CHAPTER 4

Migrants of colour: Forced, coerced and voluntary migration by Africans, Indians, Southeast Asians and the African diaspora

Much is recorded in South African history about the migrations and fortunes of European waves of settlers – Dutch, French, Portuguese, German, British and others, but there is very little amplification about the many thousands of migrants of colour that arrived on ships from across the seas. Up until the end of the 19th century there were more migrants of colour than European migrants. Today that has become the reality once more as new migrants of colour from all the same countries from which slaves and indentured labourers were taken in the 17th to 19th centuries, now still arrive, but voluntarily and for different reasons – to find a better life.

In the Cape few have any comprehensive understanding about the full and beautiful picture of their ancestry or the triumphs and the tears of these our forebears. This is particularly the case with the large numbers of Cape peoples not knowing about their Sub-Saharan African ancestry commonly referred to as so-called ‘Bantu’ – in an incorrect usage of the term.

As a result of slavery at the Cape, as well as other arrivals, numerically, the broad sub-Saharan African tributary is probably greater than any other infusion into the population that the British would label ‘Coloured’. Everyone has become so use to the uncomfortable, unreal and demeaning term ‘Coloured’ that clouds our true ancestral past; an intricate story symbolically represented by the seven steps of stone of old District Six and the Camissa River of Cape Town

This seaborne migration, to which Harries in part refers, of many thousands of Sub-Saharan migrants, among others, is an inconvenient truth that contradicts the oft emphasised mythical halt that Europeans brought to the so-called ‘Bantu alien’ sweep into the south-eastern Cape in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Europeans propagated the false story of an alien sub-Saharan African invasion into South Africa, a so-called empty land, inhabited only by what they called a few micro-communities of legendary ‘noble-savages’ part human and part beast, not white and not quite black, to whom they afforded protection against being over-run.
In the previous chapters we have already shown how South Africa was not an ‘empty land’ and have explored the ancient past as well as over 2000 years of the history of the peopling of South Africa. The people of the Cape were not cut off from their fellow Africans and they enjoyed trading relations across the length and breadth of South Africa. We also saw that the Indigenes of the Cape had a good entrepreneurial trading and port servicing relationship with the visiting ships of five European nations in the half century before colonisation. With up to 200 000 travellers stopping off at the Cape on their journeys it would have been highly unlikely that there would not have been engagement with travellers and sailors from other African ports or with slave ‘cargoes’.

In this chapter we look more closely at the diverse roots of those labelled ‘Coloured’ in South Africa – namely slaves and migrants of colour.

Migrants of colour - some brought as captives and others travelling voluntarily from other parts of Africa, Madagascar, the Mascarene Islands, St Helena, Southeast Asia, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and from as far as Borneo, the Philippines, the Americas, the Caribbean, Aboriginal Australia and China - were slaves, banished exiles, convicts, seamen, soldiers, adventurers, refugees, indentured labourers, merchants and economic migrants.

Some had the misfortune of their ships being wrecked but then fortunately surviving and being taken in by indigene communities. The Xhosa oral genealogical system known as izidiko records the lineages of the assimilated European and Asian shipwreck survivors.

All of these people each have their own stories to tell of Africa, Asia and all over the world where the colonists left their footprint. Upwards of 70% of migrants of colour were displaced Africans, some even from the northern parts of South Africa, yet there are few South Africans who know this history. These migrants of colour integrated with Khoena Indigenes, and also, but to a much lesser degree with non-conformist Europeans who assimilated with them. It is all of this history and heritage that is recognised as the Camissa embrace.

Around a decade ago, symbolically using the emotive Seven Steps of District Six, I developed an illustrative matrix with which the people of Cape Town could easily identify, and plotted out the seven steps of Camissa heritage - the heritage of the majority of those labelled ‘Coloured’. The matrix in fact can be slightly varied and applied all across South Africa.

It also showed around 30 sub tributaries of the seven main roots. This tool proved invaluable in talks which I subsequently gave on the subject. It was easy for people to grasp in one diagram what this entire chapter is trying to convey. It is the mapping of the Camissa identity over 400 years.

These are the Seven Steps:

1. African Indigenous Peoples of the Cape (San, Khoena, Gqunukhwebe, Xhosa)
2. Slaves from Africa, India and Southeast Asia
3. Free Blacks
4. Non-Conformist Europeans
5. Drosters (Maroons) and Oorlam
6. Exiles, Refugees and Asian convicted for crimes against the VoC
7. Indentured Labourers & other Migrants of Colour
Yap and Leong Man\textsuperscript{301} make the interesting statistical point that in census figures for 1865, some 213 years after European settlement, the Cape Colony had a population of 500,000 of whom only 181,600 were white and the overwhelming majority were people of colour at that time labelled ‘Mixed/Other’. They also point out that for the Natal Colony the total population was 278,806 with fewer than 18,000 being white inhabitants. The large majority were Zulu and a substantial proportion were the thousands of newly arrived Indian indentured labourers. Between 1860 and 1911 over 152,000 Indian men and women were brought to Natal (now KwaZulu Natal) as indentured labourers. Migrants of colour thus greatly outnumbered European migrants but their stories seldom feature in historical discourse.

In South Africa, free people of colour representing these different migrant traditions were called by a colourful array of names each carrying a story - Mardijkers, Bandieten, Masbiekers, Peranakan Batavian Chinese, other Chinese from St Helena, Guangdong, Orang Cayen Muslim Exiles, the Saints of St Helena, Manillas from Philippines, Lascars from Asia, the African Americans, Caribbeans, Indentures, Prize Slaves, Kroomen, Seedies, Zanzibaris, Aboriginal Australians, and Oromo.

These terms identify the origins of many of the people of the Cape, which they represent, but these rarely emerge in heritage discourse or social history. The administrative race term ‘Coloured’ likewise does not capture this amazing tapestry culture cradled by what can be called the Camissa embrace as referenced in chapter two.

This diversity of peoples integrated largely with the Khoena of the Cape and to some extent with other African communities in other South African ports and villages along the coastline. The element of South African history and heritage between the two poles of Indigenes and Europeans can be called ‘the missing and manipulated middle’. Because of the lack of information in the public domain, and the fact that there are no memorials, imagery and literature that celebrate this huge element of ancestral heritage, there is a skewed tendency for some to say that the ancestral heritage of those labelled ‘Coloured’ can simply be reduced to a Khoena and San heritage, with a minor element of Asian and European ancestry. Museums, schools and universities over the years have blocked out any real acknowledgement of this huge part of our heritage. This has encouraged a bizarre new culture where people make outlandish claims of indigenous ancestry and ‘first nationhood’ based on denialism rooted in ignorance cultivated by a deliberate suppression and distortion of history and heritage under colonialism and Apartheid.

While there are many authentic indigene restitution claims that can be supported, there are many people claiming to be Khoena, San or Khoisan today, some of whom in fact may have no such ancestry at all and the authenticity of claims to royal titles are more than dubious. A more honest and careful study of the roots of those labelled ‘Coloured’ shows that there are as many sub-Saharan African ancestral roots for instance, as there are Khoena and San roots, and indeed a broad array of other tributaries, all of which make up a wonderful and rich heritage.

There also were never any people known as Khoisan, a term created by a racist German zoologist in 1928. Many cultural expressions too, have old roots that trace back to the many countries in Africa and
Asia of the migrants of colour. The migrants of colour largely came to the Cape by sea, crossed the shoreline frontier and were embraced by the Camissa. Most of these migrants in the first two hundred years were in a miserable state after long sea journeys that had started when they were ripped from their homelands and made captive.

Gaastra and Bruijn\textsuperscript{302} elaborate on the extent of shipping over the two centuries from 1600 until the first British occupation of the Cape in 1795, saying there were 9,641 outward bound shipping movements via the Cape to South East Asia of Dutch, English, French, Portuguese, Danish and Ostend vessels besides those of other nationalities. They also give an indicator of the return traffic by telling us that the VOC outward bound figure alone was 3,358 vessels. Of the VOC outward bound vessels only, Gassstra and Bruijn\textsuperscript{303} tell us that over 1 million travellers made their way to South East Asia. There was much more shipping in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries as sail gave way to steam and larger numbers of people travelled the seas. What rarely comes to light is that the crews of these vessels often had a large component of people of colour.

While the vast majority on board these vessels were soldiers, significantly large numbers were also passengers, and on return voyages from the east significant numbers of those passengers were slaves considered to be cargo. There were also free passengers of colour and African and Asian crews. Many of these remained at the Cape and through this port gateway became part of South African ancestry.

The earliest contact with external mariners

In reviewing pre-modern history, Knox-Johnston\textsuperscript{304} indicates that the story of the visitors and migrants of colour to the Cape can possibly be traced back first to the Phoenicians (people of Lebanon, Syria and northern Palestine) 2,500 years ago, followed by the Carthaginians 140 years later. Beale\textsuperscript{305} further shows that the ancient Buddhist temple at Borobudur has a bass relief showing a sailing vessel on a trip down the east coast of Africa around AD 700. In 2003 the author built a replica that proved the possibility of such a vessel rounding the Cape at that time.

Knox-Johnston\textsuperscript{306} further shows that the Chinese travelled down the African coast in AD 960 and the Arabs may have reached as far as the Cape in AD 1000. He demonstrates that their cartography fairly accurately identifies South Africa in 1154. These Arab travellers referred to the South African indigenes as Wak Waks, differentiating them from East and North East Africans whom they referred to as the Zanjis. Zanjis means black slaves and a variant is the name for a dog in East Africa - bazenji.

The term Zanj became the basis for the naming of Zanzibar by slave traders. Some South African political groups in modern times dubiously adopted the variant Azania in honour of the briefly successful Zanj slave uprising. Rodrigues\textsuperscript{307} chronicled this successful short-lived revolt of African slaves against the Abbasid Caliphate, which took place from 869 to 883, starting at the city of Basra in Iraq. The term Zanj and its variant pops up in all the centres of slavery from Africa and the Middle East to South east Asia and China.

Menzies\textsuperscript{308} further makes a strong case for the Chinese having rounded the Cape at least by 1421 when China circumnavigated the world. The Chinese cartography of this time was much more advanced than that of the Europeans and notes detail like the Drakensberg mountains. While it is important to acknowledge these external contacts, we have no records of that early engagement with indigenes, nor reliable information on the impacts that may have left their mark.
The mushrooming of maritime contact with Indigenes in the early 17th Century

In the modern period we know that according to Gaastra and Bruijn, a huge build-up of shipping which stopped at the Cape took place between 1600 and 1652, numbering some 1071 ships. Post 1652 the entire shipping trade mushroomed, decade after decade. During those first 52 years of visitations, one can calculate that around 200,000 passengers passed the Cape on outward bound journeys and at least half that number on return voyages. There were many people of colour among the crews and also among passengers – most notably, slaves from West Africa taken to Southeast Asia and from South East Asia and East Africa on westward bound journeys, according to Allen. It was during those years that indigenes at the Cape would first have encountered the European practice of slavery and seen slaves. Those indigenes that had travelled abroad to London, Java and Batavia, as shown by Elphick and others, would also have had close encounters with slavery and all that it entails, and brought these stories back to the Cape.

We can only speculate as to whether any of those slaves were brought ashore at the Cape at that time, but what we do know is that there were many shipwrecks, particularly on the wild coast and around Table Bay, when people of colour, presumed to have been slaves or Lascars would have come ashore. Crampton and Vernon show that evidence does exist that people of colour as well as Europeans were shipwrecked, made it to shore, became accidental settlers and assimilated into indigene populations.

