A social history of Guquka and Koloni: Settlement and resources

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Introduction

This chapter elucidates the history of the two villages and should be read against the historical background provided in chapter 2. Here we focus primarily on the dynamics of settlement and the social processes that, over time, have shaped these villages. Although there are some discrepancies in accounts, formal and informal, of when Koloni was first established it is thought that both villages have their origins around 1850, in the aftermath of the Frontier Wars between the colonising English and the Xhosa.

During and following the Frontier Wars the colonial state enabled and allowed settlement on conquered land by the fore fathers of the current villagers. Settlement and, more specifically, the allocation and arrangement of access to natural resources, was based on a neat, explicit and sometimes exclusionary distinction of land categories for settlement, arable purposes and livestock grazing. The colonial state saw this as a means of facilitating crop cultivation and livestock keeping as central elements of rural livelihoods. Yet, this settle-

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ment pattern contrasted starkly with previously existing settlement patterns and use of the landscape. This chapter deals with the specifics of settlement, the introduction of various categories of land use and land tenure, the allocation of land, the dynamics of betterment planning as a government response to resource degradation, and related aspects of natural resource management.

Guquka and Koloni had rather contrasting experiences of betterment planning which is conventionally viewed in the literature (see chapter 2) as an attempt to socially and physically restructure and reorganise the so-called native reserves. Labour migration later shaped the patterns of resource utilisation and the expansion of the two settlements over the years. The pension and social grant systems played a crucial role in shifting the source of people’s livelihoods towards the use of resources located beyond the boundaries of the villages. Since the origin and social history of Guquka and Koloni differ, we start by describing these separately. Despite these differences, there are clear similarities, particularly in more recent times.

The data for this chapter are based primarily on oral accounts of villagers collected during the period 1997 to 2004. Some of the data and analysis have been written up in ARDRI Research Reports (Van Averbeke et al. 1998). Other data have been used in conferences and seminar papers (Hebinck and Smith 2001, Hebinck 2004), while some are only recorded and stored as field notes (Smith, 2000, field notes; Hebinck 2004, field notes).

The researchers, together with their assistants, purposefully selected informants who could provide historical accounts of the two villages. This was considered necessary, as written recordings of the history of the two villages are scant. The historical literature and travellers’ accounts only contain general references and descriptions relating to the larger area surrounding the two villages (e.g. the Tyume River Valley, Amatola Mountains and the Hogsback Plateau). The informants in the two villages, all elderly males, were interviewed in group sessions. In addition, Chief Mqalo, the traditional leader of Guquka, who resided in the neighbouring village of Gilton, and Mr. Ngxowa and Mr. Kama, respectively the former and present chairmen of the Residents’ Committee at Koloni, were interviewed on different occasions about the history of their villages. Unfortunately, the Chief of Koloni, Nkosi Zwelimjongile Siseko, who was residing in Qhibira, south of Koloni, was not available for an interview, due to illness.

The role of chiefs in South Africa has been changing over the years (chapter 6). In Guquka and Koloni their influence has substantially diminished in the past century, in comparison to other parts of South Africa. As the process of devolution of tribal authority is discussed extensively in chapter 6, our comments here are limited to a few observations that relate directly to the role of the chiefs in the historical changes that have taken place in the two villages. In the past the role of the chief was especially important for the (re)allocation of land for residential and arable purposes. This chapter elaborates on this and describes how this worked shortly after settlement. In the later half of the 20th Century
their responsibilities were taken over by appointed or elected civic organisations such as Residents Associations and Range Management Committees and the chiefs’ positions as tribal leaders are now primarily ceremonial. However, their traditional status as keepers of village history is still respected (Soga 1931, Mtuze 2004). It is also in this context that we refer to the views of chiefs and other traditional leaders.

History of Guquka

The social history of Guquka is one of motion: people have been on the move for a long time, albeit for different reasons. Its past involves autonomous settlement and male labour migration. In the second half of the 20th century, its history was further shaped by an influx of people who had endured forced removals from areas declared ‘white’. In the late 1980s to early 1990s, when the Apartheid system began to dissolve, whole families began to migrate from the village. Most recently, from the late 1990s onwards, migrants, retrenched workers and pensioners from other, usually urban, parts of South Africa have begun to return to the village.

Origin

The people of Guquka derive from a migration movement that dates back to the mid 19th century. Part of the Makhuzeni clan migrated to the fertile Tyume River basin that forms part of the Amatola Mountain range. This migration followed the defeat of the Ngika under Paramount Chief Sandile, and occurred after the end of the 1850-1853 Frontier War (see chapter 2) and as a result of their expulsion from the river valley. After the British cleared the Tyume valley of these Xhosa, other clans and tribes moved in and occupied the valley. In contrast to other British controlled areas of the Eastern Cape, (including Koloni), settlement in Guquka was largely autonomous. According to local accounts, some of the settlers belonged to the Mfengu or adopted Mfengu traditions (see chapter 2).

Mrs. Warsdale, an amateur historian who is well-versed with the history of white settlement in the Tyume Valley, claims that white farmers, including British soldiers who wanted to farm, began to occupy parts of the Tyume valley by 1847. The well-known missionary, Brown, also settled in the Tyume valley and farmed on the Pleasant View Estate (pers. comm. Warsdale, April 2004). Over time an active relationship between these white settlers and the people of Guquka emerged, as described later in the chapter.

Chief Mqalo, chief over what was later designated as the Makhuzeni Tribal Area, in 2004 at an age of 87 years, explained the settlement of his people in Makhuzeni as an autonomous process. In a series of interviews between 2000 and 2004, he told how his people originated from Zululand. Around 1820 a group of people under the leadership of a man named Jama decided to move from Zululand to escape the turmoil caused by the ‘Mfecane’ (see chapter 2).
They migrated through the territory east of the Great Kei River controlled by the Xhosa Chief Hintsa. Here the group split in two. Jama decided to stay and align with Hintsa, while Mqalo, the current Chief’s great-grandfather, migrated further with his followers across the Great Kei River, to an area west of the Great Fish River (close to where Port Elisabeth is today) and then to Ndabathemba where they stayed for a while. During this migration, migrants from other clans and tribes joined them. They moved with their cattle, surviving on their milk, continuously looking for good grazing land. From the Port Elizabeth area they moved to Fort Beaufort, on to Ndabexirhe and later to the Amatola region. Around 1830 they arrived in the Tyume valley, which at that time was still controlled by the Ngqika Xhosa. According to the current Chief, Mqalo and his group were given permission to settle in the valley by Chief Tyali, son of Ngqika and brother of Maqoma. The area became their tribal area called Makhuzeni and Mqalo subsequently became their chief (chapter 6).

Prior to the arrival of Mqalo and his people, the Makhuzeni region must have looked different, as chapter 5 shows. Mqalo, the father of the current chief, subdivided and allocated the Makhuzeni area to different groups, and a number of settlements, located close to each other, were established. This subdivision was overseen by the colonial administration. In addition to Guquka, these settlements included the present-day villages of Gilton, Msompondo and Mpundu. To this day, the people of these villages share the same communal rangelands. Mqalo originally established more settlements, including Kwezana, whose residents were later relocated by betterment planners to one of the other villages between 1930 and 1950.

