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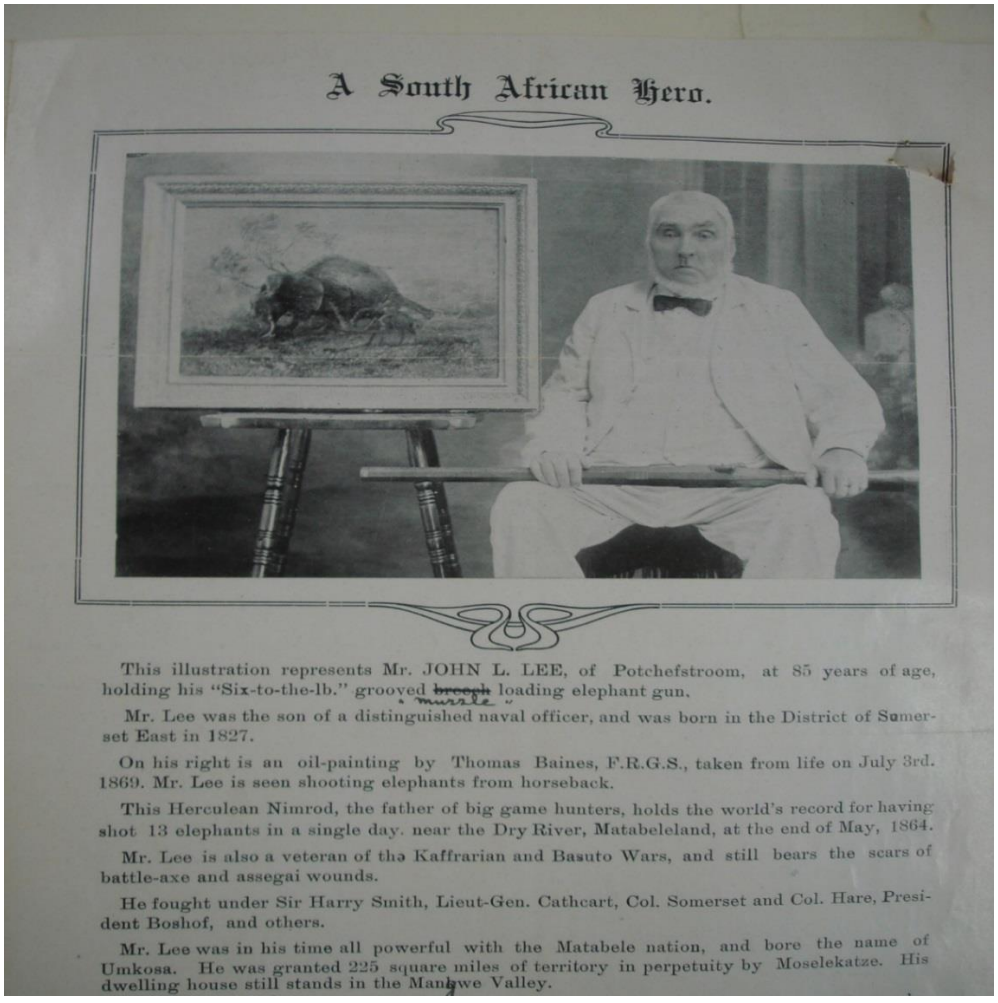
No Country for Old Men: The life of John Lee and the Problem of the Aged Pioneer.

In November 1912 an 85-year-old man, John L. Lee, wrote a letter to Herbert Gladstone, the Governor General of South Africa. Lee was then living in the Transvaal town of Potchefstroom and he was destitute. He had been offered a place at the Krugersdorp pauper house earlier that year but was unable 'to conciliate himself with the idea of being treated as a pauper'. Instead, Lee intended to raise funds for his subsistence by writing and publishing his memoirs. 'I was a great admirer of your father,' wrote Lee to Gladstone, 'and I would be much honoured to receive your autograph for inclusion in my book'. Included with the request Lee supplied a short hand-written account of his 'career in Africa' and outlined why he felt he was entitled to some kind of financial relief.[1]

Over the following two years Lee and a sympathetic associate, a Pretoria businessman by the name of J. A. van Vliet, ran a campaign to win public recognition of Lee as a deserving recipient of charitable aid. As it turned out, Lee's memoirs turned out to be insubstantial. No book was produced, only a small pamphlet entitled 'a South African hero', printed by van Vliet. That there might have been a book, however, enabled Lee to redeem the fact of his destitution. By writing, Lee sought to change his status, from pauper to author. In so doing, he avoided the convention of the petition – that he present himself as humble or supplicatory. Instead, Lee wrote with the vigour of youth. Lee may have been writing from the vantage of destitute old age but he had once been, so his appeal claimed – and might be still – a great man. Indeed, Lee's memoirs depicted their author as the archetypal British pioneer hero, a figure described against the backdrop of the South African frontier, whose life not only bore testament to the genius of an imperial race but had in more instrumental terms secured the southern African hinterland for the British Empire.

Anyone who read John Lee's memoir, who saw the press coverage of his appeal for help or who scrutinised the letters he and van Vliet sent to high-ranking officers of the South African state faced an immediate challenge of interpretation. How true were the events that these documents described? How credible was Lee and the story that he told? In what follows, I take that same

problem of interpretation as a way to think, broadly, about the question of old age in colonial history and, more specifically, about what the life of John Lee can tell us about heroism, gender and the culture of British imperialism in Southern Africa. In presenting himself as the archetypal pioneer hero, Lee painted a picture of a man without vulnerability and without any intimate family ties. Probing at this absence, I argue, helps to demystify what is possibly the most entrenched mythological image in the British imperial imagination – that of the heroic white man in colonial Africa. Writing from the vantage of old age, moreover, challenges the way we tend to organise historical time – by which one period precedes and gives way to another. The scepticism with which men like John Lee were perceived marked them out as relics from a previous era but nor were they entirely discredited either. They were problematic in this respect not because they represented the past but, rather, because they transgressed the boundaries separating past from present.



A South African Hero.

This illustration represents Mr. JOHN L. LEE, of Potchefstroom, at 85 years of age, holding his "Six-to-the-lb." grooved ~~breech~~ muzzle loading elephant gun.

Mr. Lee was the son of a distinguished naval officer, and was born in the District of Somerset East in 1827.

On his right is an oil-painting by Thomas Baines, F.R.G.S., taken from life on July 3rd. 1869. Mr. Lee is seen shooting elephants from horseback.

This Herculean Nimrod, the father of big game hunters, holds the world's record for having shot 13 elephants in a single day. near the Dry River, Matabeleland, at the end of May, 1864.

Mr. Lee is also a veteran of tha Kaffrarian and Basuto Wars, and still bears the scars of battle-axe and assegai wounds.

He fought under Sir Harry Smith, Lieut-Gen. Cathcart, Col. Somerset and Col. Hare, President Boshof, and others.

Mr. Lee was in his time all powerful with the Matabele nation, and bore the name of Umkosa. He was granted 225 square miles of territory in perpetuity by Moselekatze. His dwelling house still stands in the Mankwe Valley.

'A South African Hero': The first page of John Lee's memoir, in draft, undated.