Vernon chronicles many of these earliest shipwreck survivor stories from the 16th century in some detail too. According to SA Tourism, over 3000 ships of 37 nations have been wrecked off the South African coast since the 16th century. In the years before the European settlement of 1652 the survivors of those wrecks assimilated into local indigene African communities. A significant number of the wrecked ships, both prior to, and post the 1808 abolition of slavery carried slave cargoes. Griebel notes that sales of slave survivors took place in contravention of the ban on importing slaves. Walker notes that four slaver ships were wrecked off the Cape peninsula coast over the 50 years from 1794 from which surviving slaves remained at the Cape of Good Hope. Griebel elaborates on one of these, the Sao Jose, which in 1794 had both the largest loss of life – 200 - and the largest number of survivors – 300.

The Mardijkers and those called the Free Blacks in Cape ancestral heritage

According to Shell, the first migrants of colour post 1652 were individual Mardijkers – individual foreign-born soldiers not of European origin. Shell tells us that non-European Batavians often accompanied VOC officials to Europe and the VOC instructed van Riebeeck that when they arrived at the Cape on their return journey to Batavia, he should persuade them to remain at the Cape and earn their living as Mardijkers. While it would seem that not many took up this opportunity, and neither did the Dutch at the Cape pursue the idea, Shell’s footnotes do show evidence of Mardijkers settled at the Cape.

The original Mardijkers were Southeast Asian Catholic converts on the island of Ambon who, after the Dutch took over were converted to the Reformed Church. But throughout the period of the VOC footprint in Southeast Asia the term took on the meaning of creole or free persons of colour. Some were freed slaves, and later the label did not necessarily mean that Mardijkers had to be Christians or Ambonese. Upham notes the first record of a person likely to have arrived as a Mardijker at the Cape. He was Anthony de Later van Japan (also referred to as Anthony de la Terre, or as Anthony van Bengale), one of the husbands of a slave convict who also attained her freedom - Groot Cathrijn van Bengale. Mahida also notes that among the first soldiers brought to the Cape by van Riebeeck to ensure the
defence of the fort were Mardijker soldiers. He makes the assumption that these would have been Muslims but there is no record to underpin such an assumption.

For over 150 years the idea of importing Mardijker settlers en masse was often considered at the Cape but never implemented. However, according to Schoeman, throughout the 17th and 18th centuries a trickle of these foreign born Mardijker freemen did settle in the Cape and meshed with the people categorised as freed-slave/Free Black.

Mardijkers were also well known as soldiers across the VOC world footprint and as previously stated were likely to have been amongst the VOC soldiers at the Cape from the earliest times of settlement. Shell notes that later, when the Cape established the Javanese Pandoeren Corps which fought at the Battle of Blauwberg, they were sometimes referred to as the local version of the Mardijkers but among them too there could have been foreign born Mardijkers, as evidenced by their surnames.

The term ‘Free Blacks’ (Vrye Swaarten) was the preferred term used by the VOC at the Cape for those persons of colour who had come to the Cape voluntarily as sailors, soldiers, craftsmen and traders as well as those former slaves who were manumitted (the formal term for having been granted freedom). By 1770 there were only a few hundred Free Blacks before there was a huge leap forward to 1 700 in 1795 as stated by Giliomee and Mbenga.

Prior to the smallpox epidemic in 1713 some of the wealthiest people were Free Blacks of the Cape like Zwarte Maria Everts the daughter of Anna and evert of Guinea. But after the death of many of these pioneering Free Blacks in the epidemic, except for a handful of exceptional characters, most Free Blacks were in lowly occupations. Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford Smith note that in 1820 of 569 Free Blacks in employment 25% were craftsmen, 18% hawkers, porters and servants, 18% washerwomen and laundresses and 12% fishermen. Yet prior to 1713 Free Blacks were pioneering farmers and substantial landowners. Many Free Blacks of Asian and African roots, mainly women, married or lived as being married to non-conformist European men.

As Free Blacks increased in number many bought the freedom of family and friends who were still enslaved. Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford Smith tell us that after the passing of Ordinance 19 in 1826 allowing for slaves who could raise the price to buy their own freedom, there was a marked increase in manumissions and that the Free Black population in 1830 stood at 3538.

The enslaved Africans and Asians in Cape ancestral heritage

Schoeman tells us that in the first six years after establishing a foothold at Table Bay the Dutch had eleven slaves with them, of whom eight were women and children. With the exception of one from Madagascar and two from Abyssinia, they were from India and Bengal.

Schoeman elaborates on the dramatic change in slave numbers in 1658 when two VOC ships intercepted Portuguese ships, seized their slave cargoes and brought them to the Cape. These were West African slaves numbering 402 survivors in total. Of these slaves 172 were sent on to Batavia and the rest sold at the Cape of Good Hope. This was probably the largest single offloading of slaves at the Cape, and they are part of the ancestry of every South African community regardless of state categorisation labels today. While West Africa was not a large source for slaves at the Cape, more West Africans would arrive
during the ‘Prize Slave’ era in the first half of the 19th century. But East and Central Africa, as well as the northern parts of South Africa to a much lesser degree, became the main source for Cape Slaves after 1770. We will later see the full diversity of the origins of all of the slaves.

How many enslaved people were brought to the Cape? The most accurate but conservative figure would be around 78,539. To arrive at this figure one has to consult a number of works.

Shell’s research demonstrates, by means of an iterative calculation on the population of all Cape Slaves of each VOC census year, that 62,964 slaves were forcibly brought to the Cape between 1652 and 1808. He also broke these figures down into percentages – Africa/Madagascar 51.5%, India 25.9% and Indonesia (Southeast Asia) 22.7%. This of course does not discount that others may have been informally brought to the Cape. Other researchers provide evidence of what I have calculated to be at least another 15,539 slaves being brought to the Cape, first by the British during the first occupation and then after the British take-over until 1856, but record keeping on slaves had become blurred by then, making this too conservative a figure. When the two figures are combined the African percentage goes up dramatically and the Indian and Southeast Asian figures are lower.

To unpack the figure of 15,539 slaves Saunders puts the figure of the African ‘Prize Slaves’ brought to the Cape at over 5000 from 1806 until 1840 and Harries logs more than another 4000 during the 1840s. Over the next period until 1856 a decreasing stream of ‘Prize Slaves’ also known as ‘Liberated Africans’ continued to trickle into the Cape. It is hard to say how many but we can factor in at least another 1500, especially when we consider that many ‘Prize Slaves’ were first taken to St Helena and then sent to Cape Town. Harries also notes that during the first British occupation of the Cape, between 1795 and 1803 the Royal Navy deposited 2000 slaves at the Cape, captured from enemy shipping. In the same period he noted 1,039 slaves from Mozambique were imported into the Colony under the British administration before they returned the Colony to the Batavian Republic administration. It can further be gleaned that a number of slaves totalling in the region of 2000 were survivors of shipwrecks.

Gonzalez tells us that during the whole slave trade period (until 1860), around 909 slave ships transported slaves from south eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean islands to the New World often via Cape Town. He says that 661 ships took their cargoes in Brazil, of which 523 disembarked during the nineteenth century. It was some of these ships en route to Brazil that were wrecked or captured in Cape waters.

Many of the shipwreck survivors were sold privately at the Cape, such as those advertised when the Portuguese ship Pacalt Real was wrecked at Woodstock beach in 1818, carrying 171 slaves, some of whom perished. This would contribute to the conservative estimate of other informal and unlawful importation. Walker notes a number of slaver shipwrecks in addition to the Pacalt Real. Unlike the 1794 wrecking of the San Jose where 300 lives of slaves were saved and 200 lost, in the cases of the three ships wrecked, the slave ‘cargos’ were all saved. These were probably disposed of at that stage just like those of the Pacalt Real, where Griebel explains that the slaves may have been sold privately in contravention of the protocols governing importation of ‘slaves’.

To gain a better idea of how many slaves existed during the slave era at the Cape one has to look beyond the imported figure and also include the children, grandchildren and descendants of slaves over that 183-year period. One also has to aggregate the de facto slavery that resulted from turning the surviving
Khoena and San into ‘apprentices’ in the course of the 176 years of war that pushed indigenes out of the Colony. Then of course there was the de facto enslavement of Africans in the frontier districts and the new Boer Republics as elaborated by Eldridge & Morton. The figure of the enslaved in South Africa would easily be more than three times the 78,539 imported slaves noted in this assessment. The impact of the years of slavery and then of emancipation on social relations on the 19th century is examined in depth by Dooling who shows just how much of a paradigm shift occurred when slaves and indentured labourers began to be called ‘Coloured’. The word ‘Coloured’ was slowly introduced informally before more formal applications of the term and then the final official imposition of the term in 1911.

When one breaks down the figure of 78,539 imported slaves, considering the forced migrants that came from across the sea, and if one factors in the post 1808 African slaves and recalculates, using the percentages of Shell’s pre-1808 slave imports for the three geo locations of origin, one arrives at Africa/Madagascar (60.7%), India/Sri Lanka/Bengal (22.06% ) and Southeast Asia (17.24 %).

It should be noted that the aggregation of the Malagasy slaves with mainland Africa is not just because Madagascar is part of the SADC geo-political region of Africa but also because most slaves taken by the Dutch according to Wiestra & Armstrong were bought from the Saklava along the Western coastline. They are largely of East African descent, and in the Journal of the Cape slave ship Leijdsman are variously described as ‘black negroes’ and ‘swarte caffers’. A few of Southeast Asian and Arab descent are also likely to have come from the eastern coastline. The later mass importation of African indentured labour would push up the Sub-Saharan African migration which assimilated into the population labelled ‘Coloured’ by at least another 15%. Shell gives an overview of the diversity of origins of all the slaves and Allen complements this work by showing the diversity of the Indian and Southeast Asian component.

The origins of the Indians are from Surat, Bombay, Goa, Calicat, Cochin Tuticorin and all along the Malabar Coast down to Kerala; then Negapatnam, Tranquebar, Pondicherry, Palicat, Masullipatnam and all along the Coomandel Coast; as well as from Colombo and Galle in Sri Lanka; and from Bengal.

The origins of the Southeast Asian ranged from Rakhine (Arakan) in Myanmar through to Laos, to Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Indonesian Islands, Borneo, New Guinea, the Philippines, Formosa and Macau, through to Southern China and Shishima in Japan. The toponym of ‘van Bengal’ given to many slaves may in fact refer to the long ‘Bay of Bengal’ coastline rather than just to what we today call Bangladesh.

Distortions in South African historical narratives inaccurately referred to the enslaved as ‘Malay’ slaves and the Cape Malay identity at the Cape is a constructed identity. The National Party Apartheid ideologue ID du Plessis played a huge role in developing this constructed identity based on ‘racial’ types. In reality a rather small number of slaves may have come from the Malay Peninsula including Singapore. Haron critiques the constructed Cape Malay identity through the engagement of a range of scholars who subjected the term to scrutiny, and notes the religious division of people classified as ‘Coloured’ and their artificial racial-ethnic overlay was largely motivated by political considerations. The European colonialists fanned divisions among slave descendants based on a constructed ethnicity fused with cultivated religious antagonisms as a ‘divide and rule’ ploy. The term Cape Malay as used in the Cape had more to do with the widespread use across Southeast Asia in the shipping industry of the hybrid
Portuguese-Meleyu language. Europeans at the Cape called all slaves from the Southeast Asian region Malays, because of the language and to divide Muslim former slaves from the larger majority of non-Muslim former slaves who were mass baptised as Christians at the end of slavery.

