

'The more responsible of our critics':

Colin Webb's contributions to the study of African history

by Milner Snell

Colin Webb, the first editor of *Natalia*, was a prominent teacher, historian and administrator. He had a long and varied career, but for this article three areas of his working life will be highlighted. First, his involvement in the Natal History Research Project, which culminated in the publication of *A History of Natal* in 1965. Second, the important role he played in the 1970s by introducing new approaches to the study of African history at the University of Natal. Third, his work on the history of KwaZulu-Natal, with particular emphasis on the *James Stuart Archive*. Webb was a leading figure in the history department at the university in the 1960s and 1970s, and his career can only be understood when placed in the political and academic context in which he worked locally and the international developments in historical research of these years.¹

Early life

Colin de Berri Webb, the son of Stanley de Berri Webb and Eunice Miriam Poultney, was born in Pretoria on 24 December 1930.² He was educated at Pretoria Boys High School, matriculating in 1947; and read for a BA degree, majoring in English and history, at the University of the Witwatersrand on a Barclays Bank scholarship. He graduated in 1951 and taught at Pretoria Boys High School while studying for his Honours degree part-time at the University of the Witwatersrand. In 1955, he was awarded the Elsie Ballot scholarship and went to Cambridge University to read for the tripos at Clare College. He studied modern European history and was particularly interested in the French, Russian and American revolutions. In 1957, he obtained a post as a temporary lecturer on the Durban

campus of the University of Natal and taught economic history, European and South African history and political science. In 1960, Webb was made a permanent lecturer. In the same year he married Fleur Gower, who lectured in French at the university.

The Natal History Research Project

In 1959, Edgar Brookes, a prominent writer and liberal politician, was appointed to the chair of history at University of Natal. Brookes had served as the

principal of Adams College from 1933 to 1945, and represented the Africans of Natal in the senate from 1937 to 1952. He was a political scientist, but became more interested in Natal history once he became head of department, which led him to launch the Natal History Research Project.³ The original aim of the project was to produce a six-volume history of Natal, with each volume written by a different member of staff.⁴ However, the project was trimmed down because of financial constraints. In 1962, Brookes approached Webb, who had moved to the Pietermaritzburg



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campus in that year as a senior lecturer, to work on the project with him. Webb's own research and writing in the late 1950s were on topics of European history, but he was developing more of an interest in South African history at that time.⁵

In the first phase of the project, which began in June 1962 and continued until July 1963, Webb made a detailed analysis of historical sources from the colonial period in the Natal Archives in Pietermaritzburg. This was some time before the holdings in the archives were computerised and Webb and postgraduate student

assistants worked laboriously, but carefully, through the various finding aids at the archives, listing all available official sources. His research findings were published as a *Guide to the Official Records of the Colony of Natal*.⁶ This was the first systematic study of the available archival sources, and made it easier for researchers to trace documents. The work was updated by Jennifer Verbeek, Mary Nathanson and Elaine Peel and republished in 1984 as *Webb's Guide to the Official Records of the Colony of Natal*.⁷

Brookes retired at the end of 1962, but as professor emeritus continued his involvement in the second phase of the research project. In this phase, launched in July 1963, Brookes and Webb wrote a history of Natal. Brookes had mentioned in his inaugural lecture in 1959 the need for a general history on Natal and had expressed his hope that he would soon be able to undertake the work.⁸ This was the first attempt at a general history of the region since Robert Russell's *Natal: The Land and its Story*, which had first been published in 1891.⁹ The work was a synthesis of writings and research on Natal up to the early 1960s. Brookes and Webb aimed to write 'an impartial history of the three groups of immigrants who built Natal – Africans, Europeans and Asians'.¹⁰ Brookes had written a few years earlier:

Most past histories of South Africa have been written from the point of view of the two white groups and the struggles between them. But in 1959 this is just not good enough. We have to study the history of Africans within our borders, and again study not with dull hearts, but with quick feelings that enable us for the time being to become black and to see things from the black man's point of view.¹¹

The bulk of the text was written by Brookes, but Webb wrote the chapters on the annexation of Natal, the coming of the Indian immigrants, the Anglo-Zulu War, the struggle for responsible government and relations between Natal and the Transvaal just before the Anglo-Boer War of 1899. Webb undertook most of the research for the book and in the second half of 1963 went to London on sabbatical to work at the Public Record Office.

