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0521811910 - Environment, Power, and Injustice: A South African History

Nancy J. Jacobs

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Environment, Power, and Injustice

A South African History

This book presents the socio-environmental history of black people in the area near Kuruman, on the edge of the Kalahari in South Africa. Considering successive periods – Tswana agropastoral chiefdoms before colonial contact, the Cape frontier, British colonial rule, Apartheid, and the homeland of Bophuthatswana in the 1980s – *Environment, Power, and Injustice* shows how the human relationship with the environment corresponded to differences of class, gender, and race. While exploring biological, geological, and climatological forces in history, this book argues that the challenges of existence in a semidesert arose more from human injustice than from deficiencies in the natural environment. In fact, powerful people drew strength from and exercised their power over others through the environment. At the same time, the natural world provided marginal peoples with some relief from human injustice.

Nancy J. Jacobs is Assistant Professor in the Department of Africana Studies and the Department of History at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, USA. She is a recipient of the Alice Hamilton article prize from the American Society for Environmental History.

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NANCY J. JACOBS

Brown University



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*To my father, Fred Jacobs,
and the memory of my mother, Irene Jacobs*

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Preface

The research that became this book was possible because of several generous grants. I have been a recipient of the following support: a Fulbright-Hays Grant in 1991; an Indiana University College of Arts and Sciences Second Semester Fellowship in 1994; an American Council of Learned Societies/Social Science Research Council International Postdoctoral Fellowship (made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities) in 1997–8; and a Bernadotte E. Schmitt Grant from the American Historical Association in 1998. I am also grateful to the Brown University Office of the Dean of the Faculty for a Junior Sabbatical in 1997 and for a subvention to underwrite the costs of producing this book. I would like to acknowledge the permission of the Chief Directorate of Surveys and Mapping in South Africa to use their copyrighted map material and aerial photographs to make the maps and reproductions of aerial photographs in this book. I also thank the MacGregor Museum in Kimberley for permission to use copyrighted historic photographs of the Kuruman area.

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Finding the right documents is another challenge, one that archivists and librarians helped me meet. I am particularly grateful to the staff at the National Archives in Pretoria and the Cape Archives in Cape Town. They were unfailingly helpful and patient. Furthermore, my research on removals has benefited considerably from the assistance of the staff at The Association for Community and Rural Advancement (AnCRA) in Kuruman and from researchers at the Department of Land Affairs in Pretoria. Both organizations unstintingly shared materials on removals of Kuruman reserves.

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Following convention, in this last paragraph of the acknowledgments I thank my family. My parents, Fred Jacobs and the late Irene Jacobs, of Holland, Michigan, always encouraged me to study and travel. Their support was crucial to my studies and research. Even after years of hearing about it, my siblings and in-laws usually took interest in my work and were always humorous when they did not. I am especially grateful to the other historians in the family, my sister Chris and brother-in-law Dirk Mouw, who read parts of the manuscript. Finally, my husband Peter Heywood, a biologist who committed to both me and Kuruman in a ceremony in the Moffat Church, astounds me with his generosity, insight, integrity, and talent. In countless ways he has supported my research and helped me turn it into this book. His most evident contributions are the photographs of contemporary Kuruman and my understanding of photosynthesis, but he has been involved in many less obvious ways as well. Not least, he has been a thoughtful companion in seeking equitable ways of using and preserving the environment, and of living in this world.

Nancy Jacobs
2002

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
AnCRA	The Association for Community and Rural Advancement
ARD	Asbestos-Related Disease
BAD	Union and Republic of South Africa Bantu Administration and Development Department
BB	British Bechuanaland
BBLC	British Bechuanaland Land Commission
BIC	Bantu Investment Corporation
BP	Bechuanaland Protectorate
CC	Cape Colony
GLW	Griqualand West
LMS	London Missionary Society
LSU	Large Stock Unit
NAC	Native Affairs Commission
NAD	Native Affairs Department
OFS	Orange Free State
SANT	South African Native Trust
SAR	South African Republic
UCDP	United Christian Democratic Party