

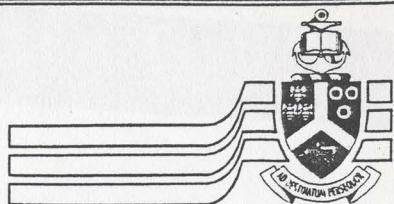








MANY TREKS MADE RHODESIA



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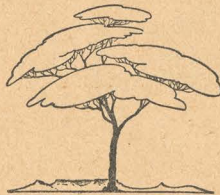
UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA



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MANY TREKS  
MADE  
RHODESIA

*by*  
C. P. OLIVIER



HOWARD B. TIMMINS  
Cape Town

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## FOREWORD

I wish to thank Mr. Olivier for his kindness in allowing a version to be brought out in English of his fine book "Die Pioniertrekke na Gazaland". People who are interested in how Rhodesia was opened up to civilisation have frequently expressed a wish that an English edition of Mr. Olivier's book should be published.

I do not think it is too much to state that of all the pioneering hardships in Rhodesia, the Melsetter pioneers suffered the most. Miles away from anywhere from the beginning, circumstances were against them and year in and year out they had no means of obtaining the ordinary amenities of life. The Chartered Company should perhaps have done more for them and surely they are entitled to distinguished marks in the annals of Rhodesia's history?

I feel sure that this English version will find an honoured place on many Rhodesian and South African bookshelves.

JEANNIE M. BOGGIE, M.B.E.

Graigievar,

Gwelo,

Southern Rhodesia.

10th April, 1957.



## CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. GAZALAND - - - - -	15
2. CONTACT AND CLASH - - - - -	21
3. A TRAIL IS BLAZED (THE MOODIE TREK) - - - - -	25
4. THE MOODIES MAKE MELSETTER, THE LAND OF GAZA -	43
5. THE MOOLMAN - WEBSTER TREK (1893) - - - - -	54
6. THE EDENBURG TREK (1894) - - - - -	57
7. THE MARTIN TREK (1894) - - - - -	61
8. THE DU PLESSIS TREKS (1894, 1895) - - - - -	80
9. THE KRUGER - BEKKER TREK (1895) - - - - -	82
10. THE MYNHARDT - UTRECHT TREK (1894) - - - - -	87
11. THE HENRY - STEYN TREK (1895) - - - - -	93
12. SETTLING - - - - -	99
13. WHEN NATURE TAKES HER TOLL - - - - -	106
14. THOSE EARLY DAYS - - - - -	115
15. CHURCH AND SCHOOL - - - - -	126
16. RINDERPEST, THE NATIVES AND THE PORTUGUESE -	135
17. THE PASING YEARS - - - - -	141
APPENDIX I - - - - -	146
"    2 - - - - -	147
"    3 - - - - -	151
"    4 - - - - -	154
"    5 - - - - -	156
"    6 - - - - -	158
"    7 - - - - -	159
"    8 - - - - -	160
"    9 - - - - -	165
"   10 - - - - -	166
CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW - - - - -	169



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Facing page</i>
MARTHINUS JACOBUS MARTIN - - - - -	34
THOMAS MOODIE, FIRST LEADER OF THE TREKS - - -	34
DUNBAR MOODIE. THE ORIGINATOR OF THE TREKS TO GAZALAND - - - - -	34
J. H. KOK, HIS WIFE SARAH WITH THEIR SIX CHILDREN -	34
JOSEPH WEBSTER - - - - -	35
HIS WIFE, SARAH WEBSTER - - - - -	35
ALFRED SAMUEL GIFFORD, LEADER OF THE EDENBURG TREK	42
HIS WIFE, EMMA GIFFORD - - - - -	42
LEADER OF THE STEYN TREK (SEATED CENTRE) AND HIS SEVEN SONS - - - - -	43



## INTRODUCTION

In the history of well-nigh every land and nation there are men and women whose good deeds, as Shakespeare said, are interred with them. When the silence of death had been reigning over them for a considerable period (and when written records are few) before an attempt is being made to record something of the part played by these men and women in the service of their country, it invariably happens that either such a layer of dust and dirt and doubt — or a coat of shining varnish has descended upon them — it is as difficult to do justice to their pioneer-work as it is to arrive at the real truth and motive.

This is indeed the case of those pioneer trekkers from Natal, Transvaal, the Free State and the Cape Colony, who, on the inspiration of Rhodes and Jameson, moved into and helped to shape the destiny of Southern Rhodesia — and particularly of the Eastern part called Gazaland — during the first five years of its occupation (1890-1895).

This area, geographically, is bound by Portuguese East Africa on the East; on the North and North-West by Umtali or Manicaland, and on the West by the Great Sabi River. The area is about one million morgen or 3,133 sq. miles.

The watershed on that most enthralling range of mountains, the Chimanimani, forms the boundary between Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa. The whole area consists of a series of plateaus, with Melsetter in the centre. In the Lowveld, the climate is a little unhealthy (the Lundi-Sabi area is only about 1,000 feet above sea-level) but otherwise it is exhilarating. Streams from the Umvumvumu, Marari, Nyinganza, Chan-zadzi, Myungu, Tanganda, Tchipanga, Dakati, Spongur, Myamvuvu, Musasi flow, practically the whole year round, into the Sabi, and Eastwards the Haroni, Busi, Lusite and Umze-bezwe flow into Portuguese territory. The rainfall varies from about 40 inches at Melsetter to about 70 in Helvetia and is perhaps the highest in Southern Rhodesia.

From an agricultural point of view this territory is one of the best and prettiest in the whole of the Rhodesias, some maintain in the whole of Southern Africa. Dr. Carl Peters, famous traveller, wrote in his *Eldorado of the Ancients* that this part had "the finest climate in the world . . . I can only recall certain September days in North Germany, and nothing else . . . But how much more intense is everything here, light, colour, even

the air . . . One cannot well describe it". The soil is fertile and almost any kind of grain and fruit will flourish on the plateaus. The grass is rich and suitable for cattle and sheep grazing. In short — a land literally flowing with milk and honey.

It was to this hinterland that the sons and daughters of South Africa cast their northward gaze. Their aim was, in many instances, to obtain a piece of land, or to start all over again and many had the fire of the pioneer spirit in them. When it was realised that the territory was to become British and that the "Land Settlement Scheme of the British South African Company" was encouraging farmers to settle in Mashonaland, the flow of settlers continued unabated from as far east as Utrecht and as far south as Cape Town and Paarl.

The treks to Gazaland, however, differed radically from those to other parts of the country during these first few years. In essence they were civilising treks with nothing opportunistic about them. In all cases the whole family accompanied the trek with the aim of establishing a home and a community as soon as possible. There was never the idea so prevalent in most new countries that have been opened up, that if the first farm was not suitable, the family would move on to the next. It was these family-treks perhaps more than any other action on the part of the British South African Company which convinced South Africans that the new country could actually be inhabited by Europeans. Up to this time the realm of the erstwhile kingdom of Monomatapa was considered only to be a hunter's paradise and no "home" for a white man. The spirit of the Gazaland and Moodie-pioneers was destined to change this view once and for all.

This movement to Gazaland never received the attention which usually accompanied the development of a new area. The difference which arose between the instigator of these treks, Dunbar Moodie and the Company, the struggle of these pioneers to find their way into the unknown eastern districts and then to try and eke out an existence, their geographic isolation, their suffering and battles against Malaria and East Coast Fever, rarely stirred up interest in other parts of the country. Perhaps it was also due to the fact that there was no gold in those parts. It therefore never attracted the fortune-seeker or gold-pro prospector, but only those people who loved the soil and soon became identified with every part of it. The country got a grip on them as on no other, and few of them ever looked back.

For many years their ideals for this dream paradise remained ideals. It was only in 1935 that the Birchenough and other Beit bridges made the Eastern Districts accessible to the rest of

Rhodesia the whole year round. Although it is the oldest fully inhabited part of the country, it still has no railway.

It is always a delicate task to compile a book when the characters or their direct descendants are still alive. The memory of the old folk has become dim, and they usually prefer to recount those tales which they remember irrespective of whether the enquirer is interested or not. Slowly the eyes light up as one incident after another comes to mind and the jig-saw puzzle of episodes pattern into a piece of history — without any spirit of bravado or superhuman genius; only the story of ordinary people with their limitations, faults and ambitions. "But through it all," writes D. M. Stanley, "trickles the warmth and intimacy of a romance as fantastic as it is real."

A word of thanks to all those who assisted, and especially to those who constituted themselves into a Committee to commemorate these Melsetter pioneers, and who undertook to erect a memorial to their honour. It has been a joy and a privilege to record something of the part these people played in the development of what has become an integral part of the British Commonwealth.

It would not have been possible to render an English version of these accounts had it not been for the sympathetic support and encouragement of Mrs. Jeannie Boggie whose pioneering spirit is still undaunted.

C. P. OLIVIER.

July, 1957.



## Chapter I

### GAZALAND

IT WAS THE Golden Century of Portugal. One expedition after another was creeping slowly down the West Coast of Africa. The historic attempt of Bartholomew Diaz to try and find the route to the East was about to take place when another Portuguese explorer, Pedro da Covilham penetrated into the heart of Africa in search of the famous but mysterious John the Priest and his followers. Of the latter he was fortunate to meet many, but never succeeded in contacting Prester John whose help he and his king so much wanted to enlist against the Moors, Turks and Mohammedans. Although we know that other white men must have set foot in these central parts of Africa, his name is the first to be connected with the white man's efforts to try and reveal the secrets of the Dark Continent. His countryman, Vasco da Gama, a few years later occupied Lourenço Marques (1498) and then Sofala (1505) on the East Coast of Africa. These flourishing Arabian trading stations, which had carried on a lucrative trade with the native people along the coast, passed into the hands of the masters of the seas. In future they were to serve as a port of call from Goa, centre of Portuguese activities across the ocean — the first European settlements in Africa South of the Nile. In the years which followed, these expeditions continued both along the east coast as well as inland. Francisco d' Almeida, Pedro d'Arhaya, Tristan da Cunha were but a few of those who pioneered along the coast to ensure that by 1520 the whole coastal belt from Gardafui in the North to Lourenço Marques and Durban in the South were in the hands of the Portuguese.

Forty years later the first Christian missionary, Gonsalvo da Silveira, undertook an expedition to Monomatapa — a word which was used to indicate the vast kingdom and its Emperor in the interior of Central Africa, and which comprised the biggest portion of the country between the Limpopo and the Zambesi. He was destined to be the first Christian martyr who gave his life "to the greater glory of God" in this part of Africa.

The westward penetration of this part of Africa by Europeans was carried a step further by two other famous expeditions. Francisco Barreto sailed up the Zambesi as far as Sena and from there he moved in the direction of the Mazoe with the intention

of possessing the mines in Monomatapa or Kalangaland. Vasco Fernandes Homen went as far as Manica and made contact with the natives in order to obtain their products and their gold dust. These expeditions led to regular trade routes and in 1629 a treaty was signed between the Portuguese Government of Mozambique, Dom Nuno Alvarez Pereira and the Emperor of Monomatapa. This enabled the Portuguese to establish during the 17th century a whole line of forts stretching from Tete to the Tati at the Limpopo. A vast piece of the territory was supposed to have been ceded to the Portuguese and a profitable trade in gold dust was carried on for many, many years.

However, the Golden Century of this great World Power was not destined to last for ever. Two of the smallest powers ever to obtain leadership from the times of the Greeks and Alexander the Great, namely Holland and England had challenged the authority of Portugal and Spain. Germany was keeping close behind them. The Portuguese had abandoned the stormy and sandy southern part of the Cape after it had taken toll of the cream of their mighty fleet.

About 150 years after the death of Albuguerque the Dutch had decided to establish a halfway refreshment station for their ships passing to and fro from the East Indian Islands. For about 150 years their relations with the English were friendly, then the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars brought the final downfall of the bankrupt Dutch East Indies; and the English, the new masters, stepped into Africa, about 150 years after the Dutch had first set foot on South African soil.

There was neither open friction nor contact between the English and Portuguese but the latter soon realised that they had to be much more definite about what "area" belonged to them. When it became necessary for them to define their boundaries it was the simplest thing in the world of that day to state that their territory stretched from the 11th to the 27th Latitude and included the Lake Nyasa, the Zambesi River basin, Matabeleland and Mashonaland. Everything from Mozambique to Angola was Portuguese territory, they declared. Not till many decades later when the scramble for Africa was in full swing was this statement seriously challenged by anybody.

It was not, however, with European powers that the Portuguese in Africa had to cross swords at the beginning of the 19th century. The trouble was much nearer home. For the European a declaration of what was "mine and not yours" in Africa might have had some meaning, but not for the native tribes. The slow southward movement of the Bantu, which had split up into a

westerly and easterly direction when they had neared the Limpopo, had been brought to a halt. The East Coast of Africa had become the home of the mighty wandering Zulu tribe, and they were masters of the area between Delagoa Bay and the Zambesi until about 1830. It was then that two new trek-movements changed the whole course of history in Southern Africa: that of the Bantu and the northward trek of the Dutch Voortrekkers.

The Bantu found the "Natal" region no longer the paradise they thought it would be when they moved across the Limpopo, about the same time as Jan van Riebeeck was called upon to establish the Dutch settlement at the Cape. There were numerous splinter-groups, each of which tried to establish its authority over the other by marauding or slaughtering whoever happened to stand in his way.

The original chieftain who was at the head of the big party that had moved northward along the coast and had settled between the Zambesi and Delagoa Bay was a certain Gaza; and his tribe, the Abagaza, was continually receiving reinforcements from others fleeing from the fearful Zulus. These reinforcements of the Abenzansi — "the inferior ones" — of the same parent tribe, gradually lost the name of Zulu and adopted for a time the name Abenguni, but soon became known by the name of their original leader, the Aba-kwa-Gaza (or Abagaza) — the people of Gaza. After Gaza's death his son Zikode became the leader and he in turn was succeeded by Soshangane. The latter's followers soon came to be called the Amashangane — better known to-day as the Shanganes.

Threatened by Shaka in the south, Soshangane had continued to move northwards in the direction of the northern Sabi. As far as he went he subjected the other tribes and forced the Mashonas to their knees. He was only dissuaded against further penetration westwards by the presence of another Zulu imperialist in the west, namely Mzilikazi who had been driven across the Limpopo by the Dutch Voortrekkers and decided to settle with a part of his tribe near the present Bulawayo — in time to become known as the Matabele.

Meanwhile another Zulu chieftain, Zwandendaba had also moved north. He followed Soshangane northwards and a bloody battle of three days ensued between these two tribes. Soshangane found the odds against him and hurriedly called a retreat of his remnants in an easterly direction along the Sabi as far as the central Sabi highlands. Before he had time to lick his wounds, he found himself in the territory of another Zulu raider

Nxaba. Nxaba had no time to muster his men. Soshangane unexpectedly moved into his sanctuary and forced him to take to his heels. He fled in a north-westerly direction across the Manica lowlands and . . . met the Portuguese. For the latter this meeting brought woe upon woe. Nxaba first besieged Macequece (1832) — a Portuguese mission and trading station. Heroically these Europeans fought back with whatever weapons they had, but when their supply of lead bullets ran out, there was only one last alternative — to cast bullets of gold. With these they managed to keep Nxaba and his men at bay and no doubt would have won the day with this rather expensive ammunition. As ill-luck would have it their gunpowder then gave out. The Zulus stormed in and killed every one of the Portuguese — from the officer commanding to the priest and the nun.

The fate of the Portuguese along the coast was also sealed. Soshangane, after chasing out Nxaba, had explored his new kingdom and decided to move as close to the coast as possible. He found that by sweeping away the inferior tribes of the Makalaka in front of him he was master of a vast territory; and within a year of his usurping power in these parts in October 1833, he was at Delagoa Bay at the Espirito Santo, besieging a fort which the Portuguese had built on a small island between the branches of the river. At first the Portuguese had drawn up the bridges and closed the gates. There they were hemmed in for five days. Then the leader, Dionysio Antonio Ribero ordered that an attempt had to be made by night to try and reach another island, Shefina, not far off. The escape in boats was successful, but Soshangane had grown bolder and had smelt blood. When he discovered that his plans were foiled he ordered his Abagaza to pursue the Portuguese. This they did, destroyed the fort and brought the helpless Europeans back to land where, without ceremony, they were all killed. Soshangane (or Manukuza) then regarded himself as the Dingane of the north and soon had his tribe organised and settled. He was now able to send out his captains and impis to kill or rob whoever they could find. Among his numerous victims was also the second group of Europeans under the Dutch Voortrekker Nicolaas van Rensburg who was the first to penetrate this part of Africa from the south. A Tonga vassal of Soshangane, Sakana, encountered these trekkers near the Pafuri River, attacked their wagons and eventually killed all 48 men, women and children.

Soshangane's death in 1856 brought some respite, and only then, because there was disagreement as to who should be his successor. The two aspirants were Mawewe and Mzila (Umzila).

The Portuguese who had started to rebuild some of their forts were far more afraid of Mawewe than they were of his predecessors. They, therefore, supported Mzila's claim to the extent of supplying him with arms and ammunition against his rival; and this forced Mawewe in 1862 to remove himself.

Mzila now regarded himself as master and owner of the whole territory from the Sabi at Delagoa Bay to the Zambesi in the north. His capital "city" was at the Busi River, about fifty miles east of Zimbabwe and from here he and his Gaza impis levied their toll of the other tribes.

Undaunted, the Portuguese continued to send one expedition after the other into the interior. Mzila had been appeased and treaties were formally concluded with any other tribes they happened to meet. A few of these heralds were Paiva d'Andrade, Cardoso, Longle, Sarmento, Castilho Xavier, and the half-caste Capitão Manuel de Souza. They erected trading stations, hoisted the Portuguese flag for whoever was close enough to see it, and promoted all the native chieftains to the rank of sergeant-major in the Portuguese army! In 1884 they proclaimed Manicaland as their territory, fixed the Mazoe River as the western border and restored Macequece where the Governor, D'Andrade appointed Jaoa de Rezende as Portuguese commander-in-chief. After appointing two chiefs, Woembe and Mtasa, they were obliged to acknowledge Mzila as head of Manicaland — albeit a subject of the Portuguese. He in turn was succeeded by Ngungunyana in Gazaland, and he kept a very close watch on any exploitation. In Manicaland, however, the Portuguese reinstated Mtasa as leader, and promoted him to a sergeant-major on the occasion when the flag was hoisted at his kraal. To D'Andrade, who had already procured a concession to mine for gold in his territory, assistance in the form of native labour was promised. As the glory of D'Andrade rose and he united all the gold seekers and companies into the one "Companhia de Mozambique" (1888) the position of the Native leaders became more and more insecure. They had indeed become "tame". It was under such circumstances that the English, under Rhodes, started to become very interested in this part of the country. Livingstone, Moffat and Mackenzie had their advance posts as far as Inyati and Bulawayo in the west where the successor of Mzilikazi, Lobengula had taken over. Between the Matabele and Mtasa's Manicaland there appeared to them a vast territory of unexplored no-man's land into which a wedge had to be driven.

It was to be the task of the Dutch pioneers to move into Gazaland and thus serve as a buffer between the English and the Portuguese, as well as between the English and the impis of Ngungunyana.

## Chapter 2

### CONTACT AND CLASH

THE LAST QUARTER of the previous century witnessed a world-wide desire for expansion and incorporation on the part of the European powers. The "scramble for Africa" was in full swing. It is against this background that the attempts of Cecil Rhodes to acquire more territory for the British Empire have to be seen. In 1890 (12th September) his efforts were brought to a successful halt when his pioneer column moved into the Mashonaland area for which Lobengula had granted him a charter. The Chartered British South African Company, of course, wished to consolidate itself as speedily as possible, and to incorporate as much as the conditions of the charter would permit. It was at this point that Gazaland, stretching from the Sabi to the Limpopo came into the picture.

There were various parties interested in this territory and every one tried to conclude a treaty of his own while nullifying that of another claimant. The Portuguese initially did nothing because they took it for granted that the area belonged to them. The first to consider settlement there were the Dutch.

Now in 1890, and before the Pioneer Column had started from the south, two other Boer expeditions left the Transvaal; one for Mashonaland and the other for Gazaland. Louis Adendorff, leader of the expedition to Mashonaland received a concession from the two chiefs in Mashonaland, Sebasha and Mozobe, whereby the area stretching from the Zambesi to the Limpopo, 266 miles in width, was "ceded" to Adendorff, Field-cornet Du Preez, De Meyer and Brummer. This would then form the Republic of Banyailand — and these gentlemen would be destined to hold no small office in this republic. It is believed that they had already settled the question of President!

But concessions were a long way off from occupation. While the above negotiators were busy trying to mobilise their "army of occupation" the troops of the Chartered Company had already moved into the area and established themselves in the heart of the territory near the abode of the chieftain Harari. "Possession was nine points of the law" — and thus the dream republic of Adendorff and Co. vanished.

The other expedition was undertaken by Willem Grobler, Hermanus Bodenstein, Jerrie Adendorff and Piet Mare. Their

object was to try and persuade the chief of Gazaland, Ngungunyana to cede part of his territory to them. Their journey was a rather catastrophic one. Most of their horses died while they were travelling along the Lebombo Mountains to the Coast. Only Mare and Adendorff could continue — the first for 23 days on foot and Adendorff by donkey. They eventually arrived at the capital of the Gaza chieftain at the Suli Lake in June, 1890.

But the reception accorded them was a very mixed one. The Portuguese in Pretoria had got word of their scheme and when the expedition arrived they saw the Portuguese flag flying over the town. They were greeted by General D'Almeida and Lieutenant Repozo and three hundred soldiers. The Portuguese told them that the territory of Gazaland belonged to them by virtue of an agreement with Mzila on the 2nd of December, 1861. He had promised and agreed to be a "subject" chief of the Portuguese crown, and that he would obey all commands from Lourenço Marques. With his successor Gungunyana — the present ruler — an agreement had also been reached (and it was proclaimed on the 15th October, 1885 in Lisbon) that he — by taking an oath of allegiance to the King of Portugal — would reject all other claims and authority over this territory. For what it was worth, Mare was allowed to speak to Gungunyana in the presence of the General.

D'Almeida then advised them to proceed to the Governor of Mozambique at Lourenço Marques to discuss possible settlements with him. This was the beginning of the end. Adendorff, deciding that he had had and heard enough, went back to the rest of the party only to find that Bodenstein was dying of fever. Mare went on to Lourenço Marques but he was suspicious of any negotiations. He suspected foul play when he arrived at the town, declined an invitation to dine with the Governor and hurried back to the Zoutpansberg.

It is just possible that both of these expeditions would have been much more successful if the political situation in the Transvaal had been calmer, but President Kruger refused to interfere with the situation north of the Limpopo and withdrew all his support.

The Boers were ousted by Rhodes and his men on the one hand, and by the Portuguese on the other. It was obvious that the time when these two powers would clash was drawing nearer and nearer. The Portuguese still had to reckon with a much more determined opposition . . .

The Chartered Company realised well enough that a corridor

from Mashonaland to the sea was absolutely necessary. The only way was through Manicaland, where Matasa was the chief; and then through Gazaland, the territory of Ngungunyana — and then . . . well, they would be pretty close to the sea . . . Jameson, who managed Rhodes' affairs for him in the new country, sent word to his brother that the Portuguese would not have much of a leg to stand on once the Company had finished with Ngungunyana.

Three days after the Pioneer Corps had arrived in Salisbury the Administrator Colquhoun had concluded a treaty with Mtasa of Manicaland and he had immediately despatched an advance party by wagon to this area. Messrs. Morris and Human had to "hold the fort".

In the meantime, however — and about a month before these incidents took place — England and Portugal had signed an agreement which fixed the boundaries of the Portuguese claims at 33° East Longitude. This meant that practically the whole of Manicaland and Gazaland would fall within Portuguese spheres, but of this agreement the parties in Africa still did not know anything.

Morris and Human were soon followed by Major Forbes who discovered that the two Portuguese, His Excellency Colonel Paiva D'Andrade and Captain De Souza, had tried to arrange a meeting of interested parties to justify the claims of the Portuguese. At this stage of the development of the country, the whole world was aware of the gold deposits not only in the Transvaal, but also further north, and several gold mining companies had come into operation in the Portuguese territory. They were naturally all interested in these rival claims and had sent their representatives to Mtasa's kraal. One of these was a young Natal-born miner Dunbar Moodie, who was employed by the Sabi-Ophir Syndicate as manager of their mine at Penhalonga.

Whether Forbes was aware of the intentions of the Portuguese or not, he refused to be a party to any further negotiations and promptly ordered the arrest of these two Portuguese officers — the flies in the ointment — and declared that Mtasa was under British protection and that no private dealings would be tolerated. He realised, however, that effective occupation of the area was imperative, because whoever could succeed in placing people in this area would have the first claim to it. He raised these points with Dunbar Moodie, and then informed Jameson and Rhodes of his contact with this able young man who seemed to know so much of the country, and who was destined to play no small

part in the final acquisition of this area for the British Empire.

The route to the sea, however, had to proceed further. Gazaland had to be opened. Following the agreement with Mtasa, the Company sent Doyle to explore the territory in an easterly direction and begged Moodie to accompany him. By December the plans had been drawn up and in January, 1891, Moodie was asked by Jameson to accompany him to Ngungunyana to discuss the position of Gazaland with him. This area seemed to them to be the heart of the corridor to the east, a paradise for the explorer, the missionary, the miner, the farmer — “a land of dreams”.

Jameson's eventual contact with Ngungunyana proved most successful. On February 2nd, 1891 he departed from this chief with a treaty whereby Ngungunyana had voluntarily placed himself under British protection and had granted a concession to Jameson over his whole country from the Limpopo to the Zambesi — and including Manicaland. Empowered by a similar treaty with Lobengula from the west, Rhodes and the Chartered Company felt in a strong position to press for more claims.

These were duly forthcoming and almost led to a declaration of war in Europe between England and Portugal . . .

On 11th June, 1891 a proper treaty was signed between these two powers. It dashed the last hopes of the British to force a route to the sea. They were only granted certain rights on the Zambesi and Pungwe. But the Portuguese, rather regretfully, had to cede a portion of Gazaland and Manicaland — the districts of Melsetter, Umtali and South Makoni.

It was to these parts that the exodus from the south was directed. The first “trekkers” who had heard of this fine country were under the impression that the Portuguese were still the owners of it, and had entered into negotiations with the Mozambique Company and with D'Andrade. The system by which it was possible to obtain possession of a piece of land also seemed attractive to the Dutch pioneers. According to this system, farms or “prazos” could be given to individuals who were then entitled to levy taxes on the natives in lieu of a contribution to the treasury. The aforementioned De Souza was one of these powerful landowners. No doubt this crown land system (Prazos de Coroa) inspired the organisers of at least one trek from the south to try and negotiate a settlement in the Gazaland (Chipinga) district.

### Chapter 3

#### A TRAIL IS BLAZED (THE MOODIE TREK)

RHODES, JAMESON AND the other leaders in the new territory realised that it was no easy task to persuade people from the south or from the Mother Country to brave the dangers of the unknown and to make Mashonaland, Gazaland or Banvailand their new home. To Rhodes' inspiring words, "Go north, young man your hinterland lies there", the response was very slow.

There were other considerations, too, when settlement of Manicaland and Gazaland was contemplated. These areas were off the high plateau where gold, and eventually the railway line, were additional attractions. But the terrors of the Lowlands were only too well known: death caused by the mosquito and the tsetse fly was so sudden and came without any warning whatsoever; roads or tracks, except via Salisbury in the north, were non-existent; the wild animals of the forests and the crocodiles of the rivers were terrors which had kept back the civilisation of Africa from the north for centuries. And always, at the back of the mind, was the question of how the native people were going to behave. The European interference had brought remarkable stability amongst these marauding tribes, but it was still too soon to judge . . .

It was clear that a new incentive had to be found to lure the Dutch South Africans from the country which they had only just opened up, and which was attracting thousands of immigrants to the goldfields of the Witwatersrand. Rhodes and his collaborators decided to make capital of the South African's inborn love for the soil. Prospective immigrants were to be promised farms of about 3,000 acres each.

But even before there was any talk of occupation of this or any area by the Europeans, various missions had moved northwards into the unknown realm of historic Monomatapa. In a subsequent chapter more will be said about this aspect. The American missions moved to the east on the border of Gazaland; the English and Scottish missions moved towards the kraal of Lobengula at Bulawayo and Inyati; and the Dutch Reformed Mission, under Stephanus Hofmeyr from the Soutpansberg, had already done so much pioneering work in the south-central part called Banyailand, years before Rhodes had thought of occupying the land, that they had already established

a vanguard missionary post near the Zimbabwe ruins when the Pioneer Column moved northward. It is not admitted often enough that without the sacrificial, untiring and inspired work of these men and women of God, the early years of the European settlement in these parts of Africa would have been inconceivable.

On the understanding that all the treks to the eastern part of the country were to be occupational treks they were to be regarded as agricultural, since agriculture, more than mining, was the sign of settlement and civilisation.

The first attempt to try and give expression to this idea was made in the latter part of 1890. The occupation of Mashonaland was hot news, and in the Cape Colony where Rhodes was a highly esteemed personality, public meetings were held to try and enlist the services of young men. At that time there was no idea in the mind of Rhodes to think of Mashonaland as a part of England, but rather as a part of the Cape Colony — both of course being a part of the British Empire. Whether he sincerely meant it or not, his aim was to make the new path to the north "safe for the Cape".

With this in mind, Rhodes had encouraged Laurence van der Byl to proceed with a party of 25 young men (Cape Colonists) to Mashonaland. In 1891 they were met at Fort Charter and presumably advised to move eastward from Salisbury and to take up land nearer Mtasa's kraal. Perhaps the reason why they were not sent further eastward was because there was great uncertainty as to where the boundary between Portuguese and British territory would be. Van der Byl started his settlement about 100 miles from the present Salisbury in the direction of Umtali. But by the time these young men had constructed their crude huts or tents, grass or sticks and started to look round for tools and seeds and lands, much of their initial zeal had disappeared. The weather conditions were baffling, there was no livestock, no coherence, no planning. The mosquitoes and the blackwater fever started to take its toll of them. Laurence van der Byl was one of the first to succumb. In 1892, less than a year after he had moved into "the land of Rhodes", he died at M'Gopos. Many of the others were so fever-stricken, and felt so lost without their leader, that the whole settlement broke up and most of the men dispersed.

There is no doubt that this area was considered a very healthy one, and suitable for the cultivation of crops and fruit trees, for shortly afterwards Rhodes had picked on the Inyanga area not far distant for his fruit farms and estates.

Two reasons are, however, generally given why this mission failed. The first was ignorance and unpreparedness to try and meet the conditions in the new country; the second was the lack of any womenfolk to give the settlement a sense of stability and permanency. In spite of all this, however, the little town of Rusapi, which has developed out of the ashes of this experiment, has proved that the ideals of these young men were not in vain.

The Moodie Trek was the first organised attempt to establish a European settlement from the south in Gazaland. Like the Van der Byl trek it was undertaken as an experiment — and a very necessary one at that — and not as an adventure. From this point of view, the work done, the price paid and the reward received by these and other pioneers to this part and their children, have to be judged from a totally different point of view, to that which obtained in the rest of "Rhodesia", or in the case of the pioneers to Mashonaland, the missionaries, the big-game hunters and the gold-diggers. Their purpose was fourfold. First of all to establish a buffer between the Portuguese and the British; secondly to act as a stop against the native tribes which were either inspired or instigated by the Portuguese to move westward without any intention of calling a halt to raiding kraals of other tribes; thirdly to be of an agricultural and therefore of a permanent nature; and fourthly by bringing their whole families with them to prove to the rest of the world that settlement by the European in these tropical parts was possible.

The man chosen for this major task, and to whose initiative, drive, zeal and determination, the origin and final settlement of various treks can both directly and indirectly be ascribed, was George Benjamin Dunbar Moodie — the manager of a mine of the Sabi-Ophir Gold Mining Company.

Not much is known of the early life of this young adventurer. He was born in Natal on the 8th July, 1861, and in his twenties held the important post for the above company on the Bartisol Reef at the Penhalonga mountains. He had an extensive knowledge of farming as well as mining and had become an important personality in these parts of Africa towards 1889. When the agents of the British South African Company set out from their base at Salisbury, just after the Pioneer Column had been disbanded, to reconnoitre the eastern part of the territory which they had presumed also to belong to Lobengula, they linked up with Dunbar Moodie and tried to elicit information about the Portuguese from him. He was also kind enough to supply them with some "carriers". Shortly afterwards he was present at the

kraal of M'tasa to which D'Andrade had asked representatives of various companies to come to discuss the Portuguese interests of this part of the country, and he witnessed the "capture" of D'Andrade by Forbes. He offered his services to an official of the company, Doyle, to inspect the country with him in an easterly direction from September to December, 1890, and in January of the following year Jameson asked him to accompany Doyle and himself from Manika to Gungunyana for the "discussions" which led to the treaty with this chief. When eventually two Indunas of Ngungunyana, under the patronage of a member of the B.S.A. Company, appeared before Her Majesty Queen Victoria and pledged their obedience to her, Moodie felt that he had played no small part in this transaction.

Nor was it possible for him to stop here. First of all his help had to be enlisted further against the Portuguese as well as against possible attempts by the Transvaal to seize this land. But in the second instance, his close association with the enemy had cost him his job. He was forced to resign as manager from the company he had represented. For the B.S.A. Company it now seemed possible to kill two birds with one stone. Jameson volunteered to repay him for whatever losses he had sustained by promising him a stretch of land about ten thousand morgen in extent, or seven farms each of about three thousand acres. It was naturally hoped that he would try and find people to come and work these farms for him . . . for one condition was "immediate beneficial occupation".

In October, 1891, Rhodes had discussed the matter with Jameson and it was agreed that Moodie would pay an annual quitrent of £17 10s. for the farms. Dunbar then drew a rough sketch of the area, dug trenches on the corners to act as beacons, built a few stone beacons and hoisted his little flag on the posts, to which he also nailed a notice with his name and indicating the area, etc., that belonged to him. It would not have been possible for a newcomer to make any mistake about Moodie's land . . .

He managed to obtain the services of three Cape Coloured boys who started building huts. His mind was scheming ahead. He constructed a big map of the area with beacons, rivers, mountains, kopjes, native kraals, etc., and dispatched this to the Surveyor-General in Salisbury. Then he came with a proposal to the officials of the company and to Rhodes to try and settle a hundred families in this area. He had many connections in the Free State and he was certain they would act on his recommendations. It seemed too good to be true to

Rhodes, who invited him to come to Cape Town to discuss the project and to submit a list of prospective settlers to him. Moodie left no stone unturned. He rushed down to the Free State and the Cape, and sparing neither time nor money he started to organise his trek. He realised that it was going to take up a lot of his time, and asked for an extension for "immediate beneficial occupation" — pointing out that he had left his work with his previous company and that he was now an employee of the B.S.A. Company. He needed sufficient time to organise his whole scheme effectively — a scheme which he said "I may venture to state will be most beneficial to both the Country and the Company if successfully carried through, as it, no doubt, will be". He also requested that he be allowed "in other ways to raise such funds as are necessary to enable me to commence farming on thorough systematic principles . . . As I have always taken the keenest interest in the country and continue to do so, I beg that your Honourable Company take into consideration my requests, and grant such support as will enable me to execute my 'trek' scheme in a thorough and efficient manner."

To this Rhodes replied that he would have to pay the £17 10s. quitrent but that the clause stipulating "immediate beneficial occupation" of the 21,000 acres would be waived until he had completed the arrangements for his party.

Dunbar then went to the Free State, to his uncle Thomas Moodie who was a wheat and maize farmer in the Bethlehem district. Before he had left for the north he was once employed for a short while by this uncle, but it is not clear in what capacity. (Thomas Moodie at that time did not possess a great deal, but he was always a keen racing enthusiast.) Dunbar Moodie was glowing all over when he spoke of the new land: "It is the prettiest country I have ever seen," he repeatedly remarked. His uncle must help him to organise a trek . . . he had a lot of pioneering blood in him . . . for Thomas Moodie, the son of James Moodie, was the eleventh representative of the Melsetter Clan. He himself was born at Grootvader's Bosch in the Swellendam district on 29th November, 1839; had married at Smithfield, Cecilia Jacomins Robbertze, daughter of a Somerset East farmer three years his junior; and was now trying his best to make a living for himself and his family in the uncertain weather of the Free State. His forefathers had for many generations farmed on the Melsetter (pronounced Melster or Malster) estate in Scotland, but the circumstances,

as well as the weather conditions, had sent this branch of the clan to seek its fortune in distant South Africa.