Just before the work was published, the Natal University Press sent a typescript to Leonard Thompson, at that stage professor of African history at the University of California, for comment. He observed that the book was 'permeated by a sense of equity', but that it was 'professionally conservative'.¹² Thompson commented that it was essentially a history of white people

in Natal, it focused on politics rather than society as a whole and it digressed from the flow of events to discuss the responsibilities of individuals.¹³ Thompson recommended that the book be revised before it was published.¹⁴ Brookes responded that there were three chapters that dealt with economic and social matters and that from beginning to end it was a study of all three groups – Africans, Asians and Europeans.¹⁵ He insisted that the book go to press substantially as written, which it did.¹⁶

'Brookes and Webb', as it became known colloquially, is still regarded locally as the first attempt 'to swing the emphasis away from the traditional Eurocentric perspective of earlier white historians, and set the trend for a more comprehensive approach encompassing all who lived in Natal and Zululand'.¹⁷ Historians working abroad were not as generous. Shula Marks criticised it as being 'basically the story of Natal in the nineteenth century, with a very heavy bias towards the history of white settlement in Natal' and failing to take account of the African response to colonialism.¹⁸ She went on to say that South African academics were cut off from new thinking in their field.¹⁹ Marks's critique remained a sore point among historians in Natal and for many years they defended the book.²⁰ Webb himself was hurt by the criticism.²¹

Marks was correct in pointing out that the work was biased towards white settlement and it neglected to take into account the response of Africans to colonial rule. However, she did not place it in the context of a Natal historiographical tradition or take into account the circumstances in which the book was written. By the 1920s, anthropologists and amateur historians, many of whom were missionaries or colonial officials, wrote histories about African societies in Zululand. The history of white, particularly British, colonists were written about by white historians, in particular A.F. Hattersley, first professor of history at the University of Natal. Brookes and Webb attempted to move away from this approach. The book was written, at least in part, in reaction to South African politics in the 1960s. In the 1948 the National Party had come to power and enforced segregation more systematically and vigorously than before. The introduction of racial laws was coupled with the enforcement of legislation that undermined university autonomy and restricted academic and political freedom. In the 1950s and 1960s the 'pulse of university life slowed' as the State enforced segregation on English-speaking universities, and there was an exodus of academics from the country.²² Brookes

and Webb were working in somewhat isolated and restrictive conditions. A work based on the premise that the history of Natal could not be segregated on racial grounds, no matter how obvious that now seems, was making a clear political statement in the 1960s when apartheid was reaching its zenith.

Webb and the introduction of African history to the University of Natal

Although Brookes and Webb was an important development in the historiography of Natal, it was overshadowed by changes taking place in African historiography outside South Africa. Marks in her critique was correct to point out that South African historians were isolated and cut off from new developments. While white rule was being entrenched in South Africa, the opposite was occurring in the rest of Africa. As the move to independence gained momentum in many countries, a number of university colleges were established in British colonies in Africa. Cyril Philips, head of the London School of Oriental and African Studies, was tasked with supervising the establishment of history departments at these colleges.²³ Philips, an expert in Indian history, in 1948 appointed Roland Oliver in London and John Fage at the University of the Gold Coast to set up these departments.²⁴