The majority of the Southeast Asian component of slaves can be traced to a range of islands in the Indonesian archipelago and the rest from a diverse array of countries in the region. However it is important to note that many Cape slaves carrying the toponyms of large slaving stations such as Batavia, Java and Colombo may indeed have been brought there from elsewhere along the long coast of the Bay of Bengal, from India to Siam (Thailand) or from elsewhere in the archipelago. Also it must be noted that up to 50% of the populations in Batavia, Sumatra and Java were Chinese and creole Chinese known as Peranakan. All of this affects the background or origins of those brought to the Cape and exposes the social engineering mischief in Apartheid identity constructions based on notions of ‘race’.

Andaya B & Andaya L342 give us a full appreciation of the source territories for slaves and exiles brought to the Cape from Southeast Asia. By also consulting Allen343 one can come to a full appreciation of the history of slavery at the Cape of Good Hope VOC outpost in relation to the entire Southeast Asian area. He covers the slaving patterns and the proximities of the Dutch factories and colonies, as well as areas of warfare and famine. Particularly of interest as exposed by Allen344 is the role played by the Mascarene Islands and Zanzibar as halfway-houses for slaves from East Africa and from Asia.

The Zanzibaris in the Cape and KwaZulu Natal

Besides the huge number of ‘Prize Slaves’ and Mazbiekers and other Indentured labourers in the Cape Colony, significant numbers also went to the Natal Colony, such as the Zanzibari African ‘Prize Slaves’ who are the forebears of the distinct Zanzibari community in KZN today. Whereas in KZN the Zanzibaris have remained as a distinct community in the Cape they were assimilated into the “Coloured” or Camissa identity.

SA History Online345 refers to the British Consul-General of Zanzibar, John Kerk, who suggested in a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, that a temporary arrangement should be made whereby the liberated slaves from Zanzibar could be brought to Natal to be apprenticed to the European sugar planters. The first group of freed Zanzibaris, numbering 113 and mainly Muslims, arrived at Port Natal in August 1873. Another 81 Zanzibaris arrived a year later. Pereira346 tells us that up to 1880 there were 600 African Prize Slaves who were brought to Natal (KZN), some of whom were referred to as Zanzibaris and others as Seedies. A Government Notice, No 142 of 1873, said that all Prize Slaves in Natal were to be employed in Public Works, but in practice they divided them equally between Public Works and private individuals as indentured labourers. The Seedies in the Royal Navy at Simonstown were also from Zanzibar.

The Zanzibari Africans in the Cape largely Muslims, were also classified as ‘Coloured’.

The facts outlined here in brief, underline that the term ‘Coloured’ made no sense because a significant proportion of those so classified were clearly Sub-Saharan African peoples from an array of African countries.
Some facts to consider about Cape slavery and ancestral roots

The children, grandchildren and descendants of slaves were all born into slavery until the 1834 emancipation was announced and then effected in 1838. From the end of the 1760s, according to Eldridge & Morton, almost 50% of slaves were locally born, increasing to 72% by the emancipation from slavery, and even by the 1740s already over 30% were locally born. First generations of locally born slaves are often referred to as Creoles and were recorded with the surname ‘van der Kaap’ or ‘van Cabo’.

In the third generation the slaves assumed the father’s first name as a surname. Other surnames were from the European fathers or from the slave master, and yet other surnames involved biblical names, Greek and Roman mythology names, and facetious names poking fun at slaves by their masters. Another widespread naming pattern was the use of the names of the month in which the slave was born or acquired or landed by ship. First generation toponyms thus disappeared very quickly.

In the case of ‘prize slaves’ aka ‘Liberated Africans’ on being brought to the Cape Colony they were not set free. They had to undergo many years of indentured or apprentice labour, which was pretty much the same as slavery. For many, this ended only around 1860.

Rowoldt Shell relates how one exceptional group, making up the last of the prize slaves, was brought to the Cape as late as 1890. In 1888, the Royal Navy had intercepted a slaver dhow in the Red Sea, liberated the Oromo child slaves on board and taken them to Aden. They were later joined by other liberated Oromo child slaves at the Free Church of Scotland mission. In 1890 sixty-four of the Oromo children were sent to the Lovedale Mission in the Eastern Cape Colony where they were baptised as Christians and completed their education. Many of the children died over the next couple of decades. Some were repatriated and others remained on in South Africa. The grandmother of former political prisoner and prominent academic, the late Dr Neville Alexander, was one of those Oromo children.

This array of slaves with different origins, and their descendant’s embraced indigenes and indigenes embraced them. Within a generation or two the creole slave offspring of indigenes, slaves and indentured labourers from different parts of the world had a new African culture born in South Africa and some European non-conformists also embraced these creole people and their culture. The river running through Cape Town which had been home to the Khoena traders whose business had been usurped by the Dutch and the focal point of the port formed by that early Camissa Goringhaicona community was the gateway of this coming together, resulting in what can be called the Camissa Footprint. This has been explained in depth in chapter two - ‘Story of a Port’.

The original captives brought to the Cape had been made slaves under varying circumstances in their homelands. We can learn much about Cape slavery by becoming acquainted with the complex circumstances at that time in the African, Indian, Bay of Bengal, and Southeast Asian arenas as elaborated in the works of Andaya B & Andaya L, Allen and particularly of Ward. Most people today are surprised when they learn that Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia are also places from which slaves were taken to the Cape. We know this from a combination of toponyms used, dna testing and from the history of slave capture and marketing in Southeast Asia.

When one looks at the toponyms of the first slaves imported, the names “van Arakan, van Burma, van Siam, van Tonkin” are markers for these identities. The Dutch VOC had factories in all of these places. Ayutthaya in old Siam was a major trade city where the Dutch had a factory, alongside those of all the
other powers. Siam (Thailand) was an independent un-colonised country but one third of the population were slaves to the nobility or money lenders, some of whom found themselves on the world slave market. Rakhine state (Arakan) in Myanmar was a major market place for slaves across the Bay of Bengal arena. When Myanmar and Siam went to war, or Siam and the Khmer of Cambodia went to war, thousands of war captives became slaves in the process. Once enslaved, people were force-marched across these vast territories and many were shipped out to other European slave trading markets. Although Indonesia did provide many slaves to the Cape, the slaves that came out of the big slaver holding areas – Arakan, Batavia, Java, Colombo, Galle - were not necessarily from those areas but rather from many of those conflict-ridden areas where centuries-old slavery was entrenched.

For a better idea of the circumstances behind the diverse African and Madagascar component of the slaves, Zimba, Alphers & Isaacman should be consulted. They elaborate on the deceptive assumption that Masbiekers were just Mozambicans. The imperial presence of the Dutch and other Europeans in East Africa, the Indian sub-continent and throughout Southeast Asia linking in to very old networks and traditions of enslavement, resulted in millions of people in the Indian Ocean domain being taken away to slave in far off lands by the use of maritime migratory routes. Popovic elaborates on the old slaver networks into which the Europeans tapped, which can be traced back to the world’s biggest trading city of Basra in Iraq back in the third century right through to the largest Zanj slave revolt in the ninth century – the largest slave revolt ever recorded.

In summary, people were enslaved through four main means – taken as war captives and sold; kidnapped by slavers or pirates and sold; sold by families in debt-bondage; or they were individuals giving themselves over into slavery en masse from famine and areas hit by natural disasters, so as to survive. Over the last 1500 years, with a few isolated exceptions, the enslaved were largely Africans and Asians.

The sea and the maritime conveyances moving between continents revolutionised and speeded up the scattering of people and many a frontier coastline was crossed, where the captives had no choice but to integrate with their captors and the indigenes of those new lands. It also resulted in a revolution in linguistics that created hybrids in language. Different languages travelling by sea jumped their ethnic origins. The meanings of terms creolised and later became the dominant meanings with the older meanings receding into the sands of time. When scholars of etymology and linguistics indulge in rigid fundamentalist interpretations of words and attempt to pin these down to only having legitimacy in their original ethnic form, in defiance of the definition of etymology and in ignorance of the paradigm shifts caused by migration, it stymies social enquiry. One finds this tendency among those arguing along the lines of ethnic purism or protectionism.

The migrations of people of colour to the Cape by sea were a paradigm shift from natural overland migratory drifts. This resulted in dramatic and fast relocations of people and cultures into new environments, where they engaged indigenes under colonial assault in far off lands, which had a dramatic impact on their identity. It also dramatically affected linguistics as ships and slaver stations mirrored the ‘Tower of Babel’ story.

In South Africa at the Cape, while a new people and culture were in creation as a result of these migrations and the colonial turmoil, many modern tribal formations and kingdoms were still in their infancy across South Africa. As can be seen in chapter one, various periods of change occurred where
organised formations of peoples segmented, differentiated and reconsolidated as new formations ranging from the early societies of Mapungubwe, through to the Rozvi empire and even later new formations emerged into Venda, Pedi, Tswana, Sotho, Xhosa, Zulu societies and so on. Over the two centuries of European incursion from 1652 -1852 the impact of the European incursions such as the Great Trek and the effects of the Mfecane further moulded social identities. In this process the modern Zulu identity only finalised its form in the second decade of the 19th century long after the foundations of the Camissa African people was well established.

In South African history and anthropological studies the mistake has often been to simply look at cross land migratory patterns in pre-colonial settlement. This gives a skewed view for instance of the Sub-Saharan African roots in the Western Cape which creolised with Asian slaves and Khoena. It is so skewed that a so-called ‘Bantu’ presence (more correctly Sub-Saharan ancestry presence) in the Western Cape is erroneously considered only to have occurred in the late nineteenth century, but this is a persistent myth. Narrow minded politicians for short term gain have frequently tried to label and dismiss people as alien refugees, because of appearance, and language and culture, that do not match their own. This has no credibility in history and has everything to do with domination and prejudice.

Far too little attention is given to the pre-colonial social history of the metal working farmers of Sub-Saharan ancestry in South Africa and fusion communities of these who came together with herder (Khoena) and (San) hunter and herder hunter formations. It is important to note that the population of South Africa which emerged over 2000 years were in the main multi-ethnic communities.

This is reality has been drowned out by the European ‘discovery narrative’ and the false notion that all persons of colour who were not purely Khoena or San, arrived in South Africa at the same time as the Europeans or later. That is simply Apartheid ideologically constructed pseudo history.

Because of sea travel, a large wave of Africans arrived in the Western Cape from west, central and east African countries, first as slaves and then as indentured labour. It is interesting to note Harries354 showing that these Africans merged into the population later categorised as ‘Coloured’ and that by the time of the new British administration over the Cape Colony, half of the slave population were ancestrally Africans. Through intermarriage and other relations between Khoena, African slaves and Asian slaves, the vast majority of those classified as ‘Coloured’ in the 1911 census, are Africans by way of the fact of having at least one forebear who is indigenous to Africa. The Camissa heritage challenges the Apartheid ideological concoction of a so-called ‘Brown’ race called ‘Coloured’.

Numerically the descendants of imported slaves and the indentured labourers by the 19th century outnumbered the Khoena (or Khoi) people by around four to one. Then of course all the other tributaries of migrants of colour must also be factored in too. Today 51% of people in the Western Cape, as well as others across South Africa that make up 9% of the national population are artificially categorised as ‘Coloured’ largely for political reasons and expediency, and should be seen as Africans of Khoena (or Khoi) and Camissa heritage.