Aging Pioneers

The slim archival files that contain John Lee's case history at the South African national archives render only a fragment of a life. It is a fragment, however, that historians too often pass over. While the historical literature on colonial childhood is now extensive, research into old age and empire is almost entirely lacking. The life of John Lee offers a window into a particular time in South African history but it also challenges the convention by which scholars of empire have tended to imagine the life-course, one by which historical actors are assumed to be, if not children or juveniles, occupying an adult space undifferentiated by age.[2]

Such historiographical neglect of age and aging can in part be explained by the acute concern that colonial communities themselves expressed for the health and wellbeing of the young. How children were raised was critical to the making of racial categories. Orphans and mixed-race children (the former often a euphemism for the latter) attracted particularly close attention.[3] Motherhood was both celebrated and tightly controlled.[4] Schools, reformatories and recreational clubs all operated to train children into adults equipped with the requisite emotional and cultural predispositions to recognise racial difference and to feel instinctively those attachments and aversions necessary to perpetuate such difference in their own lives and in the lives of their children in turn.[5]

Such a preoccupation with youth might lead us to suppose that, while childhood was of great concern for colonial regimes, old age was far less so. Children were plastic, the elderly were not. Work had to be performed shaping the subjectivities of the young; the elderly had been formed long before. Old people, perhaps, simply did not matter, so remote was old age from the politics of state and family formation, the entraining of settler sensibilities and the fraught dynamics of social reproduction.

What writing there does exist on old age and empire has been confined to the legal history of imperial pensions.[6] In South Africa, as Jeremy Seekings has shown, the introduction of old-age pensions in 1928 was part of the wider project to tackle the 'poor white' problem – 'to raise all white people to "civilised" standards of living.[7] This was a project of racial engineering: black South

Africans did not receive any kind of state pension until 1944.[8] Yet the problem of the aged poor, in South Africa and across the European empires, raised the difficult question of what was to be the role of the state in relation to individual and family responsibility. When should husbands, wives, adult children or other close relations bear the burden of supporting old age? Finding out whether there were any family members alive who might care for their elderly relatives engaged state authorities in the laborious work of trying to discover their identity and whereabouts, a task made harder by the fact that it was often only the testimonies of the elderly themselves that could provide any clues in this direction. Magistrates, police detectives, doctors and hospital superintendents were all in the business of piecing together family lives, weighing up as they did so the veracity of the evidence that they received. Simply to be able to extend financial or other kinds of help – or to refuse to do so – relied on a process of judging credibility; of evaluating how likely were the stories they were told.

As Lorenzo Veracini has argued, settlers – as opposed to missionaries, colonial administrators, travellers and other sojourners – are best defined by their intention to remain. They do not return 'home' at some future point but make a new home in the colony itself.[9] That meant more, however, than the ability of settlers to live out their own lives – and eventually to die – within the colony. Settler colonialism is predicated always on the dispossession of indigenous peoples but it also involves the perpetuation of settlers' family lines: the raising of children to adulthood to consolidate whatever gains their parents had made. The central fact of Lee's old age – and the reason why his appeal came to pass – was the absence of any family members willing and able to support or care for him. Yet Lee had at one stage two wives and a total of eight children. Their absence in John Lee's later years entails a history of estrangement. What had become of Lee's wives and children? How had their relationship with Lee altered over time?

Historians who have written on empire and the family have tended to think of family relations, even if strained or stretched by distance, as nonetheless extant – a tendency reflective of a broader emphasis upon the 'networked' nature of imperial social formations.[10] Letter writing, for

example, did not just give expression to family relations but constituted them; contact mitigated distance.[11] Yet distance could also mean quiescence, passivity or alienation. Working across the span of a life, moreover, reminds us that relations can grow *increasingly* distant, not merely geographically but emotionally too. To be sure, John Lee's children may simply have grown up and moved away. In southern Africa during the later nineteenth century, men, women and children moved with unprecedented speed and intensity.[12] Established elsewhere in the subcontinent or further afield, Lee's children may not have known of their father's impecunious circumstances in his later years. Yet it is significant that Lee himself made no mention of his children in his own account. Though this may have represented a strategic silence – if they knew of their existence authorities might want to know why they were unwilling to care for their father – it is also the case that women and children were incompatible with the heroic image of the colonial pioneer that Lee was attempting to emulate. That image described a man without domestic ties. Men at or beyond the frontier – be they hunting, fighting or prospecting for gold – had their most intimate, if adversarial, relations with 'Africa' itself.[13] The absence of family members to support John Lee in his old age echoes, therefore, their absence from the same discursive tradition that Lee was attempting to insert himself within.

It was a tradition, moreover, that celebrated youth and disregarded (old) age. In Britain a genre of juvenile fiction, aimed at boys and taking the African interior as its primary tableaux, created a powerful mix of patriotism, imperialism and adventure.[14] Scouting, the mass mobilisation of boyish energy and skill for the sake of imperial conquest and expansion, was born out of Robert Baden-Powell's own experience in suppressing the Ndebele and Shona risings in the 1890s. The popularity of *Scouting for Boys* – a book that, in the words of Bill Schwarz, translated the 'adventure' of racialized counter-insurgency into the practice of scouting appropriate for children back at home – was surpassed only by Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*.[15] This, the most popular of all imperial adventure stories, told the story of three pioneer British heroes on their quest for the legendary diamond mines of Kukuanaland, a thinly disguised fictionalised version of Matabeleland (the south western part of Zimbabwe today).[16] As Anne McClintock has argued, *King Solomon's Mines*

represented an allegory for imperial conquest, in which white men advanced through hostile 'native tribes' in pursuit of mineral riches.[17] The interior was mythic space: white men *became* white men in their journey through it. A similar quest motif lent itself to the British South African Company's 'pioneer column', its advance through what became Rhodesia heralding the dawn of a new settler state.[18] This was the history to which John Lee was attempting to appeal. *How* his memoirs were read, therefore, enables us to consider the meaning of 'the pioneer' once the era of 'the settler' had begun.

Lee's campaign

The surviving archival evidence that documents John Lee's campaign covers only a two-year period, from 1912-1914, but what it describes takes us back to the 1820s and the Eastern Cape frontier. According to his memoir-pamphlet and the newspaper articles that covered his campaign, Lee was born in 1827 in the district of Somerset East in the Cape Colony, at a time when the colony was convulsed by a series of frontier wars against the Xhosa people. According to one newspaper article, Lee first distinguished himself as an eight-year-old boy, when he swam the Great Fish River in 1835 to rescue a British officer stranded on the Xhosa side. Aged nineteen, he swam the Orange River for a bet, returning with a cask of brandy.[19] He fought in the sixth, seventh and eighth Xhosa wars – Lee termed these the 'Kaffir and Hottentot wars' – and in two Basuto wars, under a succession of British and Boer leaders. As his letters and the newspaper articles emphasised, Lee sustained a series of injuries: on three separate occasions he suffered assegai and battle axe wounds, testament to his sacrifice and his formidable endurance. He had been present at the Kilpplaat missionary station 'where the rebel Hottentots were wiped out' and had served in the War of the Axe – or the seventh Xhosa War – in the Amatola Mountains, where he claimed to have saved the life of a fellow soldier who had been tied to a tree and was being forced to eat lumps of his own flesh, cut off and roasted at a neighbouring fire.[20] After being badly injured by an assegai thrust in the war of 1851, Lee travelled north to Matabeleland, where he spent 22 years as an elephant hunter. He lived in the Mangwe Valley

from where he exercised 'an immense influence' over the Ndebele kings, Mzilikazi and Lobenguela, 'for the good of the white races'.[21]