Oliver and Fage both believed that the history of Africa should be the study of African achievement and societies rather than the study of Europeans in Africa.²⁵ The departments established by these men began to train historians from the continent, as well as to attract European and American scholars to the field of African history. By the 1960s, South African universities were no longer the sole centres for the study of the country's history and in many cases lagged behind the changes. Far more innovative history was being written by scholars at Queen's in Canada, the University of California, Yale University and the University of London. These historians, known as Africanists, were influenced by the early years of post-colonial politics and focused on African achievement, ability and resilience. They emphasised the importance of what they called oral tradition as sources of African history in addition to records written by colonial missionaries and officials. Works by John Omer-Cooper, Shula Marks and Norman Etherington reinterpreted events that occurred in Natal history using an Africanist approach. Omer-Cooper's *The Zulu Aftermath* argued that the emergence of the Zulu kingdom and the mfecane that followed was not a destructive process, as viewed in many writings on

Natal, but a positive development that resulted in the emergence of modern states, like Swaziland and Lesotho, and great African leaders like Shaka and Sobhuza.²⁶ The mfecane was an example of African achievement and nationalism. Marks's book on the 1906 uprising in Natal and Etherington's thesis on African converts in Natal emphasised that Africans were not victims of the colonial state, but were able to effectively adjust to new political and economic systems.²⁷

Webb became greatly influenced by the new trends in the study of African history while attending a conference in Lusaka at the University of Zambia in July 1968.²⁸ Here, he was exposed to the research of leading Africanist scholars, including Monica Wilson, Marks and Omer-Cooper. This was a turning point in his career and when Webb went on sabbatical in the first half of 1969 he was totally focused on the history of African societies in Natal.²⁹ When he returned from his sabbatical at the end of 1969, he began to petition university authorities to make changes in the history syllabus to include more African history and to encourage greater research in the field. In December 1969, he wrote a memorandum to the head of the history department, Mark Prestwich:

For years now, overseas scholars have been bitterly critical of South Africa's Departments of History, because their teaching and their research implicitly denies there is any significant history to be studied in this country except that made by white men. While I am aware that some of these strictures have been made in ignorance of the special problems of history teaching in South Africa, I am nevertheless beginning to share the impatience of the more responsible of our critics. African history is now, surely, sufficiently well established to find a place at last in the history departments of Universities such as our own, functioning on African soil.³⁰

Webb went on to recommend a number of changes to facilitate the teaching of African history at the university. These included the establishment of the post of junior research assistant in African history; and that Honours essays be directed to topics of African history, Honours students be allowed to substitute courses in Zulu for French or German, and a new course on the history of African societies be taught.³¹ Webb's interest in African history coincided with an upturn in the South African economy, and an improvement in the working conditions at South African universities. The economy went through a boom in the 1960s, which led to increased state expenditure on South African universities and museums. This resulted in departments increasing in size, and more funding becoming available for research.

In 1970, Webb was able to secure the appointment of John Wright as a research assistant with the rank of junior lecturer. Wright had read for a Master's degree under Webb's supervision a few years earlier and was working as a journalist in Johannesburg. In 1971, Webb was promoted to associate professor and, joined by Wright, began teaching a course on the history of African societies in southern Africa at Honours level. In 1973, at Webb's instigation, Wright introduced a course on the prehistory of southern Africa in the undergraduate syllabus. Stafford Glass had introduced a similar course at the Durban campus in 1972.

Webb considered his teaching a greater achievement than his writings. His supervision of seventeen Masters theses, fifty Honours research essays and six PhD dissertations contributed to a generation of Africanist research.³² John Laband remembers Webb as an 'inspiring lecturer' who

was able to impart both his zest for history and the intellectual integrity with which he pursued it. Because he was constantly revising his thinking on the basis of fresh evidence from his reading and research, his lectures came across with a sense of immediacy and excitement, heightened by his consummate oratorical style. He spoke in his fine, clear voice with a thrill of suppressed passion, giving even the most complex issues an extraordinary clarity and relevance.³³

A tribute to his teaching is the number of his students, including Jeff Guy, Colin Bundy, John Wright, John Laband and John Lambert, who went on to become historians and make important contributions to the writing of the history of Natal and Zululand.