Upon arrival in the Tyume valley, some of the land was cleared of shrubs and trees to open it up for cultivation. The method by which this was done is not well documented, although it is known that the Southern Nguni made use of digging sticks and hoes and that fire also played an important management role (see chapter 2).

The cleared land was used mostly for cultivating grains that were mainly meant for consumption by women during their menstruation period, as custom dictated that they should not consume dairy products at such times. In addition, various kinds of vegetables were cultivated in gardens adjacent to residential compounds. The rangelands supported the livestock, allowed for hunting and provided various other resources to the villagers. Mostert (1993) describes the Tyume Valley as being an excellent cattle grazing area at that time. For Mqalo’s people cattle also provided a social means for survival that could be bartered for other resources, used at ceremonies and as ‘lobola’ (Schapera 1937, Soga 1931, Mtuze 2004).

Thus the land was well endowed with resources that enabled the villagers to combine hunting and gathering with crop cultivation and animal husbandry (particularly cattle). Together these resources usually provided sufficient means to meet people’s needs for consumption, shelter and social-cultural reproduction. During this early period, people kept cattle so they could directly use their
produce, such as sour milk. Water was taken from the river, and game played an important role in their diet. The villagers lived in huts (‘amanukwalo’), consisting of wooden poles interwoven with reed or grass with a fireplace in the middle. The floor was dug out and plastered with manure. According to Chief Mqalo, each village had access to the surrounding rangelands, including mountain and valley-bottom pastures. This ensured that adequate grazing was available for livestock throughout the seasons. Accounts of travellers (Mostert 1993) and local people confirm this.

Demarcation of land and land tenure
As their settlement was overseen by the colonial administration, the allocation and partitioning of land to communities and individual homesteads reflected the ideas and views of the then administrators. Land tenure in the central Eastern Cape has been largely shaped by colonial interventions. A survey held in 1899 by colonial government surveyors demarcated and fixed the boundaries of each tribal area in the Tyume valley. The colonial administration made a further distinction between land allocated for crops (then termed a garden lot, but referred to in this book as an arable allotment), which were between three to four morgen (2.5 to 3.4 ha) in size, and land intended for residential purposes (building lots). The remaining land was designated as ‘commonage’.

Table 4.1 shows the current proportions of these land categories. Chapter 7 describes the changes in these over time in more detail. Map 4.1 shows the distribution of these three land use categories across the landscape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Guquka</th>
<th>Koloni</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential land</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arable allotments</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal rangelands</td>
<td>578*</td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodlot</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>772</td>
<td>1114</td>
</tr>
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* The boundaries are poorly defined

*Source: ARDRI Survey 1997*

The chief allocated rights to these three categories of land to the heads of families. The original title deed made out to Nolesi, the widow of the late Skepe Mqalo, grandfather of the current Chief is shown in Photo 4.1.

This deed has been passed down through the generations to the present Chief Mqalo who showed it to us at his residence in Gilton in 2004. A copy can also be found in the Deeds Registry at King William’s Town.
This quitrent deed granted access to and use of building lot 172 and garden lot 177 on payment of a perpetual quitrent (annual payment) of two shillings and six pence (sterling), which was first paid on the first of January 1902. The Glen Grey Act (1894) later designated ownership of the rangelands as ‘communal’. Chief Mqalo confirmed that the rangeland was ‘open to everybody’. Residency in the village grants people access to the ‘commonage’ to this day.

The first families to settle in Guquka, who are still referred to as the ‘old’ families (Holbrook 1998), were given similar deeds granting them rights to arable, residential and grazing lands. Residential sites and fields (referred to as garden lots or arable allotments) were registered under quitrent, with the title deeds being issued to the male heads of the families.
Quitrent is a form of individual tenure, but unlike freehold tenure, it requires the deed holders to pay an annual rent for their land. Each deed specifies the location of the arable allotment and the residential plot, and the annual rent payable for each. Upon the death of the male titleholder the oldest son inherits the deeds, but this usually only occurs after the widow has passed away. Historians record that quitrent title deeds were issued in the former Ciskei and in parts of the Transkei from 1849 to 1879 (Mills and Wilson 1952, Cokwana
1988) but apparently as the land allocation history of Guquka demonstrated also much later.

The Deeds Registry of Yantalo Location, Victoria East District located at King William’s Town shows that most land was allocated and registered during the late 1890s. Quitrent tenure has not yet been not converted to freehold tenure and the status and future of quitrent is uncertain at the moment (chapter 6).

In 1910 a second land survey was conducted, at the end of which “a lot of land” was taken away and provided to white farmers. Chief Mqalo explained that the colonial administration thought that “the Mqalo allocation was too large”. The area was renamed as the Yantolo Location in honour of Yantolo the regent before Mqalo, for the concessions he made to the colonial administration.

Interactions with white farmers

All the white farmers who settled in the Valley were given land under a freehold tenure arrangement. Up to the 1950s, interaction between black and white farmers in the Tyume valley was limited; while there was little co-operation or exchange they seldom came into conflict. The white farmers bought cattle from the black people, while the latter bought firewood from the white farmers. The main interaction was through employment, particularly domestic work. Chief Mqalo: “Kitchen girls were paid 70 cents a month and a sheep cost 80 cents”. Today Chief Mqalo would pay 2,500 Rand for 6 sheep and pays his domestic servant 400 Rand a month, so the relative value of labour has not changed dramatically since then.

Some local villagers that we interviewed said that their interactions with white farmers went beyond exchanges of labour and farm products. They sometimes borrowed threshers from white farmers, possibly in exchange for their own labour. There were white trading stores close to Guquka which bought and sold grain from black farmers. The farmers bought coffee, tea, sugar but generally not staples, which they mostly produced at home. The trading store was a two-way mechanism and did quite well as their trade was boosted by the relatively large sums of money that flowed into the villages from remittances from migrant labour.

The 1950s and 1960s were a period when the Apartheid laws following the 1936 Land and Trust Act, were enforced and when white people (both traders and farmers) were removed from the valley. One of the effects of this was to reduce local employment opportunities, especially for women. Pleasant View Estate, on the road to Hogsback, was vacated in 1968 (Warsdale, pers. comm. 2004). Records for rainfall data also stopped being collected in the same year (Bennett, pers. comm.).

Betterment planning

The Tomlinson Commission Report published in 1955 (chapter 2) reflected and formally acknowledged the view that emerged during the 1940s and 1950s, that improving the natural environment in areas designated as ‘native reserves’ was
an urgent priority. These interventions, which became known as betterment planning, were also introduced and implemented in the Makhuzeni area. Betterment planners brought all the high-lying homesteads of settlements, such as Kwezana, down to the valleys or plains and incorporated them in the current settlements. Elderly informants remember clearly how clusters of homesteads were destroyed and converted into grazing land. This land was divided up and fenced off into grazing camps. The arable land was also fenced off. The neighbouring village of Gilton was assigned its own section of grazing land, while Guquka had to share its grazing camps with Msopondo and Kayalethu (see Map 4.2).