Gradually a vision of a new Melsetter rose before the eyes of Thomas Moodie—a Melsetter in South Africa or Gazaland—big and fertile and prosperous enough not only to rehabilitate all his offspring and family, but also many others. Yes, the idea was sound; it stirred the best that was in him. He would assist Dunbar Moodie . . . the golden apple would simply fall into his lap.

He started immediately by discussing in glowing terms, the prospects of farming in this land of perpetual streams, of ample labour supply and of undreamt-of prospects. People were becoming interested. Within a few months they were enthusiastic. The Trek would start!

Early in January, 1892, a small deputation headed by Thomas Moodie was sponsored by the farmers interested, to visit Rhodes and to discuss one or two important matters with him. The farmers, knowing only the land they had traversed so far, came to the conclusion that a 3,000 acre farm would be too small. They proposed a 3,000 morgen farm at a quitrent of £6. To this Rhodes agreed and advised Jameson by telegram of his decision. In it Rhodes stated that he thought the farmers were quite right, for when he proposed fifteen hundred morgen he considered that the whole country was purely agricultural. He now realised that was only suitable for cattle farming and that fifteen hundred would not be enough. To him they seemed an excellent type of settler and they would bring their families. It was to be understood that the decision as to where they would eventually settle was to be made by him and that they could choose from land not yet given out when they arrived. All these treks to be bona fide with occupation. The idea at that time seemed to be to let them occupy land in the vicinity of Gungunyana's old kraal near the source of the Basi River — an area which Moodie had indicated to Jameson. That would suit them very well since the land was wholly unoccupied; and there was every likelihood that the natives might swarm in again and occupy it . . . (27.1.1892).

In his reply Jameson said that he thought a quitrent of £10 (£5 per 1,500 morgen) ought to be levied and that all rights on the timber except for domestic use had to be reserved. He suggested the environs of Mzila's kraal as suitable land for occupation. It was finally agreed that the Cape office of the Company would settle the amounts to be paid and Thomas Moodie was to be regarded as the leader of the trek of a hundred

families from the Free State. In lieu of all this he was to receive two farms each of 3,000 morgen and each of his eight sons would have the right to one.

Moodie then went back and held several more meetings at Kafferskop (Malopposdraai) where the first meeting on 6th January, 1892, had been held and where Tom Moodie was elected the leader.

At this last meeting, however, the majority of farmers felt that some kind of central fund had to be established which would enable them to buy the necessary equipment or trek oxen, as well as to clear any small debts that they might have had — seeing the trek fever had come rather suddenly. He wrote to Rhodes suggesting that the sum of £4,000 be made available (about £75 per person if he could declare that he was really in need of it). Moodie tried to reassure Rhodes that “knowing the people, I would be in a position to see that the Company does not suffer by moneys advanced indiscriminately”. To this the Company would not agree, and their decision came as a blow to Moodie. In March of that year he wrote to Rhodes to say that he was very sorry about the position and that “through the failure of establishing a fund I am afraid the Trek will not be the success I expected. Still, I will do my best”.

He reported the contents of his correspondence with Rhodes to a subsequent meeting in the middle of March. Up to that time he had 130 applicants, but on hearing that no assistance was to be given, many farmers withdrew their names. Moodie also pointed out that as there was no track and as it would be dangerous to be on the road once the rains had started, the party should be organised as soon as possible — and in any case not later than the beginning of May of that year. Many farmers found this impossible and so Moodie had to see his best men — most of them reluctantly — give up the idea of the trek . . . “men I could ill spare out of the trek . . . men of large influence over the people”, he wrote to Rhodes.

One of the last survivors of these first pioneers and a staunch supporter of Thomas Moodie, was Ernst du Plessis. Much of what follows was contributed by him. Born in the Tulbagh district in 1863, he had moved up to the Bethlehem-Fouriesburg district — a near neighbour of Moodie for seven years. From his fifteenth year he was engaged in transport-riding and he soon followed the early pioneers as far as Tuli with his transport wagon. In 1891 he was therefore no stranger to Mashonaland and Tom Moodie had mentioned the rumours he had heard of the new country. Moodie had asked him to

go as far as was possible and then to come and report back. His experience as a transport-rider and his overcoming of many disappointments and setbacks made him one of Moodie's most valuable men on the trek. For Ernst himself, then a virile young man of almost 30, it was one of his greatest privileges to be associated with Moodie and his Trek. When he arrived back at Bethlehem in 1892 Moodie told him that the Trek was getting organised, and that he had to hold himself in readiness by May, 1892. Tom Moodie was a popular farmer, he had knowledge of almost all kinds of farming as well as of mining. He was a first class man, but would never allow himself to be made a door mat. Tall and strong he could face any danger. There is a kind of person who, when he comes to a mountain, shrinks and wants to go back; there is another kind who tries to find a way round the mountain; another would dream of getting to the top but would not decide to do anything. Tom Moodie was none of these. When he came to a mountain he had to get up and over. He was not one of those who appeared tired even before he had started. He had accepted the Dutch language as his own in the Free State and his long term of office as a Justice of the Peace made him a dearly beloved man and leader. Although everybody else was as ignorant of the implications of the trek as he was, they were quite willing to trek under his leadership — and that in spite of the two great fears: the Sabi-river and the mountain ranges of Gazaland.

And so the final arrangements were made.

They were to meet in Bethlehem on 5th May, 1892, and other parties would join them at Lindley, Kroonstad, at the Vaal River (Schoemansdrift) and at Zeerust (Marico) by the 25th May.

It was a great day for the town and district when, on the scheduled date, the loaded wagons drew up in the main street. There were between 60 and 70 adults and children, three grandmothers, a small baby, about three servants, and all the cattle and horses these pioneers possessed. All the inhabitants of the little town crowded round them (many with tears in their eyes) to wish God-speed to these — the first of the trekkers. With great applause and cracking of whips the wheels rolled on to the long and unknown road to the land of the Abagaza . . .

“Our motive,” declared Ernst du Plessis, “was to get enough land once and for all — land on which one could make a decent living without debt. During my first visit, the bushveld country held no appeal for me, but when Dunbar came back and told

us about the beautiful country and the farms that would be available I decided to join in. Should the country not suit me, I could always come back. So I argued. And then I decided to leave one of my wagons with my brothers to keep should I decide to come back. One wagon I sold, and with the third I was off to Johannesburg to load about 60 bags of corn, oats, some meal and mealie-meal. With 20 red Afrikander oxen that knew what it was to be on the road, I joined up with Moodie at Lindley on about the 8th of May, 1892."

The only road available to them was along the border of the Transvaal — the route taken by the Pioneer Column and the transport wagons from Kimberley and the Cape. Dunbar Moodie, who had supported Thomas Moodie throughout his recruiting campaign, decided not to travel up by ox-wagon, but to travel to Beira by boat, in which place he had hoped to be early in July. He had told Rhodes of his intentions — and had also written to Jameson — that he was going to Salisbury to "fix up matters" for the Trekkers. From there he wanted to move to Fort Victoria where he would link up with his uncle. He expressed the desire to Jameson that, although only a handful started the trek, he would like to see all the hills covered with a hardworking class of farmer the following year. He had suggested to Jameson to supply the Trekkers with arms and ammunition: it was just possible they might need them, "and they could give a warm welcome" to any visitors in case of danger. These rifles would remain the property of the Company and the Trekkers could be held responsible for them.

The Trek moved slowly on with the 29 families. Because Thomas Moodie was afraid of "geilsiekte" (a stock disease) he journeyed via Zeerust and from there he sent a few of the party in advance as far as Tuli. From Zeerust he wrote a letter to Rhodes informing him about the Trek thus far, mentioning also that he expected to have with him about fifty families by the time he reached his destination. Two hundred more applicants were on his waiting list. Many farmers who found it inconvenient to leave their homes and farms at such short notice had given him money for farms which they hoped to occupy the following year. The people he had with him were just the kind to occupy a new country. He had full confidence in thier support in case of trouble . . . most of them had already taken part in one or more Native wars. He also asked permission from Rhodes, with, of course, the consent of the Company, "that the name of my settlement be the Melsetter

Settlement". That was the proposal he also wanted to put up to Dr. Jameson.

The long road through Bechuanaland was tackled about the 15th June, 1892. Fortunately for them the Natives were very helpful. Moodie had tried to contact the Bechuana chief Khama and the latter had sent one sheep as a sign of goodwill and then ordered his people to supply the Trekkers with milk as long as they were within his territory. This they did all the way.

From Zeerust to Enslinsberg, on they went to Marico River where it joins the Crocodile River (Limpopo). Thence along the Transvaal border creeping ever northwards and leaving the marks of civilisation slowly behind them.

The first, and one of their rudest awakenings, met them at Selika's Draai, about half-way to Tuli. Here, at the Palala River mamba snakes attacked the dogs killing in all 27 — on one day no less than seven died. For these farmers to whom a dog meant as much as a gun, this loss — impossible to replace — was indeed a heavy one. As if to initiate them more into the sort of life ahead of them, lions appeared on the scene, killing four donkeys and one ox. Malcolm Moodie (see *Die Huisgenoot*, 3.4.1942) related how they were told that lions often followed the wagons from the north as far as Palala River. These lions were, as a rule, too old to catch game and became real man-eaters. They kept close to the wagons hoping to pull down a stray ox.

That afternoon, when they had crossed the river, Moodie had sent Malcolm and most of the other young men ahead, to construct a kraal of thorn-tree branches for the night, because the time had come to drive all the cattle into a kraal for safety by night, and to surround it with fires. "I had to make the kraal where the road would meet the river again. It meant that there was a long round-about between the river and the track, densely overgrown with white-thorn and other bushes. It was a Saturday and we had planned to camp here for a day or two. It was fairly late by the time the trek arrived at our kraal and most of the company thought it would be quite safe to let their cattle graze loose as they did on the previous nights. About one o'clock that night there was a terrific noise. The cattle stormed in towards the wagons, the oxen bellowing, the donkeys screaming. Everything was topsy-turvy. On all sides the roaring of the lions could be heard, and every now and again the reprimanding voice of our leader: 'You didn't want to listen!' All his cattle were in the kraal. The oxen and donkeys were chased all over the place and Bain lost four donkeys. From that night onwards the cattle



Marthinus Jacobus Martin.



Thomas Moodie, first leader of the Treks.



Dunbar Moodie. The originator of the Treks to Gazaland.



J. H. Kok, his wife Sarah with their six children.



Joseph Webster.

His wife, Sarah Webster.



were in kraal every evening and fires were burning all round.

On the Sunday morning a party went out to inspect and to do some shooting. There was a big open piece of land near the wagons, but everybody was out in the bush. They soon found the donkeys, an antelope and the oxen torn to bits. Coetzee swore that he would shoot the lion at 10 yards if he should dare to catch his cow "Liefie"!

Tom Moodie had warned them they must not all disappear into the bush but that a few should stay on the open field near the wagons, for the lion who was a clever hunter, was bound to come again and would probably have to cross the open field to get to the left-overs of the previous night. It happened just as he had told them. While they were all out in the bush the lion crossed over the field at his ease. MacAlpine, who was chasing the oxen together, said he wanted to shoot but was afraid the lion would fall on top of him. The only other male left at the wagon was old man Bucknall who intended shooting. Then the women became almost hysterical, so much so that the men heard the noise. Many had climbed on to the tops of the wagons and had begged Bucknall not to shoot. Unperturbed and undisturbed Mr. Lion was allowed to continue his journey into the thickets. He scared away seven donkeys which the party eventually located, after a week, about seven miles from this spot. A similar incident occurred near the Zimbabwe Ruins.

It appeared to Moodie that the trek was too big to travel as one and he decided to split his party into two. Sixteen wagons were to follow the course of the Pioneer Column and the others would cross the Limpopo lower down. At Metsi Metall Kama's two leopards were shot and then the party moved to the Palm River and Fort Tuli, the crossing point for all transport to the north and the first stop in the new territory. The "road" was dusty; the water supply along it disappointing. They had to split up into still smaller groups so that the cattle would not trample down the water holes.

The trek swung in a north-easterly direction towards the Macloutsi River, but at the Sashi River a new and unforeseen calamity threatened their progress. Their cattle developed foot-and-mouth disease! This foot-germ no doubt was in the grass and eventually contaminated both feet and mouths. There were no modern remedies available and they could not afford to shoot any beast. Recourse had to be taken to the old and tried "boere-raat" ("farmer's remedy"), and the animals were smeared with grease. This seemed to prevent further spreading and contamination, but it meant a delay of almost three precious weeks.

Every animal was cared for and mothered during this time. In all they lost eight. One of Moodie's trek-oxen presented a sad spectacle. He became so weak that he could no longer get up, and then the hyenas (always sneaking behind on the trek-path) started tearing him to pieces from behind so that he had to be shot. The Trekkers made the best of their stay here, repairing broken thongs or parts, and having a grand time shooting eland and impala. The fowls were in good condition, and in addition to fresh venison every day they even managed an occasional egg and bacon menu for breakfast!

When they had crossed the Macloutsi they were met by Dunbar Moodie with two horses from the Company. He had travelled from Beira to Salisbury and thence had raced back to Gröblersdrif to link up with the party. On arriving at this spot he discovered that they had already passed there, and so after travelling over 450 miles in 15 days he eventually caught up with them at Macloutsi. "Of all those who had been telling us of the promised land it was perhaps the greatest joy to meet and listen to Dunbar Moodie himself on those unknown plains. He was the only one who knew where we were going, and looking back to-day we must have had a great faith in this man and his uncle," Ernst du Plessis remarked. Another welcome visitor from the Company at this juncture was Colonel Carrington who travelled with the slow moving wagons for a whole week.

At one stage, Ernst du Plessis said they had to travel for four days without fresh water en route. The big waterbags were being drained rapidly. The oxen, with their heavy loads were beginning to feel the strain. They were soon pulling with their heads in the air, trying to get a sniff of water. Scouts were sent out in advance. When they were outspanned, whips and sticks had to be used to prevent a stampede. They were then driven for miles to a waterhole or to a hole which was often dug in the sandy spruits to allow water to seep through (a "goré"). It was no easy task to get them back to the wagons!

To crown it all one young man, Thomas Coleman, strayed from the wagons and got lost. Every boy and man had to take turns to lead the oxen or to look after the rest of the cattle. It was probably while he was doing the latter that he got left behind or took a wrong turning amongst the shrubby country. A fruitless search lasted for one whole day and their nerves were reaching breaking-point, when Coleman himself managed to find his way back to the wagons at two o'clock the following morning. He was tired and thirsty and what little water they had left was given to him. "How much further to the water," became almost

an accusing cry in the ears of Tom Moodie, and he had to speak sternly to the Trekkers on one or two occasions. "In the Free State and Transvaal we travelled by night," Ernst du Plessis was telling, "but I now advised Moodie that it would be better to travel by day because at times we would have to cover about 20 miles before water could be reached, and the animals just had to get accustomed to it. My wagon and the two belonging to Tom Moodie were in the lead, and fortunately we still had the tracks of the Pioneer Column and other transport-riders to guide us.

"The evenings were sometimes used for a bit of sport or games — I can still remember old Mr. Moodie winning a race from his son — but on the whole we turned in early to be ready for the following day . . . and the unexpected. On Sundays (it was not our custom to trek on this day) Bucknall held a service for us in a big tent which we had erected for this purpose. These services were alternately held in English and Afrikaans. With such a lot of loose cattle and so many factors which had to be taken into consideration, it was not possible, however, to stop for every Sunday. If the thirst was 'on you' in these unknown parts on a Saturday night, we just had to move on on the Sunday to try and reach water."

The next visitor to the trek was Capt. Raaff who met them in the Similala plains. He was a friend of Moodie. He had come up from Macloutsi by cart and horses and was in charge of the Fort at Tuli. Ernst du Plessis relates: "He urged us on and promised us a grand dinner when we should arrive at Fort Tuli — and also a dance — in spite of the fact that he also acted as Minister on Sundays! Two days later we did arrive at Tuli — on the 12th September — exactly two years after the Pioneer Column had settled down in Salisbury. Capt Raaff had sent his 'feather wagon' to the Saza River to transport the women across the thick sand, while the men travelled across on horseback. He had prepared the most sumptuous meal for us that we ever had on that trek, gave our horses as much mealies as they could eat, and then escorted us to a dance in one of the stores. The old folk were sitting out, either drinking or playing cards, but the young people kicked up clouds of dust as they danced. There were shouts for the quadrille dance, but it was soon discovered that only Raaff and myself could dance this. He grabbed Mrs. Moodie — a big woman who was already dead-tired — and I Mrs. Coleman — Moodie's sister — and we whirled and swirled across that ground floor. The others became envious and tried to imitate us — but

what a shaking and trotting sight they were! That was my last quadrille, but it was a dance in a hundred that evening for Mrs. Coleman."

One of the party celebrated his official entrance into the new land a little bit too royally, and the drinks had gone to his head. His wife asked Du Plessis and Moodie's son to escort the jovial bibber back to the wagons on the other side of the sandy river. When they arrived at the white sands of the river bank the old man remarked: "It seems as if the river is in flood." "Yes," replied Boyce Moodie, "in full flood." "Then we must dive in! Down!" was the reply. He jumped in and landed with a thump on the sand. The two youths had turned and rushed back to continue their dance. They had left the old man's horse, Ginger, near the scene and shortly afterwards rider and horse turned up at the dance hall once more. He was shouting for his wife, Margory, this time, but was gallantly escorted back to the identical spot by the two youths. The whole process was repeated. Only this time they brought the horse back with them. He swam up the river-bed and managed to climb out of the stream when the rest of the party returned home in the early hours of the morning!

The short time of rest at Tuli provided an opportunity for the animals to regain a little of their strength and for the trek-party to replenish their stock. Food supplies, mealie-meal, tinned beef, etc., were supplied or bought, and the Trek was ready for the next stage. Moodie, who by this time had had over 500 applications — mostly from men of the Northern Cape and the Free State who had heard news of the Trek already on the way, and who were preparing to come up as soon as they had settled their affairs — was expecting a few more wagons to turn up at Tuli. But nothing happened. Moodie availed himself of the opportunity to write a long letter to the British South African Company in which he again pleaded for some financial assistance as an absolute necessity. He also proposed to the Administrator that the party be allowed to stay together in one place when they should arrive in Gazaland. This place could later become the town of the farmers and it would serve as a place from whence they could go out to peg their farms. He was also of the opinion that it would only be fair to grant to each of these families a plot of ground 150 ft. x 100 ft. in the new township. He then mentioned the names of the men who were accompanying him: T. Moodie, J. D. Moodie, T. D. Moodie, M. M. Moodie, D. C. P. Moodie, B. Moodie, G. Moodie, D. S. Moodie, G. B. D. Moodie, Ernst du Plessis, R. D. Hulley, E. F.

Coleman, T. E. Coleman, J. W. Nesbitt, E. A. Nesbitt, J. A. Nesbitt, I. Young, I. van Niekerk, T. van Niekerk, W. Bucknall, T. Bucknall, M. Moodie, J. B. Moodie, G. McAlpine, L. Krantz, D. Beyers, W. Schoff, C. Benecke, A. Main, D. M. Moodie, J. W. Kotze, M. J. Kotze, P. N. Smith, A. Bain, W. James, M. Attwell and C. A. Woodford. Others not mentioned were H. Ashpute, E. Baden, F. M. Arkham, G. Stiebel, J. Oberholster, Knox and Coetzee. He asked for an allowance of more than 100 cartridges per person since the country in front of them was wild and untamed. He had no intention of using these cartridges as some hunters of the Transvaal did, who, on payment of one shilling received a licence to shoot in that area, often killing mercilessly. Wagonloads of skins, lard, tusks, etc., were seen at Tuli. A. Bezuidenhout and Van Staden, big-game hunters, had told him that they shot no less than eighteen hippos at the Lundi River.

Raaff then saw them on their way to Fort Victoria into what was then considered not such friendly Matabele country. (He himself experienced this a short time afterwards when the Matabele Rebellion broke out. Raaff, a heroic fighter, was ambushed and had to hide for days in a hole, without anything to eat. He contracted fever and died soon after that.)

The bush and undergrowth was thick and a road had to be cut in many cases. The first little incident which gave them an indication of the type of thing they were going to meet, was when Stiebel shot a lion by accident. He and Ashpute had tied their donkeys to a tree one evening and these soon started kicking. Oberholster went back to see what the matter was but Stiebel thought it safer to frighten any intruder by a shot in the dark first. "What do you mean by shooting when there are so many loose donkeys around" the others shouted to him. He replied that he had shot over the heads of the animals. The next morning the oxen of Markham broke loose and the party went ahead, but when Markham's oxen were rounded up again the boys spotted a lion. They rushed after Moodie who stalked the lion as if it were a Reed Buck. He then saw that it was a dead lion. Stiebel's shot was the only one that was fired that night, and he must have killed him outright. "But did he brag about that fluke of his!" Ernst du Plessis remarked.

The other meeting with the king of the jungle was when they were camping at a police depot (a tent) between Tuli and Fort Victoria. They were told that it was quite safe to let the cattle graze and none of them felt like packing a kraal for that night. Then it started to rain softly. "About one o'clock

that night," Malcolm Moodie relates, "about the time that Mr. Lion usually makes his rounds, the cattle rushed in to the wagons. No doubt they were depending on their masters to protect them. Two horses were killed that night. We soon discovered that it was not the bad advice of the police that caused us this loss, but that we had brought the lions with us. They had been following us now for weeks, just waiting for a careless opportunity like this. It was two old man-eating lions who could not hunt any more.

"From that evening on we, of course, saw to it that the cattle were securely fenced in — lion or no lion. We never went out on a lion shooting expedition, because it is futile without dogs. He'll never allow you to catch sight of him. He is a bit of a coward until you either wound or trap him: then he will go for you! It is often said that a lion is so dangerous, but when it comes to real danger, there are quite a few animals which can teach him a lesson. A lion will look you in the eyes and turn round . . . and he will not look for trouble if he is not forced into it. But a leopard is far more dangerous than a lion. He'll never think twice before attacking you. And then there is the buffalo. An older buffalo will rush you without the least provocation. Rhinos are also dangerous but they are short-sighted and unless one is down the wind, they cannot find one easily. Their smell is fine and they do not hesitate to rush after it."

A son of Thomas Moodie had a very narrow escape one day. He had just recovered from an attack of malaria, but thought that he was strong enough to go on a hunting expedition, with a dependable coloured man. It was a clear day and they were looking for eland and kwagga, but the further they went the less they saw. It was getting hot and they were feeling tired, and so decided to walk back to the camp along the edge of a hill, quite barren except for dry white grass. The boy was glad when he noticed a small tree ahead of him, and intended resting there for a few minutes. When about fifty yards from the tree he noticed a cluster of stones rising above the grass beside the trunk of the tree. Rather tired and looking at nothing in particular he walked up to the tree to sit on the stones. When about four yards from these, one of the stones suddenly rose. It was a lioness. Shortly afterwards the other one also stood up. It was the male. They were lazy and sleepy and stood and looked quite calmly at the boy. He had stopped short and was resting on the butt of his rifle — perhaps because he had such a fright that he was unable to move or to stand on his own feet.

"And there he stood and just looked at the lions — not one of them saying boo or bah. Only the tips of their tails were moving slowly — a sign that they were scheming. Whether young Moodie was also planning, I could not say," Malcolm Moodie continued. "It appeared as if this tableau was boring the lions after a while and they turned round and calmly walked away for about forty yards. They then seemed to remember something. The lioness turned round and went for the young man. He had not moved an inch — probably paralysed by fear. With irregular jumps the lioness came and crouched, tail between the legs, but instead of jumping, hissed like a cat. The little stone pebbles hit Moodie's trousers. He was still standing like a pillar, and before he could gulp down his first fright she repeated that awful hissing noise. With great interest the male was watching the spectacle. Then it appeared as if the lioness gave up the riddle of this pillar of stone, and without looking back joined the male and disappeared over the top of the hill. The boy had to spend eight days in bed."

Another instance when children came across lions was when they were camping at Fern River near Fort Victoria. Mrs. Nesbitt tells that her boy and one of the Coetzees came running in to report that some strange animals with tails like oxen were trying to frighten them with their long hair which they seemed to shake over their heads. They were soon recognised as huge lions, but were left in peace.

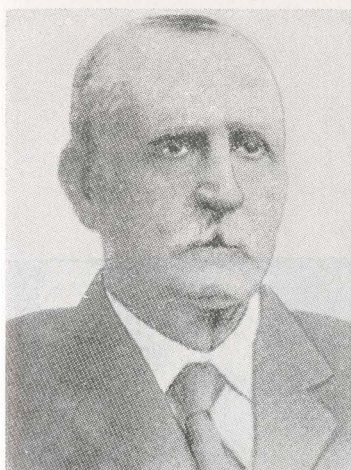
A constant fear on the whole trek were snakes. A mamba had killed the Nesbitt's dog just before they were leaving for their last stage to Fort Victoria. Some of the other dogs had developed a kind of sleeping sickness and also died.

Between this stretch from Tuli to Victoria the party also had their first contact with the Matabele, as Raaff had warned them. Malcolm Moodie relates as follows: "One Friday afternoon an advance party of about six arrived at a small river and a big stone — a 'sugar loaf' about a hundred yards long and fifty feet wide. On the Saturday some went out shooting. East of us was a thick bush and at about eleven o'clock those of us who stayed at the wagons suddenly heard a clamour in the bush. It was the clattering and stamping of feet soon to be followed by the thunderous noise of hundreds of voices. Soon an impi of the Matabele appeared out of the bush — an awe-inspiring sight. They were out on one of their raiding expeditions against the Makalaka tribe. They looked like the devil himself clad in their war costumes with their fearsome assegais. We were still all confused when they suddenly rushed to the camp. The impi

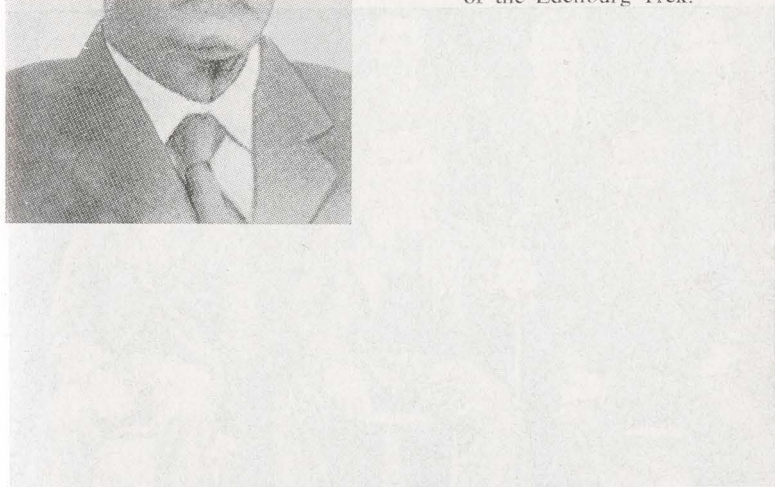
consisted of about four hundred Matabeles, and with them there were about three women of the Makalaka whom they had captured. All these women were tied to each other by means of strong twine round their wrists. Their hands were swollen because of the tightness of the twine. There were no children with them. The trek with these captured women had lasted too long . . . and in order not to be hampered by the children the Matabele had killed them all — or left them to die of hunger or to become a prey of the wild animals.

“The Matabele soldiers and their captives advanced to within about fifty yards from us. It was a heartrending sight to see and hear how the mothers were weeping for their children. It made me think of the events at Moordspruit (after all, the Matabele were also Zulus) and of Rachel of old who wept over her children and refused to be consoled. The faces of these pitiable women were wet with tears. The fear that any trouble would arise disappeared when we beheld this pitiable sight, but because of threats, we were still very much on our guard. Fortunately for us, nothing else happened. After their threats, they moved on into the dense wood with their sorrowful booty . . .”

The Trekkers experienced no more trouble from the Matabele until one day when a small band of them appeared and stole a quantity of washing — items which they could ill afford to lose.



Alfred Samuel Gifford, leader  
of the Edenburg Trek.



His wife, Emma Gifford.





Leader of the Steyn Trek (seated centre) and his seven sons.

## Chapter 4

### THE MOODIES MAKE MELSETTER — THE LAND OF GAZA

BECAUSE OF THE scarcity of water and the narrow tracks, the party had split up into smaller groups, sometimes travelling a day behind each other, sometimes more. When the parties had arrived at Fort Victoria the greatest challenge had to be faced by them. The discernible tracks were all leading in a northerly direction to Salisbury — but the Moodies were supposed to move eastwards from Fort Victoria across unexplored country and to head for Gazaland. It appeared that there existed a grave misunderstanding amongst the Trekkers as to where they had to settle. In spite of Dunbar Moodie's explanation to these men they still had only a vague idea of where Gazaland was. It appeared that the country which was originally intended for them was indicated on the British South African Company's chart No. 1 as a plateau of 3000-4000 feet above sea-level — very healthy, open and a grass country. This was bounded on the east by the Portuguese territory, on the south by a line from the Chimanimani Pass to the juncture of the Odzi and Sabi Rivers, on the west by the Odzi River and on the north by those areas and farms which were already occupied in the vicinity of Umtali. It actually appeared that the trek was meant to move to the south of the Chimanimani line to the Odzi-Sabi, and the majority of Trekkers seemed to realise here for the first time just what that would entail, and they were not at all pleased. The country appeared to them wild and out of reach of all present and future centres, where it was impossible for them to exist.

A big section of the Trekkers refused to budge. They were not prepared to follow Moodie any further and decided to wait for him and his volunteers to move off before holding a meeting of their own. At this meeting it was decided that: (i) those members of the trek, hitherto known as the Moodie Trek would no longer recognise Mr. Thomas Moodie as leader; (ii) that they were not prepared to move to a region to the south of the Chimanimani and Odzi-Sabi line, or to occupy this part, but that the Administrator be requested to allow them to occupy the region originally promised to Moodie, or failing that to allow them to choose farms in any part of the

country that appeared suitable to them and to occupy these; (iii) that this Trek be recognised as the Pioneer Trek; (iv) that Mr. Johannes W. Kotze and J. B. Moodie (the one who made the proposal) be appointed as a committee to guide the Trek; (v) that Mr. John W. Nesbitt be appointed as correspondent of the Trek to receive and despatch all correspondence and to sign all documents; (vi) that these resolutions be sent to the Administrator, and, if necessary, also to the Secretary of the British South African Company.

Two rather unpleasant letters were written, one by the leader of the dissatisfied group, J. Nesbitt, to the *Tuli Chronicle*, in which he discussed the point of view of these Trekkers; and the other by Dunbar Moodie to the Administrator, requesting him to squash the whole case immediately. Several telegrams were sent between the parties and the Administrator.

Fortunately Tom Moodie had already left with only a handful of the original party, namely seven wagons, on the 25th September when these meetings were held, and he was thus spared the ordeal of listening to the various accusations levelled against him. He realised that it was getting late, that rains would soon be falling and he wanted to get his Trek to Gazaland as soon as possible.

While the dissenters decided to take up ground between Fort Victoria and Salisbury (partly because they had lost about 170 of their cattle), Moodie and his small band braved the unknown, untraced and untracked country to the hinterland. When one considers that it was most dangerous at this time to be staying at any place more than forty miles from the three towns, Umtali, Salisbury and Fort Victoria, because of the Matabele unrest, the audacity of these few people to continue their trek to their original destination was all the more remarkable, and does credit to the trek-movements which have done so much to open up Africa to the civilising influence of the white man. At Fort Victoria all the plans were discussed and a final check made of foodstuffs and other commodities. Rhodes, whose great desire was an effective colonisation scheme, had encouraged them to move on as rapidly as possible and saw to it that all the needs of these few but determined men and women were met at Fort Victoria. They were supplied with 1700 rounds of Martini Henri and about 200 other cartridges, in case the natives wanted to cause trouble. Dynamite and implements — such as spades, axes, pickaxes, crowbars, etc. — were also supplied. Rhodes had every reason to feel worried: Lobengula was beginning to think that too many white men were

entering his country and that his supremacy would be questioned and threatened. The Portuguese still had no clearly defined area: Machado (the substitute for the Governor who had "gone off" to Portugal for a visit) was anxious to shift the Portuguese boundaries as far to the west as possible and trouble seemed to be brewing from this angle as well. The first to occupy the land would be the owners of it. From the south the relationship between the Transvaal Republic and the British "Uitlander" had grown worse and there was the danger that the Transvaal, so much near to this El Dorado than the Cape would annexe the land. This fear led to a warning to President Kruger that there would be trouble should he dare to send his men across the Limpopo: "Consequences . . . not limited to South Africa, but reaching the Imperial Government in England!" Perhaps this fear was more imaginary than real, for Rhodes soon afterwards admitted that "he felt bound to say that Mr. Kruger had behaved loyally".

According to the *Rhodesia Herald* the country needed only two things: people and money. Of the first it said: "Mr. Rhodes is sending us the Dutch Trekkers." Of the money it added pessimistically: "Now, among the manifold virtues of the South African Dutch is their holy hatred of the tax collector. A telegraph service, weekly post-carts and public buildings occupied by zealous inventors of new taxes, will never be paid for by the members of the Dutch Trek . . . but this attitude is not only confined to Dutch Trekkers . . ."

The last official act performed by the Trek party before it left Fort Victoria was to arrange the marriage between that musketeer, Dunbar Moodie, and Sarah Moodie. It was a great ceremony and the couple were allowed a honeymoon of more than a week at no less a mysterious resort than Zimbabwe — in all likelihood the first European couple ever to choose this site for such an occasion!

And so, in the first week in November, 1892, a disbanded, small but resolute party set out from Fort Victoria into the wild bush country. There were only fourteen men, four women and three small children to pioneer with their seven wagons a new highway to a new country, "their" country. They had all conjured up pictures of a new Africa, of grasslands, of sheep and cattle, of homes and cities. Their hearts beat faster when they thought of their new homeland.

Dunbar Moodie, who had finalised all the arrangements for them in connection with the actual occupation of the farms, had decided to accompany them and agreed with the Company to

cut a highway across this new country to the east along which a future Trek could travel. Tom Moodie felt that Dunbar knew much more about this part of the country and the type of forest that he was only too glad to give over the "reins" to Dunbar, who became the "Piet Retief" of this part of the journey. Some of the Trekkers, however, were not happy about this change, and were a little suspicious of Dunbar. However, they kept their feelings to themselves and it was only much later that the Company got to hear of the change-over in the leadership of the party. *The Rhodesia Herald* (5.10.1892) stated there was nothing to fear, and that "Tom Moodie, who from what we know of him, is as fond of fairplay all round as any man living, and who has worked hard and with single-mindedness for the success of the Trek. If human efforts and the best type of South African farmers can do it, the settlement which is to be known as 'Melsetter' will become one of the most important centres in the country".

For about 40 or 50 miles a scarcely visible track, made by the scotch-cart of a prospector, provided some guide. But this terminated abruptly on the top of a hill about 55 miles from Fort Victoria. The prospectors probably could not get down the steep and tree-covered hill and had to turn back. "'Tis the end of the kirk," said Dunbar Moodie. "'Tis Amen here," said Tom Moodie, and the place was summarily called Amen Height ("Amenshoogte")! Now their woe and work on the road would begin. First of all a road had to be planned through the growth, the trees, and over the visible mountains. This was the work of Ernst du Plessis and Dunbar Moodie. For four days they tried to get down that hill — and this only after they had turned back in a more easterly direction. The country at the bottom was more even, but thick woods slowed down the whole Trek. At times it had to stop for three or four days at a river while the road was being cut to the next drinking-place. Cutting was the mildest of these activities. Often they had to dig, use their crowbars, or dynamite to remove rocks or the thick trees (some 5 feet in diameter) out of the way. Fortunately there were Makalaka or Vakaranga natives in this area and their assistance was obtained.

"At last," relates Ernst du Plessis, "after we had spent 33 days on the 62 miles from Amenshoogte we spotted the Sabi River beyond the range of trees. Our courage had never failed us on the long road, although by now we had realised that life on a Trek was no picnic; but when we saw this broad river flowing in front of us—we estimated it to be a thousand yards wide!—

we began to waver. People had warned us that we would never be able to cross the river with our wagons because of the deceptive quicksand. Tom Moodie stood silent and watched the waters. Then, armed with a handful of flags he mounted his horse 'Bloubok'. He went from island to island to try and plan a 'road' through the river and put up his flags where he thought the sand was solid enough to allow a wagon to cross. However, that night all the flags were washed away — and the following morning a new track had to be marked. On the other side we cut a kind of 'exit' out of the stream and my wagon went in first — with Mrs. Moodie as my passenger! She must have had a lot of faith in my oxen and wagon — for she did not know what was awaiting us . . . The first few wagons got through all right, but we had to hook on extra teams of oxen. Amidst loud cheering and cracking of whips the last wagon was pulled through about five o'clock that afternoon. We called the crossing Moodie's Drift and now we were in — Gazaland! When we were all safe and sound on the other bank, we all gathered underneath two huge trees and fired fourteen dynamite shots. The bottle of whisky, which Ashpute had brought with him to celebrate this day, was opened here and all the grown-ups had their 'toast' out of this bottle. What was left over had to be preserved carefully in case of illness — an indication that there was never any drunkenness in our party!"