In 1970, together with John Daniel of the geography department at Rhodes University, Webb launched a project to investigate the possible environmental factors that contributed to social and political upheaval amongst the Nguni in the early nineteenth century. On a grant of an unlikely R180 they undertook field research in Zululand and Swaziland. They concluded, in an article written by Daniel, that in an economy based on cattle the control of a number of different veld types gave chiefdoms greater economic and political strength than chiefdoms who controlled fewer veld types.³⁴ This project made Webb a pioneer in the study of environmental history. In 1971, he was responsible for persuading the Natal Society to launch the journal *Natalia* which gave local historians an opportunity to publish research on Natal.³⁵ Besides contributing articles to some of the earlier editions, he was chairman of the editorial board from 1971 to 1975.³⁶ He was a council member of the

Natal Society from 1965 to 1975 and vice-president from 1988 to 1992.

The James Stuart Archive

While doing research on *A History of Natal*, Webb had come across the papers of James Stuart in the library of Killie Campbell.³⁷ Stuart, an official in the Natal civil service, had from 1897 to the early 1920s collected a large number of oral testimonies on the history of the Zulu and surrounding peoples. His notes on these interviews are the most comprehensive and detailed sources available on the histories of African societies in what is now KwaZulu-Natal before colonial times. Stuart moved to London in the 1920s and took his collection of papers with him. He died in 1942 and his widow, Ellen, arranged in 1947 for the notes to be sent to Killie Campbell, a wealthy and passionate book collector who lived in Durban. Campbell bought the papers in 1949 for £550. In the 1950s and 1960s the papers were occasionally consulted, but remained unpublished and fairly inaccessible to scholars. Webb realised that Stuart's notes were an important source on the history of African societies in the Natal and Zululand region. In 1970, he obtained the backing of the university and the Killie Campbell Library to edit and publish the oral testimonies that Stuart had collected. He launched the project in 1970 with John Wright as his co-editor from 1971 onwards. The first volume was published in 1976. Webb co-edited four volumes of the archive (1976, 1979, 1982 and 1987) and was busy with the fifth when he died in 1992.³⁸

The archive has been described as opening 'a path to Natal and Zululand's pre-colonial and colonial past which all future historians of the field must pass'.³⁹ While historians are aware of the importance of Stuart's notes for anyone researching the pre-colonial and colonial past, the production of the archives has become the source of some discussion within academic circles. After the publication of the first volume, scholars perceived the testimonies as unchanging oral, or tribal, traditions. There were dangers of distortion in the retelling and recording of the testimonies, but they were fundamentally factual histories. Julian Cobbing in an article in 1988 questioned Stuart's motives. While acknowledging that his 'feat was prodigious', Cobbing points out that Stuart was a colonial magistrate whose job it was to seize land, enforce taxation and extract labour.⁴⁰ He was a racist who agitated for segregation and collected testimonies of African informants to justify this exploitive system.⁴¹ Through leading