Map 4.2 Location of Guquka and surrounding villages
The enforcement of the grazing camp management system was accompanied by the imposition of a rotational grazing system, to be implemented by livestock owners. The villagers of Guquka disliked the fences that separated the commons that they had shared with neighbouring villages. One fence ran right down from the mountains to the valley and prevented them from grazing their cattle as they had done before. Over time, this system broke down, as local people stole fencing materials to use to fence off their own homesteads. This, in turn, led to cattle starting to graze on the arable lands.

During the betterment government officials controlled livestock numbers and enforced culling. Mr. Tabana asserts that today he can count the number of people with livestock ‘on one hand’, and that the number of livestock owners has substantially reduced over the years (chapter 8). In his view, the reduction in the size of villagers’ herds can be traced to the combined effect of serious spells of drought, e.g. in the early 1980s, and the culling and land reallocation practices introduced under betterment planning. He remembers how government surveyors who came to Guquka in 1965 to implement betterment planning ordered the people to cull their cattle:

I was working with some old men in the fields in the late 1960s when we got a message from the Paramount Chief that there were too many stock and that the government was going to cut the numbers … He did not discuss this with the people of the villages. He just had the order to obey. There was nothing to discuss with the people, as he could not say anything to the surveyor. He just had to agree to each and every thing the surveyor said and pass it on to the headmen who then had to chase the people. A gentleman with six oxen could keep four only, and one cow. If the cow calved the owner was obliged to sell one of his oxen. If the gentleman would not sell some of his animals he was taken to jail, or the police would come and take away his cattle and sell them at a low price to punish him for not obeying the rules. Before, we had been lucky, as the government had never made us sell our sheep and cattle. We only sold them when we needed money. Those times ended from then on.

Betterment in villages like Guquka was contested because it had adverse effects on villagers’ ability to manage their herds in a time of social and climatic changes. Generally, betterment planning and other government-instigated changes such as the enforcement of the Hut Tax and labour controls (the pass laws also locally known as ‘Dom’ passes) had a negative affect on their economic and social security. In addition to the culling programme, betterment planning placed other constraints on the use of land based resources. Betterment planning was intended to halt the ecological deterioration of communal grazing lands. Yet, according to local informants, the programme’s main effect was to trigger the permanent decline of animal husbandry. This, in turn, negatively affected crop production which depended on animal draught power at crucial phases during the growing season. From a local perspective the ecological
improvements that the betterment planners intended to create had an overall negative impact on their activities.

Other sources suggest that the natural resource base was already deteriorating and that this legitimised the interventions introduced under betterment planning. Bundy (1988) points out that the changes to the grazing regime caused by betterment planning, which had already started to change from a seasonal to continuous grazing of valley pastures had resulted in gully and sheet erosion. He argues that the introduction of mechanised ploughing for crop cultivation also resulted in widespread gully erosion. Chapter 7 explores the degree to which this also occurred Guquka.

Chief Mqalo remembers that white farmers first brought tractors into the valley in the 1920s. People in the Makhuzeni region started to use them from about 1939 although on a very limited basis, due to the financial constraints of villagers. Most villagers continued to use draught power to pull wooden ploughs. Only later, in the 1950s, did tractor ploughing became more popular, particularly during the Homeland period (1981-1990) when “there were four tractors stationed here allocated by the Agricultural Department. These were called ‘Trust Tractors’ and were available for use by the villagers at a nominal fee”.

Influx of people
Between 1950 and 1960, Apartheid laws were enforced, firmly establishing the segregation of races by allocating them to certain areas (chapter 2). These led to the forced removal of black people from white designated areas (and vice versa). Guquka faced an influx of black people, especially in the early 1960s, from areas declared ‘white’, such as nearby Cathcart and Hogsback. This influx was due to not only Apartheid laws but also the result of white farmers actively removing ‘surplus’ people from their lands. Many farm workers and members of their families lost their employment or their place to stay on white farms and had to find a place in the designated ‘black areas’. These new immigrants to Guquka had various ethnic identities. Some had kinship ties with residents of Guquka and the neighbouring villages; others did not. Village authorities allocated each newcomer a residential plot and they were subsequently given a Permission to Occupy (PTO) (chapter 6). However, newcomers had different rights from the older families, as Mengezelei Mbangi explained. When he came to Guquka in the 1960s he enquired about keeping livestock and was told that only ‘size 20 homesteads’ could keep livestock. In Guquka, the term ‘size 20 homestead’ refers to a homestead with quitrent title to land in the village. Conversely, a ‘size 10 homestead’ is one that occupies a residential site, taken from the ‘commonage’ and only held by PTO. Mengezelei explained that the authority kept a ‘cattle book’ in which the names of livestock owners and their holdings were recorded. The tribal authority ruled that ‘size 10 homesteads’ wishing to invest in cattle had to register their animals in the name of a ‘size 20
household’. Mengezelei was not comfortable with that arrangement and decided to keep only livestock that could “stay around the house” (Van Averbeke 2005).

Newcomers were also denied access to arable allotments because these had all been already allocated to existing residents. As a result, the newcomers could hardly make a living from local resources and had to gain their livelihood elsewhere.

It is important to point out the social and political implications of the distinction between ‘old families’ and ‘newcomers’. Most of the ‘newcomers’ were labour tenants at white farms, while the members of the ‘old’ families see themselves as descendants of the original settlers. Holbrook (1998) has shown that the old families, whose heads had served in the tribal authority, still hold most of the land, most of the livestock, and through their assets, they represent the moral authority in the village. This will be discussed further in chapters 8 and 9.

Social identity
The residents of Guquka clearly have a mixed socio-ethnic background. Some are Xhosa, others are Mfengu (see chapter 2). Despite their mixed origin, there is consensus over their identity as ‘School’ rather than ‘Red’, which implies that they respect and follow the traditions and allegiances largely derived from the Mfengu. One of the associations of the labels of ‘School’ or ‘Red’ is of being ‘modern’ as opposed to ‘traditional’; and being ‘educated’ as opposed to ‘pagan’. By adopting the ‘School’ identity, the people of Guquka present themselves as being educated, modern, progressive minded and forward looking. While notions of ‘School’ and ‘Red’ are interesting, they suggest a homogeneity within the village, especially in terms of how people seek to organize their lives, which is not supported by the available evidence. Yet the people, including the chief, immediately and often strongly identify themselves as ‘School’, showing that these designations are still relevant and important to them. These identities, however, do not directly explain the historical or contemporary patterns of resource use (see for example Mayer 1961, Hunt Davis 1979, and Bank 2002). The approach that we take in this book is to examine the relationship between patterns of resource use and various social categories of livelihoods.

Settlement expansion
Chapter 7 provides a general picture of the expansion of the settlement over the years (see Figure 7.5), which has been fuelled by both natural population growth as well as influxes of people from other areas. In response to this population increase, a clear priority has been given to meeting demand for residential land as opposed to maintaining land for communal grazing land. At Guquka, the reduction of pasturage in favour of residential land continues; although the increase in the size and population of the village seems to have slowed from
1985 onwards, due to changing migration patterns and related livelihood strategies. Chapter 11 provides details on such contemporary developments.

