

MERENSKY
 UNIVERSITY
 Augustus/August
 Klasnooms 2A.05(68)
 Registrasie P. 65/48

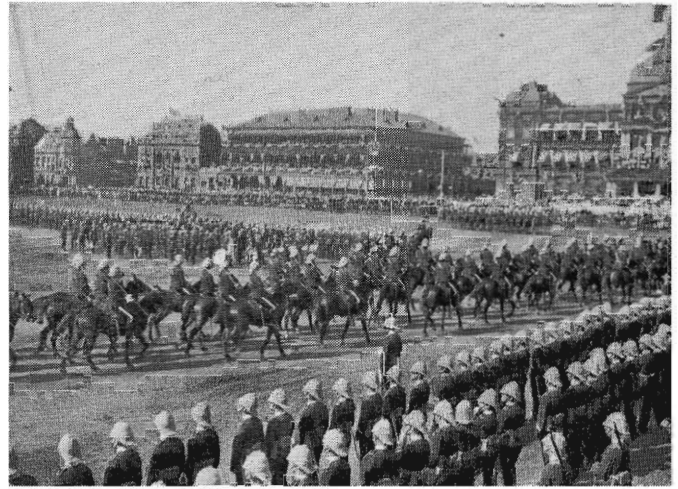
Pretoriana



TYDSKRIF VAN DIE GENDOOTSKAP OUD-PRETORIA
 VERSKYN IN APRIL, AUGUSTUS EN DESEMBER
 MAGAZINE OF THE OLD PRETORIA ASSOCIATION
 PUBLISHED IN APRIL, AUGUST AND DECEMBER

Prys : 25c : Price.

Kerkplein in 1905



Militêre seremonies tydens die inswering van die Graaf van Selbourne as Goewerneur van Transvaal op 2 April 1905. Hy het Lord Milner opgevolg wat Goewerneur was vanaf 21 Junie 1902 tot 1 April 1905.

PRETORIANA

AUGUSTUS — 1965 — AUGUST

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REDAKSIONEEL

Die Waarde van Plaaslike Geskiedenis

ONS wil graag ons lesers se aandag vestig op die artikel van mnr. J. W. Kew oor die waarde van plaaslike geskiedenis. Ofskoon daar af en toe kort artikels oor plaaslike geskiedenis in ons tydskrif verskyn het, en sommige lede en nie-ledes van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria hulle by een of ander geleentheid uitgespreek het oor die noodsaaklikheid om plaaslike geskiedenis te bestudeer, is dit die eerste keer na ons wete dat 'n lid van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria die onderwerp volledig behandel het. Lede van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria wat 'n terloopse of besondere belangstelling toon in die verlede van hul stad, sal by die deurlees van die artikel besef dat hierdie belangstelling meer as net 'n antikwariese waarde het en dat elke stukkie plaaslike geskiedenis 'n bydrae lewer tot die beter verstaan van die geskiedenis van ons land in die algemeen.

Benoni

BENONI se Stadsraad het 'n mooi voorbeeld aan die res van die stadsrade en plaaslike owerhede van ons land gestel. 'n Jaar of twee drie gelede het die raadslede van hierdie Oos-Randse stad besluit dat dit die welaangename tyd is om die kleurryke verhaal van Benoni te boek te stel. 'n Komitee onder voorsitterskap van mnr. Deryck Humphriss is opgedra om die taak aan te pak en van sy kant het die stadsraad die komitee mildelik van die nodige fondse voorsien om daardeur te verseker dat die taak ten beste afgehandel kan word. Wanneer die werk hopelik volgende jaar verskyn, sal dit tussen driehonderd en vierhonderd bladsye beslaan. Die ekonomiese, sosiale en politieke geskiedenis asook die geskiedenis van die nie-blankes sal in die werk volledig verhaal word.