questions, Stuart attempted to reinforce colonial myths about African history, in particular the idea of a monstrous Shaka being responsible for mass destruction and depopulation.⁴² Cobbing goes as far as questioning Stuart's honesty in terms of what he omitted or added to what his informants told him.⁴³ While recognising that Stuart was part of 'a particularly nasty kind of colonial society in Natal' and 'shared many of the prejudices of his contemporaries', Wright points out that Stuart felt that Africans in Natal and Zululand 'were being seriously misruled by their British settler overlords'.⁴⁴ Wright argues that Stuart 'recorded different versions of a story from different interlocutors' and 'in Stuart's own view, research into oral histories was an open-ended, never-ending process'.⁴⁵ By recording the names of the people he interviewed, Stuart ensured individual interlocutors were 'co-producers of the texts that he recorded'.⁴⁶ More recently there has been a shift towards placing more emphasis on the motives of the men who spoke to Stuart. Carolyn Hamilton, a leading scholar in the study of intellectual history, has argued that the social backgrounds and political interests of Stuart's interlocutors must be examined as their statements are 'political discourses set in the present' rather than inherited 'tribal traditions'.⁴⁷ Hamilton argues that 'Stuart's interlocutors mobilised ideas about the past in support of positions and interests that they sought to defend and promote in the present'.⁴⁸ These men, argues Wright, could not read or write but 'were involved in vibrant public discourses about public affairs, present and past' in their rural communities.⁴⁹ They interacted with Stuart to express their views, and that of their communities, during a time of political and social change. Furthermore, they were aware that their testimonies would be recorded thus giving them greater permanence and significance in a colonial world that valued the written word.⁵⁰ By the late 1970s the *James Stuart Archive* 'had come to international attention as a prime source of pre-colonial Zulu history'.⁵¹ A number of historians over the last four decades have used the evidence in the *Archive* to revise aspects of Zulu history. These included the nature of Zulu society, the size of the State and the role of Shaka in the emergence of the kingdom. Wright and Hamilton argued that the Zulu kingdom was marked by deep divisions in a hierarchy of social classes and pointed out that that the kingdom was smaller than originally thought. It did not dominate north of the Black Mfolozi and originally had been formed as a defensive reaction to Ndwandwe expansion.⁵²

Administrator and historian

In 1976, Webb took up the prestigious King George V chair of history at the University of Cape Town. Besides being head of department, he served on the senate and in 1981 became dean of the Faculty of Arts. Although his time was increasingly been taken up with administrative duties, he continued to work with Wright on editing the *James Stuart Archive* and retained his interest in the Anglo-Zulu War. The war was a popular topic among amateur historians and writers but it was only in the 1960s and 1970s that academics began a systematic and detailed study of the conflict. Webb had become interested in the war while doing research on *A History of Natal* and wrote a number of papers on the conflict in the late 1960s.⁵³ There was a surge of interest in the war in the mid-1970s initiated by the upcoming centenary. Webb wrote two articles on the war for *Natalia*.⁵⁴ He and Wright collaborated and edited a series of statements made by Cetshwayo KaMpande on Zulu history and customs.⁵⁵ In February 1979, a conference was held at the university's Durban campus to mark the centenary of the war. The papers presented at the conference were compiled as a book and Webb wrote the opening chapter, discussing the various interpretations of the conflict.⁵⁶ He dealt with a new debate that was coming to dominate historical discussions in the late 1970s and 1980s. By then a Marxist-influenced revisionist theory, which had developed at universities abroad, was being applied by some historians to the history of South Africa.⁵⁷ The revisionists focused on the development of the capitalist system and the class conflict that accompanied it. They shifted from the emphasis on political history to economic and social issues.⁵⁸ Webb was critical of this new theory which he argued moved away from individual choice and free will to economic determinism.⁵⁹

In 1984, Webb returned to Natal to take up the post of vice-principal in Durban. In 1988, on the retirement of Deneys Schreiner, he moved to Pietermaritzburg in the same position. He had hoped to spend more time on research, but soon had to face the reality of running a campus in a time of increasing political turmoil in South Africa. He spent many hours travelling to Durban, up to three times a day on occasion, to attend meetings.⁶⁰ He still managed to co-edit two volumes of the *James Stuart Archive* and continued his interest in environmental history by writing the introduction and compiling the index of the first volume of the English translation of Adulphe Delegorgue's *Travels in Southern Africa*.⁶¹ Webb's role as vice-principal during

a tumultuous time in South Africa's history has been dealt with by Bill Guest in his multi-volume history of the university.⁶² The constant pressure affected Webb's health and he suffered a minor thrombosis and loss of sight in one eye.⁶³ Suffering from cancer, he retired in February 1992 and died on 22 March 1992.