Loss of grazing land

One critical event, still regarded of much importance especially by the older generations, is the loss of a section of their rangeland located high in the Amatola Mountains to the ‘white’ Hogsback region during the seventies. In 1978 Chief Mqalo and a plantation company in Hogsback reached an agreement to plant trees on the mountaintop belonging to Makhuzeni, which specified that once the pine trees were harvested, the Makhuzeni people would share the benefits. According to chief Mqalo, “the land was not used much except for the collection of wild fruits”.

Other informants from Guquka, interviewed in 2000, provided different and contrasting accounts of this critical event. They explained that Makhuzeni livestock owners used large parts of the Hogsback plateau as rangeland for their cattle and goats, especially during the summer periods (Van Averbeke et al. 1998: 12, Coleman 1999: 35). They adamantly argued that, in addition to grazing, the mountain was also used for hunting and collecting fruits and medicinal plants. Frustrated about the loss of one of their key resources, the residents of Guquka and Msompondo decided to fight the pine tree encroachment by burning down the trees. Operationally the action was successful, but the authorities retaliated. Some local youths were arrested and thrown in jail, charged with arson. Fearing more arrests, the Makhuzeni community suspended the burning of plantations. The foresters exploited this lull in resistance to ban cattle from young plantations, blaming the animals for damage to trees. Cattle found roaming in pine plantations were impounded and taken to Seymour or Cathcart, from where owners found it extremely difficult to retrieve them. Many livestock farmers lost animals in this way (Van Averbeke et al. 1988a).

The villagers sabotaged the agreement, not only because it meant a reduction in the size of their grazing lands but, more importantly, also the loss of suitable grazing land. The loss of mountain pastures limited the number of cattle that could be reared on the rangeland around Guquka. This reduced cattle numbers, and wealth within the communities (ibid.) and status.

This loss not only reduced stock numbers, but also negatively influenced crop production, as this had always relied to some degree on animal traction. Only a few people could afford to hire tractors. The oxen were weaker at the end of the winter and barely able to plough the fields. One informant described the situation:

Our cattle used to be on top there on the mountain in the summer season. When you see those cattle, you could compare them to those [commercial] farm cattle, fit and tough. Since the government took away those lands in 1960 we have become used to the cattle eating the grass around us here ... this grass is bitter compared to the sweet grass of the hills.
The Makhuzeni community’s resistance to the loss of their mountain pastures continued for a long time but eventually faded when it became clear that the newly installed Ciskei Homeland Government would not support their claim to the land. Soon after the last remaining area of pasture above Guquka village was planted with pine trees. Today, the mountain plateau is virtually completely covered with pine, leaving little space for forage for cattle. The practice of driving cattle up the mountain is much less common than in the past. Recently, the villagers have reached an agreement on shared use of the plateau (chapters 7 and 9) under which they can again graze their cattle there.

History of Koloni

In contrast to Guquka, whose history revolves around a relatively autonomous process of settlement, Koloni’s history is far more associated with planned settlement by the British during the troubled period of the Frontier Wars in the 1850s (chapter 2). Koloni has had similar experiences with labour migration, but compared with Guquka, it has not needed to accommodate a sudden influx of people from elsewhere in the region. Expansions of the village were largely planned and foreseen and seemingly uncontested. Map 4.3 shows the current layout of Koloni. The amount of land within each land use category is shown in Table 4.1 below.

Origin

Koloni is situated in an area that was allocated to the AmaGqunukhwebe under Chief Kama by George Cathcart. After the end of Mlanjeni’s War in 1852, Cathcart moved this group of AmaGqunukhwebe as part of his overall military strategy of settling loyal clans in the Ciskei region to act as a buffer between the Ngqika and Galeca Xhosa and the Colony. The AmaGqunukhwebe originally lived in the area near Bedford (Bruintjieshoogte) across the Fish River, about 80 km west of Koloni. They were one of the Xhosa clans that settled farthest to the west of the Kei River (Peires 1981). The British resettled them in the Middeldrift District (where Koloni is situated) as a reward for their support in the later Frontier Wars. Parsons (1982), Mostert (1993) and Bundy (1988) all assert that this occurred after the British annexation of the Ciskei area once Sandile, Paramount chief of the Ngqika-Xhosa, had been defeated and replaced with Sarili of the Gcaleka-Xhosa in 1850. The Middeldrift area was more suitable for livestock farming than the area around Bedford, making the move attractive.

It is generally agreed that the village was established somewhere between 1853 and 1890, near to the Perksdale Mission. This mission was part of a grant made to Chief Kama by Sir George Grey in 1853. Holden (1877), a Methodist missionary stationed at Annshaw, provided detailed accounts of these times. Kama, chief of the Amaqgunukwebe was born in 1798, and was mentioned as key figure who remained loyal to the colonial government during Mlanjeni’s
War (1850-1853). He and his people were rewarded with land along the Keiskamma River, running southwards from Middledrift; bounded by the Keiskamma and Ncera rivers on the south-west and west, respectively, and by the road between Alice and King William’s Town on the north. They moved to this land in 1853 and shortly afterwards the Annshaw Mission Station was founded. Kama allocated land to those that settled at Koloni and facilitated the spread of Christianity by allowing mission stations to be built. He had earlier been baptized on August 19th 1825. Holden took charge of Annshaw Mission in 1871 and wrote that he arranged to have the locations of Annshaw and Peceleni (Perksdale) surveyed. This survey revealed existing village and garden allotments for individuals or families and a large commonage for public grazing land allotment holders. So Perksdale, later renamed Peuleni, must have been formed before 1871, and certainly before Chief Kama died in 1875.
There is agreement about the ethnic background of those who came to settle and as to whose land it was. The presence of the nearby Perksdale Mission would have attracted dispersed Xhosa and small groups of Mfengu, who could then be found in every frontier town and on small holdings on mission stations and elsewhere (Holden 1877). Parsons (1982) and Switzer (1993) linked this dispersal pattern to the policies of George Grey, who succeeded Harry Smith as the Cape Colony governor. Grey envisaged and implemented a set of policies through which he hoped to ‘civilize the blacks’ and create a Colony that would be divided by class rather than race. His government encouraged Europeans and ‘loyal natives’ (including the Mfengu and other ethnic groups who had joined the colonial forces in Mlanjeni’s War) to settle close to each other. Grey pursued a ‘checkerboard’ strategy where white farms and small black reserves were intermingled, with the hope of creating interactions between the two groups which would ultimately result in the reserves evolving into small holdings (Parsons 1982: 114-16). Holden (1877) confirms that the land was given to Kama to “form a breakwater against any future incursion of barbarous tribes”.

The story goes that Koloni was founded by seven families from different ethnic backgrounds, who had been previously staying on white farms before moving to Koloni. Oral history confirms that Koloni was originally called Farm A and that the neighbouring villages had been white commercial farms before they were bought up by the state in the early 1920s.