The following day was by contrast a sad one for the Trek. They discovered that most of their salt had melted the previous day when they were crossing the river. In some instances the water was so deep that it reached the platform of the wagon where the salt was kept.

The first signs of horse-sickness which was spotted the previous evening now appeared more ominous. Bloubok, Tom Moodie's old faithful, suddenly became ill and died. One after the other their horses were mowed down, and for all it was an anxious time. What were they going to do in a strange land without their horses? Fever also broke out amongst the people, and the Trek had to move more slowly. Ernst du Plessis and Dunbar Moodie were still in advance trying to locate the best road for the oxen and the wagons. They had their horses and small axes and did as much hacking down as possible while the wagons followed slowly.

They also discovered that the Sabi was the boundary between the two native tribes: the Shangaans of Ngungunyana and the Makalakas. The Shangaans regarded Gazaland as their territory, and shortly after they had crossed over, an impi of four hundred

armed soldiers appeared in front of the Trekkers. They advanced to within a few hundred yards and then squatted down. The Captain accompanied by two of his Indunas then approached the wagons. It appeared that his name was "Maseka Banta", according to Malcolm Moodie, which means "cutter up of people". He was a big man of about 350 pounds weight and started speaking furiously to the Trekkers. It seemed as if every word was accompanied by a threat or a curse. He at once demanded who had given them the right to come into his country with their wagons.

Fortunately Tom Moodie had an interpreter, and after a hectic one-sided argument accompanied by much swearing and swinging of arms, he was able to inform Moodie that the Captain would allow them to stay in his territory, but then they would have to regard themselves as his subjects. That was too much for Moodie. He asked the interpreter to explain matters fully to the Chief and state that that would be his final say in the matter. When, however, the Captain got more stubborn and more furious Moodie stepped forward calmly and called the men of his party together. "Get closer and grab him," the Trek-leader said. "I now know what he wants!"

The matter was soon settled. After the cheeky Captain had been well "dusted", as Moodie put it, he was much more humble. He spoke politely and left in a different mood. The following morning he sent fifty of his men to help Moodie cut a pass across the mountain — a work which took the party a whole week.

Fourteen days later the Captain appeared again to find out whether there were any more orders from this determined man. There were. He was told — very firmly — that he would personally be held responsible for any misdemeanour on the part of his men. And from that day onwards there was peace with the Shangaans.

Moodie was also fortunate to acquire the services of two natives who volunteered to guide them over the Chimanimani mountains — and this at least helped the party to know in which direction to move. Ernst du Plessis and Dunbar Moodie spent most of their time pegging some kind of road and on occasions were two days or more ahead of the wagons.

One night at "Bobbajaanshoogte" when these two were looking for a place to sleep, they came upon a native kraal. When the natives saw them they all fled in terror. The two white men made themselves at home, boiled some coffee and could not resist the temptation to kill two fowls which were

wandering between the huts. These they boiled in a huge clay pot. That whole night nobody turned up, and the two surveyors left the following morning for a couple of days' work. When they returned two nights later the same thing happened. "Let's surround them with our horses," Dunbar said. With the assistance of the two Shangaans who were guiding them, they managed to catch two of the men. They trembled like reeds. But then Moodie started to talk to them in Zulu and the rest of the kraal slowly appeared — women with fear written all over their faces, trying to calm their children. Perhaps they were thinking of another raid by the Matabele . . . However, they gave Moody and Du Plessis a clean hut in which to sleep. The following morning they approached the two whites and begged them to show them with what they had killed the fowls. "I gave them the three Wessel-Richard cartridge cases and they were very pleased. When we were on our horses and about to leave, they came running up with another fowl. 'Three cartridges, three fowls,' they said. And they danced around with joy when we handed the fowl back to them," Du Plessis recalled.

Another day the two were treated by a Native Chief at the Devuli Mountains on kaffir beer out of the enormous "Lateng" beer pots. Dunbar Moodie talked and drank with the Chief, but Du Plessis found an excuse to go and water the horses! Twelve o'clock on a hot day seemed the wrong time to drink kaffir beer!

The Trek-party also tried their own hand at making beer out of wild honey. One day Ernst du Plessis was out shooting when he spotted a beehive in a tree, but the poor native who volunteered to climb up for a penny was almost stung to death. He now knew that there must be more nests in the vicinity and he actually discovered seven in all. Everybody on the Trek wanted to have a shot at clearing these hives. The bees were not at all friendly especially after Ashpute tried to shoot a nest down. "Poor Dick Hulley got the nest with a bucket but soon tumbled down after the bucket when the bees started to sting him. He fell over a tree stump and was so full of bee stings that we had to scratch them off him. When we eventually got a nest down, we saw that the combs were full of young ones and bread honey. We put the lot in a pot and made honey. I was a bit sceptical," admitted Du Plessis, "but the young men drank a lot. It upset their stomachs — and either that or the stings kept Hulley in bed for four days."

Their last experience of a beer party was when they heard a terrific noise coming from a native kraal. When Du Plessis

and Moodie arrived there they found that a lion had joined the party — and attacked one old man who had gone off to his hut. The others grabbed sticks of fire, shouted and yelled and eventually discovered the dead and mutilated body of the old man. "I am convinced that fear of the Matabele and fear of the lion were two important factors which drove the native to the white man," said Du Plessis.

After the road had been marked, Dunbar Moodie and Du Plessis returned to Moodie's Pass (Sunday Pass) where the wagons arrived on the Sunday morning. They decided to cross this first big pass on that day. Practically every wagon got stuck and most of the chains broke before they eventually managed to get the whole party across. From here they had to face the next barrier: that of the famous but dreaded Three Span Mountains. Ernst du Plessis was in front, and at the first part he experienced no difficulty. However, when Moodie's wagon stuck behind him he went back to investigate. When he arrived at his own wagon again his oxen refused to move one yard. Shouting and whipping were of no avail. He was obliged to chain another span of oxen on to his own. But still there was no movement. It was only after they had hooked a third team that they succeeded in pulling the wagon to the top. "That was no child's play, I can tell you," Du Plessis remarked. "Thousands of drops of perspiration rolled down that mountain during the four days that we had to struggle to get all the wagons to the top. And when the last one reached the summit it was Christmas, 1892! With what a feeling of victory we celebrated Christmas that day! At the same time our hearts and mind were continually going back to those dear ones we left behind in the Free State and elsewhere!"

Crossing this mountain was hard enough, but then while they were still outspanned, practically the whole party went down with fever, except Moodie and his wife, Du Plessis and one native boy. Moodie and I realised that we had to be moving ahead, so the two of us continued the road making, while his wife tended to all the sick ones in the party. The native had to look after the cattle, etc. "In the evening we had to go down to the Tanganda River at the bottom with six donkeys to fetch some water for the Trek, but most of it was lost before they reached the camp. It got dark fairly suddenly and the poor native had to walk in front with a torch. I can assure you," added Du Plessis, "it was a creepy feeling to struggle through those dark thickets to the top! Imagine my disappointment when I discovered that there was water at the top about three

hundred yards from the camp, but then only after we had finished the track and were preparing to travel down!"

After the slow journey down that mountain, several streams, including the Tanganda at the bottom, had to be crossed. "It was here that I saw how strong Tom Moodie really was. In the stream was a huge flat rock, and I realised that if this could be removed the rest of the crossing would be easy. The stumps which I used as a lever all broke. We then took our crowbars and lifted it with that. Tom Moodie held his crowbar with his one hand till it bent, but it gave us the opportunity to push a few props underneath and to lever it over."

They were now nearing their destination! Only once more would they have to cross the Tanganda. "On New Year's day we arrived there and we had the same feelings as on Three Span Mountain. We celebrated the day quietly — our farms were near! That stream we called 'New Year's Drift'."

Unfortunately they had to remain there for a day or two longer because Tom Moodie also went down with fever. Dunbar had recovered but was still weak. As fate would have it, he and Du Plessis discovered the tsetse fly and brought a few in a box to show the others. "We all just looked at one another in silence, a dreadful thought in the mind of each one of us. We thereupon decided to travel by night to try and escape this menace."

How the hearts of these pioneers beat when they inspanned for this last stage of their journey. Joy and wonder overwhelmed them as they got nearer their destination and beheld the beautiful green grasslands of Chipinga lying between the soft hills. "The rains had started and to see these hills with green plains as far as your eye could travel was indeed ample reward for all the hardships and struggles we had had with bush, river and mountain. It was indeed a land of promise and I could not help feeling relieved and grateful that we were not deceived or misled in any way," Du Plessis remarked.

In front of them they saw three beautiful clear waterfalls. Tom Moodie had first choice of a farm. "As we looked down and across the valleys, he decided that he would pick this spot for his farm. This place we called Water Fall and decided to stop here and nurse the rest of the party to normal health again. We had crossed the Sabi on the 13th December and had taken 22 days for the last thirty-three miles of the journey so that we reached our final destination on the 3rd of January, 1893. This date should be of special significance to this part of the country," was the opinion of Du Plessis.

The Trek had taken them almost eight months, much longer

than they had bargained for when they had set out on it. They were too late to put in any crops, and were still largely ignorant of the weather conditions. They were full of hope and the next seven days were full of excitement for the men. They all started to pick out their farms. Most of them just picked on a hill-top and then drove in some kind of beacon. They were all careful that these farms should rather be too big than too small! Ernst du Plessis pegged his own farm "Clearwater" between two hills and decided that that would be the spot where he would settle and spend the rest of his life. Fifty years after he had joined the Trek, he was buried on this spot . . .

Dunbar Moodie took it upon himself to see that order was observed and to register the farms. Tom Moodie became the sheriff and his son Tom, the postmaster. Du Plessis and Dunbar pegged 25 farms in all and also the township of Melsetter — often spending the best part of a week out in the rain with only a piece of tarpaulin to protect them. It was a great triumph for Tom Moodie when his dream of a Melsetter hinterland had been pegged and established. For the site they used the kraal and property of a native chief, Chipinga, but re-christened it "Melsetter".

In a subsequent chapter more will be said of these first days of the new settlers in a new country. The name of the Moodies is inseparably linked to this part of the country which soon lost the name of Gazaland to become one with Rhodesia. Those who knew Tom Moodie found in him a friend and a leader, although he never received the honour that was due to him. "His task was so often a thankless one, but his heart and spirit was great. The name of Melsetter will immortalize this sturdy Pioneer and Voortrekker, Thomas Moodie; his noble attempts and his vision to develop the country so that it could supply the needs, not only of Rhodesia, but of a big section of the population of the world. He, and his successor in these parts, Marthinus Martin, had the blood of leadership in their veins. They not only safeguarded and kept Melsetter and Chipinga for Rhodesia, but they would have given that leadership which such a distant and inaccessible part of the country required and needed," Du Plessis concluded.

Tom Moodie was not allowed to see the full flowering of the settlement. Like a Moses of old, he brought his people to the top of the mountain. A year after his arrival at Water Fall, he got malaria and black water fever and died (1894).

He left his widow and sons to carry on the farming, and the development of the settlement. Dunbar Moodie continued

to organise things in that hinterland of his — a dream which had come true. But in 1897 he also died — a young man (comparatively speaking), but one whose life had been full. He, in his small way, had accomplished a task no less spectacular than that of the founder of Rhodesia himself, and a grateful posterity will yet bring honour “where honour is due”.

On the recommendation of Rhodes and Jameson, and after the death of Dunbar Moodie — on the 16th of October, 1897 — the estate of Dunbar Moodie was granted the farms Kenilworth, Groenvlei and Newcastle (13,471 morgen); and that of Thomas Moodie 3,000 morgen, and to the children another 3,000 morgen next to the farm of their widowed mother. Rhodes wrote: “They (the Moodies) undoubtedly created the settlement of Melsetter and held the country against the Portuguese . . . The Moodies fulfilled their pledge, that is, they made a settlement in Melsetter and they have, moreover, both lost their lives in the task. I consider the least that should be done is that the family of Dunbar Moodie should receive four farms of 3,000 morgen and that the family of Thomas Moodie should receive two farms . . . It is one of those matters which I consider I am responsible for and in which I do think the Moodie family has not been fairly treated, though I think it is due to want of knowledge of the circumstances.”

Thus closed one of the most remarkable chapters in the colonisation of Africa.

#### THE MEMBERS OF THE MOODIE TREK — 1892

Thomas and Cecelia Jacomina Moodie and their children:  
 Martin, Thomas, Harriet, James, Boyce, Charles,  
 Malcolm, George, Gan;  
 Sarah Moodie and her husband.  
 George Benjamin Dunbar Moodie.  
 Ernst du Plessis.  
 Henry Ashpute.  
 Ernest Baden.  
 Richard Dick Hulley.  
 ? Knox.  
 Fred Markham.  
 Jan Oberholster.  
 Gustav Stiebel.

## Chapter 5

### THE MOOLMAN-WEBSTER TREK (1893)

THIS TREK consisted of two parties — practically just families — who first met across the border in the new Rhodesia. Both originated from the Transvaal.

The first, under Johannes Nicolaas Moolman, had departed from Pietersburg early in 1893. He had with him his wife, three children and a young man, Hartkopff to assist him with the two wagons and the cattle he brought with him. His intention was to settle in the high plateau between Fort Victoria and Salisbury in the vicinity of Fort Charter or Enkeldoorn. There was this unique opportunity of acquiring land at a fairly reasonable figure and Moolman could not remain deaf to all the reports he had heard about this El Dorado of the ancients. He had, therefore, followed the now well-beaten track as far as Fort Victoria.

Joseph Webster who was born in England, but had lived long enough in South Africa to have taken part in the Damara-land War and other clashes with the Natives, was farming in the Great Marico district when he met some of the Directors of the Chartered Company in Johannesburg. They told him of the openings and opportunities for farmers in Rhodesia and he decided to trek. He had been hiring a farm in the Marico district and when he realised that he now had a chance to acquire his own farm, he was full of enthusiasm.

Laden with food for twelve months, the one wagon, carrying the whole family left the Transvaal early in 1893. Webster had spoken to a few others about his departure and a family, Austin, and a Mr. Naylor had actually joined him, but only as far as Macloutsi.

While halting near Fort Victoria, the Matabele Rebellion had broken out and it was dangerous to move too quickly. It was while they were waiting that they linked up with the Moolman family. Mr. Jan Moolman had met some friends who had told him about Gazaland and what a wonderful country it was. He thought it best to investigate and saddled his horse to try and see for himself. He contacted Tom Moodie and then realised that the "other half had not been told him". He was very thrilled with what he saw, and came back fully convinced that he must move into Gazaland. He spoke to Dr. Jameson as also did Webster who was persuaded by the reports that the country was green when everything around was barren and dry.

Jameson told them how they could acquire farms in that part, and that they should link up with Dunbar Moodie.

Various others had heard of the new departure and eventually also Piet Lourens, Johannes Bezuidenhout and John Ballantyne and his company decided to join the party.

John Webster, son of Joseph, recalled how alarmed they were when news first reached them of the Matabele uprising. They had camped about six miles from Fort Victoria when a policeman came up and told them to move into the town at once. There they formed a lager and the men were all commandeered for military service. For three weeks they had to go on parade twice a day and were just beginning to get bored when an impi of a few hundred Matabele made their appearance. Every man was at his post. Dr. Jameson, the Native Commissioner, Mr. Jack Bribant, and Lord Pollard went out to meet them. The Matabele leader wanted to know why our men were all standing so ready with their rifles, whereupon Jameson told him that unless they left the Makalakas alone and were all across the border by two o'clock that afternoon, he would show them what these men could do. The leader turned back and the impi disappeared. When they were gone for about two hours a patrol of horses of our men went to investigate and followed them. The two parties met and fierce fighting followed. About thirty natives were killed, including the Captain of the impi, whose ring and feathers were brought to the lager.

"Shortly before this incident the officer commanding had asked for volunteers to join the expedition of 'Matabele' Wilson. Although I was only sixteen I was on the point of putting up my hand when my father, who was just behind me, pulled my jacket and arm down and said: 'Don't, it's madness, the Matabele will kill them all.' It was only much later after we had heard of the tragic ending of this expedition that I realised that my father's prediction had come true. Needless to say I felt very grateful for his intervention."

On the 30th of August, 1893, the party arrived on Moodie's farm at Water Fall. Mr. Moolman pegged his farm about six miles from Moodie, but Webster went too far to the east in the direction of Mozzeresi and found out afterwards that his farm was pegged in Portuguese territory.

One of the first tragedies befell these pioneers into Gazaland while Webster was still living in Portuguese territory. Just as they were about to make this country their home, Mr. Webster was accidentally killed. His son Thomas tells: "It was just beyond Chipungabera and we had only been in the country two

months. An English missionary, Burgin, a friend of my father's, was staying with us. That evening the lions tried to catch the donkeys and my father and Mr. Burgin went out to shoot them. The lions got away. Mr. Burgin wanted to go buffalo hunting early the following morning and did not trouble to unload his rifle. My father said that he would not be able to accompany him but that some of the natives would. While he was explaining this to a native, and was showing him how to work with it, Burgin was sitting in the doorway cleaning his rifle. All of a sudden the shot went off and got my father in the chest and heart."

Mr. John Webster and Jurie Moolman then started transporting for the American missionaries and other Portuguese from Malata to Mount Silinda. They, in turn, had to cut open a track through a very thickly wooded area, full of swamps in some places and infested with tsetse fly. Unfortunately they did not know this and the first trip cost them six oxen. The next trip to Beira and back killed every ox.

Mrs. Webster realised that it would be impossible to continue living in the Portuguese territory under such circumstances and applied for a farm in Rhodesia near Melsetter. For many years she lived on this new farm "The Meadows" from where she would often walk many miles to care for and tend to the sick of the Moodie settlement. She was 84 when she died in the Mt. Silinda Hospital, having experienced there her first and only sick-bed.

The other families which had scattered from Moodie's farm, also faced the troubles which accompanied such a new settlement. Hartkopff found it too much and had moved off to Salisbury, where he died the following winter. Lourens and Bezuidenhout went back to the Transvaal. The remainder of the party, and especially "Oubaas" Moolman, who died in 1919, stayed on to cultivate and colonize.

#### MEMBERS OF THE MOOLMAN-WEBSTER TREK

Johan Nicolaas and Catherine E. F. Moolman and their children: Jurie, Hendrik and Lettie.

Johannes Hartkopff.

Piet Lourens.

Joseph T., Sarah Webster and their children: John T.; William G.; Anna, Louisa, Mary, Alice.

Johannes Bezuidenhout.

John Ballantyne.

Jakens ?

? Lecorno.

## Chapter 6

### THE EDENBURG TREK (1894)

ANOTHER AGRICULTURAL TREK which arrived in Gazaland in 1894 was the Edenburg Trek. The news from Gazaland, and the departure of Thomas Moodie were still the talk of the town.

Rhodes himself had now realised that his "Mashonaland" of 1890 was meant to include the whole of modern Rhodesia, and he was propagating this idea as hard as he could. He had his agents to try and sell "Rhodesia" and various pamphlets were displayed. Ground could be bought for 1s. 6d. per morgen and this alone was attraction enough.

Meetings were held in Edenburg and three men were chosen as delegates to go and inspect the country and to report on possibilities there. They were Cannell, Grootwahl and Swanepoel, and their expenses were paid for by the aspirant trekkers.

On their northward journey they met Dr. Jameson, who advised them to take up land in the extreme east of the colony. So they went off to Moodie at Water Fall, which to us seemed quite a well-developed proposition, considering it had only been occupied for about a year! It served also as the headquarters of the British South African Company in the district.

The delegates were very impressed with all the possibilities of farming and the life in general, and went back to tell their people of the land of milk and honey, of hippopotami and fertile crops.

The leader of this Trek was Mr. Samuel Gifford and he was very adamant about being regarded as the leader. He organised things and drew up a list of names of those who were anxious to participate in the Trek. Preparations were made, wagons were built, advice sought or rejected — even the history of the Great Trek was studied!

Full of expectation every bit of news of the new country was lapped up, and for days before the Trek nothing else was spoken about. The peak of all this excitement was reached when the Dutch Reformed Minister preached about Gaza in the church on the Sunday previous to their departure.

Prudence Gifford, the daughter, displayed exceptional foresight when she approached the headmaster of the school and asked him for some school books for the Trek. She thus pro-

vided an opportunity which was unique for most, if not for all, of the children who entered the country.

On the 13th March, 1894, at about eleven o'clock the Trek started. The burghers came out on horseback with their rifles, flags were flown, speeches made, prayers offered up, songs were sung, and with loud cracking of whips the Trek departed.

There were 34 people with the 10 wagons including some English from overseas and from the district. Very few of them had any idea of what they were really tackling, many of them had never handled a wagon and some had no experience of farming whatsoever. Gifford and Herbst meticulously painted their wagon tents green on the outside and pink on the inside, built in a window, and placed comfortable beds inside!

The first morning after their tired sleep found a number of dispirited men who had to go and look for the donkeys which disappeared that night. Mrs. Gifford fainted — to crown it all!

It took them two weeks to get to Kimberley and from there they travelled along the Transvaal border to Vryburg. They could not get permission from President Kruger to journey through the Transvaal because they had so much ammunition and firearms with them. From Kimberley to Vryburg was a rather dreadful trek. The wagons got stuck and the trek animals started to die. They were originally warned that the oxen would die in the Northern Transvaal area because of the prevalence of the bush-tick, so they mostly used donkeys. These animals proved no more efficient than the oxen and died at such a rate that new stocks had to be bought even before Vryburg was reached. Many more of the animals and also the cows died of a mysterious lung disease north of Vryburg and beyond Pilala.

When eventually the Macloutsi River was reached most of their livestock had died and there were too few donkeys to pull the wagons. The few servants who heard about a strange and dreaded disease decided to leave the Trek. Rumours that the Matabele were on the war path also reached them.

They were then forced to get rid of the remaining few donkeys and had to buy Matabele oxen from the British South African Company. These were untrained and so wildly did Gifford struggle to get them trained that the chains, thongs, yokes and "skeys" were smashed to bits after the first attempt. It meant an additional delay to make new "skeys". Nor could they stop too long because they discovered the dust-tick in the dry grass and so had to get their cattle out of this region.

At the Tokwani River Mrs. Gifford's son was born, and while her husband's and the Scott's wagons remained behind

for a while, the rest moved on to Fort Victoria. Later the whole party went to visit Zimbabwe, which, of course, was not excavated.

After replenishing their food supplies (stocks were low after spending about five months on the road), they left Fort Victoria for the last stage. They followed faint tracks of Moodie's party as far as Amenshoogte and then discovered the steep decline down this kopje. The Moodies had, of course, to go back to find a way down, but Gifford's party did not realise it, and thought that if the Moodies could get down there — well so could they! The oxen were outspanned, the disselbooms tied to the wagons and then pushed down the hill! They arrived at the bottom of the granite kopje one after the other but in what a condition! Days and days had to be spent on repair work!

Accompanied only by gaping natives from behind trees they trekked over the rocks, sand, bush and rivers. When they crossed the Sabi and Tanganda the men had to take off most of their clothes to try and drive the oxen across.

What would have happened at Three Span Berg to these dauntless strugglers if Moodie himself had not met them there, is difficult to imagine. But some natives had informed Moodie of the new party that was on the way and he had brought an additional span of oxen and some servants to help them across this mountain.

Eventually on the 9th of September, 1894, they arrived at Moodie's farm Water Fall. Here they were allowed to rest and inspect the country. Many of them were disappointed to find that it was not a land literally flowing with milk and honey, but they refused to consider going back to the Free State.

The party eventually settled in a more easterly direction. Some said that Dr. Jameson had advised Moodie to shift this party as far to the east as possible so that there would be no uncertainty about the boundary line. Unfortunately this also resulted, as in Webster's case, in many farms being pegged in Portuguese territory, and these farmers suffered greatly when they had to trek across the border back into Rhodesia. Most of the farms near the settled parties had by that time been taken up.

"Where there's a will, there's a way," was the motto of this party. They had proved that it could be done, and their deep tracks marked the entrance of another pioneering group into the Eastern Districts.

## MEMBERS OF THE EDENBURG TREK (1894)

- Alfred Samuel and Emma Geauz Gifford and children:  
Prudence Mary, Edith Maud, Alice, Alfred Johann,  
Margaret Anne.
- Johann and Sarah Herbst and children: Elizabeth, Johann,  
Molly (+ 2 ?).
- Clifford and Molly Cannell and children: Reginald, Alice,  
Arthur.
- Daniel Nel, his wife and three children.
- T. van der Walt and two children.
- Frank Cannell.
- E. Dorking.
- Emil and Katrina Grootwahl.
- Michael Herbst.
- ? Hulett.
- J. Pienaar.
- Angus Rubridge.
- John Walker Scott.
- William Edward Scott.
- R. Sauer.
- S. Swanepoel.
- F. Webster.

## Chapter 7

### THE MARTIN TREK (1894)

ONE OF THE most important and one of the biggest agricultural treks ever to enter Rhodesia was inspired by and conducted under the leadership of Marthinus Jacobus Martin of Naudelust, Fouriesburg in the Orange Free State. Although he had heard of Thomas Moodie's undertaking in 1893, the origin of Martin's trek was found in an advertisement which appeared in the Bloemfontein newspaper, *The Friend*, in January 1893. In this advertisement a certain Mr. Joseph Bobbert, agent for the Mozambique Company, made available to Free State farmers a certain area of land in Portuguese East Africa near Macequece, and invited anybody who might be interested in these 3,000 morgen apiece farms to contact the Administrator of the Company immediately.

Marthinus Martin was at that time a Member of Parliament of the Free State, and after discussing the matter with some of his friends, he wrote to Bobbert (Mapanda, East Coast), asking him for more details, and also whether his company would grant any support should a delegation be sent to inspect the suitability of the area. This support would have to be in the nature of guides from Beira to Macequece to show them the area and to supply all other information.

However, no reply was forthcoming, and so in February, 1894, Martin wrote to the Administrator of the Mozambique Company himself. He stated that "considerable interest is taken in the matter, especially by those who live in the eastern parts of the State. A Commission will be elected which will leave for Beira on or about the 1st of July next, to investigate as to the suitability of the land for emigration from here, with powers to arrange matters for a trek . . . I presume that my letter to Mr. Bobbert on this subject must not have reached him, on account of having received no reply . . . We are sorry we could not get your address before. Availing myself of the privilege now, I beg to ask you whether your Company will be able to provide our Commission with a guide and carriers from Beira to Massa Kesse, and surrounding neighbourhood and back or to my point of embarkation from there and back . . ."

A month later Martin, having received no reply to his second letter, wrote to the Administrator of the Portuguese Company

again and informed him that, in case there was any misunderstanding he wanted to make it clear that he did not expect the Company to pay for the services of such guides and carriers, but that he and his Commission would do that ("if His Honour could understand Dutch it would have been expressed more clearly"! ). He assured the Administrator that there was great excitement amongst his countrymen about this project. "The friendly treatment and protection which our relatives and fellow-believers have enjoyed in Humphata and Mossamedes have convinced us that we can safely entrust our interests in the hands of your Company and Portugal, provided the conditions are favourable . . . We understand some farmers would be leaving from the Transvaal at the same time to try and find the shortest route to Massa Kesse by wagon . . ."

In the meantime Bobbert had written from Beira to say that he was very pleased some of his old friends were considering settling in Manicaland. He assured Martin that the Commission would be given every assistance on their arrival in Beira, and that the Governor himself, Mr. Machado, was also very anxious that the Free State farmers should settle in his territory, and that he would also give every assistance. A beautiful piece of land to the north of Massa Kesse was available. Of this area at least fifty miles was hilly country well supplied with water, and suitable for men and cattle.

He concluded by giving them details of shipping times operating between Durban and Beira, and promised to write again.

With this information in hand Martin was able to start organizing. He advised other districts and wrote to various friends giving them further information and asking for representatives to attend a general meeting to be held at Bethlehem on the 15th April, 1893.

At this meeting where the correspondence was discussed, Martin was chosen as Chairman of a commission of three — with power to co-opt. two others — to proceed to Manicaland and inspect the area. A subscription list was opened for 200 persons to pay £2 each in order to finance this Commission and on the understanding that these subscribers would have first choice should the ground prove suitable for habitation and should they still be wanting to move.

Martin — who had to proceed to the Volksraad in the meantime — left H. A. Heyns to arrange matters. Various meetings were held — also at Kafferskop where Moodie had held one the previous year. However, his assistants did not seem to have the

same organizing ability as Martin, and while he was at the Session very little progress was made and various erstwhile supporters had withdrawn. After his return another meeting was held at which four persons were elected to undertake an expedition to Gazaland. These four, Marthinus J. Martin (Fouriesburg), Michael A. Heyns (Fouriesburg), Casper Badenhorst (Ficksburg) and Cornelius J. du Preez (Senekal), left Durban for Beira by boat (the *Cowland*) on the 4th August, 1893.

At Beira the Governor, Machado, welcomed them heartily, gave them permission to visit Gazaland and supplied guides. They travelled from Beira along the Pungwe to Fontesville and from there to Chimoyo and Macequece. Here they found most of the ground rather low-lying, and being afraid of the malaria fever that could lurk in such areas, they decided to move further southward in search for high-veld farms. They travelled along the British Portuguese border as far as the farm known as "Clifton" to-day, and here they saw what they had really been looking for. They obtained a magnificent view of the undulating hills and mountains, of the clear streams and rivulets, of green grass which made their hearts beat twice as fast.

Some natives informed them that there was a European settlement a few days' journey from that area and they decided to investigate. They had an idea it might be the Moodies who had left the Free State the previous year. Across Buffelsnek and Lemoenkop they journeyed, and at Cecilton they divided into two. Badenhorst and Heyns continued to the settlement, but Martin and Du Preez wanted to do some more inspection in an easterly direction towards the Nyahodi River and the Chimanimani Mountains. About three hours later the two parties met again — the one more surprised than the other! And shortly afterwards they were at Water Fall, where the Moodies gave them a great welcome. Tom Moodie was a brother-in-law of Badenhorst and a great friend of Du Preez, so this was a great occasion for all the parties.

Martin made detailed notes of his travels and much of what is known about these expeditions has come from these notes.

Dunbar Moodie realised that this was too good an opportunity for the British South African Company to miss and as a representative of that Company he took the party around and showed them what the territory of the British South African Company was like! They continued their inspection for 10 days and by the end of that time they were convinced that they had found in this arc what they had been looking for. Heyns had even

picked on a farm for himself along the Basi River (Sterling), as did Martin (Rocklands) and the others. They met at Wolwehoek (Rocklands) where Martin and the rest decided to apply for permission to settle along this range of mountains (the Chimanimani). (This name was actually given by the natives to the gorge or poort and the range itself was known as "Mawhengi". The first name, however, has come down to posterity as signifying the high mountains forming the watershed between Portuguese and British territory — probably because the Europeans were not sufficiently conversant with the language.)

They travelled back to Beira via Chimoyo and there told the Governor they were very interested in the area around this mountain. They were told, however, that this was all British territory.

After an absence of about two months they arrived back in the Free State. At this stage three members of the party decided that they had better just wait and see how things developed and not to take an active part in any big trek-movement. The only one who was still enthused by the idea of such a trek was Martin, and he was determined that nothing would stop him. He took it upon himself to talk about his scheme and once more entered into correspondence with the Mozambique Company and the British South African Company to ascertain accurately what the position was with regard to Gazaland and the area he had visited. While he was awaiting replies, he travelled down to Kimberley to have an interview with Rhodes himself. Mr. Rhodes at once signified his willingness to cooperate and said that he would welcome nothing more than a number of Dutch Trekkers to Mashonaland, since the Dutch Trekker always took his family with him. It did not matter whether they wished to go to Mashonaland or Manicaland, he told them. A woman was necessary to civilize a country, because — in addition to many other attributes — she influenced the moral climate of any country. He promised Martin that all the rights of the Dutch Trekkers, including their language, would be respected, and that they had nothing to fear. Until his death Rhodes honoured these promises.

Martin received an official reply from the Secretary informing him that, should he wish to come up the following year (1894) he could have the farms in Gazaland "if you will leave in April next year to come and occupy them". He had asked for eight farms around the Chimanimani and inquired as to whether more land was still to be had in that part. "You need be under no anxiety as to time," the Secretary of the British South African

Company, Mr. Rutherford Harris, wrote back, "for provided land is open there we shall be very glad to give you plenty of time to get up, but at the same time do not delay . . . It is a good place and other people may cast their eyes upon it, but if open now it will be granted to you and your people. Mr. Rhodes has decided not to charge you any purchase price, but only to charge you for the land the usual annual quitrent of £1 per 1,000 acres. Mr. Rhodes is much interested in your scheme and trusts that your people will be successful and turn out our strongest supporters on the Eastern Border."

This was just what Martin had been waiting for. He sent in his resignation as member of the Volksraad and told his constituents that he would not be able to stand for re-election. To his people this came as a severe blow. They had learnt to respect and trust him with the affairs of this model Republic. The constituents sent him letters and addresses expressing their regret at his departure, and thanking him for the growth and prosperity he had brought to some of the towns. Perhaps the town of Bethlehem voiced the opinion of the whole Free State when they stated in an address that they could never forget how much Martin had meant to, and done for, the country. "You have consistently shown that you have the welfare of our little commonwealth at heart, and you have never done or said anything in the Raad which went against the interests of Land and People or which clashed with our republican principles. Your departure we consider in one word a loss not only for your constituency but for the whole of the Free State . . . Now, however, that you have firmly resolved to leave the Free State and to depart to the distant interior, we shall be silent, and we can but trust that you have been called by a Higher Hand, namely by Providence who has the government of the whole universe in His hand; perhaps the Lord wishes to use your ability and powers in the distant North in the interests of country and people, and to be of service to many there. May He give you grace! We, however, remain convinced that you are our delegate and that you will do for the Afrikaans people and more particularly for the Free State 'what your hand finds to do'. We pray fervently that the Lord will bless you and your fellow-travellers and that your departure to that country will help to extend His Kingdom."

Martin was born in the district of Cradock in 1851 but had moved to Fauresmith with his parents when he was still fairly young. He took part in the war against the Basutos and subsequently moved to Senekal and then to Bethlehem where he

got married and settled on the farm Naudelust. He got interested in politics and was soon elected as member for the Volksraad for Bethlehem. He was always known as a progressive farmer and worked untiringly in the interests of the whole of the Free State and for the interests of the Afrikaans people. He was known to many by the name of "Coolie" Martin because of his efforts to restrict Asiatic and Arabian traders from entering the Free State and for the laws which were subsequently enacted to remove those already in the Province. Even to-day the law is still in operation and there are only about four Asiatics in this Province.

This far-sighted statesman showed the same thoroughness in the preparation for this Trek as he did in the whole of his parliamentary career. Every step was worked out in detail, because he was convinced that good faith would only work after all the facts had been thrashed out and the project tackled. Nor did he want to trek because it was not going too well with him. On the contrary, this was what his friends and neighbours could not understand. One can only conclude that he had a vision for the future, perhaps greater than Moodie's, of a community of people settling in a new country and developing a generation that could give leadership to a new part of the continent of Africa. He was too well steeped in politics, in justice and liberty, ever to have undertaken anything by which his people could have been let down. This was further proved by the provision he made for the spiritual care of those who were going with him. He was at that time an elder in the Dutch Reformed Church at Fouriesburg and there, as well as in matters politic, he had come into contact with that great preacher, missionary and teacher, Dr. Andrew Murray, who at that time was having a series of revival meetings in the Free State. Martin discussed his proposed Trek with the Rev. Murray, indicated his plans and asked him whether he would assist him to start a proper congregation in the north. Murray was, of course, very interested and expressed his appreciation at the practical insight of the leader. He promised every assistance and it was largely owing to the earnestness and resoluteness with which Martin attended to this aspect that the Dutch Reformed Churches were established in Rhodesia in the following year.

Martin's party gradually grew to over a hundred and he had to raise the question of more land for the extra families with the British South African Company which was most responsive. He thereupon instructed the applicants to assemble at Fouriesburg on the 19th of April, 1894.

From near and far they turned up. Many had sold everything, a few left their properties in the care of others so as to have something to come back to should they find it impossible to settle in a foreign country. Friends, relatives and many others turned up as well — some to say goodbye, others to sympathize or to advise. Nobody ever doubted the leadership and ability of a man like Martin; although most of them thought that the whole party was going to die from malaria.

The wagons were new, and this, in part, accounted for the minimum of trouble which this party experienced on the road. They were all well-packed and stocked with such imperishables as biltong, biscuits, coffee, sugar, salt, etc. The cattle, horses, pigs, turkeys, fowls were gazing quietly at the big crowd — all awaiting the great day.