According to his appeal the heroism of Lee's early life derived from his military service on the South African frontier but his more important contribution to the empire was at Mangwe where he lived as a white man in a black nation, before the advent of colonial settlement. According to a report in the *Transvaal Chronicle*, Mzilikazi granted Lee land 'for advice and services rendered, as political agent in all questions arising between that chief and the white settlers.' It was at the same time, during the two decades that he spent at Mangwe, that Lee's fame reached its most epic proportions. Supposedly, Lee held the world record for having shot thirteen elephant in a single day in 1864.[22] Seven years later, he hosted the famous hunter, Frederick Selous, at his farm.[23] Significantly, Lee's extraordinary hunting talents were deemed not only to have earned his reputation 'amongst his own people' but had 'gained for him the honoured title of "Umkosa" [meaning 'lord'] in the far off lands of Matabeleland'.[24] It was in the guise of hunter – 'a mighty nimrod' in the words of the newspapers – that Lee's greatness had been recognised in African as well as European eyes. This, indeed, was the crux of Lee's appeal. In January 1913, van Vliet submitted a petition to the Chartered Company of Southern Rhodesia, asking that Lee's old farm at Mangwe be restored to him or that he be granted an adequate sum of money in lieu. The tract of land, argued the petition, was given 'in perpetuity' to Lee by the Ndebele king, Mzilikazi, for 'advice and services rendered'. In 1870, the petition continued, when Mzilikazi's son, Lobenguela, succeeded as paramount chief, Lee's appointment was confirmed. Apparently, Lee still had in his possession a document to this effect, signed by Lobenguela.

In April 1913 the Company responded to say they had investigated the matter and concluded that Lee was entitled to nothing. Lee, they reported, only had a right of occupation to the land whilst resident in Matabeleland. He had abandoned this right when he left in 1884. Lee thus emerges as part of the fall-out from the Scramble for Africa; as one of the many concession hunters who derived their claims for sovereignty from the agreements they claimed to have reached with an African king.[25]

The simultaneous demise of John Dunn, the 'white Chief' of Zululand, represented the closing of the South African frontier and the ending of an era when white men could negotiate power with African polities on their own account. As the Chartered Company laid down its own borders and boundaries, it seems that Lee was forgotten.[26]

John Lee in 1884 was fifty-seven years old. Since he made his home at Mangwe more than two decades before he had relied on physical good health. Lee hunted elephant, he traded and he farmed. His was a life lived largely out of doors, often on horseback. At 57 and suffering 'repeated attacks of fever', Lee could no longer sustain this kind of physical, out-of-doors life. But models of imperial masculinity were also changing. Biographical and historical time were aligned: the same span of years through which John Lee advanced into old age marked the same historical moment at which the meaning of 'the pioneer' became less certain. Writing to General Lord Roberts, commander of the British imperial forces in South Africa, Gladstone noted that Lee had made previous petitions to various notables and that Ministers had decided that there was no ground for granting a pension. Gladstone then added a further thought. 'He appears to have spent all his life hunting and fighting, and to have made no provision for his old age.'[27] Hunting and fighting were not heroic but irresponsible. At the end of his letter Gladstone inserted a post-script. Switching into a more relaxed writing style he added, 'we had a most interesting time in Rhodesia – especially at Zimbabwe – including Indabas with the Bechuanaland and Swazi Chiefs – and also got in shooting, fishing (trout) and golf.' In her study of the colonial history of the Victoria Falls Joann McGregor described their transformation from 'a place known for the discoveries of intrepid (male) pioneers' into a site of genteel leisured activity, where women were not out of place.'[28] That same shift is clearly evident in Gladstone's post-script. The transition from hunting elephant to playing golf marked the domestication of the wild.

In 1913 John Lee was out of time as well as place. The world he described – the hinterland before the settler states of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa had been created – no longer existed. The source of his entitlement to land, the Ndebele nation, had been destroyed, by the very force to

which he appealed. At the same time, as investigations began into the 'poor white problem' – the great social issue of the day – it was discovered that a disproportionate number were old and male. Unemployment rates amongst whites were in fact very low: 'poor whites' were those who were not *able* to work – due to illness, injury or old age.[29] Frequently, these coincided: old men who appealed to the authorities for help or who passed through one or other of South Africa's hospitals or asylums typically described at least some kind of bodily impairment or mental distress. Usually this kind of evidence was cited to emphasise the severity of need. The 'assegai thrusts' that Lee described were included for dramatic effect; there was certainly no suggestion he suffered from these injuries in later life. The juxtaposition of Lee's supposed greatness with the pathos of his aged destitution reminds us, however, that behind the *image* of the heroic white man in colonial Africa were real, flesh and blood human subjects who were as much damaged by the frontier as they were able to define it. At the same time, as rapidly increasing urbanisation led to the creation of racially mixed 'slums' in South Africa's cities, the figure of the pioneer took on new, negative connotations.[30] The 'conditions of life during the pioneer period', one report commented, engendered unfavourable 'habits and attitudes' that were then 'passed on as traditions to pioneers' descendants'. Those 'habits and attitudes' spoke obliquely of white degeneration. 'Tradition' hinted at the overspill from one period to the next.[31] Aging pioneers were a logistical and financial problem but also an ideological affront.

Failures of Credibility

Between 1904 and 1931 the number of whites in South Africa aged 60 or over more than trebled, increasing from 37,000 to 129,000.[32] This was the demographic consequence of southern Africa's later nineteenth century history. The discovery of gold and diamonds from the 1860s attracted men from around 'the British world'.[33] Reputed discoveries of even greater proportions – the inspiration for *King Solomon's Mines* – were reported further north.[34] Military conquest of the Zulu, the Xhosa, the Ndebele and the Afrikaners drew British soldiers to the region (as many as 400,000 imperial

troops fought in the 1899-1902 South African war) while fixing in the British imagination the idea of southern Africa as a site of masculine racial prowess.[35]

Many of the men who entered the subcontinent as soldiers reinvented themselves when they were discharged, seeking work in South Africa's burgeoning cities or travelling further north in search of gold. Criminal networks flourished. Besides the soldiers and the statesman with whom historians have been long familiar were imposters, racketeers, smugglers and thieves.[36] The rapid expansion of steam ship transport and the characteristic transience of these men means that many of those who entered South Africa during the later nineteenth century at some point moved elsewhere. A significant contingent, however, remained. The 'pioneers' of the high-imperial period were the old white men of the interwar years. In the absence of any coordinated welfare provision, many impoverished old men ended up being accommodated in hospitals, sanitoria and asylums. Dozens of those admitted to the Valkenberg hospital in Cape Town during the nineteen twenties were in their sixties and seventies when they entered the hospital. Of those whose origins could be traced to Britain, the average age on admittance was 51.[37]

The problem for the South African authorities in dealing with these men was not merely one of a lack of resources. Like John Lee, old men with experiences of the frontier drew upon those same experiences to present themselves as deserving. Yet those who encountered these men found their stories to be essentially unreliable. Many were deemed to be exaggerated or dishonest. In situations where individuals were thought to be senile, tales of pioneering were more often cited as symptoms of failing mental capacity than as evidence of their greatness. In all these cases the absence of family members meant there was no one available to confirm an individual's identity or the stories that they told. Heroic high-imperial masculinity provided the organising script by which old white men plotted what they hoped were credible lives but, without corroboration from a reliable source their stories appeared implausible. Often, authorities were frustrated by the failure of old men to recall where – or, indeed, who – their family were.[38] When those in hospital had no-one to whom they could be discharged, declining mental or physical health could lead to long-term, sometimes

life-long, institutional confinement.[39] Some men, admitted to hospitals in their forties and fifties, were still there twenty or thirty years later.[40]