Social identity
The residents of Koloni, like those of Guquka, lay claim to a ‘School’ denomination and orientation. The implications of this become clearer by discussing betterment planning. Records of people who settled in the British controlled areas (Peddie, Grahamstown) indicate that ‘School’ people were apt agriculturists who traded and engaged with the British. Many of them obtained education and converting to Christianity.

Whatever their original affiliation, the villagers of Koloni currently regard themselves as Xhosa of the AmaGqunukwebe clan, the same clan to which residents of nearby villages belong. A Bantu Affairs Betterment Report backs this up, also specifying that they were ‘Fingos’ (i.e. ‘Mfengu’) (Bantu Affairs Commission 1962).

Land tenure
There is some confusion over the original ownership of the land on which Koloni was established. The land was originally allocated to the Peuleni Mission Station. Elderly residents of the village, like Mr. Nyathi, claim that the Koloni’s residential and garden lots were allotted to families by government sale. He says that this land was adjacent to the lands of the mission and sold by the state under ‘freehold tenure’. The first buyers were from different origins, some from nearby local villages (especially from around Middledrift and Keiskammahoek), others from farther away (such as Peddie). To settle in
Koloni, one had to apply to Chief Kama to buy a residential and arable plot. The freehold title also provided access to the communal range lands of the village.

Chief Kama initially stayed in Middledrift before moving to GaGqumukwebe/Qibira with his tribe in the 1920s. This was because, in the words of one respondent, “although Middledrift gets plenty of rain, the land there is like gravel, there is no grass there like you can find here”. Mr. Nyathi explained that Koloni and the neighbouring villages had originally been white commercial farms. The government bought these up in the early 1920s and planned them according to a pattern of separate residential, arable and grazing land areas. Although most respondents do not know the exact date their ancestors arrived in the village, they claim that it was around the time the government put the land up for sale. One respondent indicated that the first headman of the village died in 1912. He was followed by Dazadaza Rebe, indicating that Koloni was established somewhat earlier. As indicated before, the first families to settle in the village had diverse origins, although Chief Kama gave priority to the interests of those who had come from Middledrift. Mr. Nyathi remembers:

If you came from another area not under his rule, such as Peddie, you had to get a permit from your chief there to come and settle here in Koloni. Chief Kama would ask: ‘What is wrong at Peddie? What did the chief there tell you?’

Photo 4.2 Quitrent title deed of Mr. Ngxowa. (Photo by Hebinck)
According to some informants, the Nyathi, Rebe and Ngxowa families were among the first to settle in the village. When they ‘bought’ their plots in the 1920s the village was still relatively open and many plots had not yet been sold. Some elder respondents were boys at that time and still remember this well. They assert that their fathers arrived before 1920.

Evidence from the Deeds Registry in King Williams’ Town and the title deeds shown to us by some of the people, clearly indicated that the land was surveyed in 1874 by a surveyor named Thos van Renen on instruction of the Minister of Native Affairs. On the basis of this survey land was allocated to individuals through Quitrent title deeds.

As in Guquka, the land was classified into residential and arable plots and rangelands with plot sizes being fixed (Table 4.1). The Chief or headman allocated the plots to individuals. The title deed of Mr. Ngxowa was issued to his grandfather in 1889.

Quitrent implied the payment of an annual sum to the government. The obligation to make such a perpetual payment may explain why people now say that they bought the land. Years later, i.e. in the mid-1980s, this land was changing hands. Mrs. Mlilwana, a widow in her late eighties, talked about how she and her husband bought their residential plot and arable field in 1985. It took them some two years to locate the owner. They finally found out that he lived in Queenstown and managed to convince him to sell the land.

This and other accounts enable us to establish the most probable course of events: settlement in Koloni was a gradual process whereby families settled when they could negotiate access to land. This gradual nature also has a specific spatial reflection. There is proof that some owners (see chapter 6) did not use some of the residential and arable sites, which could only be obtained as a pair. By the end of the 1920s, many residential sites were still unoccupied. Indeed to this day, the various plots in Koloni that are clearly demarcated for residential and/or agricultural purposes are still not in use. Mr. Ngxowa, the former chairperson of the Koloni Residents Association once remarked that “a lot of land is wasted”. Younger residents complain about residential sites being derelict and that they cannot use them. On other occasions informants clearly showed resentment about land being left unused for long periods. Nevertheless, because of the nature of the title arrangements these sites could not easily be re-allocated to another family by the chief or headman, as would have been the case under a communal tenure system, as the land had a title, held by the owner.

The statement in Photo 4.3 was written by Mrs. Ngxowa, who gave it to us in April 2004. It underlines that the settlement of Koloni was gradual. It also tells about clashes between chiefs and missionaries, who both considered themselves as the ‘owners’ of the land, with the right to dispose of it as they saw fit.

Her statement that few families had settled at the time of betterment, also suggests that Koloni’s settlement was a gradual process that extended beyond 1938, when betterment was introduced to the village.
Betterment planning

Oral evidence underlines that agriculture was the primary source of livelihood for most homesteads in the village until the mid 1950s/1960s. During this time there was generally no need to seek work elsewhere, as crop and livestock production provided more income than could be obtained from migrant labour. Following developments that they had noted elsewhere, the villagers began, on their own accord and expense, to fence off their arable fields (Ndlovu 1991: 22-23). They expanded their livestock holdings by establishing bull camps. They also constructed two water dams. The commons were not fenced off at this time because they were shared with neighbouring villages and, being large, were expensive to fence.

This interest in agricultural improvements drew the attention of government officials. In 1936, the Principal of Fort Cox College of Agriculture suggested to the Chief Native Commissioner that Koloni could be a suitable test case for betterment planning (Ndlovu 1991). The villagers fully co-operated with, and were interested in, this government initiative. At this time most other villages were opposed to betterment, so Koloni was favoured by the state whenever it was allocating resources, whether for infrastructure and services, but especially for agriculture. Koloni was one of two villages in the Ciskei region selected as a ‘pilot’ betterment village. The Ciskei Bantu Affairs Report mentions that Koloni as a “location was planned in May 1937” and that “the location was
declared a Betterment Area” (Bantu Affairs Commission 1962). This meant that Koloni’s “… stock numbers have been determined and the carrying capacity fixed, and stock culling has already been applied”. The report also categorises Koloni residents as “co-operative and … prepared to assist in fulfilling plans put forward for the betterment of themselves and their location”. This is quite a contrast to the situation in Guquka. The report makes it clear that conservation of soil terraces was necessary, and was augmented by erecting fences to protect crops from cattle. It also mentions the presence of two woodlots, each 5 morgen in size.

The Trust, as betterment was locally referred to, institutionalised separate bull camps in Koloni (chapter 9), established fodder plots and further expanded the dams to ensure year-round water supplies for the cattle. These interventions sought to ensure more constant cattle numbers and to balance stock herding with soil and water preservation measures. Betterment officials also introduced good-quality rams into the Koloni sheep flock to improve wool production. When tractor services became available, Koloni farmers were first in line for access. Agricultural technicians trained farmers in sheep shearing and wool classing and assisted in marketing the village clip. Crop production was diversified beyond the traditional cultivation of monocultures of maize and ‘kaffircorn’ (sorghum) and herd quality was improved by introducing the Shorthorn and Afrikaner cattle breeds. Attention was given to marketing produce.