As an example Cape Town as a city should and does have a 78% African population profile if the 36% classified as ethnic ‘Black’ and the 42% classified as ethnic ‘Coloured’ were not artificially categorised in this manner. The still dominant white political and economic power utilises this Apartheid construct where they are able to more than double their 20% power in the Western Cape and around 8% nationally by playing up mischief through ethnic division.
There are also many social problems suffered by communities today such as substance abuse and gratuitous and horrific acts of violence that can only be fully understood by looking through the lens of generationally transmitted trauma that had its genesis in slavery and the barbaric violent methods of control used by the Europeans under colonial control.

Jan van Riebeeck’s dosing of the West African slave children with daily alcohol and tobacco rations to pacify them, metamorphosed into the ‘dop system’ (alcoholic tot system) on farms right up into the 21st century. Over a century and a half there were crucifixions, impalements, garrotting, drowning, burning, pulling breasts off with hot tongs, dismembering and other violent public spectacles as judicial punishments at the Cape, and acts of genocide, and though in the past, these still impact on communities today.

**Understanding the different tributaries and how these identities cannot be seen as separate silos**

However the story of the people of colour who migrated to South Africa is not just the story of slavery. A range of other migrants of colour also came across the seas to the Cape. Some came voluntarily, but many were forced into exile from their homelands by the VOC, or sent as convicts from the VOC’s eastern colonies to serve their time at the Cape. Most of these exiles and convicts never returned home. Over the next 350 years all of these contributory identities faded into the distance and an African identity like all other African identities continued to be shaped.

Some migrants of colour were refugees and others adventurers, traders and economic migrants. Here one can identify groups such as the Mardijkers and those called Free Blacks discussed earlier in this chapter. There was an array of names such as bandieten, political exiles, Peranakans, the Saints, the Manilas, the Mazbieker slaves and indentures, other indentures, the Kroomen, the Seedies, the Lascars, the Oromo, passenger Indians, the black diaspora from the US and the Caribbean, even a few Australian Aborigines, all of whom made their homes in the Cape before the 1910 Act of the Union of South Africa. This diverse array all integrated with each other and with local Indigenes pacified, during and after the brutal 176 years of wars by the colonists against them.

These collectively constitute figures of migrants of colour that rival those of the various waves of European migrants. Interestingly post 1994 the waves of economic migrants from exactly the same feeder countries of the slavery era, indentured labour era and other free migration areas of the past have continued to arrive as migrants unabated.

Most South Africans have been unaware of how big a part of our heritage and identity these tributaries are and the significance of the infusion of these tributaries into the existing indigene Khoena footprint at the Camissa gateway, particularly during the 176 years of war, genocide and dispossession that were taking a huge toll on the numbers of indigenes and their culture within the ever expanding Cape Colony. The migration of people of colour via the sea seems to have escaped anthropologists, historians and until now, archaeologists - largely because maritime studies of the movement of people and trade goods had been glossed over by a focus on the European “discovery narrative”. Factoring in the maritime perspective as a study of the conveyance of humans and cargoes along migratory sea-routes changes many aspects of the dominant narratives of South Africa, and particularly addresses the missing part of the history and heritage of people of colour.

For two centuries at the Cape there was always a category of people called the ‘Free Blacks’ in the census. This was recognition that a class of people of colour were distinguishable from slaves and
indigenes. There were a range of people who fell into this category, which has received poor attention from historians. As previously elaborated, those people of colour who had freely made their way to the Cape as sailors, soldiers and traders, were referred to as Mardijkers. But Free Blacks were also manumitted slaves who had either bought or been gifted their freedom, or who had completed the required timeframes of enslavement determined by policies governing Christianised ‘halfslag’ slaves.

Alongside the so defined ‘Free Blacks’ were others who would also fall under this census category but were indeed only at the Cape due to force. These were those who were banished as exiles from VOC colonies in the east because they were resistance figures during conflicts. They all emerged from resistance to Dutch colonialism. Ward in dealing with networks of empire and imperial sovereignty gives a comprehensive overview that assists in understanding what happened in the Cape Colony, which was an outpost of the VOC Empire. Without understanding this context and what it means for migration and identity formation at the Cape we really cannot understand the history and heritage story of the Cape, leaving most of us with simply a caricature of those times.

Ancestry rooted in Banished Exiles and those convicted for offences against the VOC in Southeast Asia

The VOC found it convenient to use the Cape of Good Hope as a place of banishment and punishment, particularly for resisters and convicts. Three groups of resisters were targeted in the main. These were the Indonesian and Javanese Muslim religious leaders, Indian and Singhalese resisters to Dutch colonisation and the Chinese resisters from Batavia where the Dutch had carried out a huge massacre of middle-class creole Peranakan Chinese and Chinese settlers. These exiles had a huge impact on our heritage. The exiles were often highly educated, politicised members of leading families, captured after colonial wars of conquest, or to appease allies of the Dutch in India, Sri Lanka, the Bay of Bengal territories and the Indonesian Archipelago.

The Indonesian and Javanese exiles, known as Orang Cayen and also as Auliya (Sufi patrons or saints). Through their missionary work among local slaves, often holding Animist, Buddhist, Hindu and Catholic tenets of faith, they laid the foundations of today’s Muslim community in South Africa. Most slaves brought to South Africa were not Muslim, but many converted to Islam at the Cape. Islam offered many of the traumatised slaves a means to find social cohesion and a sense of freedom even though they were in a life of bondage.

Burial shrines called kramats can be found in a crescent across the Cape Peninsula and on Robben Island. the markers of the religious-political exiles of the East. The most prominent of these is that of Sheikh Yusuf al-Maqsari at Macassar. Sheikh Yusuf was banished to the Cape in 1694 with a party of 49 family members, personal slaves and followers. Ward tells us that Sheikh Yusuf, like many other Free Blacks and exiles, was a slave-owner. Gillomee & Mabenga note how his home in Macassar Downs became a meeting place for runaway slaves and those who had taken the Muslim faith. They also note that nearly 3000 convict labourers had arrived from Southeast Asia to work on the fortifications and harbour works and that the core imam community was drawn from these convicts. Cape Town has a vibrant Sufi culture with distinct practices that go back to pre-Islamic times in Southeast Asia and to shamanist animist roots of indigenes of that part of the world. Today all over Southeast Asia and indeed the Cape too, if you scratch the surface of the faiths one finds many signs of practice of syncretic faith.
Convicts or ‘bandieten’ most of whom were not originally Muslim were another big part of the migrant community of colour and proved to be fertile ground for the missionary message of Islam. Among the convicts were many who would be considered to be Peranakan Chinese, who made up over 50% of the populations where the Dutch VOC footprint was strongest in Southeast Asia. From that early group of exiles numbering 50 and subsequent leaders forced into exile, Islamic Focus \(^{358}\) notes that Muslims were 1,000 in number in 1800, grew to 3,000 by 1820 and 6,400 by 1840. Today the Muslim community of faith in South Africa comprises around 1.7% of the total population, largely concentrated in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg.

The kramats around Cape Town continue to receive pilgrims in the Sufi tradition not just from across South Africa but from all over the world. Such was the influence and impact of these holy men. Today a significant proportion of the descendants of slaves and indigenes make up the Cape Muslim community. The vast majority of the enslaved were not Muslims from Southeast Asia and India but through the missionary efforts of the Indonesian politico-religious exiles they became what those of the Muslim faith would call ‘reverts’ to the faith. In Islam it is believed that all of humanity is born into the embrace of Islam but not all are conscious of this status. When a conscious step is taken to embrace the Muslim faith such people are called ‘reverts’ as it is believed that they revert to Islam rather than convert, as in other faiths.

**Ancestral roots and the Batavian Peranakan Chinese, Formosa Chinese, the Guangdong and elsewhere**

From the earliest period of settlement by the Europeans, Chinese convicts and indebted Chinese were brought to the Cape as ‘bandieten’. Others came to the Cape as free traders and others as enforced exiles. They were employed as fishermen, basket-makers, and masons. Yap and Leong Man \(^{359}\) show that these Chinese of the seventeenth century, though not slaves, were treated no differently and many remained at the Cape long after their sentences concluded, dying far from home and loved ones.

From the beginning the Chinese were singled out and discriminatory and restrictive laws applied against them. In their work on the history of the Chinese in South Africa Yap and Leong Man \(^{360}\) note that probably the first Chinese man at the Cape was a convict Ytcho Wanko and one of the first ‘Free Black’ Chinese was Abraham de Vyf also known as Tuko de Chinees who was accepted into the Reformed Faith and baptised in 1702. But these authors point out that besides the Chinese prisoners, other free Chinese traders, shopkeepers, restaurateurs, and ships’ chandlers came to the Cape but faced huge hurdles and discrimination. Not all remained.

Ward \(^{361}\) shows that from the time of Van Riebeeck, the VOC had an itch to send what they called ‘industrious’ Chinese to the Cape Colony because of their many talents, but various political fears stood in the way. Ward points out that although the desired Chinese settlers were not sent to the Cape, many Chinese exiles and convicts were sent to live out their lives in the Colony.

Vermeulen \(^{362}\) tells us that under Governor General Adrian Falckenier of Batavia, conflicts between Dutch and Chinese increased in 1740. Somers \(^{363}\) provides us with some first-hand accounts of the atrocities. In September and October of that year a massacre of up to 10,000 Chinese began and spread over the next two months. Over the next two years Ricklefs \(^{364}\) further elaborates on an alliance of the Chinese and Javanese who engaged in a resistance war with the Dutch. Both prior to and after these events, Chinese and Peranakan Chinese were deported in large numbers while some were murdered and thrown overboard at sea. Armstrong \(^{365}\) calls this period “a terrible tragedy perpetrated by a weak and corrupt
colonial power”. Paasman tells us that the Dutch referred to the Chinese as the ‘Jews of Asia’ and they were subject to racist and restrictive measures taken by the Dutch wherever the two nationalities co-existed. The VOC colonial power at the Cape of Good Hope could equally be described as weak and corrupt and guilty of meting out inhuman treatment to the indigene population.

The genocidal practices of the Dutch in Southeast Asia mirrored those practiced against the San in the Cape whom the Dutch often referred to as ‘Chinees Bossiesmans’. According to Kemaseng only 3000 Chinese survived the Batavian massacre. Dobbin quotes Governor General van Outhoorn in 1698 to give us a sense of the identity formations that emerged in Indonesia as a result of Chinese migration. She refers to a Chinese community in Batavia whose forebears were Hokkien Chinese but through intermarriage with Indonesians they became known by the creole name Peranakan – meaning locally born children of Indonesia. Most of these Peranakan had pre-Islamic animist folk religious beliefs from south China, with a syncretic Buddhist mix. They also had a degree of Dutch ancestry through intermarriage. The Peranakan and Hokkien Chinese made up 50% of the populations in Java and Sumatra, and by 1740 they were numerically larger than the Dutch in Batavia, who feared their growing power. Mingham adds to Dobbin’s descriptions to give us an in-depth picture as to how important the Chinese communities were in Dutch-occupied Indonesia. They were industrious and entrepreneurial and were great farmers, traders and administrators. It is surprising that South African history is not more vocal about the Chinese in the Cape who would have been much more of a factor than they are given credit for simply because the huge numerical and social influence they had in Dutch southeast Asia and the widespread Dutch intermarriage with Paranakan in that part of the world. The Cape Colony fell under the VOC Governor General in Batavia, and to him and other Dutch administrators the presence of a few Chinese would have been unremarkable.