Die twee hoofstukke wat ons ter insae ontvang het, nl. dié oor die politieke geskiedenis en die geskiedenis van die nie-blankes toon weer eens hoedat die breëre nasionale en provinsiale geskiedenis van enige land deureengevleg is met die plaaslike geskiedenis en hoedat 'n verstaan van die plaaslike geskiedenis 'n bydrae lewer tot die verstaan van ons nasionale geskiedenis. Die geskiedenis van 'n stad, dorp of distrik kan ook beskou word as die deursyfering van nasionale geskiedenis tot op plaaslike vlak.

Munitoria

ONS Stadsraad het uiteindelik besluit om 'n naam aan die groot nuwe munisipale kantoorblok wat ten noorde van Vermeulenstraat verrys, te gee. Hierdie is 'n gebou wat die aandag trek en 'n sieraad vir Pretoria gaan wees. Nadat die Stadsraad 'n naamwedstryd uitgeskryf het, het meer as honderd inwoners van Pretoria die naam *Munitoria* voorgestel. Die woord *Munitoria* is eintlik 'n samestelling van die twee woorde *Munisipaliteit* en *Pretoria*.

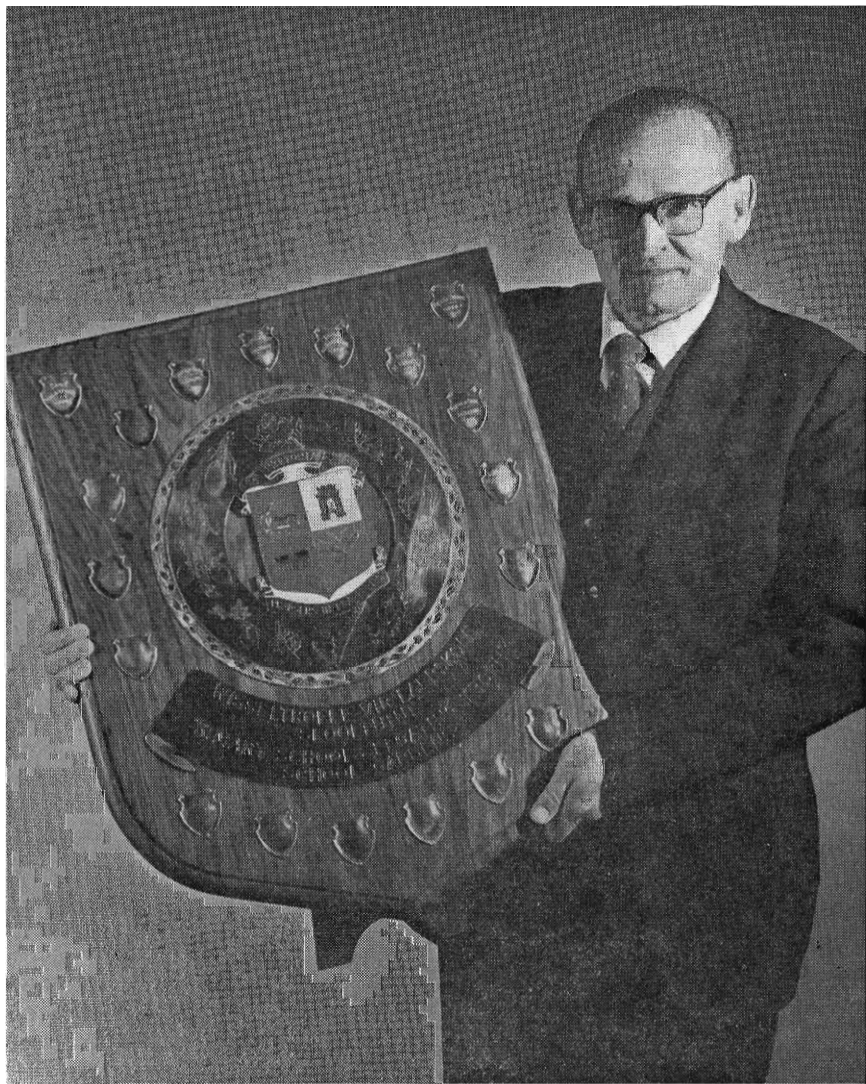
Geluk

ONS hartlike geluk aan mnr. H. P. H. Behrens wat so pas aangestel is as Direkteur van Kulturele Aangeleenthede van ons stad. Mnr. Behrens is 'n kenner van die geskiedenis van Pretoria en hy het as stigterslid van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria deur die jare heen 'n lewendige belangstelling getoon in u Genootskap. Sy bydrae tot die ontwikkeling van u Genootskap kan alleen maar as belangwekkend beskryf word terwyl sy menigvuldige artikels oor die geskiedenis van ons stad in *Pretoriana* en ander tydskrifte nie alleen 'n blywende bydrae vorm tot die karige historiografie oor plaaslike geskiedenis in ons land nie, maar ook daadwerklik daartoe bygedra het dat die inwoners van Pretoria bewus geword het van hul stad se verlede. Deur die skepping van die nuwe pos het die Stadsraad 'n lankgevoelde behoefte vervul en ons is daarvan oortuig dat die aanstelling van mnr. Behrens in die pos alleenlik tot voordeel van die kulturele lewe van Pretoria sal strek.



Mnr. H. P. H. BEHRENS

— Red.



(Foto: MARTIN GIBBS)

Mnr. P. Robinson, hoof van die Pretoria-Oos Laerskool en die skild wat sy skool vir die tweede agtereenvolgende jaar gewen het.

Tuinboukompetisie vir Laerskole