Overview

Webb left Cambridge steeped in European history. He became more interested in African history while teaching it at the University of Natal and attempted a more inclusive approach in *A History of Natal*. Yet it was in the late 1960s that he began to appreciate the role of Africans in the history of South Africa. While attending a conference in Lusaka in 1968, he was exposed to Africanist scholarship and when he went on sabbatical in the first half of 1969 was totally focused on the history of African societies. When he returned to Natal, he worked to introduce the new Africanist approach to the history department at the university by changing the syllabus and encouraging postgraduate students to focus on topics of African history. His most important contribution to the study of African history was his editing, with John Wright, of the *James Stuart Archive*, the largest collection of testimonies on pre-colonial and colonial history in KwaZulu-Natal.

NOTES

- 1 I would like to thank John Wright for commenting on a draft copy of this article.
- 2 Biographical information from University of KwaZulu-Natal Archives (UKZNA), BIO-S 55/1/1-, Curriculum vitae of C. de B. Webb; Author's interview with Fleur Webb, Pietermaritzburg, 14 December 1995; Bill Guest, *Stella Aurorae: The History of a South African University: Volume 3, The University of Natal (1949–1976)* (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Society Foundation, 2018): 240; John Laband, 'Colin de Berri Webb (1930–1992): an historian's tribute' *Natalia* 22 (1992): 7–10.
- 3 Edgar H. Brookes, *A South African Pilgrimage* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1977): 109.
- 4 Andrew H. Duminy and Bill Guest, 'Introduction' in *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910* edited by A.H. Duminy and W.R. Guest (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press and Shuter & Shooter, 1989): xviii.
- 5 Author's interview with Fleur Webb, Pietermaritzburg, 14 December 1995.
- 6 Colin de B. Webb (ed.), *Guide to the Official Records of the Colony of Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1965).
- 7 Jennifer Verbeek, Mary Nathanson and Elaine Peel (compilers), *Webb's Guide to the Official Records of the Colony of Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1984).
- 8 Edgar H. Brookes, *The Relationship between History and Political Science* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1959): 10.
- 9 Robert Russell, *Natal: The Land and its Story* (Pietermaritzburg: P. Davis, 1891).
- 10 Edgar H. Brookes and Colin de B. Webb, *A History of Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1965): x.
- 11 Brookes, *The Relationship between History and Political Science*: 16.
- 12 UKZNA, STP 1/5/2, Leonard Thompson to the Publications Officer of the University of Natal Press, 10 February 1965.
- 13 *ibid.*
- 14 *ibid.*
- 15 UKZN, STP 1/5/2, Edgar Brookes to Mark Prestwich, 24 February 1965.
- 16 *ibid.*
- 17 Laband, 'Colin de Berri Webb': 8.
- 18 Shula Marks, 'The Nguni, the Natalians, and their history' *Journal of South African History* 8(3) 1967: 529.
- 19 *ibid.*
- 20 Duminy and Guest (eds), *Natal and Zululand from Earliest Times to 1910*: xix–xx.
- 21 Author's interviews with Fleur Webb, Pietermaritzburg, 14 December 1995 and John Wright (Pietermaritzburg, 5 December 1995).
- 22 Belinda Bozzoli and Peter Delius, 'Radical history and South African history' in *History from South Africa: Alternative Visions and Practices* edited by J. Brown et al. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991): 8.
- 23 Jan Vansina, *Living with Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994): 46.
- 24 *ibid.*: 47.
- 25 *ibid.*: 48.
- 26 John Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth Century Revolution in Bantu Africa* (London: Longmans Green, 1966): 6.
- 27 Shula Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906–08 Disturbances in Natal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970): 338 and Norman A. Etherington, 'The rise of the Kholwa in south-east Africa: African Christian communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand, 1835–1880' (PhD thesis, Yale University, 1971): 247 and 266.
- 28 Author's interview with John Wright, Pietermaritzburg, 5 December 1995.
- 29 Author's interviews with Fleur Webb, Pietermaritzburg, 14 December 1995 and John Wright (Pietermaritzburg, 5 December 1995).
- 30 UKZN, STP 1/5/5, Colin Webb to Mark Prestwich, 2 December 1969.
- 31 *ibid.*
- 32 Laband, 'Colin de Berri Webb': 8.
- 33 *ibid.*
- 34 John B. McI. Daniel, 'A geographical study of pre-Shakan Zululand' *South African Geographical Journal* 55(1) 1973: 31.
- 35 For more on the origins of *Natalia* see Christopher Merrett, 'Natalia at 50: an overview and appreciation' *Natalia* 50 (2020): 59.
- 36 Colin de B. Webb, 'John Bird' [editorial] *Natalia* 1 (1971): 5–6; Colin de B. Webb (transcriber and editor) 'Captain Allen F. Gardiner's Natal Journal for 1838' *Natalia* 3 (1973): 9–12.
- 37 Author's interview with Fleur Webb, Pietermaritzburg, 14 December 1995.
- 38 Colin de B. Webb and John Wright (eds), *The James Stuart Archive of recorded Oral Evidence Relating to the History of the Zulu and Neighbouring Peoples* 6 vols (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press and University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 1976–2014).
- 39 Laband, 'Colin de Berri Webb': 8.