Just prior to and after the Chinese uprising in Batavia and Java and following the massacre of 10 000 Chinese settlers, the Dutch started deporting Chinese merchants from Batavia. These Chinese deportees to the far reaches of the VOC Empire were considered to be trouble makers and treasonous. Among these were the majority creole Chinese whose forebears were from Fukien, the Paranakan. Some were deported to the Cape of Good Hope. Armstrong puts the figure for Chinese deported to the Cape or who arrived freely during the entire VOC period at 350. This is probably too low but the figure would not be radically higher. Armstrong suggests that at any one time during the VOC period there was likely to have been at least 50 Chinese identified as such in Cape Town.

According to Harris the population for the entire census of the Cape Colony in 1891 was 1,527,224 of whom 215 were recorded as Chinese. Only 6 Chinese were recorded for the City of Cape Town, the majority being in Kimberley. This census figure certainly was ridiculously low, when one aggregates the steady trickle of migrant Chinese that Yap and Leong Man recorded in their research as entering the Cape between 1810 and the 1880s, with around 80 in Natal.

By 1899 some Chinese were also among the refugees who fled the Anglo-Boer War from the ZAR to the Cape, but this cannot account for the huge jump in figures presented by the authorities in the next census, probably correcting the early inefficiency. This illustrates my scepticism about census figures because the 1904 census recorded 329 Chinese in the City of Cape Town whereas a decade earlier the record had shown 6 Chinese. Then suddenly, also in 1904, when the Chinese exclusion Act was
introduced in the Cape, the entire Chinese population in the Colony was put at 1380, some six times the number of a decade previously.

Census figures, since the first ‘official’ census of the Cape Town municipal district was taken in 1865 under the British Administration, must be treated with caution if not suspicion, but they do provide some sort of yardstick. The 1865 census according to Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith said that the total population was 28,400 with 15,100 being white, and 4,600 of these having been born in Europe. Then 628 in the census are categorised as ‘Hottentots’ and 274 as ‘Kaffirs’. A total of 12,400 are simply categorised as ‘Other’ of which 536 are said to have been born ‘elsewhere’. When one cross-references these census figures to other figures of arrivals, particularly of persons of colour, there are clear contradictions.

The Chinese at the Cape were a small community who were seen as ‘Free Blacks’ and had their own burial ground. Yap and Leong Man sketch a short social history and show how the Chinese married or co-habited with slaves and freed slaves. The offspring of these relationships are another tributary of the Camissa footprint and their descendants were later labelled ‘Coloured’. Likewise with the descendants of the Chinese craftsmen and farmers brought to the Cape from 1806 after the British took over. Their handiwork exists to this day. After 1834 many Chinese indentured labourers were brought to the Cape from St Helena. Yap and Leong Man show how throughout the nineteenth century a steady trickle of Chinese workers flowed into the Cape and then into the Natal Colony alongside the Indian indentured labourers. They also point out the further migrations of Chinese mainly from Guangdong that flowed into the Cape and Natal from the 1860s and 1870s due to political and economic ructions and natural disasters in China. The new waves of Chinese in 1904 numbered over 806 in the Eastern Cape and 328 in Cape Town. They were subjected to many restrictions and indignities including special pass laws for Chinese people.

The Chinese were completely barred from the OFS but with the gold rush Chinese also made their way in larger numbers to the Transvaal Republic where besides prospecting they became farmers, traders and artisans. They too soon found themselves subject to discriminatory laws and became victims of harsh racism. But these Chinese settlers took the hard knocks and prospered. Everything changed for the worse when, as elaborated by Yap and Leong Man, the dire need for cheap labour on the gold mines saw 64 000 Chinese brought over to the Transvaal. This was seen as an emergency measure until black labour could be coerced to work on the mines. Most of these Chinese were repatriated but over 2000 remained in South Africa, greatly boosting the permanent Chinese migration presence. Chinese economic migrants have continued to come to South Africa ever since. The difference between the earlier migrants and the post 1870s migrants is that the latter remained as an identifiable Chinese South African community even three or four generations later while the former assimilated into the Camissa footprint that officialdom labelled ‘Coloured’.

The Droster (Maroon), the Oorlam phenomenon and later 19th century Khoi Revivalism

Within the first fifty years of European settlement at the Cape, indigenes, escaped slaves, rebel ‘Free Blacks’, and non-conformist rebel Europeans making common cause with the others, trekked away from the Cape Colony boundaries to various usually mountainous spots but mainly to the northern Gariep territory to establish communities free from the VOC and later British governing authorities.
Penn gives a little window into this mix of people who were largely led by surviving Khoena and integrated with the Nama, San and other indigene groups along the Gariep River. Drossen was the Dutch word for ‘runaway’ and collectively the desertion phenomenon was referred to as the flight of the Drosters. This phenomenon played a pivotal role in the creole group identity formations of Oorlam groups in the Gariep region. These include the Oorlam Afrikaners, Oorlam Springboks, Basters, Witboois, some of the Gora (Korana) groups, and the Griquas. Although embracing a range of peoples, the foundations of these new identities was a displaced Khoena Indigene base. This 19th century manifestation of Khoena revivalism has withstood the test of time as they still exist in Namibia and South Africa 200 years later.

Various Droster manifestations are dealt with in a piecemeal manner by many published studies, but there is no comprehensive account of the Droster phenomenon in its entirety and its effect on identity formation. Penn also points out that both the parameters of what constituted Drosters and the term itself evolved in meaning from the pre 1720 period and the post 1720 period. What clearly emerges that while in the early period Drosters simply meant slave runaways, by the post 1720 period these marooned runaways or escapees from the colonial authority and not only from their masters, joined forces with refugee Khoena and formed communities. These communities evolved into Oorlam communities which have survived the test of time as resilient formations with cohesive identities.

The Droster phenomenon is a most important facet of modern identity formation as it brings a range of people of colour together using old indigene culture as the cement that binds. Among those who joined the Droster migration to the Gariep were also migrants of colour who had come from across the seas and rebel Europeans who assimilated into the new formations. In the Gariep region there was much greater social cohesion and community organisation among the Khoena and this provided a firm foundation for assimilation into a regional Khoena identity whereas in the Western Cape it was the inverse. The clearest examples of proto modern national group formations are those of the Griqua and the Oorlam Afrikaner formations. The Griqua even pipped the Boers in establishing the trappings of a proto modern nation-state as a British Protectorate, although it was short-lived.

It can be argued that when in the 1860s to 1880s the Boers started to explore their framing of their nationalism they borrowed heavily from the Oorlam and revivalist Khoena arena. In establishing the name ‘Afrikaner’ as the title of their proto national identity they basically stole the term from the Khoena and Slave descendants in the groups called Oorlam Afrikaners. It explains a peculiarity in the title of their founding association – ‘Die Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners’. Why ‘Regte’ or ‘Real’ and not just Association of Afrikaners? Who were the supposed ‘False Afrikaners’ that they were distinguishing themselves from? The answer lies in understanding the insults and barbs thrown their way at a time when it took a lot of convincing for other Boers to abandon the Boer identity in favour of the identity being offered by their intellectuals. The barb involved the Afrikaans patios language that the Afrikaans Language Movement was promoting, where their opponents retorted Afrikaans is ‘n Hotnots taal’.

Indeed both the Afrikaans language was a language of Khoena and Camissa people that was being stole and ‘Afrikaner’ as a people were the Oorlam Afrikaners - a regrouped people of Khoi and Camissa heritage. The white Afrikaner and Afrikaans language movement was based on plagiarism of Khoena and Camissa identities and language. Indeed the first written Afrikaans appeared a century before white Afrikaans texts, in the catechisms writings in Muslim madrassa schools in the form of phonetic Afrikaans
in Arabic script. Hidden in history are many ties that bind South Africans across our group identities if only we opened our minds.

The Saints of St Helena Island in Cape Ancestry

St Helena Island shares a long history with South Africa through connections that go back to the 1620s. Like the Cape Colony the larger part of its population was made up of slaves and indentured labour, alongside the European settlers and troops, who were mainly English. There were no indigenes on the island. The slaves and indentured workers were from Africa, India, Southeast Asia and many were from China.

After 1834 St Helena sent a number of Chinese to South Africa as indentured labourers. Together with other St Helenians who had migrated earlier they were later known as the Saints. St Helena became a first stop for anti-slavery Royal Navy patrol ships where they disembarked Liberated Africans or ‘Prize Slaves’. Many of these liberated slaves would inevitably also be sent on to the Cape Colony.

Significant numbers of St Helenians first came to the Cape as part of the English naval and armed forces in the two British invasions of the Cape at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries. Some of those St Helenian forces stayed on at the Cape after 1806. They were followed by Chinese St Helenians who settled in the Cape in 1834 with the encouragement of the British authorities. The Yon family name in the Cape among others has this history.

Then later in the eighth decade of the 19th century and right into the 20th century, over 2000 more Saints came to the Cape and Natal as indentured migrants. Schulenburg tells us that large assisted migrations from the island began between 1871 and 1873, as a result of the depression on the island following the opening of the Suez Canal. Some were white and some, to use the British classification used on St Helena Island, were ‘Coloured’, but all thought of themselves as British. The harsh reality of South African racism was soon brought to bear on the migrant Saints.

Many Cape families share an ancestral heritage with the Saints and these Saints too had a tapestry heritage. It is amazing, and suspiciously so, that whereas both the St Helena and Cape Colony administrations were British, it is difficult today to find detailed and coherent records for the different St Helenian migrations and their settlement in South Africa. It seems as if there has been some kind of cover-up, for whatever reason – perhaps in order to thwart possible later claims to British citizenship.

Camissa embraced the migrant Saints and many of them embraced the Camissa footprint. As with the records of the many other diverse generations which passed through the Camissa gateway into South Africa, the many descendants of the Saints have little evidence of a connection. Today one will hear, “In our family they say we have a connection to St Helena but that is all I know.”

The Mazbiekers and ‘Liberated Africans’ (Prize Slaves’) known as ‘Rightless Natives’ in Cape ancestry

At the same time that the Saints were coming to the Cape, the largest groups of migrants of colour, known as the Mazbiekers, were arriving too. The Mazbieker heritage stands out as the least talked about element of Cape heritage, yet it is one of the strongest in many family lineages, affecting many more people than want to acknowledge it. Mazbiekers flowed across our shoreline frontier into the embrace
of Camissa both as slaves and as indentured labourers from the 1780s well into the 1880s. Without the sea-route between Mozambique and Table Bay this very large element of the heritage roots of South Africa may never have existed.

The first African slaves at the Cape were largely from Angola up to Guinea in West Africa, but after 1660 they were from east and central Africa from Mozambique up to Somalia and inland to Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Congo and east to Madagascar. Harries notes that these African slaves were formally classified as ‘Coloured’ when the first census of the new Union of South Africa said that Mazbiekers should be classified as ‘Coloured’ rather than as Natives. Because these slaves were dispatched from Mozambique island, they were called Mazbiekers. Prior to this Harries conservatively estimates and notes that the over 25,000 Mazbiekers who came to the Cape between 1770 and 1880, whether slave, Prize Slave or Indentured labourers and were originally referred to as ‘rightless natives’ before being classified as ‘Coloured’ by 1911. We will return to the origins of the Masbiekers later.

‘Liberated Africans’ also known as ‘Prize Slaves’ and who were further referred to as ‘Rightless Natives’ were from the slave cargoes seized on the high seas by the Royal Navy during sea battles with ships still involved in the international slave trade after the 1806 Abolition of Slavery was passed in the British Parliament. These naval encounters resulted in the seized prize ‘cargo’ being taken to British colonial ports where these mainly African slaves would be branded and then given over to be rented out as apprentices to serve lengthy apprenticeships last between five and fourteen years duration.

