

B.J.T. LEVERTON (ed.). *Records of Natal, III, August 1835-June 1838*. Government Printer: Pretoria, 1990. 331 pp. R6,06 (inclusive). ISBN 0 7970 1603 1.

The third volume of *Records of Natal* is a welcome addition to this well-established, meticulously presented series. This particular volume seems to be a much richer quarry for both the 'national' and the local regional historian, than the previous one. Much of the material herein contained has bearing on important themes in South African history currently under critical discussion. Such themes include the relationship between the Great Trek and the 'Mfecane', the role of the missionary and the origins and early history of the Fingoes (Mfengu). It is a volume especially (and surprisingly) rich (because some of the material is outside the stated chronological range of the volume) on the armed confrontation between the Cape forces and the Ngwane at the battle of Mbolompo on 27 August 1828. This material is contained in a whole clutch of enclosures, dated 1828 and attached to a despatch by Governor D'Urban to Lord Glenelg, dated 22 November 1837 (pp. 218-240), as well as in conflicting evidence before the 1835 parliamentary select committee on aborigines, printed on 5 August 1836 (pp. 64-69, 152-156 and 158-163). Equally fascinating is the contrasting accounts of the causes of the Great Trek (pp. 246-251 and 291-294).

For Cape historians this volume contains certain 'classics' like D'Urban's response to the Glenelg despatch of 1835 (pp. 41-43) and Harry Smith's account of the causes of the war of 1834-1835 and his defence of the killing of Hintsu (pp. 99-109). And there are perhaps even some surprises, like a defence of the then Lieutenant-Colonel Henry George Wakelyn Smith by Sir Andries Stockenström, though one must bear in mind the correspondent! 'All the Caffres whom I had an opportunity of conferring with,' writes Stockenström to D'Urban on 14 September 1836, 'expressed the most unqualified satisfaction with the Lieutenant-Colonel's conduct towards them and many symptoms of regret at his departure, particularly on the part of Macomo, were apparent. My own opinion is that the Colonel's zeal and industry are beyond all praise and have greatly contributed to the tranquil state of the Caffre tribes' (p.94).

Natal historians will find plenty of confirmation, particularly via the letters and evidence of Captain Allen Gardiner (pioneer Natal missionary), of the extent to which the flight of refugees from Zulu rule to Port Natal bedevilled the relationship of the embryonic community of often unscrupulous traders with Dingane. Here, too, handy for reference are 'classic' Natal regional documents like Dingane's letter to William IV, dated 21 June 1837 (p. 188) and the objectives of the provisional committee of a Natal Association, presumably dated 1839 (pp. 252-254).

H.C. HUMMEL  
Rhodes University