In 1910 the Union of South Africa was formed, joining the British colonies of the Cape and Natal with the formerly independent Afrikaner republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The political project of reconciling British and Afrikaner populations, it has been argued, was forged in the discovery of a common – white – interest in dominating South Africa's indigenous population.[41] In the infancy of the new colonial state scientists and sociologists went to work on moulding the population into stable racial groups.[42] Work colonies were established to rehabilitate out-of-work or alcoholic white men.[43] Industrial schools rehabilitated delinquent youths and prepared them for a life of stable, productive work.[44] Yet care for the elderly continued to be viewed as a family responsibility. The romantic image of the pioneer was that he was a man – or boy – released from domestic constraints to find adventure in the African wilds but the reality was that many single men were unable to sustain family relations. They simply could not afford to care for dependents who might care for them in turn later in their lives. Men whose employment depended, directly or indirectly, on the fortunes of the mines were in and out of work. Of 23,000 white employees in the mines in 1912, almost 90% were subject to 24-hours notice. Many were incapacitated due to accidents or disease.[45] A series of recessions throughout the 1900s, 1910s and 1920s, 'added urgency to a mounting sense of desperation'. By 1917, 39,021 of the Union's white population was classified as 'extremely poor' and another 67, 497 as 'poor', the greatest concentration of whom were to be found in the Transvaal.[46]

In such precarious circumstances men were often forced to keep moving in search of better prospects. During years of insecure, short-term labour around the subcontinent men lost contact with their families or deliberately abandoned them. As new opportunities to fight, mine, work or trade appeared, men moved from one camp or city to another. With few possessions and even less in the way of job security, men frequently walked from one destination to another overland. At Durban and Delagoa Bay, the nearest sea ports to the Transvaal, British officials processed a steady

stream of Distressed British Subjects.[47] Dogged by high commodity prices and a shortage of affordable housing, wages were quickly spent. The bodies of white men, killed by some combination of exposure, hunger or disease, were regularly discovered on the South African veldt.[48]

Old, impoverished and unattached men can be found in archives all over South Africa. Some sought help from local charities and municipal authorities set up to support destitute whites, such as the Cape Town Board of Aid or the Johannesburg Rand Aid Society. Others – like John Lee – wrote personal letters to the South African Governor General. They did so under the auspices of the Governor General's Fund, set up to aid the veterans of the 1899-1902 South African war. In their letters of appeal, many petitioners reached back, like Lee, into the heroic settler history of the preceding century, some claiming blood relations with earlier generations of South Africa's pioneers, others professing to have enjoyed some friendly acquaintance with royalty, statesmen or the celebrated soldier-heroes who led the British through that concatenation of wars and rebellions that preceded the birth of the new South African state.[49]

Like Lee these men attempted to present the pathos of aged destitution in a particular light, one in which their earlier lives on the frontier retained their credibility. Yet the committee that disbursed the fund looked with disbelief at epic tales of the African frontier. The same courage and virility that defined high-imperial masculinity appeared exaggerated or ridiculous when claimed by aged white men in social distress. Herbert Goodridge, who wrote to the Governor from Durban in 1922, claimed to have travelled to South Africa in 1879 with the imperial forces during the Zulu War and to have fought in seven subsequent campaigns – against the Pedi, the Basuto, the Boers (twice), the Zulus (again) and the Ndebele.[50] While Lee claimed that an agreement signed by Lobenguela proved the veracity of his story, so Goodridge offered his possession of military medals as supporting evidence.[51] Officials remained sceptical. 'I think he is exaggerating his losses,' commented one. 'As the Americans say, he is so careful of the truth he hesitates to use it.'[52] In all their deliberations officials parsed judgement as to the character of applicants and the likelihood of the life-histories

they divulged. 'South Africa,' it was observed of another applicant, 'has many wastrels of all classes and nationalities attracted by the gold fever or cast up by the War.'[53]

Medals offered the most tangible proof that applicants were deserving and were often at the heart of a case. Peter Sarrill claimed to have come out to South Africa in 1872, to have been at Isandlwana, where the British were famously defeated, and at Rorke's Drift, which he helped to defend. Sarrill's greatest misfortune, so he claimed, was to have had all his medals and discharge certificates stolen. A letter supplied by the Durban CID confirmed that in April 1916 Sarrill had lodged a complaint with the police that certain testimonials, discharges and medals had been stolen from the pocket of his coat at the Salvation Army hostel where he had been staying. It was also noted, however, that though Sarrill had been living at the home for over two years, nobody at the hostel had ever seen or heard of the medals before. The superintendent took the view that Sarrill's complaint was false and that he had never had the medals, at least while he had been staying at the home.[54]

That superintendent's testimony, coupled with the suspicion that Sarrill may have been an alcoholic, was enough to sabotage his claim. 'He appears to have done good military service in the past', noted the Committee's chairman, 'but is now addicted to drink…for years past he has been little more than a professional beggar.'[55] Other aged applicants met a similarly suspicious response. One man, who wrote a series of letters over a fifteen-year period, was dismissed as 'a troublesome old stiff with a grievance'.[56] Officials referred disparagingly to 'old friends' – persistent applicants who become well known to the officials who handled their case.[57]

The absence of family meant the absence of the means to corroborate the stories these men told. Without family to look after them, moreover, men were liable to spend their final years in long-term institutional care. What is particularly striking about these men is that they continued to draw upon heroic pioneer narratives. John Bowyer*, admitted to the Valkenberg asylum in Cape Town aged 55 in 1915, claimed to have been through fifteen different campaigns – in southern Africa and

* The names of all those admitted to the Valkenberg hospital have been changed to protect their anonymity.

in France during the First World War.[58] 'There is not a campaign since the Galeka war in which I have not taken part,' he claimed. Neither the Cape Town magistrate's office nor the doctors at Valkenberg could decide whether what Bowyer said was true. 'It is difficult to find out exact details about his past life,' commented one doctor, 'he evidently has had a chequered and adventurous existence.' Bowyer remained at Valkenberg until his death in 1931, aged 71.

Another patient at Valkenberg, 57 year old Harold Ward, talked at length about 'shooting lions up country', said he had performed great feats during various 'kaffir wars' and claimed to own all the railways in Great Britain.[59] Roger Merriman, fifty years old on admission in 1924, believed he was still in Bulawayo. He had built the Beira-Bulawayo railway, he said, and, as if to parody the fantasy of high imperial capital accumulation, claimed to have a controlling interest in the Rhodesia and Kimberley mines and to own all the coal fields of Great Britain. He had boxes of diamonds hidden away, he said, and various sums of money stashed away in banks in England and South Africa. [60]

Men with medical diagnosis of senility, evidenced by their being 'disorientated for time and place' occupied the extreme end of a spectrum of (in)credibility: their pioneering tales were not merely disbelieved; they were the very substance of their mental confusion. Yet the struggle for credibility was what all these aging pioneers shared. This is why John Lee asked Gladstone for his autograph: to have his memoir authenticated by the Governor General himself would prove Lee to be reliable. Though he failed in this, Lee did manage to have the names of those who made donations to his fund printed in the newspaper: he understood the nature of charity as something that is socially performed. It is likely that he was only able to do this, however, with the help of the businessmen, van Vliet. In this one respect, John Lee was unusual. He may have lacked a family to support him but he did have a friend. Men with no social capital at all often had their stories of the frontier as their only resource. That Lee's most loyal supporter, however, was an Afrikaner raises a final question: was John Lee as *British* as his memoirs portrayed him to be?