There had over more than a century been a very gradual migratory drift by micro-communities of sub-Saharan African and East African herders and herder-farmers from Tanzania and the Great Lakes region, across the area which we today know as Zimbabwe. Then over 600 years between 200 BCE to 400 CE there was engagement with hunters and herder-hunter San peoples into Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KZN provinces. Within another 250 years the herders and farmers had scattered across South Africa where archaeological sites show a presence as far as the Eastern Cape. Migrant Khoena (or Khoi) herders reached the lands of the Xam ‘First people’ of the Western Cape only by around 1050 CE.

However, the maritime route was the fastest and most revolutionary relocation system. By the time of the permanent European settlement at the Cape, people with distant Sub-Saharan ancestry had long developed multi-ethnic fusion relationships with both the Khoena (or Khoi) migrants and the Xam (San ‘First People’). There is over a 2000 – 3000 year history of the emergence of the peopling of Southern Africa before the European notion of borders was imposed. At the same time as the establishment of Van Riebeeck’s settlement of Europeans, numerically larger numbers of West African Sub-Saharan migrants arrived in the Western Cape as slaves, as early as 1658. The irony of many of the racist outbursts by the European descendants that they were settled in the Cape long before the supposed recent alien ‘blacks’, is that by 1658 the numbers shows more than a four to one outnumbering of Europeans by Sub-Saharans West Africans who had been brought to the Cape by their own European ancestors, albeit that the numbers reduced within two years.

The Mazbiekers were East and Central African slaves and later indentured labourers who came to the Cape between 1770 and the 1880s largely as agricultural labour in the rural areas of the Cape Colony and as labour for Public Works and the Cape Town dockyard. They came via Mozambique Island - hence the name Mazbieker - but these included Mozambicans, Malawians, Zimbabweans, Zambians, Tanzanians, possibly Congolese and people from the northern areas of Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KZN. Zimba, Alpers and Isaacman explain that the term ‘Mazbieker’ was a stereotype created by the Master class
for a creolised group of African slaves. They explain how most Mazbiekers did not actually come from Mozambique or even East Africa but were captured all along the Zambezi River and even further inland. The Mazbiekers were effectively a creolised new creation born of many different tribespeople thrown together through slavery.

In the Cape the Mazbiekers integrated with other slaves and with surviving Khoena and San. Communities in the Swartland, Paarl, Worcester, the Karoo, and Overberg today labelled ‘Coloured’ have as a strong part of their heritage a Mazbieker infusion. So do many of those in Cape Town where Mazbieker influence was strong in District Six, the Bokaap and across the Cape Flats. Zimba, Alpers and Isaacman give us an amazing insight into the Mazbieker culture and how this slowly melted into the formal category of people identified as ‘Coloured’. They provide cameo stories of how freed Mazbieker slaves settled on the slopes of Lions Head, and became Anglicized through the Anglican Churches in the City Bowl area – St Philips, St Pauls, St Marks and St George’s Cathedral. Many took on very English surnames. The role of the Cowley Fathers in this process and the economic crossover of Mazbiekers into fishing, trading and hawking is well documented.

Mazbiekers were used extensively for the most back-breaking work on farms and in public works and the docks. Zimba, Alpers and Isaacman describe the Mazbieker identity development in detail and show how it is the Mazbiekers who introduced the Ghoema or Ngoma to Cape culture. The Ngoma faith of the ‘way of the drum’ (ngoma means drum) and the role of the Sangomas is a southern African wide traditional faith practice. In Cape Town what survives of this African faith is the corruption of the word ngoma to Ghoema and its associated drumming beat in Cape Jazz and Klopse music. Zimba, Alphers and Isaacman also describe the conditions of their capture and brutal transportation first across land and then sea.

After 1870 Zimba, Alpers and Isaacman tell us that there was a renewed call for new generations of Mazbieker labour at the Cape, this time as indentured labourers. These new waves of Mazbieker migrants, negotiated with the Portuguese at Lourenzo Marques (Maputo), were largely Mozambicans and went to Natal as well as the Cape Colony. Those sent to the Cape Colony just for the period of 1879-1880 numbered over 2000, which is a good example of how large the migrant groups were, with most coming from Inhambane. Some of the migrants coming to the Cape did not come through agencies but made their own way to Cape Town. They not only worked on the farms but also on Kimberley mines and as railway-line workers, dockworkers and public works labour. Zimba, Alpers and Isaacman note that after six years this mass importation of Mazbiekers was concluded and that only seven percent of those eligible for repatriation ever went home.

The Mazbieker identity comes to mind when evaluating a story covered by a television news journalist during South Africa’s first non-racial democratic elections in 1994. The journalist was interviewing a would-be voter in Lavender Hill about his voting intentions. The voter was a man who was very dark in appearance and had strong African features. He gave his name as Mr Kaffertjie Swart. On asked as to who he was going to vote for he stated “Ek gaat stem vir die man met die bles”. That is, he would vote for the bald headed man – de Klerk. When asked why, he stated - “Eka willie dat ‘n Kaffer lanksaan my bly nie. De Klerk sallit nie soe laat gebeur nie”. (He did not want those whom he saw as ‘Kaffers’ living next door to him and de Klerk would ensure that this did not happen). Here was a very dark man with African features and a derogatory first name meaning ‘Little black heathen’ as well as the surname
‘Black’, who did not want people he identified as ‘Little black heathens’ living next to him. Foreigners found this amazingly weird and asked why he was classified as ‘Coloured’ rather than as ‘Black’. The Mazbieker story and the stories of slavery and other migrations of people of colour was used to explain the phenomenon experienced by the foreign observers.

The ‘Liberated Africans’ (‘Prize Slaves’) once known as ‘Rightless Natives’ in Cape law ancestry

Another large tributary of African people to our heritage in the Cape were those called ‘liberated Africans’ or ‘prize slaves’ also called ‘prize boys’ and ‘prize girls’ to whom previous detailed reference has been made. Zimba, Alpers and Isaacman388 in their work on slave routes and oral traditions provide the most invaluable information on understanding where slaves referred to as East Africans or Mazbiekers and East African ‘prize slaves’ actually originate on the continent.

As explained earlier, enslaved people from West Africa and East Africa were seized by the Royal Navy patrols after the abolition of slavery from slave-trader ships on the high seas after the 1807 abolition of slavery by the British Parliament.

Zimba, Alpers and Isaacman389 explain how the ‘prize slaves’ were indentured first into the army, navy and government services and then into private contractual labour with colonists. They also show how this meshes with the Mazbieker story and how settlements of ‘prize slaves’ sprang up in the area known as Black Town in Simon’s Town and in Papendorp, which became Woodstock. The authors quote how in 1843 the British Parliament bizarrely stipulated that all ‘prize slaves’ had to be branded on their upper right arm with “a symbol of freedom” and registered, following which they were to be publicly auctioned as apprentices. ‘Liberated Africans’ were far from liberated. It was the same practice of slavery under a different name.

Initially the ‘prize slaves’ were indentured as apprentices for 14 years and then in the 1840s it was reduced to five years. All ‘prize slaves’ had to be apprenticed within a 20-mile radius of Cape Town, except of course those who were taken to Durban, and who were called Zanzibaris there.

During the period between 1808 and the 1860s thousands of African ‘prize slaves’ were brought to the Cape Colony and became part of the population that was classified as ‘Coloured’. This is closely related to another part of the story of migrants of colour – the story of the black seamen in both the Royal Navy and the merchant marine.

The British Royal Navy sailors made up of Kroo, Seedies, Lascars and Ethiopians in Cape ancestry

Related to both the slave era and the period after the abolition of slavery was the tool used by Britain to ensure an end to the slave trade – the Royal Navy. After 1840 the Royal Navy established patrol ships based at Simon’s Town, St Helena, Zanzibar and Aden, policing the then outlawed slave trade. The patrol ships and these bases were primarily crewed by West and East African sailors. Many of these, known as Kroomen, Seedies and Lascars, also settled down and married locally.

We can turn the clock back even further to note older visitations to South Africa’s shores of Lascars and other black seamen and to those shipwrecked on the Wild Coast prior to European settlement. These seamen of colour who were part of our ancestral heritage for almost 500 years seldom feature in our heritage literature but they were an indelible part of our past and their bloodlines run through all South Africans including indigenes.
The dedicated Royal Navy squadrons charged with the task of liberating slaves only began their work in earnest after 1840. The ‘prize slaves’ were then taken to Royal Navy bases at St Helena, Zanzibar, Aden and of course Simon’s Town. Davey gives us a picture of the Royal Navy (RN) anti-slavery patrolling operations on the high seas along the African coastline, and shows how much the RN relied on African sailors – Kroomen, Seedies or Lascars from West Africa, East Africa and India respectively. Also among the seamen were other Asians such as the Manila men from the Philippines. The RN seamen of colour were based at the Simon’s Town dockyard for almost 100 years. The late great Cape Town professional dancer and choreographer Christopher Kindo was a descendant of the Kroomen. Many in Cape Town share this heritage. One can go today to the little graveyard in Simonstown where there are many tombstones of the Kroomen inscribed with their names and ranks.

Pereira provides an excellent overview of how the Mazbiekers, prize slaves (also known as ‘liberated Africans’), Kroomen, Lascars, Seedies and Zanzibaris played related roles in the maritime environment and at the Cape of Good Hope. It was sad for me when one day I saw in a newspaper picture a young lady with a Krooman surname posing as a Khoena (or Khoi) queen and with her having a negative attitude towards Sub-Saharan Africans – the very people whose real ancestry she shares. This heritage confusion and denialism of one’s own ancestors I find bizarre. This has largely happened because people have been denied their history and forced fed Apartheid history for so long. One cannot seek cultural liberation from the history concocted by those responsible for the demise of one’s heritage.

One of these groups of seafarers of colour who are part of Cape and Natal ancestral heritage, the Lascars, are in fact more associated with the merchant shipping crews but also served in the Royal Navy. Jaffer indicates that Lascars serving as sailors from 1600 onwards would have come to South Africa from Eastern India and Bengal but would also have included people from Arakan in Myanmar, Indonesia, China, the Middle East, Mauritius, Madagascar and East Africa. The term Lascar was generally applied to sailors or militiamen of colour and originated in Arabic military terminology – Al Askar.

Lascars were usually to be found working on English merchant ships where poor and cruel working conditions often forced them to jump ship in British Ports – Table Bay and Durban being two such ports. Lascar involvement in South African heritage occurs much earlier than even Van Riebeeck’s landing at the Cape. Here reference is made to seafarers who were shipwrecked on the Wild Coast of the Eastern Cape. However, Lascars continued coming to the Cape right into the 20th century.

Vernon says of the Lascars that crews were treated so harshly that when ships were wrecked, few felt loyalty to those in command. In contrast they were treated well by indigenes and assimilated into their communities in the Eastern Cape. Lascars were associated for over three centuries with the English East India Company and other British naval and commercial sea traffic. Lascars also served on British troop ships transporting soldiers for the Anglo-Boer War. Thousands of Lascars settled in England but a number also settled in the British colonies such as the Cape Colony. They are among the ancestors of many South Africans labelled ‘Coloured’ as well as the amaXhosa.