On the 19th of April, 1894, the big trek of 24 wagons and 104 members moved slowly out of Fouriesburg. There were at least eight heads of families and several young men, and in addition ten old house servants, four Zulus, four Hottentot men and two Hottentot women. A last farewell, a last good wish and the party was off. "How hearty and impressive were those moments of parting. Bonds of friendship and blood-relations have welded hearts together so intimately that it seemed to some of us as if we were standing at the deathbed of a friend. For who knew whether we would ever see one another again? And yet, it was God's will. Man proposes but God disposes. Here, I am convinced, a new stage in the development of our national history was entered upon which meant that a new milestone had to be planted for both the moral and Christian expansion of our nation," Martin wrote in his diary.

They were followed for some distance on the road to Johannesburg by relatives and friends, but these soon left and the party moved on through the Witwatersrand and Pretoria. Great excitement was experienced when all these wagons had to cross the Vaal River by pont.

At Johannesburg the Du Preez family were going to join them, when the husband, Jan Gysbert, died suddenly. All arrangements had been made, everything sold out and the widow left with eight children. But she was a brave woman. Without any hesitation she said that she was determined to carry on with the plans of her husband; and so with the whole family — the eldest of which was a daughter of 18 years — she joined the Trek. One of the daughters, Hester, who married one of Martin's sons later, recalled how "my father's sudden death had cast a shadow over all of us. My mother, however, had an

opportunity to talk things over with my father and he had thought that if we wanted to go it would be right. My mother never wavered even though we were all dumb with grief. I remember how even our 'old dog could not find rest for himself until he eventually was found dead on the grave of my dad'.

The journey from the Free State to Pretoria took them about a month, which was rather long. "But," wrote Martin, "we were not so skilled in the use of the ox whip and the women and girls were not accustomed to the inconveniences of a wagon life. Native assistants were difficult to obtain and expensive, so that the trek with the large number of cattle and horses was very heavy. We had first to get used to the new life!"

Various other families, namely the English, Tilburg van Rooyen, Herrelman Scholtz and other young men joined the Trek en route, and the whole party left Pretoria on the 21st of May.

The significant fact was that President Kruger had allowed this Trek to proceed through the Transvaal without the slightest difficulty. He had no doubt about the good intentions of these people or the integrity of Martin.

A great thrill awaited these Free State farmers when they camped beyond the Apies River for the first night after leaving Pretoria. Hitherto they had to use dried cow dung for firewood, but now they had plenty of wood. "How refreshing it was to see the whole lager lit up with enormous wood fires. Thus far it had been very difficult in places to get a proper fire going. What a joy it was to see pot and kettle boiling away to their heart's content! How nice a cup of hot coffee tasted after a tiring day's driving! It was as if man and beast were all enjoying these friendly fire lights. Truly God's creation is great and rich," Martin recorded.

At Wonderboom one wagon of Mr. Martin's was emptied and hurriedly sent back to Pretoria to be loaded with fresh food supplies for the journey.

They experienced their first two mishaps along this road. An ox was killed by a veld fire that first morning and two days later it had started to rain. They were moving on to Pienaar's River through the turf clayey area known as the "Springbokvlakte". It was a time they would never forget. "That night it poured heavily and we had to plough our way wheel deep through the endless turf soil. Every wagon had to try and find its own way, and every driver had to use all his skill and ingenuity with his voice and his whip to almost torture the brute creatures to move forward. About 10 o'clock the following day

we had succeeded in getting all the wagons to the north of the Springbokvlakte. But how much that had taken out of man and beast!"

They journeyed slowly on, were given oranges by De Beer at Waterberg and then started to experience the sun of the Northern Transvaal. The animals got tired very soon and after eating some wild tobacco plant — or so it was presumed — five of J. H. Kok's oxen died suddenly at Kranskop. After that ill-luck seemed to increase with every mile. "Almost every morning there were a few cattle lying dead at the camping place — or else they were so sick that we knew they were going to die, and we just left them. Texas Fever, dust disease, gall-sickness, splenic fever — almost every known and unknown cattle disease sowed destruction," Martin wrote.

Without any respect of persons everyone was forced to sacrifice some of his cattle. At Soutpansberg the position was so critical that one wagon had to be bartered for trek-oxen in addition to a number of oxen which had to be bought so that the Trekkers could move on.

Another tragedy occurred after they had left Kranskop when Cornelia, the youngest child of the bereaved widow Du Preez, died — the first human being to die on the trek. Her remains were taken to the Berlin Mission Station at Macalong and solemnly buried. "The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken. The name of the Lord be praised!" But how sad for mother and relatives to leave a dear one behind where perhaps never again a tear would be shed or a flower be placed.

At Nylstroom Spies joined the Trek which continued as far as Blouberg. Here they were all frightened by the appearance of a commando of soldiers, who, however, appeared to be very friendly and told them that there were rumours that the Native chief, Makhato, was very rebellious. They had to pass Makhato's kraal but "Oom" Paul's men volunteered to accompany them. Nor did they stop to rest that night, but tried to get as far away from Makhato's kraal as was possible. Mr. Attie Hefer, a young man of the Trek recalled how every man and boy had to be on guard with a rifle ready in case they were attacked. However, they got through safely.

"We boys," Mr. H. J. Hefer recalled, "had quite a stiff time on the Trek. We had to see that all the loose cattle and horses were properly cared for at night in huge kraals made of trees or branches, and the following morning we had to be ready to move off with the first wagon. Fortunately Mr. Martin requested each owner to try and look after his own cattle when we arrived

at the bushveld of Rhodesia. This was much easier. When we could not find enough trees to construct a kraal, the wilder and untrained cattle were tied to the tame and older cows so that there was a minimum of straying. Our own team, for which I was responsible, had to be allowed to graze and drink after every outspan. We tied a bell round the neck of the leader of these oxen so as to be able to detect their whereabouts. But our leader was a real *vagabond*. He was so quick to slip away and very often while we were playing around with the other boys and girls, he would lead the whole team astray. There were then two fears: that of going into the bush and be caught by a lion while bringing them back, or telling my dad and getting a hiding for not looking after the cattle! Many is the day I wished a lion would catch this leader of our span!" Fortunately they never came across any lions except on an occasion when Mr. Martin poisoned one.

When the oxen were being inspanned, the fowls and turkeys, on hearing the crack of the whip jumped on to the wagon or into their pens. Only the pigs had to be caught. The Trek had plenty of eggs and some were even being hatched. "At one place, 'Ghom-zyn-loop' we had a royal time with all the guinea-fowl," wrote Hefer. "It was a pleasant spot and we stopped for a few days to allow the animals and children to rest. The men did some shooting but with all the guinea-fowl about we ate nothing else."

Mr. Martin saw to it that Sunday was observed as a day of rest and, said Mr. Hefer, "I can say without hesitation it was the Martin Trek which gave real form and content to the religion of the Dutch in Rhodesia. Two services were held every Sunday: one for the grown-ups in the morning and another for the children in the afternoon — or 'Sunday school'." Mr. Martin himself took the morning service and Mr. Kok the afternoon ones. The tent of his wagon was a big canvas which could be taken down and used as a tent. The children had all to be dressed up in their best "Sunday" clothes for this occasion. Martin was a man with spiritual as well as political gifts, a man who, while he was honoured and respected by the whole Trek, had the greatest respect for the opinion of others. He was never full of jokes, but his quiet nature did not mean that he could not chat jovially. He was a sincere Christian and always thinking about other people and their needs and problems. It was the fact that he was the recognised leader and father of the company which gave the Trek a unity and a coherence.

Hefer recalls how they had even tried to organize a proper

choir for the services and how, in the bushveld and out of the range of professional singers and critics, it did not sound too bad! He had an old violin with which he sometimes tried to aid the singing.

The education of the children was conducted by the mothers in the tents. But most of them felt like the girl Du Preez, who said that the flowers and the veld and being in a different place every day was sufficient education!

The party was given a great shock one day when Hardy got lost. Fires were made, lanterns hung up in the trees, shots were fired, but there was no sign of him. A number of men on horseback went out the following morning but arrived back late that afternoon without him. The second patrol came back late that night with him—pale with fright and hunger. He could not tell them very much except that he had slept in a tree and stayed there most of the day. The party had heard of the story of young Willie van der Riet who had also got lost in Rhodesia, and they feared the same might happen to Hardy. Van der Riet had come up with Mother Patrick on her journey to Salisbury soon after the Pioneer Column had gone down from Salisbury to Fort Victoria to fetch some sisters and nurses. He went out shooting but never returned to the party, which eventually proceeded to Salisbury. Van der Riet wandered around for 42 days and was discovered by another party about 90 miles from this spot in a hole near a dry sandy river bed. He was battered and torn and looked like a skeleton. He was unconscious when they lifted him on to the horse and he was only able to tell his story afterwards. (More fully described in Mrs. J. M. Boggie's book: *Pioneer Women of Rhodesia*.)

It appeared that he had only his gun with three cartridges when he left his party. He shot at a pheasant, missed it and followed it in the direction of the wagon — as he thought. Later it dawned on him that he was lost. Fortunately he discovered a hole with water and thought that he might die of hunger but not of thirst. He made a fire and slept and killed two partridges which lasted for about a week. He wandered around without any cartridges until he discovered a sandy river bed. He found a round bitter fruit with jelly inside, but broke his knife trying to open it. He had only his teeth and then some of them broke as well. He had no more matches. He used an antbear hole as a protection against lions and the cold, and was too afraid to wander away from it. He got so hungry that he started catching lizards and even killed snakes for a meal. Crickets, frogs and locusts were regularly devoured. Several times he tried to commit

suicide. One day he tried to hang himself on a matonda tree. He put the rope of bark round his neck, climbed into the tree and jumped. Fortunately or unfortunately the rope broke and he only cracked his jaw. Then he tried to drown himself, but the water was not deep enough. One day five or six lions came to the waterhole and he thought it best if they destroyed him. But they had only come to drink water, and strolled off again. He then realised that he was meant to live and tried to make it as comfortable as was possible in the antbear hole. When he was found by a hunting expedition (Steenkamp?) he was first given some weak tea and coffee and then some brandy. The following day the men went out shooting again and left him in charge of a native servant who had also to cook some meat for the party. He had, of course, received orders not to give the young man any food, but it was not long before Van der Riet started talking to the servant about food. The latter protested and told him that he must not give him any food and that everything must be locked. Van der Riet then promised the boy a tumbler of brandy if he would only give him some of the meat in the pot. He argued and was so convincing that the servant gave in. Van der Riet took the keys from him, gave him his drink and then went and sat in front of the meat where it was cooking on the fire. He ate and ate! As the servant's eyes got bigger and bigger, the meat in the pot got less and less until it was all practically finished. Then the trouble started. The poor man started to roll around with pain and seemed ready to die at any moment. The servant could do nothing! There he lay and groaned until the hunters returned. From the servant they could get nothing, because he refused to admit guilt. Then the hunters threatened him with a severe hiding and he told the story. They gave Van der Riet castor oil and he started to get better. He eventually recovered.

News of this "man with nine lives" soon reached the ears of the natives. In 1896 he took an ambulance to the Matabele Rebellion. The wagon was attacked by the Matabele and hacked to pieces, the medicine etc., destroyed and Van der Riet tied to a tree. One or two of the Matabele who had been to a mission school near Bulawayo then discovered who their victim was. They told the others that he was a "umtagate" — the bewitched one — because he could — like Jesus — stay in the wilderness without food for forty days. They then spared his life.

The Martin Trek experienced a tragic loss beyond the Limpopo where Jan Frost and his family had joined them.

One of their children, about three years old, disappeared one day while the children were playing a little distance from the wagons. When they started to look for this child, he was gone. A frantic search was begun and lasted for days . . . but their attempts were of no avail. Only a little shoe was found a couple of hundred yards from the spot . . .

Before Martin reached the Limpopo they had to travel through a very dry, sandy, dusty part, and man and beast almost died of thirst and the dust in their throats and nostrils. They trekked along Hout River and arrived at "Blinkwater", a name which meant clear water. "But," said Martin, "instead of water we only found a sandy spruit with a few trees and a place which indicated that if we dug there, some dampness might seep through the earth. After we had dug a few feet, water did come through, but before it had time to settle the sand began tumbling down. The lager was supplied with dirty muddy water and then we had to give some to the animals. No sooner was the first team of oxen brought near the hole than everything was closed up with sand and only a muddy pool showed where the waterhole had been. The poor animals literally climbed on to one another to get a lick of the water which they had smelt. Eventually after much struggling they were removed and another hole was dug. We took a canvas, hollowed out the sand like a dish, put the canvas in, and then poured water in this canvas trough. Almost 300 animals had to drink from it!"

The lovely water from the Limpopo the following day, enabling man and beast to wash and drink to their hearts content was perhaps more fully appreciated now than it would have been otherwise! Clothes could be washed properly, since water on the road was preserved mostly for drinking, and Martin had to speak sternly to some of the members who dared to waste a drop — especially the women who sometimes had a quarrel about whose turn and right it was to do a bit of necessary washing! On such an occasion Martin had to act as judge. Having arrived at a river they would stream to the water's edge with a bundle of washing and eagerly assist one another to get it all done as quickly as possible.

It took them a week to cross the Limpopo and thus to say farewell to the old Republic. "The water was a bit deep and the thoughts of crocodiles made us a bit nervous, but everything turned out fine," wrote Hefer. "We had left South Africa and were now on the border of Rhodesia — but there was no one to welcome us."

From the Limpopo to the Umsinwani they trekked without incident. Water, game and grazing were plentiful and they could breathe again. Then a new calamity occurred. Their horses, which up to now were all in a good state, started dying of horse-sickness and the 53 were soon diminished to a mere handful.

The bush was also getting denser, and the young herdboys had a difficult time through the white or hook-thorn bushes. Blood was often flowing down hands and legs as they hacked their way through the bush.

At the Buby River they experienced the same disappointment as at Blinkwater. There was not a drop of water in the river. However, they had learned now, and a hole was soon dug in the river bed and the water oozed through. At the Nuanetsi, water was plentiful and the women washed and bathed in the cool water with the hot sun overhead.

"But here the Trek also received its first message although we refused to listen to it," wrote Hefer. "Two women got malaria, and a week later one of them, Lettie Scholtz, was very ill. For the rest of the trip she had to be nursed in the wagon tent, and before we had reached our destination she succumbed — the first victim of this fever. We buried her at the Lusite River near Melsetter . . . The other woman, Mrs. Van Zyl, recovered and helped to see the country grow and prosper."

Across the Lundi to Fort Victoria they went, and at the town itself the magistrate (Native Commissioner) and the public welcomed them heartily and gave them a great reception and dance. It was just after the Matabele Rebellion and many people were still living in the laager. At the invitation of the magistrate a bisley was held to see whether the newcomers could outshoot the old pioneers. The Freestaters, always ready to defend the honour of their model Republic, outclassed their opponents by more than twenty points and received a slaughter ox as a prize.

Like the Moodies, this Trek also chose Victoria for the marriage of Petronella, one of the daughters of that brave widow Du Preez, and young John Heyns. Mr. Hefer recorded how most of the young men had tried to gain the affection of this pretty young girl. "The young men stood like cats round the wagon of Mrs. Du Preez to see if they could not catch the mouse." Heyns, no doubt, only too conscious of all the competition, took the first opportunity to clinch the engagement. The ceremony was conducted by the Rev. A. A. Louw who had started the Dutch Reformed Church Mission Station at Morgenster near the Great Zimbabwe. His presence was a real

inspiration to the Trekkers and he held a service for them.

Because there happened to be a sale of cattle which were looted from the Matabele, the Trekkers could buy acclimatised cattle or exchange their own. Unfortunately it was discovered too late that lung-sickness was prevalent amongst this cattle, and the party lost quite a number subsequently.

The dull tracks of Moodie's party were followed from Fort Victoria and across the Umtilikwe and Twingi Rivers, down Amenshoogte through Sundays Pass, along the Devuli River to Moodies Drift at the Sabi River. They were all struck with the high ground "hills" made by the natives at the Devuli and by the width of the Sabi River which seemed to be flowing over an area of a thousand yards to a mile — in some places about knee-deep.

The party had no luck with the attempts to shoot hippopotami. The Olwages lost most of their fowls in the crossing for while Mrs. Olwage was still busy washing, her husband who had thought that he would be clever, had put all the fowls in a bag on top of the wagon, where all but three were suffocated.

Having passed the Sabi the Trekkers felt they were now in the land of milk and honey. They proceeded along Mount Rudd to Goke, to the Tanganda River and the notorious Three Spanberg. "Even on the journey we were told about Three Spanberg, but nobody ever took it seriously. Now, however, the day had dawned for us to tackle this Jacob's ladder," Martin recorded. "The mountain road was short — as it was made in 1892, but steep and full of stones. The animals were tired and footsore . . . In some cases four teams of oxen had to be hooked on to one wagon before the whole party managed to cross."

Except for the fact that Miss Scholtz and Gert van Rooyen were ill and that the Trek had to move a bit slower, nothing else occurred. They were now in Gazaland and were all jubilant and tried to forget the past — even the little bickering which sometimes occurred when one would pinch another's cheeks or something of the sort, would be forgiven.

On the 14th October the Trek reached Buffelsnek. While the wagons stopped on the mountain to give the men the opportunity to go down and inspect the river to see if they could get through, the thought occurred to Martin that this would be an appropriate place to erect the memorial which he had in mind for some time. He discussed it with the others and said that he wished to establish a memorial to the honour of God who had so wonderfully guided and helped them. This is what Martin wrote in his little pocket book. "The Trek left

the Free State in April, 1894 and arrived at Buffelsdrift on the 14th day of October. Then the decision was taken to erect a memorial of stones in memory of our safe arrival on the border of this habitable part of Gazaland to the honour of God as a sign of our thankfulness for His faithful guidance and care of the Trek. Truly the Lord has helped us and takes care of us on this long, dangerous and exhausting journey.

"Two days later, on the 16th of October, we celebrated the day as a day of Thanksgiving. This spot and memorial were called 'Ebenhaëzer'. The members of the party thereupon decided that once every fifty years as from 1894 they would gather here on the 16th of October and celebrate the day in remembrance of God's wonderful love and care and that they would often speak to the coming generations about it and why this stone pile was erected. Also from what context the word Ebenhaëzer was chosen and what its meaning was."

The following day, 17th October, the Trek arrived at Water Fall. Mrs. Moodie and the children were already waiting for them, and there was great joy and excitement at meeting so many of her own countrymen again. Her husband, the great pioneer to these parts had just died, and it was indeed a great consolation to her to realise that his hard work had not been in vain, and that it could now never perish.

The party stayed here for a few days and then Martin decided to move northwards to the original area near the Chimanimani Mountains he had chosen when he had come up the previous year. He took all his people from Bethlehem (17 wagons) to North Melsetter while the others dispersed in a southerly direction with Van Rooyen.

Martin went as far as the farm Nooitgedacht and then a new problem arose. Thus far the Trek had some kind of road, but now there was none. "To Fort Victoria we had Pioneer Road; from there the Moodie Trek paved the way, but now the big mountains north of the farm Sterkstroom and the Lusiti River rose as if they were out to prevent even the bravest and most dauntless trekker to proceed one step further," wrote Martin. But it was the part of the country he had chosen and there was no turning back. Reconnaissance units were sent out in all directions and after a few days they reported that a way down and over could be found. Slowly the Trek moved on from there to Randfontein down to the Lusiti Valley and up again at the farm Uitkyk. Here Mrs. Scholtz, wife of Salmon Scholtz was buried "a noble God-fearing woman, who was respected by all, and whose death was a severe loss to us all".

They proceeded patiently across the Lusiti Mountains through the Nyhodi River at Blomhof, and between these mountain ranges and the farm Belmont. They were almost at the end of the journey . . . "But at Orange Grove an unexpected disappointment awaited them. A police officer, Joe Nesbitt, brother of the magistrate at Fort Victoria, suddenly made his appearance with a letter from Dunbar Moodie commanding all the men to come with their rifles and ammunition and provisions for eight days, to withstand a Portuguese army which had planned to take over Gazaland. All the men except Martin, A. Olwage and H. G. Heyns went off to Kenilworth Farm in pouring rain and drenched to the skin. After eight days they arrived back at the Trek, wet, hungry and tired and without having had the privilege of meeting with the Portuguese. It appeared that it was either a false alarm or "that the news that it was a party of Boers coming to meet them was enough to send their neighbours scurrying back".

On the third of November the Trek arrived at Lindley and after a few days "not without sorrow, each said farewell to his fellow-trekker to settle on the farm of his choice", Martin ended his diary. He himself had chosen the site of the present farm Rocklands for his home. The whole party was full of praise for the safe conduct of the Trek of Marthinus Martin. They handed him a memorandum in which they stated that "we wish to convey to you our sincere and grateful thanks for the noble and manly way you have brought us safely to our destination. We all realise only too well the great responsibility which you have shouldered and carried through in such a masterly way, and to the good of all who were connected with the Trek. Your forbearing patience through such uncommon struggles and difficulties was exemplary. Even in the midst of your own cares your hand was always open and ready to offer practical help, and your tongue always prepared to advise and your heart always open for the affliction of another to whom you gave sympathy and consolation as often as was necessary. As you have helped us in the past, and relying on your promise of help for the future we shall always feel that we can depend upon your sound common sense and inspiring candour, as well as on your sound advice and ever-willing head and hand to assist us in our future progress. We all wish you, your wife and son good health and prosperity and that you may in the future look back with satisfaction and then feel proud of this band of Trekkers you have so ably led into Gazaland . . ."

Needless to say Martin, and later his son, took a prominent

part in the political life of the whole country and represented this part of the Colony in the Legislative Assembly.

The section of the Trek which had moved south had to depend on Dunbar Moodie to allocate their farms, and they had a very difficult time at the start. (They were the Van Rooyen, Scholtz, Ferreira and Herselman families, with A. Hefer and Jacobus Marks.)

They had trekked past Ernst du Plessis' farm Clearwater, and at the first outspan Mrs. Van Rooyen became ill again. They proceeded past Moolman and Hendrik du Plessis' farm to a place which Dunbar Moodie had indicated, and where they had to wait for him. But he was at Kenilworth with the troops, and they had to wait a whole week. In the meantime Mr. Van Rooyen also got ill and with all the men, except Marks, away at Kenilworth, the women had a real nightmare of a time. The four men who had been called up and were ordered to proceed to the farm of Odendaal, appeared later to have been on a wild goose chase, because Odendaal himself knew nothing of the trouble with the Portuguese or Portuguese natives; and after four days they had received news to go back to their farms. "We almost died of thirst and were not familiar with the amount of quinine we should give the patients. Eventually the idea of wild wormwood struck us and this was really our salvation. The temperature soon became normal after a couple of doses of this medicine."

When Moodie arrived to show them their farms they were scattered in various directions; some ten, some twelve miles from each other. But the patients were still too ill to travel along the unmade roads, so something had to be done. Scholtz, Herselman and Ferreira went on to their farms, and Van Rooyen decided that he would stay on Herselman's farm, while the two young men, Hefer and Marks, would proceed to Van Rooyen's farm to construct some kind of hut for him to move into when it was ready. It was only a month later that these two invalids could manage to walk with the aid of a stick and to leave Herselman's farm for their own El Dorado.

#### MEMBERS OF THE MARTIN TREK (1894)

Marthinus Jacobus and Rosina Elizabeth Martin and their son Johannes Lodewikus.

Johannes Hendrik Christoffel and Rosa Huigh Kok and children: Jacoba M., Johanna Cornelia, Gertruida, Rosina Elisabeth, Barbara, Johan Andries and Stephanie Deborah.

- George Frederick and Dirkie Elizabeth Heyns and children:  
Engela J., Maria M., Johan A., Cornelius, George F., and  
Dirkie Elizabeth.
- Abraham Daniel and Dirkie Jacoba Olwage and children:  
Susanna Maria, Christian Dudfif, Josef Daniel, Abraham  
Daniel, Jasper.
- Petronella Susana du Preez (widow) and children: Petronella  
Susana, Jan Gysbert, Rosina Elizabeth, Jean Charles  
Frederick, Hester Elizabeth, Anton Michael, Helyard  
Petrus, Johanna Christina, Cornelia.
- Rudolph and Martha van Rooyen (the late Mrs. Hefer) and  
children: Tommie and Miriam.
- Pieter Edmond and Christina Steyn and children: Johannes  
Pieter Edward, Jacoba.
- Jan Dirk and Rozena Elizabeth Heyns and children: Jan  
Dirk, Rosina Elizabeth, Christina, Ignatius.
- Jan and Maria Scholtz and child Aletta.
- Jacob and Gertruida Herselman and children: Frederick,  
Jan, Gertruida, Magdalena, Jacob.
- Salmon and Ann Scholtz and children: Jan Botes, Anna  
Maria, Hendrik, Wynand Willem, Cathrina, Frederick  
Johannes.
- Petrus Stephanus and Louisa Francina Martin and children:  
Johannes Lodewekus, Pieter Stephanus, Marthinus  
Jacobus Debora.
- Tobias and Mirian van der Riet and children: Edward,  
Willem.
- Jan and Johanna van Zyl and children: Johannes, Willem,  
Pieter, Dawid, Johanna, Elizabeth Adrian.
- James Tilbury and Catherine Gesina English.  
Phillipus Branken.  
Antonie Ferreira.  
Edward Hardy.  
Adriaan Hefer.  
Johan Andries Heyns.  
Koos Marks.  
Pieter Routenbach.  
Jan Roos.  
Louis Schutte.  
Frederick Smit.  
Frederick van Eeden.  
Joubert van Heerden.  
Therenis van Schalkwyk.  
Joe Adendorf van Schalkwyk.

## Chapter 8

### THE DU PLESSIS TREKS (1894, 1895)

ON THE 3rd of January, 1893, Ernst du Plessis arrived at Water Fall with the Trek of Thomas Moodie in which he had taken a leading part. He had pegged his own farm, Clearwater, helped to peg the others, and after making arrangements about his farm during his absence, he harnessed his span and travelled back to the Free State.

"I left on the 7th of June," he said, "to go and fetch my own Trek, as well as the many other things such as cattle, horses and other implements which I had left behind. On my arrival in the Free State I met many who intended to come up, and at Ficksburg, where I was asked to address a meeting, I had to answer a host of questions about the country. As a result of this, several persons decided to come up with me, and in May, after the Rhodesian rains, we took to the road. There were not many of us and so we could cover the journey in about four months so that we were on my farm in August of that year. I applied for another two farms and put my brother on the one and planted on the other." However, this was not according to the demand of occupation and he lost his claim to this last farm Mayfield.

After he had taken care that all the members of his family were well settled and that some kind of home was being built, he decided to go back once more to fetch his bride. He wanted to give her something more than a pole-and-dagha hut and he was the first one to build a house of burnt brick.

This time he went by foot to Chimora and from there to Beira and to Durban by boat. He was very ill on this journey and decided that the sea was not for him.

He spent the rainy months in Natal and the Free State and spoke to many more about his own hinterland. For those who wanted to work and venture, the new country would yield ten and hundredfold, he had told them.

By April the weather had settled and then he got married to Magdalena Maritz, a daughter of one Gerrit Maritz and descendant of the Great Trek leader. Full of the joys of life he collected his other wagon and invited various people to join with him. Five families and two young men decided to come, and early in May this staunch pioneer led a third party into Gazaland. It took them a little longer, but early in October his

whole party arrived safe and sound on his farm. The brick building was covered with a thatched roof and a new home awaited the bride.

This unostentatious, humble patriarch lived on this farm till his death in 1953 — fifty years after his entry with the Moodies. He never lost his first love for the country of his adoption and instilled in his children and grand-children the same feeling of warm patriotism.

## MEMBERS OF THE DU PLESSIS TREK (1894)

Ernst du Plessis.

Hendrik and Johanna du Plessis and children: Gertruida,  
Christina Hendrika, Frans, Jan, Aletta.

Dirk du Plessis.

Jan Human.

Abraham Spies.

Hans Talgaard.

## MEMBERS OF THE DU PLESSIS TREK (1895)

Ernst and Magdalena du Plessis.

Louw and Deborah Kleyn.

Diederik and Lenie Engelbrecht and child, Jan.

Frikkie Stopforth, his wife and children.

Hendrik Pikster, his wife and children.

Andries Breytenbach.

Jacob Breytenbach.

## Chapter 9

### THE KRUGER-BEKKER TREK (1895)

ERNST KRUGER, co-leader of this second last Pioneer Trek to Gazaland was born in the Queenstown district. He had farmed here and then moved to Tembuland. Here he took part in the wars against the Natives. In 1885 there was a terrible epidemic amongst his cattle so that he retained only about 50 out of his 2000. He decided to try his luck at the goldfields of Johannesburg and moved to Pretoria in 1886. He saw the need for good transport-drivers and concentrated on this work. When the Mashonaland expedition left he started conveying to Salisbury in 1891 and 1892, and later to Bulawayo. He made "good" money. The only incident was when an attempt was made by Mr. Longden, subsequently a magistrate at Melsetter, to prevent him from delivering an order of drink in Bulawayo.

He continued transport-riding till 1895, and then competition grew very rapidly. He called a few of his friends and neighbours together and decided to move into Rhodesia in that year. No sooner said than done. He was well acquainted with the highway to Rhodesia, and in May 1895 trekked as far as the Crocodile River with a small party.

He was joined or joined himself to another Trek, that of Hendrik Bekker. Bekker was also in the transport business and had established his contacts in Salisbury since 1890. In 1891 his one son Jan was born in Salisbury, for his wife accompanied him on such trips. This boy might well be the first European baby to have been born in the Capital. Mr. Bekker used to get as much as £7 10s. per 100 lbs., and it was no wonder that on some occasions there were as many as 90 wagons in Salisbury!

In 1891, while in Salisbury, lung-sickness broke out among his cattle, and with the six or seven which were left over he could not go back to the Transvaal. He accepted a contract to saw and deliver wood for the British South African Company, and made as much as £80 per week. Building timber was needed in great quantities and he had a flourishing mill on the banks of the Hunyani.

Some of the transport-riders, if they were fortunate enough to have completed a good contract, would sell their wagon and oxen and go back by coach. In this way Bekker managed to buy a wagon and team of oxen for about £200. Mr. Rhodes had

already promised him a farm but he wished to go back to the Transvaal first to see if he could persuade some of his acquaintances to come up to Mashonaland. Only two families joined him, Kotze and Visagie, and they all intended taking up farms in the area between Fort Victoria and Salisbury. His party came as far as Fort Charter. Here Mr. Bekker pegged his farm "Enkeldoorn" — named thus after a big thorn tree on the plains. And this farm, or name, subsequently developed into the township of the present Enkeldoorn. Because of the rains, uncertainty about the Matabele and the malaria, the whole party decided to stick together, but all of them contracted malaria. After the rains and upon the advice of the authorities — also Mr. Rhodes — they decided to go back for a rest and to receive medical treatment.

Early in 1893, however, Bekker was on the trekpath again with his family. At Fort Victoria they met a Mr. Pretorius and sons who persuaded him not to go to the Charter District but to try Gazaland. They joined parties and followed the Moodie's track as far as Water Fall. From here they went to discuss matters with the Portuguese Commandant at Mozzorezi. He promised them a hundred farms if they could bring in enough people to occupy them.

A hurried decision was taken to go back and to try and organise such a migration. Before they left, the son-in-law of Pretorius, Lucas Laubacher, went out hunting and got lost. For two weeks they searched in vain for him. They had proceeded as far as Melsetter in the Portuguese territory and then decided to retrace their steps to Mozzorezi in a last attempt to try and find Laubacher. Mr. Bekker took the road back to the Commandant's camp and just before he arrived there he met four natives who were carrying Laubacher in a zebra-skin fatally ill with malaria. It appeared that he had eventually arrived at Beira and that he had been sent back from there to their camp at Mozzorezi. Two days afterwards he was dead.

"And there," Mrs. Annie Bekker tells us, "we buried him on the banks of the Buzi River. While my husband and his father were making the hole, I and my mother-in-law sewed up the corpse. We carried him to the rough and ready hole and rested him on top of the poles and skins. Other poles and skins formed his canopy and a deserted mound of ground was the only indication that death was once again too strong for us."

They all went back to Pretoria where Mr. Pretorius also died about two weeks later. Bekker tried to organise his hundred

people, but did not have a great response. They were to meet at the Brak River near the Crocodile.

It was here where the Krugers linked up with them. They travelled along the Crocodile to Chikoli where another Bekker boy, Lourens, was born. They travelled up to the Nuanetsi where Mrs. Annie Bekker also had a son and there was great rejoicing when the party arrived at Fort Victoria. They exchanged some oxen and bought others, and were granted four Matabele oxen for one from the south.

Kruger intended going in the direction of Bulawayo, but Bekker told him of his scheme for settlement in Gazaland. Mr. Bekker said that Rhodes was in Fort Victoria at that time and that they had discussed their plans with him. Mr. Rhodes considered that it would be more desirable to go to Melsetter. For, he had said, many people in England and South Africa seemed to think that they would never be able to make a white man's country of Rhodesia. He wanted these people, who knew something about farming to throw in their lot with the Gazaland farmers and to show the world that agriculture could be developed in Rhodesia. When Mr. Kruger pointed out to him that places south of Bulawayo would develop rapidly and that Melsetter would be virtually cut off, Rhodes gave them the assurance that whatever progress might take place in the Bulawayo area he would see to it that the same privileges be granted to the Melsetter part of the country. Kruger then said that if it was a promise he would be willing to change his course.

This joint Trek then moved to the Sabi, where another child of Mrs. Kruger was added to the party. There were no incidents on the way except that they had some fun with a leopard which they caught in a trap. They had plenty of kudu meat, and arrived in good form at Water Fall on the 25th of July.

There they were told that all the available farms in the district had been allocated. It appears that Dunbar Moodie was very suspicious of the whole party. Trouble was brewing in the Transvaal between President Kruger and the British. This was the first big party from the Transvaal, and having the name Kruger as well, he advised them to go back to the Transvaal. When they were told further that the "hundred farms" were no longer all in Portuguese territory as the boundary was at Chitatonga, the party's plans seemed pretty hopeless. When, however, Dunbar suggested that they might be spies for the Portuguese the fat was in the fire. Bekker challenged him to

a free fight to settle the matter immediately and there was no doubt that he was furious and capable of anything.

Dunbar thought it better to keep quiet, and then Bekker told him that after such treatment, he would rather settle in Portuguese territory in spite of all his associations with the country. It was also clear that Moodie had misunderstood the intentions of this party.

The whole party, except Bezuidenhout and Du Preez, thereupon proceeded to Mozzorezi. Dunbar Moodie had mobilised a small commando to see that they crossed the border, but fortunately the two parties never met.

They stayed for a week at Mozzorezi, but before they could pick out their farms, the malaria fever had them all in bed, except S. Bekker. They were all so helpless that they thought no one would recover. After a few weeks, however, improvement set in.

Kruger and Smit, who had only come so far on condition that they would go back if things turned against them, now realised that the farms were too low-lying and of doubtful tenure and decided that they had had enough trouble and struggle in Portuguese territory. They decided to go back to Bulawayo as they had intended originally, or otherwise to try and settle in the Melsetter district.

Then the rinderpest broke out and all Kruger's oxen, except one, died. Another trip back to the Transvaal to obtain provisions, etc. was out of the question.

They struggled back to Melsetter where a magistrate had been appointed to act as a channel for all the official work of the Company. This magistrate was the same Mr. Longden with whom Kruger had an argument more than a year before at Fort Victoria, and as he was not too friendly disposed towards Kruger, he could not obtain a farm. He then met a Mr. Labuschagne who asked them to occupy a farm for him (Avontuur) which he had bartered from Hendrik du Plessis, so after much wandering this family found a resting place. Mr. Labuschagne gave them a few oxen to get to their destination, but for the rest they had nothing except the one ox which they sold for about £80. They had no more ammunition, clothing or food and had to live on a kind of barter existence, especially as the rains had just started.

They were fortunate in obtaining their own farm a year or two later, and since then have never wished to move away from the district.

The Bekkers, after their recovery, could not face the rainy

season at Mozzorezi, and decided to spend those months with friends at Melsetter. Early the following year they went back to Mozzorezi but had nothing with which to start. They accepted a contract to cut a road to Beira because the payment was good. It was hard work and under very unhealthy conditions. For a few months all went well, until one day when Mr. Bekker, who was on a visit to Beira to make final arrangements about the farms, suddenly took ill and collapsed. He died the following day. This almost broke the spirit of the party, for they were without a leader and father. They were brave fighters but realised that Portuguese territory was not their destiny. They decided to go back to Rhodesia and were granted a troop of carriers to assist the whole party back to Mozzorezi from Beira. They were fully supplied with food and clothing, and had sufficient to last them for at least a few months.