BY ses van die skole wat vir die tuinboukompetisie van 1964 ingeskryf het was die tuine besonder aantreklik en was dit vir die beoordelaars moeilik om die prysweners aan te wys. Dit was ook interessant om te sien wat by skole met hul uiteenlopende terreine gedoen kan word om die omgewing te verfraai.

Belangstelling en entoesiasme by die betrokke skoolhoofde, die staf, en die leerlinge was opvallend. Aan hierdie skole dan ook die dank en waardering van die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria vir hul ondersteuning.

Die eerste drie plekke is toegeken aan:

1. Pretoria-Oos;
2. Die Poort;
3. Die Heuwel.

Die ander drie skole wat eervolle vermelding verdien is:

1. Danie Malan;
2. Menlopark;
3. Waterkloof.

Die kompetisie is in 1955 as 'n bydrae tot die Eeu-fees van Pretoria vir laerskole in die gebied van die Skoolraad van Pretoriastad deur die Genootskap Oud-Pretoria ingestel. Die doel is veral om skoolgaande kinders aan te moedig om ons inheemse plantesoorte te leer ken, lief te kry en te beskerm en om ons geskiedkundige ou stad Pretoria met sy weelderige plantegroei te verfraai.

Die beoordeling vind plaas gedurende die maande Oktober-November en dit geskied volgens 'n skema van punte-toekenning wat so ingedeel is dat dit vir alle skole, ongeag die ligging en grootte van die skoolgronde, die vrugbaarheid van die grond, die klimaat of wat ook al die uitlê en instandhouding van die tuin mag beïnvloed, moontlik is om aan die kompetisie deel te neem en vir die eerste plek in aanmerking te kom.

Aan die skool wat die eerste plek behaal word 'n wisseltrofee toegeken tesame met 'n geskenk van 'n inheemse boom en 'n gegraveerde koperplaat. Die wisseltrofee bestaan uit 'n skild van witstinkhout met silwer versierings van passende ontwerp.

Aan die skole wat die tweede en derde plek behaal word 'n silwer wisseltrofee toegeken en ook 'n geskenk van 'n inheemse boom en 'n koperplaat.

Die Genootskap oorweeg ook om aan alle skole wat 75% of meer van die totale punte behaal 'n sertifikaat van verdienste toe te ken.

Inskrywings vir die kompetisie is vry. Daar word weer eens 'n beroen op alle skoolhoofde gedoen om vir hierdie jaar se kompetisie in te skryf.

J. P. Lotz.

'n Ou Probleem

DIE afgelope maande was daar kort-kort allerlei kritiek in die dagblaaië oor die Pretoriase verkeer op te merk. Hoe oud is die probleem al?