For a long time most people knew very little about the Kroomen of Simon’s Town except that there had been these West African seamen with strange names with the Royal Navy and that their gravestones were in the Simon’s Town graveyard carrying the mysterious inscription – KROOMAN. There were also a few photographs which remained as markers of their time. Then Joline Young at UCT undertook the
mammoth task of bringing together the limited and scattered jigsaw pieces of information to tell the hidden story of the Kroomen heritage in the Cape.

Young tells us that the Kru or Kroo are a West African people who have a long history of being recruited as seamen by the Europeans. The ethnic Kroomen were coastal people from Sierra Leone/Liberia. Most Kru villages have become part of the Liberian State. The term Kroomen however covered both these ethnic Kru and another group, the Settler-Liberians. The latter were made up of freed slaves who had been liberated by the Royal Navy anti-slavery squadrons as well as black loyalists who had sided with the crown in the American War of Independence and had settled in Freetown. The ethnic Kru had long developed seamanship and had navigational skills acquired through canoe travel on the difficult local seas. They were therefore in great demand by European shipping.

Young explains that the British Royal Navy in particular experienced a huge attrition rate of their sailors on African and Asian voyages whereas sailors from the Kru withstood the heat, rough seas and illness much better. The Kru were also highly resistant to being enslaved, so although they had previously assisted European slaver ships, they were recruited for the new Royal Navy anti-slavery vessels. Perhaps their intimate knowledge of the slave trade was seen as an advantage. It definitely seems that the Kru sailors tackled their new role passionately and with great seamanship.

The first Kroomen to be employed by the British Navy in Simon’s Town arrived on the HMS Melville in 1838. For almost 100 years these Kroomen were integral to the Simon’s Town naval dockyard. Though great efforts were made to contain the Kroomen and segregate them from freed slaves and from other South Africans of colour, many lived out their lives in the Cape, married and had children in their new abode. Some of the Kroomen left the dockyard and the seafaring life on the high seas and worked as craftsmen and builders on the Royal Observatory project at Liesbeeck.

The Kru and the Lascars were not the only sailors of colour to work at the Cape and settle at the Cape. They were joined by the Seedies who were mostly East African sailors. Pereira tells us the term “Seedies” derived originally from the Arabic ‘Seyyedi’ meaning Lord, and referred to Africans in Islamic northern India. These Africans who see themselves as Indian are very much a part of modern India today but their roots are from among the Ethiopian Habshis. Some of the African slaves freed by the Arabs rose to become senior military lords. In the early seventeenth century the Seedies served in the naval fleets on the western coast of India, first as slaves and soldiers but sometimes as free crewmen and even as commanders. The European fleets including the Dutch fleet also began employing Seedies when they entered the region.

The term Seedies in the East African and South African context was certainly influenced by the Seedies experience of India but these Seedies had a different history. Pereira explains that three types of freedmen were employed by the Royal Navy: Africans liberated by the navy and employed directly; Africans liberated and taken by the Royal Navy to be employed in Bombay and the Seychelles; and manumitted Africans employed in the ports of East Africa. All of these men were termed ‘Seedies’ by the Royal Navy. Pereira said that the term ‘Seedies’ came to denote Moslem seamen originally from the Swahili coast, especially Zanzibar, particularly sailors and harbour workers. He says some 46% of Royal Navy Seedies were Muslim. He also tells us that the Royal Navy term ‘Seedie’ was changed to ‘Somali’ on May 14, 1934 at the Court of Buckingham Palace because most recruits were now from Somaliland. The terms referring to Royal Navy African servicemen of colour thus had some fluidity.
The Seedies like the Kru had around a 100-year history with Cape Town where their role initially was also the halting of slave trading on the Indian and Atlantic coastlines of Africa.

There was also a meshing of the term ‘Seedies’ with the term ‘Zanzibaris.’ After a major strike in Cape Town in 1884 when there was a labour shortage, Pereira says several hundred of these Zanzibari Seedies were brought to South Africa and housed in stables in Hope Street, from where they were put to work in the City. They also married locally and merged into the population labelled ‘Coloured’.

The Manilas in Cape ancestry

Then there are those we call the Manilas – the refugees from the revolutionary uprisings in the Philippines in the latter half of the 19th century - who were part of a global diaspora spanning thirty years of upheaval in that part of the world. They settled largely in Kalk Bay but as time passed their descendants spread across Cape Town. Many today carry their surnames such as Fernandes, de la Cruz, Flores, Manuel, Padua, Pascal, Palma, Garcia, Torrez, Bonaventura, etc. Filipinos themselves were of mixed ancestry including Chinese, Indian, Spanish and Philippine indigenes, and here in South Africa they inter-married with descendants of an array of indigene Africans, and with diverse slaves, indentured labourers, Kroomen et al.

Over the troubled and extended revolutionary period in the Philippines from 1860 to 1880 the Manilas trickled into the Cape as word was spread by the first Filipino, Felix Flores, who arrived in Cape Town in 1863. By the time of the successful revolution led by the Katipunan and the La Liga Filipina, the Manila chapter of the Propaganda Movement and its rebel army, the Manilas of the Cape were well settled in their new home and their children were Capetonians. In the late 1890s Spain was finally expelled from the Philippines.

In the middle of the revolutionary period, in 1870 and 1872 respectively, the Labios Revolt and the Cavite Mutiny saw a dramatic increase in Filipino exiles arriving at the Cape. By 1882 there were 68 Manila families in Kalk Bay. In 1898 the Primera Republica Filipina was established by Emilio Aguinaldo and a new Philippine Republican Army replaced Spanish military control. By this time Cape Manilas had fully embraced Cape Town as their new home.

Staunchly Catholic and imbued with revolutionary nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiments these Filipinos had fled to England, Hong Kong, Japan and South Africa. The catalyst was the execution of three of their leaders, the revolutionary priests Burgos, Gomez and Zamora during the Cavite Mutiny against the imposition of a new tax. The mutiny was led by Sergeant Ferdinand la Madrid against Governor General Rafael de Izquierdo.

Price relates how the founding father of the Manilla community, Felix Florez, came to be in Cape Town. Felix was born on Panay Island in the Philippines in 1844 and arrived in Cape Town in 1863. From a photograph of Felix on board a vessel it would seem that Felix Florez arrived on the CSS Tuscaloosa. This was a vessel seized as spoils of war by the CSS Alabama and commissioned into the Confederate Navy of the rebel Confederacy at civil war with the Union of States in North America. The two ships had sailed down the Latin American coast and on to the Indonesian and Polynesian islands before arriving in Cape Town to much fanfare, with some of the crew jumping ship and settling at Church Haven on the West Coast.
Felix would have boarded the ship as it passed through the Philippines where it took on extra crew. The Royal Navy at Simon’s Town seized the CSS Tuscaloosa to return it to its rightful owners, while the CSS Alabama continued on to France. In French waters a sea battle ensued with a Union ship and the Alabama was sunk. The Crew of the CSS Tuscaloosa were thus stranded in Cape Town for a while and this is when Felix fell in love with what would become his new home and spread the word to others in the Philippines.

Adams, a descendent of the Manilas, tells us that Felix set up a shop in Kalk Bay and married the daughter of a German count and a former Masbieker slave. Their business supplied the arriving migrants from the Philippines with provisions, fishing gear and even accommodation. Felix was the godfather of the community. The community spoke a mixture of Spanish, Tagalog and English and soon began speaking their own comical version of Afrikaans. Felix Flores had four daughters and a son. One of the daughters, Franzina, married Christiaan Adams, likely a descendant of a slave and passenger Indian, a free black.

The Mazbieker, Basotho, Batswana, Malawian and Mfengu indentured labourers in Cape ancestry

After the abolition of slavery in 1834 a labour crisis developed in the Cape, so that in addition to ‘prize slaves’ and the St Helenian Chinese being used as cheap indentured labour, Cape farmers were assisted to bring in indentured labourers from Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique, and Malawi. Huge numbers of these economic migrants settled in the rural areas and farmlands of the Cape and largely integrated into the populations of freed slaves and Khoena in those areas. The term earlier used for slaves from many Southern African countries, because they departed from Mozambique island, was Mazbieker. The new indentured labourers from outside of South Africa were also generally called Mazbiekers.

The story of the Mozambican and St Helena elements of these indentured labourers has been elaborated on, but each of the other migrant groups has its own story too. Clements Kadalie, who founded the Commercial and Allied Workers Union, the biggest Trades Union Movement for much of the first half of the 20th century, was a migrant Malawian dockworker at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The African Kadalie descendants were classified ‘Coloured’ through the deliberate de-Africanisation approach of the government. Similar cameo stories exist for those from Lesotho, Botswana and Malawi. Abdullah Ibrahim, earlier known as ‘Dollar Brand,’ South Africa’s most renowned Jazz pianist with a worldwide following, is a descendant of a BaSotho migrant of that time.

As migrations from the Mfengu of the eastern Cape arose to meet the need for both farm and urban labour also grew, so new locations sprang up. Over time the African indentured labourers from outside of the Cape Colony integrated with small community of initial Mfengu labourers in the Western Cape. These included Sotho, Tswana, and Xhosa communities. Many of these indentured labours moved out of their narrow identity formations and married into communities classified as ‘Mixed/Other’ later to be labelled ‘Coloured’.

During the Apartheid era many of these descendants were classified as ‘Other Coloured’ as were others who appeared to be white but were evaluated as being part of those categorised as ‘Coloured’ due to familial and community linkages. In a paradox those Africans who in appearance looked too black to just be classified as ‘Coloured’ and those who looked too ‘white’ to just be classified as ‘Coloured’ shared a marginalised category called ‘Other coloured’. Prejudiced street terminology made up for the paradox by giving them derogatory nicknames like ‘Kaffertjie’ and ‘Halfnaatjie’ and they were doomed to live in a
twilight and shame-ridden world which has continued into the post-Apartheid era. These people’s often horrific stories of living in no-man’s land littered with landmines never get told.

The amaXhosa relationships with the Khoena in the Western Cape go back in time to before European explorers set foot on the shoreline frontier. The Khoena in their own gradual migratory drift from the northern reaches of Botswana met the migratory drift of early farmers of Sub-Saharan ancestry known as Kosa who later in the Eastern Cape were influenced by migrating Nguni speakers from KZN and often formed integrated Xhosa communities together. As earlier mentioned, the Xhosa were a confederation of peoples rather than a single monolithic people.

Besides the fact that old kinship ties existed between the Khoena and amaXhosa, around the year 1700 European cattle raiders first engaged in raiding and stealing cattle from the highly integrated Khoena-Xhosa communities in the northeast region of the Western Cape and, their common cause to protect themselves and their livestock, strengthened their relationships. From that time amaXhosa made their way into greater Cape Town and this was accelerated by the so-called frontier wars when prisoners of war were shipped by sea to be interred in Cape Town, and Xhosa and Khoena ‘convict’ labour gangs were brought to work at the docks. There was much marriage between Xhosa and Khoena and children were born regardless of ethnic demarcation lines drawn up by officialdom.

There had also always been inter-marriage between Khoena, San and amaXhosa as attested by DNA studies and by isiduko records. Indentured labour, followed by migrant labour systems, resulted in much crossing of tribal and clan lines and Camissa was embraced and, Camissa embraced all of these in return.

The argument that the erroneously labelled ‘Nguni’ people or alternatively so-called ‘Bantu’ people are invaders from north of the borders of South Africa does not have much historical credibility. Those speaking either of the two southern Bantu language dialects – the Zundu and Tekela, are a diverse array of tribes and clans, which evolved and developed in South Africa over time and, whose ancient ancestors trace back through to 1000 BCE to the slow migration drifts of sub-Saharan Africans whose first contact in South Africa can be traced back to metal using herders, herder farmers and farmers who came into contact with hunters and herder-hunters between 200 BCE and 350 CE.