Bundy (1988: 36) discussed whether the missionaries at the Perksdale Mission turned Koloni residents into farmers, or whether Africans chose to enter farming in the following way:

... ‘missionary successes’ might justifiably be described in retrospect as ‘African successes’, in that the initial decision to invite the missionary and the subsequent cultural adaptations were conscious and deliberate choices by chiefs, clans or individuals.

Initially agriculture in Koloni, both crop farming and animal production, showed much promise. Ndlovu (1991: 53) cites an elder informant who recalls the period before 1940: “There was no need to go to work, even if you worked during the ploughing season you came home because crop growing was more beneficial than the cent you got from migrating”.

Ndlovu (ibid.: 29) also explains the importance of the quitrent form of land tenure in Koloni at this time:

The landowners are the wealthier and relatively more educated and therefore are looked upon as a superior group by people living in communal and Trust lands. Much of this superior attitude of the landowners, it is argued, derives not only from the sense of freedom from authority, engendered by the security of tenure, but also from their rather better standards of living.
This would suggest that agriculture was indeed of much importance in Koloni until at least the 1940s. Key informant interviews suggest that crop production peaked during the 1960s. Aerial photographs of the village taken in 1963, show that the ploughed and terraced arable land, most probably done by heavy equipment (chapter 7).

This underlines the eagerness and interest in agricultural development shown by the village. Respondents explain that this was at least partly the result of the interest and encouragement of the village headmen, Ngxowa and DazaDuza Rebe. Ngxowa initiated a number of new approaches on his fields that he learned about through agricultural education. He motivated all the villagers to start cultivating their fields. One key informant, Mr. Moyoma, remembers how under the leadership of Ngxowa and Rebe he and his father had been seriously involved with agriculture, producing fields of pumpkins, ‘bedseed’ (akin to wheat) and maize during the summer months, and peas in the winter time.

Betterment, however, was not the first time that the village had interacted with and picked up ‘white farming techniques’. Some of the elder respondents told how Koloni had previously received some assistance from a few white farmers who, under a government contract, provided technical assistance in agricultural production to the village. They had introduced various new breeds and breeding techniques, introduced animal traction (for the arable fields), and initiated other measures to improve crop production. White farmers also taught the villagers to plant peas and to add these to the cycle of crops to rejuvenate the soils. They introduced sheep breeding and taught villagers how to shear the sheep and set up a shearing shed. After a few years, they left the village, leaving behind the shearing shed, ploughs and other tools for the villagers to use.

According to elder respondents, the village enthusiastically followed the involvement of white farmers and, later, the Trust officials. Ndlovu (1991: 2) explains the willing participation of the villagers in betterment planning: “...there were people who, after realising the wholesale deterioration of their land and stock, a sign to them of a diminishing livelihood, decided to collaborate with the government”. Through this kind of cooperation, they expected to reverse the deterioration of their natural resources and increase agricultural production, thereby improving their, locally derived, standard of living.

According to informants, the collaboration of Koloni with government officials did not go down well with neighbouring communities who were jealous of the number of projects that headman Rebe had been able to introduce to his village. Neighbouring communities, especially those also belonging to the AmaGqunukhwebe clan, were highly critical of the advantages that Koloni had gained. Their own situations contrasted greatly with that of Koloni. They were subject to the restrictions imposed by betterment planning (especially over the number of stock) without receiving any of the opportunities enjoyed by Koloni. Thus, after a few years of quarrelling, the Paramount Chief of the AmaQunu-kwebe, under the pressure of protests (‘toyi-toyi’) from the other villages, fired
Koloni’s headman Daza Daza Rebe in 1935. His brother Sipho took over the headmanship. However, this change of headman had little effect on the assistance Koloni continued to receive through betterment planning, especially during the 1950s and 1960s.

These various betterment programmes brought improvements and boosted the agriculture of Koloni. This contrasts sharply with the impact of government interventions in other parts of the Ciskei region (De Wet 1987, 1989), especially those measures that resulted in a large-scale resettlement in the Ciskei region of ‘surplus people’ from areas designated for white South Africans. Only the Middledrift district, where Koloni is located, was exempt from this resettlement process. This is one fundamental difference in the settlement history of the two villages of Guquka and Koloni.

Settlement expansion
In the early 1980s a ‘squatter settlement’ as it is called to this day by villagers was established. Under the auspices of the village authorities, this settlement was created on one of the grazing camps to accommodate the offspring of the villagers. In Koloni, this move is still perceived as a one-off action to accommodate ‘our children’, the younger generation who needed space to build new compounds as extensions, or satellites, of existing homesteads in the village. The construction of this settlement was announced and approved in an amendment of Soil Conservation scheme No. (60)N.2/11/3/12 dated February 1962 (Bantu Affairs Commission 1962), but was not enacted until September 1985 when it was signed by the Ciskei Minister of Agriculture. It specified that a “total area of 35 hectares of land situated in camp No. 4 is hereby withdrawn from grazing and set aside for residential purposes to accommodate the natural increase of the population”. The residential sites of the squatter camp were allocated under ‘permission to occupy’ (PTO) right of tenure. Thus these ‘squatters’ were not provided with arable fields, as there were none available. Therefore it was possible for the younger generations to live in the village, though they needed to derive their incomes elsewhere, or participate in agriculture through sharecropping or other access arrangements that would allow them to employ local resources.

The ‘squatter settlement’ also provided the opportunity for people from other places to come and build a house in Koloni. Yet many of these new immigrants did not finish the construction of their houses. Mr. Kama, Chairman of the Koloni Residents Association claimed many of those who came later migrated on to East London and other major cities. Those who did come to occupy houses in the squatter camp were mostly young, unmarried women, often with young children.

Map 7.7 illustrates the expansion of the Koloni settlement over the years. From this map and the aerial photo sequence (Figure 7.3), the expansion of the residential area of the village into the communal rangelands can also be noted.
General trends in the history of Guquka and Koloni

It is clear that, since the early days of settlement, there has been a considerable transformation in rural livelihoods in both villages. The Xhosa, who now inhabit the area that includes Guquka and Koloni, used to live from what the land provided. The role and relative importance of land-based activities in the two villages began to change around the end of the 19th century, roughly some 30 years after settlement. The role of agriculture, or rather cultivation, began to change dramatically from the mid 1960s onwards (chapter 7). In both villages, the pension and social grant system play an important role in livelihoods. Although this influence cannot be precisely dated it is likely that this started to be significant in the early 1940s (see chapter 2). Its importance is explored in more detail in chapters 12 and 13.

Labour migration has played a central role in the lives of the inhabitants of both villages and its character has changing dramatically over time. Another feature common to both villages has been the effect of recent retrenchments (which have seen a return of villagers) and the lack of opportunities to earn a living locally. The effect that these influences have had on population dynamics will be examined in more detail in chapter 11.