Daar was tye toe ossewaens Kerkplein deurkruis het, perderuiters straat-af getrippel het, trems wat alle verkeer agter toe laat ophoop het, maar in die lig van die hedendaagse druktheid waar alles afhang van spoed en haas, moes dit 'n rustiger tyd gewees het as vandag. Maar toe al het Pretoria sy klagtes gehad. Die volgende is 'n beswaar wat op 9 Februarie 1901 by die militêre-goewerneur van Pretoria ingehandig is:

„I beg to draw your attention to the reckless manner in which bicycles are ridden in the streets of Pretoria.

„No rule of the road is observed and while riding about as I do it is with the greatest difficulty that one is enabled to steer clear of accidents. Yesterday morning in Market Street I was nearly ridden into by a person riding bicycle number 27, who was between the tramline and the path, on the wrong side of the road, and this morning I had two narrow escapes in a similar manner from individuals riding bicycles without numbers.

„ . . . The Police apparently take no notice of the reckless riding referred to, and it was with difficulty last week that I was able to persuade a constable to stop and take the number of the bicycle whose rider was on the wrong side of the road.

„I have previously directed the attention of the Commissioner of Police to this Laxity . . . I regret that my representation should have met with no response and I am therefore compelled to come to you with the request that unmistakable instructions may be given to the Police to suppress the nuisance complained of and thus avoid the possibility of accidents occurring.

T. T. C. Purland,
Director of Prisons.”

Die militêre-goewerneur se aanbeveling hierop was dat die polisie 'n voorbeeld moet maak van sommige oortreders en streng teenoor hulle moes optree. Dog die reaksie van die polisie was seker te stadig want op 13 Februarie 1901 skryf dieselfde persoon weer aan die militêre-goewerneur en onder andere noem hy sy jongste noue ontcoming: „I was nearly unhorsed this morning in Market St. by a person riding a numberless bicycle . . . ”³⁾ Dat hy werklik rede het om te kla blyk verder uit die res van die sin, want die fietsryer beweeg „at a greater rate than 12 miles an hour on the wrong side of the road”.

J. L. Hattingh.

³⁾ Military Governor Papers: 70/1730.

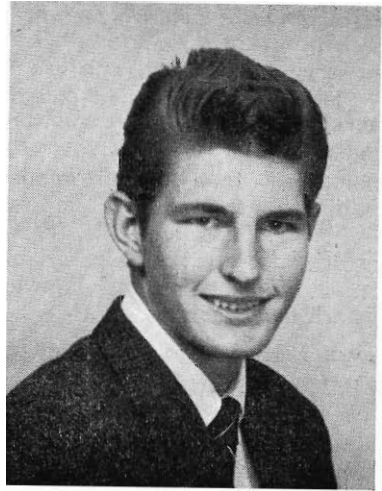
THE VALUE OF LOCAL HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

THE study of history should cover all the aspects of a nation's life and as such should concern itself not only with the events pertaining to that which is national, but also to the events in the life of local and regional communities **because of the reciprocal reaction of the two on one another.** The latter is the task of the local historian and in terms of this local history can be defined as the history of a district, town or any locality with defined territorial limits in which the inhabitants are so far united in thought and action as to feel a sense of belonging together.¹⁾

Prior to the beginning of the twentieth century local history had been, one can almost venture to say, exclusively the pursuit of elderly antiquarians. In fact, the scope of local history was so limited that the interest of the local historian or antiquarian was centred primarily in noting "the descent of landed estates and in the pedigrees of landed families."²⁾

In the last fifty years this geneological predominance in local historical works has been severely condemned, on the grounds of its neglect of social, cultural, economic and political history as well as neglect of the typographical characteristics of the specific localities. With the adoption of this wider approach to local history, it became a specialised sphere of research, beyond the capabilities of the antiquarian untrained in historical methodology.³⁾



THE AUTHOR

I

THE VALUE OF LOCAL HISTORY

DURING recent years an increasing number of historians, especially overseas,⁴⁾ have turned their attention to the writing of local histories. This has resulted in much speculation on the value of local history. Historians seem to have a peculiar tendency to disagree among themselves, and consequently various schools of thought regarding the value of local history have come to light.