Full of sorrow they had to say farewell to the land of their leader's dreams. They went back to Melsetter where they were given hospitality by De Beer who also asked them to remain on his farm Middelstroom.

Perhaps they had a right to a better place and to fairer treatment in this land which they had served so faithfully since 1890 and where they had already settled at one time.

These two treks were the most unfortunate ones of all the pioneer treks into Gazaland. However it detracted nothing from the allegiance and determination of these men and women to rehabilitate themselves and add to the progress and prosperity of their families and of their country.

#### MEMBERS OF THE KRUGER-BEKKER TREK (1895)

Hennie and Christie Bekker and children: Koot and Annie and Hendrick their son, Soon, Jozua, Dawid Piet, Jan, Pap, Maria Chrissie, Nellie and Isabel.

Bezuidenhout: Wynand and Dorie Bezuidenhout with their children Wynand, Klasie, Hans, Borend, Jan, Cornelius Johanna, Anie and Dorie.

Du Preez: Fanie, Lea du Preez and children: Salamon and Johanna.

Kruger: Ernst and Nellie Kruger, with their children Petrus, Maria, Hans and Wynand.

Smit: Willem and Nellie Smit and their children Nik, Gert, Soon, Lettie and Johanna.

## Chapter 10

### THE MYNHARDT-UTRECHT TREK (1894)

NORTH OF Umtali near the Odzi River, in the heart of the forest country behind the massive rocky Mapembi Mountain ("from where you can see everything"), Letta and Jan Mynhardt ("Oom Rooi Jan") have their home. With them live their one son whose wanderlust had driven him as far north as Kenya at one stage — and where he was rewarded with a bride!

This is the family's second farm. Their first one was in the district of Chipinga (originally Melsetter) where they had settled about a year after the Moodies.

Originally the family lived in the Winburg district but a great drought had forced Mr. Mynhardt's father to trek to Utrecht in Natal. Even there it was difficult to exist as cattle and sheep farmers. Shortly after their arrival, Mr. Johannes Tobias Mynhardt (Snr.) heard of Gazaland. Ernst du Plessis, who had been up with Moodie came back only to get married at Utrecht to a girl living not far from the Mynhardts. He was full of praise for Gazaland, told them that it was a good and beautiful country and advised them not to delay trekking to this hinterland.

They decided to trek at once. But they had no cash. Then Mynhardt, his two sons and son-in-law went to two English brothers, Alltaker, who had a business at Dundee at Balderspruit, and put their case to them. They wanted to borrow, and without any security. The two brothers lent them £300 worth of food, harness, cash, etc. The generosity of these two brothers was beyond their wildest dreams — especially when they were told to come back to them should they not fare so well in the new land.

On the 29th March, 1894, the trek was ready to start. A prayer meeting was held, and last pieces of advice were given. One old hand told them that the criterion of a healthy climate is the presence of "oorbietjies" or "klipspringers" — a small buck. If these were there they could stay, otherwise they had better come back. "It swarmed with oorbietjies when we got to Gazaland," Mr. Mynhardt recalls. "Hands were clapping and whips were cracking, while flags of sheets were flying, and mirrors were shining when my father eventually gave the order to move on. The animals kicked up a cloud of dust behind them while the native people looked amazed at these mad people who

were going to the land of beyond. We were fortunate to have with us one old Zulu who volunteered to look after the cattle.

"There were not so many of us when we first left, but my father had arranged for others to meet us on the way, so that we were 54 souls with 14 wagons in the end. Some of those who linked up with us were the Labuschagnes, Odendaal, the De Beers, Louwtjie de Klerk and others."

From Charlestown and Honde River they had very little for the animals to eat or drink and this caused considerable delay.

When trekking through the Vaal River one night their one and only servant disappeared and the men had to take turns to look after the animals.

Perhaps the most sporting character of the party was young Sina de Beer who apparently could hold her own with the men. One day she went out shooting but was so absent-minded when some pheasants flew up in front of her that she dropped the gun with fright and shouted, "If I had a gun, I would have killed all of you!" One night while she and a young man, Marthinus Mynhardt, who was courting her, were sitting on the wagon some lions rushed at the washing hanging on the trees. The two of course got such a fright that that was the end of their courtship! She afterwards married a Britisher, McPherson, who could not speak any Afrikaans. She again could speak no English, but they had both learnt a bit of "Kitchen-Kaffir" or Fanagalo.

"Mina funa wena," McPherson started off. "Wena funa mina?" (I want you. Do you want me?) Sina's reply was, "Ja, mina funa wena — sterrek!" (very much!).

At Nylstroom a baby was born, and the party stopped for about two weeks before the next stage to the Palala River. At the Crocodile River they met the Grootwahls and Herbst who had fled before the warlike natives. Thereafter the noises of the drums constantly reached them and commandos of the Transvaal advised them to turn off the road. On one occasion they had travelled for nine days with such a commando. Mrs. Mynhardt has written about those fearful nights when many of them never closed an eye and when they watched the break of day with real joy in their hearts towards God for keeping watch over them.

For about two-and-a-half months they stuck to the open country only to discover that they were hopelessly lost and could not find a way across the Soutpansberg. Eventually they met a few big game hunters — "slaughters" Oom Jan prefers to

call some of them — who indicated the direction. Mr. Mynhardt told how these hunters had killed seven buck in one day — mostly as food for the lions. These animals would not only follow the hunters but molested the Trekkers as well.

The Trekkers also heard the full story of Grobler — the delegate of President Kruger to Lobengula who was murdered by the natives — and were told where he was buried.

They continued their journey across the mountains only to discover that the Limpopo was in front of them. Nowhere could a crossing be found. Then, before despair overtook them, they met two good and well-known hunters, Van Rooyen and Rossouw, who explained where a ford could be found. A road had to be cut and it was only after they had put another span of 20 oxen in front of Marthinus Mynhardt's wagon that this was pulled through. Oom Jan was the "tou-leier" or leader of the oxen and it was only afterwards that the others told him of the crocodiles which were spotted in the river. "It was just as well I didn't know about them before I went in!" was his comment.

As ill-luck would have it, the wagon overturned when it had gone about twenty yards in the water and it had to be pulled back. It was all a real nightmare. As the following day was Sunday, they tried again on the Monday. Four barrels were put underneath the wagon to see if that would not keep it afloat, but it failed to work. A whole week was spent in planning and working and long beams of wood were put on the wagons and about half of the luggage was off-loaded. "It was a real ordeal," Mrs. Mynhardt tells us. "I was on the first wagon and could not help thinking and shouting as we struggled, that my last hour had come. However, after much yelling at the oxen and everybody helping, we eventually reached the other side. What a relief it was!

"Thereafter the other half of the load was brought across and one more wagon that day! Since the following day was Sunday and since Mr. Mynhardt was a very religious man, he would not allow any more work to be done or the trek to continue, and so we stood with a few wagons on the one side and the remaining ones on the other side till the Monday morning." As was customary two services were held each Sunday: one by Tobias Mynhardt and the other by De Klerk. The following day the rest of the party was brought across. Mrs. Mynhardt remembers the crocodiles swimming in the muddy water, and also how they killed her father's cow. Seven cattle were also caught in a maelstrom when they were brought across. All seven had disappeared under the water — an event

which brought an unexpected and serious loss to the whole party. The last wagon to come across carried a barrel of butter. Unfortunately this barrel rolled off and into the stream. Everybody shouted but no one was willing to go into the stream to try and save it. When it was washed against a rock in the river they took the seat of the wagon and four of the barrels and allowed this to drift with some men on board till it reached the butter. In this way they managed to save most of it!

The young boys had to look after the cattle along the road, and, according to Jan Mynhardt, this was no easy task! Torn and scratched and covered with blood they were as happy as the trek-oxen when the time to outspan was at hand. One day, for example, a cow was missing and Jan volunteered to go back and look for it. It was a very hot day and so dry that the animals were licking the ground. "I took my horse and made my way through the thickets on the one side and the kaffir-corn lands of the natives on the other. I rode this way and that, but could not see the cow. 'Nonsense,' I said to myself and turned back. When I had gone a little way I heard someone singing, and it did not sound to me like that of the natives. I halted and to my surprise saw it was my brother who had been sent to look for me. I gave a loud cry and the poor fellow got a terrible fright. We both turned back and then discovered some cattle of Labuschagne as well as the cow and calf. The latter could not make it any more and dropped down. Eventually we discovered a hole where the other animals had drunk, so we had to stop with our strays. By this time we were very far behind and I was terribly hungry. I was rather fed-up with the whole affair and also because the animals were moving so slowly. Late that night we arrived at a native kraal where an old native gave us some coffee which my mother had left for us. By twelve o'clock my patience was exhausted. 'Let these d. . . cattle die or else I'll soon be dead of hunger,' I told my brother. We left the cattle and raced to the wagons as if all the spirits of the kraal were behind us! The following morning all the animals had turned up at the wagons."

The party was also visited by lions so that fires had to be made at night. On one occasion a lion had torn out all the insides of a cow; on another "wolves" wanted to catch the young calves. Grootwahl had such an experience of the lions at the Lundi River that he decided to turn back. He had tied bells around the necks of his donkeys because he rather unwisely remarked that the lion would never catch a donkey with a bell. The following morning thirteen of his donkeys had been killed!

When eventually they arrived at Fort Victoria — the first centre of civilization after they had left Nylstroom many months before — it felt like paradise to them all. They were not keen to move away from this haven of comfort. For a whole week they hung about the town and bought foodstuffs, etc. for the journey to Gazaland.

When at last they set out on the Moodie track, they were pleasantly surprised by the lovely mountains, granite hills, trees, shrubs and flowers — for it was the Rhodesian spring. The majestic Baobab trees stood out as sentinels amongst the other trees, with shades from light brown to purple.

They followed the track cut by Moodie for most of the way but occasionally lost sight of it and had to cut their own. On many occasions the women had to turn the brake at the back, and Mrs. Mynhardt records how her hands were often covered with blisters after such a day's journey. They often had to act as the leader. She remembers how one day when called upon to do so, she had asked her husband to remove the front ox "Driberg" from that position. After the ox had bumped her in the ribs twice she threw the rope down and told her husband to take it, while she took the whip. "I gave Driberg one or two cuts across the back, and every time my husband got it in the ribs. He was quick enough to stop and to inspan Driberg somewhere else. What with the hook-thorn in front and the horns at the back, it was enough to drive any woman to despair. Labuschagne's wife once got so entangled in the hook-thorn that we had to pull her out. If you wanted to know which way we trekked you could just follow the remnants of dresses left in the hook-thorn."

They crossed the Sabi without incident, although they were all full of fear. From there they continued through the beautiful country of the Tanganda River, Threespanberg and Trommel-draai.

The Moodies again came out to meet them when they were nearing Water Fall. That was in October. From Water Fall they trekked to the Busi River where they had to wait for Dunbar Moodie for almost three months. When he eventually arrived the party was fortunate to obtain some of the twelve farms originally pegged for Swanepoel, who had failed to occupy them beneficially.

It was, however, too far advanced in the summer season to put in any crops, and a hard time lay ahead of these settlers. They parted company, all grateful to Mr. Mynhardt (Snr.) who

had brought them safely to Gazaland. "It would be difficult for any of his sons to fill his place," Oom Jan concluded.

MEMBERS OF THE MYNHARDT TREK (1894)

Johannes Tobias Mynhardt and Anna Cornelia Mynhardt and children: Maria Elizabeth, Aletta Cecilia, Marthinus G., Wilhelmina Cornelia.

Johannes Tobias (Oom Jan) and Aletta C. Mynhardt and one small daughter.

Barend Jacobus and Talitha C. Mynhardt and children: Jan Y., Annie A., Ewert P., Barend J., Cornelia, Agatha.

Johannes Gerhardus and Christina M. S. Raath.

MEMBERS OF THE UTRECHT TREK

Willem N. and Hester S. Odendaal and children: Willem N., Paul C., Dawid P. J., Petrus J., Michiel N., Sannie J.

Dirk and Jacoba Labuschagne and children: Miemie, Kate (Susara), Johanna, Tommy, Nols.

Theunis and Johanna de Beer and children: Jan, Arnoldus, Herklaas, Theunis, Dawid, Piet, Sina.

Theunis and Annie Hamman and children: Jim, Theunis, Johanna.

Louw and Jacomina de Klerk and children: Louw Theunis, Gina, Emmie, Wessels.

Piet Fourie.

Jacobus Kemp.

? Manoel.

## Chapter II

### THE HENRY-STEYN TREK (1895)

THE THIRD big Trek and one which has opened up the most northern part of Gazaland, was that conducted by Messrs. Henry and Steyn in 1895.

The Trek fever was growing, especially in the Free State where farmers were beginning to realise that their farms were getting smaller and smaller, and where others saw that it was not so easy to obtain land. The idea to move into the "Land of Rhodes" had gripped the Freestaters who by now had lost several hundred emigrants.

In the Kroonstad district various people contemplated trekking to German West Africa, and then again to North West Transvaal, but a decision either way was never made.

The news that farms were available in Rhodesia at the nominal figure of only about £30 caught the imagination of those people who have always grown up with the soil and whose greatest desire was to possess a piece of ground themselves. The news in the press that plentiful and fertile agricultural land was still to be had led some of the local inhabitants to convene a meeting. Here it was decided to appoint a small committee to proceed up to this hinterland of Rhodes and to inspect possible areas of settlement. They were also instructed to take up several farms should they be satisfied with the prospects.

This committee, consisting of John Henry and Johannes S. F. Steyn, took the boat at East London in the winter of 1894 and sailed to Beira. From there they travelled in a river steamboat up the Pungwe River and then by train up to the last stop "Seventy-five!" From there they had to walk or to make use of transport-wagons as far as Chimoyo and the Ruwui River. Here the road to the Moodie's farm was explained to them and once more they had to travel on foot. The first night the mist arose and they lost their way completely. They wandered around aimlessly and full of fear until one day they stumbled on to the farm of Mr. Cripps near Umtali. He gave them directions how to get to the Moodie's farm along the mail route and sent a native boy as guide.

Two days later they arrived at the kraal of a native chief, Mutambara, who gave them a brand new hut to sleep in, as

well as food in two newly carved wooden bowls: in the one, hard-boiled mealie meal and in the other roasted locusts.

When they arrived at the Water Fall, Dunbar Moodie said they should move to the extreme south. They thought, however, that an area nearer to the railway line would be more desirable and expressed a wish to settle in the extreme north, past the Martin's area towards the Umvumvumvū valley. They were granted farms on payment of £30 apiece, and had to be responsible for pegging their own boundaries of the 3000 morgen farm for a married and 1500 for an unmarried person. If the farms were too big, they could buy the extra ground, after proper surveying, at one shilling and sixpence per morgen; if they were too small nothing more could be done about it, as all farms had to be pegged adjoining one another.

The party was very satisfied, travelled back through the Chimanimani-poort and arrived three days later at Chimoyo from where they journeyed back via Beira to the Free State.

Their report was anxiously awaited by the farmers and others from Kroonstad, and it was decided to start organising at once so as to move off as soon as it was feasible in the following winter. The Trek would meet formally at Schoemansdrift at the Vaal River on the 8th May, 1895.

Loaded with such diverse items as grass, fruit, seeds, trees, domestic animals, clothing and food for six months, thirteen wagons arrived at the appointed place on this date. From the farthest south was perhaps Mr. Thomas I. Ferreira from Tarkastad, whose uncle, Steyn, was one of the delegates. He had come to Cradock and told his relatives what he had discovered, and at least this one family decided to join his party. Thomas Ferreira writes: "My mother was rather sad at our parting, but she told us to load our wagon firstly with Religion, then with Patience, then with Courage and then with Faith, and all would be well."

At Vaal River a few other wagons joined them so that there were in all 16 wagons and 104 people, about 5000 cattle and about 750 sheep, etc. It was decided to divide the Trek in two parts to facilitate grazing and movement and that Mr. Henry would lead one section and Mr. J. G. Steyn, acting as general secretary, the other.

Ten more people joined them near Potchefstroom, and so the Trek moved on in the direction of the Crocodile River. It was terribly cold and on one occasion so muddy and sticky that one wagon after the other got stuck. On one occasion they had to use four spans of oxen to pull one of the wagons out. Food supplies were obtained at Rustenburg and from there they

had to keep a close watch on the cattle for fear the Africans would steal some of them. They crossed the Crocodile River and on the road to Palala experienced the first signs of cattle disease (gall-sickness), and many trek-oxen died. On one occasion the lions caught four of their horses. What with heat, hook-thorn, thirst and a certain amount of despair, the Trek was heavy-going as far as the Limpopo. Here they met transport-riders and others who encouraged them to go on. The hunters were most interesting, and for about ten days they camped at the Limpopo listening to hunters like Hans Niemand, Jan Terblanche and others. They even arranged a dance on one of the canvas sheets.

The Sunday before trekking through the river, the usual Sunday service was held, and many a heart was sad at the thought of leaving their native country.

The Trek received quite a fright on the road from the Limpopo to Tuli when Thomas Ferreira got lost. He had gone out shooting and after he had killed a kudu, he had no idea which way to go. That evening he found the spot where he had left the wagons that morning. "Suddenly somebody touched my shoulder," writes Thomas Ferreira, "and asked me if I knew where I was. I got such a shock that I ran wildly into the bush; and till this day I do not know who touched me . . . I struck the road again but had no idea which way to go. Fortunately it was north. I ran with the perspiration running down my face. I had only three cartridges left, and all around me I heard the yelping of wild dogs, hyenas and the roaring of lions. That night about one o'clock I heard a shot. It was someone sent out along that road to look for me." It was a case of "all's well that ends well"!

On the road to Tuli, horse-sickness broke out and killed off most of their horses. At the Nuanetsi, lions caught some of those who were left. At "Sugar Loaf", a solid, gigantic granite hill, more cattle got ill, and the party was not sure whether they would ever reach Fort Victoria. They were greatly encouraged by the arrival of an invitation from some owners of a mine near this fort to the young people of the party, and by the arrival of two new adventurers, Willem Prinsloo and John Scheffers.

At Fort Victoria — the supply depot of all who travelled to and from South Africa — they took in what supplies they considered necessary, and then moved on to the Sabi. About halfway to this river, most of the members of the Trek developed a kind of dysentery which, however, did not prove too serious.

A few days later a boy, Paul Steyn, was born and the Trek slowed down for a day or two. The only mishap was when the wagon of Cornelius Marais broke down. A few men volunteered to stay behind and do repairs, and while they were away to fetch an axle of a precious wagon skeleton which was discovered there, he tried to jack up his wagon. This toppled down and Marais was pinned to the ground. He and his wife struggled in vain to free his legs, and he was almost dying of pain when a native boy appeared on the scene and helped to pull the poor man out.

The Sabi itself appeared like the Red Sea to them, but after Ferreira, on horseback, had marked a track across, they got through safely, although they had to span two teams in front of some wagons. The condition of these trek-oxen, by this time, was none too good, and at Tanganda a few died — of sheer exhaustion, they thought. With Three Spanberg looming ahead, they were all dubious as to whether they would be able to get across. But by spanning three teams in front of each wagon and forcing all passengers to walk up, there were no incidents. One enormously fat old lady, Sannie Steyn, had to be supported by a girl under each arm and another one in front who pulled at a cloth twisted round her body. A little footstool was carried along to enable her to rest on the journey and then she was duly refreshed with some coffee!

They passed the Ebenhaëzer memorial of the Martin Trek and so arrived at the Moodie Settlement towards the end of October. They proceeded in the direction of the Martin Trek and thence to the Myohodi and Elandspunt where Dunbar Moodie had arranged for them to stop. He, together with John Henry, Johannes, Beltsazar and Coenraad Steyn, then went out for a few days to peg the various farms. It was discovered that there was not sufficient land available for the whole party so a number of them went still further northwards into an unknown and unchartered area. The mountains were steep and two span of oxen had to be used regularly. Sannie Steyn had to have her usual escort! At Osaapsnek the chain snapped just as the hind-oxen were pulling the wagon of Hendrik Steyn. The wagon ran backwards and landed at the bottom, crushing every bit of furniture to pieces. The wagon was repaired, and the trek over Osaapsnek continued. Their first view of the lovely range of country stretching before them, inviting occupation, sent a thrill through young and old. The first farm was duly pegged and the others moved on to Paulingnek, where the same mishap occurred as at Osaapsnek — only this time it was Harm

Coetzer's wagon. From there they travelled to Moodiesnek (Moodie's Pass) a road to Umtali made by the Moodies. For fear the wagons would run backwards again a huge wooden block was fastened at the back in order to stop the wagon from moving backwards. All except one wagon reached the top safely. The block proved most successful.

The farms Weltevrede, Lombardsrust and Johannesrust were pegged. Then the others moved to Thom's Hope where the rest pegged their farms. Two families moved beyond the Umvumvumu and discovered that the area there had been occupied. By the summer of 1896 all families had been settled and northern Melsetter occupied.

They had to pay about £15 for the Deeds and about £40 survey costs. Only one farmer, Mr. Willem Steyn, sustained a loss when he discovered that 500 morgen of his farm was in Portuguese territory.

For most of them the planting and sowing season was past, and so they had to await the rainy season of 1896 with rather gloomy prospects. It took them a month to complete the distance of 70 miles from Melsetter to Steynsbank — the last farm in the north, and it was realised that communication, even with the older residents further south, was extremely difficult. The first winter gave them ample proof of it. However, through their perseverance, they opened up the new area of North Melsetter; and thus the whole of Gazaland — dream of Moodie, Jameson, Rhodes — was occupied as British territory.

Other Treks followed the Steyn's Trek, but they were not, technically, considered Pioneer Treks.

#### MEMBERS OF THE HENRY-STEYN TREK

John and Emily Henry and children: Tom, Freddie, Trevis.

Johannes Gerhardus F. and Herculina Steyn and children:  
Christoffel, Christian, Theunis, Lucas, Maria.

Johannes and Annie Steyn and children: Martha, Herculina,  
Johannes, Anna.

Pieter and Engela Steyn and children: Johannes, Annie.

Hendrik and Christiana Steyn and child: Aletta.

Hendrik and Sannie Steyn and children: Cornelius and  
Sannie.

P. Willem and Cornelia Steyn and children: Antonie, Hendrik,  
Stephanus, Paul, Susanna, Anna, Cornelia, Johannes,  
Pieter.

Christoffel and Aletta Steyn.

- Wentzel and Johanna Coetzer and children: Johannes,  
Wentzel, Johanna, Annie, Piet, Martha, Willem.
- Harm and Johanna Coetzer and children: Hendrik, Susanna,  
Jan, Piet, Lettie.
- Thomas and Maria Ferreira and children: Willem, Maria,  
Jan, Thomas, Catharina, Louis.
- Johannes and Annie Kloppers and children: Martha, Aletta,  
Annie, Christoffel, Willem, Johannes, Schalk.
- Stephanus and Annie Lombard and children: Annie,  
Stephanus, Barend.
- Cornelius and Catharina Marais and children: Annie, Barend,  
Catharina, Stephina.
- Willem and Hessie Prinsloo and children: Willemina, Hans,  
Willem, Frelk.
- E. Coetzer.  
Ignatius du Pre.  
Jaap Hauptfleisch.  
Daniel van der Zandt.

## Chapter 12

### SETTLING

ACCORDING TO Malcolm Moodie the beginning of the Trek appeared to him like one long picnic. Everything was new — clothing, shoes, etc., and the wish uppermost in the minds of the younger members of the Trek was: "May it last for ever." They were all full of ambition to see their new 3000 morgen farms, and in that spirit they rejoiced, and danced and sang all the way up to the Border. "But the world soon started to change once we were nearing our destination and had to settle down . . . there were bushes and thorns and thistles. The trousers were torn to pieces and the beautiful dresses hung like rags. The music slowly died away . . . and its place was taken by the family Bible . . ." The first two months of 1893 was an experience they could never forget: torrents of rain came down and malaria was rife.

No sooner had they settled down when the news that the Portuguese were threatening to drive them out of the country reached the small community. The only thing to do was to stand guard on the border, while the Portuguese seemed to be preparing themselves. After a month (February) things quietened down, but for those who accompanied Dunbar Moodie along the border it had meant wet clothes for a whole month (they saw the sun for only two days) and, in many cases, fever. The only daring episode during this time was when Dunbar Moodie and Ernst du Plessis boldly rode to the Portuguese outpost on the Devuli Mountains to bring down the Portuguese flag!

Not one of the Trekkers was disappointed in the country. The climate was mild, the grazing sweet, and the soil soft, red and very fertile. They were all struck by the possibility of using the numerous streams for irrigation purposes. Excellent timber was available in the mountain valleys — especially the "assegai" bush.

They found the Gaza tribes friendly and only too willing to barter their agricultural products for trifles from the white man or woman. They brought maize, kaffir corn, pop corn, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, lemons, bananas and even tobacco, and they seemed to have cultivated these even better than did the Free State farmers.

It was hoped that the Chartered Company would make a

decent road from the Settlement and that a few police would be stationed in the vicinity. "It is just possible," Dunbar Moodie wrote, "that with a view to the proximity of the Bandisi gold-fields and the expected increase of the population in the settlement a small town might even be started in Gazaland." The *Rhodesia Herald* carried a report four months after the beginning of the settlement to the effect that everything was going well. Four new faces had appeared; the natives had reaped their crops and they seemed to have been good. On a recent hunting expedition to the Busi River, the settlers killed, amongst other game, a hippo. A lioness, that was wounded by a rifle set for her by Mr. Oberholster, had attacked him, but he was able to shoot her at his feet. "Since their arrival the party had begun to lay out their gardens; and potatoes, onions and other kinds of vegetables were available. All kinds of fruit trees had been planted and had taken root."

In the meantime Dunbar Moodie and Ernst du Plessis had mapped out the proposed township. A few police actually moved into the district to keep an eye on the situation on the border. One result at least was that some contact was now possible between these settlers and officialdom in far away Salisbury, Victoria and Umtali. A regular weekly postal service between Melsetter and Umtali was inaugurated. "One is inclined to say that all we still need is an Archangel in order to make the place an earthly paradise. We already have a justice of the peace!" was the comment of one of the settlers. Others thought that Dunbar Moodie was a bit of a "fly in the ointment" for he seemed to have appropriated all the official posts (except postmaster) for himself.

During August and September a couple of the men returned to South Africa to recruit more settlers and to fetch their families. Those who came up to inspect the country had included the Swanepoels, Pollet, Strydom and De Wet. Swanepoel and De Wet had asked for 36 farms for their families and friends. Swanepoel alone wanted twelve which he pegged and promised to occupy as soon as he had settled his affairs (he was a rich farmer in the Free State). He left them unoccupied until 1895 and by that time people had realised that it was a friendly but unlawful gesture on the part of Dunbar Moodie to have allowed the two men to peg and lay claim to these farms. Dunbar Moodie wrote several letters to Swanepoel keeping him informed of the position and asking him not to delay occupation too long. He stated, also, that they were beginning to build, that the farms were in good condition, and also the sheep and goats. They them-

selves were up to all kinds of tricks . . . "The trouble with the missionaries had been settled (occupation of one of the farms of M. L. Swanepoel)," he wrote in a subsequent letter, the farms had been pegged and surveyed, and transfer had been passed . . . "The world was too lovely for words . . . The beautiful green trees, the green veld, the lovely waters, the flowers and everything one's heart could wish for . . . Wheat, barley, oats seem to do well, the cattle are in prime condition . . . We had a bit of a joke here yesterday. A Portuguese Commandant arrived here with 12 armed men to take away some natives here in Gazaland, and they had all kinds of nonsense . . . I went up to them, took all their rifles and swords and chased them out of the country . . . the scally-wags, they do make me cross! . . ."

Gazaland was now beginning to appear "on the map" as a high grassy plateau 4,500 feet above sea level, and described as very healthy. For the few pioneers to this part of the land of Cecil Rhodes it was good news, for reports from the Mashonaland area were not always favourable. It compared favourably with the best in Natal, Swaziland and Zululand, with few marshes and swamps.

"The agriculturist would find everything he desired in the form of soil, crops and grazing," remarked one visitor. Almost every farm had a high plateau and a low-lying valley; on the former there was good grazing, in the valleys, timber. Wild fruit was plentiful: lemons, loquats, bananas, 'majantjies', 'mahobohobo' — food for man and animal. The indigenous inhabitants seemed to be of a mixed sort — outcasts from the once mighty Gaza race, but showing as little zest for hard work as the rest of their people. Their crops were good, but they possessed no cattle — all probably having been taken by Nganganyana on one of his last raiding expeditions as he moved southwards to Imhambanè. Game like buffalo, eland, hartebeest and small buck, hippos, lions and leopards were plentiful — but not so many birds.

A suitable market for disposing of the rich harvests of this area was soon realised. Fort Victoria, 150 miles away was the nearest, but the roads were too bad and the rivers impassable for a long period each year. Perhaps trade could be established with the Portuguese and for this a railway was indispensable. If Umtali was to get preference, it would still be seventy miles from them . . . However, they continued to scheme and dream . . .

Gradually the area around Salisbury was all occupied so that more and more people were advised to settle in Gazaland.

And when the Moolman-Webster Trek did arrive to strengthen the numbers of the Moodie Settlement it was a day of great rejoicing. The first seeds (maize) had just been sown, light showers had begun to fall and the country was looking at its best. Herds of eland, hartebeest, zebra and sable were grazing peacefully on the green grass of the new spring.

During that winter season the settlers had organised hunting expeditions, and on one or two occasions they also went lion hunting. Malcolm Moodie relates how they went out after two lions one afternoon. They shot and skinned the lioness, but the male had disappeared. It was getting dark when they started their homeward trip, then they heard the male roaring close behind them. It was too dark to discern anything and the lion seemed to get closer, now roaring to their right, then behind, and then to their left. It was a mad rush back to the "rondavels" or huts where a friendly fire could be lit. That whole night the lion walked round the hut . . . and they only managed to kill him several days later.

A hippo hunt one day resulted in five hippos being shot by Thomas Moodie and his party in the Busi River. For many it was their first experience, and the hide-and-seek tactics of the hippos in the water provided a whole day's fun. They had never intended killing all five and it was only the following morning when they discovered the five bodies floating in the water that they realised how many of the shots fired had hit their target. It took them a whole week to skin and cut up those hippos . . . "And did we enjoy that hippo bacon? You have no idea how much you can eat without any ill effect. And we cut over two hundred whips from one old bull," concluded Malcolm Moodie.

Thomas Moodie realised that it would be disastrous to allow this indiscriminate shooting to continue, and he therefore imposed restrictions on which and how many animals or game could be shot. This, of course, did not apply to beasts of prey.

So the first year in the new territory slowly came to an end — with only one note of discord. One of the members of the small community had to leave a farmer's life "for a golden land; but alas! not between the wings of two shining and glittering angels, but handcuffed and accompanied by two strong policemen to settle his account at Fort Victoria. He was accused of beating up a donkey . . ."

Valuable discoveries had been made such as salt deposits in the Sabi Valley, three hot mineral springs (recommended for the crippled, sick and blind), copper mines — also in the Sabi Valley — and a good quality limestone. Old ruins, a little

smaller than Zimbabwe, were discovered at Chikwanda near the Busi — “about 37 feet in diameter and 20 feet high with unplastered stones, containing, in one place, a big stone pillar about nine feet high, and several other smaller ones on old graves”.

Towards the end of 1893 the British South African Company had still refused to assist the settlers with the cutting of a road to Umtali over the Umvumvumu and it appeared as if the Portuguese would be reaping the benefit of the settlement. It seemed a pity as so much of the timber could have been used in Mashonaland.

After the rains had begun to fall the crops promised well on all the farms. Lions were still troublesome. Boyce Moodie had killed a prize male on one farm; and on Moolman's farm no less than ten appeared one day. A hunting party chased them into the gorges and dynamite had to be used to try and get them out. The hunters were not sure which was the most dangerous — the lions or the dynamite. However, they managed to kill two, bringing the total for that fortnight up to six.

The new year 1894 began with bright days and clear skies, a pleasant change from the heavy rains of November and December. In January of that year there was an occasion of great rejoicing when the first marriage, that of Thomas Moodie's daughter, Elsie, took place in Melsetter. The Rev. Wilder had come over from the newly established Mt. Silinda Mission to perform the ceremony. There were no less than ten ladies present! A big reception was held, there was target shooting and sport, and the eighteen competitors had a grand time.

Dunbar Moodie tried all kinds of experiments with crops and soon discovered that certain strains of tobacco would do well in the district — possibly better than anywhere else in South Africa. As a proof of that he sent ten rolls of his own tobacco crop to Salisbury in April 1894. Further exports to the Chamber of Commerce during that month were four hundred pairs of soles and eleven skins. His dream of a tobacco culture did not entirely come true, but certainly inspired many farmers to try their hand at it — some in other districts and some with the culture of cigar leaves.

Indeed the first year was, for the pioneers of this settlement, a rich and eventful one.

But perhaps it was too good to be true. April 1894 saw the turning of the tide. The first tragedy was the sudden death of the pioneer leader Thomas Moodie. When he realised that the British South African Company had no immediate intention of

assisting them to make a road to Umtali, he decided to start with the work himself. He was the sort of man who would rather do what has to be done than to wait for somebody else to do it. He took some Africans and they struggled day after day to shorten the 135 miles between them and Umtali. No doubt he exerted himself too much, for he was a man not only with great initiative but also of great strength. The story is told of how Moodie had travelled to the Victoria Falls as a guide to an English hunting party as early as 1882. They had to obtain permission from Lobengula and it was the powerful figure of Thomas Moodie that made Lobengula decide to grant this permission without much ado. He asked Moodie to show him his muscles and then said they looked more like the hips of man than muscles of the arm. In a jovial mood Lobengula had remarked "O! O! you must not shoot the elephants, you must catch them with your hands".

It was his resoluteness which perhaps made him overconfident. He had not realised that he was not so young any more, and he took it upon himself to roll the huge boulders out of the road. It was while he was busy with this that he had an accident. He did not pay much attention to it, but it led to serious complications and he died shortly afterwards.

A dark cloud settled over this small community. Moodie, a beloved leader imbued with the pioneer spirit from the time when his grandfather had come to Swellendam in 1840 to start an industrial settlement, was there no longer to lead them. In his time he had associated with many great men — amongst others, Paul Kruger, with whom he had been on a hunting expedition — and he feared no man.

"He was a man full of endurance," Ernst du Plessis relates. "I have never met a man who had so much courage as Thomas Moodie, and I would dare anybody to display as much of that courage as did my friend Tom. For me it was a great privilege to be associated with this marvellous man, and to travel, work and live with him. The memories of what he had to face to make this country liveable will be amongst my happiest recollections. I can only say that if Thomas Moodie had not 'departed' so early, Rhodesia and Melsetter would have been a different country to-day."

A true husband, an intimate father, a faithful friend and an excellent colonist — that was how he was remembered by everyone who knew him. Rhodesia as a new country could ill-afford to lose a man with such capabilities. His experience in the Basuto wars and other military operations, his industrious

Scottish nature and his general ability would have fitted him to take full leadership for the Eastern Districts.

It was no wonder those of his friends who cared to remember him, were so shocked at the treatment meted out to his widow and children in this land for which he sacrificed his life.

The rest of that year passed rather gloomily for the Melsetter community. Many new Trekkers arrived, and they brought new life and spirit into the whole of Gazaland. The winter soon passed away. Hunting expeditions were again organised and the newcomers were drawn into the family of settlers. The grass was as green as ever in August — a great wonder to these Free State farmers — the cattle were in good condition and butter, milk and vegetables were plentiful. For all of them it was still a land of high hopes.

## Chapter 13

### WHEN NATURE TAKES HER TOLL

IN SEPTEMBER 1894 a slight earthquake was felt in Melsetter and it was no good omen to the settlers. Thomas Moodie left no one to take his place and they were almost as sheep without a shepherd. Their fears did not prove groundless, for a few months later the second tragedy in the Moodie company occurred when Mrs. Moodie's youngest son died. The poor widow felt like a Rachel "who refused to be comforted". She would not, and was probably never likely, to taste of the milk and honey of this Melsetter paradise, and could not help wishing they had stayed in the Free State . . .

Central and North Melsetter were occupied during the first two years, seventy miles from the spot where the first settlement had started. The shadows of the mountains, ravines and forests were dark, but darker clouds above presented a sombre picture of the Gazaland scene. The rains of 1893 which were more than these pioneers had ever experienced in their lives—being used to the low rainfall of a dry colony—had stopped, but were followed by other clouds—those of huge swarms of locusts. Ominously they appeared on the horizon and sped forth over the green hills. "Locusts!" the newcomer would say, "where do locusts come from in this land of milk and honey?" One consolation was that these settlers had no lands full of maize or wheat which these "winged vultures" could destroy. They came and went . . . and there was only one hope: that they would not return the following year!

