

I was to spend many holidays at the Hoek even after my marriage and have a soft spot for this old village. But more later.

Having mentioned my Uncle George I might perhaps digress for a while and mention another member of the old family - my Grandfather, Tom Nettelton - a brother of George - who was captain of No ! Company the Buffalo Rifle Volunteers, under command of Capt, later Sir, EY Brabant, an East London regiment which first took part in the Gaika/Galeka war of 1877/8. In doing the research work for the history of the Kaffrarian Rifles and its parent corps the Buffalo Rifle Volunteers. I realised that after just twenty years of peace there were once more signs of war being waged by the natives. Twenty years peace after the cattle killing mania of 1856 when the Gaika/Galeka were told to destroy all their cattle, sheep, goats, grain etc and their ancestors would rise and drive the white men into the sea. This promise was not fulfilled and they died by the thousands and it took twenty years for them to build the tribes again and seek war. And in the war that followed they again lost thousands while our casualties were very light.

Regarding the killing of the cattle, I have a good story told me by an old friend and farmer of the frontier. The whole business sounds like fiction at its best and because nothing of this nature could be kept in records it was never recorded in history. What was known as British Kaffraria in the 1800's was very sparsely populated. The Europeans, among them Military and settlers, had already experienced one or two Kaffir wars and in 1856 were again conscious of impending raids by the thousands of blacks. The story which I hope will not be boring to the reader I will relate as told to me. "It was this imminent danger to the whites that must have brought about the conspiracy that was planned and ultimately carried out. (My friend Miles Warren told that he knows the name of the white Major involved but that is a secret to be kept). The officer was a fine hypnotist and with him was a conjurer and also an outstanding linguist from among the settlers. They went off on their mission and met a native girl NoNtombi, the niece of a witchdoctor, who came under the influence of the so-called spirits - the three men well-covered with karosses at the pool known as NoNquoses Cibi (watering place). This girl reported to NoNquosi on the spirits she had seen at the pool. There were other visits and ultimately NoNquosi, now quite under the influence of these spirits of their ancestors carried their message for the destruction of all livestock and food and promised that the white man would be destroyed. What happened is well known and it was only twenty years later in 1876 that the settlers once more realised that they would once more be called upon to defend themselves and their possessions against the natives and it was in the year 1876 that the Buffalo Volunteer Rifles was formed.

That is the story as told to me and which I have mentioned in my research for the Kaff Rifles history, but whether it will be included in the history I don't know and so I am quoting the story here. It was Prof Bart Houghton who said to me "we are not writing S A history".

However/