The life and after life of John Lee

Aged eighty-five in 1912, we do not know when John Lee died. Though it seems that he failed in his attempt to have his land at Mangwe restored to him, his campaign did muster some support and, with it, a partial expression of belief in the credibility of his life story. Several government ministers expressed sympathy for Lee and the mayors of Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth all donated money to his appeal, as did a number of judges and senior army personnel. Gladstone himself gave £10, a donation perhaps intended as an example of generosity for other imperial-minded citizens to follow.

All charity appeals aim to mobilise emotion. This one met with modest success. The question of who John Lee *was*, however, remained unresolved. Reading the record of Lee's appeal in the South African archives leads us, like the officials who dealt with his case, to investigate its resemblance to the truth. Had John Lee really saved the life of a man who was being forced by his African captors to eat his own flesh? Did he really shoot as many elephants as he claimed? What other records exist to challenge or corroborate the story that Lee and van Vliet told?

In fact, John Lee does appear in several of the published accounts written by men who, like Lee himself, travelled through the subcontinent during the final third of the nineteenth century. Lee's most famous contemporary advocate was Thomas Baines, the artist-explorer, and it was Baines' portrait of Lee that was reproduced in Lee's memoir-pamphlet. In his own book, Baines remembered 'Mr. Lee, who not only perfectly understood the language and customs of the Matabili [sic] but was privileged to hunt and reside in the South Western district, had long enjoyed the confidence of the late chieftan Umselekatze [sic], and was generally regarded as his agent in all business affairs with white men.'[61] Lee's claim to have brokered British power with the Ndebele was perhaps not so far-fetched. Indeed, it seems the land that Baines himself secured from Lobenguela was achieved through Lee's diplomatic work.[62] Throughout Baines' book, Lee appears as a mediating force for the advance of British imperialism, as he negotiated between parties of gold seeking Europeans and the Ndebele kings. Other contemporary accounts paint Lee in a similar light. Fellow elephant hunter,

William 'Old Bill' Finaughty, described Lee settling at the Mangwe river in 1863 on a farm granted by Mzilikazi. Lee, as Finaughty put it, became 'an advisor, or rather the foreign minister, to both Mzilikazi and Lobenguela.'[63] Other accounts describe Lee as Lobenguela's agent, his translator and his friend.[64] Lee's farm, nicknamed 'Lee's castle', became a well-known stopping place on the road to Bulawayo. In August 1879 a group of Jesuit missionaries arrived at Mangwe. One wrote in his diary:

> Arrived at Lee's house at 7am…he was civil eno' & gave us much valuable information. Gave him the times of sunrise and sunset for the year. He showed us a tree where Baines had written something, but it is now illegible. …Lee gave a discourse to our Amandebele friends on the victory over Cetwayo. Father Delpechin says it was splendid to hear him rattling away in Zulu so fluently – I was sorry to be away at the time.[65]

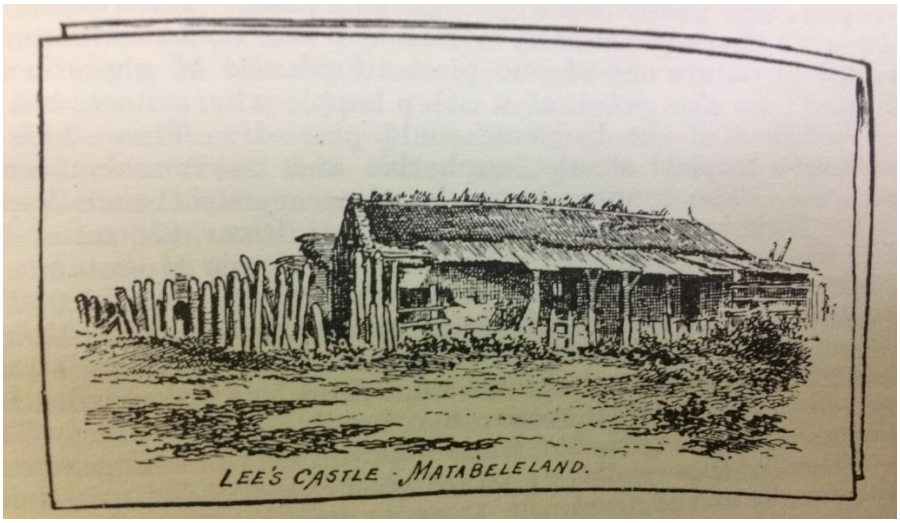
As a successful intermediary, Lee knew the value of information. Whether impressing upon the Ndebele his own version of their conquest or directing his guests' attention to Baines' tree-trunk carving, Lee was nothing if not instructive. His talking in Zulu was likely intended both to impress his missionary visitors and to exclude them from his conversation.

In February 1880 another missionary party arrived at Mangwe. 'Lee has long been out of coffee,' observed one, 'his coffee is made from Kaffir corn. He gave us plenty of milk and some butter and we gave him a little coffee.[66] Such were the material limits to Lee's existence and the reciprocal nature of the hospitality he offered to visitors. Finaughty gave a more vivid picture, showing Lee very much at home and in relation. Recalling a 'most laughable and enjoyable' evening that he spent during one month-long visit to Mangwe, and referring to Lee as 'Jan', Finaughty wrote:

> Old Jan Lee and his family had settled here. Jan had built a comfortable house and they certainly were having a happy time. The fun consisted in hearing the old man talk. He would

> tell the most circumstantial yarns, full of adventure and humour, by the hour together, and to listen to him you would think he had left no elephants in the country. At the same time his son would be whispering to me that his father was…too frightened to go near an elephant, that he had never shot one and was never likely to shoot one. But the gravity of the old man in telling adventures and the bursts of Homeric laughter that invariably followed their recital kept the house in a constant state of merriment.[67]

Here is Lee the family man and the raconteur. Strikingly, however, though Lee's sons do feature in these accounts, we learn very little about any wives or daughters. Yet Lee's female relations were important – and historically consequential. Ten days after the Jesuit priest bartered coffee for butter and milk, he returned to Mangwe to find Lee 'sick with fever, as well as his wife'.[68] Perhaps anticipating the implications of his illness, Lee suggested to the missionaries that they move their station at Tati to his farm at Mangwe, explaining that he wanted to 'have some means for educating his children'.[69] But Lee's need for the missionaries may have exceeded their own need for him. Lee, it transpired, had not one but two wives and a new conservative priest, Salvatore Blanca, recently arrived at the mission, would have no truck with Lee's polygamy. Though Lee's castle was the preferable location, the Tati mission stayed where it was, struggling on until it was finally wound up in 1885.[70]



