (1894d). The Beginning of Lovedale [Archival Photograph]. In *Lovedale missionary institution, South Africa*. <https://archive.org/details/lovedalemissiona00stew/page/n47/mode/2up>
- The National Library of Scotland. (1938a). Children's TB ward, Victoria Hospital, Lovedale, South Africa, ca.1938 [Archival Photograph]. In *National Library of Scotland*. https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1E1ID9K?FR_=1&W=1280&H=607
- The National Library of Scotland. (1938b). Girls' dormitory, Lovedale, South Africa, ca.1938 [Archival Photograph]. In *National Library of Scotland*. https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1E1ID9K?FR_=1&W=1280&H=607
- The National Library of Scotland. (1938c). Home economics, Lovedale, South Africa, ca.1938 [Archival Photograph]. In *National Library of Scotland*. https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1E1ID9K?FR_=1&W=1280&H=607
- The National Library of Scotland. (1938d). Trainee teacher with a class, Lovedale, South Africa, ca.1938 [Archival Photograph]. In *National Library of Scotland*. https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1E1ID9K?FR_=1&W=1280&H=607
- The National Library of Scotland. (1938e). Victoria Hospital, Lovedale, South Africa, ca.1938 [Archival Photograph]. In *National Library of Scotland*. https://digitallibrary.usc.edu/asset-management/2A3BF1E1ID9K?FR_=1&W=1280&H=607

unknown. (1902). *Plan of Lovedale Mission 1902* [Map]. https://vital.seals.ac.za/vital/access/manager/Repository/vital:34230?site_name=GlobalView&f0=sm_mimeType%3A%22image%2Fjpeg%22&f1=sm_type%3A%22digital+maps%22&sort=ss_dateNormalized+asc%2Csort_ss_title+asc. Available from SEALS digital collection .