- 40 Julian Cobbing, 'A tainted well: the objectives, historical fantasies, and working methods of James Stuart, with counter argument' *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 11 (1988): 116 and 119.
- 41 *ibid*: 122–123.
- 42 *ibid*: 125–126.
- 43 *ibid*: 129.
- 44 John Wright, 'Life with the *James Stuart Archive*' in *Archives of Times Past: Conversations about South Africa's Deep History* edited by Cynthia Kros et al. (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2022): 184–185.
- 45 *ibid*: 185.
- 46 *ibid*: 188.
- 47 John Wright, 'Thununu kaNonjiya Gcabashe visits James Stuart in the big smoke to talk about history' *Natalia* 49 (2019): 7.
- 48 *ibid*.
- 49 *ibid*.
- 50 *ibid*.
- 51 Guest, *Stella Aurorae*: 137.
- 52 Carolyn Hamilton, 'Ideology, oral tradition and the struggle for power in the early Zulu kingdom' (MA thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985): 583.
- 53 Colin de B. Webb, 'The ruin of Zululand', paper to the Natal branch of the British Historical Association (1968); 'The annexation of Zululand to Natal, 1879', Oxford University seminar on Zulu history (1969); 'Why war?: an examination of the origins of the Anglo-Zulu conflict of 1879', annual Natal Historical Conference (1969).
- 54 Colin de B. Webb (ed.), 'A Zulu boy's recollections of the Zulu War' *Natalia* 8 (1978): 6–21; 'Lines of power: the high commissioner, the telegraph and the war of 1879' *Natalia* 8 (1978): 31–37.
- 55 Colin de B. Webb and John B. Wright (eds), *A Zulu King Speaks* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press; and Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library, 1978).
- 56 Colin Webb, 'The origins of the war: problems of interpretation' in *The Anglo-Zulu War: New Perspectives* edited by Andrew Duminy and Charles Ballard (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1981).
- 57 Guest, *Stella Aurorae*: 136.
- 58 *ibid*.
- 59 Jeff Guy was mentioned by Webb in his chapter. He later criticised Webb's commentary in Jeff Guy, 'Battling with banality' *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 19 (1998): 169–170.
- 60 Guest, *Stella Aurorae* vol. 3: 13.
- 61 Adulphe Delegorgue, *Travels in Southern Africa* vol. 1 (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press; Durban, Killie Campbell Africana Library, 1990). Fleur Webb was the translator.
- 62 Bill Guest, *Stella Aurorae: The History of a South African University*, vols 1–3 (Pietermaritzburg: Natal Society Foundation, 2015, 2017 and 2019).
- 63 Author's interview with Fleur Webb, Pietermaritzburg, 14 December 1995.