Local history is a training ground for aspirant historians.

THE attitude of mind of this school of thought is that local history forms an ideal training ground for young historians, who, once they have mastered its techniques, can proceed to writing history on a grand, or national, scale. They represent local history "as a sort of little harbour-boat in which a man is to find his sea-legs before launching out on the broad ocean of national history".⁵⁾

This attitude tends to create the impression that the writing of local histories is far easier to cope with than in the case of national histories, and this quite rightly evoked a loud protest from all local historians who maintained that the historical training and methodological grounding required for writing local histories was no less than that required for writing history on a national scale. This is quite true with regard to fullscale local histories, but the young historian can gain valuable experience in the application of his theoretical knowledge by means of contributions in local historical magazines.

Local History as Educational Aid.

WHILE in the exact sciences a given experiment conducted under laboratory conditions can be continually repeated and a similar result attained each time, this is not possible in the teaching of history (a specific historical event or situation is unique and not repeatable). However, by means of references to local history, that is, from the locality in which the school is situated, the child can be placed within the historical atmosphere and his national apprehension of a historical event can be transformed into a "picture of real people and familiar scenes."⁶⁾ In fact, the educational value of local history, according to this school of thought, is in its use as a means of making the study of general history more interesting,⁷⁾ and they thus emphasize the fact that the teacher should not enmesh the child in the "bogs and sands of local history",⁸⁾ but merely use local historical references as illustrative of the course of national history.⁹⁾

This is a very commendable aim as the lack of knowledge of, and interest in local history amongst modern youth is a matter of considerable concern.¹⁰⁾

The Value of Local History in Terms of National History.

THE preoccupation with national history inherent in the two schools of thought mentioned above was expanded on by a school of thought which saw the value of local history "not just (as) a sugared pill for young learners, nor a gymnasium in which promising historians may develop their muscles",¹¹⁾ but as a specialised technique in historical research whereby local histories are portrayed as fragments of the national history. This attitude toward local history was well defined by Mr. R. B. Pugh, one of the leading adherents to the national orientated school of thought, when he wrote that "much history is studied nowadays through the microscope

... local history ... is one application of that technique".¹²⁾ He states further that local history is a means to an end, and not an end in itself: It is in fact merely a method of ascertaining certain facts about the history of the nation as a whole by means of the examination of the histories of towns and districts, which, according to him, combine to make the nation.

It is true that if local histories were written on every town and district in South Africa, we would undoubtedly know more about the general history of South Africa as a whole. But the sum total of these local histories would most definitely not be a history of the nation, as the union of the parts has endowed the nation with attributes which make it greater than the sum of the component localities.¹³⁾

It is thus obvious that the value of local history in terms of the relationship between local and national history (which will be fully elucidated at a later stage) is far more complex than depicted by this rather narrow and limited school of thought.

The Value of Local History Per Se.

IN the early 1950's a school of thought which propogated the attitude that the value of local history was contained in the compiling of local histories as an end in themselves, and not solely as fragments of the national history, was advocated by various members of the department of English Local History in the University of Leicester. Consequently this school of thought has become known as the "Leicester School".¹⁴⁾

The Leicester School demands that local history should not be treated as an auxiliary discipline to national history, but as a discipline subsisting in its own right. In terms of this they advocated that the theme of the local historian should be "the growth, the perfection and the final disintegration of a local community in a given neighbourhood".¹⁵⁾ Consequently they believe that as each local community has had a life-history of its own, it has a perfectly good claim to be studied for its own sake.¹⁶⁾

Their insistence on the value of local history per se does not however imply, that they regard the local community as existing independent of the national whole. They do recognize a reciprocal interaction, but point out that this is also the case with the nation and, for example, Western Christendom. This they quite correctly observe does not minimize the significance of national histories per se, so why should that be the case with local histories.¹⁷⁾