The Martin Trek had brought a new leader, who never looked back. Gazaland he had chosen for better or for worse, and he was determined it was going to be for the better. In this strain he wrote to friends in the Free State who were enquiring about farms. He informed them that the policy of the British South African Company was not to give out farms on a speculative basis, even though moneys were paid in advance and an "occupant" supplied so as to prevent the land from being "jumped". This was decided upon because cases had occurred of people who had sent in applications and then never turned up. He himself would endeavour to obtain farms for all bona fide settlers.

He and his co-trekkers who settled in the Chimanimani area,

were indeed satisfied with their choice. "A plentiful supply of water, an ideal climate, wood in abundance and grass which proves admirably suited for cattle and sheep. Our cattle are in good condition. I think that horses should do well in this area. Nobody would ever think that our cattle had suffered so many diseases and have come so far. The waters are shallow and easy to take out. In all my travels in the Southern parts of South Africa, I have never yet seen a more beautiful stretch of country than North Gazaland. I have never had a moment's regret that I did not stay in the Free State, and am completely satisfied — although a pioneer's life is no easy one." Maize, pumpkins and vegetables were growing luxuriantly and at an almost unbelievable tempo. "The whole Trek passed a series of native lands along the mountains of the Lusite River. On the fifth of November, about 12 miles from where Andries Heyns is now farming, we noticed a land where the mealies were just up; the other lands appeared to us as if they had just been hoed to remove the grass and weeds so that it could be properly cultivated.

"On the 4th January we went back along this route to fetch the goods that we had left at the Moodies; and then we saw that the mealies were taller than any of the men on the Trek, although not yet in seed. It is unbelievable and many just won't believe it! All my friends are well here, all healthy and in good condition. The eland meat seems to agree with them!"

He advised future Trekkers about the route to take to Fort Victoria via Johannesburg, and stated that the cattle from near the Natal border seemed to do best in Gazaland. But as there were plenty of cattle in Mashonaland it would be advisable to buy rather than to bring. The only exceptions were good bulls. The load of wagons not to exceed 6000 lbs. up to Fort Victoria and from there 4000 lbs.

Fortunately Mr. Mansergh who was an official employed by the Beira Railways volunteered to peg a road from Melsetter (Moodie's settlement) to Umtali, in January, 1895. Six months later, in July 1895, this highway was declared open and transport business with Chimoio was immediately begun. This meant that building material and other implements could now be obtained from Umtali. Permanent brick dwellings began to make their appearance.

The border police force was increased to thirteen, the first Magistrate, Mr. Heugh, and his family arrived in July, 1895, and then also a Native Commissioner, Mr. Meredith. In September a Farmers' Association was started.

In October, 1895 a petition was drawn up to request that a township be established in the Chimanimani area since this would mean much for the development of agriculture in that area. It was nearer and it would facilitate transport to and from Umtali, but the proceedings suddenly took an unfortunate turning. It appears, although reports are conflicting, that the petition for a new township was changed to a proposal that Melsetter township itself be shifted about 70 miles to the north, to the Chimanimani.

Mr. Ernst du Plessis' version of what actually happened is as follows: "Shortly after the proposal was made the magistrate had an argument with Dunbar Moodie. He, the magistrate, was in favour of such a change and this trouble between the two preservers of the peace made the one as obstinate as the other. Dunbar was told that the Melsetter area, where the Moodies had dug themselves in, was too unhealthy and he threatened to move the official town which Moodie had begun at the Kraal of Chipinga (or Coetzeeskop) to the Chimanimani . . . What happened I do not quite know, but it appears that when I went down to the Free State and Natal to fetch my wife, this threat was actually carried out by the next magistrate, Mr. Longden. They shifted the town 70 miles to the north and named it Melsetter — the present township. The place where so much sweat and tears of the first Trekkers had fallen, and by which, in name, they wished to bring honour to their leader and the whole of Gazaland, was to be re-named Chipinga and the new Melsetter would be where the most recent Trekkers had settled. Could they really not have picked on another name? It was an atrocious affront. Unfortunately those who sided with us were so few and Dunbar the only spokesman that it could not be otherwise. It was a grave insult to the first Trekkers and especially to Thomas Moodie. The place was established with tears and sweat and blood as Melsetter, and it would seem to me that the new township was established with deceit, and if I might prophesy, will never flourish. Just think of it! Here is not a single place, like Moodie's Rest or Moodie's Falls, to immortalise the spirit and memory of that great man; not even a memorial, except an attempt to cover his grave. And if ever a memorial is to be established in Gazaland, it is my humble but definite opinion that its rightful place is here at Water Fall."

And thus ended a chapter in the history of Melsetter or Chipinga which Thomas Moodie had never dreamt would be written.

In the meantime the rains of 1895 had begun to fall — and it seemed as if they were never going to stop. Lands for planting and sowing had to be cleared, cultivated and irrigated — in itself no easy task. The African helpers were not too keen to show their faces or to work for the European. As soon as a European approached their kraals, they would disappear in the bush. The result was that girls had to work as hard as boys — milking the cows, chasing wild pigs, baboons and porcupine.

Towards the end of the rainy season, 1895, the real struggle with malaria started for these pioneers. Those were days they would not easily forget — the restless tossing about in the bed, the unconsciousness, the fearful moments when it seemed as if a whole family was on the point of death. Medicine and doctors were just not available. Mr. Mynhardt, leader of the Trek of 1894 showed the first signs of this dreaded disease in March, 1895. Slowly the black hand of death folded over him and helplessly the family stood by as he died that Saturday morning — scarcely a year after he had arrived in Gazaland. The eldest daughter was heartbroken. She started crying and sobbing, and developed a hiccough which grew worse and worse. Three hours later she was also a corpse. The neighbours, Odendaal and Webster, stood by them in this sudden and painful bereavement. The coffins were made with planks which old Mr. Mynhardt had brought with him, and father and daughter were buried side by side at Middelstroom.

But the end was not to be yet. The bereaved wife and mother got ill the same day and grew worse and worse as she pined for her lost ones — and on Monday she was also taken away from the family. “We laid her to rest next to the other two — and lifted up our eyes . . .” Mrs. Letta Mynhardt wrote.

It was like a ray of light after a dark day when her own son was born after the summer of that year, but another cloud soon blotted out the hope and joy of a new day. By the end of the following summer she surrendered her young boy to the clutches of death — the first baby to die in the district, and as if to repeat the events of the previous year the little daughter of Mrs. Letta Mynhardt followed her brother . . . “Two rosebuds which never opened”.

Death from other quarters was also reported: Two Bezuidenhouts and two Madwigs. Was there never going to be an end? As they were returning from the grave of their second child, the Mynhardts saw their old shepherd approaching. He, too, was a herald of further deaths . . . the cattle were sick. A thorough investigation was made: it was the rinderpest — a

disease for which there was no cure. All of their cattle except two were mowed down "by the scythe of death".

It fared no better with that section of the Martin Trek which did not proceed to the north. Mr. Attie Hefer recalls: "The beginning of the year 1895 was rain, and rain, and yet more rain. After forty days our clothes, shoes and the kind of temporary huts we had erected were white with mould and all musty. When eventually the rains subsided, the trek-oxen and other cattle were beginning to gain some weight. It was too good to be true! One morning an ox came to the hut and it seemed as if he were going mad. He was all blown up and shortly afterwards he dropped down dead and the gall ran out of his mouth! We knew what that meant! One after the other the oxen died and Van Rooyen and I lost thirty within a fortnight.

"While we were still busy with this first ox, a native arrived with a note from Herselman to say that his daughter of twelve had just died. It came as a great shock because we had not heard anything of them since we left each other to take up our farms. She had a temperature, Herselman wrote, and, because there was no other help, had to bring the oxen into the kraal. She walked through the cold water . . . and it meant death for her. What else could we do but feel real sympathy for this hard-working family."

A few days later, however, another note arrived from the eldest daughter of the Herselmans. She begged Van Rooyen and Hefer to come over as quickly as possible because her mother had died the previous day, and her father had been so ill that he knew nothing of what was happening around him, or of his wife's death. Would they not please come and bury her mother? But unfortunately Hefer was also down with fever. Mr. and Mrs. Van Rooyen decided to go at once. But the whole country was wet and muddy and the road, what there was of one, could not be used by a wagon. A new plan had to be contrived. A sleigh was constructed, bedding, etc. piled on and with eight oxen the two were drawn (or dragged) across to the Herselmans — a distance of only about three miles, but with so many hills and twists and such a slippery road that it seemed to them like thirty. Mrs. Hefer continues to describe this episode further:

"When we got near to the house we just could not outspan the oxen. They were wild and out of control. Did they smell death? I firmly believe it! The daughter conducted us into the little hut (or "hartbeeshuisie") which consisted of a bed and

dining-room and a kitchen. Here we found things as the child had described it to us. The father alive but unconscious and delirious most of the time, the mother dead, and the children all ill and shivering with cold, the pupils of their eyes all yellowish. There were only a few sheets to cover them, their feet protruding at the bottom. There was no food, and the children had started to eat some green pumpkins, and had all got sick. The baby also appeared to be dying and I had to put my ear close to her mouth to find out whether she was still alive . . .”

The husband had regained consciousness for a short while. “Martjie” (Mrs. Hefer), he said, “I do not know when Sannie died. I have only heard it from the children.” And with panting breath he asked to try and find something in which to bury his wife. There was no timber for a coffin. My husband looked round — and all he could find was the skin of an impala . . . While he was digging the hole, I was trying to attend to the sick ones inside. My husband had a struggle with the implements; he had to go down deep. He managed four feet . . . Inside my task was no less arduous. When he was finished we placed the skin in front of the bed. With big black eyes she lay and looked at me — just as if she wanted to tell me something; and every moment I, myself, was beginning to feel weaker and weaker. My husband took her feet and I her shoulders, but when I pushed my hand to lift her — I still shudder to-day when I think of it — I discovered that the body had already started to go bad — it was a terrible sight on the bed . . . We shifted her on to the skin, put a blanket over the body and carried her to the grave. It was not possible for me and my husband to do it alone and the sick daughter of sixteen and the boy of about fifteen had to get up and help us . . . And so we struggled with the mother towards her shallow grave. They cried with pain and fever, the poor things, and after much falling and tripping we eventually arrived there. There was no funeral service while the body was being lowered; only the heart-rending sobs of these pioneer children broke the silence of grave and death. The skin we pulled over the body . . . and I left my husband to cover her and to increase the nameless little mounds of ground in Gazaland with one more . . . Was this what we had come to see?

“Back in the hut I had to remove the bedding . . . while my husband was trying to tie up the oxen. It was impossible to go back that evening. The oxen were still as wild as ever. I prepared some food for the sick ones, and by the time it was

finished it was dark. My husband and I went and slept in the wagon — a restless night where images of the day's events never left me . . . and details which I alone would know about.

“The following morning we had to decide what to do with all the sick people. It was impossible to leave them there, it was also impossible to convey them on our sleigh or by wagon, or to take them to our place where we had no food or accommodation either. It was when our perplexity was at its height that we saw a wagon approaching! It belonged to Dunbar Moodie. He had heard of the sickness, but not of the death at Herselman's, and had sent the wagon to fetch the people. We helped them on to the wagon and saw them off to the farm of Mr. Scholtz. It was not the end of their appointment with Death. That night, while they slept in the huts of the Scholtz family, the baby, who had been so sick, died. They put her in a separate hut in order to bury her the following morning. But their eyes beheld a pitiful sight that morning when they entered the hut. The rats had discovered the body and eaten away most of the small face!

“They went off to Mr. Moodie, but a week later Mr. Herselman also died. Four of the family in one month, including the father and mother. And three young children were left strangers in a strange land, where the only bond left was that of their fellow Trekkers . . . Mrs. Moolman took the three children although I would have liked one. But at that time I thought that I also was going off my head. I never thought that I would dare laugh again — that any person had a right to laugh. Why should I laugh and what was there to laugh about? . . .”

When the Van Rooyens arrived at their home, they found Hefer better — a sweet drop in their cup, but the Angel of Death did not stay away from this family for long. Mr. Van Rooyen (Snr.) who had not been so well ever since they left Fort Victoria, got ill again and died a few days later. Old pieces of box timber had to be hammered together for a coffin and the funeral was conducted by the son in the presence of a few bowed heads. Was this the last one? So they had hoped and prayed. But the young man Marks also went down with malaria — and a week or two later died in the Van Rooyen's hut. His coffin was a piece of canvas. Thus another young warrior who had entered this country with such high hopes was laid to rest even before he had time to settle.

The Van Rooyens and Hefer thereupon decided to leave the area for a while and to spend the next month or two with the Moolmans, but there the news of death followed them . . .

According to their reports there were twenty-two deaths during that season.

Of course reports like these were never sent up to or published by the British South African Company. Perhaps they were afraid that these might frighten prospective settlers. Towards the end of 1895 a short item appeared in the Report of that year that "since December 1892 and April 1895 there were fifteen deaths out of a population of three hundred Europeans".

Many people were beginning to despair of life in this much pruned hinterland. This is what Malcolm Moodie, who had settled on a farm about twenty miles from the Mt. Silinda Mission Station had to say about the conditions (cf. *Die Huisgenoot*: 3.4.1942).

"The missionaries were my nearest neighbours and it was very seldom I ever saw other white people. Soon it was my turn to become a victim of malaria fever. But the missionaries of the American Mission, Mr. Wilder and Dr. Thompson did much for me, as also my two friends who lived in that part, Labuschagne and De Beer. The only connection between us was a footpath through this wilderness, and the only visitor I had was an old native who occasionally passed by. My own boy, fortunately, was a very faithful one and he nursed me for twenty-five days. I was so ill with this fever that I could not eat — and there was no suitable food to eat. All I had was thin mealie soup without milk, sugar or salt. At the end of twenty-five days my boy thought that I was dead. He left me and went and told my friends that I had died and they came with a wagon to fetch my body and bury it.

"But while the native boy was away, my fever 'broke' and I came round again. And when my friends came we all three cried with joy. The wilderness might make one hard and tough, but your heart is made tender and soft towards those of your friends who share the difficulties and troubles with you. These staunch friends put me on to their wagon and took me to their home. But it was a painful journey. Every now and again they had to stop because I was so weak. Labuschagne — a rich farmer — took care of me in his home, and Dr. Thompson visited me almost daily. He advised me that, should I recover, it would be better for me to leave that territory . . .

"The high tide of the pioneering game was over for me. In the company of a pleasant circle of friends I had entered the land; alone and sickly and dejected I had to leave it again. Our whole little team gradually lost its pillars. Thomas and Dunbar

Moodie, the Aaron and Moses of the Trek, passed away. My brother Jan, who had a beautiful farm in the Umtali district, was the next to go. My sister, Mrs. Coleman was still alive, but death did not pass her door. Her own husband died soon after we had settled down; now the husbands of all three of her daughters died as well. Alone the four women had to struggle on . . . I cast a last look over this beautiful land of Melsetter . . . It was a pleasant land for me — but death chased me out of it. I struggled, as ill as I was, from Umtali to Beira and met two others, Brown and Frames, who were in a similar plight. We rowed slowly down the Pungwe to Beira, and back to the Free State . . . grateful that I was a bachelor who had to face all this alone . . .”

## Chapter 14

### THOSE EARLY DAYS

DR. THOMPSON of the Mt. Silinda Mission Station, about thirty miles from Water Fall, realized by 1895 that conditions in Gazaland were taking a serious turn, and he had to issue a warning through the press (the *Rhodesia Herald*, 13th March, 1895) against the risks and the mistakes which might have fatal consequences. He stated that although he was a medical doctor sent out to the American Mission which had just been opened up in that part, it was his duty and his privilege also to care for the settlers in their illness, since he was the only representative of the medical profession in that area.

By going around amongst them he had learnt a great deal about their living conditions and what they thought of the country prior to their entering it, as well as what their opinion was a few years later. He discovered that many of them had come with the idea that no disease could enter this part of the land and that there would be a plentiful supply of food. During the previous three months he had treated a hundred and fifty settler families and eighty-six per cent were cases of malaria, or the after-effects of it. During this time he had been called five times to visit patients who were already dead by the time he arrived there. Of the thirteen cases of death which occurred during that time, eight were on account of malaria as far as he could judge from the descriptions — he only saw three before they died.

He continued to point out that although the signs of malaria were not always visible, he was convinced that it was present none the less, and he believed that if these facts had been recognised and treated wisely, many of the illnesses and deaths could have been prevented. It was clear, he said — and Dunbar Moodie and Martin agreed with him afterwards — that the people who built their first houses did so from an entirely wrong angle. They thought first of all of water and irrigation, and not of health. The result was that many of them had built in those areas where malaria would have been found if it were present at all. And most of the deaths had occurred under just these circumstances.

“Future settlers had to be prepared,” he wrote, “to avoid this way of life or else be prepared to meet and fight this enemy

as they were prepared to fight the lions, which are now rapidly disappearing. High areas protected against the cold were preferable to the hot valleys where houses are sometimes flooded in the rainy season." He commented on the fact that the Government's regulation that farms should be occupied had led to each settler being so far away from the next one that it was not possible for them to assist one another. "The distances are so great and the journey (usually on foot), so difficult, that the patient had either died or was better before assistance could arrive."

He gave some further advice about the medicines with which each family should be equipped so that they could cope with the problems themselves.

It is doubtful whether this advice reached the ears of those who were most in need of it. One reason, of course, for the sad state of affairs lay in the fact that all the Treks had spent much longer on the road than they bargained for. The Martin Trek, for example, had been planned for four months. In actual fact they spent about eight months on the road. Supplies were used up and they missed the sowing or planting season. The cattle died on the road, the Trek was slowed down and by the time the last farmer had settled, the rains had started and the food was all consumed. Many who had started with a fine dairy herd of between 20 and 30 cows and with teams of oxen (18-20) in many cases arrived without any cows to milk and with few cattle from which to build up a stock. They were lean, but still able to pull the rapidly emptying wagons.

Martin wrote in 1895 that most of the settlers had ploughed and sown mealies, peas, and beans which grew as well as anyone could wish for. Then the locusts appeared and destroyed almost everything. The tragedy was that all the farmers, hoping for a first-year bumper crop had sown all the seeds which they had brought with them — and were now, of course, without any seed to sow at all! By April not one family had a bag of flour left, and the natives, who were afraid of the effects of the locusts, were no longer bringing mealies or kaffir-corn to barter as they did in the past. There was little chance to earn any money or to buy any food. There was no way out of this dilemma unless the British South African Company were prepared to help them with cows and oxen. Even if these were untrained — the young men would soon break them in or break their necks! They should be able to pay for a span of thirty oxen within three years. This would give people an incentive to stay in the country, otherwise they would have to leave and seek work and

food elsewhere. That would not only be a great pity but also a great blow for a country that had so great a potentiality. Be a farm ever so good, however, no man would be able to feed his wife and family on grass.

Dr. L. S. Jameson replied that the Company would be able to let them have some cattle as Martin had suggested. "I am now returning to Mashonaland and will arrange about it if you will write to me at Salisbury when and how you propose taking the cattle down. I shall be happy to see you in Salisbury, should you be coming up that way yourself during the dry season. At first I shall be travelling about a good deal, but should be settled there about August or September." Two events prevented this scheme from ever being carried out. The first was Dr. Jameson's futile raid on the Transvaal soon afterwards, and the second was the outbreak of rinderpest which meant that no cattle could be sent from one district to another.

The distress in which a great section of the people found themselves is revealed in bits and pieces contained in letters sent to friends in South Africa. The sorrow, which is so evident from these sources, never reached the outside world, and there were few who could sympathise with the dying and their relatives. So often death was sudden and left even the family dumbfounded. It was almost incredible that these people were the same who, a year or two before, were a joyous, ambitious and dauntless company, braving veld and forest, mountain and river to settle in these lovely dales and valleys of shadow and sunshine.

"The Edenburgh Trek" — Martin wrote to a friend in the Free State, "which settled in between the Busi and Lusiti Rivers is in a terrible plight. Jan Herbst, Hullett, Rubridge, Nel and Webster all died within the space of twenty days. Most of them built near to the water — and swamps. The doctor is of the opinion that they got fever because of irregular and bad food . . . In the vicinity they were so short of food that they had to eat their seed. Most of them came to this land with the assumption that there was plenty of game, and that they could subsist on meat and barter this with the natives for food. For days on end they just had no food. Game is not so plentiful, the natives have little food because the locusts destroyed most of that last year."

They were men of steel, Herbst, Hullett, Rubridge, Nel, Webster — twelve months before. Twelve months later just a name — and "all within twenty days" . . . They went as unobtrusively as they had entered the country and no wreath adorned their resting place.

The same fate befell the Steyn's Trek of 1895 and the Hulley and Cawood Trek of 1896: Veld fires, no game, no food; only the hand of a friend to comfort them.

Martin rarely complained about his own condition. He was careful to select a high-lying area for the site of a house and ploughed day in and day out to cultivate the raw soil of his farm Rocklands. Several meetings were held to discuss the situation of the settlers, and in 1895 they informed the authorities that these Melsetter farmers were not a crowd of adventurers or prospectors who had come to try and get rich quickly. They requested an opportunity to discuss the conditions of acquiring farms and to demand the presence of a surveyor to help them with roads and beacons.

However, in February, 1896 even Martin began to feel the strain. "Our condition is one of real woe — also that of the Steyn Trek. We cannot barter any more food from the natives, because they have nothing, the locusts having destroyed it all. The rivers between Chimoya and Umtali are in flood and so our wagons cannot get through to fetch our provisions. My son, Jan, wanted to go but had to return empty-handed. To crown it all he and the boys contracted fever in the Portuguese lowlands . . . I have to supply the needs of two families who arrived here with the last Trek in dire circumstances. I have to provide food for them . . . and many days we had no food in the house. However, the Lord has always made provision to supply our needs."

Clothing was scarce and getting more and more worn. Old Mrs. Kok, the family nurse, had only one dress left and had to wrap a towel round her when that had to be washed. The daughters were allowed two dresses: one for Sunday and one for the week. Mr. Martin, with his usual foresight, had brought a few rolls of material with him, but these could not last for ever.

The one pair of black and white stockings were reserved only for church services — and were then only put on when they were near the place of assembly. There was great tragedy on one occasion when it was discovered that a rat had stolen one stocking to use it as a nest for her young!

The women and children skinned the legs of the eland which the men had shot, and this skin they wrapped around their legs so that the shrubs would not scratch them so much. Fortunately one or two farmers were excellent shoemakers (especially Mr. Ewert Steyn) and they provided those near them with "veldschoens", made from the skins of the animals killed for meat. In many cases the settlers had to make their own shoes however, women and children included!

Hats were made from the leaves of the Lala plant which were plaited and, for church purposes, lined with remnants of cloth. For powder they used a kind of white clay which, when allowed to dry in the sun, became very soft and fine. It was also used on the babies (Mike Kok was supposed to be the first one on which it was tried out).

Bread was very scarce and pumpkin and stamped mealies had to be used instead. Honey was used instead of sugar, and a bit of bartered rapoko meal was the staple diet. Sometimes there were sweet-potatoes and coffee made from maize; and, of course, an occasional piece of venison. The rapoko or kaffir-corn meal was new to most of the Trekkers and they had no idea how to prepare it. The first attempt was a sticky lump which they decided to give to a dog. It stuck to his teeth and he refused to eat it. For a long time thereafter the Trekkers thought that it contained harmful ingredients and went without it.

Eventually the tent flaps were cut off to make clothes for the young children — especially trousers and shirts for the boys. Old clothes, as well as new ones when they could afford to make these, were exchanged for food from the native women. Before many months, bedding and table linen had to be cut up for dresses for these women who wanted to barter almost all their possessions in the way of food for a dress. After a while the natives got wiser and brought only sufficient food for a couple of days, so that it was a hand-to-mouth existence for months on end. They had to contrive all kinds of ways to try and make a meal of anything and everything that was edible. When bread was made from mealie-meal, sweet potatoes were used to bind the meal.

Matches and needles were carefully guarded, and many families found to their embarrassment that their matches had got wet during the rainy season. Candles were made of the fat or dripping of the eland, but very often the cat or dog would smell them out and disappear with them! The only solution was an early night with a fire that had to be kept going day and night. Salt was all used up and when a native was sent to Chimoya to fetch some, he was caught in the rain and it all melted. The fowls which supplied eggs, had eventually to be sold (some for as much as £1 5s. at Chimoya) and another source of food supply had disappeared. The children tried to catch rats for food; one of them, J. P. Kruger followed two rats down an antbear hole and got stuck in it. He was only discovered late that night when other animals were already beginning to sniff around.

D. M. Stanley who roughed it with these Trekkers recalls two incidents typical of that period. Girls, as has been said already, had to work as hard as boys. (The Melsetter people will long remember the name of Gertie Kok!) In one case brother and sister had to look after the few domestic animals — in this case pigs. The ration of the children consisted of a piece of meat and some mealies. The little girl, who was the elder of the two, tried to make the herding of these pigs easier by feeding half of her ration to an old pig who otherwise would have strayed for miles into the thick bush.

In another case a farmer had heard that his neighbour had no food and that there was malaria in the house. On his way to his lands he shot an eland. He called his wife and two daughters of sixteen and eleven to skin the animal and to cut it up so that he could take some to his neighbour that afternoon. They had scarcely begun when two lions made their appearance and watched the operation. The women were too scared to try and go home and too concerned about their own meat position to want to supply the lions with the eland. From ten o'clock till two that day with one eye on the lions and the other on the eland, they did their part of the work. When the husband arrived he shot one lion and the other fled into the woods.

The rains caused almost everything to turn mouldy unless it was hung in the sun to dry. A variety of green fly would settle in the blankets and consequently there was much trouble removing these in front of the fire in the evenings before they dared to go to bed. The dampness was so bad that when Mr. Hefer one evening hung his trousers over a wooden pole the seat of the trousers remained stuck to the post the following morning when he tried to take it down. Very often, especially during a sudden storm at night, the rains would come through the thatch roof and the family had to sit up for the rest of the night while they tried to dry the bedding and themselves in front of the fire. It was only after the rainy seasons when the grass was taller, that they could build the more substantial pole and mud huts. The first huts were usually built where the zebras had rolled, but the clay was not always proof against the continuous rain, as the poles, as well as everything else, seemed to be the feasting place of the white ants. One morning Mr. Hans Kok discovered that his boots had disappeared. A terrible loss! Every corner and box were inspected, but the boots could not be found. At last two small antheps were noticed and when these were demolished it was found that the boots had been either covered or buried inside these heaps!

In spite of all these difficulties the spirits of many of the settlers remained high. They had a simple faith in the God of their fathers that better days were ahead and that if they did their duty, the Lord would provide. And He did. Whenever things were at their worst or food would have run out, a native woman would appear with something to eat, relates Mrs. Kok. "If you know there is no food, and no chance to get any, then you simply have to trust" was her philosophy. In North and South Melsetter she was the doctor. Wild worm-wood medicine was her antidote against malaria, and with the assistance of a box of medicine which Martin had brought with him, she nursed many of the sick back to health. She travelled up and down that part of the country in rain and sunshine for births and deaths, so much so that wherever "Tant Rosa" went hope burnt anew in the despondent heart. Her Minister, Rev. Le Roux said of her: "Many a day the waters of distress were close to our lips, and many times I wept with her and sought God's face with her. But always her words were 'God is good. He does not treat us as we deserve. I know He will put matters right.' Many days her journeys were in the dark of night and over mountains, sometimes she would be soaking wet and have nothing dry to put on. But always she would be encouraging people, urging them to pray and to worship. She was always ready to serve, ready to walk miles to a place of worship."

This Dutch Reformed Minister, the Rev. Le Roux, did much to bring coherence to the community. So also did Mr. Longden, the new magistrate and the Native Commissioner, Mr. Meredith, whose wife did so much to supply clothing to the needy in the district. Mr. Meredith also acted as the unofficial dentist, but only where extraction was necessary! In addition he was the only photographer.

When Mr. Longden arrived he was not at all satisfied with the whole set up of the territory, and he spoke in no uncertain terms about haphazard arrangements for occupation, lack of control and foresight. He blamed Dunbar Moodie for much of the ill-feeling and for many of the bad conditions which existed in the area, and said that that was one reason why many farmers had decided to leave the territory. "He seems entirely to have studied his own interests," he continued, "at the expense of those of the country; and the settlers complain bitterly of the exorbitant fees he has in many cases charged for anything he did for them, even in his official capacity; and complaints are rife of injustice and partiality in compelling farmers to accept whatever ground he chose to give them. In many cases farms

had been changed, beacons altered to suit the convenience of his special friends, causing great hardships and inconvenience to the others. Many farmers who have been settled in the country for more than a year have not been able to obtain even a Certificate of Right; whereas I found that numerous friends of his residing in the Free State and elsewhere, and who have never been in this country, have had titles issued to them for farms in this district. The consequence is that great confusion prevails." People had paid Dunbar for surveying their farms (the magistrate found receipts of £100 which had never been paid in to the Government Accountant) and they were not willing to pay more money in these difficult circumstances for another surveyor.

In the Magistrate's Office he found the same confusion. The previous magistrate, Mr. Heugh, had brought about no improvement, "and did nothing but offend the settlers by his high-handed conduct, resulting in the late unanimous agitation for his removal". Heugh did not understand these people, was not a healthy man, had a miserable home life and even tried to bribe one or two of the farmers.

Longden became a beloved man and spent the greater part of his life in the service of this community. He organised the public life and decided that the proper place for Melsetter — as had been recommended by Heugh — was not to be Moodie's area at Chipinga near Water Fall but in the vicinity of a farm of G. F. Heyns, Dunbarton, as this would be more central. Feelings ran high for some time but eventually the official status was bestowed on the new site and Melsetter shifted about 70 miles to the north. The old name Chipinga was retained for the Moodie Settlement.

Longden also finally settled the dispute about the Portuguese boundary. The rather tense situation was solved when he met the Portuguese leader, Lieut. Serego, on the Border early in January 1896, to try and remove causes for possible friction. By this time (1896) there were 314 Europeans as against 13,245 Africans in the area. 11,530 acres had been worked by the latter, but many Africans (over 2,000) were leaving the area to work in the gold mines of Johannesburg and Kimberley. The Africans had to pay a hut tax of 10s., which tax was paid by means of goats which they brought to auction at the farm Kenilworth, and since 1896 the total income surpassed the expenditure!

A general dealer's licence was also issued to Mr. Cannell, the first shop-keeper, in 1895.

There was not a great deal of work for the magistrate and up to 1895 there were only six crimes. Only two of the accused were found guilty. There was, therefore, no need for a jail, which, nevertheless, Mr. Longden felt should be built (1897).

Perhaps the biggest source of income was obtained by means of transport business to and from Chimoya and Beira to Umtali. All building materials were conveyed up the Pungwe River by means of a steamboat *Agnes* with a whole string of cargo boats on tow to a place about 60 miles from Beira. From there everything — even building timber and galvanized iron roofing had to be carried by natives to Chimoya or Macequea, and from there wagons helped to distribute these over the territory. It meant that only limited quantities could be transported. In addition the rivers were sometimes so high that days and days had to be spent waiting for the waters to subside. When the road through Melsetter was used during the rainy season many a wagon spent months on the road so that food supplies were most irregular.

Fees for transport — whether by boat, wagon or carried by an African (pakamina) were high, because heavy losses were incurred by the time spent on the journey, the bad weather, the white ants, etc. Many drivers charged exorbitant fees for what they brought — some as much as £10 a day during the rinderpest period. These high prices had an effect on the other occupations where, for example, the prices charged for sawing or for bricklaying were exceptionally high. At its best native labour was uncertain and not very satisfactory.

The transport business was later extended from Umtali to Salisbury, but it meant that the farmers on transport had to be away from their, as yet undeveloped, farms for many months, and had to leave their wives on the farms so as to ensure "effective occupation". Many times their wagons had to stand in front of flooded rivers for days on end. On one such occasion, a whole troop of wagons was held up for eight days. The only thing the party could do was to organise games, hunting expeditions, and because there were ladies with some of the wagons — a dance.

One young woman, who was the bride of Heyns at Fort Victoria, and a daughter of the widow Du Preez who joined the Martin Trek, accompanied her husband on one of his trips from Melsetter to Umtali. On the way she became very ill and had to be carried back in a "meschela" carried by four natives. They dared not stop on the way for fear it would be the end.

She only lived for a few hours after they arrived at her mother's house. Thus another dream of life in Gazaland crashed.

One more death on the road was that of Van Heerden who was alone with his wagon. When news of his death reached his friends at Melsetter, some started to dig a grave and others set out to fetch his body, but when they arrived at his wagon the other transport drivers who had passed by had taken the body, wrapped it in blankets and buried it next to the road.

Needless to say the transport riders looked after their animals as if they were their children. Steyn actually had half a team of oxen and half a team of donkeys; and although the chains and harness of this uneven team often broke, and although the wagon often got stuck, or wheels lost their spokes, they never let him down. Ferreira had two leader-oxen for which he was offered £105, but of course he refused, for that might have meant the end of his other earnings. The British South African Company supplied these farmers with donkeys during the time of the rinderpest at about £16 apiece so that their main source of income was not stopped. However, about half of the donkeys also died from the disease.

There are many tales of these old travellers, and they probably had as many more to tell when they squatted round their camp fires by night. Mr. Muller discovered a plan for getting donkeys to exert themselves a little more by putting some mealies in an empty tin and shaking the tin in front of the donkeys. This he discovered one day when his animals refused to pull his wagon up an incline. Serfontein used the same method to collect his donkeys after an outspan! Philip Nel had discovered a place to outspan where there was good grazing. Some others discovered it too. Nel then spread the story that there was a grave in that place, and that it was rather spooky and dangerous to stop there. It was only many months later that the true motive was revealed.

When the conditions were so bad many of these farmers decided to leave Gazaland and to go back to South Africa — either permanently or for a few months. The pity was that they lost their farms if these were left unoccupied for more than three months. Some tried other parts of the country, like Hefer and young Van Rooyen and Spies. They went to Fort Victoria where they were fortunate enough to obtain more oxen and then decided to continue their transport business between Fort Victoria and Salisbury. Some tried to exchange their farms in the Melsetter district for farms in Charter, but were not always successful. Van Rooyen and Hefer built up a successful

trade within a short time, but then Van Rooyen, whose father had died the previous year in Melsetter, contracted malaria and also died.

Mr. Hefer decided to continue and eventually never left the country, but many of his fellow-trekkers, like Scholtz, Heyns, Ferreira and others, went back to the Free State.

These men are still to-day full of praise for the courage of their womenfolk. They were really the "king-pins", and the only source of those finer qualities which could so easily degenerate in the veld and jungle. "Sweet and sour tasted alike in those days," was Hefer's comment.

## Chapter 15

### CHURCH AND SCHOOL

ALTHOUGH LITTLE is known of the early history of Gazaland or even of that vast mysterious kingdom of Monomatapa, many fables and stories have accumulated about this kingdom, the only one recognised south of the Sahara. It was reported in Europe, during and after the Renaissance, that this mighty empire, highly civilised and very rich, was the native home of the Queen of Sheba and perhaps other famous figures, and that the men had long hair which drooped to the ground; that they were powerful, that they tamed the lions and used them in warfare. Also that some were cannibals, but the majority were traders of gold along the East Coast of Africa and in Arabia.

When the strain between East and West reached breaking point with the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453, whereby Constantinople fell in the hands of the Turks and the trade route to the East was closed to European merchants, then indeed there was much speculation as to how the forces in Africa could be mobilised against the Moors and Mohammedans.

When the Dutch came out to start the settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, a small expedition actually asked permission of the founder, Jan van Riebeeck, soon after they had landed, to proceed inland to try and locate this Monomatapa. Needless to say they returned after a few days never having realised that this territory was between 2000-3000 miles from the Cape. The cloak of secrecy continued to shield Africa from the world.

The Portuguese missionaries who moved into the country along the East and West Coast gradually added to these stories, and by the 17th century a fairly clear picture of conditions in South Central Africa had been built up. From a religious point of view it was discovered that the inhabitants, "Bantu", were mostly spirit worshippers (ancestral), but that they had also trees and caves, etc. for the "Unknown God". For the rest they were pagans.

At the time of the Great Trek when the Zulu impis had swung back northwards, various missionary enterprises followed on their tracks and Africa became almost as famous a mission field as it was a source of slave supply previous to that date.

In 1836 the American Mission — only one of many — penetrated deeper into Africa from the south, and went as far as

Mafeking where three mission families started their mission. One of the women, Mrs. Wilson, died there (it is said that her grave is still being looked after by the local inhabitants to-day), and when the northward sweep of the Zulus made it too unsafe, the party moved to Natal where the Zulu monarch Dingaan had just been repulsed by the white man.