Labour migration

At the turn of the 19th century, the expansion of South African industry (most notably the gold mines) triggered the migration of male labour from Guquka and other villages. Commoners, headmen and chiefs alike went to the mines and factories to work on 6- to 9-month contracts. Their motivations to migrate were similar, although their status was taken into account in their new jobs and they occupied different positions in the mines and factories. The father of Chief Mqalo worked in the mines in Johannesburg as a police officer (‘mashlugnane’) earning 5 pounds per year. He went to the mines, as he could not survive on the 2 pounds a year he received from government for his formal village function and had to find money elsewhere. Chief Mqalo also worked in the mines as a clerk from 1946 until 1966. This time span is a good indication of how long commoners also spent in the mines.

Labour migration was characterised by rather well-defined cycles of working in the urban areas and returning to the rural homesteads. Their time in the mines coincided with the winter period, which enabled the men to remain actively engaged in cultivation when home. Young women from Guquka sometimes accepted jobs as domestic workers on neighbouring white-owned farms. When later, from about 1930 onwards, the duration of mining contracts was extended, visits to the rural homesteads were shortened and increasingly occurred during the Christmas holiday season. The Christmas period is not the best time to plant crops, because of little rainfall (chapters 3).

The Glen Grey Act of 1894 induced the need for such labour migration in two main ways. Firstly, it set a limit of (up to) four morgen (3.4 ha) on the
amount of arable land that could be held by each ‘African family’ (as this was labelled by the then Government). Secondly, it imposed a labour tax on every ‘African family’ that could not prove that at least one of their members was involved in wage employment for a minimum of three months per year.

Migrant wages emerged as a new and important source of cash for the villagers, most especially the men. At the same time women were finding short-term employment on white farms in the nearby Tyume valley. The men brought their wages back to the homesteads to invest in cattle (for ‘lobola’), to buy clothing and feed their family. One of the key informants from Guquka expressed clearly that migration secured the resources to acquire the lobola and to ‘build a homestead’:

When I became a grown up, I still stayed with my brothers and sisters at my parents’ place. My brothers were older than me, and had to get their wives. For that, they went to find jobs to raise the money so they could pay the lobola. … I also had to get myself a job for that reason. I also saw that my friends, with whom I had grown up, were coming back from work wearing new clothes and shoes, and having some money. I could not expect them to give me some of their money, so I also decided to leave my job of looking after the cattle of my family to go and find a job.

Initially migration was mainly temporary and, according to informants, its main purpose was to strengthen village-based livelihoods. Very few homesteads were able to derive an income from local resources and activities alone and the income from wages formed a necessary addition to incomes produced from locally land-based resources.

Migration contributed to relatively large sums of money flowing to the villages and helped the expansion of a commodity economy. The institutionalisation of pension and other social grant schemes added a further flow of money to the rural homelands. The significance of pensions, grants and remittances is discussed in general terms in chapter 2 and in more detail in chapters 12 and 13. By the time that the stringent Apartheid legislation was implemented rural livelihoods had already begun to include incomes and resources derived from outside the locality. Initially, part of these external income sources was used to invest in sustaining local agricultural production, but their role changed over the following decades.

The significance and heavy dependence on outside incomes for local agricultural production had dire consequences as, over the next 40-50 years, the continuity of arable production was jeopardised as migrant wages were increasingly invested in meeting other needs, such as education, health and buying food. In the end, there was not enough money remaining to secure the inputs needed for arable production, such as renting a tractor to plough the land (chapter 8).

Migration increasingly became a long-term phenomenon, with migrants returning home only once or twice a year. Migrants only had a few weeks of annual leave to return home and in many cases this leave had to taken from
about the middle of December to the middle of January. Increasingly the short time spent at home was used to relax and socialise and no longer to work in the fields. The Christmas return of urban migrants, carrying with them their annual bonus, developed into a period of festivities. This period was also used to attend to important rituals, such as the initiation of young males, in which men play a central role. Social activities competed for time with agrarian activities, particularly cultivation. Ngwane (2003) provides a vivid account of Christmas time visits.

This migration pattern was shaped by a steady increase of urban employment opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors during and after the Second World War (Seekings and Nattrass 2005). The institutionalisation of the Ciskei Homeland Government in the late 1950s and early 1960s and through various acts, including the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act (Mears 2004: 10) generated employment. Homeland formation enabled an expansion of a black bureaucracy that was able to govern the Ciskei Homeland separately from the Republic of South Africa and led to the creation in 1968 of the Dimbaza Industrial Zone near King William’s Town. This created employment opportunities that were closer to home, opening up the opportunity of commuting rather than migrating.

Migration institutionalised co-residence of people in their place of birth and their place of work and mobility between these places. In the beginning, migration predominantly involved males and was, above all, temporal. Pass laws, the levying of a hut tax and (later) Apartheid regulations, all restricted the scope for permanent migration. As a result, migration from the villages to urban and industrial areas became cyclical. While migration in the past was more short term (spanning a few months of absence), more recent migration patterns have a much more long term and often more permanent character (chapter 11).

Local employment and retrenchments
By the 1960s changes began to take place that brought the local economy more under the influence of the national one. These included: declining agricultural productivity in the village (despite government interventions) as mounting pressure on available arable lands affected soil fertility, changing perspectives on the way that lobola should be paid, i.e. in ‘cash’ rather than in ‘kind’ and, a general decline in interest in agriculture among younger generations as they saw more promise in urban derived incomes and an urban life style. Hence, by the 1960s, a growing number of homesteads had come to rely substantially on incomes derived from non-local resources. Spells of drought in the 1970s and early 1980s further hastened this trend.

The implementation of the homeland policy of the South African state during the 1960s and 1970s led to the formation of ‘independent’ homeland states. This coincided with the expansion of employment opportunities within the Ciskei homeland. Those who were able to secure such employment found
that they could commute to work, a big change from working in distant locations and being absent for long periods.

During the early 1980s, the Government of Ciskei pursued a policy of poverty alleviation. One of its strategies was to urge large organisations, such as the University of Fort Hare, to provide employment to as many local people as possible. Van Averbeke (2005) captured the dynamics of this as follows. Fort Hare was a small university with between five and six thousand students. At that time, the rector and the management of the university was entirely white and supported the Apartheid policy of separate development. Since Fort Hare was located within the boundaries of the (then) independent homeland of Ciskei, there was a certain obligation to support the homeland government. The university management adopted a maximum employment policy and dramatically increased the number of service workers. By the end of the 1980s, their number exceeded 1,200 – about one for every five students. The employment conditions of the service workers, who did cleaning, cooking, gardening, farm work and security work followed the policy of maximum employment. The large majority were casual workers, who could be summarily dismissed. Besides a monthly wage, an annual bonus, and membership of the Unemployment Insurance Fund, they had none of the benefits enjoyed by permanent staff, such as subsidised medical insurance and a pension scheme, travel and housing allowances, and free education at Fort Hare for family members. Wages of services workers were very low, but generally, allowed employees and their families to subsist.