'Lee's Castle, Matabeleland', E. P. Mathers, Zambesia, 1891, p.187

To Father Blanca, Lee's polygamy was a sign of his being not entirely white. Polygamy was African custom; Lee had violated racial as well as religious sensibilities. Indeed, the fact that Lee might have been polygamous seems to have shaped his personal reputation as much as, if not more than, his talent with a gun. Not only Catholic priests but Dutch descended Afrikaner hunters found Lee's polygamy a scandal.[71] Most found it remarkable at the least. Comparing Lee to bigamists who found in South Africa the opportunity to forget they had wives back in Britain, John 'Matabele' Thompson noted in his diary: 'John Lee was a bigamist of a different kind from the others: he had two *white* wives and families, all living in the same house.[72]

Writing the family back into the life of John Lee works to critique the figure of the heroic male imperialist, but it also helps to open up the profound uncertainty of Lee's political loyalties. Living between the Ndebele nation and the advancing tide of British imperialism, Lee lived astride competing cultural and political forces. So long as the balance of power between those forces hung in the balance Lee could show himself to be valuable to either side for his knowledge of the other. Over more than twenty years Lee gave food and shelter to numerous European travellers passing through the Mangwe valley. Consternation at his polygamy aside, Lee was valued for this and remembered as 'a decent man'. To the Ndebele kings Lee proved to be a reliable advisor. One account even has it that after gold was discovered at Tati, Lee was appointed 'governor' of the goldfields by Mzilikazi. During the early days of the rush, it is said, he interviewed diggers and saw to the marking off of claims.[73]

In his petition Lee claimed to have won Matabeleland 'for the empire' but as a political broker, Lee operated in the spaces between white and black, British and Boer. This, indeed, may be what explains the failure of his petition. Finaughty himself described Lee as 'a man of mixed English and Afrikaner parentage'.[74] A later historian judged Lee 'more Boer than Englishman…a British subject half Afrikaner by birth, a Matabelelander by residence and a Transvaler in sentiment'.[75] In his 1968 book, *Pioneers of Rhodesia*, Edward Tabler reports that Lee 'used Afrikaans as his European

language…and knew Xhosa (he was called 'Johnny Xhosa' by the Matabele), Zulu and Sindebele perfectly.'[76] Of Lee's later life, Tabler writes:

> Lee retired to the Transvaal in 1891 and his land was confiscated by the Chartered Company because he refused to help fight the Matabele in 1893. It is said that he fought on the Boer side in the War of 1899-1902 but it seems unlikely in view of his age.[77]

Though we lack firm evidence to show whether Lee did fight against the British, like the Ndebele rising five years before, the South African War exposed his divided loyalties.[78] In his appeal for help Lee tried to present himself as somebody with a single, exclusive identity but in reality Lee's identity was multiple and mutating. In his middle years, it seems his primary loyalties were to the Afrikaners of the Transvaal and the Ndebele. Both were defeated by the British. As southern Africa was subsumed within the British Empire, Lee attempted to refashion himself as proudly British and unambiguously white. We do not know *who* said that Lee had fought against the British or whether the officials who handled his petition to the Chartered company were aware of these rumours. But it may provide an additional clue as to why Lee kept his family out of his own account. John Lee's wives were both Afrikaans. So was his mother. His sons were named Rolf, Jan, Karel and Hans – hardly British names – and his daughters, Sara, Anna, Maria and Catherine. All we know of John Lee's father is that he was a British naval captain, his absence in John Lee's own life representing the break between Lee and any British ancestry of his own.[79] The great silence in Lee's life story may have been that of the estrangement between himself and his children but it echoes the estrangement between Lee and his British past. Family genealogies did not merely span imperial time and space but were ruptured through them and disconnected too.

Conclusion

In ideal terms pioneer heroes did not grow old at all but died superbly for a much greater good.[80] The sacrifice in laying down their lives conveyed the exemplary moral courage that they – as white men – embodied, while subsequent rituals of remembrance sanctified the settler colony with the virtue of men arrested forever in the moment of their death.[81] The mythology of the frontier from this perspective was appealing precisely to those who had never been near it. Old men with their own experience of the African frontier were, in the early twentieth century, anathema to the *idea* of the pioneer – a figure that in the public mind remained fixed in middle age.

If pioneer heroes were forever young, they were also depicted as characteristically without a need for family ties. High imperial masculinity described men who were physically robust and emotionally self-sufficient. Theirs was a homosocial world. They lived away from 'home'. The romantic aspect to this image masked the fact that many single men in southern Africa were not *able* to maintain their family relations. An idealised construction of the family – in which men actively maintained relationships with their children throughout the course of their life – was a luxury many men could not afford.

Once the colonies of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia had been established, the moral connotations of 'the pioneer' became less certain as a new model of colonial masculinity, orientated around family life, emerged. Though mothers in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia had primary responsibility for the raising of their children, men were needed to sustain the home through regular waged employment while providing discipline to their children and companionship to their wives. Men liable to disappear up country in search of money or adventure were out of sync with the spirit of the times. But it would be problematic to suggest that one standard of colonial masculinity simply substituted for another (the ongoing popularity of frontier folklore at the least tells us that) or to view changes in the meaning of 'the pioneer' as the exclusive reason for the failure of John Lee's appeal. Instead, perhaps the greatest value to reading John Lee's appeal is in its capacity to disrupt a periodization that defines the pioneer era ending when the colonial era began. So many histories narrate the tumult of the high imperial years – the same span of time as that of John Lee's movement

into old age – as leading to or culminating in the end of one period and the start of another. With the creation of new colonial states and the state-sponsored migration of women and children from Europe, the frontier 'closed'.[82] But the transitions that help to organise historical time do not easily apply to the transitions that are experienced within the life course of an individual. 'As we age,' writes Lynne Segal, 'we retain…traces of all the selves we have been…rendering us psychically all ages and no age'.[83] With age we inhabit the past *in* the present. This is not to propose simply that we use a metaphorical language of aging to describe the passage of historical time: the imperial pioneer did not corrode or 'fade away'. The point is not just that metaphors for aging often tend to perpetuate essentialist notions of physical or mental decline but that the process of aging does not *in any way* flow in a coherent or single direction. The past, as many have recognised, can feel more intense, more immediate, in old age. Time – distance – does not make things automatically recede. Incorporating age and aging into our historical analysis shows the characteristic dissonance involved as past and present converge.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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[1] South Africa National Archives Repository (hereafter SAB), Pretoria, GG 41/115; GG 41/248; GG 41/273; GG 41/888.

[2] Outside the colonial historiography, there is a limited, though valuable, literature on aging in southern Africa. See: Andreas Sagner: 'Ageing and Social Policy in South Africa: Historical

Perspectives with Particular Reference to the Eastern Cape', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26: 3. 2000, pp. 523–53; Sagner, The Abandoned Mother": Ageing, Old Age and Missionaries in Early and Mid Nineteenth-Century South-East Africa, *Journal of African History* 42:2, 2001, pp.173-198; Joe Hampson, 'Elderly People and Social Welfare in Zimbabwe', *Ageing and Society* 5:1, 1985, pp. 39-67.

[3] David Arnold, 'European Orphans and Vagrants in India in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 7, 1979; Owen White, *Children of the French Empire: Miscegenation and Colonial Society in French West Africa, 1895-1960*, Oxford, 1999; Emmanuelle Saada, *Empire's Children: Race, Filiation and Citizenship in the French Colonies,* Chicago, 2012; Christina Firpo, *The Uprooted: Race, Children and Imperialism in French Indochina*, Honolulu, 2016.