II

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL AND NATIONAL HISTORY

NATIONAL history occupies an intermediate position between local and universal history, and as improved means of communications have drawn into contact communities and nations which had previously been

partially isolated, the process of reciprocal interaction between local and national history on the one hand, and national and universal history on the other hand has steadily increased. In this context Dr. R. Peacock makes the following observation in the introduction to his local history of Pretoria, "waar groot stede in Europa soos Rome, Berlyn en Londen vir ons 'n weerspieëling is van daardie betrokke volke se politieke, maatskaplike en kulturele groei en ontwikkeling, net so ook is Pretoria die weerspieëling van die politieke, maatskaplike en kulturele ontwikkeling van die Boere-nasie, nasate van die Voortrekkers wat hulle in Transvaal gevestig het."¹⁸⁾ This is not only the case with local histories of towns or districts, as the histories of old governments or private buildings can also be used to illustrate many facets of the national culture.¹⁹⁾

Despite the fact that the history of a specific district, town or building can be considered as illustrative of national history, the best results in the application of this technique can only be attained by means of a comparative study of a number of local histories, wherein both the typical and unique characteristics and their relation to the total fabric are noted. For example, a local history of Potchefstroom during the early days of the settlement of the Transvaal is of great value to the national historian, as many of the first administrative experiments were conducted there,²⁰⁾ but the true value of these advancements cannot be ascertained until a comparison has been made regarding administrative conditions in other localities in the Transvaal.

Local histories can also be of functional value to the national historian as they provide him with an easily accessible means of controlling and checking the wide diversity of phenomena with which he works. Faced with countless phenomena, the national historian is forced to work selectively and by means of generalisations, and thus, without the aid of local histories, he could well overlook some local occurrence, which, if noted, could upset or modify his general view.²¹⁾

National histories are also written largely in terms of the point of view of the central government and its representatives,²²⁾ and consequently the national historian can be accused of falsifying history if he fails to realize that, for the people, their immediate locality remains the foreground of their views.²³⁾ In fact, the attitudes of each local community is determined by events own to their specific locality.²⁴⁾

From a purely methodological point of view a knowledge of local history can be of value to the historian as it can assist him in determining the approximate date of origin of undated documents and maps. The document could refer to some local occurrence, the date of which can be determined by means of local historical research.²⁵⁾

In almost every country, the origin of various towns preceded the formation of the national state, in which they were later incorporated. As such, these specific local histories can possess a time-scheme or chronology of their own, distinct from that of national history.²⁶⁾

This was the case in the Transvaal where numerous towns were founded prior to the establishment of the national state, and their local histories are thus an essential field of study for the historian attempting to elucidate the formation of the national state.

The complex and deep-rooted process of reciprocal interaction between local and national history is consequently a factor, which neither the national, nor the local historians can ignore.

III

LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

IT is true that large quantities of local historical source material are stored in the Archives, but a large proportion is still in the cellars and attics of private individuals. The general public, unaware of the value of much of what they usually consider as old junk, often dispose of local historical source material in their dust bins. In this manner irreplaceable items of historical value are often lost to the local historian.²⁷⁾ To counteract this deplorable state of affairs interested people founded Local Historical Societies, with the express aim of preserving for future generations the past of their respective towns or districts. During the last thirty to forty years the formation of local historical societies has been conducted on a large scale and with great zeal in both England and America, but unfortunately the same cannot be said about South Africa. As far as can be determined there are only a couple of functioning local historical societies in South Africa, of which, the Association Old Pretoria (founded in 1958) is the eldest active society of the group.

The activities of a local historical society are as diverse as the social, cultural, economical and political activities of the locality in which it is established. The members of the society interview old residents, read through books and documents pertaining to their locality, examine old prints and maps, consult old local newspapers and compile articles (usually published in a magazine) relating to incidents in the history of their locality. They note and correlate any information thus obtained, and many of the more established local societies have their own archives and local museums.²⁸⁾ The primary aim of a local historical society is thus to ensure that no source material of value is allowed to be lost, and as such, they constitute a great aid for the local historian.