The Council of this American Mission Society, however, was determined that their original plan of proceeding ever northward towards the heart of Africa (the Great Lakes) would not be abandoned. When, therefore, one of their officials, Means, who was well acquainted with the country, went to America in 1879 to report on the possibilities of mission stations to the north of the Transvaal, it was decided to open up two new fields: One to the west of Bibe River and the other to the east of this river, in the territory of the native chief Moila (or Umzila). The Rev. Penkerton was sent up from his station in Natal to inspect the country and to study the habits, etc. of the native people. Unfortunately he fell a victim to malaria and enteric and died before he could do very much. His successor, Richards, tried to come up, but he was alone, and could not stay. In 1888 a third expedition was organised with Messrs. Wilder and Bates to discuss matters with Ngungunyana, Umzila's son. The gold-fever of the Portuguese and the prospectors however and fear of being swamped by too many white men, had made Ungungunyana very careful. All that the two missionaries were told was, "Your feet have been too slow in coming; we now have other missionaries here; we cannot take you as well . . ." With heavy tread they had to return to their base.

After the British South African Company had gained control of the territory, however, two other members of this mission, Messrs. Wilcox and Thompson, asked Rhodes (1891) for permission to start their "East Central African Mission" in Gazaland. He studied the map and proposed the area near the present Mt. Silinda — a farm later occupied by Mr. Steyn. This was purchased from Steyn for £300, and in 1892 Messrs. Thompson, Wilder and Bunker made their appearance in Gazaland, with recommendations for a permanent settlement. Thus after 60 years of trying, the efforts of this Society were crowned with success. The staff of the station was duly appointed and eventually consisted of Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Wilder, Mr. and Mrs. Bates, Dr. and Mrs. W. L. Thompson — all from the Zulu Mission — Mr. and Mrs. Bunker and Miss Jones from the Inhambane Mission.

They left Durban in June, 1893, and after their arrival in Beira they visited the kraal of Jobo, one of the most influential chiefs, about thirty miles from that port, who had requested them to stay there. They then proceeded to the Lower Busi, rowing upstream for about seventy miles and using about 40 hollowed-out tree trunks as their vehicles to convey the luggage, etc.

The road from Manyi kraal had to be undertaken by foot, and many weeks were spent on the 100 mile road to the kraal of Chibababa and Mt. Silinda where they eventually arrived on the 19th October — having performed a few operations on the road!

They thought they would be the first Europeans in that area except the Portuguese at Mozzorezi, but were overjoyed to make the acquaintance of the Moodies who had arrived in January of that year.

What assistance could be given by these Trekkers was gladly given, and from that date the most cordial relationship continued to exist between these two sections of the community. The Trekkers soon realised that the struggle of these people against the heathen powers and the witch-doctors, their endurance and conviction, their zeal and willingness to help in the spiritual, physical and mental development of both black and white were deserving of no lesser a place in the roll of honour than that of the pioneers themselves. The fame of their medical services soon spread across the whole territory and whenever it was possible the whites went to this centre for treatment. On many occasions the mission doctor, Dr. Thompson, was sent for by those Trekkers who could not travel by wagon to Mt. Silinda and he was never known to have excused himself.

In 1893 Dunbar Moodie — who seemed to regard the venture as a bit of a joke — wrote that “in other lands the bar comes first and then the minister, to convert the people from their evil ways. But it is not so in this model country. We provide a better example. Firstly the minister and missionaries arrive — no less than three! — and we all wonder whether the bar, if it comes, will be able to swing matters round again, and what kind of a job it would make of it”! In 1894 he boasted about their three ministers, their medical doctor, one “quack” — and stated that the only thing needed now were a “few Salvation Army lassies” to provide some diversion . . .” He went on to discuss the great work performed by the Revs. Wilder, Banker, Bates, Dr. Thompson and the others, and how all Colonists viewed with approval the nature of their work. They had started an industrial school which the settlers thought much better for

the simple-minded Africans than the singing of Psalms and Hymns!

For the first few years the settlers went to these officials for their marriage, baptism and funeral services. It was soon evident that the whites had created an environment which would effect the work of the missionaries, and therefore, the closest co-operation and understanding were necessary. Consequently in 1894 a committee was appointed whose task it was to consider what could be done to start a school for the children of the settlers. This request also came from the farmers themselves who stated that their children would otherwise grow up as barbarians.

This committee recommended that the work of educating these white children be proceeded with, but official approval had to be awaited from the United States. Consequently the years 1894, and 1895 and most of 1896 passed before anything could be done about the suggestion. In November, 1896, plans for the first school at the station were put into effect and sixteen children were enrolled. It was no easy undertaking. Many farmers were sceptical, especially as they were not of the same faith, most of the farms were a long way away from this centre, and neither the Mission Council nor the British South African Company were willing to assist financially with the construction of a building, or with any salaries.

This school continued to exist for a few years and those farmers who could afford it sent their children as boarders. They all spoke of the noble work performed on behalf of their children, and of the very excellent results which were obtained. Mrs. Martin, for example, relates how her mother, the widow Du Preez, started to teach them on the farm, but had sent her with about twenty other boys as boarders to Mt. Silinda when the school was opened there. "We had to learn with the native children because there was only one classroom. There was, of course, no inspector, and the teacher, a Miss Gilson, passed us as far as we could go, namely Standard Four."

The fame of the school at Mt. Silinda soon spread and towards the end of that decade the farmers in the Chimanimani area approached the magistrate to inquire whether it would not be possible for the mission to start a school at Melsetter itself (the new one).

Various attempts had been made to try and start a school in this area. The settlers' own spiritual leader and teacher, the Rev. Le Roux, had arrived in 1895 but it was impossible for him to run three schools: one in North, one in South and one

in Central Melsetter (about 70 miles apart). The government and the Rev. Le Roux had made various attempts to start a school or to obtain teachers for these three centres. At one stage there was a school in each of these areas. Mr. Rhodes himself was most sympathetic and had offered to pay £150 per year for three years to each of these schools, but there seemed to be no leader and also some distrust amongst the settlers so that very little came of this scheme, except in North Melsetter where there was a school with 33 pupils at one stage. Its existence was very precarious until the Rev. Le Roux took it over. On one occasion the school closed suddenly with the marriage of the teacher to one of his 14 year old pupils; another time the teacher left suddenly to take up some other occupation in another town.

Now, however, with concrete suggestions placed before the mission authorities on the one hand and the Government on the other, it seemed as if there would be an end to all these uncertainties. The Missionaries made the proposal and the Government accepted the scheme with a few minor alterations. A telegraphic reply of two hundred and fifty words outlined the Government's consent and contribution. The Mission Station was to supply the teachers and half of the money for suitable buildings. The Government would provide £300 per annum for two years as well as six building plots in the town, four acres just outside the town and the other half of the money for the buildings at 5 per cent interest over a period of fifty years. In the meantime the Government would hire suitable buildings.

Children had to pay £1 10s. school fees, and girls over eight and boys over twelve years of age would later be accepted as boarders at the rate of ten shillings per week.

The person selected as the first teacher of this new school was Miss Gilson. She used to be a teacher at the mission in 1893. She had taught at Stellenbosch with at least one other teacher, who later came to Gazaland, Miss Le Roux (Mrs. Andries Kok). Miss Gilson reported that when the school was started with four boarders and seven day scholars, some parents were very sceptical about the "American religion" that might be taught to their children. Others wanted to wait and see.

When the work was first started the people had more or less established themselves and funds were available. Cattle had increased, more land was being cultivated, and the transport-riding brought in cash. When cattle began to die, the Government made generous grants by paying the school fees and up to two-thirds of the board.

"From its inception it was a work of faith," stated Miss

Gilson; "but all their needs were supplied, and they could go forward with ever greater trust."

When the boarders increased to about thirty-six, the girls were housed in a separate building. "The big boys of 18 years and older," Mr. J. A. Kok recalled, "led this teacher quite a life at times, but she was a good disciplinarian and kept them all under control. She almost always discovered what we were up to — for example when we went to steal fruit or to swim naked in the river . . . Our school day started at seven when we had to do all kinds of jobs around the house, and then in school from eight to one, and from two to four — except Saturdays. On Mondays we spent the morning section cleaning the yard, or helping with the potatoes or beans, etc. We had to chop wood and crush mealies with a hand-machine every day. The blessed thing was so blunt . . . We had to make streets as well; one work we did not like and which we soon stopped was to fill the girls' baths with hot and cold water!

"I found starting school with 'Hiawatha' and Shakespeare a bit tough! . . ."

The vast majority of these Trekkers were of Dutch or Afrikaans-speaking extraction, and members of the Dutch Reformed Church. The Synod of this Church sent two delegates in 1892, the Rev. Hofmeyr and Stegman, to investigate the conditions of their flock in Mashonaland. They had a most interesting trip and left some valuable information of those days. The Dutch Reformed Mission at Morgenster (Gt. Zimbabwe) had just been opened up by the Rev. A. A. Louw, and extended a hearty welcome to whichever visitor passed its door.

This two-man commission recommended that a Minister of the Church at once be sent, and the Rev. Nel decided to take this work upon himself. He came up to Mashonaland and ministered to the people between Fort Tuli and Salisbury. Later that year the Matabele Rebellion broke out. Most of the able-bodied men went on active service and the Rev. Nel volunteered to act as chaplain for his section of the soldiers. This suggestion was not accepted and he felt that it would be a waste of time to hang around. He then very reluctantly went back to South Africa.

The next move came after the Martin Trek arrived in GAZALAND. Martin had spoken to the Rev. Andrew Murray, and now he reminded him of their discussion in the Free State. This matter was again raised at the Synod of 1895, and young men were asked to come forward for this work.

The call came very strongly to an able and popular young

minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at Wynberg, the Rev. P. A. Strasheim, who felt that he would be the answer to the Lord's request of "whom shall I send"? Wynberg at that time was one of the oldest congregations in South Africa and there was no doubt that he would be sacrificing a very comfortable life for the pioneering work which awaited any minister in Rhodesia. (See his book, P. A. Strasheim: *In the Land of Cecil Rhodes*.)

He took his leave of the twenty-three public and church bodies on which he served, and, taking a young man, Groenewald, with him as guide, companion and assistant, he set off for Tuli and Fort Victoria. He stayed at Fort Victoria for a month, visited Morgenster Mission and then went to Bulawayo. Here he found a large community of Afrikaans-speaking people and started a Dutch Reformed Church congregation on the 6th September, 1895. He discussed the opening of a school with the Administrator, who offered to assist, and the first Dutch Reformed School was started in October with Groenewald as the minister and the teacher. He thereupon went to Fort Charter, Salisbury and Umtali.

Martin had sent three men to Umtali to welcome him to Gazaland, but he knew nothing of the arrangement and was, of course, happily surprised. Martin had also sent his own horse, Poon — about the only horse left in the district — for the minister to ride. One of the men would accompany him, but had to walk.

The journey to Gazaland was not without incidents. The native carriers seemed lazy and obstinate and by the third day were a very long way behind. They also took up a threatening attitude and the guide thought that he could frighten them by firing a few shots in the air. When he had finished, the carriers thought that his revolver was empty — as indeed it was — and grabbed their own weapons to rush the two white men. But the Rev. Strasheim was also armed with a revolver. He pointed it towards them and this gave Van der Merwe, the guide, an opportunity to reload. The carriers thereupon ran away into the wood, leaving all the luggage. The two white men slept at the huts of a Mr. McAndrew that night and informed the police of what had happened. The latter soon tracked down the culprits, gave them a good hiding, and the party could set off again — with spirits not very high! It also started to rain and one night water flooded their tent.

They were indeed very much relieved when they eventually arrived at the widow Du Preez' house where Martin welcomed

them. From there they went to Martin's house, Rocklands, the guide riding on the donkey which had brought Martin, because his feet were too badly blistered to walk any further. Martin walked with them. On the way it started to rain and they were soaking wet when they arrived at the farm. The carriers had disappeared with all the luggage and only turned up the following day (Sunday) after the Rev. Strasheim had borrowed clothes from Martin to put on for his first service in Gazaland.

He was very proud of the fact that the whole of Rhodesia was his parish and he set about bringing coherence to the various scattered communities. He called the Gazaland people together for a meeting at which it was resolved (12th October, 1895) to start an official community of the Dutch Reformed Church. He divided the area into North, Central and South Melsetter and expressed the hope that Central Melsetter would form the nucleus of the new congregation. From the Administration he obtained ground for a church and parsonage, and also assistance for a teacher. (£300 on the £ for £ principle.)

After an attack of malaria, he went back via Rusapi to Laurencedale Settlement — the first attempt to colonise this part of Rhodesia — to visit the grave of the young leader Laurence van der Byl whom he knew so well in South Africa and who had left Kensington so full of life a few years earlier.

The Rev. Strasheim continued his pilgrimage through Rhodesia founding various congregations and arranging with the authorities to assist any teacher who might want to undertake school work. He then went back to South Africa and recruited two young missionaries who had just completed their studies, the Revs. A. Liebenberg and P. le Roux. He brought them back as pastors and teachers — the former to Enkeldoorn and the Rev. Le Roux to Melsetter.

The latter described his first acquaintance with the district as follows: "When we were near a Mr. Olwage's farm, my driver (we were travelling in a wagon and ten oxen), Mr. Hans Kok, said, 'There on the top of the hill is Melsetter.' I looked and looked, saw high trees and grass but nowhere did I spot a house. Perhaps it was on the other side. Eventually I saw the top of a hut sticking out of the grass. And suddenly the whole truth dawned on me: these people were not living in comfortable houses but in huts! 'Do you see that house in the hollow of that hill? Well, that belongs to Mr. Heyns and that's where you are going to stay. Those other three huts further up the ridge are meant for you. The other group to the right is the magistrate's office and the post office, my informant went on.'"

The Rev. Le Roux at once organised the community and started the school the following week — without slates, books, pencils or a blackboard. His few items for the school had still to be ordered from Umtali, the nearest depot.

For several years he continued his work as school master and minister; but although he might serve the three districts of Melsester as pastor he could not do so as teacher. Many attempts were made to start schools in the other two centres, but it was not until the Mt. Silinda Mission volunteered to help that the second school could be organised. In 1903, when Mr. Rhodes visited the district, Mr. Le Roux acted as interpreter on the occasions when he addressed the settlers. Mr. Rhodes promised him full assistance for three schools and he would see to it when he arrived in Salisbury. Mr. Rhodes also listened to various other grievances, helped four settlers to obtain farms, and when he left the whole community was deeply appreciative of his sympathy and understanding. There seemed to be no doubt that he, personally, would have done a great deal to develop this district, but he died about ten months after this visit.

The Rev. Le Roux worked in Melsester for eight years. "Those were the happiest years of my life," he wrote. "There was never any friction or misunderstanding . . ." He never complained about the many miles he had to travel, first on foot, and later with a donkey, to visit his flock on their farms, but he left behind him a grateful people. He saw much progress during his years of office. The first school building — a hut without any windows or desks and with a grass door — gave place to more substantial buildings and when a hostel was eventually built, every child was given the opportunity to attend.

Like the Rev. Strasheim, he found these people men of steel and he made no small contribution to their intellectual and spiritual welfare, in an attempt to reward the patient labour and far-sighted spirit of the founder of that state.

## Chapter 16

### RINDERPEST, THE NATIVES AND THE PORTUGUESE

"THE RINDERPEST swept like a storm of hell through the country, sowing devastation wherever it went and leaving practically no beast untouched," Mr. Hefer recorded. For many of these people, their first and last hope of making a living was centred upon their cattle, and when this outbreak occurred early in 1896 this hope disappeared.

Mr. Hefer recalls how he was riding transport to and from Umtali in March, 1896. As he crossed Devil's Pass he noticed that the whole road was covered with signs of diseased cattle, but paid no attention to it. At the bottom of the hill he decided to outspan, and there met Abraham Spies who told him that it was his oxen which showed all these signs. He did not know what disease it was and thought it might be some kind of poisonous herb. The following day Spies met Malherbe about six miles from Umtali who also complained about the strange signs, but had no idea what the cause could be. That same afternoon word came through from Salisbury that a disease called rinderpest had broken out amongst the cattle, and that nobody was allowed on the road with any beast.

Hefer, who had proceeded to Macaqueque, only heard about the order when he arrived there and was held up by the Commandant, who told him that his cattle had to remain encamped at least a mile from the road and about three miles from the town. He demanded a safe place for his three wagons, and after an argument with the authorities, Van Riet volunteered to look after them on his erf. Hefer drove his oxen to a hill and camped there for about a week. At the end of that time there were only two oxen left of the three teams. These he took back to Van Riet who offered him £20 apiece. Because he was in Portuguese territory, he had no right to claim the allowance of £7 granted by the British South African Company for any animal that had to be destroyed as a result of this disease. For him it had meant a new start altogether.

In Southern Melssetter practically every beast died and the farmers who had any left had to join their remnants in a span for ploughing or transport purposes. The people had to walk — some 130 miles or more — to Umtali to seek food and work,

and in many cases the British South African Company supported them.

The Native Commissioner, Mr. Meredith, collected teams of African carriers to go to Chimoya and to bring food which was then rationed, to the settlers or the women and children who remained behind. "It was pathetic," he wrote, "to see how the cattle died. The people had nothing with which to plough their lands . . ."

To crown it all the Mashona Rebellion broke out later that year, and it was dangerous for a European to be on the road or alone on the farm. It was not very certain how the natives of the eastern part of the country would react to the Rebellion, but everybody thought that they would consider this a golden opportunity of attacking the residents and settlers in Umtali and Melsetter. In September, 1892, the son and grandson of Mtasa, Zumbazo, had gone to Cape Town via Durban to protest against the appropriation (1888) by the British South African Company from a syndicate of a piece of territory in Manicaland which the native people considered to be their property. When Lobengula had rebelled in 1893, feelings rose high in Manicaland, but fortunately nothing serious occurred. At that time it was told that Lobengula had sent the following message to Ngungunyana:

"Ngungunyana, I am here: I am the messenger of sad news from Lobengula. O Chief! Listen to the words of Lobengula, O Ngungunyana! I am a dog! I am spoiled; I am a dog that has come to seek safety and shelter in the woods — like a wolf. I am a king no more. Be warned! My impis killed the Mahalaha dogs who worked for the white man; and a handful of white men have driven me out, killed my impis and taken my land. Ngungunyana be warned. Leave the white man alone."

Ngungunyana was between two fires. At his back the Portuguese were exerting pressure on him to move back to his old kraal at Manhlagazi (Melsetter), but the white people had already settled there. The Portuguese were not satisfied with the decision of the Leversohn Boundary Commission, and used all kinds of threats against Ngungunyana should he refuse to go back. However, the words of Lobengula must have been taken seriously, for he did refuse — and was subsequently taken captive and banished by the Portuguese. Now, three years later, Melsetter was severed from all connections with Salisbury, the centre of the rebellion, and for eight months uncertainty and fear reigned in Manicaland and Gazaland.

In Gazaland itself there were, fortunately, no incidents

except that which was caused by a false alarm starting with a Mrs. Labuschagne. She had apparently overheard some of the native boys talking about the rebellion, and thought that it referred to their plan in Melsetter. She told her neighbour, Jan de Beer who then went off to Umtali to call the menfolk who were on the road to come to a laager in South Melsetter. He also took the message to the local magistrate who at once ordered two laagers for the district: one in North and the other in South Melsetter. The result was real consternation. The farms had to be left, valuables were buried, what little food there was packed, or in some cases left as chicken food.

In Melsetter they entrenched themselves with sandbags and everything was organised on a military basis, and the Portuguese were asked to supply additional ammunition. One day three Shangaans did make their appearance, just looked at all the preparations and disappeared again. This put more fear into the inhabitants. When a certain Jannie van der Riet arrived with some horses he had brought from South Africa, these were immediately commandeered, and a mounted force decided to go out to meet the enemy on the farm De Beer had mentioned. In the meantime the transport riders to Umtali had come back and brought a small police force with them. The joint operation in the direction of the farm "Gungunyana" took place the following afternoon. But to their surprise and embarrassment they found no laager and the women, Mrs. Labuschagne and Mrs. Hamman, calm and at their ease. The magistrate expected that it was a false alarm and ordered an investigation. It then appeared, according to the Native Commissioner, Mr. Meredith, that one young man had told some others, including the headman, that on a certain night some men would appear with swords and would kill all those who were not in their huts. Mr. Meredith then realised that it was a twisted version of the Jewish Passover, and that the native had merely been relating this story (or his view of it) to his compatriots. There appeared to be no intention on the part of these natives to take part in the rebellion.

Rather grumpily the men went back and the laager was broken up. They had never been told the full story, and were rather fed up that they should be the victims of such a false report. They did not wait to get back to the laager, but disappeared on the way after an officer, whose horse was frightened by a buck, had fallen off.

In Northern Melsetter the settlers also waited patiently for the attack to begin. One day the native chief, Mutambara, did appear, but with a pot of beer, and to enquire why the white

men were afraid he would make war against them. He assured them there was no truth in the rumour and had brought this beer which the white man could drink with him. At first there was some suspicion (the people had not forgotten Dingaana's methods) but this soon proved groundless, and that was the end of the story. To-day, a Mission Station operates from this place (the huts of McAndrew at Mutambara).

At Umtali, however, many of the transport riders who never got to hear of the "call up" from Melsetter, joined the local defence force. In this district the conditions were altogether different, and several white people were killed by the natives before the defence or the attack could be organised. A laager was organised, and the men then set out in the direction of Makoni, the native chief who seemed the most dangerous. Makoni fled but his kraal was burnt down and about 200 of his men killed. From there, so Hefer, who was a volunteer relates, they went to Ruzowa where the natives had hidden themselves in a cave and had tied two calves at the entrance. The officer-in-charge, Lieut. Lelille, got down to loosen these calves and was shot. Morris, who went to his assistance was also shot. For a few days the cave was besieged but no native appeared, whereupon it was decided to blow up the cave with dynamite.

From there they proceeded to another chief, Gaatse, where Maj. Evens was killed while he was doing some reconnaissance work. Dynamite had also to be used against the chief.

The troops went back to Makoni; he was caught and shot and that meant the end of the war for Umtali, and, except for some discontent caused by the killing of their rinderpest cattle, the natives remained quiet and peaceful, and gratefully accepted the compensation awarded for the cattle that had to be killed.

The Portuguese appeared never fully to have accepted the 1891 decision of the boundary, and continued to regard the eastern districts as belonging to them. Several attempts, according to stories from these settlers, were made to intimidate them or to frighten them away. When Moodie had arrived a Portuguese officer was sent to arrest him; but Moodie took him captive, treated him with respect and then sent him back across the border. The same thing happened to two others, Spring and Oxley, who acted as the agents of the Portuguese.

The false alarm of Dunbar Moodie which had caused all the early settlers to trek to his laager at Kenilworth was, however, viewed in a more serious light by the authorities in Umtali who never seemed to feel quite safe with the Portuguese on their

border. The reports from Melsetter were perhaps a bit exaggerated by the time they reached Umtali, and sub-inspector Nesbitt was ordered to proceed to Melsetter to keep an eye on the position at the border. The *Umtali Advertiser* of December, 1894, welcomed this strong action on the part of the authorities, stating that the recent murder of MacDonald was too well-planned to be merely brushed aside.

Dunbar Moodie, who originally determined what he thought would be the boundary (at Chitatonga) never wavered from his decision. "Once you are in possession of the African forests, they are yours," he used to say. "And the Melsetter Colonists are now in possession of this territory." He and others, like Ballantyne, also tried to frighten the Portuguese with stories of Boer tactics and that once they got mixed up with these Dutch farmers in a fight, they only stood the chance of losing yet more territory. This, at least, was what Ballantyne was reported to have told the Portuguese at Chimoya where they had prepared their troops. According to him they listened to his advice, and never advanced beyond Chimoya.

In January, 1897, Signor Vigliani, G.C.M.G., was the final arbitrator in this dispute about the boundary and awarded about four-fifths of the disputed area of 1656 sq. miles to Rhodesia — an area which was already occupied by the settlers, but which was smaller than the British South African Company had originally intended. The new boundary was to be the watershed on the Chimanimani Mountains. For some farmers it meant a great loss. Mr. Henry's farm was more or less divided in half, and Mr. Steyn had to lose about 500 morgen. Mr. C. Dirking's farm was entirely in Portuguese territory, but he decided not to move.

After these difficulties were finally settled the Portuguese and the settlers became good friends and the Commandants, Machado and Santos, often invited the Dutch farmers to go on hunting expeditions with them. Mr. Mynhardt relates that Machado actually wanted to buy his wife for £500! He also offered him a good salary if he would be willing to settle and to keep an eye on the station.

The Portuguese did not stand much from the natives in their own area. Ngungunyana, the Lobengula of the East, had moved in the direction of Lourenço Marques where the Portuguese eventually took him captive and exiled him to Lisbon and subsequently to Cape Verde where he lived for about ten years. His territory went into the hands of Tshikwanda who also made his home at the old kraal near Melsetter. It was said

that fear for Ngungunyana and the Shangaans from the South kept the other tribes, the Magoligoli in Middle Melssetter and the Margarwas in South Melssetter, quiet during these days.

## Chapter 17

### THE PASSING YEARS

MORE AND more people gradually moved into the Eastern Districts and a strong sense of fellowship began to grow amongst the settlers. Perhaps the last Trek to suffer severe hardships was also the end of organised Treks to this part. It was the Hulley and Cawood Trek. These poor people went off the main road and got hopelessly lost. Their food began to run out and eventually they had to eat donkey meat, and afterwards they chewed the skins of animals. There was no water and for three days, almost paralysed by hunger and thirst they struggled on. At long last they heard the frogs croaking and discovered a pool of water where a lion had just pulled down an eland. Hastily a piece of this meat was cut off to save the life of a young baby whose mother's breasts had been sucked until nothing but blood flowed from them. The party was discovered here by some natives who guided them to Melsetter carrying Mrs. Cawood in a "palanquin" because she was too weak to travel in any other way.

But even this party found that with the help of friends it did not take very long to get on their feet.

Substantial houses were being built in the district and by about 1898 most of the families had brick homes. The lands were cultivated, the stock of cattle was increasing slowly and most of the necessities of life which could not be procured locally, were imported. The railway line was extended as far as Umtali and civilisation was brought much nearer. The road was improved and widened and a trip to Umtali could now be completed in six weeks.

It appeared as if game was also becoming more plentiful. Perhaps it was because they were no longer being hunted by the natives in such large numbers, or because veld fires had diminished. It meant, however, that lions and leopards also had more to feast on, and became a real menace to the farmers and their cattle. Mr. Olwage's son was once attacked by a leopard, and so was Mr. Gifford who managed to push the butt of his rifle in the animal's mouth and gave his young twelve-year old boy an opportunity to load and shoot. Bezuidenhout had a similar experience and he kept the leopard at bay with his rifle which failed to work at the crucial moment. Eventually

his brother arrived and he was so excited that he grabbed the hind leg of the leopard and tried to pull him away. Only then did he think of shooting. F. Prinsloo was another victim, and he was also attacked by a hippo which tore most of the flesh from his leg.

The community was very fortunate in the leaders of the district, more especially Mr. Longden, Mr. Meredith, Marthinus Martin and the Rev. P. le Roux. When Mr. Rhodes visited the settlement he found the farmers in good circumstances, contented and thriving. His private secretary, Mr. Philip Jourdan, records of that visit. (See *Jourdan: Cecil Rhodes*, p. 136.) "We travelled through a thick bush country, and consequently did not have such good sport as in other parts of Rhodesia. The nights were cold, but the days were beautifully sunny and the temperature moderate. One could not have desired more delightful weather for travelling. It made one feel buoyant and bright and well-disposed towards everybody and everything. We found the Dutch settlers in good circumstances, contented and thriving. They were indeed a very excellent class of settler; hard-working, courageous and determined bravely to face and overcome all their difficulties. Mr. Rhodes encouraged them to come to his camp and to unbosom themselves of all their troubles; but to his delight he found they had very few and were quite happy. He had a knack of making people feel at home, and I could see it gave them great pleasure to talk to him. He would sit and chat with them for hours and soon found out all about the settlement and how it was progressing. The settlers had two very excellent leaders to guide and advise them in Mr. Longden, the resident magistrate and "Flippie" le Roux, missionary and teacher. "It was a very pleasant surprise for me to meet 'Flippie' here. As boys we attended the same school . . . The Settlers . . . lived together like a big family, each sympathising with the others troubles and each gaining by the others experience. They looked upon Mr. Rhodes as their father and repeatedly told him so . . . We visited a good many of the neighbouring farms and found them most excellent for cattle. On one farm in particular situated on a high plateau, the cattle were sleek and fat. Mr. Rhodes felt quite sorry to leave these happy people, and they, in turn, showed genuine regret when he shook hands with them on his departure. He told them they were to come to him when in trouble and in need of his advice and assistance."

Rhodes showed great insight into the feelings of these people. Jourdan relates how he was cleaning his rifle one Sunday morning to go out shooting. When he saw me handle my gun, he

asked me not to shoot that day. "I am afraid you may offend the people. I know the Dutch are very particular in the observance of Sunday, and why risk giving them offence when you have plenty of opportunity to shoot on the other days of the week?"

Rhodes never lived to see the full development of his Gazaland dream. His death, like that of Thomas Moodie, came at a time when his people, after a decade, were ready to launch forward into bigger projects.

Shortly after the visit of Rhodes, another great tragedy occurred in the district with the death of Marthinus Martin (September 1904). He and his wife and son had gone on a hunting expedition with the Portuguese Commandant, Mr. Santos. They got as far as Shaya where practically the whole party went down with malaria. Mr. Martin had to be carried in a "meshela" (machila) and he died a few days after he had arrived on his farm. There was great sorrow in the whole district where he was considered the father. Not only did he bring the biggest Trek into that part, thus being responsible for the development of the present Melsetter, but he had a wonderful influence on his people — an influence which did more than anything else to promote co-operation and trust and goodwill amongst all the sections of the community. He was a very wise, tactful, consistent and kindhearted man, and would spend hours trying to find a solution to a conflict between two neighbours or to someone else's trouble. He was always welcomed as a mediator, and became one of those beloved leaders whose advice was continually being sought. He was made a Justice of the Peace soon after his arrival in the district, and was given permission to perform the offices of marriage, etc. He thus got to know the people of the whole district very intimately. When dark clouds rolled over these areas he blamed himself and went round to encourage the settlers. "I cannot understand Martin," Rhodes was said to have declared; "he thinks of the needs of everyone except his own." The Dutch Reformed Church, which owes its existence in Rhodesia in no small way to the zeal of Martin, and which he served so sacrificially and so faithfully, felt his loss perhaps as much as did his family. For many years to come church and community were often heard to say how differently things would have developed if Oom Marthinus — as he was affectionately known, had not been taken away so soon.

The district, never having had a railway line and continually having to face the threat of East Coast fever since 1901, when it wiped out almost all the cattle, had to face odds in its develop-

ment which were spared practically all the other districts of the Colony. The development was so slow that it never warranted a railway line, but, on the other hand, it was also because of the lack of a railway line that future settlers to the country sought ground elsewhere. On the whole the commercial growth of the district was never the first concern of the people in this area. The soft flowing streams with their numberless little waterfalls flowing eastwards through the wide grasslands no doubt created in the minds of them all at some time or another, the dream of huge dams and irrigation schemes to enable the soil to produce the hundredfold which it is able to do; a dream of many factories and co-operative schemes to establish a flourishing import and export trade; of thousands upon thousands of cattle grazing over the distant hills . . . and many other dreams.

The first dreamer and visionary, Thomas Moodie the patriarch, achieved something which very few are ever destined to achieve, but he was never allowed to taste much of the first fruits of his efforts. Webster, Bekker, Dunbar Moodie, Mynhardt, Martin . . . then Labuschagne, Gifford, Steyn, Henry and Moolman went, one after the other. They each came to perform their smaller or bigger part, and then without applause or show, quietly left the stage. And at their side, always faithful and always hopeful, were their wives. No soldier or prospector can make or develop a new country: it is the silent task and privilege of a woman. Failure to recognise this and to value her accordingly must eventually lead to a country's spiritual bankruptcy, but in this territory the signs of her determination in the midst of fear, disease and loneliness, of victory in the midst of bereavement, deprivation, floods and pests, were clearly to be seen. Some of them were privileged to grow old in this new country and to see their children and grandchildren settled as citizens of this El Dorado.

And what about their children? It is usually, and in the last instance, they, who have to pay the price of any pioneer venture: It might be a premature death or disease for them, a widowed mother or a lonely father. The comforts and enjoyments of a civilised community, of schooling, of Church and companionship were not for them. Nature was their great teacher and a boundless faith in the country—in spite of its vicissitudes—their hope. For them it was a hinterland — the only one they ever knew and their roots were sunk deep into the fertile soil. They would never forget the sacrifices and promises of the leaders — their fathers. They would remember Ebenhaezer, although the death of their cattle and horses made it impossible

to gather there regularly every five years as Martin had hoped.

Eventually "Ebenhaezer" was removed to Middle Melsetter: All the stones were conveyed thither by Messrs. Andries Kok and Mr. Sonnell and the names of the Trekkers put in a bottle and placed inside the new memorial. Mr. Kok especially became enthusiastic about a more substantial memorial to all the pioneers, and suggested that a committee be appointed, more particularly of the children of the Trekkers, to work towards the realisation of such a tribute and to try to have it completed when the occupation of Gazaland would be fifty years old, i.e. in 1953. Only two Trek leaders, Kruger and Ernst du Plessis lived to that year.

The old pioneer road of Moodie has long since been overgrown with shrubs and a new macadamised road runs from Fort Victoria to Umtali. Similarly many pioneer farms have changed hands where the remaining members of the family had to seek a livelihood elsewhere. "More than once we who have led these pioneers to Gazaland have asked ourselves whether we did right to the generations to come to move into this distant, untamed country half-a-century ago and to try and make it a place to live in. It is my firm conviction that we have done right, in spite of all the adversity and hardships of the past, for even to that there was an end. The health of the people has improved, the community has grown, and so have our ideals and our vision. The rains come down as usual, the mountain streams run as they used to do and the valleys and hills are dotted with our cattle. We are but at the beginning of a great development of this part of the world. I do not fully know what that might be, but to the young ones I would say: Hold fast the heritage of the past and the inheritance of your fathers: the best is yet to be!"

## APPENDIX I

### THE PIONEER TREKS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

#### *Departure and arrival at Water Fall*

1. Moodie Trek:  
From Bethlehem, 5th May, 1892 to Water Fall, 3rd January, 1893.
2. Moolman-Webster Trek:  
Great Marico, 6th(?) May, 1893—30th August, 1893.
3. Du Plessis Trek:  
Reitz, 26th May, 1893—12th August, 1893.
4. Edenburg Trek:  
Edenburg, 20th March, 1894—9th September, 1894.
5. Mynhardt-Utrecht Trek:  
Utrecht, 29th March, 1894—1st October, 1894.
6. Martin Trek:  
Fouriesburg, 19th April, 1894—10th October, 1894.
7. Kruger-Bekker Trek:  
Pretoria, 21st April, 1895—27th July, 1895.
8. Du Plessis Trek II:  
Utrecht, 2nd May, 1895—11th October, 1895.
9. Steyn-Henry Trek:  
Kroonstad, 5th May, 1895—30th October, 1895.

## APPENDIX 2

Some correspondence between the Moodies and the B.S.A. Company:

- (i) Possession and occupation.
- (ii) Pegging of farms.
- (iii) Instructions to Dunbar Moodie.

### (i) *Possession and Occupation*

Cape Town,  
30th March, 1892.

T. Moodie, Esq.,  
Malloposdraai,  
Kaffer's Kop,  
Dist. Bethlehem, O.F.S.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of the 17th instant, enclosing copies of resolutions passed at the meeting of intending Trekkers of Mashonaland, held at Kaffer's Kop on the 16th March, 1892.

I enclose for the information and guidance of yourself and your friends a few printed copies of terms and conditions upon which land grants will be made within the Company's sphere of operations, and I think well to take this opportunity of repeating in writing, briefly, the special conditions upon which Mr. Rhodes sanctioned your taking into Mashonaland a Trek of about hundred families from the Free State, namely:

- (a) You and your party will be subject to the laws in force within the Company's sphere of operations.
- (b) The head of each family will have an allotment of three thousand (3,000) morgen.
- (c) The annual quitrent of each of such allotments should be six pounds (£6).
- (d) The allotments will all be made from vacant land in the vicinity of Umzila's old kraal.
- (e) All timber is to be reserved except what is actually required by the members of the settlement for domestic purposes.

I fear that it is not possible for this Company to make application to the Government of the South African Republic for a remission of the duties which will be payable under the

existing regulations by your party on passing through the territory of that State, but this does not in any way preclude you, if you are so disposed, from making such an application on behalf of yourself and your party to his Honour, the President.