[4] Anna Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', *History Workshop Journal* 5, Spring, 1978, pp.9-65; Marijke du Toit, 'The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: Volksmoeders and the ACVV, 1904-1929', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29:1, 2003, pp. 155-176; Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*: *Settler Colonialism, Maternalism and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940*, Nebraska, 2009.

[5] Carol Summers, *Colonial Lessons: Africans' Education in Southern Rhodesia*, 1918-1940, Oxford, 2002; David Pomfret, *Youth and Empire*; Antoinette Errante, 'White Skin, Many Masks: Colonial Schooling, Race and National Consciousness among White Settler Children in Mozambique, 1934-1974', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36: 1, 2003, pp. 7-33; Sarah Duff, *Changing Childhoods in the Cape Colony: Dutch Reformed Church Evangelicalism and Colonial Childhood, 1860-1895*, Basingstoke, 2015; Shurlee Swain and Hillel, *Child, Nation, Race and Empire: Child Rescue Discourse, England, Canada and Australia, 1850-1915*, Manchester, 2010; Shireene Robinson and Simon Sleight, eds. *Children, Childhood and Youth in the British World*, Basingstoke, 2015.

[6] David Thompson, 'Old Age in the New World: New Zealand's Colonial Welfare Experiment' in *Old Age from Antiquity to Post-Modernity*, ed. Paul Johnson and Pat Thane, Routledge, 1998; Edmund Rogers, 'A Most Imperial Contribution: New Zealand and the Age Old Pensions Debate in

Britain, 1898-1912', *Journal of Global History* 9:2, 2014, pp. 189-207; Anne O' Brien, *Philanthropy and Settler Colonialism*, Basingstoke, 2015.

[7] Jeremy Seekings, "'Not a single white person should be allowed to go under": Swartgevaar and the Origins of South Africa's Welfare State, 1924-1929', *Journal of African History* 48:3 (2007), p. 378.

[8] Though the extension of pensions to aged Africans was explained by the incumbent government in terms of Christian compassion, it is also the case that pensions served to indirectly prop up the migrant labour system because it reduced the pressure on migrant workers to support aged family members. State support for elderly Africans remained inadequate: in 1978 there were a total of four old age homes for Africans in the entire country – not one in Soweto, with a population of over a million people. *South African Institute of Race Relations Survey*, 1978, p. 484; Sagner, 'Ageing and Social Policy in South Africa'.

[9] Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, Palgrave, 2010.

[10] The literature is substantial but for examples of what I describe here see Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India*, Oxford, 2004; Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth Century History,* Princeton, 2011; Emily Manktelow, *Missionary Families: Race, Gender and Generation on the Spiritual Frontier*, Manchester, 2013; Adele Perry, *Colonial Relations: the Douglas-Connolly Family and the Nineteenth Century Imperial World*, Cambridge, 2015. On networks more broadly see Alan Lester and David Lambert, *Colonial Lives across the British Empire*, Cambridge, 2006.

[11] Erika Rappaport, 'The Bombay Debt: Letter Writing, Domestic Economies and Family Conflict in Colonial India, *Gender and History* 16: 2, 2004, pp. 233-260; Sarah Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and letters in the later eighteenth century*, Oxford, 2008; Alexandra Lindgren Gibson, "I wish I could see you as often as I could see your letter": Imperial anxieties and working-class family life in the Raj', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 17: 3, 2016.

[12] For histories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that describe the turbulence experienced by Africans as well as white settlers in the subcontinent, see Shula Marks, 'Class, Culture and Consciousness in South Africa, 1880-1899' and 'War and Union, 1899-1910', both in *The Cambridge History of South Africa*, volume II, ed. Robert Ross, Anne Mager, Bill Nasson, Cambridge, 2011.

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[15] Bill Schwartz, *Memories of Empire, Volume I: The White Man's World*, Oxford, 2011, pp. 223, 235. On scouting see also Robert MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 189-1918*, Toronto, 1993.

[16] Wendy Katz, *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire*, Cambridge, 1987.

[17] Anne McClintock, 'Maidens, Maps and Mines: Long Solomon's Mines and the Reinvention of Patriarchy in Colonial South Africa', in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, ed. Cherryl Walker, Johannesburg, 1990.

[18] Robert MacDonald, 'The Invention of Rhodesia' in *The Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880-1918*, Manchester, 1994. Rhodesia became the independent African state of Zimbabwe in 1980. See Alois S Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, Cambridge, 2014.

[19] SAB, GG 41/115, 'The Career of Mr. John L. Lee, now living at Potchefstroom', enclosed with J. A. Van Vliet to Herbert Gladstone, 30 November 1912; GG 41/188, J. L. Lee, pp. J.A. van Vliet, to Herbert Gladstone, 28 August 1913; *Transvaal Chronicle*, 9 September 1913; *Transvaal Chronicle*, 27 October, 1913.

[20] *Transvaal Chronicle*, 27 October, 1913.

[21] SAB, GG 41/115, J. A. Van Vliet to Herbert Gladstone, 30 November 1912.

[22] SAB, GG 41/115, J. A. Van Vliet to Herbert Gladstone, 30 November 1912.

[23] *Transvaal Chronicle*, 9 September 1913.

[24] *Transvaal Chronicle*, 27, October 27, 1913.

[25] Steven Press, *Rogue Empires: Contracts and Conmen in Europe's Scramble for Africa*, Harvard, 2017.

[26] Charles Ballard, *John Dunn: The White Chief of Zululand*, Cape Town, 1985.

[27] SAB, GG 41/273, Herbert Gladstone to General Lord Roberts, 24 October 1913.

[28] Joann McGregor, 'The Victoria Falls, 1900-1940: Landscape, Tourism and the Geographical Imagination', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29:3 (2003), p. 727.

[29] Seekings, 'Not a Single White Person', p. 383.

[30] Robert Morrell, ed., *White but Poor: Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa, 1880-1940*, Pretoria, 1992; Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*, Cambridge, 1995; Philip Bonner, 'South African Society and Culture, 1910-48' in *Cambridge History of South Africa*, volume II, ed. Robert Ross, Anne Mager, Bill Nasson, Cambridge, 2011, pp. 261-263, 291-293.

[31] Wilcocks, 'Rural Poverty among Whites in South Africa and the South of the United States', Carnegie Corporation, 1935, p. 2.

[32] Sagner, 'Ageing and Social Policy', p. 525.

[33] James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World*, Oxford, 2009, pp. 379-82.

[34] The first goal rush in what became Southern Rhodesia centred on the area of Tati, only 50 miles from John Lee at Mangwe. Lewis Gann, *A History of Southern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1934*, London, 1965, pp.50-53.

[35] Michael Lieven, 'Heroism, Heroics and the Making of Heroes: the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879, *Albion* 30: 3, 1998, pp. 419-438.

[36] Charles van Onselen: *Masked Raiders: Irish Banditry in South Africa, 1889-1899*, Cape Town, 2010; and *Showdown at the Red Lion: The Life and Times of Jack McLoughlin*, Johannesburg, 2015.

[37] This is based on a total of 167 British-born patients for whom their age is recorded on their patient case files.

[38] University of Cape Town, Special Collections (hereafter UCT), BC 1043, 2928; UCT, BC 1043, 2733; UCT, BC 1043, 2733; UCT, BC 1043, 2860.

[39] SAB, PM 91/60; SAB GG 41/193; SAB GG 41/409; SAB GG 41/464; BC 1043 2495; SAB GG 41/192; SAB GG 41/540.