A secondary activity of local historical societies is to stimulate the interest of the general public in the history of their locality. This aim can be attained by means of the establishment of local historical museums and, to a certain extent, by the publication of local historical magazines. Talks on local history, organized by the local historical society and delivered by leading authorities can also be of value. However, to gain the interest of those people who consider "a talk on local history as merely a proper way for nice old ladies to pass the time before the tea comes round,"²⁹⁾ Mr.

H. A. Taylor recommends a switch to the sound and vision technique, that is, the presentation of local history by means of slides and tape recordings.³⁰⁾

By thus stimulating the interest of the general public in the history of their locality, local historical societies can ensure that vast quantities of local historical source material, formerly disposed of in dust bins, will be donated to them for safe keeping.

IV

LOCAL HISTORICAL SOURCE MATERIAL

ALMOST every class of material is grist for those who know where they are going, and consequently the local historian has to examine not only many different classes of central and local records but also the geographical and geological structure of the locality, archaeological remains, local traditions and so more. The most important classes of local historical source material are as follows:

- (i) **Central Records:** In the various Archives Depots of the Republic there are central archives relating to every town and district in South Africa. Thus, to write a local history of a town, say in the Transvaal, the local historian will be forced to consult, among others, the archives of the Government Secretary, the Surveyor-General, the "Volksraad" and the Government Gazettes. The early Voortrekker archival records also contain much valuable information regarding the settlement of the Transvaal.³¹⁾ But even when these and other central repositories of records³²⁾ have been taken into consideration, there will be wide gaps in the evidence unless the local historian is also prepared to explore the many classes of local records.
- (ii) **Local Records:** Local records include not only Municipal records, but also the records of local cultural and social organisations. In order to get a complete picture of the activities of the local community, the local historian will further find it necessary to consult "Church records and muniments and collections of literary institutions, learned societies, academic, professional, and trading corporations, and private individuals."³³⁾
- (iii) **Newspapers and Photographs:** Local newspapers reflect the attitudes and views of the local community (this is especially so if the Editorial Board is comprised of local men) and as such constitute a tremendous aid for the local historian. In this respect advertisements placed in the newspapers are also of value as they portray the mode of life, i.e. fashions, etc., of the people.

Photographs depicting landscape scenes, old buildings which have subsequently been demolished and general photographs of the town at various stages of its development all assist the historian in recreating the atmosphere of the early development of the town.

- (iv) **Reminiscences:** Reminiscences are the recollections of old residents regarding events which occurred in the history of the town during their lifetime. Reminiscences can thus bring to light facts which had not been put on paper, and which if not noted would have been lost to the local historian.³⁴⁾
- (v) **Traditions:** Each locality has its own traditions, legends and myths relating to events and personalities in their past. However, unless the local historian discovers corroboratory evidence he cannot accept the purported factual content of the tradition. This does not mean that traditions are valueless, as they can provide the the historian with a rough estimate of the attitudes of the people, e.g. if numerous traditions relating to the wisdom and courage of Paul Kruger exist, one can deduce that Kruger was well loved by his people.
- (vi) **Place-name Study:** The smallest town, farm and plot has a name, and thus by means of place-name study the local historian can learn much about the early settlement of the locality.³⁵⁾
- (vii) **Archaeological Remains:** By means of a study of archaeological remains the local historian can investigate the pre-literate and in some cases, the pre-historic era of the locality.³⁶⁾
- (viii) **Topography:** At this stage it should be apparent that it is impossible to write local history from the confines of a library or Archive. According to Finberg the study of the geographical and geological structure of the locality is essential "as every community will have left traces of its history on the changing face of (mother earth) and it is part of the historian's business to decipher that unwritten record, 'to construe'—in Maitland's phrase—"the testimony of our fields and walls and hedges'."³⁷⁾ The historian must in fact determine why the specific locality was chosen for settlement and whether specific geographical or geological factors contributed to the growth of the town.³⁸⁾

At present local history offers a vast field of research for post graduate students in South Africa, and one sincerely hopes that their attention will be drawn to this fact. If the writing of local histories is seriously tackled in the near future it will, without doubt, prove a great asset to both the national historian and the community as a whole.

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