All that Nguni means is a ‘cluster of groups of people who can be linguistically connected as speaking a dialect continuum of a branch of a family of languages within the broad language group of hundreds of languages called Bantu languages. Neither the term ‘Nguni’ nor ‘Bantu’ denotes a national group or tribe or tribes nor does not mean a historical monolithic united ethnic group as is often bandied about.

The term ‘Nguni’ as applied to Zulu and Xhosa, both of whom evolved in South Africa over seventeen centuries as show in chapter one, are people of greatly mixed ethnicities resulting from Kalanga, Khoena, San, Tsonga, Rozvi and other lineages and influences, rather than resulting from one invading tribe of people.

The southern amaXhosa are a people with multiple roots much the same as those of people labelled ‘Coloured’ and indeed the two are cousins sharing many of the same ancestors. The DNA of Nelson Mandela on the MtDNA side, had markers for Khoena and San while on the paternal side, his YDNA was found to be sub-Saharan African (Bantu). Archbishop Desmond Tutu found in his test results that he too has Khoena and San DNA.
Soodyall\textsuperscript{402} shows that testing the DNA of a large sample base of those self-identifying as ‘Coloured’ reveals that marginally more of them have Sub-Saharan African DNA (‘Bantu’) markers as opposed to Southern African DNA markers (Khoena/San). The study was done by the UCT based Human Genome Project in cooperation with the National Health Laboratory Service and School of Pathology at the University of the Witwatersrand, headed by Prof Himla Soodyall. It had a sample base of 483 people in 2008, broken down into segments self-identifying as Black, ‘Coloured’, White, Asian and those not wishing to identify with any of these terms. There were 107 who self-identified as ‘Coloured’.

In fact DNA makers show the almost exact pattern that the story being related here of the Camissa footprint would predict. In other words, the markers reveal Khoena, San, Nguni, Sub-Saharan, Indian and Southeast Asian roots in ‘Coloured’ ancestry, and that European and Eurasian roots are also part of the story but not the dominant element that many believe them to be.

**Passenger Indians and Bengalis**

Over the entire 18th and 19th centuries there was a constant trickle of sea-conveyance passengers of colour who migrated to the Cape to start new lives. Those that stood out most were passenger Indians and Bengalis who came to the Cape and applied themselves to all sorts of trades from shoe-making, tailoring and barbering to running fruiterers and general dealerships.

But by the 1860s indentured labour became the greatest lure to South Africa from the Indian sub-continent and Sri Lanka and thousands of labourers were brought to work on the sugarcane plantations of KZN.

In the Western Cape, which had 200 years of forced and voluntary Indian migration, most assimilated into the creole Camissa footprint, but in KZN it was different in that the waves of Indian sub-continent migrants kept a strong distinct Indian cultural identity even though most of them became fairly cut off from India in time as a South African Indian identity emerged. Over 152 000 indentured Indian (or Dravidian) migrants settled in KZN over a 40 year period.

Initially under Apartheid the KZN Indian indentured migrants were put under the same classification of “Coloured” but the National Party ideologue Eben Donges who intensely disliked Indians insisted that a separate silo be created whereby Indian, Chinese and ‘Other Asians’ be classified within an Asian silo of ‘race’ classification.

**African American, Caribbean, Australian Aborigines and other tributaries to Cape ancestry**

Vinson\textsuperscript{403} tells us that from the 1780s more and more ‘American Negroes’ – African Americans and Caribbean sailors, missionaries, adventurers, musicians, political activists, newsmen and tradesmen - made their way to South Africa and settled. The Kokstad Advertiser and the South African Spectator were two examples of newspapers started by African American journalists. The American negroes as they were called at the time were part of the gold rush and they opened hotels, restaurants and other businesses.

Vinson\textsuperscript{404} elaborates that the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) and the National Baptist Convention (NBC) were both established through an African American missionary presence in South
Africa. He also uncovers a number of race incident conflicts in which court action and US government intervention were brought to bear.

Lewis elaborates how with the American negroes came the political tradition of Pan Africanism and the ideas of Marcus Garvey, Booker Washington, du Bois and others. This had a profound impact on emerging political movements such as the CMP&PA, CPVA, APO, SANNC, and ICU. He goes on to highlight the contributions of two men who stand out in terms of their political influence in the Cape – Francis Zacharias Peregrino and Henry Sylvester Williams.

Peregrino was born in Ghana but came out to the Cape from the USA, where he ran a newspaper in New York State, while Williams came from Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. Many South Africans labelled ‘Coloured’ also have an ancestry component which goes back to the ‘American negroes’ from the USA and Caribbean.

It is important to note that this is an ongoing story, and today refugees and economic migrants come by road, air and sea and include a great number of migrants of colour from exactly the same regions that slaves were taken from and brought to the Cape. Today 38 million people travel in and out of South Africa annually and a significant percentage have permits and visas allowing long term and permanent stays. Many others illegally enter the country and over time they and their offspring assume South African identities. Stowaways enter South Africa’s ports, which are fairly porous gateways for migration despite measures by authorities to try and secure them.

Trotter tells the story of the many ‘sugar girls’ plying their prostitution trade in South Africa’s port cities. This inconvenient truth and the offspring of these relationships with seamen is yet another element of our Camissa heritage roots that cannot be factored out of the maritime migration story.

Constantly new stories come to the surface which again speaks to diversity within our Camissa heritage. The story of the Australian Aborigines who were brought to South Africa on the side of the British along with other Australian troops in the Anglo-Boer war is another micro component within our ancestry. Kerner and others believe that around 50 Aborigine troopers and trackers came over to participate with Australian military contingents to fight in the Anglo-Boer war but most did not return to Australia due to racist policies and were abandoned in South Africa. Dale Kerner and others have been meticulously searching for answers for many years, so that the descendant families of these men may get closure and the reparations due to them. Today these Aborigine Australians are likely to have many South African descendants too.

We owe it to ourselves and to our ancestors to do justice to their memory and to celebrate rather than deny the diversity of our heritage.

This chapter started with noting that Mellet developed a useful educational tool using a set of stone steps in District Six as a symbol to explain the heritage of those labelled ‘Coloured’ and offered a collective rallying point for self-identification of an important South African sub-identity in the form of the ‘Camissa Footprint’. By using the iconic ‘Seven Steps of Stone’ from District Six as a symbolic matrix tool, heritage and identity in the Cape, and indeed across South Africa, are explained in the form of seven tributaries to an identity that officialdom labelled as ‘Coloured’. The term Camissa as a sub-component of African heritage is argued to be a non-racial, non-colour and non-ethnic term that
captures this intricate wonderful heritage outlined in this book. Proudly African and proudly Camissa has its own special place in South Africa’s diverse heritage and it also speaks to the ties that bind us as a people.

The ‘Seven-Steps’ tool also links very well into the symbolism of the Camissa River and its many tributary springs across the city bowl of Cape Town. Each of the seven steps recognises one aspect of cultural heritage – the indigenes, the slaves, the non-conformist Europeans, the ‘Free Blacks’, the Drosters, the exiles and refugees, and the indentures and economic migrants. Each step, like all the springs that feed the main Camissa River, comprises many cameo stories as outlined in this short study. Some today may have one or two of these tributaries in their ancestral heritage, others may have more and some may have all seven. Even the latest migrants have a place on the seven steps of Cape identity.

The Camissa embraced all those who crossed the shoreline frontier and the challenge exists for modern day generations of descendants to rediscover the Camissa within themselves and thereby celebrate wholeness. It is all these tributaries together and the story of each woven like threads in a tapestry that constitute a coherent social history of the Cape and across South Africa. Indigene forebears at a time of assault and all sorts of pressures reached out to these other victims of colonialization and the slave trade and the integration processes became part of the strategy for survival. The lack of acknowledgement of this part of heritage needs to be addressed in heritage discourse as do many more elements lost between the cracks of history. There is a binding tie between indigene struggles for survival and those of the migrants of colour in all their diversity. Over time these struggles meshed and so did these peoples.

Migrations of people of colour, forced and voluntary, still flow across that first frontier - the shoreline frontier - and continue to enhance our society. Camissa will embrace these too and in time they will embrace Camissa. We need to be careful of bigotry, xenophobia, racism, tribalism, ethno-nationalism and nativism. They are all cut from the same poisonous cloth soaked in a toxic broth. They are not heritage, and these toxic tendencies and heritage should never be confused.

Much pathology among people plays out in antagonisms between various groups – the artificial ‘black’ and ‘bruin’ arguments are a part of these, as is the notion of ‘white purity’. Even the trendy concepts of ‘First Peoples’ and ‘First Nations’ used by some opportunistically to make claims of exclusive rights of restitution are highly questionable. Signs of habitation by the first peoples of antiquity dot our landscape across southern, eastern, western and central Africa and most groups in South Africa and across the African continent today link back to these people of antiquity.

Today those few descendants in surviving San communities who are traced directly to the precolonial communities known as San, /Xam or Bushmen, are the closest that anyone in modern times can be said to relate directly to the first people in Southern Africa. The Cape San suffered extermination as no other group did, as the facts carefully brought together by Adhikari illustrate. They amount to the anatomy of genocide. When people for modern political purposes attempt to blur this terrible historically documented reality with bizarre claims, it adds insult to injury.

No modern grouping can justifiably claim to wear the mantle of ‘First Nation’ or ‘First People’ without denying the defining character of the genocide visited on the Cape San. They also deny the various roles played by those who participated – European, the various Khoena formations and those of other African formations. Many people across all modern groups, however, do have some ancient San heritage, and this should be celebrated and cherished without making bizarre claims and statements of exclusive
rights. Also, those small surviving San communities isolated in South Africa and numerically larger in neighbouring states deserve to be respected and supported by all. Crude ethnic revivalism can undermine historical events and has sometimes done so, adding a modern dimension to the injustices of the past. It is ground upon which all should tread carefully if true respect is to be shown to ancestral heritage.

Indigene heritage can and should be proudly celebrated but not in a chauvinistic manner, nor around notions of ‘purity’. Ethno-chauvinism does a great disservice to the memory of the Khoena and San in South African social history. Most often when populist arguments are closely examined, one finds ideologically skewed influences in their understanding of history and false social constructs that have been revived over and over again. This is a hangover from colonialism and Apartheid.

The kaleidoscope of roots elaborated on in this book requires more amplification in our society because it offers a legacy second to none and an opportunity to move beyond notions of singular and pure identities. This approach can liberate people rather than drive people into opposing enemy camps. It certainly offers those labelled ‘Coloured’ an opportunity to embrace a different way of looking at identity or more accurately at the identities we carry. In this context many can celebrate indigene identity as the cement that binds all other elements in birthing a unique African identity among many others. The multi-faceted story of the Camissa Footprint brings indigene history and heritage together with the history and heritage of migrants of colour giving all a cornerstone for understanding what has been labelled as ‘coloured’ identity. While indigene roots cannot be the single defining attribute of this “Coloured” identity, it is the most important foundation from which social history proceeds and is framed.

The descendants of the migrants of colour who came across the seas and integrated with indigenes and fought exploitation and discrimination against all odds, emerged as a people from the footprint and embrace of Camissa. The new African people born of this heritage is not an ethnic nor race heritage but rather a heritage made up of a valiant set of stories of a creole people of Africa whose forebears rose above all sorts of adversity. These are the Camissa people.