[40] South Africa National Archives, Cape Town Repository (KAB), 1/KNT, 26, 11/1; UCT, BC 1043, 2940; UCT, BC 1043, 1134; UCT, BC 1043, 2940; UCT, BC 143, 3896; UCT, BC 1043, 2712.

[41] Leonard Thompson, *History of South Africa*, Third edition, Yale, 2001, p. 144

[42] Grace Davie, *Poverty Knowledge in South Africa: A Social History of Human Science, 1855-2000*, Cambridge, 2015, chapter two

[43] Neil Roos, 'Work Colonies and South African Historiography', *Social History*, 36, 1 (2011), pp.54-76.

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[45] Elaine Katz, *The White Death: Silicosis on the Witwatersrand Gold Mines, 1886-1910*, Johannesburg, 1994.

[46] Bonner, 'South African Society and Culture, 1910-48' pp. 264.

[47] South Africa National Archives, Pietermaritzburg Repository (hereafter NAB), CSO 3489 / 1896, 'Unemployed, destitute European men'; CSO 3739 / 1897, Relief of distressed British Subjects and the burial of pauper British Subjects at Lourenco Marques'; IRD 286 / 1908, 'Repatriation of Immigrants from the Commonwealth of Australia'.

[48] For examples, see UK National Archives (TNA), CO 28-320-1, D. R. Hammond, British Subject, to HM Consul, Delagoa Bay, Impondwina Hill, Lebombo Mountains, 20 December, 1895; NAB, *Natal Witness*, 15 October 1904: 'Destitution and Death' and November 12, 1904: 'A Veldt Victim'; 3 February 1905: 'Found Dead'.

[49] Particularly vivid examples include letters sent by Ernest Botherill (68), Edward Brander (83), Robert Crosbie (54), Peter de Brehem (71), H.M.J. Hall (63); W. H. Pringle (62) and C. F. Robinson (66) all submitted between 1913 and 1931. The oldest applicant to apply to the fund during this period was – or claimed to be – 106 years old. SAB GG 41/160, 182, 193, 353, 477 and 655.

[50] SAB, GG 41/568, Herbert Goodridge to Governor General, 14 February 1923. Goodridge was born in Derby in 1845, making him 77 years old when he began his appeal.

[51] SAB, GG 41/568, Herbert Goodridge to Governor General, 5 November 1924.

[52] SAB, GG 41/568, Minute, 22 February 1922.

[53] SAB, GG 41/253, Herbert Gladstone to Charlotte Knollys, 19 May 1914.

[54] SAB, GG 41/335, Head Constable, Durban CID, to Deputy Assistant Adjutant General, HQ, South African Military Command, Cape Town, 19 June 1916.

[55] SAB, GG 41/335, Private Secretary, Governor General, to South Africa Military Command, 22 September 1916.

[56] SAB, GG 41/551, Minute, 19 November 1932.

[57] SAB, GG 41/347, handwritten memo, undated; SAB, GG 41/322, handwritten memorandum, 18 November 1916; SAB GG 41/551, Witwatersrand Disabled Soldiers' Board, Johannesburg, to Secretary, Executive Committee, GG Fund, Cape Town, 21 May 1923.

[58] BC 1043, ME 2495, 'Previous Personal History'. The Gcaleka war was the final Frontier War of 1877-1879.

[59] BC 1043, 1447, Medical Certificate 30 April 1906; Case Book 1 July 1920.

[60] BC 1043, 2634, Clinical Description of Case; Medical Certificate 19 November 1924. Other cases in which old men exhibited similar high-imperial delusions include Harold Blackman: BC 1043, 2270, admitted 1921; Archibald Dale: BC 1043, 2758, admitted 1926; and David Leyton: BC 1043, 2902, admitted 1927.

[61] Thomas Baines, *The Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa*, London, 1877, pp.19-20.

[62] Edward Mathers, *Zambesia: England's El Dorado in Africa*, London, 1891, p.264.

[63] William Finaughty, *The Recollections of William Finaughty, Elephant Hunter 1864-1875*, ed. Edward Tabler, Cape Town, 1957, p.41.

[64] *Zambezia and Matabeleland in the Seventies: The Narrative of Frederick Hugh Barber 1875 and 1877-1878 and the Diary of Richard Frewen 1877-1878*, ed. Edward Tabler, London 1960, pp.72, 173; Tabler, *The Far Interior: Chronicles of pioneering in the Matabele and Mashona Countries, 1847-1879*, Cape Town, 1955, p. 29.

[65] Michael Gelfand, *Gubulawayo and Beyond: Letters and Journals of the Early Jesuit Missionaries to Zambesia, 1879-1887*, London, 1968, p.104.

[66] Gelfand, *Gubulawayo and Beyond*, p.183.

[67] Finaughty, *Recollections*, p.41.

[68] Gelfand, *Gubulawayo and Beyond*, p. 185.

[69] *Ibid,* p. 204.

[70] Rob S. Burrett, 'The Zambesi Mission and the Residences of Good Hope and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Old Tati', *Botswana Notes and Records* 32, 2000, pp. 25-38.

[71] *Zambezia and Matabeleland in the Seventies: The Narrative of Frederick Hugh Barber 1875 and 1877-1878*, ed. Edward Tabler, London, 1960, p. 72

[72] Thompson papers, Diary, 10 December 1888, cited in Arthur Keppel Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia: The White Conquest of Zimbabwe, 1884-1902*, Kingston, 1983, p. 41.

[73] Edward Tabler, *Pioneers of Rhodesia*, Cape Town, 1966, p.94

[74] Finaughty, *Recollections*, p.41

[75] Keppel-Jones, *Rhodes and Rhodesia*, p.94.

[76] Tabler, *Pioneers of Rhodesia*, p.94

[77] Tabler, *Pioneers of Rhodesia*, p.95.

[78] For a brilliant reconstruction of conflicted loyalties generated by the war see Bill Nasson, *Abraham Essau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*, Cambridge, 1991.

[79] Tabler, *Pioneers of Rhodesia*, p.93.

[80] This is not a necessary characteristic of the hero *per se*, as the honouring of military veterans at events such as the annual armistice commemorations at the cenotaph in London will attest. Martyrdom *is* a strong feature, however, of high imperial hero culture. See for example, Douglas H. Johnson, 'The Death of Gordon: A Victorian Myth', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 10:3 (1982); John Wolffe, *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain*, Oxford, 2001, pp. 136-153; Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, pp.83-121; Joanna Lewis, *Empire of Sentiment: The Death of Livingstone and the Myth of Victorian Imperialism*, Cambridge, 2018.

[81] Especially notable in this regard is the last stand of Allan Wilson's patrol during the Matabele War of 1893. See MacDonald, 'The Invention of Rhodesia', pp. 131-135 and Philip Mason, *Birth of a Dilemma: the Conquest and Settlement of Rhodesia*, Oxford, 1958, p. 181.

[82] On the shifting ratio of white women to white men in southern Africa see Julia Bush, "'The Right Sort of Woman": Female Emigrators and Emigration to the British Empire, , 1890-1910, Women's History Review, 3:3, 1994, pp. 385-409; Kate Law, *Gendering the Settler State: White Women, Race, Liberalism and Empire in Rhodesia, 1950-1980*, Routledge, 2016, pp. 24-29.

[83] Segal, *Out of Time*, p. 4.