During the 1980s, workers’ unions in South Africa increasingly grew in strength. As a large employer, Fort Hare was a centre of organised labour activity. The union at Fort Hare actively engaged with management to improve conditions of service workers, and was not afraid to use strike action in pursuit of its demands. Wages tripled by the end of 1989. A new management was appointed in 1990, consisting of African academics with credentials from the liberation struggle. With the upcoming 1994 political changes in mind, the decision over whether to reduce worker numbers at Fort Hare was extremely contentious, even though the budget of the University required this action. Rather than doing this, the University management chose instead to broaden the benefits available to service workers to include membership of a pension fund, housing subsidies and free education for their children. This had a positive impact on the local economy. For example, several new shops opened in Alice and existing retailers saw an increase in trade. Benefits also flowed to neighbouring rural settlements, such as Gqumahashe, Tyali, Mavuso, Lower Ncera, Ngele and Kwezana, where the workers and their families lived. Higher wages stimulated the construction of new houses or the extension of existing dwellings and the erection of fences around residential sites or fields. Mostly local people were employed in these tasks.

However, the pro-worker policy of the University drained its financial reserves. In 1995, the budget showed a deficit for the first time, and the situa-
tion worsened in 1996. In 1997, the financial status of Fort Hare was so precarious that drastic action was required, which came in the form of the wholesale retrenchment of service workers. All the functions of the service departments were outsourced. The University encouraged workers to establish their own companies and submit tenders, but in the end, the majority of the retrenched workers became unemployed (Van Averbeke 2005).

In the 1990s an economic decline, regionally and nationally, led to further large-scale retrenchments and reduced opportunities for new entrants (the younger rural generations) into commuter-based migrant labour. The retrenchments at the University of Fort Hare were especially significant for Guquka. The same period also saw a constitutional change in the government, and the subsequent demolition of the homeland government apparatus, which further reduced employment opportunities in government. Urban wage employment opportunities also diminished rapidly. On a macro-economic level, South Africa’s economy continues to go through some drastic changes, with employment opportunities in the industrial and service sectors falling, while the profitability of these sectors increases. Structural reorganisations within these sectors designed to enhance their efficiency appears to accelerate this process (Mail & Guardian 14-20 October 2005).

The onset of a national economic recession and a shrinking labour market has further reinforced the difficulties, noted earlier, in maintaining or expanding agricultural and livestock production beyond their current levels. This has become an increasingly difficult task as money from remittances and pensions is increasingly being used to meet other needs, such as securing nutritional, health and education needs.

Time line for Guquka and Koloni

By way of summary, the following Tables (4.2 and 4.3) present a time line showing the main trends and events in the history of Guquka and Koloni.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a historical overview of the settlement of the villages of Guquka and Koloni, and the ensuing changes in terms of resource management and livelihoods. This historical overview also provides a background for the chapters that follow, which describe natural resource management, the agricultural practices and livelihood patterns of villagers, in more detail.

In terms of settlement patterns, the two villages have quite different histories, despite their origins tracing back to the same period, the mid-19th century. The settlement of Guquka is closely linked with those of its neighbouring villages. Its origin, like these neighbouring villages, stemmed from the settlement of the Makhuzeni tribe in the Tyume valley. The establishment of Koloni, on the other hand, seems much less coherent. This is reflected in the disparate
origins of those who came to settle in the village (although villagers now claim in unison to be AmaGqunukhwebe), in terms of how its access to surrounding land has always been contested by neighbouring villages, and even in the somewhat varying accounts of the village’s origins.

In contrast to nearly all other parts of the Ciskei homeland, Koloni welcomed betterment planning as a way to increase its agricultural output. Initial ventures with state officials gave rise to various improvements to agricultural practises in the village. Nonetheless, these improvements turned out to only have a temporary effect and did not prevent a later decline in agricultural production (see chapter 8), although as this chapter shows, this decline began much later in Koloni than it did in Guquka. This may be explained by Koloni’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time/period</th>
<th>Critical events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>Expulsion of Xhosa from Tyume Valley following the 1850-1853 frontier war</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Settlement of Makhuzeni. Guquka village established under Chief Mqalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Land is surveyed and the tribal area is demarcated</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Second land survey held. Land reallocated to white farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 1900s</td>
<td>Labour migration to the mines takes momentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939 – 1960s</td>
<td>Fencing of rangelands due to betterment planning. Hut and poll taxes push rural people to seek waged incomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Influx of immigrants following forced removals elsewhere Formaion of Ciskei Homeland State creating nearby employment opportunities and facilitating commuting Agriculture begins to decline; increased dependency on ‘external’ sources of income Allocation of rangelands for residential purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Loss of grazing land to the Hogsback Pine Forest Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>Drought reduces livestock numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s – present</td>
<td>Retrenchments and rise in unemployment due to collapse of homeland government after 1994 and budget cuts at University of Fort Hare (mid 1997) Migration begins to take on a more permanent character Withdrawal of government support to agriculture; later reinstated and reconsidered, albeit primarily with a policy interest in land reforms and/or commercial agricultural activities.</td>
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Table 4.3  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time/period</th>
<th>Critical Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>1850-1900</td>
<td>Establishment of Koloni on the Perksdale Mission following settlement by the British</td>
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<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Land surveyed and residential and arable allotments demarcated and allocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850s-1930s</td>
<td>Agriculture forms the prime source of livelihoods of villagers Male migration to the mines and industrial areas of South Africa is limited compared to other rural parts of the Eastern Cape Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid 1930s</td>
<td>Involvement of white farmers with village agriculture improves production, introduces new crops and stock management techniques Villagers instigate betterment-like initiatives for improved natural resource management which are noted by government officials Koloni is made one of two pilot villages in the Eastern Cape Region by government officials. Their scheme is met with full commitment and support of villagers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1970s</td>
<td>Formation of Ciskei Homeland State, creating relatively nearby (&lt;50km) employment opportunities and facilitating commuting Agricultural productivity declines due to droughts and a declining interest in agriculture Labour migration increases, furthering reliance on ‘external’ incomes Limited influx of immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>A ‘squatter camp’ is constructed on one of the grazing camps to give residential lots to younger generations of the village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s present</td>
<td>General retrenchments due to the collapse of the homeland government leads to a rise in unemployment The demise of the homeland government also means a withdrawal of government support to agriculture The ‘squatter camp’ continues to expand, partly due to the sale of residential plots to ‘outsiders’ Migration begins to take on a more permanent character.</td>
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relative success in accessing state resources during and after the époque of betterment planning. Male labour migration to earn cash incomes appeared later in Koloni than it did in Guquka.

For some time now, people in both settlements have sought to secure their livelihoods through external non-local resources rather than from local and natural ones. In this process the meaning of ‘local’ and ‘rural’ becomes the subject of continual negotiation and contestation, and this is addressed in various chapters of this book. Chapters 11, 12 and 13 explore how this has affected livelihoods and led to shifts in homestead and family arrangements, while chapters 8, 9 and 10 examine the continuities and discontinuities in the use of various natural resources in the villages.