

Professionele historici stel toenemend belang in geskiedenis wat tot 'n spesifieke streek beperk is, omdat dit tot meer dieptestudies lei en 'n bydrae tot die algemene geskiedwetenskap lewer. Inderdaad plaas die skrywer met sy verwysing na gebeure soos die runderpes (1896-1897), die Tweede Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902), die Rebelle van 1914 en politieke ontwikkelings, Postmasburg in die nasionale verloop van die Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis.

Die boek lees vlot, terwyl foto's en 'n kaart die teks effektief aanvul. Dit beskik oor 'n uitgebreide bronnelys, voetnote en register van wetenskaplike gehalte. Vir sowel die navorser as die leek is die boek op streekhistoriese vlak 'n wins.

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A. de V. Minnaar. *-uShukela: a history of the growth and development of the sugar industry in Zululand: 1905 to the present*. Human Sciences Research Council Pretoria 1992.

Tony Minnaar's *Ushukela* represents a major and positive step forward in the historiography of Zululand. The author is a respected and prolific writer on the history of Zululand. This tidy volume is welcomed because it concentrates specifically on the history of the industry of sugar in Zululand.

One appreciates the clear and helpful way the book is organised from the establishment of the first sugar cane growers north of the Thukela to the problems the planters experienced as they pioneered this commercial enterprise. The reader is graphically reminded of the agony of establishing these farms, the planters associations and the supporting industrial sugar mills. The chapter on problems is especially interesting and valuable.

Of particular value is the last chapter on the small growers, which not only indicates a special road forward for the industry, but also shows the reader the tremendous relevance in creating viable small entrepreneurs in a time of shrinking economy.

However, this clarity is somewhat lost to the reader in the unclear contents page which could benefit by careful attention to the relevant size of the print. The chapter titles should enjoy more prominence than abbreviations etc. I would also appreciate the source of the photographs which, incidentally, could be clearer.

One of the recommendations of the book is that it is an excellent reference book on the subject with copious helpful annexures. However, in future editions an index would be very helpful and careful attention to sources would be useful, for example, Isaac's source is the Struik facsimile.

Ushukela is a readable and enjoyable narrative often buoyant with thought-provoking observations. Also, the text creates questions: Why could Zululand not attract sufficient Zulu labour for the sugar industry?

Why were the planters so dependent upon the amaThongas and Shangaans from Mozambique? And why were the latter available?

The opportunity to produce more specifically relevant maps for this subject was neglected. But the overall quality and usefulness of this excellent volume by one of the foremost authors on the history of Zululand, is to be welcomed.

What this volume emphasises, by its omission, is the very real need for a history of road and rail transport in Zululand because it was on this foundation that the sugar industry depended.

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