I am directed to express to you Mr. Rhodes' regret that after the most careful consideration, he is unable to comply with your requests for some pecuniary assistance from the funds of the Company towards the preliminary expenses of the Trek.

It is understood that in conjunction with Mr. G. B. D. Moodie you will organise and superintend this Trek, and that all communications thereto are to be addressed to you.

Mr. Rhodes will be glad at all times to hear of your progress, and I am to request you that you will not fail to acquaint Dr. Jameson of your arrival at Tuli and your subsequent movements.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

H. Currey.

(ii) *Pegging of Farms*

Survey Office,  
B.S.A. Company,  
Salisbury.

To  
G. B. D. Moodie,  
Melsetter,  
Gazaland.

Sir,

Allotment of Farms

1. The farms are to be selected in the terms of the agreement entered into by the B.S.A. Company and the Moodie Trek.

2. The farms are not to exceed three thousand morgen.

3. The beacons of each farm are to be erected and to stand four feet high and on a base of three to four feet. Such beacons to be placed on conspicuous ground. Wherever a small river runs between farms, the beacons are to be alternately placed on either bank — and the straight line between the two beacons is to be considered the boundary.

4. In the event of the extent being below the three thousand morgen but above two thousand six hundred morgen that extent is to be taken in full satisfaction of the grant.

5. Farms applied for will be registered by the B.S.A. Company's representative after the beacons have been duly inspected

to the satisfaction of the said official, when a return will be forwarded to Salisbury, to be entered in the land registers.

6. The stamp on grant, four pounds (£4), and the first year quitrent, six pounds (£6) and stamp on quitrent, 7/6, are to be paid on the issue of the certificate.

7. The grantee is to occupy his land within a period of five months after the date of notice of the grant being given to him by the representative of the Company and is to continue in occupation by himself or by some European substitute duly approved of by the said representative.

8. The following will be the tariff rate for surveying and framing of diagram: For a 1,500 morgen farm or portion thereof, £19. For every additional 100 morgen, 10/- extra. For a 3,000 morgen farm, £26/1/-.\*

9. A limited number of stands in the township will be allotted at a rental of 5/- per month. The sanitary fees will be regulated by the Sanitary Board. Pending survey of township no permanent building shall be erected. The survey fees on each stand will be three pounds (£3).

L. S. JAMESON,  
For the B.S.A. Company.

\* The survey can be done by riding off by compass, or by theodolite at the option of the grantee. The above tariff is for theodolite survey.

(iii) *Instruction to Dunbar Moodie*

The British South Africa Company,  
Salisbury,

20th October, 1892.

To  
G. B. D. Moodie, Esq.,

Dear Sir,

I have submitted your letters of July 17th and 31st and September 20th to Mr. Rhodes, who desires me to call your attention to the fact that with reference to your Trek, and list of names, only about four or five have occupied, and that many who have gone down to the Colony may not return. In consideration of your services he is willing through your judgment to let you send in names, and each case will receive consideration on its own merits. I would point out that even with the Swane-pool application, 30,000 morgen if granted, would be absorbed by one family, who would probably have but one residence in this whole large tract of country.

As far as we can gather, the list submitted by you on July 31st, consists of yourself, your children and seven others. With reference to the application for farms in Gazaland, we must have a clear statement of what people intend to occupy, and if so, what names and when, also send in the application of the Free State deputation.

The difficulty of the Company making free grants is that many residents in Mashonaland, have not paid 9d. per acre, and they naturally object to subsequent occupiers getting more favoured terms than themselves.

We have seen Mr. Stiebel, and we understand that there is some difficulty as regards the payment to you for your services, connected with the farms which Messrs. Stiebel and Espute have located. We have informed Mr. Stiebel that as regards these two claims, we, as a Company will arrange with you, and you will therefore please recognise their occupation, and you need not draw any payment from them — but as regards future settlers, Mr. Rhodes thinks that £10 is a sufficient charge for you to make for showing beacons. And we propose from time to time to send farmers to you to whom you may make such a charge.

We are aware that the Mozambique Company have put forward the preposterous claims that their territory goes to the Sabi; and we hear that a certain Capt. Spring is moving in your direction under their auspices. We would point out that you maintain Captain Levensohn's line which we believe is beaconed, and you are authorised to treat as trespassers any persons who come in to occupy under Mozambique title.

An American mission from Natal was promised by Mr. Rhodes a missionary grant — if they arrive, you might locate them.

We believe you know Capt Levensohn's line, but if you do not, you will be safe in treating the whole of the High Veldt as British South African territory, and the Mozambique the Low Veldt.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

A. H. DUNCAN.

(for the B.S.A. Company.)

## APPENDIX 3

- (i), (ii), (iii) Requests for farms.
- (iv) Reply to Martin's request for more farms.
- (v) Correspondence with Dunbar Moodie.
- (vi) Martin's request for cattle.

### (i) *Requests for Farms*

B.S.A. Company,  
Salisbury,  
January 13th, 1894.

M. J. Martin, Esq.,  
Naudelust,  
Bethlehem District, O.F.S.

Dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 12th ultimo and to inform you that you can have the farms in Gazaland, if you will leave in April next year (?) to come up and occupy them.

Yours faithfully,  
A. H. DUNCAN, G.C.G.,  
(for the B.S.A. Company.)

### (ii) *From Head Office of B.S.A. Co.*

B.S.A. Company,  
Cape Town,  
9th February, 1894.

M. J. Martin, Esq., M.V.,  
Naudelust,  
District Bethlehem, O.F.S.

Dear Mr. Martin,

I have wired Mr. Duncan that we wish to grant you and your party eight farms round Chimanimani, and inquiring whether land is still to be had in that part. Directly I get his reply I will wire to you.

You need be under no anxiety as to time, for provided land is open we shall be very glad to give you plenty of time to get there, but at the same time do not delay.

It is a good place and other people may cast their eyes upon it, but if open now, it will be granted to you and your people. Mr. Rhodes has decided not to charge you any purchase price, but only to charge you for the land the usual annual quitrent of

£1 per 1,000 acres. Mr. Rhodes is much interested in your scheme and trusts that your people will be successful and turn out our strongest supporters on our Eastern border.

With kind regards,

Yours very truly,

RUTHERFORD HARRIS.

(iii) *And Reply*

Naudelust,  
Bethlehem District,  
7th March, 1894.

Dr. Rutherford Harris, Esq., M.L.A.,  
Sec. B.S.A. Company,  
Cape Town.

Dear Mr. Harris,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 28th ultimo and am very grateful to be informed that the farmland at Chimanimani is still open. Hoping Mr. Duncan has secured the block of (8) farms for us.

We are greatly indebted to you and Mr. Rhodes for the interest you are taking in our party, and the support given.

With kind regards,

Yours truly,

M. J. MARTIN.

(iv) *Reply to Martin's request for more Farms*

B.S.A. Company,  
Cape Town,  
14th June, 1894.

M. J. Martin, Esq.,  
Fort Victoria,

Dear Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th May last, relative to the conditions upon which we shall be prepared to grant farms to Trekkers next year, but I think perhaps before we consider this question it will be well for you to represent the matter to His Honour the Administrator of Mashonaland after you have visited the Melsetter district. In the meantime I will bring the matter to Mr. Rhodes' notice.

I am dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

RUTHERFORD HARRIS,  
Secretary.

(v) *Correspondence with Dunbar Moodie*

Melsetter,

8th November, 1894.

M. T. Martin, Esq.,  
Melsetter.

Dear Sir,

I am sending a runner to you with post, and also to inquire how you are getting on. I have just returned from my second trip, within the last fortnight, and from where I was last Tuesday, Mr. Nell pointed out to me where your wagons were standing and from what I know of that locality, I very much doubt whether you will be able to find a practicable road over that mountain. Anyway I hope you will not be seriously delayed in reaching your destination.

Will you kindly send me a rough estimation of the number of people all told with your party, number of wagons, etc., cattle and horses, as I am just making up my annual report.

Mr. Fraser, our new magistrate, I am expecting daily with a batch of mounted police; one M.P. has already arrived. Mr. Fraser left Fort Victoria some time back for this.

I hear of 14 more wagons at the Sabi River. No particular news. All well. Hoping to hear same from you. With kind regards.

I am yours faithfully,

G. B. DUNBAR MOODIE.

This was an extra mail. Therefore no papers, etc. from down South.

(vi) *Martin's request for Cattle*B.S.A. Company,  
Cape Town,

February 26th, 1895.

Dear Mr. Martin,

Mr. Rhodes has received your interesting letter, and will probably write to you himself when he has got through some of the accumulation of work awaiting him here. I write now to let you know that we shall be able to let you have some cattle as you suggest.

I am now returning to Mashonaland and will arrange about it if you will write to me at Salisbury when and how you propose taking the cattle down. I shall be happy to see you in Salisbury, should you be coming up that way yourself during the dry season. At first I shall be travelling about a good deal but should be settled there about August or September.

Yours faithfully,

L. S. JAMESON.

## APPENDIX 4

*Address offered to Mr. and Mrs. Martin, 1899*

Melsetter,  
6th October, 1899.

To Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Martin,  
Rocklands,  
Melsetter.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Martin,

It is with the greatest pleasure that we take this opportunity of writing you on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of your entering Gazaland.

During the time both you and Mrs. Martin have lived in this district, we have noticed you have both had your fair share of trials and hardships to contend with, and we can only express our opinion that you have borne them well.

We are aware that it was always your hope to establish a practice of visiting the spot every five years where that time back you and your Trek erected a "Temporary Monument" "as a mark" in remembrance of the long journey and thankfulness for the safe arrival in this settlement; and it was your expressed wish at the time, that we should endeavour to uphold this custom every five years, and carried out conjointly by the settlers and inhabitants in general of Melsetter, and on this occasion of the first "Anniversary" we feel that we should like to express our heartiest thanks for the interest you have taken in this matter and the district in general.

Many of us regret not being able to accompany you to the scene of the re-erection of the "Monument"; in many cases circumstances prevent us from attending. However you can rest assured that our best wishes are with you and those accompanying you — although you are only one of the several leaders of different Treks that have left their land of birth to locate here, yet we feel confident you will be ably supported by your brother leaders and members of their Treks if not now, on future occasions.

As a "memento" we would like to present you both with two "enlarged photos", each separately as a small token of respect and remembrance of your fellow settlers and inhabitants of Melsetter, whose very best wishes are with you both; and we trust that you will be spared many years to reside and take part in the holding of the ceremony you are about to establish.

We propose having the photos enlarged, taken from a sitting at your present time of life.

Thanking you in anticipation of accepting this small token of remembrance, and wishing you both long life and prosperity, we beg to remain, Dear Mr. and Mrs. Martin,

Your wellwishers,

N. A. Cloete, P. L. le Roux, James I., Englis R., P. E. Steyn, C. J. Steyn, Wil. Nichols, A. du Plessis, J. C. du Preez, J. H. Kok, R. A. Kok, G. B. D. Moodie, L. Kleyn, D. J. Kleyn, J. D. van Zyl, J. H. van Zyl, Marthinus Swane-poel, W. A. van Zyl, F. du Preez, J. B. van Zyl, C. Scholtz, E. Heyns, J. G. du Preez, J. G. Steyn, J. J. Moolman, P. S. du Preez, E. du Preez, A. du Preez, J. J. van Heerden, C. English, A. G. Kloppers, C. B. Ferreira, Annie Klopper, J. M. S. Martin, S. Moodie, J. Roberts, M. du Preez, E. F. Roberts, E. E. Markham, M. J. Hulley, P. E. Shinn, H. Remmer, L. H. Edwards, C. Justice, T. Brent, C. C. Kloppers, J. Ferreira, F. Cronwright, G. L. Kok, A. D. Olwage, D. J. Olwage, E. H. Heyns, D. E. Heyns, C. D. Olwage, Maria Heyns, E. J. M. Kok, E. du Plessis, Johans Heyns, C. A. Heyns, M. C. du Plessis, L. J. Schutte, J. C. Kok, P. Gwynner, J. B. Schultz, F. Smith, L. Jones, E. A. Hoal, Edgar Hoal, L. C. Meredith, H. Meredith, T. Willows, F. Willows, L. Kidson, L. M. Olwage, H. le Roux, C. le Roux, J. Kloppers, C. Cannell, M. Cannell, S. Nicholson, O. Cawood, R. Cannell, A. R. Cannell, Cilia Cannell, W. Palmer, J. Bok, H. I. Robertson, C. Macquier, J. Erickson, E. J. Belstead.

## APPENDIX 5

### *List of Pioneer Trekkers to Gazaland as supplied to Mr. Rhodes*

#### MARTIN TREK

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Martin, M. J. (leader). | 10. Scholtz, S. J.      |
| 2. Kok, J. H.              | 11. Van Zyl, J. B.      |
| 3. Olwage, A. D.           | 12. Van Heerden, J. J.  |
| 4. Martin, J. L.           | 13. Van Eeden, J. L. J. |
| 5. Martin, P. S.           | 14. Branken, P. M.      |
| 6. English, J.             | 15. Smith, F.           |
| 7. Steyn, P. E.            | 16. Roos, J. P.         |
| 8. Heyns, G. H.            | 17. Schutte, L. J.      |
| 9. Du Preez, P. S.         | 18. Du Preez, J. G.     |

#### MOODIE TREK

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Moodie, T. (leader). | 4. Du Plessis, E. L. |
| 2. Moodie, G. B. D.     | 5. Markham, H. E.    |
| 3. Hulley, R. A.        |                      |

#### HENRY AND STEYN'S TREK

- |                     |            |                        |
|---------------------|------------|------------------------|
| 1. Henry, J.        | } Leaders. | 11. Steyn, L. C.       |
| 2. Steyn, J. G. F.  |            | 12. Lombard, S. J. N.  |
| 3. Steyn, H. B.     |            | 13. Lombard, S. J.     |
| 4. Steyn, P. W. J.  |            | 14. Marais, C. H.      |
| 5. Steyn, C. C.     |            | 15. Steyn, C. J. F.    |
| 6. Steyn, J. G.     |            | 16. Coetzer, J. H.     |
| 7. Steyn, P. W.     |            | 17. Ferreira, T.       |
| 8. Steyn, H.        |            | 18. Prinsloo, W. A.    |
| 9. Steyn, C. C.     |            | 19. Kloppers, J. G. F. |
| 10. Steyn, F. F. J. |            | 20. Coetzer, N. C.     |

#### MYNHARDT'S AND LABUSCHAGNE'S TREK (UTRECHT)

- |                          |            |                     |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| 1. Mynhardt, J. T.       | } Leaders. | 6. De Beer, T. C.   |
| 2. Labuschagne, J. N. R. |            | 7. De Beer, J. C.   |
| 3. Mynhardt, B. J.       |            | 8. De Beer, A. S.   |
| 4. Mynhardt, J. T.       |            | 9. Raath, J. G.     |
| 5. Mynhardt, N. G.       |            | 10. Odendaal, W. N. |

List of names of men who did not come with any organised Treks and to whom farms were granted:

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. King, L.            | 10. Moolman, J. J.      |
| 2. Kleyn, L.           | 11. Du Preez, L. J.     |
| 3. Ballantyne, J.      | 12. Sweetnim, C.        |
| 4. Wilder, G. A. Rev.  | 13. Du Pleyrus, H.      |
| 5. Bates, H. W. Rev.   | 14. Bezuidenhout, W. K. |
| 6. Human, J. C.        | 15. Webster, J. E.      |
| 7. Jensen, J. A.       | 16. Markham, J. F.      |
| 8. Le Roux, P. L. Rev. | 17. Markham, H. R. A.   |
| 9. Moolman, J. N.      | 18. Markham, J. S. R.   |

Names of people who came into Rhodesia for the purpose of settling in the country but have not got land, for the reasons of either having left or forfeited their rights by non-occupation:

- |                     |               |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Kruger, E. P.    | 5. Moodie, M. |
| 2. Moodie, J. B. D. | 6. Fourie, P. |
| 3. Moodie, T. D.    | 7. Hardy, E.  |
| 4. Moodie, C.       | 8. King, H.   |

Names of those who came to occupy for others:

J. C. du Preez.

Total: 79 names.

Cannell has informed me that he has forwarded a list of names of the Edenburg Trek to Mr. Rhodes.

M. J. MARTIN.

## APPENDIX 6

IN MEMORIAM: MELSETTER DISTRICT — 1896

IN MEMORIAM

MELSETTER — 1896

J. Webster.	J. Pienaar.
T. Moodie.	R. Hullett.
Mrs. Scholtz.	A. Knox.
D. Nel.	J. van Heerden.
A. Rubridge.	Ashpute.
J. Herbst.	Grootwahl.
R. van Rooyen.	J. Loubscher.
Miss Herselman.	Mrs. Webster.
K. Marks.	J. Swanepoel.
Mrs. Herselman.	Mrs. Heyns.
Mr. Herselman.	J. T. Mynhardt.
D. Moodie.	Miss Mynhardt.
Herselman (baby).	Mynhardt children (2).
Scholtz (baby).	Mrs. Mynhardt.
Madvigs (2).	Bezuidenhout (2).

## APPENDIX 7

Distance and road mapped and travelled by the Moodie Trek, from Fort Victoria, 25th September, 1892 to Water Fall, 3rd January, 1893:

		<i>Miles</i>	
Victoria	... ..	0	Nderunderu ... .. 5
Kurumitsi (R(iver))	... ..	5	Sunday's Pass ... .. 4
Popotekwe R.	... ..	7	Tshebaka ... .. 4
Umtilikwi R.	... ..	5	Mananga ... .. 2
Mazali R.	... ..	5	Tshebanga ... .. 7
Tshedza R.	... ..	4	Devuli R. ... .. 8
Lion R.	... ..	4	Sabi R. (Moodiesdrift) 6
Uhabi	... ..	6	Manessa ... .. 6
Baobab Hill	... ..	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	Mashanga Bantu ... .. 6
Dzergiva	... ..	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	Lower Mtanganda (Tan-
Two Fountains	... ..	3	ganda) ... .. 3
Hell's Wood	... ..	4	Redstone Creek ... .. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Twingi R.	... ..	5	Middeldrift ... .. 3
"Stoor"	... ..	3	Magarra ... .. 3
Tierkop	... ..	7	Upper Mtanganda ... .. 4
Mud Creek	... ..	4	Waterval (Water Fall) ... .. 3
Molyneux Stoor	... ..	4	
Amen (Amenshoogte)	... ..	6	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>
Knox Creek	... ..	5	149 $\frac{1}{2}$ <hr style="width: 100%;"/>

## APPENDIX 8

- List of Trekkers, their wives and children and the Trek with which they arrived in Gazaland.
- Ashpute, Henry; Trek Moodie, 1893.
- Baden, Ernest; Trek Moodie, 1892.
- Ballantyne, John; Trek Moolman-Webster, 1893.
- Beeks, Trek Edenburg, 1894; wife and children (leaves Trek at Tuli and trekked to Bulawayo).
- Bekker, Hennie (Hendrik); Trek Kruger, 1895; wife Chrissie, born Pienaar; children Soon, Jozua, Dawid Piet, Jan, Pop, Marie, Lourens, Krissie, Nellie, Isobel, Koot and wife Annie (born Potgieter) and child Hendrik.
- Bezuidenhout; Trek Moolman-Webster, 1893.
- Bezuidenhout, Wynand; Trek Kruger, 1895; wife Dorie, born Van der Westhuizen; children Wynand, Klasie, Hans, Barend, Jan, Cornelius, Dawie, Annie, Johanna.
- Braken, Phillipus; Trek Martin, 1894.
- Breytenbach, Andries; Trek Du Plessis, 1895.
- Breytenbach, Jacob; Trek Du Plessis, 1895.
- Cannell, Clifford; Trek Edenburg, 1894; wife Molly, born Mollet; children Reginald, Alice, Arthur.
- Cannell, Frank; Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Coetzer, Wentzel; Trek Henry-Steyns, 1895; wife Johanna, born Steyn; children Johannes, Wentzel, Johanna, Annie, Piet, Martha, Willem.
- Coetzer, Harm; Trek Henry-Steyns, 1895; wife Johanna, born Steyn; children Hendrik, Susanna, Jan, Piet, Lettie.
- Coxton; Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- De Beer, Theuns; Trek Utrecht, 1894; wife Annie, born Hamman; children Jan, Arnoldus, Dawid, Herklaas, Piet, Sina.
- De Klerk, Louw; Trek Utrecht, 1894; wife Jacomina, born De Beer; children Louw, Theuns, Sina, Emmie, Wessels.
- Dörking; Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Du Plessis, Ernst; Treks Moodie, 1892, Du Plessis, 1894 (leader), Du Plessis, 1895 (leader), wife Lenie, born Maritz.
- Du Plessis, Hendrik; Trek Du Plessis, 1894; wife Johanna, born Roberts; children Gertruida, Christina, Hendrika, Frans, Jan, Aletta.
- Du Plessis, Dirk; Trek Du Plessis, 1894.

- Du Preez, Fanie; Trek Kruger, 1895; wife Lea, born Van der Westhuizen; children Saloman, Johanna.
- Du Preez, Petronella (widow), born Taute; Trek Martin, 1894; children Nellie, Jan, Liza, Frikkie, Hessie, Anthonie, Helgard, Johanna, Cornelia (died on road).
- Engelbrecht, Diderich; Trek Du Plessis, 1895; wife Lenie, born Kleyn; child Jan.
- English, James; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Catharina, born Van Riet.
- Fourie, Piet; Trek Utrecht, 1894.
- Ferreira, Thomas; Trek Henry-Steyns, 1895; wife Maria, born Steyn; children Willem, Maria, Jan, Thomas, Catharina, Louis.
- Ferreira, Anthonie; Trek Martin, 1894.
- Gifford, Alfred; Trek Edenburg, 1894; wife Emma, born Glauz; children Prudence, Edith, Alice, Alfred, Margaret.
- Grootwahl, Emil; Trek Edenburg, 1894; wife Katrina, born Herbst.
- Hamman, Theunis; Trek Utrecht, 1894; wife Annie, born De Beer; children Jim, Johanna.
- Hardy, Edward; Trek Martin, 1894.
- Hartkopff, Hans; Trek Moolman-Webster, 1893.
- Hauptfleisch, Jaap; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895.
- Hefer, Adriaan; Trek Martin, 1894.
- Henry, John; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895 (leader) and wife Emily; children Tom, Freddie, Trevis.
- Herbst, Johann; Trek Edenburg, 1894 and wife Sarah; children Elizabeth, Johann, Molly.
- Herbst, Michael; Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Herselman, Jacob; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Gertruida, born Ferreira; children Fredericka, Jan, Gertruida, Magdalena, Jacob.
- Heyns, George; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Dirkie, born Zondagh; children Engela, Maria, Johan, Cornelius, Frederick, Dirkie.
- Heyns, Johan; Trek Martin, 1894.
- Heyns, Jan; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Elizabeth, born Rade-meyer; children Jan, Elizabeth, Christina, Ignatius.
- Holdstock, Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Hullet, Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Hulley, Dick; Trek Moodie, 1892.
- Human, Jan; Trek Mynhardt-Utrecht, 1894.
- Jakens, Trek Bosman, 1893. (Moolman-Webster.)
- Kemp, Jacobus; Trek Utrecht, 1894.
- Kleyn, Louw, Trek Du Plessis, 1895; wife Debora, born Maritz.

- Kloppers, Johannes; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895; wife Annie, born Van Vuuren; children Martha, Aletta, Annie, Christoffel, Willem, Johannes, Schalk.
- Knox; Trek Moodie, 1892.
- Kok, Hans; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Rosa, born Rautenbach; children Jacoba, Nelie, Gertruida, Bettie, Barbara, Andries, Phienie.
- Kruger, Ernst; Trek Kruger, 1895 (leader), wife Nellie, born Bezuidenhout; children Petrus, Maria, Hans, Wynand.
- Labuschagne, Dirk; Trek Utrecht, 1894; wife Jacoba, born Lafnie (?); children Mimie, Tommy, Susara, Nols, Johanna.
- Lecorno; Trek Bosman (Moolman-Webster), 1893.
- Lombard, Fanie; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895; wife Annie, born Lombard; children Fanie, Barend.
- (Maniewel) Manoel; Trek Utrecht, 1894.
- Marais, Cornelius; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895; wife Catharina, born Lombard.
- Markham, Koos; Trek Martin, 1894.
- Martin, Marthinus; Trek Martin, 1894 (leader), wife Elizabeth, born Du Preez; child Jan.
- Martin, Pieter; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Louisa, born Hugo; children Jan, Piet, Martinus, Debora.
- Moodie, Tom; Trek Moodie, 1892 (leader), wife Cecilia, born Roberts; children Dunbar (son-in-law) and wife Sarah, Harriet, Boyce, Tom, George, Ben, Charles, Malcolm, Duncan, Elsie.
- Moodie, G. B. Dunbar; Trek Moodie, 1892.
- Moolman, Jan; Trek Moolman-Webster, 1893 (leader) and wife Catharina; children Jurie, Hendrik, Lettie.
- Mynhardt, Johannes; Trek Mynhardt-Utrecht, 1894 (leader), wife Anna, born De Lange; children Aletta, Maria, Marthinus, Wilhelmina.
- Mynhardt, Barend; Trek Mynhardt-Utrecht, 1894; wife Cornelia, born Van Schalkwyk; children Jan, Annie, Ewert, Barend, Cornelia, Agatha.
- Mynhardt, Johannes (Jnr.); Trek Mynhardt-Utrecht, 1894; wife Aletta, born Kok.
- Nel, Danie; Trek Edenburg, 1894; wife and children.
- Oberholzer, Jan; Trek Moodie, 1892.
- Odendal, Willem; Trek Mynhardt-Utrecht, 1894 (leader); wife Hessie, born V. d. Berg; children Willem, Paul, Dawid, Petrus, Magriet, Sarie (born on Trek to Waterval).
- Olwage, Abraham; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Dirkie, born Van Eeden; children Sannie, Christiaan, Josef, Abraham, Jasper.

- Pienaar, Jan; Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Pikster, Hendrik; Trek Du Plessis, 1895.
- Prinsloo, Willem; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895; wife Hessie, born Snyders; children Wilhelmina, Hans, Willem, Freek.
- Raath(s), Gert; Trek Mynhardt-Utrecht, 1894; wife Chrissie, born Mynhardt.
- Rautenbasch, Piet; Trek Martin, 1894.
- Roos, Jan; Trek Martin, 1894.
- Rubridge, Angus; Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Sauer; Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Scholtz, Jan; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Maria, born Nel; child Aletta.
- Schoonveldt, Trek Edenburg, 1894, and wife.
- Scholtz, Salmon; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Anna, born Nel; children Jan, Hendrik, Wynand, Catharina, Frederick.
- Schutte, Louis; Trek Martin, 1894.
- Scott, John; Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Scott, Eddie; Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Smit, Freek; Trek Martin, 1894.
- Smit, Willem; Trek Kruger, 1895; wife Nellie, born Wilderman; children Nik, Gert, Soon, Lettie, Johanna.
- Spies, Abraham; Trek Du Plessis, 1894.
- Steyn, Johannes; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895 (leader); wife Herculina, born Van Heerden; children Stoffel, Christiaan, Theunis, Lukas Maria.
- Steyn, Johannes; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895; wife Annie, born Malan; children Martha, Herculina, Johannes, Anna.
- Steyn, Pieter; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895; wife Engela, born Lombard; children Johannes, Annie.
- Steyn, Hendrik; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895; wife Christina, born Coetzer; child Aletta.
- Steyn, Hendrik; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895; wife Sannie, born Van Heerden; children Cornelius, Sannie.
- Steyn, Willem; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895; wife Cornelia, born Lombard; children Anthonie, Hendrik, Fanie, Paul, Sannie, Anna, Nelie, Pieter, Johannes.
- Steyn, Stoffel; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895; wife Aletta, born Van Heerden.
- Steyn, Edward; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Chrissie, born Rautenbach; children Jacoba, Johannes, Pieter.
- Stibel, Gustav; Trek Moodie, 1892.
- Stopforth, Frikkie; Trek Du Plessis, 1895; wife and children.
- Swanepoel; Trek Edenburg, 1894.
- Taljaard, Hans; Trek Mynhardt-Utrecht, 1894.

- Van der Walt; Trek Edenburg, 1894.  
Van der Zandt, Danial; Trek Henry-Steyn, 1895.  
Van Heerden, Joubert; Trek Martin, 1894.  
Van Riet, Tobias; Trek Martin, 1894, and wife Miriam; children Edward, Willem.  
Van Rooyen, Rudolf; Trek Martin, 1894; wife Martha, born Boshoff; children Tommie, Miriam.  
Van Zyl, Adriaan; Trek Martin, 1894.  
Webster, Joseph; Trek Moolman-Webster, 1893 (leader); wife Sarah, born Gobey; children John, Louisa, Will, Mary.  
Webster; Trek Edenburg, 1894.

## APPENDIX 9

### THE EBENHAEZER (OR MEMORIAL) COMMITTEE OF 1939—1943

Rev. O. A. O. Robertson (Chairman).

Mrs. O. Robertson (Secretary).

D. M. de Kock.

E. du Plessis.

J. A. Kok.

J. A. C. Kruger.

Mrs. M. Martin.

Mr. Jurie Moolman.

D. P. J. Odendaal.

A. Olwage.

C. C. Steyn.

H. B. Steyn.

Org. Steyn (Under-secretary).

## APPENDIX 10

### SOME SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- (i) Books, etc.
- (ii) Persons.

#### (i) *Books, etc.*

- The Mashonaland Herald, 1890 - 1891.  
Mashonaland Advertiser, 1890 - 1897.  
Rhodesia Herald, 1890 - 1897.  
Umtali Advertiser, 1893 - '95-'97.  
Mashonaland Times and Mining Chronicle (Fort Victoria), Jan. 1893 - Dec. 1893.  
Rhodesia Chronicle and Mashonaland Advertiser (Tuli), 1891 - '92.  
Bulawayo Chronicle.  
South African Deputation Papers (E.C.A.M.), 1903.  
Zambesi Mission Records (1900).  
The East Central African Mission in Gazaland.  
Report of the American Board of Commission for Foreign Missions, 1900.  
B.S.A. Co. Reports on Territories and Administration (1889 - 1898).  
J. M. Boggie: Experiences of Rhodesia's Pioneer Women.  
J. M. Boggie: First Steps in Civilising Rhodesia.  
J. W. Smith: The Way of the White Fields in Rhodesia.  
Church Missionary Gleaners (1893).  
S. le Roux: Pioneers and Sportsmen.  
P. Jourdan: Cecil Rhodes: His Life.  
B.S.A. Co. Reports: 1891 - 1898.  
G. Preller: Die Grobler-moord.  
G. M. Theal: History of South Africa since 1795 V.  
Die Huisgenoot: Mei 1937, April - Mei 1942.  
Dr. Carl Peters: The Eldorado of the Ancients.  
W. Gale: One Man's Vision.  
Ruvigny: The Moodie Book.  
H. Marshall Hole: The Making of Rhodesia.  
H. M. Hole: The Passing of the Black Kings.  
H. M. Hole: Lobengula.  
H. M. Hole: Old Rhodesian Days.  
C. A. Lindley: After Ophir.  
Sir Harry Johnston: Pioneers in South Africa.

- P. Gillmore: Through Gazaland and the scene of the Portuguese Aggression.  
 S. P. Hyatt: The Northward Trek.  
 T. Hertslett: The Map of Africa by Treaty, Vol. I-III.  
 Rocha Martins: Historias das Colonias Portuguesas.  
 E. de Noronha: Mousinho de Albuquerque.  
 Die Kerkbode: 1895 - 1897.  
 Die Zambesi Ringsblad, 1927 - 1940.  
 A. R. Colquhoun: Dan to Beersheba.  
 A. Strasheim: In the Land of Cecil Rhodes.

(ii) *Persons*

## MOODIE TREK

Mr. M. Moodie.	Mrs. Jacks.
Mrs. Nesbitt.	Mrs. Cripps.
Mrs. J. Roberts.	Mrs. Arnold.
Mr. E. du Plessis.	

## MOOLMAN-WEBSTER TREK

Mrs. Jurie Moolman.	Mrs. Edwards.
Mr. J. Webster.	Mrs. King.

## EDENBURG TREK

Mr. C. Gifford.	Mrs. Brent.
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## MYNHARDT-UTRECHT TREK

Mrs. C. Raaths.	Mr. and Mrs. J. Mynhardt.
Mr. D. Odendaal.	

## MARTIN TREK

Mrs. H. Martin.	Mr. J. A. Kok.
Mr. and Mrs. A. Hefer.	Mrs. Nash.
Mrs. Nel.	Mr. F. Scholtz.
Mr. Van Zyl.	Mrs. Kok (Ouma).
Mrs. Du Preez.	

## DU PLESSIS TREK

Mr. and Mrs. E. du Plessis.

## KRUGER-BEKKER TREK

Mr. E. Kruger.	Mr. J. H. C. Kruger.
Mrs. I. Scholtz.	Mrs. A. Webster.
Mrs. A. Bekker.	Mr. Soon Bekker.

## STEYNS-HENRY TREK

Mr. H. B. Steyn.	Mr. C. C. Steyn.
Mr. S. J. Lombard.	Mr. J. G. Steyn.
Mr. T. I. Ferreira.	

## OTHERS

Mr. C. Meredith.	P. Bosch.
Rev. P. le Roux.	P. Serfontein.
L. Spies.	L. de Bruyn.
G. Bezuidenhout.	Mrs. C. Herselman.

## CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW

- 1505: Vasco de Gama occupies Sofala, an Arabian trading station; First Portuguese Fort; Contact with the Makaranga, most important indigenous tribe in the area.
- 1561: Gonsalvo da Silveira: First Missionary and Christian Martyr.
- 1571: Expedition under Francesco Barreto to the gold fields of Monomatapa.
- 1629: Emperor of Monomatapa cedes portion of his territory between Limpopo and Zambesi to the Portuguese.
- 1817: Mzilikazi of the Kumalo Zulus flee from Shaka to Bulawayo.
- 1825: The Abagaza tribe grows in numbers and moves to part of country bearing this name.
- 1832: Zulus under Nxaba occupies "Massi-Kessi" — Bullets of Gold.
- 1834-1838: "The Great Trek".
- 1834: Soshangana kills Captain Ribero and all his men at Inhambane.
- 1836: Sakana, vassal of Soshangane murders Nicolas van Rensburg's Trek of nine wagons at Pafuri River.
- 1838: Dingane defeated.
- 1847-1854: Contact between Portuguese and Dutch Pioneers Trichardt and Potgieter.
- 1853: Birth of Rhodes and Jameson (England), and Beit (Germany).
- 1855: Livingstone reaches the Victoria Falls.
- 1856: Death of Soshangane: His body carried back to the Lebombo Mountains to Etshaneni in Zululand whence the Gaza tribe had originated.
- 1861: Mzila (Umsila) rules over Gazaland (Sabi to Zambesi).
- 1871: Rhodes in Africa.
- 1888: Rudd Concession (mineral rights of area north of Limpopo ceded to Rhodes-Rudd).
- 1889: Charter granted to British South African Company (B.S.A. Co.).
- 1890: 12th September: Pioneer Corps reaches Salisbury.  
14th September: Treaty between Colquhoun and Mtasha.  
15th November: The "Rezende" affair.  
Ngungunyana, ruler of Gazaland  
Dunbar Moodie visits Ngungunyana.

- 1891: February: Treaty signed with Ngungunyana.  
12th June: Treaty by which Portugal loses portion of Gazaland.
- 1892: 21st January: First "Land Settlement Scheme" announced.  
27th April: Beira Railway Company launched.  
5th May: Moodie Trek starts.  
10th Oct.: 75 mile railway Beira-Salisbury.
- 1893: 3rd January: Moodie Trek reaches Water Fall.  
July: Troubles with Matabele and with Lobengula.  
30th August: Arrival of Moolman-Webster Trek at Melsetter.
- 1894: Du Plessis, Edenburg, Mynhardt, Utrecht and Martin Treks.  
Death of Thomas Moodie.
- 1895: Kruger, Bekker, Du Plessis, Steyn and Henry Treks.  
"Rhodesia".  
Rinderpest.
- 1896: Mashona and Matabele Rebellions.
- 1897: Signor Vigliani gives his verdict about differences over Gazaland.  
Death of Dunbar Moodie.
- 1899: Beira-Salisbury Railway opened.
- 1901: East Coast fever.
- 1902: Death of Rhodes.



9/5903/1079.

OLIVIER, S P

ix Dekadal

G 968"189"

OLIVIER, C — P —

R<sub>2</sub>; 967.45

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de Caus: 968"189"

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en:

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R<sub>2</sub>; 967.45;

BomL<sub>2</sub>; do;

Afr<sub>2</sub>; do;







